



Questions Matter

Building confidence in critical thinking for today's media and digital world



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About this magazine

Welcome to this magazine called 'Questions Matter'. This magazine is written for adults to help you become more confident in your critical thinking for today's media and digital world.

Every day we deal with a lot of information. Some of this information could be false or misleading. We need to learn how to work out if what we are reading or hearing is true or false. We can do this by identifying the source and 'fact checking' the information.

In this magazine, we share tips and tools you can use to help build your media literacy skills, with some exercises you can use to practise.

We use these symbols to guide you through using this magazine.



Writing



Reading



Online resource



Useful tip



Need help?

There is a lot of information, tips, exercises and website links included in this magazine.

It is important to take your time with the information. Please note some of the content or topics covered may be distressing.

Feel free to dip in and out of the magazine in order to suit your needs and interests.

This magazine does not recommend any particular type of technology or social media platform.

Using website links

There are lots of different links to resources in this magazine. We have included clickable links, URLs and QR codes to help you find these resources online. You can also visit the NALA website page on **Questions Matter resources** which will direct you to each link. Scan the QR code or visit this link nala.ie/questions-matter-resources

Using Quick Response (QR) codes

In this magazine we use QR codes to share links and further information. To open these on a smartphone:

1. Open your Camera app and point it steadily for 2-3 seconds towards the QR Code you want to scan.
2. A website link will appear. Tap on this link. This will open it on the internet browser on your phone.
3. If nothing happens, you may need to go to your Settings app and enable QR Code scanning.



Scan on your phone

Need help?

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) can help you to improve your reading, writing, maths and digital skills.

Call NALA on **Freephone 1 800 20 20 65**. NALA is open from 9.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

NALA can talk to you about your free learning options. You can:

- Attend classes in your local Education and Training Board (ETB). Find your local centre online at nala.ie/free-courses
- Learn with NALA on the phone or online through learnwithnala.ie. You decide what, where and how you want to learn.

You can also do a combination of these to suit you.

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Introduction

There is a lot of information available on our phones and other devices.

We live in a world of facts, opinions, misinformation and lies.

Have you thought about?



How do we know
if what we read or
hear is true?



How do we look for the real story
behind news headlines and posts on
social media?



Who writes the
story?



Who benefits
from the
story?



Who is missing
from the story?

These are some of the questions that we explore in this magazine.

Media and digital literacy

Media literacy is not just about reading, watching or listening to the news. It is also about asking where that news item comes from and why someone decided to share it. You might write a social media post giving your opinion on a news item too.

Digital literacy is not just about looking up information on the internet or sending an email. It is also about working out where or who that information came from, also called the source.

As we try to read, understand and make sense of all the information around us, it is essential to **stop, think and check**.

Stop	Think	Check
		



See the **Be Media Smart** campaign by Media Literacy Ireland online. Scan the QR code or visit this link bemediasmart.ie for more information.



Why questions matter

We live in a busy world of news and information. These are presented to us in many ways:

newspapers	books	the internet	leaflets
television	booklets	social media	word of mouth
radio	magazines	advertising	phone messaging

When we get too much information we can feel overwhelmed. Sometimes we experience **infodemics**. This is when we get a lot of good and or bad information about an important topic very quickly in a short space of time. It is difficult for us to know what is true or good information and what is not. For example, in a global disaster like an earthquake good information can save lives. Bad information can confuse people and make things worse.



Critical thinking

We know that we cannot believe every piece of information we read or hear. That is why we must use our **critical thinking skills** to question it, get the facts and check the sources.

What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is a way of thinking where you set out to understand what is going on. You don't accept all arguments and conclusions initially. When you think critically you don't accept all the arguments and conclusions you are told straight away. You question and find out more about a piece of information so you can form a fair opinion of it.

It is about being able to:

- Think clearly, carefully, logically, rationally and independently;
- Understand the connections between ideas;
- Seek out information actively rather than be a passive scroller; and
- Reflect on information.

Why does critical thinking matter?

Critical thinkers **question ideas** and **assumptions** rather than accepting them at face value. They will always ask whether the ideas, arguments and findings represent the entire picture, and they are open to finding that they do not.

For example, we should **not** like or share information online on social media unless we know it is from a trusted and reliable source (for example established news agencies) and it has evidence to back it up (not hearsay or gossip).

1. Definitions

Look at these definitions below. Are you familiar with them?

Information

News, knowledge or information can be shared in texts, videos and images.

Opinion

A view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

Fact

A piece of true information.

Misinformation

Information that is wrong, is not complete or is taken out of context. This may not be intentional.

Disinformation

False information is knowingly shared to cause confusion and harm.

All forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed to cause public harm or for profit. This is sometimes called 'fake news'.



Malinformation

True (or partly true) information that is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere.

Language

There are many terms that you will hear around media and digital literacy.



Look at these terms. Are you familiar with them?

Write down what you think they mean.

Algorithm

Bias

Consent

Fake news

Meme

Troll



Here are six definitions.

Write down what word best describes them from the list above.

Any story or article meant to deliberately disinform the reader.	
Giving permission for something to happen.	
A set of instructions designed so a computer can perform a certain task.	
A person who intentionally upsets people online by posting accusations or irrelevant or offensive comments.	
An image, video or piece of text, sometimes funny in nature that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users.	
Favouring one side or issue over another.	

What do you think?



Look at this video 'Why we don't say "f***news"' from the media literacy organisation First Draft. Scan the QR code or watch it online at youtu.be/zwqZd6wFVf8



Write down some thoughts about the video.

I feel...

I like...

I believe...

I think...



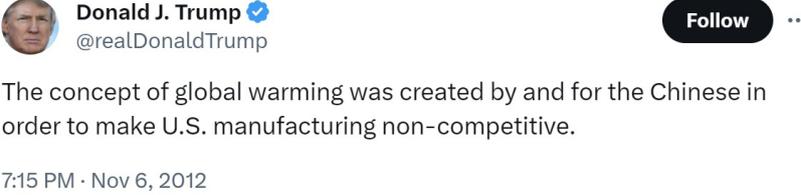
Make a note - What is the main point from the video?

True or false?



Look at these headings and posts. Do you think they are true, false or you're not sure? Write your answer below. Think about how you would check if these are true or false.

You can find the sources and answers for each item on page 54.

News item	True, false or not sure
 <p>Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump Follow ..</p> <p>The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.</p> <p>7:15 PM · Nov 6, 2012</p>	
 <p>Give me a break</p> <p>Stop Nestlé destroying Rainforests for palm oil. Have a break from Nestlé Killer</p>	
 <p>Revealed</p> <p>Private jets belonging to 200 celebrities have spent a total of 11 years in the air since 2022</p> <p>Swipe for key findings from our analysis</p>	

2. My digital world



What do you do online?

Look at these icons and answer the questions below.



Do you recognise any of these icons?

Yes

No

Which ones do you recognise?

Online platforms and apps



Tick the box if you are familiar with these platforms and applications (apps).

