

# Can You Trust That Site?

By Larry Johnson

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Knowing which sites are trustworthy is very important to anyone who works online. After a while you begin to develop some touchstones to apply when deciding whether a site is legitimate and worthy of your trust.

I have had very few problems with purchases made online, but it can happen to you and me both.

Here are five things to look for in a site:

1) VIRTUAL DOMAIN NAME-- Does the site have a virtual Domain name like this ?

[">http://www.goodbusiness.com](http://www.goodbusiness.com)

Or is it based at a free host address like this?

[">http://www.angelhair.com/9985409/?cgi/interpol/geodcities.com/xppd.gsr/](http://www.angelhair.com/9985409/?cgi/interpol/geodcities.com/xppd.gsr/)

Well, I don't know where your thinking is, but I am definitely going with the identifiable virtual address here as an indicator that they are legitimate.

They at least thought enough about their business to invest a few dollars in a name.

2) TESTIMONIALS-- Are there any good testimonials of others who have done business with them ? Can they be contacted ?

If there are, chances are you are on the right track to having a good experience with them yourself.

Beware, however, of made up testimonials that cannot be verified.

3) HOW LONG ONLINE-- How long has the site been online ?  
This may take a little researching on your part, but it may well be worth it to know how long this business has been making it's offer for products, software and/or services.

An easy way to verify how long the domain name has been registered is simply to a search at:

[">http://www.allwhois.com/](http://www.allwhois.com/)

- You will find lots of information including who owns the domain name, their address, who hosts the domain name, and when it was registered.

It can give you some useful information about the genuine nature of the site.

4) CONTACT INFORMATION-- Can you contact the webmaster either by phone, fax and /or email.

Personally, I like dealing with those that give you all of the above information. There is something comforting to me that I can call or e-mail the site manager if something goes wrong with my purchase.

5) CREDENTIALS-- There are several "credentialing" sites online. Their intention is to offer some validity to the site by tracking complaints from former users.

If the site does offer such a service, by all means check out what others have said about their experience with the business.

A note: Not all legitimate businesses offer such a "seal of approval". I assume because there is usually a cost involved, or they just don't feel that they need it.

While this article is not all-inclusive, it is intended to give you a "heads-up" when surfing to unknown areas of the internet and experiencing dealing with new sites that you discover.

Larry Johnson, author

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