

# How to spot when news is fake

'Fake news' and disinformation – information deliberately manipulated with the aim of fooling people – have become an increasingly visible global phenomenon. Social media and their personalisation tools have made it easier to spread bogus stories. They often use emotions to capture attention and generate clicks, for economic or ideological reasons. Even young, digital-savvy people find it difficult to identify manipulated news. Significantly, six in ten news items shared on social media were not even read first by the user who shared them. Some 85 % of Europeans see 'fake news' as a problem in their own country, and 83 % view it as a problem for democracy in general. This compass will help you navigate the ocean of information, and find your way through waves of lies and disinformation.

## 1. CHECK THE CONTENT

Are the facts and figures accurate? Is the article biased?

A credible media outlet keeps one-sided opinions where they belong – in op-eds, not in news articles.

## 2. CHECK THE OUTLET

Do you know it? Does the URL look strange? Check the 'about' section. Who is behind it? Who is funding it? Double-check what other (trustworthy) sources say.

## 8. JOIN THE MYTH-BUSTERS<sup>(2)</sup>

Keep on top of the latest tricks and narratives used by those spreading disinformation.

Report fake stories.

Tell your friends.

## 7. QUESTION YOUR OWN BIASES

Sometimes a story is just too good or entertaining to be true.

Take a deep breath, compare with reliable sources and keep a cool head.

## 6. THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

The story could be a distortion of real or old events – or it could be satire. The headline could be designed to spark strong emotions. If an event is real, reliable media will cover it.

## 5. CHECK THE PICTURES

Images are powerful, and it is easy to manipulate them. An image search can show if it has been used before in a different context. The InVID plugin<sup>(1)</sup> can help you detect manipulation of videos or pictures.

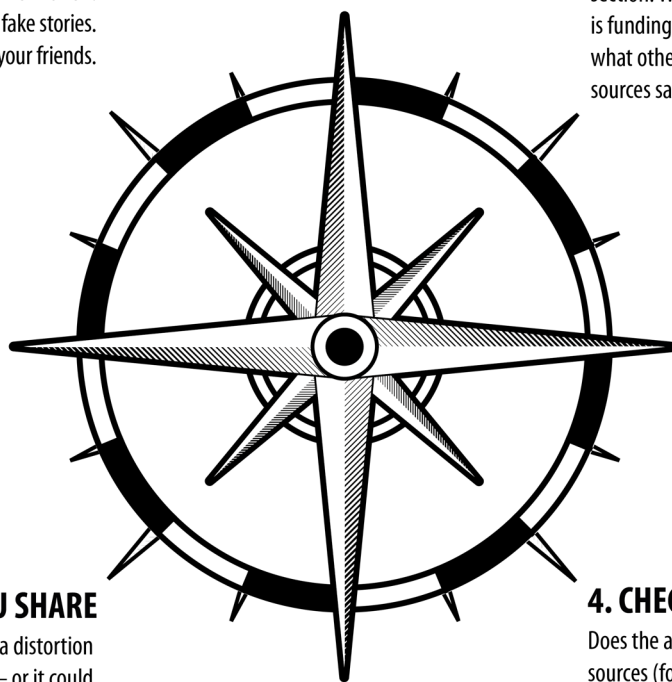
## 3. CHECK THE AUTHOR

Does this person even exist?

A well-respected journalist always has a track record. If the author has made up his or her name (or does not mention it), the rest is also likely to be fake.

## 4. CHECK THE SOURCES

Does the author use reliable sources (for example, well-established and respected media outlets)? Are the quoted experts real specialists? If the story uses anonymous (or no) sources, it could be fake.



1) Get the plugin from the [InVID project](#).

2) For example, follow [@EUvsDisinfo](#)/[@EUvsDisinfo](#), [@DFRLab](#)/[@DFRLab](#) or [@StopFakingNews](#)/[@stopfakeukraine](#)

*This is a revised version of an 'at a glance' note published in March 2017.*