Logo	Name and what it does	Tick if familiar
	Facebook is a social networking website that lets you connect and share with family and friends online. It is owned by a company called Meta which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Facebook Messenger is a mobile app used for instant messaging and group chats, sharing photos, videos and audio recordings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Instagram is a photo and video sharing app where people can share photos or videos with their followers or with a group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	LinkedIn is an online platform where you can set up a profile to showcase your professional life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pinterest is a social network where people can find inspiration and ideas for their interests and hobbies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reddit is a discussion space that has a large group of forums in which registered users can talk about lots of different topics.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Snapchat is a messaging app where people can share photos, videos, text, and drawings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	WhatsApp is a messenger app for smartphones. You can send messages, images, audio or video and set up group chats.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	X previously known as Twitter is a 'microblogging' and social networking service where you can share short posts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YouTube is a video sharing service where users can create their own profile, upload videos, watch, like and comment on other videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Which applications (apps) do you use often?



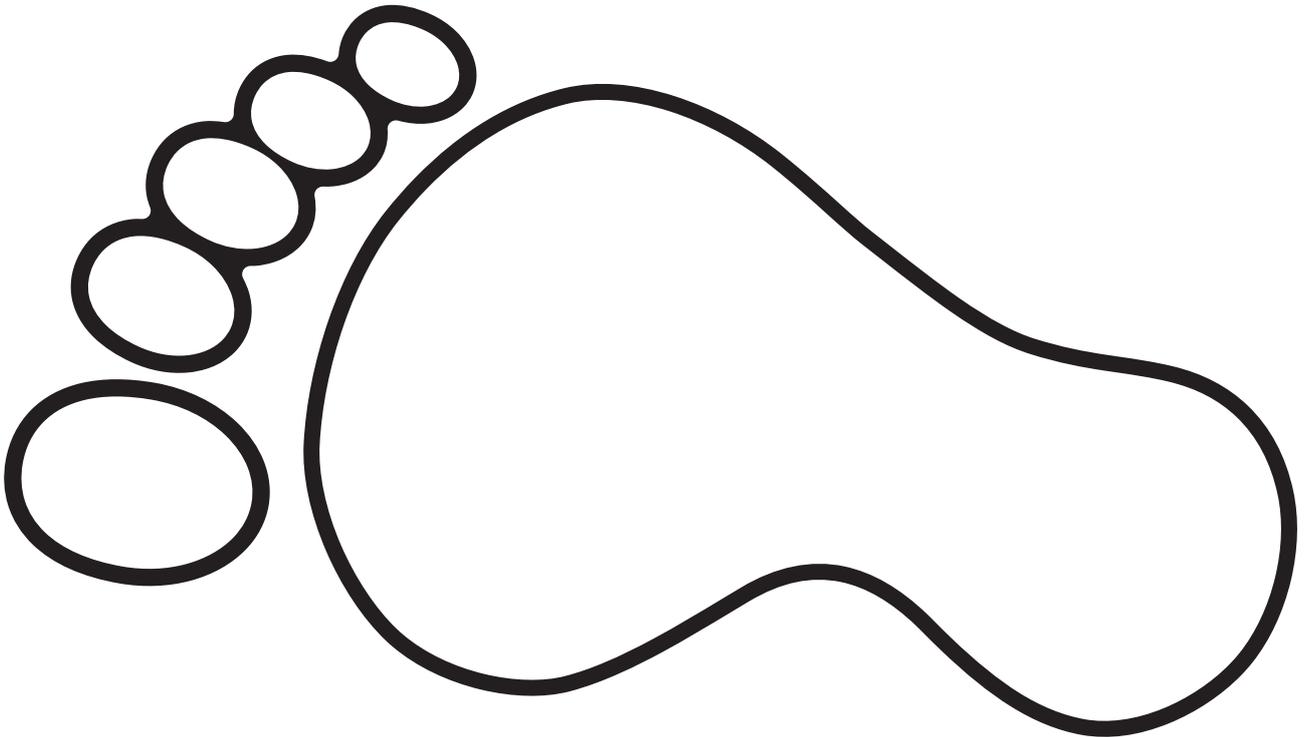
What do you like (or not like) about the apps you use often?

My digital footprint

A **digital footprint** is information about a particular person's online activities that exists on the internet. It includes the websites you visit, emails you send, social media posts you put up and information you submit to online services. Think about what kinds of information you would want to find about yourself online in 10 years' time.



Write in the footprint below the types of search results that you would want to see linked to your name (articles, posts, videos, images and so on).



Write a note about how you could create a positive digital footprint.

Tracking our personal information

Did you know that...?



Information can be tracked from:

- The websites you visit
- The time of your activity
- The search terms and keywords you use
- Your location while browsing
- Your Internet Protocol (IP) address (number assigned by your internet service provider)
- Who you interact with
- What you search for
- What is said about you
- What you say in your email, texts and social media posts
- What you like or share on social media and other online platforms
- How much money you spend
- How old you are
- Where you live
- If you are mentioned or quoted in a news story or blog post



Information can be collected from:

- Search words
- Browsers
- Cookies on websites
- Survey forms you fill in
- Comments
- Information you post on social media (private and public)
- Purchases
- Logging into sites
- Location or Global Positioning System (GPS) data on your mobile phone



Information can be used for:

- Marketing
- Recommending ads you see in the future
- Emails and other digital marketing
- Invasive attacks on your privacy: Hacking, Cyber attacks, Malware, Spyware

3. Values matter

Values are the rules that you live by, they are the things that matter most to you. These can be impacted by lots of things, your family or friends, or your community.

There are lots of ways to demonstrate your values, such as having harmony in the home, being a good neighbour, not stealing, standing up for what you believe in.

Our values can also influence how we take in information and how we see the world.



What are your top 5 values in life?

