

False Information

The ability to assess and determine what is reliable information online is a valuable and lifelong skill. False information refers to information, stories and hoaxes created to mislead, misinform or deceive readers, viewers and listeners.

“Fake News” is a kind of false information which refers usually to political stories and movements. False information, however, captures everything.

Below are five types of false information you should be aware of online:

Clickbait

Headlines that grab reader’s attention and curiosity. The title may not reflect the contents of the page/article accurately.

Example: You Will Never Believe What Happened Next!

Satire

Articles posted strictly for entertainment or parody purposes but in the guise of a ‘news’ article or similar.

Example sites: Waterford Whispers.

Sloppy Journalism

When reporters or journalists publish their articles or information without fact checking each point, this is called sloppy journalism. These articles may contain false or inaccurate information.

Propaganda

Stories that are written deliberately to promote bias views, political standpoints or agendas.

Example: World War flyers and posters.

Bias/Slanted News

Information written, produced or presented which may be factually correct but may infer particular meanings or viewpoints of the author/organisation.

Factual information should be impartial.

How to assess information

It takes time and practice to determine what is reliable information and what is fake. When searching for information online, always ask yourself the following:

Who?

Who wrote it?
Do they have the qualifications or credentials to be writing on this topic?

Why?

Why was this article written?

When?

When was the article written?
Is the information up to date and accurate?
When was it last updated?

Where?

Where was the information published?
Is this information being published on other sites too?

What?

What is the piece about?
Does it contain purely factual information or does it contain personal opinions (bias)?

How?

How is this information presented?
Does it contain references/citations to other sources?
Is there any spelling or grammatical errors?
Is the information exaggerated?