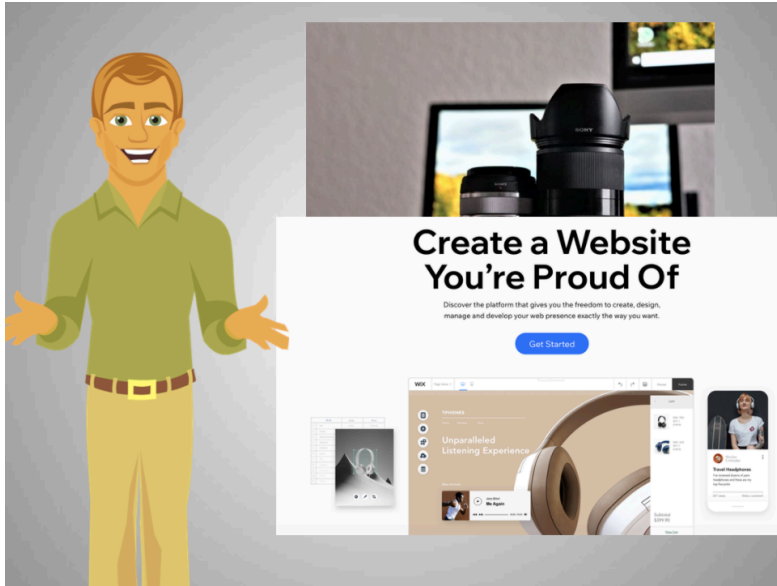


How Disinformation is Created



There are many reasons to create false information.

Making false information look convincing is easier than you may think. Digital tools, such as Photoshop, and easy-to-make websites, along with more powerful artificial intelligence tools, give almost anyone the power to manipulate or falsify just about anything — social media posts, news reports, images, and even videos.

These tools are used by people to manipulate digital content and present it as if it was real.



It can be hard to tell whether a picture is real or not. Here's an example of two pictures, one is the real picture taken by the reporter's camera, and one has been manipulated.

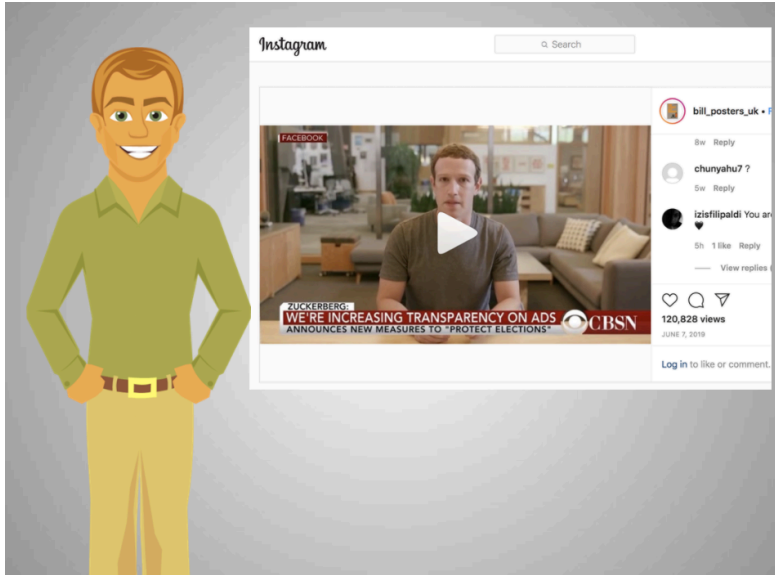
In one of the pictures, a person in the back of the boat was either digitally removed or added.

Which one of them do you think is the real picture? Click over the picture you think is the photo as it was taken.



You are correct!

A person in the back of the boat was digitally removed
— except for their knee.



Other more sophisticated computer tools manipulate audio and video of real people, presenting them saying and doing things they never said or did. These are called deepfakes and it is very difficult to distinguish them from reality.

Not too long ago, two British artists created a deepfake of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg talking to CBS News about the "truth of Facebook and who really owns the future." (<https://www.forbes.com>)

To make the fake, the artists used artificial intelligence tools developed by a digital media company, Canny AI, a video dialogue replacement.

Even for experienced online users, without the right context, it is impossible to know which one is the original, unaltered video.

For more information on how to spot altered media, take the course Building a Fact-Checking Habit in Chicago Digital Learn.

Tom knows that...



Statement 1

- Every account on social media belongs to a real person.
- People online say only what they really think.
- Everything people share online really happened.
- Online information can be easily created.

Submit

Available automated technology for manipulating audio, images, video, and text, and the fact that a lot of information travels over social media and spreads really fast, has made disinformation seem normal and abundant.

What does Tom know so far that can help him make better decisions when it comes to information he finds online?

You are correct! Online information can be easily created and posted by anyone.

Tom knows that...



Statement 2

- Not every account on social media belongs to a real person.
- People online say only what they really think.
- People share information online only when it is real.
- Online information cannot be easily manipulated.

Submit

You are correct! Social media bots do not belong to a real person.

Tom knows that...



Statement 3

- Every account on social media belongs to a real person.
- Everyone online is who they say they are.
- People share online information without questioning its veracity.
- Online information is very difficult to create.

Submit

You are correct! People share online information without questioning its veracity

Tom knows that...

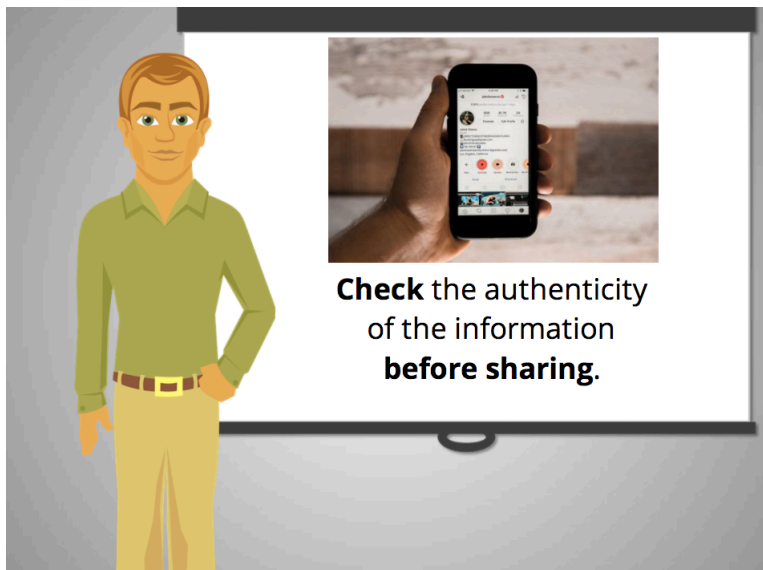


Statement 4

- Every account on social media belongs to a person.
- Not all people online say only what they really think.
- People share information online only when it is real.
- Online information cannot be easily manipulated.

Submit

You are correct! Unfortunately, not all people express online what they really think.



Sponsored content in sites that contain paid articles can easily be made to look like real, trustworthy information, making it very tricky for people to spot misleading information.

And while some social media companies have begun to disclose advertising and sponsored content, that's not enough to stop the spread of disinformation. We all as consumers play the most important role: taking the time to check before sharing.

Tom knows he has to be extra careful when he sees information online and to always question the authenticity of the information he gets on social media.

Like Tom, you can learn the skills you need to identify and avoid the spread of disinformation.