For me

For health and wellbeing

Values in my life

For work or education

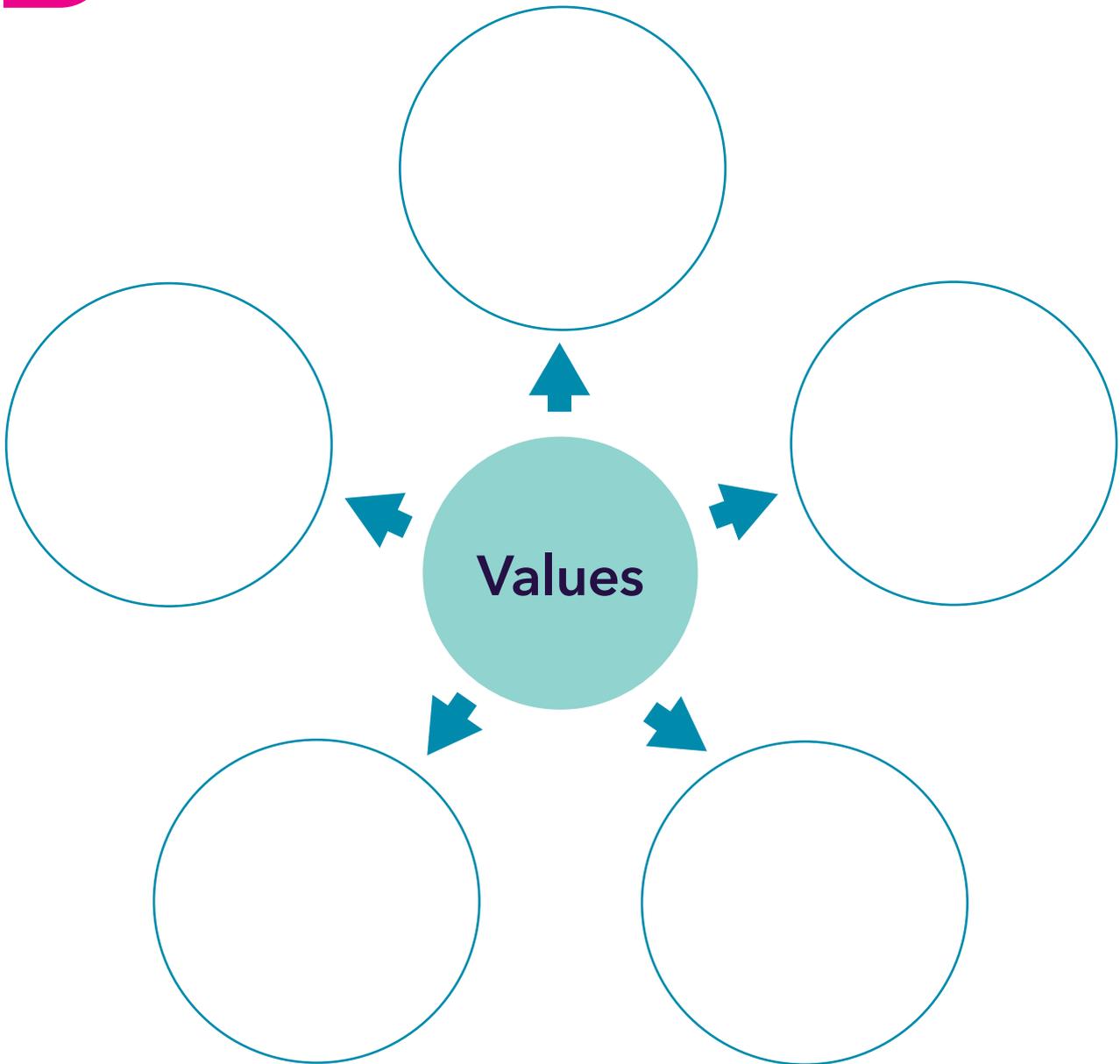
For family

For community

Values for a better society



What do you think are the top 5 values for our society?



My community

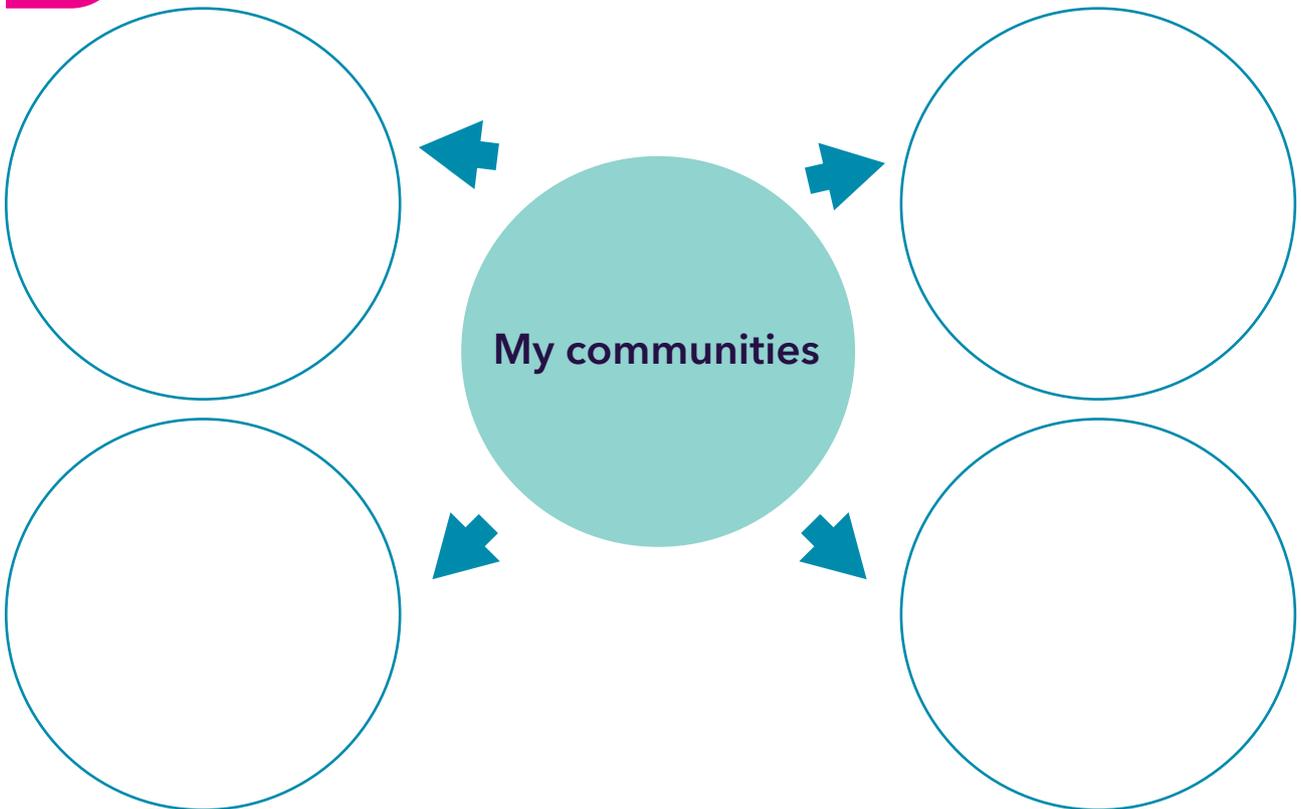
Think about what a community is.



Write down some thoughts.



What communities do you belong to?



What things do we need in a community to feel safe?

Building trust



Answer these questions.

1. When you are part of a community, how important is trust?

2. Can you think of an example where trust was an issue?

Imagine you are part of a local residents' organisation. You have a WhatsApp group for all the members. One evening one of your neighbours makes a comment that you find offensive.



Write down what you would do.

4. What's in the news?



Look at this YouTube video 'Unbelievable Flight Landing'.
Scan the QR code or visit this link online at
youtu.be/_POw3Vo_Sjk



Write down some thoughts about what you have watched.

I feel...

I wonder...

I believe...

I think...



To find out more now read this article by Newshub online.
Scan the QR code or visit this link [newshub.co.nz/home/travel/2018/09/dramatic-video-of-plane-landing-in-typhoon-mangkhut-a-fake.html](https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/travel/2018/09/dramatic-video-of-plane-landing-in-typhoon-mangkhut-a-fake.html)



Where do you get your news?



Answer these questions.

1. Where do you get your news from?

2. What is a trusted source of news?

List three news sources you trust.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Neutral or biased?



Look at this front page of a newspaper.



Photograph: The Daily Mail



Do you think it is biased? Why?



Read more about the reaction to this piece in The Guardian online. Scan the QR code visit this link theguardian.com/media/2017/mar/28/daily-mail-legs-it-front-page-sexist



Be a reporter



Read this personal account from someone who witnessed an incident.

"I was walking home from the library when I saw a group of people gathered around a tree. They were shouting and throwing things at the tree. I didn't know what was going on, but I could tell that something was wrong. I walked closer to see what was happening. When I got closer, I saw that there was a bird's nest in the tree.

"The people were trying to knock it down. I was really upset. I love birds, and I couldn't believe that someone would do something like that. I yelled at the people to stop, but they just ignored me.

"I didn't know what to do, so I just stood there for a few minutes. Then I remembered that I had my phone with me. I took a picture of the people and the tree and posted it on social media. I asked people to help me save the bird's nest.

"Within a few hours, I had hundreds of messages from people who wanted to help. Some people came to the tree with me and we stood around it to protect it. Others called the Gardaí and reported the incident. The Guards arrived a few minutes later and the people who were throwing things at the tree ran away. I learned that day that even if you're just one person, you can make a difference."



