

# Who can you believe?

How to avoid being deceived  
by 'fake news'

And why  
it matters





# Five genuine facts about ‘fake news’

1.

“Fake news”  
is nothing new.

2.

But it’s growing  
out of control.

3.

And it has real  
consequences.

4.

You don’t have  
to fall for it.

5.

And you can help  
protect others.



# 1. It's nothing new—and it's not news





## 2. It's growing out of control with...

### Broad internet access

Everyone has a “press” at their disposal, with immediacy and unprecedented global reach.

### Explosion of social media

Social media tools make it even easier for anyone to be a “reporter.”

### Contentious 2016 presidential campaign

In campaign's final three months, 'fake news' reportedly generated more Facebook engagement than real news.



### 3. It has real consequences

**People make large and small decisions every day based on what they read and believe to be true.**

*“Never have we had so much information at our fingertips. Whether this bounty will make us smarter and better informed or more ignorant and narrow-minded will depend on our awareness of this problem and our response to it. At present, we worry that democracy is threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish.”*

—Stanford study of students' online reasoning ability

**‘Fake news’ can undermine confidence in legitimate journalism, creating potential information chaos.**



## 4. You don't have to fall for it



**THE PROBLEM  
WITH QUOTES  
FROM THE  
INTERNET IS  
THAT OFTEN  
THEY ARE NOT  
TRUE.**

**--Abraham Lincoln**

Getting duped by fake news can happen to anyone, but you can limit the likelihood of being deceived by following a few simple tips. The best advice may be the simplest of all:

**Don't abandon  
common sense.**



## 5. You can help protect others

Discuss the dangers of “fake news” with friends and family—particularly young people; promote revering the truth.

Use the delete key—refuse to pass along “fake news.”

Promptly report inaccurate items if the site has a “fake news” reporting or feedback tool such as Google’s or Facebook’s.

Kindly inform a friend that he or she is sharing “fake news” by responding with a link to Snopes or a similar fact-checking site.



# Who's posting 'fake news' - and why

- Those who are in it for financial gain from ad clicks, misinformation that prompts buying or selling, or various other schemes
- Those with an axe to grind or a particular idea or belief, candidate or viewpoint, to promote or discredit
- Satirists and misguided pranksters



# Why people get fooled by 'fake news'



Creators and distributors have gotten really good at it, and are growing more sophisticated every day.



Readers don't take the time to read critically, or don't know how.



Readers, viewers and listeners often are blinded by their own prejudices, finding only what they want to find and are predisposed to believe.



# Protecting yourself from 'fake news'



**FAKE**

10 easy tips  
for telling online  
fact from fiction



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

1



**CAUTION**

Is the headline full of CAPITAL LETTERS and/or punctuation marks??????

Does the headline match the story that follows?



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

2



**CAUTION**

Trust your gut. If a story doesn't feel quite right, check it out.  
Some useful fact-checking sites:

- [Snopes.com](http://Snopes.com)
- [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org)
- Washington Post Fact Checker
- [PolitiFact.com](http://PolitiFact.com)



## Can the Queen Legally Kill President Trump with a Sword?



**FACT CHECK**

A report about Elizabeth II's claiming she could legally dispatch President Trump with a sword in Bu... [More >](#)

2K

## Did President Obama Ban Muslims from Entering the United States in 2011?



**FACT CHECK**

5K

## Does President Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' Exclude Countries Where He Has Businesses?



**FACT CHECK**

9K



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Use the search box below to locate your item of interest.

Search keywords or URL...

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# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

3



**CAUTION**

Once you've opened a story, take a close look at the URL. Is it what you would expect, or does something look off about it?

