



Simple Ways to *Stop* the Spread of False Information



Before you share, cite, or discuss what you've read, seen, or heard...

Read Beyond the Headline.

Carefully consider the entire story. You don't want to take something out of context or misunderstand a reported fact, statement, or story.

Also, be cautious of images and videos—no matter how realistic they may seem. AI is making it easier to manipulate content and remove context.

Check the Source.

Evaluate the credibility of the outlet and the sources quoted in the story.

What is the mission of the outlet (newspaper, website, social media account) and how does it make money?

What is its reputation and what types of information has it published or produced in the past?

Also, pay attention to where the report is coming from and who is quoted in the story. Is the story coming from the same location where the event is taking place? What is the proximity of the outlet and the sources cited in the story to the event? Would these individuals be likely to know?

Check the Author.

A credible article should have an identifiable author(s) with a track record of reliable reporting. Look to see if the creator (individual or group) has a stake (financial, ideological, or partisan) in the claims being made? Is the story more fact or opinion?

Whether you agree or disagree with the content or its intended message, if the creator is disreputable or not easily identifiable, remain on guard.

Verify with Multiple Sources.

If the same story is reported by multiple reputable sources, it's more likely to be true. If the story cites or links to even more obscure sources, be cautious.

Be Skeptical.

If a story is filled with biased or one-sided language, or if it seems too good or outrageous to be true, it probably is. Always question everything you read.

If you conclude the content is fake or only partially true, the best way to stop the spread is...

Ignore it!

Don't post about it.

Don't share or "like" it or amplify it in any way.

This includes trying to point it out to others, so they know it is false. Studies show that when people try to "debunk" false stories, it can backfire and reinforce people's bias.

The best way to kill false information is death by silence.

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AND DEMOCRACY

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