One of the most important factors of deciding to trust a website for me is through friends, family, and wide use. If my relatives or close friends begin to commonly visit specific websites and comment positively on them in conversation, then I will be significantly more likely to trust these websites and visit them more often. If I notice consistent mentions of certain websites on social media, however, this could mean two things: This could mean that there is a new website, quickly becoming more popular and enjoyable to use and visit, or this could mean that the owner of the website is spending money on internet personalities or celebrities to discuss and rave about said website under the guise of genuinely enjoying the site. If I suspect that a site is sponsoring celebrities without explicitly forcing the celebrity to declare they are indeed being sponsored, my trust of both the celebrity and the website decreases immensely. For example, if a YouTube personality began to randomly mention a new product or website he or she had discovered and mentioned how amazing it was, this is quite obviously just an advertisement with the intent of tricking the viewer. However, if a Youtuber stated explicitly that he or she was being sponsored by a company and then began to mention the intricacies of the product or website, I would respect the fact that the Youtuber is upfront about who financially supports him or her and that the company is confident enough in what they have to offer that they do not have to rely on deception.

Similar to the TRUSTe seal of approval given to websites that follow specific privacy standards as mentioned in the article, I commonly check websites to determine if they have the lock symbol to the left of the address bar. This symbol, when utilizing Google Chrome, signifies that Google trusts this website with private information and almost gives the user the peace of mind that anything sent privately to the website will be kept this way. I mainly trust Google with
my private information since it is a multi-billion dollar company and would not willingly give websites their seal of approval without some form of vetting. Transparency is also crucial in building trust with customers. As stated in the article, simply fulfilling the task and meeting consumer expectations will greatly increase trust, but when things don’t always go right it is important for companies to report this to the consumers. Creating a social media account for the company and posting issues with production or otherwise in an effort to keep customers up to date will show that the company is willing to be transparent with everything they do.

2. I believe that it is naive to think that someone living in America has never been affected by advertising in some way. I, of course, like to imagine that I don’t choose products based on carefully selected placements and well-crafted advertisements, but I know that it is likely I am affected by it in some way. No ads have grabbed me so much that I know I needed to buy that product immediately, but they do subconsciously tuck the brand name in the back of your head for later remembrance. I believe that an example of unethical marketing is the scenario I mentioned before in the first question. Deceiving customers into thinking celebrities they adore and closely follow use and love certain products is quite shady in my opinion. Advertisements that I am actually more apt to listen to and take into consideration are when companies sponsor Youtubers or celebrities and they are both upfront about the exchanging of money between them. This shows complete honesty and treats consumers with respect. In addition, I believe that advertisements of clearly fabricated testimonials are also reprehensible. Ultimately, I feel mostly in control of my thoughts on products when it comes to advertisements, but companies are talented in crafting retail architecture in order to align with customers’ habits and idiosyncrasies.
In the case of shopping malls and grocery stores I am most definitely affected by their clever placements so I believe this is where companies have the upper hand.