



FAKE NEWS

est. 2017

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WHAT IS FAKE NEWS

Parven Kaur, Kids N Clicks Founder

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 children learn how to distinguish between real news and fake news, so that they don't inadvertently share something which isn't true or believe something which could be misleading.



KNOW THE RISKS

SHOCK VALUE

Fake news can cause upset or shock to readers or viewers. Many fake news stories are written with appealing headlines and have content designed to create 'shock value', so the news spreads rapidly (common examples include the 'death' of a celebrity, company giveaways, news relating to supernatural events, or terror-related posts that provoke reactions).

EMBARRASSMENT

Fake news is often deliberately created to misinform people – whether for fun, out of malice or to support an ideological or political agenda. As it's often difficult to tell the difference, young people can easily believe what they see and then share something which is a hoax or a joke, leading to embarrassment or ridicule.

INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR

Ultimately, fake news is designed to shape people's beliefs, thoughts and decisions: influencing them into believing something which has been misreported or which simply isn't true. This can shape how children think, behave or act in real life. It can especially affect their trust in the media or even in democracy itself.



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SPOT THE SIGNS

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Fake news stories can sometimes be identified simply because they are too ridiculous or outrageous to believe. Make sure that the website that published the story is a credible source, like a major news network or local paper which has the resources to fact-check published stories.

CHECK THE URL

Does the website address at the top of the page look real? An easy way to spot suspect stories is if they're located on a news site with an odd domain name. So check the URL. Some shady websites try to incorporate a legitimate news source into their URL (such as www.therealbbc.co.uk) or will slightly misspell a popular domain name.

VERIFY FACTS AND IMAGES

Authentic news is usually backed up by official data or surveys and previous, similar instances of the occurrence being reported. Similarly, fake news stories often include photos which have been manipulated. Perform a Google reverse image search to see if the picture has been stolen from another source and doctored.

RESEARCH THE WEBSITE

Be wary when a big story comes from a news organisation that you've never heard of. Some hoaxers will quickly set up a website just to spread fake stories and so-called 'breaking news'. Use the internet archive to research how long a site has been running – and check if the same story is being reported by more credible news outlets.

FURTHER SUPPORT

REPORT THE CONTENT

Google and many social media platforms now have dedicated methods for fake news stories to be reported to them. This can range from sending a feedback message to Google via the page itself to the 'Report Post' buttons on Facebook and Twitter.

PROVIDE REASSURANCE

If your child feels as though they have been negatively impacted by a fake news story, or has suffered some form of embarrassment because of fake news, it's important to be supportive and reassuring. Discuss with them how not everything that's posted online is true.

IMPROVE THEIR DIGITAL LITERACY

If your child has been tricked by a fake news story, try to encourage them to think more rationally about what they see and hear on the internet. Advise them to question the motivation behind a story – such as why it's been written, and if it's trying to make them form a specific opinion or influence their actions.

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OUR EXPERT PARVEN KAUR



Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.