FACT OR FICTION?
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Why trust me with the facts?

• Founder of Katie Lingo – content marketing services for agencies and small businesses
• Trained with the National Council for the Training of Journalists including modules in Media Law
• BrightonSEO speaker with keen respect for YMYL and EEAT guidelines
• Low tolerance for BS
When did everything get so **FAKE?**

- Fake news dates back to the ‘Great Moon Hoax’ by the New York Sun in 1835
- When Donald Trump came into power, the term shot up from 14 to 100 on Google Trends
- The vast range of content channels is making the problem worse
Where do we find the answers to our questions?

HubSpot Blog Research, Consumer Trends Report 2023
What’s wrong with fake news?

“The connection between journalism and the public is fraying.”

- Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023
The decline in journalism...

“The connection between journalism and the public is fraying.”

- Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023
At best, poor content erodes trust.

- 56% of us worry about what’s real
- 57% of us think government leaders, business chiefs and journalists are spreading falsehoods
- People deem content fake due to clickbait, satire, ad content and factual errors
At worst, it influences elections...

- Teenagers in Macedonia profited from fake news websites citing ‘FBI sources’ that Hillary Clinton was to be arrested.
- Previous Obama voters said they would not vote for Clinton after stories of poor health and links to ISIS surfaced.
- 30 million pro-Trump stories were shared compared to 8 million pro-Clinton.
At worst, it impacts people’s health...

- A study by East Anglia University showed that a **10% reduction** in disease-related fake news mitigates outbreaks
- An investigation by the World Health Organisation showed that misinformation featured in **60% of social media posts** related to pandemics
In March 2022, a deepfake video of Zelenskyy emerged in which he encouraged Ukrainian soldiers to stop fighting.

Social media users spread false information in May 2022 about Polish and Finnish armies preparing to engage in the conflict.

A Community Note on X said that Israeli law enforcement were falsely labelled as Hamas members.
Then we have AI.

Imagine one teeny tiny human mistake...
Then we have AI.

...replicated at scale.
How do we fight misleading content?

We can follow these tips from LexisNexis and the European Commission, asking ourselves the following questions...
• Do they have **clear expertise** (think Google’s EEAT) including author bios, credentials and associations?

• Are they **biased**? Would they have reason to bend the truth e.g., a salon promoting health benefits of sunbeds?

• Are they transparent about **who they are**? What can you find out on Whoxy.com?
Do they **CITE THEIR SOURCES?**

- External links are a given, but are they linking to the primary source e.g., a journal, or just a random stat?

- Have you cross-referenced the content with other publications?

- Do they reference relevant bodies for their industry e.g., NHS for health, Law Society for law, FCA for finance?
Do they have a good REPUTATION?

- Google will generally rank high-quality sites higher based on YMYL and EEAT guidelines.
- Sites with a good trust flow (Majestic) have relevant inbound links, including those from universities, local news outlets, industry bodies.
- An August 2023 Google update prioritised government and health websites for rich snippets.
How does it make you FEEL?

- If the content has provoked an emotional response in you, it may be biased and will need investigating, e.g., political content.

- Always check your facts before publishing based on your emotional reaction (think Twitter’s/X’s ‘read before you retweet’).
Alternatively: do your own research!

“I believe it’s in reference to the ending.

“I know the territory, I’ve been around It’ll all turn to dust and we’ll all fall down.”

“I’ve read certain things and It ranges from Infedelity or to orgys with men and other women, to Anal sex with a strap on (female wearing strap on.)” [sic]

“He knows that he would do anything for love, but there are some lines that he just won’t cross.

“Maybe it’s because he’s been burned in the past, or maybe he’s just a bit of a commitment-phobe.”
Get it from the primary source!
Where do we find these sources?

- Interview experts using tools like Qwoted or HARO to find people with the right credentials
- Send a Freedom of Information request in writing but beware of the caveats (see guide to FOI requests here)
- Conduct surveys and publish them on relevant forums, ensuring all sources are named and checked for expertise
Helpful fact-checking tools

- **Full Fact**: Impartial UK-based charity dedicated to fighting misinformation
- **Meta’s Third-Party Fact-Checking Program**: Journalistic partnership with the International Fact-Checking Network, also used by organisations like Reuters
- **NewsGuard**: Reliability ratings for news and information
- **Reuters Fact Check**: The news agency checks recently published stories to debunk myths
- **Facebook Content Ratings**: Guidelines on how Facebook checks facts from altered to satire and false
- **Google Image Checker (pending)**: Gives information on when an image was originally published
Trusted news sites

• Your UK readers will love you if you cite these sources...

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* Reuters Digital News Report 2023
THE TAKEAWAYS

1. Inaccurate or fake content RUINS LIVES

2. People are sceptical of online content so we must foster TRUST

3. AI content has the potential to be INACCURATE or MALICIOUS

4. Before you hit publish, ask yourself WHO said it and WHY?

5. Don’t be afraid to question sources or DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH
Keep in touch!

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