

UNDERSTANDING MISINFORMATION: HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND STOP THE SPREAD OF FALSE INFORMATION

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TODAY'S AGENDA

Understanding what
misinformation is and
how it spreads



Strategies to recognize
misinformation and stop
the spread of false
information



How to talk about
misinformation with others

UNDERSTANDING MISINFORMATION

WHAT IS MISINFORMATION?

1. Misinformation is information that is not credible.
2. It can take many forms including social media posts, headlines, memes, falsified videos, or rumors that can spread rapidly online
3. It can range in severity and level of falseness
4. It can be difficult to spot and can spread quickly online



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF MISINFORMATION?

Can mislead people and
can lead to distrust and
conflict within
communities



Since misinformation can
be difficult to spot, it can
make it difficult for people
to find and use credible
information in their daily
lives

RECOGNIZING MISINFORMATION

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY FEATURES OF MISINFORMATION?

Controversial topics: Misinformation can often be found among controversial topics or areas where people do not agree on an issue.

Complicated issues: It also appears around topics that are difficult to understand, such as complex medical issues.

Emotional topics: Misinformation is often highly emotional and plays on fears. It can often spark an emotional reaction in someone, such as anger or outrage.

Need for answers: Misinformation can present reassuring “answers” or explanations or reinforce existing views.

#Breaking: Just in - Video is emerging of a #GiletsJaunes in black cloths at one of the the 2 towers half an hour at the start of the fire at the cathédrale Notre-Dame de #Paris. #NotreDame #France.
pic.twitter.com/haGSO7VCIB

— Sotiri Dimpinoudis 🌸 (@sotiridi) April 15, 2019

Source: Fact Check EU

<https://factcheckeu.info/en/article/watch-out-false-information-around-notre-dame-fire>



EXAMPLE: NOTRE DAME
CATHEDRAL FIRE RUMORS

HOW DOES MISINFORMATION SPREAD?

- **Heightened emotions:** The emotional nature of misinformation can make it easy to spread. People might see misinformation and get upset and then quickly share the content with others.
- **The Internet:** The speed at which information spreads online also makes misinformation spread very quickly.
- **Unclear sources:** The Internet and media we all use now (like WhatsApp) can make it difficult to spot or identify sources. It can be hard to tell what something is or where it came from.
- **Human behavior:** We often read quickly online or share content without fact-checking. Remember that being mindful of how you consume media and what you are consuming is a key way to stop the spread of false content!

EVALUATING AND FACT-CHECKING INFORMATION

1. PAUSE AND REFLECT

Misinformation can trigger emotional reactions and rapid responses.

A key way to stop the spread of misinformation is to pause for a bit and make sure you understand what you are seeing.

Questions to ask yourself: what am I feeling? What do I know about this topic?



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January 28, 2020

Print This Post

Vitamin C Protects Against Coronavirus

183 12 18 11 14 13 10
f Shar t Twee e Share e Share in Shar Pinterest Eme

Join The Discussion (0)

Get the news right
in your inbox !



Your email address

CHOOSE YOUR ACTIONS

MYTH: "High doses of vitamin C have been proven to be an effective treatment for COVID-19."

THE TRUTH:

While a clinical trial is [underway](#) in China to test whether a high-dose vitamin C regimen is effective against the new strain of coronavirus, the claim that it is a proven treatment for COVID-19 is not supported by scientific evidence. Vitamin C has some marginal benefits for the common cold, such as reducing the duration of symptoms if it is taken before catching the cold, but those benefits can be achieved with a diet that includes 200 milligrams of vitamin C, according to [Harvard Health Publishing](#). The daily dosage being tested in the Chinese trial is 60 times higher.

HOW THE HOAX EMERGED:

The claim originated in a Jan. 26, 2020 [press release](#) titled "Vitamin C Protects Against Coronavirus," from the International Society for Orthomolecular Medicine, which promotes large doses of nutritional supplements. The article was then [republished in full](#) the next day on HealthImpactNews.com, a Red-rated network of health sites with 450,000 Facebook followers that has promoted false health claims such as the debunked link between vaccines and autism.

