

IDENTIFY FALSE CONTENT AND FAKE NEWS



Frequently
asked
questions



**MEDIAKASVATUS·
SEURA**

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GLOSSARY

FAKE NEWS

In the past, this only referred to content that looks like news articles but contains distorted information. However, some people have started using this term as a weapon to attack any content or person that expresses opinions different to theirs. Due to the term becoming increasingly ambiguous, the European Commission, for example, has started using the term 'disinformation' instead.

DISINFORMATION

false, misleading, or incorrect information, or intentionally selected information intended to promote the goals of the content producer

MALINFORMATION

false or incorrect information that's purposefully distributed

PROPAGANDA

systematic operations of which the aim is to influence the attitudes of masses of people through intense manipulation and promoting the interests and (political) ideology of a specific media outlet

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More information:

www.mediakasvatus.fi

www.suomisomaliaseura.fi

HOW CAN I IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS?

LOOK AT THE INFORMATION CRITICALLY

Fake news often mix up fact and fiction. They are vague and often one-sided news, videos, images, or other social media content that sometimes contain humour or insults. They are intended to evoke major emotions in people. The topic may be too unbelievable to be true. Identifying fake news may be difficult since fake news often mimic reliable news channels and their logos, for example. The fake article may also state that the information comes from a reliable and well-known source.

EXAMINE THE CONTENT CAREFULLY, INCLUDING ITS SOURCES AND AUTHOR – CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEM? CAN YOU ALSO FIND THE SAME PIECE OF NEWS ELSEWHERE? DOES THE ARTICLE TAKE MULTIPLE POINTS OF VIEW INTO ACCOUNT? DOES THE TOPIC SEEM TOO FAR-FETCHED TO BE TRUE?

WHY ARE FAKE NEWS MADE?

THINK ABOUT THE INTENTIONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Misleading news seek to make money (e.g., selling something or raising funds) or gain power – or both at the same time. The aim of fake news is to influence people’s opinions, feelings, and behaviour. Sometimes, they aim to cause chaos and confusion and to shake people’s trust in specific people, societies, or institutions. Sometimes, it may only be about mischief.

THINK ABOUT WHY SOMEONE WANTED TO GET YOUR ATTENTION? WHAT KINDS OF EMOTIONS DOES THE CONTENT SEEK TO EVOKE? WHAT CAUGHT YOUR ATTENTION, IN PARTICULAR?

WHO PRODUCES AND SPREADS DISINFORMATION?

VARIOUS MEDIA OUTLETS

Fake news and false content are produced by organised organisations or communities around the world that seek money and power. These organisations hire people to write news articles from specific points of view that aren't based on researched information or facts. Furthermore, false information can be produced by anyone claiming to be an expert in a specific field, for example. Be alert, since anyone can produce fake news, even governments.

WHO WROTE THE NEWS ARTICLE? DOES THE CONTENT INCLUDE EXPERTS' VIEWS, AND WHO ARE THESE EXPERTS? WHO ARE RELIABLE EXPERTS? IS THE ARTICLE BASED ON RESEARCHED INFORMATION, PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OR STORIES?

HOW DO FALSE INFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS SPREAD?

QUICKLY AND WIDELY

False information and fake news spread quickly on social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Fake news often evoke intense emotions and reactions, which is why they gain attention quickly. When several people are spreading false information, its original publisher is often left in the shadows.

EVEN IF YOU HEARD SOME NEWS 'THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE,' VIA YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA FEED, OR FROM A FRIEND OR RELATIVE, IT DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MAKE THE NEWS RELIABLE OR TRUE. WHAT HAVE YOU SHARED MOST RECENTLY? DID YOU CHECK THE ORIGIN OF THE NEWS OR INFORMATION?

WHY DO FAKE NEWS SPREAD SO QUICKLY?

THEY EVOKE EMOTIONS

All news coverage is intended to attract attention and evoke emotions, since media outlets want to gain as large an audience as possible. However, fake news simplify and distort complex topics. In such cases, intense reactions can lead to the conflict of interests of the involved parties. Your own views and experiences affect how you receive and interpret news and what kinds of content you seek.

DO YOU SEEK NEWS COVERAGE THAT PROMOTES YOUR PERSONAL VALUES? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT INFORMATION PRODUCED BY THE AUTHORITIES?

WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS CAN FALSE INFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS CAUSE?

THEY CAN HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Fake news spread false information, which may lead to danger, for example if health-related news are false. The communications of authorities are based on the latest researched information available at the time. Fake news may also damage people's reputation irrevocably or trick people into donating money to charity frauds, for example. Media content may influence people's decisions and actions, such as their voting behaviour and elections. This is why it's vital that you can tell fact from fiction.

HAVE YOU RECOGNISED OR OBSERVED HOW NEWS OR VARIOUS MEDIA CONTENT HAVE INFLUENCED PEOPLE'S OPINIONS?

HOW DO FAKE NEWS AFFECT THE RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

FALSE INFORMATION MAY BE MISLEADING

Fake news undermine the trust in reliable sources of information regarding communications about health, for example, where the information may change very rapidly. False information can mislead and build distrust and disbelief towards the communications of the authorities, reliable media and society.

WHEN WAS THE CONTENT PUBLISHED, AND IS IT STILL TOPICAL? FROM WHICH SOURCES DO YOU SEEK INFORMATION?

HOW CAN YOU AFFECT THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS AND FALSE INFORMATION?

THINK TWICE BEFORE SHARING

Identifying and preventing fake news is everyone's responsibility. Never share news or information if you have not read the entire article with care and examined if the news or information is correct. In many countries, creating and spreading fake news and causing subsequent damage may be considered criminal activity. In addition to this, spreading false or private information or images of other people may be punishable by law. There are various materials and information sources available produced by various media outlets, such as authorities, reliable media, libraries, and organisations.

WHO PUBLISHES INFORMATION THAT YOU TRUST?