



BU.BI

Beyond lack of
Understanding, Beyond
disInformation



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Content reliability

UNIT 5: INFORMATION DISORDERS

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1.Introduction

In today's digital environment, we are surrounded by an endless stream of information—some accurate, some misleading, and some deliberately false. The ability to navigate this information landscape has become a vital skill, not only for professional growth as well as for informed participation in society. This module explores content reliability and the different forms of information disorders that can distort our perception of reality.

Through development of critical thinking and heightened awareness, you will learn to recognize signs of unreliable, biased, or manipulative content. We will examine practical strategies for categorizing online content and apply functional literacies—including media literacy, data literacy, and digital literacy—to evaluate and manage diverse sources of information.



2. LEARNING GOALS

Learning Goals

After training in Unit 5, the trainees will be able to:

- ❖ Recognize and distinguish online threats by identifying common characteristics of misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and scams.
- ❖ Differentiate content types such as news articles, opinion pieces, sponsored content, and advertisements, based on their purpose, structure, and credibility indicators.
- ❖ Analyze source reliability using fact-checking tools and cross-referencing techniques to verify information accuracy.
- ❖ Apply responsible sharing practices by critically assessing content before engaging with or distributing it, thereby reducing the spread of false or harmful information.



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3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome 1 – Misinformation And Scam Recognition

Identify and evaluate misleading or fraudulent online content by recognizing common patterns, tactics, and red flags used in misinformation and scams.

Explain the difference between misinformation and scam, providing at least one real-life example of each.

List common red flags that indicate an online post, message, or e-mail may be a scam.

Apply a fact-checking tool to verify the accuracy of a suspicious online news article.



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3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome 2 – Content Type Differentiation (News vs. Opinions vs. Ads)

Identify and distinguish between news articles, opinion pieces, sponsored content, and advertisements based on structure, tone, and purpose.

Explain the differences in intent and credibility among different content types, and how each one influences the audience.

Apply critical reading strategies to classify and evaluate online content according to its type and potential bias.



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3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome 3 – Disinformation, Misinformation & Malinformation

1. Identify the difference between misinformation, disinformation and malinformation.
2. Identify common signs of unreliable or misleading online content.
3. Identify whether a content piece is advertising, news, or opinion based on its features and source.
4. Apply basic fact-checking tools (such as Google reverse image search, Snopes, or InVID) to verify the accuracy of information found online.
5. Apply a simple checklist or verification steps before forwarding or sharing information with others.



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A. MISINFORMATION AND SCAM RECOGNITION





Why It Is Important To Recognize Misonformation And Scam

In today's digital world, we are constantly surrounded by information — but not all of it is true or safe.

Recognizing misinformation and scams has become a critical skill for people of all ages, for several important reasons:



Why It Is Important To Recognize Misonformation And Scam

- ✓ **Protect your money and personal data**

Avoid fraud, identity theft, and financial loss.

- ✓ **Make smart decisions**

Don't let fake news or false offers mislead you.

- ✓ **Keep vulnerable groups safe**

Help protect seniors, youth, and those less familiar with technology.

- ✓ **Maintain trust**

Truth matters — don't let fake information damage trust in real sources.

- ✓ **Stop the spread**

When we detect false information, we stop sharing it further.

What is misinformation?

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that is shared **without the intention to deceive**, but still causes harm because people believe it to be true.

Several respected authors and institutions define it similarly:

According to **Wardle and Derakhshan (2017)**, misinformation is *“information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm.”*

The World Health Organization (WHO) explains it as *“false information shared by people who do not realize it is false and do not mean any harm.”*

Key characteristics of misinformation:

- It is not true
- It is shared accidentally or unknowingly
- It can still mislead people and spread confusion
- It is often shared through social media, messages, or conversations

RELIABLE CONTENT

What is a scam?

A **scam** is a form of **fraud** — a dishonest plan designed to trick people into giving away **money, personal information, or access to their accounts**.

Scams are intentional and are created on purpose to **mislead, manipulate, or steal** from others.

Characteristics of a scam:

Intentional deception – someone is trying to fool you on purpose.

