How Do We Avoid Fake News?

It is well understood that it is important for us to keep up with the news more than ever. At a time when we find ourselves saturated with information around the clock, we must seriously consider which news are accurate and which ones are fiction. How do we go about sorting out true news and stay away from what is fake? Whether we use social media, print media or online sites to get our news, we need to be savvy in deciphering what we read, what is shared with us, or what is posted online.

We also need to be careful not to contribute to the spreading of fake news ourselves. It is encouraged that we be very careful about sharing news stories that come across as outrageous. We may think twice before posting it or sending it right away to our friends; it could be fake. The solution is to do some homework before sending it. So, what are some of the tools available to us that can help us identify what is real news? More than ever, there are countless fact-checkers not only in the U.S., but around the world who can provide us with useful information. We need to do our homework and scrutinize the news source before considering it to be true facts or real news. Reliable information is essential to the ministry of social justice. It can tell us how people are treated unfairly and indicate ways to act.

Five Ways to Spot and Stop Fake News

1. Consider the source – strange domain names or websites
2. Check the URL – look for web addresses that ending in “.com.co”
3. Look for the visual clues – look for shoddy/unprofessional design and overuse of CAPS.
4. Get a second opinion – does it make you angry, dig deeper; consult other sources
5. Consider installing a browser plugin to flag fake news in real time:
   - Fake News Alert (Chrome)
   - BS Detector (Chrome, Firefox, Safari)
   - This is Fake (Chrome, Facebook feed)

Source: Harvard Library-guides.library.harvard.edu/fake
Suggested checklist students can follow to spot fake news

1. Do you know who the source is, or was it created by a common or well-known source? Example National Geographic, Discovery, etc.
2. How does it compare to what you already know?
3. Does the information make sense? Do you understand the information?
4. Can you verify that the information agrees with three or more other reliable sources?
5. Have experts in the field been connected to it or authored the information?
6. How current is the information?
7. Does it have a copyright?

Source: NPR: 5 Ways Teachers Are Fighting Fake News, February 16, 2017 http://n.pr/2qr3SwC