8 tips on how to spot fake news

Fake content has become a daily reality of life online, with hundreds of sites creating false or exaggerated stories for political or personal gain. In spite of the efforts of big tech companies to limit the spread of fake news, some stories fall through the cracks. The expert advice is that it's always useful to have a critical eye and to be on the lookout for misleading stories. There are several telltale signs to look for. Fake news experts Will Moy, director of British fact-checking charity Full Fact, and Cambridge University researcher Sander van der Linden offer their tips.

1 Beware of stories that don't make _____

One of the key signs of fake news is that the stories are highly improbable. During last year's Hurricane Irma, a hugely popular viral story claimed that it was a Category Six hurricane that would 'wipe cities off the map'. Category Six hurricanes do not exist. Moy says, 'Extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence. If somebody says Elvis is alive, ask for a song before you believe it.'

2 Check the _____ of the news site that published it

Unfamiliar sites built to sound like news organizations are behind many fake news stories, but the names of the sites are often a hint that stories may be fake. When the *Denver Guardian* made claims about Hillary Clinton's emails, there was one small problem – there is no such paper as the *Denver Guardian*. It sounds real, but it is completely fake. 'Be careful of websites that you haven't heard of before,' says Moy.

3 Beware faked website _____

Some sites may try to impersonate real news outlets with URLs which seem similar but have slight differences. For instance, one fake news site impersonated ABC news using a URL which read *ABC.com.co*, rather than *abcnews.go.com*.

4 Check the _____

False news stories often include timelines which make no sense, or contain the wrong dates. For instance, images purporting to be of a 2016 terror attack in Brussels were actually from a 2011 attack on Moscow's Domodedovo Airport.

5 Look for unusual _____ and mistakes

Often, the sign that news is fake is that it is of low quality, with spelling errors and an over-use of capital letters. Real news sources will employ editors to remove these errors and ensure accuracy.

6 Look out for _____ celebrity accounts

'Sometimes stories can spread online after being shared by a social media account designed to impersonate a real person,' says Sander van der Linden. 'Think about the fake tweets that were supposedly sent out by billionaire Warren Buffett. Someone was impersonating him, and millions of people did not notice that the Twitter handle read 'WarrenBuffet', while his real name is Warren Buffett.'

7 Google-search the _____

Fake news sites will often use unrelated or doctored photos. Google-search them to see where they came from and check how accurate they are against other legitimate news sites. Other hoaxers will use deliberately disturbing imagery in an attempt to hook in readers, van der Linden says. 'Emotional content is more likely to go viral, for example, imagine the effect of a fake story containing disturbing images about the effects of a fake disease.'

8 If you're unsure, double check with a source you _____

Fake news stories will often appear on just one site, so if you're unsure, check against a reliable news source. 'When it matters, double check,' says Moy, 'particularly when it comes to health or other life decisions. Always use a trustworthy sour

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