Source: NewsGuard fact checking
<https://www.newsguardtech.com/covid-19-myths/>

EXAMPLE: CURES FOR COVID-19

2. CHECK YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Misinformation can be difficult to recognize and can sometimes look like something else

Pay attention to where you are seeing this information and what else is around it.

Questions to ask yourself: does this source or site seem suspicious at all? What other articles or content am I seeing?

Claim

In late 2019, NBA star Michael Jordan announced he would run for U.S. Senate as a Republican.

Rating



Labeled Satire

About this rating [↗](#)



The Onion [@TheOnion](#) · Sep 12

L.A. Designates Open-Air Dining Areas Along 101 Freeway Median [bit.ly/33qaz62](#)



77

713

5.9K



Source: <https://www.snopes.com/>

EXAMPLES: SATIRE


3. FIND OUT ABOUT THE AUTHOR


Misinformation often
come from non-credible
sources


A crucial aspect of
evaluating information
and identifying
misinformation is to
check out the author and
publisher

Questions to ask
yourself: who created or
published this content?
What are their
credentials and
reputation?

EXAMPLES: SCIENCE NEWS

 **Miles O'Brien**



About Miles  @milesobrien

Miles O'Brien is veteran, independent journalist who focuses on science, technology and aerospace.

Full Bio +

Miles's Recent Stories

Health Jul 22

What we know about the search for a COVID-19 vaccine – and what we don't

The question of when a COVID-19 vaccine might be available is perhaps the most pressing in the world. There have been a number of recent headlines on this front, including early but encouraging results from trials. And on Wednesday, the...

Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop series on Netflix slammed by NHS chief

30 January 2020

     Share

Gwyneth Paltrow's new series explores alternative therapies

Gwyneth Paltrow's new Netflix series poses a "considerable health risk" to the public, NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens has said.

Sources: <https://www.pbs.org/news hour/author/miles-obrien> and <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-51312441>

4. FACT CHECK THE CLAIMS

Misinformation often relies on bogus claims or lacks citations or sources

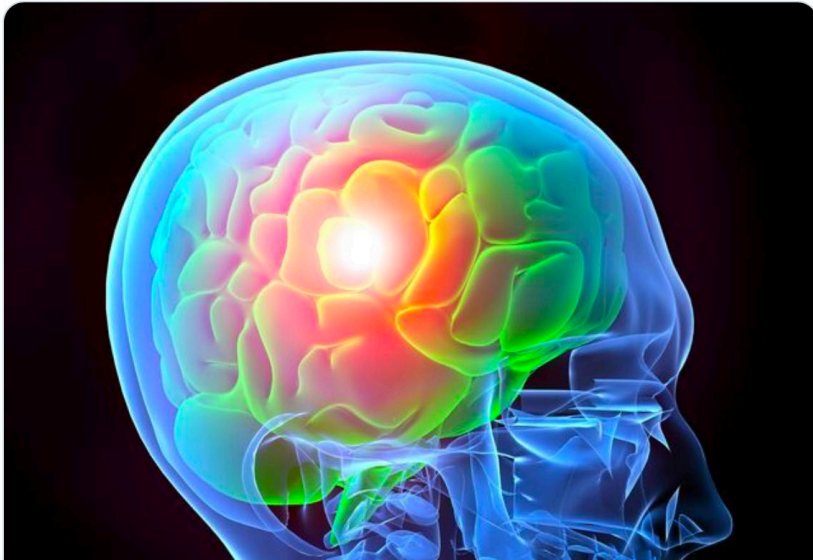
A crucial aspect of evaluating information and identifying misinformation is to check out the claims and ensure they are factual and true

Questions to ask yourself: what sources are cited here? Are these claims legitimate and factual?

