How to spot FAKE NEWS

FREE item every Wednesday

Issue: #WakeUpWednesday

WHAT IS 'FAKE NEWS'?

Fake news can be false information, photos or videos purposefully created to confuse or misinform. It can also be genuine information that has been manipulated to deceive. It is important that we learn how to distinguish between real news and fake news.

DOES IT SOUND REAL?

Many fake news stories are written with appealing headlines and have content designed to create 'shock value' in order to spread like wildfire. Typically, fake news will include topics such as the 'death' of a famous person, company giveaways, news relating to supernatural events, or terror related posts that provoke a reaction. Have a look at other news sources to see if a story has been widely reported before sharing unsubstantiated claims. You can also check facts at websites, including snopes.com and factcheck.org.

CHEK 4 SPELIN AND GRAMMATICAL MISTKS

Not always, but poor spelling, grammar and vocabulary on articles may indicate that an item is not from a reputable source. Be wary!

National Online Safety

Check the comments!

Have a read through the comments on a news story – either at the bottom of the article or on a social media share. Reactions and comments can often show if other people don't believe the story is true, or whether someone has confirmed it is fake news. Of course, you can't always know if a comment is real!

How long has the page existed?

Be wary if a story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. Some hoaxers will set up a quick website to spread fake stories and so-called 'breaking news'. So, if a story with bold claims originates from a website that has only just launched, you would be wise to doubt its authenticity. There are online tools, such as the internet archive, that display the approximate age of a website on the internet and allow you to view how it looked before.

Who wrote it?

Make sure that the website that published the story is a credible source, i.e. a major news network or local paper which has the resources to fact-check published stories. If you get your news primarily via social media, always check the source and use caution if the story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. If the article has a byline, you should be able to research to see if the writer is a genuine reporter by searching for them on Google.

Read more than just the headline!

Some news sites will post stories with 'click bait' headlines to grab your attention and make you click on them. These headlines might not even be relevant to the story. Studies show that almost 60% of links that people have shared on social media have never actually been clicked before sharing, so it's really important that you read the article first before you share it to make sure the news is real.

Have you checked the URL?

https://

Does the website address at the very top of the page look real? One of the easier ways to spot suspect stories is if they're located on a news site with an odd domain name. So, check the URL. Some dodgy websites will try to incorporate a legitimate news source into its URL, such as www.therealbbc.co.uk, or will slightly misspell a popular website domain, e.g. www.bbcc.corp.

Is it a joke?

While most fake stories are designed to make you believe them, it's important to know how to spot when the content has been written as a joke on purpose. Articles from joke news webisites (such as 'The Onion' or 'The Daily Mash') are hugely popular on social media but some people may think their stories are real. Always read joke articles with a pinch of salt.