

Pupils think fake news is fact and are using it in their schoolwork, say teachers

Teachers are frustrated that pupils can't accept that some stories on social networks are false, as experts say pupils need better education about online dangers

- ¹ School pupils believe that fake news is fact, and are repeating it in lessons and using it in written work, teachers have warned.
- ² More than a third of teachers say their students have used false information that they found online, according to a survey by a teacher's union.
- ³ The union's general secretary, Chris Keates, said that the information was "worrying" and it showed that internet companies have a lot of power to influence people's opinions, especially young people.
- ⁴ International education experts are becoming more worried about the situation and say that teachers will need to teach children how to spot fake news.
- ⁵ Others were frustrated that students didn't believe that news they had seen on Facebook and other social media sites was not true, even when the problem was explained to them.
- ⁶ One teacher said that pupils often thought that fake news sites were real, and also that anything that President Donald Trump said was a fact.
- ⁷ Last week, German officials said they would give fines of up to 50 million euros to social networks if they didn't take down illegal fake news posts.
- ⁸ The new law would give social networks 24 hours to delete or block the content and seven days to concentrate on more complicated cases.
- ⁹ Commenting on the results of the survey, Ms Keates said that she was worried about the trend, particularly because many young people have never known a world without internet, and are less able to judge whether information that they read online is real or fake.
- ¹⁰ She added that: "It is important for children and young people to be made aware that not everything they see and read online is real."
- ¹¹ She said that teachers are trying to help educate pupils about using false information, but added that it was important for internet providers and websites to take responsibility for any material that is available, and also to deal with people who misuse their services.
- ¹² Last month Andreas Schleicher, the director of education and skills at OECD, (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), said that in the modern age, being able to tell the difference between what is real and what is fake is a critical skill.
- ¹³ He added that: "This is something that we believe schools can do something about."

Adapted from the Independent by Rachel Pells, 12th of April 2017