Usually involves money or personal data

Can happen **online** (emails, SMS, social media, fake websites) or **offline**

Scammers often pretend to be someone else (a bank, a delivery company, government, etc.)



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HOW TO RECOGNIZE MISINFORMATION



Check the Source

- Is it a trustworthy website, news portal, or institution?
- Unknown pages, strange URLs, or websites with lots of pop-ups = ⚠️ warning sign.

Look for Other Sources

- Can you find the same information on at least 2–3 reliable sites?
- If only one unknown source claims something shocking — be careful!

Watch for Emotional Language

- Titles that sound very shocking, angry or unbelievable ("You won't believe!") are often misleading.
- Misinformation tries to trigger strong emotions so people will share it quickly.



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HOW TO RECOGNIZE MISINFORMATION



Verify the Author

- Is the author a real person or expert?
- If there is no name, or it is “admin123” — that is suspicious.

Check the Date

- Old or outdated articles sometimes get shared as if they are new.
- Always check when it was written or published.

Too Good (or Too Bad) to Be True

- Miraculous cures, mega prizes, quick money schemes = are usually false.
- Always be skeptical of spectacular claims without real evidence.



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HOW TO RECOGNIZE MISINFORMATION



Photo or Video Manipulation

- Images can be edited or taken from a different context.
- Do a “reverse image search” (Google Images) to see the real origin.



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Quote



"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't."



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B. CONTENT TYPE DIFFERENTIATION (NEWS VS. OPINIONS VS. ADS)





Why it matters to know the difference

Understanding the difference between news, opinion, advertisements, and native advertising helps people become **critical and responsible media users**.

When we clearly recognize the *purpose and intent* behind each type of content, we can:



Why it matters to know the difference

Avoid manipulation and be less vulnerable to persuasive or promotional messages disguised as facts. (*Richards & Curran, 2002, IAB, 2013*)

Detect bias and separate factual reporting from personal viewpoints or hidden agendas. (*Potter, 2015*)

Make informed decisions based on reliable information — especially on social media where these formats often overlap or get mixed. (*Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014*)

News

News is information about current events presented to the public by journalists through various media.

Opinions

Opinion writing is commentary that reflects the writer's personal beliefs or judgments, rather than objective reporting of facts.

Advertisement

An advertisement is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future.

Native Advertisement (also called "Sponsored Content")

Native advertising is paid content designed to match the form and function of the media platform on which it appears, often blending in so that it resembles editorial content.

NEWS VS. OPINIONS VS. ADS



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"Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don't have for something they don't need."

— Will Rogers

Quote



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C. DISINFORMATION, MISINFORMATION AND MALINFORMATION AWARENESS TRAINING





False and harmful content is all around us.

In today's digital age, we are surrounded by a constant flow of information. Not all of it is trustworthy or harmless.

Being able to recognize different types of false or harmful content—such as misinformation, disinformation and malinformation—is essential for protecting ourselves, making informed decisions, and preventing the spread of manipulation or fear in our communities.

These concepts are especially important when working with vulnerable groups, such as older adults.

Understanding the difference between them is the first step in building strong media literacy.

Misinformation

"False information that is shared without the intent to cause harm."

— UNESCO, Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training (2018)

Disinformation

"Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country."

— UNESCO, Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training (2018)

MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION AND MALINFORMATION

Malinformation

"Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country."

— Wardle & Derakhshan, Information Disorder (Council of Europe Report, 2017)

Fact-Checking Tools & Platforms

Snopes.com – debunks viral rumors, fake news and scams.

PolitiFact – checks political statements and claims.

FactCheck.org – investigates political and public policy claims.

AFP Fact Check – international fact-checking platform by Agence France-Presse.

Poynter / IFCN (International Fact-Checking Network) – provides a database of global fact-checkers.



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HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

IFLA

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

www.ifla.org

If something sounds suspicious, emotional, or unbelievable – **pause and check** before forwarding it to others.

Think before you share!



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Without critical thinking, the media can control how we perceive the world."

— Noam Chomsky

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- ❖ *Social Media Scams and How to Spot Them* (2019) available at: <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/social-media-scams/>





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THANK YOU

Does anyone have any questions?
Follow the project updates

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