DEFENDING YOURSELF AGAINST
FALSE INFORMATION

In a world of increasingly free information driven by our technological advancements, it's easier than ever to run into information designed to mislead viewers into believing something that isn't true. To navigate the saturated info-sphere of the internet, web-surfers will benefit from inspecting all news they run into to check if it's reliable and worth spending time on.

HOW TO SPOT IT

Catching false information depends largely on the type of media the original poster presents it in. Each type of disinformation comes with its own ways the poster can deceive their audience, and by extension, their own set of clues to look out for.

CHECK ARTICLES' CREDIBILITY

Many people rely on news outlets to stay in the know about current events, but if you're getting your news from an article published online, it's a good idea to give it a good inspection before believing anything it says.

- Outlandish language and claims may point to a satirical article - while intended to cause laughs, not harm, it's not to be taken seriously (SFU).
- Keep an eye out for biased or emotional language, grammatical and spelling errors, and evidence of external support or endorsement (Purdue University).
- Verify the author and check their credentials - if they're not qualified for the job, or even real, the article's not to be trusted (Purdue University).
- Compare the article to other sources to see if the information it contains is accurate and trustworthy (Purdue University).

IDENTIFY CLICKBAIT

Clickbait is a mild form of false information intended to catch people's attention, for the purpose of getting them to click on a post and increasing its publisher's ad revenue. Identifying clickbait before reading a text post or watching a video can save you from wasting time on a false promise.

- Pay attention to the wording of the post's heading. Does it make a shocking or lofty claim, use language that invokes a strong reaction, or offer something big to you just for engaging with the post? If it does, the publisher is probably pulling your leg (Lenovo).
- If a thumbnail picture uses imagery that grabs your attention but doesn't tell you what you're about to get into, it's likely not reliable (Lenovo).

LISTEN TO AUDIO CAREFULLY

AI-powered voice changers and text-to-speech audio generators are becoming more convincing as time goes on, but they still have some quirks that can give them away with attentive listening.

- Put the clip through an audio editor to check for unnaturally even and clear sound waves (Social Links).
- Listen for unusual instances of mispronunciation, pauses that are too short or too long, a lack of background noise, or unnatural cadence (PlayHT).

LOOK AT IMAGES CLOSELY

Image-editing software, AI-generated images, and deepfakes can be effective ways to mislead people into believing something untrue. However, even as this software becomes more advanced, there are some ways to pick out the fake images from the real.

- If the image contains text, check to see if whether it's legible or just garbled nonsense (BBC Bitesize).
- Look at the smaller details - a common giveaway that an image is AI-generated is that a person's fingers look unrealistic (BBC Bitesize)
- AI images can also look suspiciously flawless, with fantastical background elements and people with skin that looks like it's airbrushed (BBC Bitesize).
- If you have a suspicion that a picture is Photoshopped, reverse image search it to check if the original photo is different (IOWA University Libraries).

THINK BEFORE YOU SEND

In general, if you're not completely certain that a post or article is telling the truth, don't send it to anyone. True or not, information spreads rapidly online, which can cause a lot of confusion in digital spaces very quickly.

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