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Know the Difference: Spotting Misinformation and AI Images on the Web

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As technology continues to expand, misinformation and bad actors looking to fraud and deceive people are becoming more and more common. Now, with the rise of AI, it is easier than ever to trick people with the use of AI-generated images and information.

Here are some quick tips on how to spot and avoid misinformation while using the Internet:

1. **Check the Source!**

Whether information appears good or bad, always start by asking yourself where the information is coming from. Is there a source cited? Do you have any way of checking it yourself? Just because an article doesn't have a source for its information doesn't mean it's fake, but it's always good to be careful and think critically. Larger news organizations will usually have more trustworthy sources, while smaller websites tend to be a little sketchier. If you aren't sure about the veracity of the information, you can use a factchecker website, like Snopes or factcheck.org.

2. **Don't Rush to Judge**

Remember that the most viral kinds of information, true or false, appeal to a person's emotions. If you read news that appears to be so happy *or* too sad, you should be skeptical. If it seems like some news is intentionally meant to deliver some kind of emotional appeal, it's a good idea to be wary.

3. **The Devil is in the Details**

A misinformed or AI-generated article tends to feel more like a template, as the subject could easily be swapped for a different one. Pay attention to the way the text describes its subject. How specific does it get? Could the article easily talk about a different subject

Always Check!

If you have any doubts as to the authenticity of anything you see or read on the Internet, check to see where it came from. Learn about Reverse Image Searches using tools like Tineye or Google Reverse Image Search.

Most Importantly: Think Before You Share

Misinformation is designed to spread to go viral. We all must do our part to keep false or harmful information from spreading around. It can be tempting to share the things you see online with other people in your life but always make sure to use the tools you've been given to determine the veracity of the information.

AI IMAGERY

AI-generated images can be surprisingly realistic, but there are ways to detect them:

Smooth Textures and Distortion: Pay attention to surfaces: Skin, clothes, grass, anything that should have a lot of detail. AI images will often have smoother, blurrier backgrounds and textures.

Count the Fingers: For some reason, AI has a harder time showing hands. Fingers will be too numerous, blend together, or disappear into whatever the person is holding.

Too Specific: Think critically, use common sense. If an image or video seems too specific, too perfect for whatever point the source is trying to make, there is a possibility it has been generated to convince people of their point.

Know What to Look For: Take time to look at some AI-generated imagery yourself. Familiarize yourself with what a fake image looks like and pay attention to what strikes you as odd. Everyone sees things differently, so there may be things you notice about AI images that others don't!