

PHILOSOPHY

ON VERIFICATION

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Most recently, I came across of [another euphoric](#) hygiene hypothesis review and wonder how this could ever happen. The evidence here is mixed and largely ambiguous. Probably it would be best to follow some basic journalistic rules as summarized in the [on-line](#) “Verification Handbook for investigative reporting”

As with the verification of user-generated content in breaking news situations, some fundamentals of verification apply in an investigative context. Some of those fundamentals, which were detailed in the original Handbook, are:

- Develop human sources.
- Contact people, and talk to them.
- ! Be skeptical when something looks, sounds or seems too good to be true.
- ! Consult multiple, credible sources.
- Familiarize yourself with search and research methods, and new tools.
- Communicate and work together with other professionals — verification is a team sport.

Journalist Steve Buttry, who wrote the Verification Fundamentals chapter in the original Handbook, said that verification is a mix of three elements:

- A person's resourcefulness, persistence, skepticism and skill
- Sources' knowledge, reliability and honesty, and the number, variety and reliability of sources you can find and persuade to talk
- Documentation

