CHECKLIST: CAN YOU SPOT 'FAKE NEWS' ONLINE?

'Fake news' (or disinformation) can mislead us about politics, health, the environment and other important aspects of our world.

As social media platforms are increasingly becoming sources of news, we all need to be able to spot 'fake news' online and know how to report it.

1. What's the website address?

Sites that spread disinformation often use names that look familiar but have a few spelling changes or errors. Some also have a strange domain, like '.co'.

Do a quick online search to see if the site is considered a legitimate place to find accurate and reliable information.

2. Where is this information coming from?

Take a closer look at the site and the story. Is there anything on the site that proves that it's telling the truth? Are they using reputable sources to prove their claims? If they aren't, it may be 'fake news'.

3. Is the headline accurate?

Headlines are designed to shock us and grab our attention, but they don't always tell the full story. Take a look at the story and ask yourself: is this headline exaggerating the facts?

Another tip: many 'fake news' headlines are written in all caps and use lots of exclamation marks.

4. Look beyond the photo

Images aren't always proof. Any photo or video can be easily edited or used out of context. Examine these images critically before believing a story and check if reputable news outlets are also covering it.

5. Are there mistakes or errors?

Are the dates in the story adding up? Are there typos or strangely written sentences? These are common signs that the story is false.

6. Is it a joke?

Many sites write fictional accounts of current events to make us laugh. Take a look at the site before accepting the story as truth. Is it known for satire and comedy?

7. Check it with trusted sources

Are any reputable media outlets covering the story you've seen? Can you find any credible evidence to support it? If you can't, it's likely false.

8. Check the facts on these websites

- Media Literacy Ireland
- FactCheck NI
- TheJournal.ie's fact check
- Snopes