

IDENTIFYING FAKE NEWS



The ability to identify fake news is part of "information literacy" and will help you to have a clearer understanding of the world around us. Check out the tips below for a few ways to quickly and easily identify fake news.

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1 IS IT PAID CONTENT?

Not all paid content is "fake news", but it's not real news, either. Fake news stories and advertisements are often placed on real news websites and designed to visually blend in with the real stories. However, a reputable news site will always label the advertisements as Paid, Sponsored, or Promotional.

2 DOES IT EVOKE STRONG EMOTIONS?

If the story seems too crazy to be true or evokes any strong emotions, it might be fake. The creators of fake news sites make more money the more widely the pages are shared on social media. They often use "clickbait" headlines. Do a Google search to see if there are any other more widely known news sources covering the same story.



3 SPELLING, GRAMMAR, ALL CAPS

Real news sites have editors. If there are any typos or misspellings, it is most likely a fake news site. The use of ALL CAPS anywhere except in a breaking news headline is unprofessional, and reputable news sites don't do it.

4 LOOK FOR AUTHOR & SOURCES

Look for an author attribution at the beginning or end of the article. If there is no author, the site probably requires verification. Does the author credit any sources? Does the author say where the information came from or give links to any other sources?

5 BAD WEBSITE DESIGN

Bad website design is also an indicator of a fake news website. Are there links that don't go anywhere? Does the page look cluttered or disorganized? (However, just because a page does have good web design, does not automatically mean it's reputable.) Check the "About Us" page, and read it carefully. If there is no "About Us" page, be suspicious and look for other sources covering the same story.



6 LOOK FOR NEUTRAL SOURCES

There are many news sites that are in the gray area of providing real news, but with a political angle. For example, The Huffington Post, Slate Magazine, and Fox News all have stories that are based in fact but written from either a left or right political angle. These stories might require a second reading from a more neutral source to get more context.

7 SATIRE = COMEDY NOT REALITY

There are also satirical news sites like The Onion which are written entirely for humor and are not based in fact at all, and do not intend for their readers to take it as fact.

8 USE FACT-CHECKING SITES

If you are suspicious of any story, there are many fact-checking websites: Snopes and FactCheck are popular and reliable ones.