<http://www.ABCnews.com>  
<http://www.ABCnews.com.co>



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

4



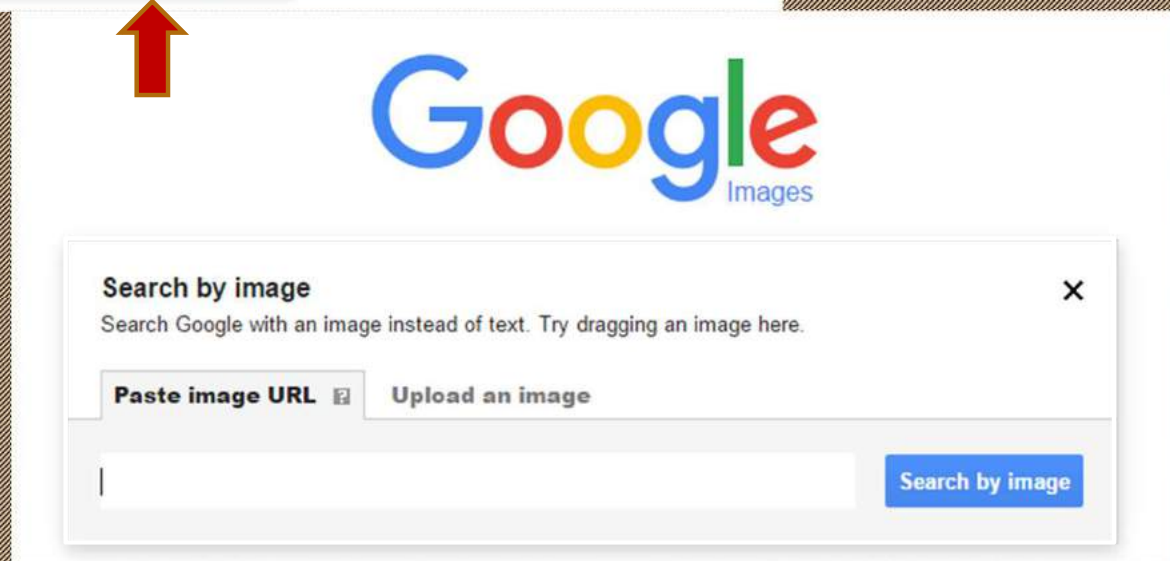
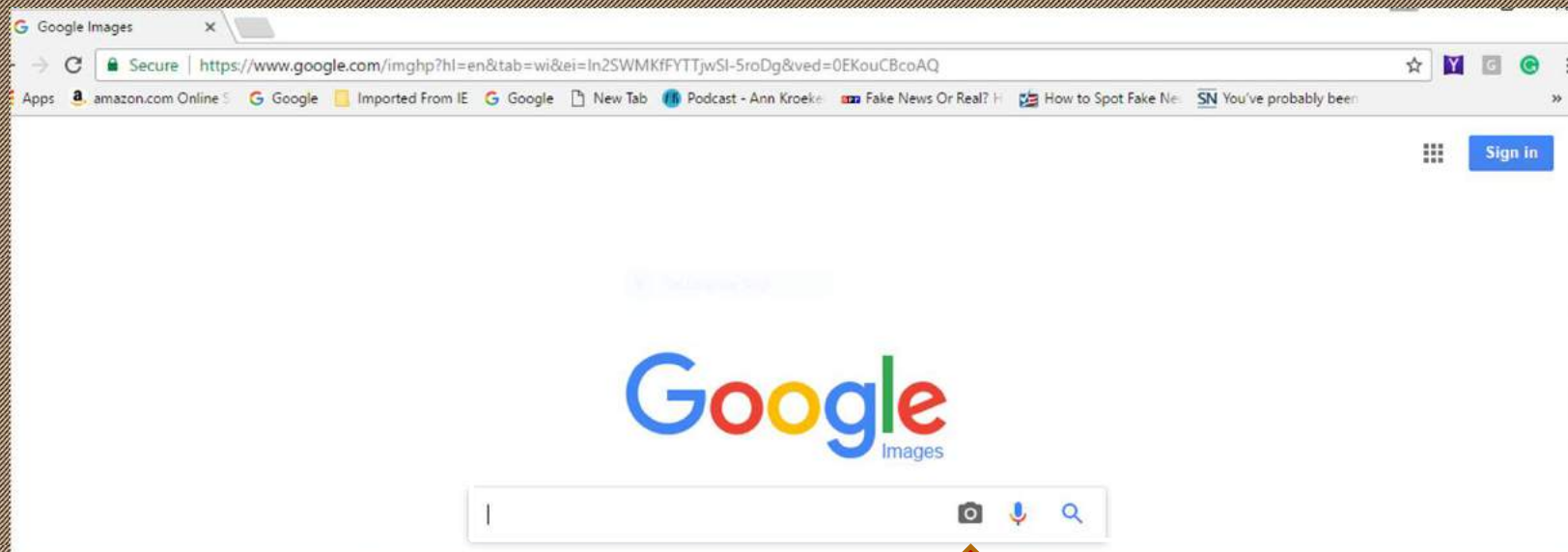
**CAUTION**

