



Fake News

The old saying goes, “Don’t believe everything you read”. This is especially true for content on the internet. Fake News has become commonplace through Social Media and can pose serious problems for information Security, Society and Democracy.

What Is Fake News?

Fake news **IS**

- **False information that pretends to be real news**
- **Designed to manipulate us into believing something that is untrue**

Fake news can sometimes contain real information, but manipulates it to conclude something untrue.

Fake News **IS NOT**

- **Information that is surprising and challenges what we already believe**

The world is quickly changing and is always surprising us. That can make it very difficult to tell what is real and what is not.

How Can we Recognise It?

There is one countermeasure we all have against fake news, and that is **critical thinking**.

What does the Writer Know?

Is this person a recognised expert on the topic? Or is this someone’s opinion?

Make sure to catch credential tricks, just because someone is a doctor, doesn’t mean they are a medical doctor (they could have a doctorate in Art History). Even if someone is a scientist, they might not be a qualified to speak on climate change science.

Where was it Published?

Not all publishing platforms are equal. There are many platforms that exclusively post “Parody News” that is deliberately false as a kind of joke. Some platforms are heavily biased to push a particular product or political position. Try not to rely on news that comes from a single source.





What are other Articles Saying?

If something seems unexpected, make sure to check what other news sites are saying. Maybe an important angle is being missed, or the source information could be really biased. If a message is being repeated across many different news platforms, it usually means it is more reliable.

What is the Purpose of this Information?

Does the writer or publisher have another motive for publishing this information? Do they profit somehow from this information? Are they trying to sell you something or support a particular political platform?

What does The Evidence Say?

Look carefully at the evidence. Is this someone's opinion? Are other publishers posting the same facts? Is this article missing any important facts that make a difference?

Always check to see if the article lists its source of information. Can we check the source of those facts ourselves? Are those sources reliable?

What is the Goal of Fake News?

Fake news is usually designed to get as many people to visit and share the content with as many people as possible. This can be for a few reasons:

- **Clickbait:** These articles are created to attract as much attention as possible through sensational headlines. These sites get advertising money for every person who visits the site.
- **Phishing:** If fake news can make someone believe something untrue, it can convince users to click on a malicious link, download unsafe software, or adopt unsafe security practices. These articles are published by cybercriminals who don't want you to be secure.
- **Reality Hacking:** These are fake articles, fake posts and sometimes fake users that are designed to change a person's perception of the world. By changing someone's idea of the world, they can influence social, financial and political choices.

Resources

Snopes – A fact-checking site that can help you see what the evidence is saying.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

Media Bias/Fact Check – Provides fact checking and media bias ratings for online news

<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

Allsides – Measures media bias ratings for news outlets and writers.

<https://www.allsides.com>

