

## Library Services

### Fake News Friday: Week 1

05/05/2017

KATHERINE: Hello and welcome to the first Fake News Friday. My name is Katherine Moore and I am a librarian at The Open University Library.

So throughout May we are going to be doing a series of short live video clips talking about fake news every Friday. So we all know decisions should be based on sound information if they're not they're not going to be great decisions. So and this is always important especially in the midst of a general election, so this means being able to spot fake news becomes really, really important. And I'm going to give you two tips to help you spot fake news today.

Tip number one: think about the source. And this can be really quick and simple. Think about... have a look at what else gets published on that news website. If on the homepage is full of headlines that are about aliens, women not wearing many clothes or just generally inflammatory you're unlikely to be reading a site that is gonna give you a good piece of investigative journalism. So by all means keep reading but just be aware what you're reading might be fiction even though it's called news.

Have a look at the website's mission. Most news websites and especially smaller ones have a couple of page, well a page that says mission or about this service and they'll normally be found on the home page.

These... if you are reading a news site that is purely for satire normally those pages about that website will say you know this is for comic effect only. My special... my favourite description from a satire news site was in the about section it had "these stories are fictitious, however given how strange the world is some of them may be true". If you are reading something that may be true you want to know that actually you're reading fiction not a real news service. And this was on something that called itself "America's top independent news service" as its tagline but just on its mission page which was one click away from the homepage you did get this "This is satire guys, OK?"

The other thing to look for is does the site have a clear sponsor or is a particular company sort of used an awful lot throughout the story? If so then it's worth Googling them. Now that can be so you're just picking up the bias of the news website that's publishing the article you're reading or it could be something much more important to

find out. To find out if you're reading a news article that isn't a news article but is a scam instead pretending to be a news article so an example of that would be online wealth so the sort of the nasty darker side of fake news with just a little bit of effort you can spot where it is.

OK tip number two: Check the author. Firstly does your news story have an author? If it doesn't it doesn't mean "argh run away instantly you're definitely reading fake news" but it should make you question what you're reading. If there is no author then all the credibility of the source you're reading is coming from the website itself so doing that first check of seeing what other news stories they publish is a good call. If there is an author Google them. Do they look real? If you can't find them on Google then you really want to question if this is a real person as most journalists will want to get themselves out there on the internet and advertise themselves as real journalists because they want people like you to know that OK and the other thing to note is does the writer of your story have credibility in the fields that you're have credibility in the fields that they're writing in? So for example if you're reading a science story, is it is it written by a science journalist or someone with a background in science? And again that should be quite clear from a quick Google search.

So those are my two tips for today.

Thank you very much for listening and please join my colleague Helen for some more tips for spotting fake news next Friday.

Thank you very much.

Bye!