Now imagine you are a journalist and you have to report about this event.
Draft what you might say. You could suggest a picture to go with the story.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the student to write their draft report and suggest a picture.

5. How's it made?



Look at this 3-minute YouTube video where a Canadian news agency describes their editorial process. Scan the QR code or visit this link [youtube.com/watch?v=PNGZAWiKflo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNGZAWiKflo)



Write down some thoughts about what you have watched.

I feel...

I like...

I believe...

I think...



Name one positive and one negative highlight from the video.

Trust and the news



Look at the survey results below published by the European Commission in 2018. You can read more about the survey in this article '80% of people believe fake news "a problem for democracy' – EU study"' by Euronews. Scan the QR code or visit this link euronews.com/2018/03/13/80-of-people-believe-fake-news-a-problem-for-democracy-eu-study



'Trust and the media' survey results

- **83%** of those who responded (from over 26,000 people) believed that 'fake news is a danger to democracy'.
- **85%** of respondents think fake news is a problem in their country.
- **37%** said that they come across fake news every day or almost every day, and a further 31% said that this happens at least once a week.



Write down what you think about the statements below.

Statement	Your opinion
Fake news is a danger to democracy.	
Fake news is a problem in my country.	
I come across fake news every day or almost every day.	

Algorithms

Search engines and social media platforms use complex **algorithms** that shape what we see online. Based on data collected we are then shown advertising or posts that they think we will be interested in.

Social media companies believe there are benefits in using **algorithms**, such as:

1. They help you see more of what you're **interested** in;
2. They can help you **discover** new things;
3. In a world where we are shown a lot of content, they make the social media experience more **personalised** for you; and
4. They **filter** out all the other content that might 'distract' you from what you like.

Platforms can make money by **keeping users online**, and algorithms help to do just that. The longer you spend scrolling through your feed, the more likely you are to see ads. A feed is an updated list of all the content posted by other accounts on social media.



Read this article '**Who controls your Facebook feed**' by Will Ormus, The Slate (January 3, 2016). Scan the QR code or visit slate.com/articles/technology/cover_story/2016/01/how_facebook_s_news_feed_algorithm_works.html



"The like button wasn't just a new way for users to interact on the site. It was a way for Facebook to enlist its users in solving the problem of how best to filter their own news feeds. That users didn't realize they were doing this was perhaps the most ingenious part.

"If Facebook had told users they had to rank and review their friends' posts to help the company determine how many other people should see them, we would have found the process tedious and distracting.

"Facebook's news feed algorithm was one of the first to surreptitiously* enlist users in personalizing their experience – and influencing everyone else's."

* Surreptitiously - Something done in a way that attempts to avoid attention.

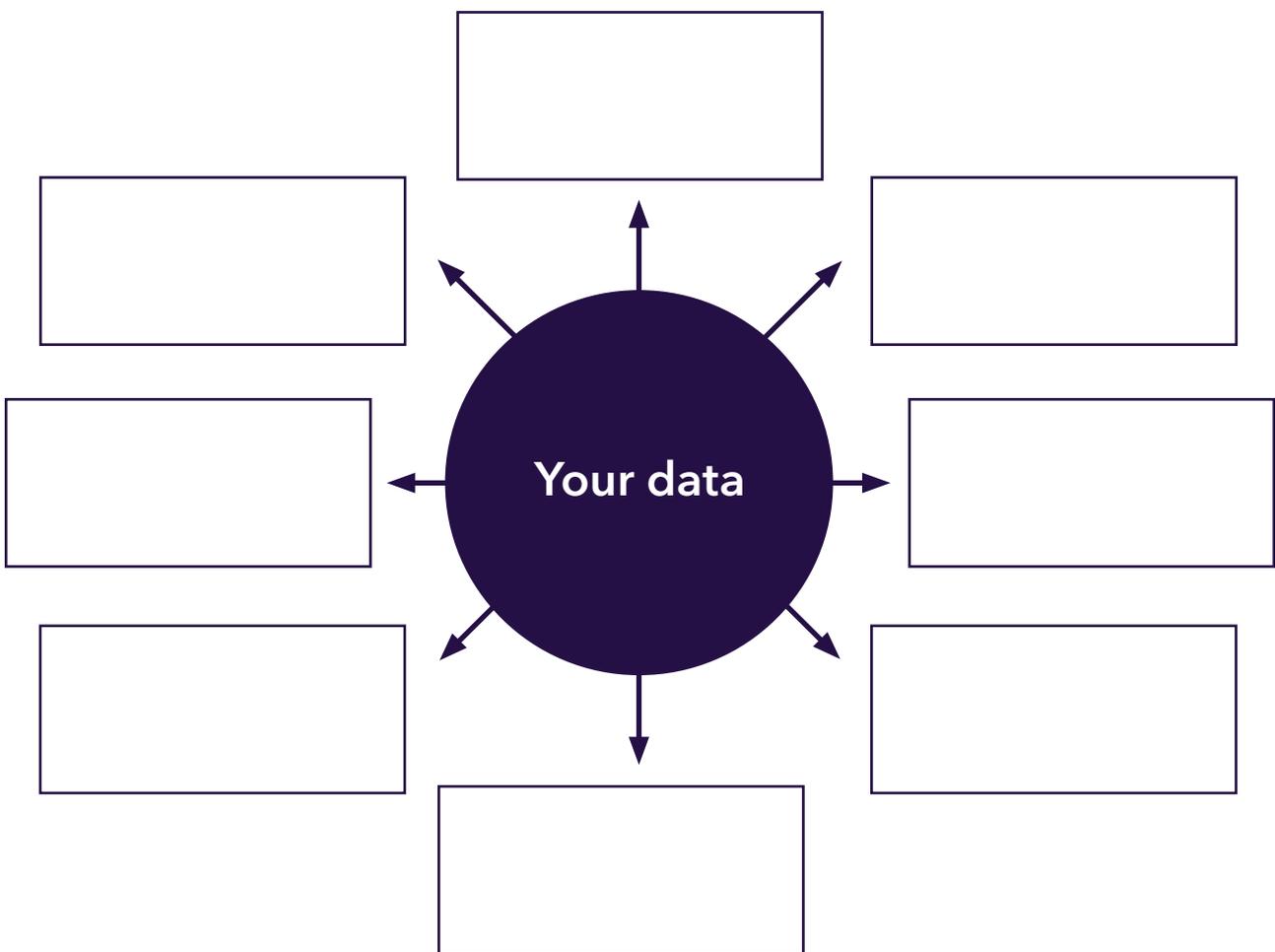
How your data is used

Pause for a moment and **think about the following:**

- Who uses your data and what do they want to do with it? Are they individuals, organisations or others?
- What are the potential motivations they might have for collecting data?
- Is the platform using you to make money from selling data and information about users like you?



Write down some points about where your data might be used and why.



