

# **Really Fake News in 500 Words or More.**

An Essay by Tyx Anthony Candolesas

In an era where information can travel virtually anywhere in the blink of an eye, and controversies can start with the push of a single button, False news is a very powerful weapon. Over the years, as technology continues to grow greater and greater, the influence of false news reaches larger and larger audiences and continues to spread like a plague. These days, people read something online and immediately believe it without first checking the facts. Keeping all of these in mind, how do we defend ourselves against the prevalence of fake news?

To answer this question, we must first understand what fake news is. According to a magazine published by Science in 2018, “We define “fake news” to be fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent.”. Fake news is a type of information created to look real with some facts slightly altered to fit a different “truth”. However, the real danger of fake news is its innate ability to manipulate the thoughts of the reader into believing something that is false. The prevalence of fake news is a concern as in the same magazine by Science (2018), they wrote that it can hurt the credibility of sources while at the same time benefitting from the same credibility of the source.

All that said, we should now be able to answer our initial question on how we can defend ourselves from fake news. Initially, this question looks very basic and can be answered using a few words. However, that is not the case as the matter of fake news is very complicated. For example, an answer you might think to this is to simply fact check, however that alone is not

enough as fact checking on the wrong websites may simply give you more false news. When checking facts, we must make sure to use a reliable source. While Wikipedia does not count as a reliable source, scrolling down to its bibliography can give multiple other sources where they got their information from.

By getting your information from a reliable source, you read the real information rather than the false information that other unreliable sources give you. Another method of finding a credible and reliable source is by using Google Scholar. “Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for a scholarly literature.” (Google, n.d.). As such, using Google Scholar will provide better and more reliable sources than an average Google Search. Using these methods, we can cut down a significant portion of the fake news we read by simply fact checking from a reliable source.

Lastly, we can help reduce the amount of fake news by not sharing it. Publicity, good, bad, or anything in between, is at the end of the day still publicity. By sharing a source of false news and calling them out is still sharing the false news by proxy and we should avoid doing this as much as possible.

In conclusion, although the prevalence of fake news cannot be fully neutralized, we are able to counter it by simply fact checking on a reliable source, and not helping the spread of false information. In our day and age, information has the power to change the world with a single click. As such, we should make an effort to prevent misinformation as much as we can by doing our part.

**References:**

*About Google Scholar* (n.d.). Google. <https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/about.html>

Lazer, D.M.J., Baum, M.A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A.J., Greenhill, K.M., Menczer, F., Metzger, M.J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G., Rothschild, D., Schudson, M., Sloman, S.A., Sunstein, C.R., Thorson, E.A., Watts, D.J., & Zittrain, J.L. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*, 359(6380), 1049-1096. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998>