EXAMPLES: SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

pain Painaustralia
australia @Painaustralia

Neurobiologists Discover an "On/Off" Switch for Pain
The central amygdala houses a pain-suppression circuit that can "turn off" pain. buff.ly/2WXzps4



 **justsaysinmice**
@justsaysinmice

IN MICE

pain Painaustralia @Painaustralia · May 27
Neurobiologists Discover an "On/Off" Switch for Pain
The central amygdala houses a pain-suppression circuit that can "turn off" pain. buff.ly/2WXzps4



4. CONSIDER WHY

Misinformation is often very emotional and might have some sort of ulterior motive

Consider why something was published and what its goals are to ensure you fully understand what you are seeing or reading

Questions to ask yourself: why was this written or posted? What are the goals – is it trying to persuade me or get me to do something?

5 Misleading Headlines Sponsored By The Food Industry

Why you should be wary of Big Blueberry, Big Pasta, and Big Nut

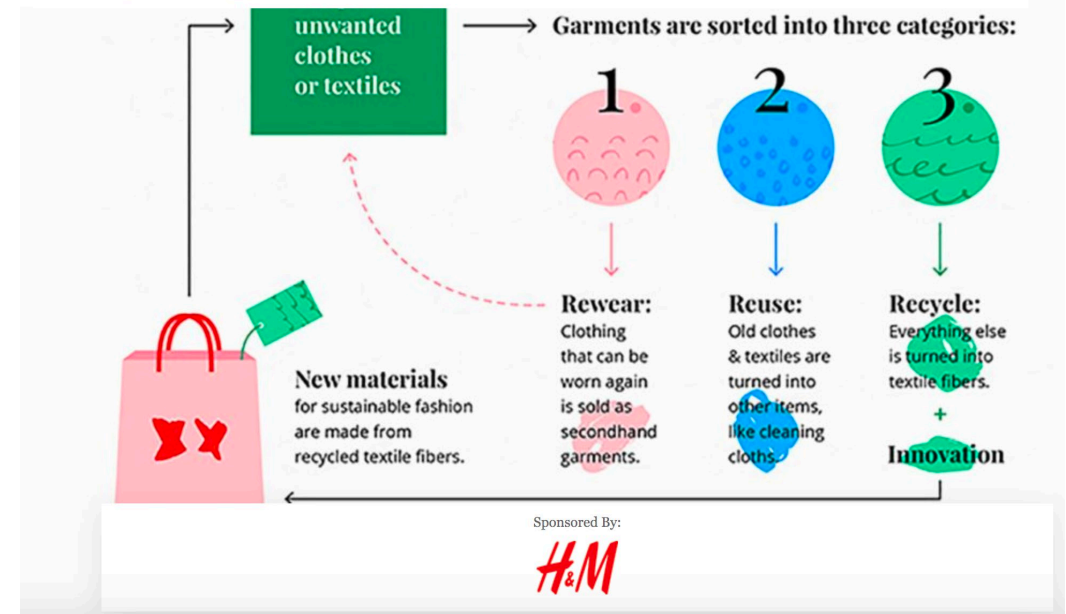


Gideon M-K; Health Nerd
Jul 31, 2019 · 6 min read ★

Follow



Recycling Your Fashion for a Better Future



Sources:

<https://www.impactingourfuture.com/sustainable-living/recycling-your-fashion-for-a-better-future/> and <https://medium.com/@gidmk/5-misleading-headlines-sponsored-by-the-food-industry-15c64565f74d>

EXAMPLE: SPONSORED CONTENT

DISCUSSING MISINFORMATION WITH OTHERS

Practice these skills and help others learn them

- You can share credible content online and talk about how you fact checked the information
- You can avoid sharing rumors
- You can help friends and family and your community learn more about these techniques to evaluate and fact-check information and to recognize misinformation

Tips for discussing misinformation

- Try to avoid attacking someone or engaging in a heated debate. Misinformation can be emotional and upsetting someone won't help them learn more about the topic.
- Frame recognizing misinformation as an empowering skill

Remember, even a brief, one minute google search on a topic can make a difference between allowing misinformation to spread further

FINAL QUESTIONS

Ways to talk about misinformation with others and explain that not everything on the Internet is true?

Distinguishing between misinformation, which is false information, and differing options.

Ways to manage the excessive use of social media

Technological interventions and ways to stop misinformation

Please share other questions!