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Download software safely

Many know and consider it sound advice to only obtain software from trustworthy sources. But how to establish whether a source is trustworthy?

For mobile devices, this is an easy question to answer: Official app stores are considered a safe option.

You can also obtain software on traditional computers via so-called stores or package management programs. The common practice though is still to download and install them from various websites. When doing so, you must however make absolutely sure that you are using a software manufacturer's official website. If you don't recognise the website address, it is advisable to use several sources to confirm its trustworthiness. You could for instance compare the results provided by your search engine with entries in an online encyclopaedia (for instance Wikipedia) or the details provided by a mobile device app store.

You should also trust your gut instincts, in particular when viewing a website. Dubious-looking sites, for instance if they offer all sorts of software by different manufacturers to download for free, are covered in misleading adverts or hide a download link behind a countdown counter, should best be avoided.