

# Nine steps to keep your article free from fake news

blastingnews

**We are currently experiencing a new era of disinformation, where the internet, social media, and increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence systems amplify the dissemination of false news and propaganda. Since 2019, Blasting News has been actively combating misinformation, acquiring valuable expertise through its participation in EU-funded projects such as Eunomia and Fake News Sicily. Here is our short handbook to help you write articles that are free of unverified or fake news.**

# 1. The five pillars:

## Find the original:

Check if your source is the original social media account or article that published the news.

## Source:

You need to understand more about the source that created the piece of information you are using or checking. Try to understand if it's reliable, if it's not a media sponsored by autocracies or dictatorships or a media that in the past spread false claims. To do so you can check online to better understand the nature of the media and at the same time you can use tools like NewsGuard, AP Fact Check and Snopes.

## Date:

Try to understand the date in which a piece of content was published. Is it recent? If not, you need to be careful and understand why the piece of content is still around.

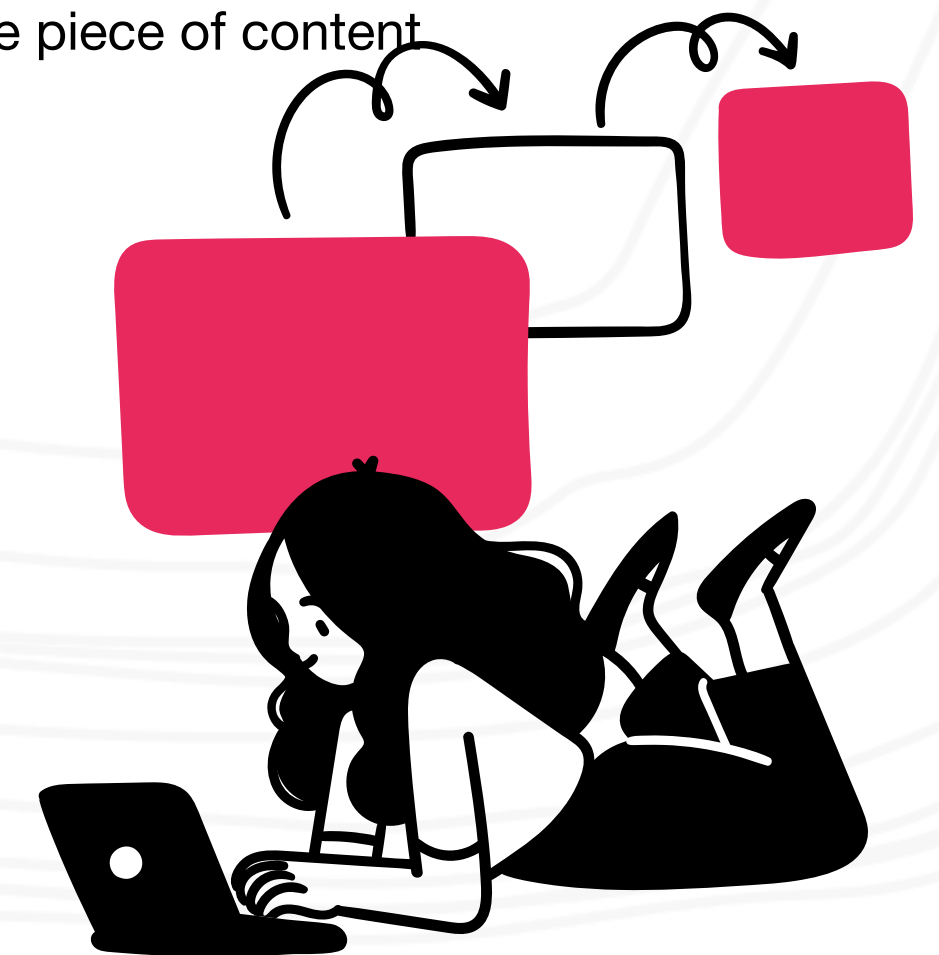
## Location:

Where was the social account/piece of content you are checking created?

## Reasons why:

Try to understand why an account or a website or a piece of content was created. Was it created to share information to the public or does the content have a hidden agenda?

*Also*



## 2. Know your sources:

**Before starting your article you need to check your sources to understand if you are in front of a credible outlet, as we said in the 5 pillars.** Where do you get your information from? Which sources do you use/consult every day? News websites, social media, Google News? Telegram, Twitter, WhatsApp? Do you trust what your friends share on social networks? Ask yourself these questions and try to go beyond the headline and the first paragraph.

## 3. Cross-sourcing (aka, you are not the only one):

**It's important for individuals to cross-reference every piece of information with multiple news sources to verify its authenticity.** It's very rare that an obscure, unknown media outlet without any reference online can be the only one to have a scoop about an important topic. So cross-sourcing is your religion.

## 4. Be skeptical, not emotional:

**If you come across something that elicits a strong emotional reaction, whether it's outrage or joy, it's a clear sign that you should delve deeper and read more.** Many instances of disinformation are intentionally created to provoke intense feelings of anger or fear rather than provide accurate information.



## 5. Propaganda is a huge problem:

Consider the potential beneficiaries of disseminating misleading information during a news event, and familiarize yourself with the specific narratives circulating.

- For example, **in wartime a side can spread false news in order to sway public opinion.**
- During an **election a party could spread misleading and false narratives** to gain more power and influence the electorate.