Read this article 'The poison in our politics runs deeper than dodgy data' by Gary Younge, The Guardian (March 22, 2018). Scan the QR code or visit this link theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/22/us-politics-data-cambridge-analytica-russia-trump

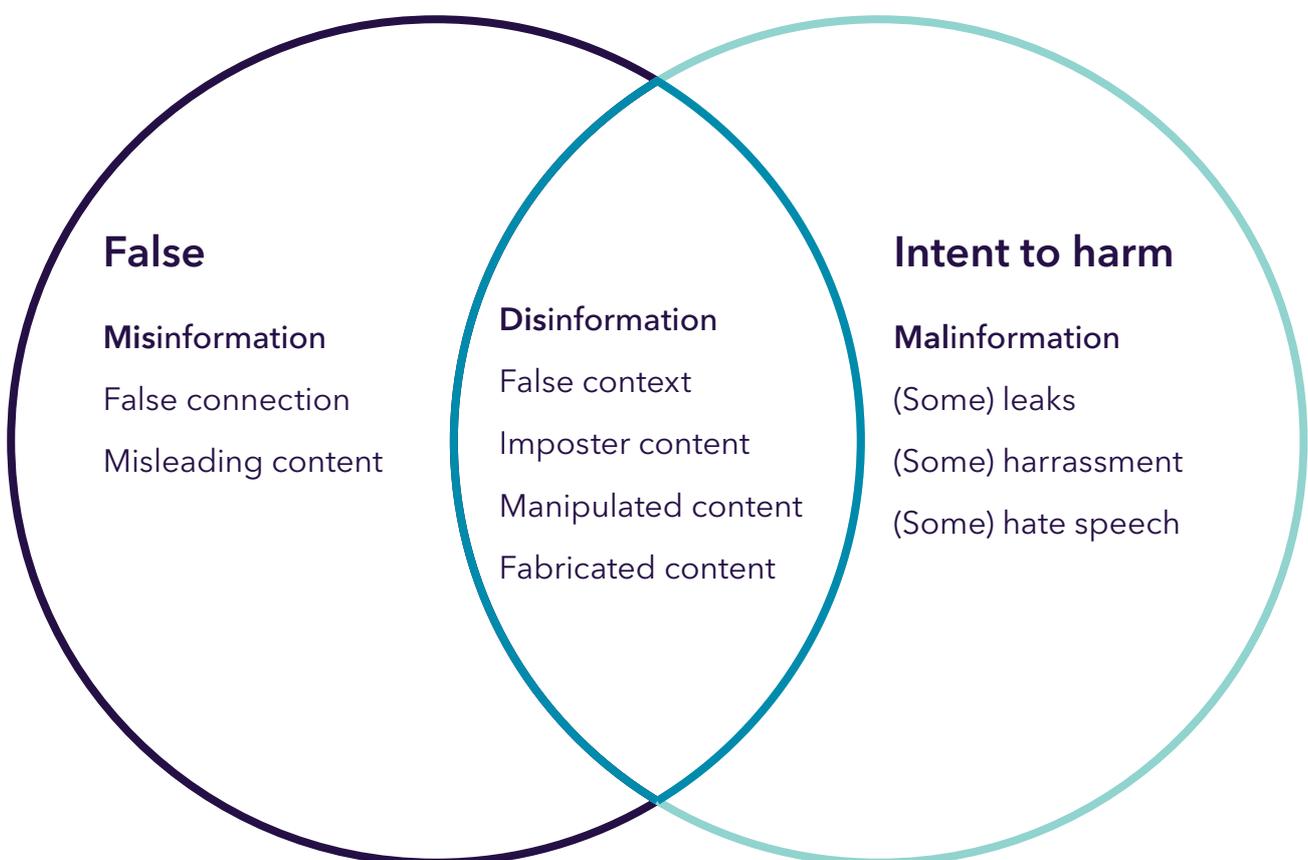


6. Breaking down tactics and techniques

Misinformation, disinformation and malinformation



Do you come across a lot of **misinformation**, **disinformation** and **malinformation**?



Misinformation - Information that is wrong, is not complete or is taken out of context.

Disinformation - False information is knowingly shared to cause confusion and harm.

Malinformation - True (or partly true) information that is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere.



Watch this video from Shout Out UK 'How to understand Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation'.

Scan the QR code or visit this link

youtube.com/watch?v=HD5MmuLDeFE



Dealing with misinformation

Tips for dealing with misinformation.

It is not unusual to find online posts, comments, blogs or images that contain in part or in whole, conspiracies, untruths or bad information.



Tips

1. Point it out, gently.

If someone posts a fake story and you think they have believed a lie, it can be useful to point out the error. However, please do so gently if in public. And sometimes a private message can be best.

2. Help promote a culture that respects truth.

Check your sources before you post anything. Support newspapers and other organisations that do good, reliable reporting. Discourage people in your own community when they promote stories that feel good to you, but are, sadly, untrue.

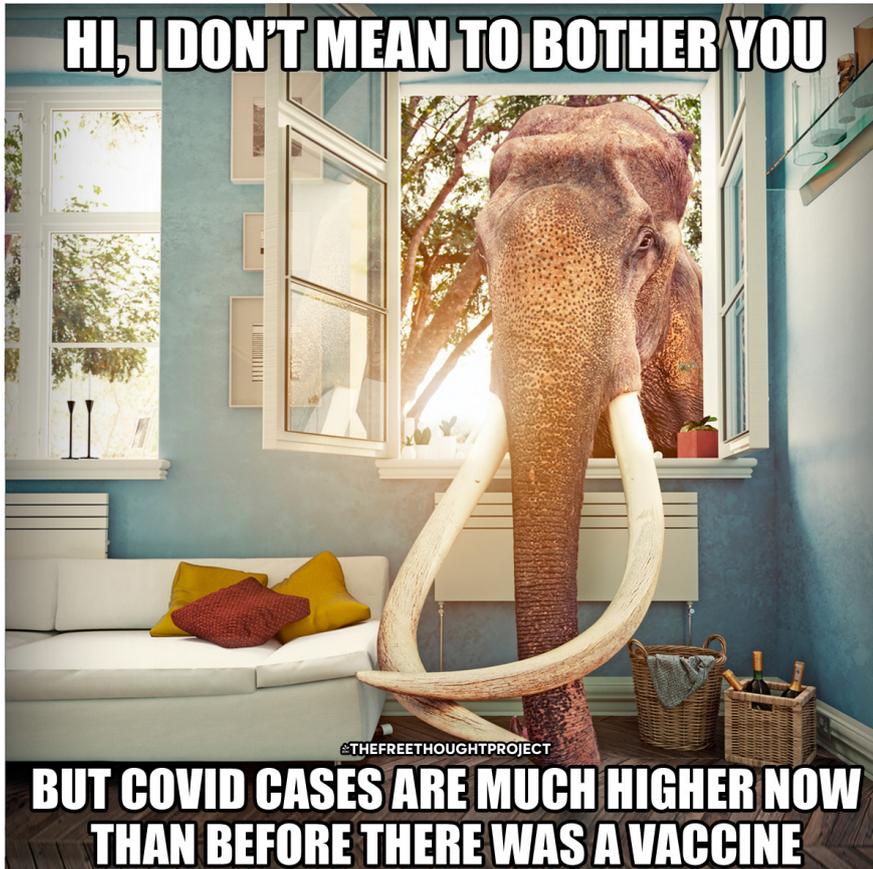
3. Appreciate humour.

Jokes and satire can be personal - funny to insiders, and often not understand or offensive to outsiders. Some people may find some jokes silly, rude or possibly crude or vulgar but unlike fake news they are not an attack on truth.

Spotting misinformation



Look at this image and write your answers to the questions below.



Source: Shared on Facebook, January 2022

Is this misinformation?

How are you going to check that?

If it is, what will you do?

About disinformation

Why is 'fake news' or disinformation created?

