



## VOCABS

**objectivity:** lack of bias and prejudice, seeing things the way they “really are”

**User-Generated Content (UGC):** refers to any digital content that is produced and shared by end users of an online service or website

**trolls (internet):** someone who makes intentionally inflammatory, rude, or upsetting statements online to elicit strong emotional responses from people or to steer the conversation to a different direction

**bots:** internet robots; software programs that perform automated, repetitive, pre-defined tasks

**troll farm:** an organized operation of many users who may work together in a “factory” or from different places across a distributed network to generate online traffic aimed at affecting public opinion, and to spread misinformation and disinformation

**lateral reading:** leaving a site to see what other digital sources say about it (as opposed to ‘vertical reading’ which is staying on a single webpage)

Image source: <https://www.facebook.com/tarantadongkalbo/photos/a.1009500306112875/1025991377797101>

**user-generated content (UGC)** there is. Now, anyone can upload anything and describe it in any way they want.

So, on to the third step in #IWASFAKE. Like every good journalist, make sure that you check the source and context of every piece of information you encounter: **[A]lamin ang Source at Konteksto ng Impormasyon.**



## Verifying User-Generated Content (UGC)

### 1. WHO'S BEHIND THE INFORMATION?

Recall the lesson on the 7 Types of Mis-/Disinformation (Module 2, Lesson 2.2). One of the types in the list is called Imposter Content, which is basically false and misleading content circulated by imposter accounts. To filter imposter content, you must always verify people's identity -- if they are who they say they are online. The most commonly faked accounts are those of journalists, news organizations, politicians, and celebrities.

Aside from imposter accounts, you should also be wary of **internet trolls** and **bots**. These are social media profiles that make rude and confrontational comments online with the goal of provoking strong emotional responses. Often, these accounts are fake and are produced in thousands to millions inside so-called ‘**troll farms**’. It is becoming

more and more difficult to detect trolls as their profiles are created to be more unique and sophisticated. But one strategy that remains effective is to locate the original uploader of a content and evaluate whether a piece of false content is spread in a coordinated manner through trolls (i.e. Are the posts copy-pasted, or do they follow a certain script?)

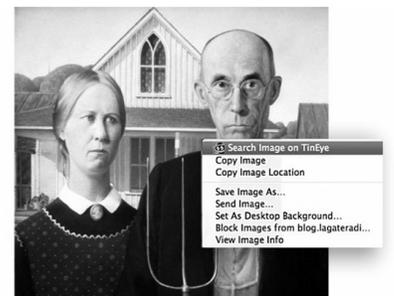


#StarveTheTrolls. Courtesy of Tarantadong Kalbo FB page

## 2. IS THE CONTENT AUTHENTIC?

It is no secret anymore how easy it is to make a fake photo, video, tweet, or document. And yet, people are still so quick to fall for anything that captures their attention. Manipulated content (genuine information or imagery that is edited to deceive) and fabricated content (new content that is 100% false and designed to deceive and do harm) about coronavirus are uploaded in hundreds or even thousands online every day.

One important skill you must learn in testing the authenticity of an online content is using Reverse Image Search through TinEye.



  
**Tweet your thoughts. Aside from the red flags listed here, what other reasons will make you doubtful of a certain piece of information?**  
 Tweet us at @ootbmedialit and use the hashtag #IWASFAKE.

This technique allows you to check if an image is being recycled to support a new claim or event. By checking one or more image databases (with billions of images), you can track where an image has appeared elsewhere in the internet. Take note: If a reverse image search does not show you results, it does not automatically prove that the image is original; you still need to do additional checks.

## 3. WHAT DO OTHER SOURCES SAY?

**Lateral reading** is the process of finding multiple sources to either confirm or disprove a piece of information. When online, you do this by opening a new tab and searching for keywords to find out. This is opposed to ‘vertical reading’ which means staying on a webpage to look for information and evidence. When Googling, remember, the top result is not always the best and most credible result. Take the time to scan different results and open multiple tabs.

Image source: [https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/tineye-reverse-image-search/haebnnbpedc\\_bhnciplfhjjkbafij\\_pncjl](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/tineye-reverse-image-search/haebnnbpedc_bhnciplfhjjkbafij_pncjl)

**HEADS UP!**

In a 2019 study by Tandoc et al, they found that people tend to only offer corrections if it is about an issue close to them and if it is shared by people they are close to. List down issues or subjects that you find personally relevant and most important.

## LESSON 2 | What should we do after verifying mis-/disinformation?

Verifying information can be a long and difficult process. It is not a simple yes/no action. It is not typical to get clear answers after simply running through three (3) quick checks. This should make you realize just how difficult and imperfect the job of a journalist is. However, you should always strive, like any good journalist, to only give out information that is verified and to catch information that is not. This is the last of the four steps of #IWASFAKE: **[S]ALAIN BAGO I-SHARE AT [S]ITAHIN ANG MGA NAGKAKALAT NG MALI.**



### Reporting Mis-/Disinformation on Facebook

Facebook has made it easy for everyone to report content and content creators that we have verified to be deceiving and doing harm. Once reported, they are evaluated by Facebook against their Community Standards. In the last couple of years, Facebook has taken down hundreds of pages in the Philippines that they found to be performing “**coordinated inauthentic behavior**”.

It only takes these four easy steps to report content deemed problematic on Facebook:



### How to deal with difficult conversations

Aside from reporting content, it is also very easy to unfollow or block accounts on Facebook. This helps you maintain a safer space on the platform. But what if it's not trolls or strangers who spread disinformation on your feed but a friend or a relative of yours? How should you talk to them?

It may be tempting to just hit the block or unfollow button. However, in this case, ignoring the spread of false information from people you

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**“coordinated inauthentic behavior” or CIB (social media):** a term coined by Facebook to refer to the use of multiple accounts or pages that hide the real identities of the people running them to mislead and/or influence people for political or financial gain

**empathy:** action of understanding; being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing feelings and thoughts of others

**fact-checking:** the process of checking that all the facts in a piece of writing, a news article, a speech, etc. are correct

personally know is not the best idea. You need to try to talk to them while not making them feel bad or ashamed. The key is empathic conversation.

**Empathy** is shown through the language you use. Show concern and make it clear that you are on the same side. Here are some conversation templates you can try:

## Join or Build Your Own Fact-Checking Communities

One final tip we have for you is to participate in existing **fact-checking** efforts. Several media organizations and civil society groups accept reports on disinformation and offer advanced training on how to verify online content. It will be a huge help to journalists when the general public does their part in monitoring the infodemic, instead of contributing to the information pollution. You can also start your own fact-checking communities within your school, neighborhood, organization, or family.

Combatting the infodemic should not end with just protecting ourselves. We must realize that what makes disinformation a global problem is the fact that we all have important roles to play in it. Remember, the closest thing we can get to a vaccine for disinformation is increasing the public’s immunity against it.



**THIS IS THE END OF MODULE D.** Congratulations, you’ve reached the end of the course! Are you ready to test your knowledge and practice your skills? Get from us or your teacher the Module D quiz and worksheets.