



Medietilsynet
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Working Group 1 - Media Literacy: Focus on the role of regulators

Summary of survey on fake news and collaboration of “Ten tips for spotting fake news online”

Norwegian Media Authority, Tone Haugan-Hepsø (tone@medietilsynet.no)

By request from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture in March 2017, the [Norwegian Media Authority](#) (the NMA) carried out a **survey on fake news** that was published on 3 April 2017.¹

A representative sample of 1000 people aged 18-80 were asked questions about the sharing and spreading of fake news, the ability to detect such news and who they think is responsible for preventing the dissemination and increasing media literacy among the population. The survey was carried out by a polling institute in March 2017.

The survey on fake news in Norway shows that:

- 55 percent of the respondents suspect that they, weekly or more often, read news that they consider to be inaccurate.
- 45 percent report reading news, weekly or more often, that they consider deliberately falsified.
- Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the respondents say that they have shared a news story at least once that they later realized was fake.
- 15 percent report that they have at least once shared a news story that they knew or suspected to be fake.
- Four out of ten are unsure of their ability to detect fake news, while almost five out of ten have fairly good confidence in their own ability to detect fake news.
- 43 percent answered that they are confident and four percent answered that they are very confident.
- 14 percent of the respondents do not know whether they can detect fake news or not.

When asked where they most often read false information presented as news 62 percent mention Facebook, 15 percent search engines, 14 percent YouTube and 12 percent alternative news websites. 21 percent pointed to traditional media as to where they most often read fake news. Following from this it is interesting that the survey shows that for almost 90 percent of the respondents, traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television have a very big responsibility (68 percent) or quite a big responsibility (21 percent)

¹ The survey was designed by the NMA, and is based on similar studies on fake news in the US ([Pew Research Center](#) December 2016) and Sweden ([TU](#), February 2017).

for preventing the spreading of fake news. The expectancy towards social media's responsibility is a bit lower, with 49 percent meaning that social media has a very big responsibility and 33 percent meaning that social media has quite a big responsibility. Only a little more than a quarter (27 percent) considered that the population has a substantial responsibility for preventing the spreading of fake news. To the question about what you do when you come across a news story that you suspect is false, a little more than one third (37 percent) of the respondents state that they do not do anything. At the same time 35 percent answer that they check via web search, 24 percent check via traditional media, and 18 percent check "fact check services". Four percent state that they contact the editor or the journalist, and 13 percent state that they address fake news in the comments field or in social media.

To be able to detect fake news and know what to do about it, it is vital to have a variety of media literacy skills and knowledge about source criticism. The survey shows that Norwegians believe that increasing media literacy and source criticism primarily is a responsibility of traditional media (50 percent), closely followed by schools and education (47 percent) and public authorities (46 percent). 38 percent stated that social media has a very large responsibility and 26 percent that the responsibility rests with the population.

The survey is available at:

http://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/2017/falske_nyheter_undersokelse_hovedfunn.pdf

Cooperation with Faktisk.no and Facebook: "Ten tips for spotting fake news online"

Is it possible to detect fake news? Before the general election in Norway the NMA entered into a partnership with Facebook and faktisk.no to limit the spread of fake news. Together we worked out ten tips on detecting fake news online.

NMA is working to create critical media users. To spread the ten tips, a massive advertisement campaign were activated in the mid August. The advertisements including the largest printed newspapers in Norway; VG, Dagbladet, Aftenposten and all of A-medias local newspapers (all together 66 papers). This campaign will help the Norwegian people to detect fake news online.

The tips were also available on top of news feed on the profile to alle norwegian facebook users (3,8 millions). People could then click on the story and additional to both Faktisk.no and the Media Authority's media literacy pages.

Quiz

At the same time as launching the ten tips, NMA also wanted to test peoples ability to actually spot fake news. We put together 8 news stories from different sources in Norway, both real, satire and fake news and shared it on Facebook. So far 5100 persons have taken the quiz.

https://www.facebook.com/Medietilsynet/app/489107954569299/?app_data=%7B%7D

Tips for spotting false news.

It's possible to spot false news. As we work to limit the spread, check out a few ways to identify whether a story is genuine.

1. Be sceptical of headlines.

False news stories often have catchy headlines in all caps with exclamation marks. If shocking claims in the headline sound unbelievable, they probably are.

2. Look closely at the URL.

A phony or look-alike URL may be a warning sign of false news. Many false news sites mimic authentic news sources by making small changes to the URL. You can go to the site and compare the URL to established sources.

3. Investigate the source.

Ensure that the story is written by a source that you trust with a reputation for accuracy. If the story comes from an unfamiliar organisation, check their "About" section to learn more.

4. Watch for unusual formatting.

Many false news sites have misspellings or awkward layouts. Read carefully if you see these signs.

5. Consider the photos.

False news stories often contain manipulated images or videos. Sometimes the photo may be authentic, but taken out of context. You can search for the photo or image to verify where it came from.

6. Inspect the dates.

False news stories may contain timelines that make no sense, or event dates that have been altered.

7. Check the evidence.

Check the author's sources to confirm that they are accurate. Lack of evidence or reliance on unnamed experts may indicate a false news story.

8. Look at other reports.

If no other news source is reporting the same story, it may indicate that the story is false. If the story is reported by multiple sources you trust, it's more likely to be true.

9. Is the story a joke?

Sometimes false news stories can be hard to distinguish from humour or satire. Check whether the source is known for parody, and whether the story's details and tone suggest it may be just for fun.

10. Some stories are intentionally false.

Think critically about the stories you read, and only share news that you know to be credible.

Together, we can limit the spread of false news.