

- Fact-checking

FACT CHECKING BASICS

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Gone are the days when one can trust every bit of information that he or she comes by online. These days, one has to proactively fact check news and features that're posted in social media – most especially when such news and features appear to be too good to be true. Here are takes on the basics on how to go about fact checking information in the net, some fact checking basics, if you will.



Be Skeptical

Being skeptical is not necessarily a bad thing, especially when it comes to information that you come by online or in social media.

In fact, being skeptical is one of the perks of the interactive nature of the internet, in the sense that you can actually use the internet to look up if information that you come by is true.

In most cases, one should be skeptical of information or “news” that confirms specific biases or appear to be intentionally made to trigger strong emotions like anger or fear.

Verify The Type of Content

The internet is host to all sorts of content, and when it comes to information that you come by, it pays to verify what type of content it is.

Ask yourself, is it an opinion piece? Is it from a satire or spoof site? Is it an advertisement?

Having an understanding on what type of content you are reading gives you an idea on how to properly process it.

A Lateral Approach is Better Than Just Trusting One Source

A lateral approach in fact checking means that you should consider what others are saying about a certain topic or story.

Basically, don't just read one story about a certain topic. Check what others are saying, with particular focus on accuracy and the level of bias that a source has towards a certain topic.

The approach may come off as too cumbersome or too much work, but it's a price worth paying to be fully informed with what's going on.

Consider Red Flags

Red flags in fact checking tends to take shape in things like crass name calling and the use of inflammatory language.

In the case of “news sites”, things like misspellings and grammatical errors are big red flags to watch out for, as well as the use of graphics/visuals that tend to paint a certain story with specific biases and leanings.

In most cases, “news” that appear to be more concerned on rousing emotions instead of informing readers are big red flags.