# Session 7 - Questioning what we see online

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| **Resources** | |
| ‘Fact’ ‘Opinion’ ‘Bias’ sheets | 3 sheets of paper and pen |
| Resource Sheet 1 – Fact, opinion and bias | 1 copy for the facilitator |
| Resource Sheet 2 - **How can we differentiate between real and fake news?** | A copy for each student  Paper and pen for each group of students |
| Resource Sheet 3 - How advertisers influence us online | A copy for each student |
| Resource Sheet 4 - Questions to ask if we follow someone online | A copy for each student |
| PowerPoint slides 16-21 | Computer, projector and screen |
| My evaluation sheet | Each student has a copy |
| My Acceptable User Policy | Each student has a copy |

**Intended learning outcomes: ‘I …’ statement(s)**

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| I know how online images and language can influence how I feel  I understand how information is targeted at users of different social media  I know how important it is to question what I see and hear online, and the values and motives of the person who posted it.  I can resist unreasonable pressure (and help my friends to do the same) from people who try to persuade us to their view. I know how to get help if this concerns me. |

**Note:** One of the SEL foci of this session is identifying and articulating emotions and facilitators will be sensitive to this. Participants may find it upsetting to express their inferences from, and responses to, online content. The session may remind them of their experiences, both in their home countries and abroad, and facilitators may need support to ensure that this doesn't adversely affect the learning experience and the wellbeing of the group.

**Welcome**

Welcome students and ask whether they have done anything to change their online behaviour at home since the last session.

**Warm-up activity: Fact, opinion and bias**

**Purpose:** to establish the difference between fact, opinion and bias in order to help students judge online information

Write ‘Fact’ in large letters on one sheet of paper, ‘Opinion’ on a second sheet and ‘Bias on a third sheet. Put the sheets on the floor or wall spaced well apart. Explain that we are going to think about the differences between Fact, Opinion and Bias. Ask what students think the differences are. Agree that

* Facts can be checked to be true (or not).
* Opinions are beliefs and can't be checked
* Bias supports a certain side and presents an unfair view, using language that focuses on feelings

Explain that you are going to read out some statements and students must decide whether they are Fact, Opinion or Bias and stand by the appropriate piece of paper.

Read out the statements on Resource sheet 1 and discuss students’ decisions. How can they recognize the difference between fact, opinion and bias?

**Review group aims:**

Remind students of the group aims and ask how well we have achieved one of them recently.

**Plan for today’s session**

Explain that, today, we will work on these learning outcomes for each student in the group.

* I know how online images and language can influence how I feel
* I understand how information is targeted at users of different social media
* I know how important it is to question what I see and hear online, and the values and motives of the person who posted it.
* I can resist unreasonable pressure, and help my friends to do the same, from people who try to persuade us to their view. I know how to get help if this concerns me.

Ensure they understand what the learning outcomes mean and tell them you will be asking them at the end of the session to think about whether they think they have been achieved.

**Core Activity 1: Evaluating online images and information**

**Purpose:** To begin a discussion about how information can be distorted and falsified online

Show the short video [Photo Hoax: #2 - Shark Attacks Helicopter!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOwpLHBzFvk)  which explains how a false image was made from two unrelated photos.

Freeze on the image and ask students to describe what is happening. What are the emotional responses of people who are seeing it for the first time? (shock, fear, anxiety...)

Then play the video and discuss afterwards the motivation that the creator of the image might have for making and distributing it. How do our ideas about this affect our attitude to what we see online?

**Core Activity 2 Fake News**

**Purpose:** To help students think critically about online information and distinguish between real and fake stories and news.

Ask what students understand by the term ‘fake news’.

It may be:

1. Untrue stories which are intentionally published to influence your thoughts and decisions, or to make you visit particular websites (which could be fraudulent, or feature content you would not normally wish to see), believe something false or buy certain products or services.

2. Stories which are only partially true, such as reporting a factual event but misreporting some of the circumstances or facts around it, such as motives and quotes. This type of fake news is designed to spread the ideologies and views of the individual or organisation originating it, influencing its readers.

Alternatively, some fake news originates purely through people passing on stories they have heard. And because many people tend not to check the source of online content before they share it, it can go viral very quickly.

Some people also deliberately claim that factually accurate news is actually fake news, because they either do not agree with it, or dislike it.

Divide students into small groups. Give them a sheet of paper and a pen and ask them to choose a scribe for their group. They have 5 minutes to have a meeting to list ways in which we can find out whether news is real or fake.

Give out Resource sheet 4. Is there anything there that was not on their list? Is there anything on their list that was not on the sheet?

**Core Activity 3: How are we affected by advertisements or influencers online?**

**Purpose:** To help students to question the effect that what they see online has on them and the motives of those who attempt to influence them

Use Resource sheet 2 to consider how online advertisements are targeted at individuals using an imaginary interview with an ‘Expert’.

You could act as the ‘Expert’ and ask a student volunteer to be the interviewer. Or students could work in pairs to act out the interview.

Ask and discuss with the whole group:

What information about you is online? *(Advertisers may use location services, social media posts (theirs and friends/families), smart speaker monitoring (see Session 6) and, maybe, even calendars to target adverts*)

What would you say to discourage a friend from being manipulated by online advertising?

We may also be influenced by people who are famous or who become famous through their online presence. They may have millions of followers who all feel as if they know them personally. It is not always clear that they may get money from advertisers to promote their goods..

