

BE RESPONSIBLE ONLINE

It is important to use the Internet responsibly, whether you are creating or sharing content. The freedom of speech is not the freedom to lie, or spread lies. Cultivate an inquisitive and critical mind, and practise good values such as honesty, courage, integrity, respect, tolerance and compassion.

What the experts say

“We need better media literacy education at all levels, we need political will to ensure that any response to these actions is fair across the board, we need to pressure digital platforms to take a more proactive role in managing these sorts of behaviour, and we need better leadership and role models.”

> **Dr Niki Cheong, Digital Culture Expert, University of Nottingham**

“Start reading content or exposing yourself to alternative viewpoints with an open mind in the hopes of expanding your own worldviews and perspectives.”

> **Dr Benjamin Loh Yew Hoong, Senior Lecturer & Programme Director at Taylor's University's School of Media and Communication**

“While education is important, it can only do so much. It's up to Malaysian institutions (government and non-government) to build a healthy digital public sphere.”

> **Dr Ross Tapsell, Senior Lecturer at the Australian National University, and Director at ANU Malaysia Institute**

“Find the time to process and think about something before sharing it. Give it a moment. Speak to someone about it and after you've done all that and it's still something worth sharing, then go for it.”

> **Dr Joel Low, Vice President of the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology**

“The first response to any news is to 'search, not share'. When we receive messages, or read articles, regardless of whether we agree with them or not, we must stop ourselves from hitting the 'share' or 'forward' button. Instead, we should ask someone else about it, or search for more information online to verify the news. It's not a perfect solution, but it's a useful filter.”

> **Dr Tan Meng Yoe, Course Coordinator, Master in Communications and Media Studies, Monash University Malaysia**

Where to check?

There are numerous fact-checking sites to assist you. Here's a list to get you started:

Sebenarnya.com

Medical Mythbusters Malaysia

Scicheck

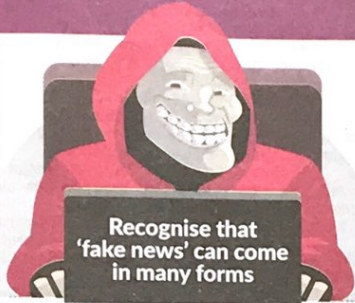
Snopes.com

AP Fact Check

FactCheck.org

Politifact

Quoteinvestigator.com



Misinformation

Information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm

Disinformation

Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country

Mal-information

Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organisation or country

Recognise that 'fake news' can come in many forms

Be aware of

> False, or misleading websites that are shared on social media. Some of these websites may rely on distorted headlines and decontextualized information in order to generate likes, shares, and profits.

> Websites that may circulate misleading and/or potentially unreliable information.

> Websites that sometimes use clickbait-y

headlines and social media descriptions.

> Satire/comedy sites, which can offer important critical commentary on politics and society, but have the potential to be shared as actual/literal news (Merrimack College's Professor Melissa Zimdars).

> False content will always exist. However, it loses its power once we stop sharing it.

Develop a critical mind

> Maybe you were once passively receiving content. With new online media, you have to become more active. From being a consumer, you now also share information that you receive or perhaps even create new content.

> So it's time to brush up on your media literacy. What is that? The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMELE) says that media literacy is the ability to Access, Analyse, Evaluate, Create, and Act using all forms of communication.

Tips for content creators

> Almost everyone on a social network is a content creator or curator these days. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube users, among others, are constantly creating and sharing stories, pictures, videos and memes.

> Star News Editor Philip Golangai shares the golden rules for every reporter:

- Get the five Ws and H – Who, What, When, Where, Why and How, and make sure each of these is accurate.
- Be fair and tell all sides of a story.
- You must also have a critical mind, and learn to question everything.

Who spreads fake news?

> According to Statista.com, the number of smartphone users worldwide today surpasses three billion and is forecast to further grow by several hundred million in the next few years.

> By 2025, it is estimated that there will be around 33.46 million social network users in Malaysia alone, up from about 29 million in 2019.

> With the rise of social media and instant messaging platforms, the speed at which news spreads is much faster.

> Digital platforms such Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp – have become epicentres of misinformation. And almost everyone shares fake news at some point – the joker, scammer, politician, conspiracy theorist, insider, relative, celebrity, even you might have!

> People share news, even false news, for many reasons including: sensationalism, schadenfreude (pleasure derived from someone else's misfortune), genuine concern.

Checklist before posting or sharing

> **Consider the source** – Is it credible? Have others heard of it? Are there other sites writing about the same issue?

> **Pause**, don't rush to reply, forward or share something. Process it first and ask yourself why you're sharing it.

> **Reread** what you've written

before you click the send button. How would you feel if you were on the other end of this message?

> **Fact check** – If you see something that is too good to be true or completely against your worldview, there's probably more than meets the eye. There is so much information on the Internet, a quick search might help you find out if it's true or not.

> **Read the whole article** – One of the major issues that people have is that they read a sensational title and share a post. Please read the whole article before you decide to join the drama, share or comment on a story.

> **Check everything:** Snopes,

FactCheck, Sebenarnya – use them! You can also Google information to see if it comes up somewhere more credible than Facebook posts and blogs.

> **Talk to someone about it** – For the older generation, ask your adult children before you post something. Children, ask your parents. Check with those around you or if you have access to an expert on the subject, ask them.

> **Check the date** – Did this happen a long time ago? Has it been taken out of context?

> **Don't let your bias sway your judgement** – Silo mentality can be a dangerous thing. Make sure you are listening to all sides of an argument, no matter how difficult.

