

The News: Separating Fact from Fiction

What You Can Do

Learn to recognize fake news sites

- Verify the URL. (e.g., abcnews.com.co/ is fake. abcnews.com is legitimate.)
- Distrust any source without an explicit, prominent editorial policy or a statement of ethical standards. Reputable news sources will have a link to their policies in one of their navigation bars – generally on the left or at the bottom of each webpage.
- Read the *About Us* page for evidence of bias.
- Verify the physical address of contact information.
- Google the news source to see what others say about it.

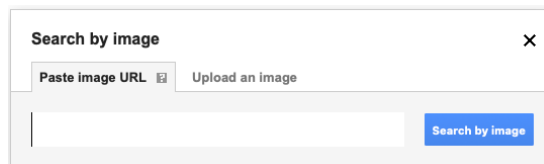
Be curious

- Use fact-checking websites. Some frequently recommended sites are:
 - FactCheck.org (Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania)
 - PolitiFacts.com (*Tampa Bay Times*)
 - Snopes.com (Published by a husband-wife team)

NOTE: A non-biased fact-checking site will debunk articles with both a right-leaning and left-leaning perspective.
- Use one of the following two sites to determine whether an image was altered by doing a reverse image search.
 - TinEye.com
 - Google.com
 - Go to Google Images
 - Click **Search by Image** (the camera icon)



- Select either **Paste Image URL** or **Upload an Image**



- To get the URL of the image, right-click the image and select *Copy Image Address*
 - If the image is saved to your device, upload it.
 - Click the **Search by Image** box
 - Review the visually similar images that are returned to see if yours is not the original and has been altered.
- Seek multiple perspectives on a story
 - Go to different news sources that range from left-leaning to right-leaning.

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- Use AllSides.com that shows you the same story from three different news sources: a centrist, a left-leaning and a right-leaning source.

Use accountable news sources

- Distinguish between
 - News Gathering: investigative work, calling sources, researching documents, checking published facts
 - News Analysis: stringing facts together into a narrative.
- Select news sources known for high-quality, investigative reporting
- Look for lengthy articles that capture the complexity of topics and event. Red Flags that an article is a conspiracy theory, rather than news include:
 - Article explicitly states it is telling the truth, and/or everyone else is lying.
 - It contains short, conclusory opinion statements. (e.g., The media has it all wrong.)
 - It is organized as a list of questions or hypotheses. News provides answers, not questions. (e.g., Why wasn't this . . .)
 - It requires you to answer the questions. (e.g., Do you really know what happened?)
 - It asks you to prove a negative. (e.g., No one has proven the government wasn't involved.)
 - It suggests a plot by someone, but doesn't say what the plot is or provide any evidence.
- Review Media Bias Charts, such as
 - www.adfontesmedia.com
 - www.allsides.com

Recognize your own biases

- If you have an immediate emotional reaction to a news article: pause, reflect and investigate. Eliciting an emotional reaction is the primary goal of fake news producers.
- Ask yourself if you are exhibiting one of these 4 common types of bias:
 - Confirmation Bias: People seek out information that confirms their pre-existing ideas and ignore information that conflicts with it.
 - Narrative Fallacy: People like stories that are easy to understand and relate to. You are more prone to accept lies if they stimulate feelings of surprise or disgust.
 - Repeated Exposure: People tend to believe what they hear repeatedly. Just because you hear the same thing many times doesn't make it true.
 - Affect Heuristic: People make decisions by "gut feeling" rather than analysis of the facts because it's easier.

Use care before your share

- Do not be part of a viral fake news spiral. Go through the previous steps to make sure the article you are about to share is legitimate, unbiased news.