

Challenge: Fake News?

On 9th February, lots of people will be talking about Safer Internet Day, so we thought it would be a great time to talk about this too, and to set you a CU Home Learning Challenge. However, this challenge can be done at any time.

We're sure you'll have heard a certain ex-President of America talking about 'fake news', but what exactly is fake news? Well, it's a real problem and is where someone has made up some false information then shared it somehow, usually on social media. Other people then see the 'fake news' and share it even further. Sometimes, the 'fake news' can be shared thousands, even millions of times, leading to lots of people believing it is true. This can be dangerous if the 'fake news' is about an important subject or an individual person for example. It can lead to lots of upset and anger and can even lead to people changing what they believe about something, or how they behave. People create 'fake news' sometimes as a joke, but often to make money because the more people who read the article, the more money they will make.

It's important to know about 'fake news' – what it is, how to spot it, and how to help solve the problem – so here's a challenge to help you understand all about 'fake news' and to share your advice with others.

Step 1: Watch the two short videos on the link to the BBC website here:

<https://www.bbc.com/ownit/the-basics/spotting-fake-news>

Step 2: Have a think about what some of the problems might be with fake news. How might 'fake news' affect people? Why might it affect them in these ways? What can be done to spot 'fake news'? How can people check whether something is fact or fake? You might want to brainstorm some of your answers and ideas. Use the information from the videos or use some of our extra information from the next page to help you.

Step 3: Think about how you could share what you've learned with other people. Perhaps other people in your house? Friends or family members? Maybe even other people in school? You might want to create your own front cover of a newspaper, all about 'fake news' (you could use an attention-grabbing headline!). Or, why not create a poster to display in school, or an information booklet. You could even pretend to be a reporter or a newsreader, and ask an adult to film you giving your report on 'fake news'. The choice is up to you!

You will need (all optional):

- Paper or card
- Pencil, crayons, etc.
- Camera or phone



Which skills will I be developing?

Main

Additional



Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP



Here's a little more information about how to help solve the problem of 'fake news'...

Think about where the news is coming from

Is it coming from a source with a good reputation, such as a large news company, newspaper, etc., or has it been made up by someone on social media? A quick search and you'll soon be able to find out where the news came from. If the same news story is being reported by more than one organisation, chances are, it's more likely to be fact than fake.



Is the headline dramatic?

Be careful, fake news headlines are often mis-leading, to attract our attention and get us to read even more. This is called 'click-baiting'. People are paid each time someone new clicks on the news article, so this is why dramatic headlines are used (this happens even when the news is fact).

Who has written the article?

Check where the source of the information started. If it is written by an expert, a scientist or a 'correspondent' (a person from the news agency who always covers that type of news, e.g. 'education' or 'health'), then it's much more likely to be fact than fake.



Check the date



Is it 'old news'? Sometimes new information becomes available at a later date which makes the first edition of the news incorrect. It might have changed since then. Is it an 'April Fools' Day' joke? Sometimes, 'fake news' can be a bit of a joke (especially around 1st April, or 'April Fools' Day), when some news organisations put out joke news to play a little trick on us! One of the most famous 'April Fools' jokes was about scientists who had managed to develop a new type of tree that grew spaghetti!

Who can you check it with?

A good rule to follow is 'if it seems too good to be true, it probably is'. Competitions to win huge prizes on Facebook are almost always fake, but in clicking on them or sharing on them, you're giving away information about yourself to strangers. You should always check that the information you want to share is true BEFORE you share it. Check it with an adult or someone you trust. A brilliant fact-checking charity in the UK is www.fullfact.org



Do your feelings and beliefs affect the way you think about the article or decide whether to share it?

Often, when we feel strongly about something, it can change the way we might think or behave. This is a good thing – it makes us passionate and committed to things. However, we need to be aware of this so that we don't just share information without really thinking about it.