

What is propaganda, misinformation and fake news?

The terms 'propaganda', 'misinformation' and 'fake news' often overlap in meaning. They are used to refer to **a range of ways in which sharing information causes harm, intentionally or unintentionally – usually in relation to the promotion of a particular moral or political cause or point of view.**

It is possible to separate out two clearly different uses of information which fall into this category:

- **Mis-information** - false information shared with no intention of causing harm
- **Dis-information** - false information shared intentionally to cause harm

Although none of these phenomena are new, they have taken on new significance recently with the widespread availability of sophisticated forms of information and communication technology. The sharing of text, images, videos, or links online, for example, allows information to go viral within hours.

Make your own fake news Exercise 1.

ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

The goal of this exercise is to show students how manipulating information and creating fake news is easy and can be done by anyone, and therefore to urge them to exercise more caution with the news they get from social media.

By putting them in the place of fake news producers or conspiracy theorists, they learn which tools and methods are used and become better at detecting this type of content in their daily internet use.

Fake news can take different forms and cover different topics. There is commercial fake news, conspiracy theories, fake science news, fake political news, fake pictures, and fake articles.

1. Produce fake news:

1. In this step, participants must choose the theme of fake news they want to make (scientific, political, etc.).
2. Once they have chosen the theme, participants must find news items and arguments to distort that news item. For example, they can find articles about their topic and take certain statements out of context, twist them, etc. They can also use photo editing software, such as Photoshop, or use doctored photos they find on the internet.

3. To produce a fake news item, participants can follow the typical fake news pattern:

- The story must be surprising and/or shocking.
- Know who you want to target, whose attention you want to grab.
- Complain that 'censorship' is keeping your news item from being shared.
- When it comes to visual aspects, participants can simply write up an article in Microsoft Word or use a fake news generator to make the piece look 'media-friendly'. Here are a few links: <https://breakyourownnews.com/>, <https://www.thefakenewsgenerator.com/>, <https://www.worldgreynews.com/add-news>.

3. Present and assess: Each group takes turns presenting their fake news piece or pieces. Other participants give their opinion.

1. Students give each fake news piece a grade to determine which ones were the most believable and most successful. Students must explain why these pieces were the most convincing.

Source: <https://talmil.org/activity-2-make-your-own-fake-news/>