

FAKE NEWS: LIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE



POSITIVE DIGITAL
PARENTING



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What Is Fake News

Today, thanks to the rise of social media, anyone can become a “news publisher.” A single tweet, blog post, or TikTok video can reach millions of people in just a few hours. While this gives people more freedom to share their voices and experiences, it also makes it far easier for fake news to spread at lightning speed. Unlike traditional journalism, online platforms often do not have editors or fact-checkers, which means false information can travel just as fast—or even faster—than the truth.



Fake news is not just a harmless joke or a funny meme. It can have serious consequences in the real world. Misleading stories and manipulated images can influence elections, create deep social divisions, damage reputations, and even put public health at risk. A powerful example was during the COVID-19 pandemic, when false cures and conspiracy theories went viral online. Millions of people saw and shared this misinformation, leading to confusion, fear, and in some cases, dangerous health choices.

This shows us that fake news is not simply a digital annoyance—it is a modern challenge that affects how societies think, act, and make decisions.

WHY DO PEOPLE CREATE FAKE NEWS?

Political Power and Influence

Many fake news stories are designed to influence elections or political debates. False claims about candidates, parties, or government decisions can shape public opinion and even change the outcome of a vote. Fake news is sometimes used as a tool of propaganda—spreading biased or misleading information to control the way people think.

Profit and Clickbait

Fake news websites often use shocking or emotional headlines to attract attention. Every click brings advertising money. The more outrageous the story (“Chocolate cures all diseases!” or “Aliens spotted in New York”), the more people click and share—bringing easy profit to the creators, even if the content is completely false.

Entertainment or Satire

Not all fake news is created to harm. Satirical websites or parody accounts publish exaggerated or absurd stories for humor. However, the problem is that many people don’t realize it’s satire and end up believing and sharing it as if it were real news.

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS?

- Check the source – Is it from a well-known, trusted outlet?
- Look for the author – Is the writer credible?
- Examine the date – Old stories often resurface as if they're new.
- Cross-check – Is the story reported by multiple reliable sites?
- Watch for emotional language – If it sounds too shocking, it may be fake.
- Check images and videos – Tools like reverse image search can help



“SPOT THE FAKE!” MINI GAME

Below are four headlines.
Three are fake, one is real.
Can you find the truth?

1. Scientists confirm chocolate cures all types of cancer.
2. Government launches new program to fight climate change with AI tools.
3. Aliens spotted shopping in a New York supermarket.
4. Drinking 20 cups of coffee a day makes you live longer.

👉 Answer: Headline 2 is the real one!



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