

What is fake news?

“Fake news” is a term that has come to mean different things to different people. At its core, we are defining “fake news” as those news stories that are false: the story itself is fabricated, with no verifiable facts, sources or quotes. Sometimes these stories may be propaganda that is intentionally designed to mislead the reader, or may be designed as “clickbait” written for economic incentives (the writer profits on the number of people who click on the story). In recent years, fake news stories have proliferated via social media, in part because they are so easily and quickly shared online.

Where does it come from?

How misinformation and disinformation is produced is directly related to who the author(s) is and the different reasons why it is created.

Who are the authors? They may be:

- Someone wanting to make money, regardless of the content of the article (for example, Macedonian teenagers)
- Satirists who want to either make a point or entertain you, or both
- Poor or untrained journalists - the pressure of the 24 hour news cycle as well as the explosion of news sites may contribute to shoddy writing that doesn't follow professional journalistic standards or ethics
- Partisans who want to influence political beliefs and policy makers

Types of fake news:

- Satire/parody
- Imposter sites
- Actual “fake news” sites
- Mixed fake & real news
- Hyper-partisan
- Pseudoscience
- Clickbait

Criteria for Evaluating Articles

Who is the author/publication?

What is the author's/publication's point of view, and how does it relate to your point of view?

Who is the audience for the article?

What evidence does the author use to support their viewpoint?

What's missing from the article?