

Brush up on your Information Literacy on Social Media

Startling report from NATO Strategic Communications



Recent research from [NATO Strategic Communications https://stratcomcoe.org/how-social-media-companies-are-fail...](https://stratcomcoe.org/how-social-media-companies-are-fail...) highlights how social media platforms like Facebook are being used to spread misinformation at frightening levels. This is a massive problem.

Reading this report will equip you with the necessary knowledge to navigate Facebook with the necessary caution. Information Literacy is a critical digital literacy skill.

Here are 10 tips to spot false stories and news:

1. Be skeptical of headlines. False news stories often have catchy headlines in all caps with exclamation points. If shocking claims in the headline sound unbelievable, they probably are.
2. Look closely at the link. A phony or look-alike link may be a warning sign of false news. Many false news sites mimic authentic news sources by making small changes to the link. You can go to the site to compare the link to established sources.

3. Investigate the source. Ensure that the story is written by a source that you trust with a reputation for accuracy. If the story comes from an unfamiliar organization, check their "About" section to learn more.
4. Watch for unusual formatting. Many false news sites have misspellings or awkward layouts. Read carefully if you see these signs.
5. Consider the photos. False news stories often contain manipulated images or videos. Sometimes the photo may be authentic, but taken out of context. You can search for the photo or image to verify where it came from.
6. Inspect the dates. False news stories may contain timelines that make no sense, or event dates that have been altered.
7. Check the evidence. Check the author's sources to confirm that they are accurate. Lack of evidence or reliance on unnamed experts may indicate a false news story.
8. Look at other reports. If no other news source is reporting the same story, it may indicate that the story is false. If the story is reported by multiple sources you trust, it's more likely to be true.
9. Is the story a joke? Sometimes false news stories can be hard to distinguish from humor or satire. Check whether the source is known for parody, and whether the story's details and tone suggest it may be just for fun.
10. Some stories are intentionally false. Think critically about the stories you read, and only share news that you know to be credible.

Source: Peter DuToit, [Future Skills linkedin.com/in/peterdutoit](https://www.linkedin.com/in/peterdutoit)

Report title: *Falling Behind: How Social Media Companies are Failing to Combat Inauthentic Behavior Online.*

Prepared by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence.