



digital. FUTURES

Recognising Trustworthy Content Online

It's important to stay curious and ask questions, because misinformation can change how we see ourselves and the world around us, and that can lead to real problems.

Now that the internet is more accessible than ever, it can be tricky to tell which websites or influencers you can truly trust.

That is why it is so important to pause and think about how you choose the information you read online.

You might already be great at spotting fake news, but have you ever wondered how misinformation might be affecting your mood or mental well-being?

What is an Echo Chamber?

Fake news or misinformation is not a new idea, as people have been spreading misleading information long before the internet existed. But today, the online world can make things trickier.

Many websites and apps show us posts based on what we usually look at, which can trap us in what is called an **echo chamber**.

An echo chamber is a space where you mostly hear the same opinions repeatedly.

When that happens, it becomes easy to take in harmful or untrue information without checking the facts or hearing other viewpoints.

Fake news or misinformation often spreads because people click on it quickly without thinking. Sometimes it is harmless, but other times it can cause real worry, stress, or even panic.



Tips for Spotting Untrustworthy Information

Don't let false fake news or misinformation catch you out, try these simple checks whenever you're unsure about something you read online:

1. Check the source.

Look at where the information is coming from. Is the website or page known to be trustworthy? Trusted sites often end with ".com", ".co.uk", ".net", ".gov", ".org", ".mil", or ".edu".

2. Look for an author

Reliable news or information articles usually include the writer's name or details. No author can be a red flag and so it's a good idea to look a little closer.

3. Read beyond the headline

Headlines can be dramatic or misleading. Make sure the rest of the story supports the title. Ask yourself: What is this trying to say? Is it meant to be serious, or could it be an advert or a joke? Could it be AI generated?

4. Look for evidence

Good information includes facts, links, quotes, or data. If there's nothing to back it up, be careful.

5. Compare with other sources

See if other reliable websites are sharing the same story and or information. If it only appears in one place, be cautious.

6. Check the date

Is the story new or old? Sometimes outdated news or information gets reposted and can be confusing. Also remember that computer programs called bots can post at any time, so be cautious if something seems unusual or rushed.

7. Watch for emotional language

If something sounds designed to make you angry, scared, or shocked, it might be trying to manipulate your reaction.

8. Examine the content

Look out for spelling mistakes, strange grammar, or anything that feels off.

9. Think about your own bias

We all tend to believe things that match what we already think. Pause and check the facts before sharing.

10. Be careful with images and videos

Pictures and videos can be edited or taken out of context or manipulated using AI. Reverse-image search can help you check where they originally came from.