

Tackling fake news & misinformation:

internet
matters.org

Advice to support children and young people

Get support to help children develop their digital literacy and critical thinking to spot the difference between fact and fiction online.



What is fake news?

Fake news is the spreading of news stories online that are **invented, distort the facts**, or are not news at all, but made to look as if they are.

Why do people create it?

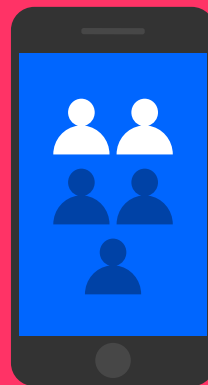
Those who create fake news may be looking to get people to click on the link **to promote advertising, encourage people to buy something or persuade them** to support a point of view.

There are also times when news organisations may make a mistake and print something which is **later revealed to be untrue**.

Growth of fake news

Although fake news has always existed, **increasingly those creating 'fake news' are making it more difficult to spot**. At times even well-established news organisations find themselves reporting on stories based on false information due to the nature of the online world.

With so much information coming from a wide range of sources, it can be hard to know which are trustworthy.



2 in 5

(43%) of 12-15s who go online said they had seen something online or on social media they thought was fake news

Source: Ofcom children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes 2018

How can fake news impact children and young people?

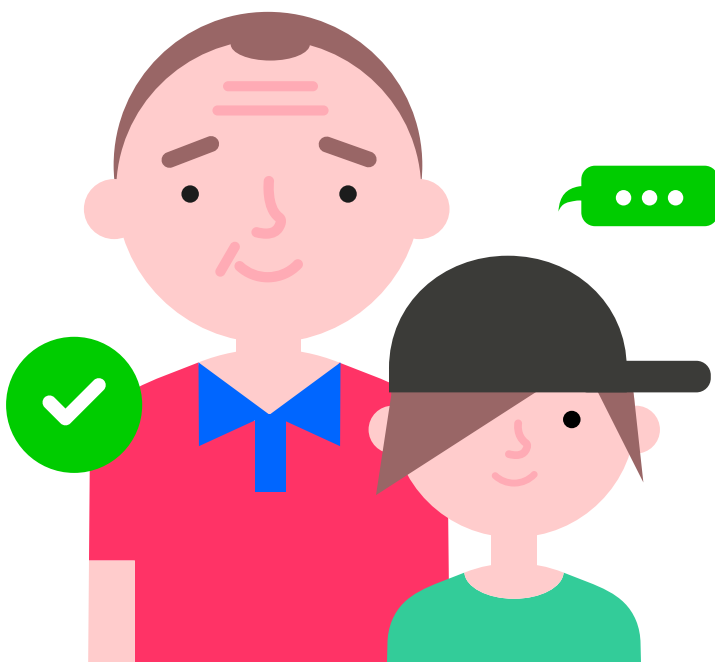
- It can lead children and young people to believe something about the world that **can have a negative impact on their wellbeing**
- Fake news sometimes **may target minority groups and spread hate** which can have real world consequences
- **It can cause children to be confused** about what they see online and anxious about being misled to believe something that isn't true



Strategies to help children develop critical and digital literacy

Talk to them:

Children rely more on their family than social media for their news **so talk to them about what is going on.** It's also helpful to talk about how the information they see online is created so they have a better understanding of the intentions behind it.



Read:

Many people share stories they don't actually read. Encourage children to read beyond the headline and if they do spot something, not to share it but to help set the record straight.

Check:

Share quick and easy ways to check the reliability of information.

This could be doing a search to double check who the author is and how credible they are, seeing if the information is available on reputable sites and using good fact-checking websites to get more information.

It's also worth talking to them about spam, and the possibility that some of the adverts that they come across might also be fake.

Get Involved:

Digital literacy is about participation. Teach children to be **honest, vigilant and creative digital citizens.**