View photos, as well as text, with a skeptical eye. Photos from a legitimate story can easily be copied for use with “fake news.” Or, a photo may be manipulated to fit a false story.













JPG x

tiananmen square tank man



All

**Images**

Maps

Shopping

More

Settings

Tools

About 25,270,000,000 results (1.75 seconds)

Rectangular Snip



Image size:  
1000 x 707

Find other sizes of this image:  
[All sizes](#) - [Small](#) - [Medium](#)

Best guess for this image: ***tiananmen square tank man***

## Tank Man - Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank\\_Man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tank_Man) ▼

**Tank Man** is the nickname of an unidentified man who stood in front of a column of tanks on June 5, 1989, the morning after the Chinese military had suppressed the **Tiananmen Square** protests of 1989 by force.



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

5

## **Ask yourself**

- Who's the author of the story and what's the date on it?
- What support is presented in the story? Do quotes check out as legitimate?
- Is there any attempt to present a balanced story or is it entirely one-sided?



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

6



**CAUTION**

Check the site's "About" section. If it doesn't list believable contact information, turn up your skepticism.

Satirical sites may identify themselves as such on an "About" page. It's definitely worth checking.



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

7



**CAUTION**

If a story seems outrageous, but you think it might be true, check to see if other news sites are reporting something similar. If you can't find it elsewhere, be very suspicious. And don't pass it along.



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

8

**Ask  
yourself**

Does the story answer most of your questions, or is it vague in tone or explanations?

Does it attack or praise broad groups such as “the right” or “the left,” or does it list specific groups that can be researched elsewhere?



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

9

**Ask  
yourself**


Does the story appear to be trying to convince you of something—such as a conspiracy—or is it just presenting the facts?

Does the news source appear to employ editors—or is it more likely one person sitting alone in a room somewhere dreaming up stories?



# Tips for telling online fact from fiction

10



Continually check biases,  
and seek a steady, balanced  
diet of news and information.

A final word of caution:

*'So long as social media allows for the rapid spread of information, manipulative entities will seek to cash in on the rapid spread of misinformation.'*—Snopes.com



# Thank you





You can find numerous insightful articles about “fake news.” Here are links to a couple that informed this presentation and a few other pieces you might find helpful:

Executive summary of the Stanford study:

<https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf>

A Finder’s Guide To Facts:

<http://www.npr.org/2016/12/11/505154631/a-finders-guide-to-facts>

Thoughts from the Web’s founder:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/mar/11/tim-berners-lee-web-inventor-save-internet>

How your brain tricks you into believing fake news

<http://time.com/5362183/the-real-fake-news-crisis/>

Helping children navigate the news:

<https://www.familycircle.com/teen/how-teach-children-think-critically-and-recognize-fake-news/>



*Professional communicators hold themselves and each other to high standards of accuracy, fairness, objectivity and accountability, operating under codes of ethics such as this one:*

### **Code of Ethics of the National Federation of Press Women**

As a professional communicator, I recognize my responsibility to the public which has placed its trust and confidence in my work, and will endeavor to do nothing to abuse this obligation.

With truth as my ultimate goal, I will adhere to the highest standards of professional communication, never consciously misleading reader, viewer, or listener; and will avoid any compromise of my objectivity or fairness.

Because I believe that professional communicators must be obligated only to the people's right to know, I affirm that freedom of the press is to be guarded as an inalienable right of the citizens of a free society.

I pledge to use this freedom wisely and to uphold the right of communicators to express unpopular opinions as well as the right to agree with the majority.

(Adopted in 1975)

*Nebraska Press Women is an affiliate of the National Federation of Press Women.*