To make money - The more clicks and views a company gets, the more money they can make by using targeted or sensational advertising.

To share propaganda - Some governments and powerful organisations might like to control messages. They might hide messages they dislike or pay someone to publish what they want to see. This can be used to attack opponents or influence and disrupt public opinion at home or abroad.

To influence elections, civic actions or voting decisions - If a particular organisation or group would like someone to be elected, or would like to prevent someone from being elected.

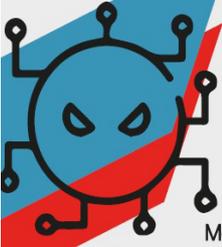


**Can you think of other reasons why disinformation or fake news is created?
Write down an example.**

Other tactics used online



Read this list of online abusers and their profiles.



Did you know?
In Europe, 9 million girls experience online violence by the age of 15.

They are confronted with online abusers.
Meet the cyber sexual harasser *also known as*

THE TROLL

TACTICS Attacks women who assert their opinions online.

HABITAT Comments sections, forums, chatrooms.



Did you know?
1 out of 4 European teenage girls experience cyberbullying.

They are confronted with online abusers.
Meet the humiliator *also known as*

THE CYBERBULLY

TACTICS Repeatedly sends hurtful messages and starts rumors to shame and humiliate.

HABITAT Social networks, communication apps.



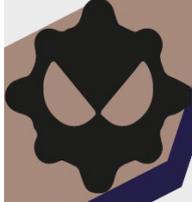
Did you know?
Hacking discussion sites count millions of posts with the images of female "slaves" stolen by hackers on women's webcams.

They are confronted with online abusers.
Meet the invador *also known as*

THE HACKER

TACTICS Intercepts private information and communication, i.e. webcams.

HABITAT Can be everywhere.



Did you know?
In 2015, 31 women human rights defenders were murdered.

They were confronted with online abusers.
Meet the dangerous defamator *also known as*

THE MALICIOUS DISTRIBUTOR

TACTICS Uses new technologies and a propaganda tool to promote violence against women or women's rights groups.

HABITAT Social networks.



Source: © #HerNetHerRights resource pack by the European Women's Lobby.

Scan the QR code or visit womenlobby.org to read more about the tactics of online abusers.



Standing up



Think about how you could stand up against one of the profiles on the previous page

Abuser name:	Tactics:
Two ideas or approaches to stand up to them: 1. 2.	
What can I do?	What can we do?



Read this article 'How to deal with internet trolls' by Spunout. Scan the QR code or visit this link spunout.ie/voices/advice/dont-feed-the-trolls/



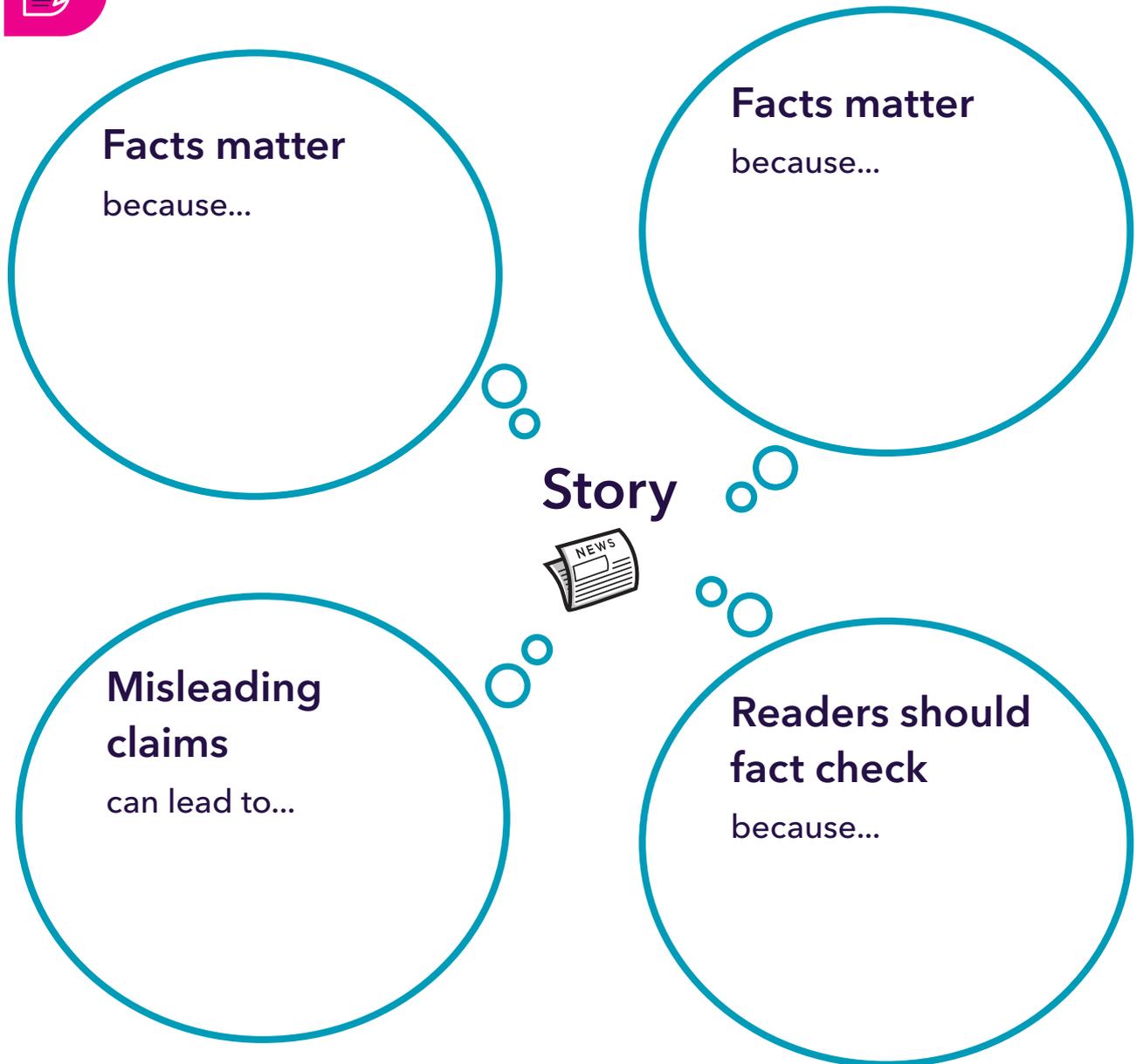
7. Press pause



Watch this video 'Facts Matter' by fact-checking journalists about International Fact Checking Day on 2 April. Scan the QR code or visit youtube.com/watch?v=RULcren_EKk



Write down some thoughts about what you have watched.



What facts did you check this week? What facts will you check after this?

Think of 6 before you click



Watch, listen or read a news piece of your choice and answer the below.

1. Who is the source?

2. What is it about?

3. Where did it happen?

4. When did it happen?

5. How did it end up on the news?

6. Why did it end up on the news?

Online article debunked



Read this article 'Debunked: The official US women's soccer team did not lose 12-0 to a team of Wrexham "veterans"' from TheJournal.ie. Scan the QR code or visit this link thejournal.ie/wrexham-soccer-us-womens-team-tst-the-soccer-tournament-6115125-Jul2023/



Write down some thoughts about what you have just read.



The Journal Fact Check unit check factual claims made by public figures or organisations about topical issues. They also check or debunk memes, online hoaxes, rumours and viral content.



