

eSafety Guidelines

FAKE NEWS

The advice on this page is for young people under 18. Advice is also available for over 18s, who may be experiencing adult cyber abuse.



Anyone can post a story online and news travels fast on social media. So we need to question what we read and watch, before trusting that it's right. Spreading fake news is not ok.

In short:

- Fake news is a term used to describe fictional news stories that are made up to support certain agendas.
- Understanding what fake news and misinformation looks like can help you to avoid sharing it and there are red flags you can look out for.
- It's everyone's responsibility to call out fake news, to keep themselves and their community safe.

It's likely you've heard of fake news before - it's used to describe false or misleading information. But as the name suggests, 'fake news' can be hard to spot and even harder to define. Fake News can be written or verbal and both are just as dangerous.

So, how can you tell if what you're engaging with is real or fake?

Tips to spot fake news

Check the story's source and credibility

The first thing you should do if you come across a fishy story on the timeline, is to check the story's credibility. Ask yourself:

- Do you recognise the account or news site that's sharing the story?
- Does the person who's reporting the information have the right credentials to tell this story?

If the answer to these two questions isn't a confident 'yes', this could be a sign you've stumbled onto fake news. Fake news is often published by 'independent' organisations or reporters - meaning people who may not have done appropriate research.

Check for biases or an agenda


Understanding how or why the story was written can also tell you a lot about its facts. If the story was shared onto your timeline by a specific account, try to figure out that account's intentions. What do they want you to do or believe after reading the information they're sharing - and does that action or belief seem reasonable?

Consider how the story is written

If you're still unsure, it may be worth opening the article itself. The way a news story is written is often a giveaway to whether it's fake news. The story may be fake news if it:

- uses simplistic terms or emotionally-charged terms for complex issues
- employs or references stereotypes without acknowledgement or context
- references incorrect or outdated information
- employs sensational headings rather than focusing on facts
- misspells words or uses incorrect grammar
- uses low-resolution pictures, or pictures that appear manipulated.

Generally speaking, people who create fake news are less interested in reporting the truth as they are in producing sensational content or information that furthers their interests.

 You can learn more about [how to identify and spot fake news and misinformation.](#)