

# The News: Separating Fact from Fiction

## What You Can Do

### Learn to recognize fake news sites

- Verify the URL. (e.g., [abcnews.com.co/](http://abcnews.com.co/) is fake. [abcnews.com](http://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.

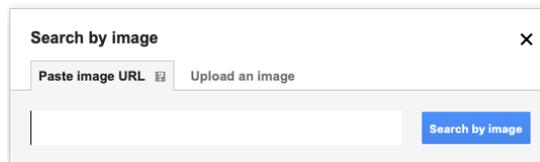
### Be curious

- 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](http://www.adfontesmedia.com)
  - [www.allsides.com](http://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.