Scan the QR code to find out more or visit this link thejournal.ie/the-journal-factcheck/

8. Get the facts

Reading headlines



Read these headlines and answer the questions below.

PM: WHY WE MUST NOT TAKE 3,000 MIGRANT CHILDREN

It would just encourage new influx, he says

Source: Daily Mail

U-turn over resettlement of Syrian children

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

Britain will take in unaccompanied Syrian refugee children who are already in Europe, under a new scheme to be announced by the Home Office today.

It is the first time the UK has agreed to take Syrian refugees from within Europe, and follows calls from charities and politicians for the country to allow 3,000 children fleeing the civil war to settle.

James Brokenshire, immigration minister, said the government would work with the office of the UN high commissioner for refugees to identify the exceptional cases where a child's best interests are served by resettlement to the UK and help us to bring them here." The announce-

ment comes hours after David Cameron was accused of using inflammatory language about refugees at prime minister's questions, where he referred to people in camps as "lumps of migrants".
Saw the Children, the Liberal Democrat leader, Tim Farron, and the former Labour cabinet minister Yvette Cooper have all argued that Britain needs to make a special case of some of the estimated 26,000 unaccompanied child refugees in Europe, as they are prey to human traffickers and

£10m
The sum set aside to bring unaccompanied Syrian refugee children in Europe to the UK. Charities say 3,000 such children should be settled

in danger of being forced into prostitution or being used as a form of cheap labour.

As many as 1,000 unaccompanied child refugees disappeared in Italy alone last year, prompting calls for a modern day Kindertransport: a scheme similar to the one that saved many children in the second world war.

The Home Office said it could not predict the precise number of children that would be helped by the new scheme.

Under the new arrangement, many of the children will be allowed to come to the UK, but in some cases the effort will be focused on settling them with their parents elsewhere in Europe.

Ministers have promised to take 20,000 refugees over the course of the parliament.

Continued on page 4 →

Source: The Guardian

What is your reaction to these headlines?

Would you like or share them? Why?



Read this article from The Guardian 'A tale of two press releases: what's behind the Guardian and Mail's contrasting refugee stories?'. Scan the QR code or visit this link theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/28/a-tale-of-two-press-releases-whats-behind-the-guardian-and-mails-contrasting-refugee-stories



Dig deeper

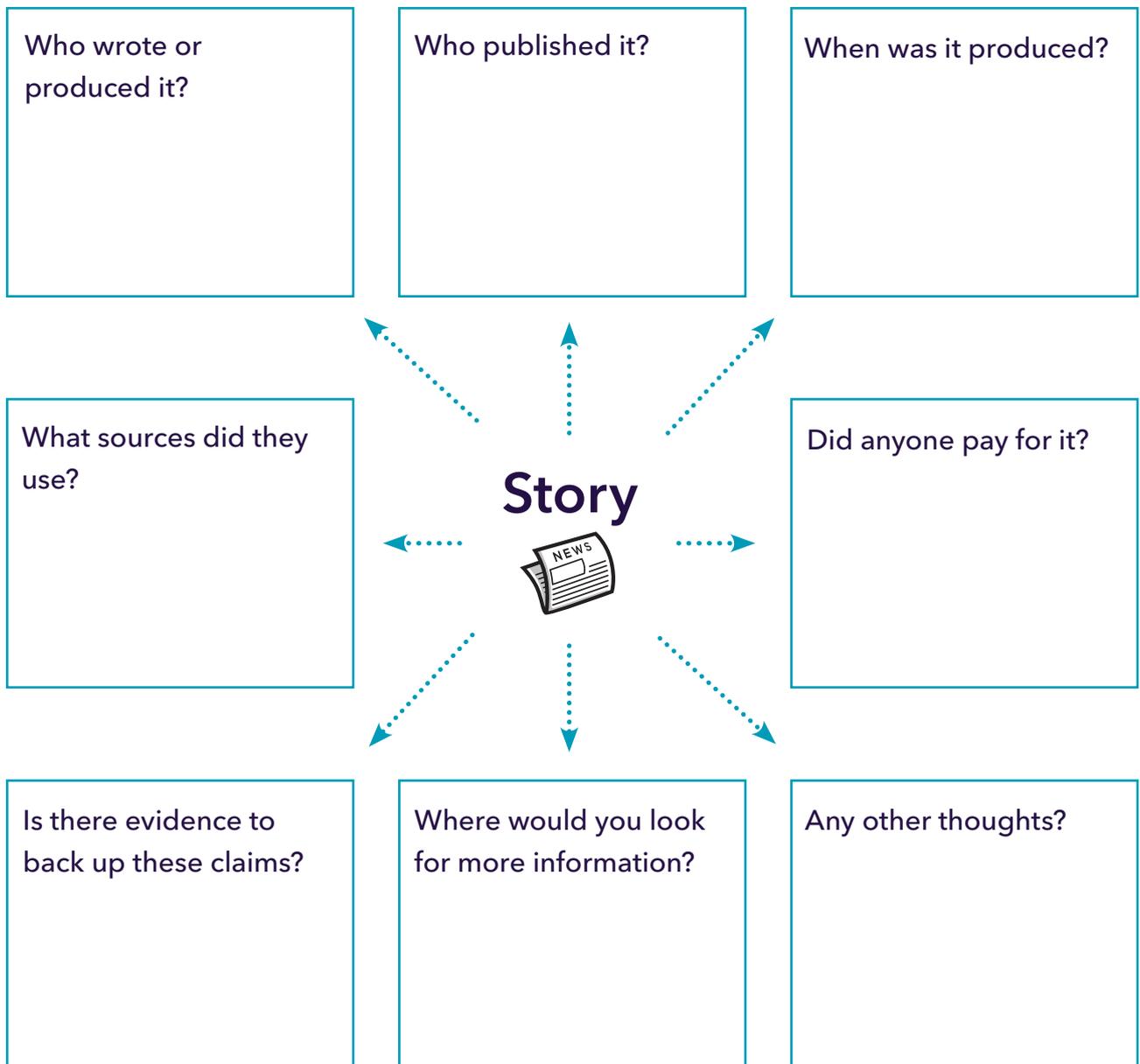


Read a story of your choice from the **9 at 9** section on [TheJournal.ie](https://www.thejournal.ie/9-at-9/news/). Scan the QR code or visit this link [thejournal.ie/9-at-9/news/](https://www.thejournal.ie/9-at-9/news/)



We need to learn more about this story. How can we do that?

Think about the questions below and write your answers.



Fact-checking tips

It is relatively easy to make a quick fact check if you have got access to the internet.



Here are some useful tips and links.

- ✓ Check the facts of the claim by **finding different sources** which could confirm the facts.
- ✓ Use **several search engines** like Google or Bing. Avoid using Wikipedia or any other single source as the only source of information.
- ✓ Check the **domain owner information** from, for example, the **WHOIS service** online at **whois.com**
- ✓ Verify the **authenticity of the images** (is it real?) by using, for example, **Google reverse image search** online at **google.com/imghp**.
You can upload an image and it gives you search results with more details.
 - First Draft has an excellent **Verification Toolbox** to help you to verify images, links and videos at **firstdraftnews.org/verification-toolbox/**
 - Check also the **free verification tools** offered by InVid at **invid-project.eu**
- ✓ Check if the **fact-checking organisations** have already examined the case, for example the **Coronavirus Facts/Datos Coronavirus Alliance database** online at **poynter.org/ifcn-covid-19-misinformation/**
- ✓ **Trust scientific facts**, not just opinions!

