

3

Handouts & Exercises

Social Media Fact Checking Strategies

#defyhatenow | 3 HANDOUTS & EXERCISES

SOCIAL MEDIA FACT CHECKING STRATEGIES

- HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS - SORTING FACT FROM FICTION
- FACEBOOK TIPS TO SPOT FAKE NEWS
- AFRICACHECK: Useful links and tools



HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS - SORTING FACT FROM FICTION

- Identify a recent news story or rumour you have seen shared on social media.
- Try to establish the original sources and find evidence using the following tools.
- Remember to examine the facts, check all claims with external sources
- Everyone can help to stop the spread of fake news, rumours and propaganda!

Africa Check
Sorting fact from fiction
www.AfricaCheck.org

INFO FINDER

The hardest part of checking a claim is often finding reliable data to check it against. To help you do this, we have created this database of resources we have used in doing our own research or which we have created. Each comes with a description of the information it provides and its strengths and weaknesses. Please select the region then check the topics we have information on.

1. Select place of interest

Tick the region or country on which you are seeking information.
AFRICA / NIGERIA / SOUTH AFRICA

2. Select topic of interest

Click the list of topics. If we don't have data sources on the topic that interests you, please write to info@afRICaCHECK.org to suggest it. We can't respond to all emails but we will read them all.

MEDIA BIAS/FACT CHECK CHROME EXTENSION
<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

Google Chrome extension shows an icon denoting the political bias for the current page

Verify suspicious images with the reverse image search you did earlier, or try one of these:

Who stole my pictures?

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/who-stole-my-pictures/>

BELLINGCAT IMAGE VERIFICATION PLATFORM

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

Bellingcat researches reported events, verifying every photograph, video, and witness account to inform our analysis.

BELLINGCAT ONLINE INVESTIGATIONS: AFRICA

<https://www.bellingcat.com/category/news/africa/>

Remember you can upload an image, click on the camera icon or search by URL.

Use reverse.photos on mobile phone, tablet or android apps.

<https://images.google.com/>

<https://reverse.photos/>

<https://tineye.com/>



FACEBOOK TIPS TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

<https://www.facebook.com/help/188118808357379>

1. Be skeptical of headlines. False news stories often have catchy headlines in all caps with exclamation points. If shocking claims in the headline sound unbelievable, they probably are.

2. Look closely at the URL. A phony or look-alike URL may be a warning sign of false news.

Many false news sites mimic authentic news sources by making small changes to the URL. Compare the URL to established sources.

3. Investigate the source. Ensure that the story is written by a source that you trust with a reputation for accuracy. If the story comes from an unfamiliar organisation, check their "About" section to learn more.

4. Watch for unusual formatting. Many false news sites have misspellings or awkward layouts. Read carefully if you see these signs.

5. Consider the photos. False news stories often contain manipulated images or videos. Sometimes the photo may be authentic, but taken out of context. You can search for the photo or image to verify where it came from.

6. Inspect the dates. False news stories may contain timelines that make no sense, or event dates that have been altered.

7. Check the evidence. Check the author's sources to confirm that they are accurate. Lack of evidence or reliance on unnamed experts may indicate a false news story.

8. Look at other reports. If no other news source is reporting the same story, it may indicate that the story is false. If the story is reported by multiple sources you trust, it's more likely to be true.

9. Is the story a joke? Sometimes false news stories can be hard to distinguish from humour or satire. Check whether the source is known for parody, and whether the story's details and tone suggest it may be just for fun.

10. Some stories are intentionally false. Think critically about the stories you read, and only share news that

you know to be credible.



AFRICACHECK: Useful links and tools

- Social news agency [Storyful's validation process](http://storyful.com/): <http://storyful.com/>
- [The Verification Handbook](http://verificationhandbook.com/): Guide to dealing with user-generated content; edited by Craig Silverman; available online in PDF version: <http://verificationhandbook.com/>

Search tools

- [Twitter Advanced Search](https://twitter.com/advancedsearch): For searching for people, subjects and pictures on Twitter
- [Wolfram Alpha](http://wolframalpha.com/): An “answer generator” that provides a direct response to factual queries rather than a list of sources to consult for information: <http://wolframalpha.com/>
- [Twicsy](http://www.twicsy.com/): Searches Twitter for images: <http://www.twicsy.com/>
- [TwXplorer](http://twxplorer.knightlab.com/): Searches Twitter for most recent tweets on a particular subject. One useful element of twXplorer is that when you do a search it reveals the hashtags people are using in tweets on that subject, as well as tweets and links: <http://twxplorer.knightlab.com/>

Web page verification

- [Digital Inspiration's guide](https://www.labnol.org/) on how to find the date a web page was first published on the Internet : <https://www.labnol.org/>
- [Wayback Machine](http://archive.org/web): View archived versions of web pages across time and capture a web page as it appears now for use as a trusted citation in the future: <http://archive.org/web>
- [Cached View](http://cachedview.com/): Cached view of any page on the Internet through multiple cached sources: <http://cachedview.com/>

Picture verification

- [Google reverse image search](https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?hl=en): Use a picture as your search to find related images from around the web. Right-click on an image and select “search Google for image” <https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?hl=en>
- [Jeffrey's Exif Viewer](http://exif.regex.info/exif.cgi): Submit an image to determine date, time and location data: <http://exif.regex.info/exif.cgi>
- [TinEye](http://www.tineye.com/): Submit an image to find out where it comes from, how it is being used, if modified versions of the image exist and if a higher-resolution version is available: <http://www.tineye.com/>

Video verification

- [YouTube Data Viewer](http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/custom-scripts/citizenevidence/): Insert the URL of a YouTube video and this tool will give you details of the video, including when it was uploaded. It will also take screengrabs from the video and allow you to do a Google reverse search to find other iterations and posts of the same video: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/custom-scripts/citizenevidence/>
- [Video Vault](https://www.bravenewtech.org/): Use this tool to preserve videos, take screengrabs to do a reverse search, slow down and speed up video and more: <https://www.bravenewtech.org/>

Verification of people

- [Foller.me](http://www.foller.me/): Provides analytics for public Twitter profiles: <http://www.foller.me/>
- [Google](http://www.pipl.com/), [Pipl](http://www.pipl.com/), [Spokeo](http://www.spokeo.com/): Searches for information on individuals: <http://www.pipl.com/>
<http://www.spokeo.com/>
- [Who tweeted it first?](http://ctrlq.org/first/): Enter search keywords or a link to find the first tweet that contained the term: <http://ctrlq.org/first/>

Myth-busting and debunking urban legends

- [Snopes](http://www.snopes.com/): Urban legends reference page: <http://www.snopes.com/>
- [Museum of Hoaxes](http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/): Historical hoax archive: <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/>
- [Hoax Slayer](http://www.hoax-slayer.com/): Latest email and social media hoaxes as well as current Internet scams: <http://www.hoax-slayer.com/>
- [Hoax of Fame](http://hoaxoffame.tumblr.com/): Tumblr blog about debunking fake images and verifying real ones: <http://hoaxoffame.tumblr.com/>
- [Wafflesatnoon](http://wafflesatnoon.com/): Website focusing on hoaxes, rumours and odd news: <http://wafflesatnoon.com/>
- [Bellingcat](https://www.bellingcat.com/): Investigative search network for citizen journalists to investigate current events using open-source information such as videos, maps and pictures: <https://www.bellingcat.com/>

[Published 23/04/2014; updated 5/01/2017]

© Copyright Africa Check 2017. Links above from the report written by Africa Check, a non-partisan fact-checking organisation. View the original piece on their website: <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-how-to-spot-fakes-and-hoaxes-online>