How to Spot Fake News

Look out for strange or unfamiliar URLs, such as those that end in .com.co
Check the site’s “About” section—if it has one. Often, you’ll find clues to whether the site is legitimate and whether it follows acceptable editorial standards.

Be wary of articles labeled “sponsored content”
Such content typically means a company, organization, or perhaps even a government entity paid for it.

Be wary of Bloggers
Some bloggers lack expertise on a subject. Check blog posts against coverage of the same topic in the mainstream media.

Click the links
Much like citations in a research paper, links are supposed to provide clear evidence that supports the claims a journalist wants to make. When you see a link, click it to see if it really supports what the writer had to say. Also, see if it links to an outside source or if it’s linking to another post or piece by that same author.

Consider the source
Is it legitimate and trustworthy? What do searches on the authors’ names tell you about their qualifications? Legacy media, like the Washington Post and New York Times, as well as major network news (ABC, CBS, NBC) tend to have more credibility.

Search the topic
Do an Internet search for any other stories on the topic, using keywords. The more stories you find on a topic, the more likely it is that the story in question has some merit.

Check the root sources
Good stories will have multiple root sources, with various publications, websites and television broadcasts all using their own reporting with multiple, varied sources to confirm information. If you rely on stories with many quality sources, it will help you separate the weaker pieces from the stronger ones.

Watch for bias
Are the writers fair and impartial, or are they promoting their own views or those of a political party, pressure group, or other entity?

When in doubt, don’t cite
Don’t use information in an assignment, broadcast it on social media, or tweet it in a way that implies it’s true if you suspect that it is not. Nothing kills fake news faster than healthy skepticism and a commitment to quality research.

*Sources:
Dynamics of NEWS REPORTING & WRITING
VINCENT F. FILAK
and the editors of
CQ RESEARCHER

SPONSORED CONTENT

Colleges banned from charging students for parking
By Jimmy Fake

According to Fake News Incorporated, the Supreme Court recently ruled that public colleges and universities can no longer charge their students for parking. Biased Broadcasting will be televising this announcement along with special guest commentators discussing why this fee isn’t excessive since most college students have their parents pay for everything. Contact your local college’s journalism department for more details on this story.