Give out Resource Sheet 3. Ask if anyone in the group follows an influencer online.

Have they asked themselves these questions?

Which of these questions do they think is most important? (There is no right answer! The purpose is to help them to consider the questions).

Are there any other questions they would add?

Agree that there is a lot to be gained by using social media but it is important to be aware of what lies behind what we are shown.

**Core Activity 4: The influence of people with extreme views**

**Purpose:** To raise the question of extremism and help students to understand how extremists may attempt to influence their online followers.

Whilst it is possible for influencers to encourage very positive changes in the world, there are people who have a strong online presence but whose aim is to cause harm to others. Their values may be very different from those of most people. We see stories in the news of young people who have been persuaded by those they met online to have sex with older people or to do very violent acts.

Ask students to discuss in pairs the values that they think most people would like to see in the country where they live e.g. respect for others.

Show and discuss PPT slides 17 and 18

PPT slide 19 – Extremists may not think these values are important. They are people who strongly support a certain idea or cause in a way that most people would think unreasonable. They may use these views to justify hateful or harmful behaviour towards those they oppose or who oppose them

Yet they manage to persuade other people to agree with them. How do they do this?

PPT slide 20 - Extremist groups often tell stories which are personalised to make the listeners feel certain emotions. The stories may be based on events that are true, exaggerated or completely made up.

They will look out for vulnerable people who may be unhappy or lonely and who they think they can persuade to agree with their extremist views.

Ask students to work in small groups and, remembering everything we have discussed today about fake news, advertising, influencers and how these make them feel when they see them online, to discuss what they would do if they thought a friend had been influenced by an extremist group.

Share their ideas and explain what support is available in these circumstances.

PPT Slide 21 Discuss how we can tell whether what we see online is biassed.

**Agree that it is important for us all to question what we see or hear online, to think about how it affects our feelings and to be sure that we are not being unduly manipulated or hurt by it. Remember what we learned about digital resilience in Session3.**

**Review and reflection on intended learning outcomes and group aims**

Ask the students to indicate how well they feel they have achieved the session learning outcomes by using ‘thumbs up, thumbs level or thumbs down’. If students indicate that they haven’t achieved the learning outcome ask why and ensure that you plan the next sessions accordingly, or offer further support if possible.

Ask them to complete their evaluation sheet and personal Acceptable User Policy for Session 7

Ask students to think about what we have learned today and how they will be cyber-safe and responsible when they are online.

**Session 7 . Resource Sheet 1: Fact, opinion and bias**

Paris is the capital of France

I think Paris is more beautiful than London

Paris is the most beautiful capital in the world

I think my football team has a good chance of winning the match tomorrow

My football team has won 5 of its last 6 matches

My football team is the best in the whole country

Eating oranges is the best way of getting the Vitamin C that keeps you healthy and stops you from catching colds

Oranges contain Vitamin C

I think oranges taste nice

Diamonds are made of carbon

Diamonds are the most beautiful objects in the world

Diamonds are very expensive to buy

That was the best film I have watched recently

That is the greatest film ever made

That film won an Oscar last year

**Session 7. Resource Sheet 2: How can we differentiate between real and fake news?**

**Ask yourself ‘Would this actually happen?’** Why was this written? Is it attempting to change my viewpoint, sell me something, redirect me to another website or simply shock me?

**Is anybody else reporting the same story?** Check to see if reputable newsfeeds and websites have also covered the news you have seen.

**Research the source.** Find out more about who posted it. Is a well-known, normally reliable source or the personal blog of an individual? Are there unbiassed reviews of the source?

**Check facts.** Real news is often backed up by official data, surveys and reports of something similar having happened before.

**Check images.** Photos or illustrations accompanying fake news are often retouched to reinforce the story, and often this is not done very well. You can try a Google reverse image search to see if the image has been stolen from another source.

**Use your instincts.** Remember that if something sounds too strange, unreal or weird to be true, it often is!

**Session 7 . Resource Sheet 3: How advertisers influence us online**

**Interviewer:** Welcome to our expert in online advertising. How can we begin to think about it?

**Expert :** Let’s start by going back 200 years. People didn’t go to a lot of shops then. They bought from pedlars who came to their houses with carts full of goods. Pedlars would look at their customers and their homes and guess how much money they had, what their lives were like, what they wanted or didn’t want. Then they would show them things that they thought they would buy. They didn’t show them everything in their cart.

**Interviewer:** What has this got to do with online advertising?

**Expert:** Now people who want to sell you something don’t come to your house. But they still behave like the pedlars did. They guess what you like or don’t like. To do that they use algorithms.

**Interviewer:** What is an algorithm?

**Expert:** An algorithm is a set of steps to solve a problem or get something done. Advertisers use algorithms in their computers to process information about you. Then they send you advertisements that fit their idea of what you want. For instance, Facebook takes information about you and uses algorithms with more than 52,000 categories that they could put you in to choose advertisements for you.

**Interviewer:** What information do they have? Let us discuss this with our whole group. Do we know what information about us is online?

**Session 7 . Resource Sheet 4: Questions to ask if we follow someone online**

Who created this picture, video, or advertisement? What is the author’s point of view?

Why was this post created? To make me laugh, bring awareness to a cause, or to persuade me?

What information has been disclosed and what has been left out?

How does this post make me feel?

Why do I like this influencer?

Are they presented in a realistic way?

Are they like this in real life?

What values does this person portray?

How does this person make me feel about myself?