## 6. Be careful with opinions:

Check for facts not opinions. If the article you are using as a source is packed with opinions, be skeptical and try to find other news sources or try to understand if there is news beyond the opinions.

## 7. Do you know/trust the author?

A simple way to be sure that the article is reliable is to do a quick check about the author on a search engine. Are they credible? Are they real? Can you find other content online from the same author? Can you find a bio of the author with an email or a social media account to contact them?



*Step*

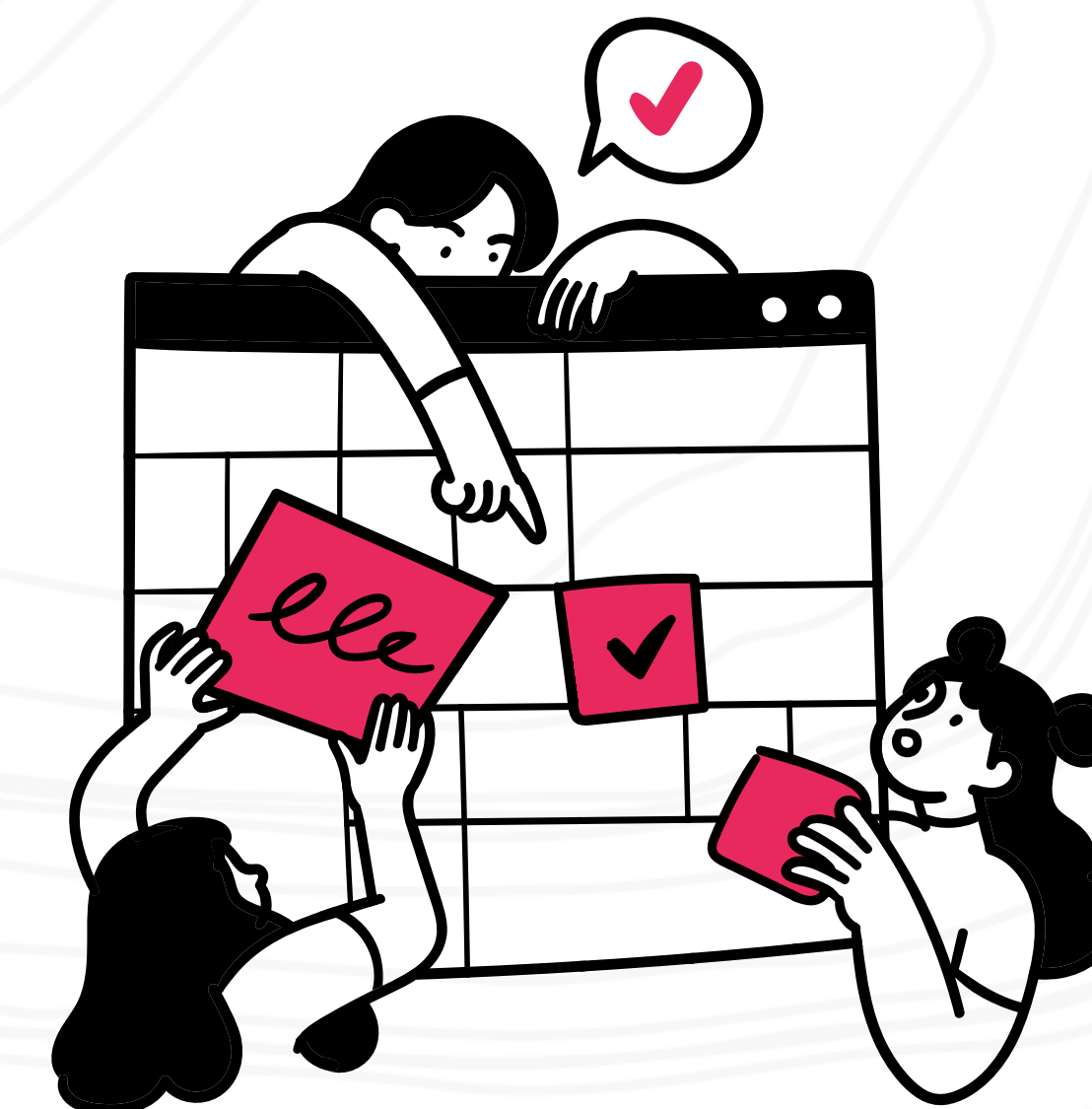
## 8. Check your biases:

Sometimes your own beliefs could influence your judgment. For example, **confirmation bias** refers to the tendency of individuals to selectively seek, interpret, and remember information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs or opinions, while disregarding or downplaying evidence that contradicts them. It's a cognitive bias that can limit objective thinking and lead to the reinforcement of one's existing beliefs, even in the face of contrary evidence. Confirmation bias can hinder critical thinking and the ability to consider alternative perspectives, as individuals tend to seek out information that confirms their existing worldview, reinforcing their biases and potentially perpetuating misinformation.

## 9. Fact Check Websites:

Use fact check websites to be sure that your information is legit.  
*Here is a list with the most relevant fact check organizations in English.*

*Here is the accuracy check list* compiled by Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, New York.



## The other Blasting News handbooks

- How to write an article for Blasting News in ten steps
- Blasting News stylebook
- Six rules for perfect links
- How to edit an article for Blasting News in ten steps



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