The internet and social media are overloaded by information on every imaginable subject. It is a real challenge for us all to find, select, use and share the most reliable information. If we are sensible social media users with critical thinking and information literacy skills, we can avoid getting fooled.

Let's reflect and check the facts before sharing or liking anything!

Read more

- **Infodemics Observatory, 2020** online at **covid19obs.fbk.eu**
- **FaktaBaari Infodemic Survival Kit** online at **faktabaari.fi/edu/infodemic-survival-kit/**

How to spot fake news



What would you do to spot fake news?



Consider the source

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact information.



Read beyond

Headlines can be sensational. What is the whole story behind the headline?



Check the author

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



Supporting sources?

Find out if the story information given actually supports the story.



Check the date

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they are relevant to current events.



Is it a joke?

If it is too ridiculous, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



Check your biases

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



Ask the experts

Ask someone who might have knowledge about a topic.

Source: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions at ifla.org

9. Thinking smart and checking bias

It is important to question myself and the people around me.



Look at this meme and think about if you would share it.

(A meme is an image, video, piece of text, often humorous in nature that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users.)



Look at this post and answer the questions on the next page.

This is not a conspiracy theory.

NEW WORLD ORDER UN Agenda 21/2030 Mission Goals



- One World Government
- One World cashless Currency
- One World Central Bank
- One World Military
- The end of national sovereignty
- The end of ALL privately owned property
- The end of the family unit
- Depopulation, control of population growth and population density
- Mandatory multiple vaccines
- Universal basic income (austerity)
- Microchipped society for purchasing, travel, tracking and controlling
- Implementation of a world Social Credit System (like China has)
- Trillions of appliances hooked into the 5G monitoring system (Internet of Things)
- Government raised children
- Government owned and controlled schools, Colleges, Universities
- The end of private transportation, owning cars, etc.
- All businesses owned by government/corporations
- The restriction of nonessential air travel
- Human beings concentrated into human settlement zones, cities
- The end of irrigation
- The end of private farms and grazing livestock
- The end of single family homes
- Restricted land use that serves human needs
- The ban of natural non synthetic drugs and naturopathic medicine
- The end of fossil fuels

Source: Shared on Facebook,
May 2020

To share or not to share



Answer these questions about the post on the previous page.

1. Would you share that post on social media or WhatsApp? Yes No
2. If you would share it, why?

3. What worries do you have about sharing this post on a social media platform?

4. What would you do if your friend shared this post or sent it to you on WhatsApp?



Now read this article by USA Today 'Fact check: U.N. Agenda 21/2030 'New World Order' is not a real document' to find out more about this post.

Scan the QR code or visit this link eu.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/07/23/fact-check-uns-agenda-21-2030-agenda-wont-create-new-world-order/5474884002/



Being alert and observant



Look at this image.



Think about these questions:

Are you looking at the original piece of content or has it been edited?

Who took the photo and when?

What can you tell about the location?

Why was the photo taken? Who benefits (or loses out) from its production?

What might a fuller picture look like?



Answer these questions.

Would you share this image? Yes No

If not, why not?

You can find out more about where this image came from on page 54.

Bias

There are lots of different types of bias. In this section we will discuss confirmation and unconscious bias.

Confirmation bias

Confirmation bias is about our habit to:

- More readily believe information that supports – or confirms – our existing worldviews, beliefs and values; and
- Exclude information that might be different to them.

Examples could be:

- **Cherry-picking:** If you catch yourself searching for or giving more credit to one-sided evidence, including reading the news from only one source or only reading one news report for evidence.
- **On Google:** Search engine algorithms are designed to give you what you want. So, when you phrase questions in a one-sided way, you'll likely find information that confirms your pre-existing belief.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is when we either hold a prejudice or stereotype or a preference for certain groups of people and we might not be aware we have these views.

For example, you might assume that all young people are good with technology or that older people don't play sports.

Addressing unconscious bias

1. Try to meet a **diverse range of people**.
2. Learn from people who are **open minded and tolerant**.
3. Surround yourself with **open-minded media**.
4. **Model standards** by setting an example – avoid stereotypical images and examples.



Watch this video **How AI Image Generators Make Bias Worse** by the LIS – The London Interdisciplinary School.
Scan the QR code or visit this link youtu.be/L2sQRrf1Cd8



Can you think of a time when you saw or experienced bias?

How bias can escalate



Here are some terms you might hear in situations where bias can escalate.

Bias: When we have a preference for or against an individual or a group which clouds our judgement.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of one person or a group of people because of their identity (for example, race, religion, gender, ability and so on). Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

Genocide: To deliberately and systematically annihilate (wipe out) an entire religious, racial, national or cultural group.

Hate crime: A criminal act directed at a person or group because of their identity.

Prejudice: Judging or forming an idea about someone or a group of people before you actually know them. Prejudice is often directed toward people in a certain identity group such as race, religion or gender.

Scapegoating: Blaming a person or group for something, when the fault actually lies elsewhere. They usually lack the power or opportunity to fight back.

Stereotype: The false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way, based on an oversimplified generalisation of the group.

Bias-motivated violence: An action that emotionally or physically harms a person or group and that is motivated by the identity of the person or group (for example, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and so on).

10. Back to you

We hope this magazine has helped you learn more about critical thinking and media literacy.

Now is a good time to reflect on how you will assess information you see.



List what you can potentially do in relation to each of the 6 approaches listed.

Slow down

Take a different perspective

Expand my group

Ask myself

I can

Be a role model

Learn about cultural differences

Further information



Here are 5 things you can do now.

1. Learn some tips

Visit the **Be Media Smart campaign website** by Media Literacy Ireland to learn more about the Stop, Think, Check method to help find accurate and reliable information.

Scan the QR code or visit this link bemediasmart.ie/tips



2. Watch a TED Talk.

Watch this short TED talk video '**Beware online "filter bubbles"**' by author and organiser Eli Pariser. Scan the QR code or visit this link youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWfX525s



3. Look up a FactCheck service.

Explore articles from the **FactCheck Unit on TheJournal.ie**, regularly. Scan the QR code or visit this link thejournal.ie/factcheck/news/



4. Watch a documentary.

Watch '**The Great Hack**' (2019) on Netflix. Scan the QR code or visit this link to watch the trailer youtube.com/watch?v=iX8GxLP1FHo



5. Learn how to de-escalate (calm a situation down).

- Think about how you could de-escalate hate towards a person or a group of people, online or offline.
- Report hateful content to moderators and social media platforms, and be kind in supporting friends who may have shared something by accident.
- Look to the **Irish Network Against Racism** for useful information. Scan the QR code or visit this link inar.ie/hate-speech-monitoring/



'Questions Matter' is a magazine for adult learners to build knowledge, understanding and confidence in critical thinking in today's media and digital world. It was published by 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World and the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

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National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh, Dublin 6
D06 YF65

Phone: 01 412 7900

Email: info@nala.ie

Websites: nala.ie
learnwithnala.ie

Freephone: 1 800 20 20 65

Registered Charity Number: 20020965

Charity Number: 8506

Company Number: 342807

80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World

St. Cronan's BNS
Vevay Road, Bray
Co. Wicklow

Phone: 01 286 0487

Email: info@8020.ie

Website: 8020.ie

Registered Charity Number: 20034221



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Riálas na hÉireann
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Có-mhaoinithe ag an
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SOLAS
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