

FACT-TRACKING FAKE NEWS

FAKE NEWS IS DANGEROUS, VERY DANGEROUS!!!!

How do you determine whether a piece of information or news on WhatsApp or Facebook in text, video or audio is factual/true or is a lie?

Use the 5Ws+H method to verify the authenticity of the information.

W=WHAT?

- What is the central issue in the story narrated or in the information presented?
- Could the information be propaganda?
- Is it a personal opinion, point of view disguised as information?
- I it about a person, a personality, a group, an interest group such as a political party?

W = WHERE?

Check on author's sources:

- Where did the author obtain the information presented?
- Are the sources credible?
- Is the source first hand, eye witness, or is the source secondary?
- Where is the story taking place?
- For a story on video, examine the location to find out whether the surrounding environment of the story fits in with the known geography of the place?

W = WHEN?

- When did the event in the story take place? (date of happening)

- When was the story published?
- Why is the story published at this moment?
- Is there a gap between date of happening and date of publication? If yes, why?

W = WHO

Who is the author/creator of the information?

Check on competence/expertise:

- Has the author the competence/expertise?
- Has he/she got a convincing professional status, level of education, level of knowledge, and experience in the field of the information published?

Check on reputation:

- Has the author got a reputation in the domain of the information published?
- What do other people know about the author?
- What do other people say about the author?

Check on affiliation(s):

- To what institutions or organizations including political party, religion and other interest groups does the author belong?

Check on key actors in the story:

- Who are the key actors in the story?
- Have they all been presented, or the author has decided to present only those who illustrate his/her own side of the story?

Check on target audience

- Who are the persons or group of people targeted as audience?
- Why is that particular audience/group of persons selected as target?

W=WHY

- Why, or for what reason is the author creating or posting the information?

- What goal/objective does the author want to achieve through the information?

Check on news/information headline:

The headline gives you a clue/an indication/an idea on the intentions or expectations of the author.

- From the headline, is the author already trying to guide/influence and direct you to a particular idea, point of view, and the way to understand the story?

H = How?

- How is the story told, or the information presented?
- Be careful with stories which begin with attention-catching devices like: "breaking!!", "breaking news" "alert", "urgent", "hurry up", "warning" for they can mislead you into thoughtless conclusions and actions.
- Are all sides of the story presented, or the author has decided to tell only the side of the story that satisfies her/his own opinion?
- Be careful with the use of propaganda language which divides people or communities into "good" and "bad", "inferior" and "superior", "them" and "us", "we" and "they" so commonly used by bad politicians.
- What is the message in the conclusion or comment of the information according to the author?

“Remember, if you are found guilty of fake news lands you 6 months to two (02) years in jail

-Or fine of 5.000.000 to 10.000.000 CFA or both fine and imprisonment”

(law n° 2010/012 of December 2010).