YALICHECKS: Stop, Reflect, Verify

Video Transcripts - English

Stop

We all get them — messages containing the latest news, opinions and gossip. Either from friends, family, or co-workers. From official and unofficial sources. Anyone and everyone, it seems, is now a news reporter with a pressing story to share of the day. And depending on that information, the urge to pass it on can be hard to resist. But should you?

In this series, we're going to talk about why, when it comes to information sharing, we should all stop, reflect and verify.

[TEXT: STOP]

The open exchange of information is vital to productive societies and creates opportunities for learning and informed decision making. But a healthy amount of skepticism and the ability to evaluate what you're reading and hearing is just as important. We call this media literacy.

Media literacy is thinking critically about the information you consume and share. Being media literate requires you to not only question who the news is coming from, but why and how that news is being communicated to you. Even the timing of the messages and who they're directed to must be considered. Was the story about the latest polling before of the election true? Was it meant to elicit an emotional response? Was it meant to cause you to lose faith in the process? Who sent it, and why would it benefit them?

In the rapidly expanding and increasingly open information world in which we live, there are good and bad actors. It's on you to commit to being a responsible promoter of reliable and credible information.

So before you share that story - STOP!

Reflect

Every day, billions of people share billions of messages across social media. It's a pretty good bet that one or more of those messages are going to find you. It's also a pretty good bet that you'll want to share a few of them with your social media network. But here again, the question is: Should you? Really?

One of the most important things that we as social media consumers and information sharers should know is that just because someone wrote something or put it in a video, doesn't necessarily mean that it's true. We've already recommended that when that juicy tidbit comes across your feed that you stop. Now let's look at that piece of content and what it means. Let's reflect.

[TEXT: REFLECT]

Being able to discern what is fact and what is just a matter of opinion, as well as taking the time to think deeply and carefully about what you've just seen, will make you a much smarter and responsible social media user or news consumer.

A fact is a piece of information that is verifiable, no matter how you look at it; say your height or shoe size. An opinion, on the other hand, is a subjective point of view that's not always true for

everyone, everywhere. Like who's the greatest athlete in history. Both are vital pieces of news and information — as long as you understand the difference.

When someone forwards a story to you or you find something that piques your interest, it is always a good idea to determine just how credible it is. Some of the savviest manipulators of news and information know that by adding just enough facts to make the story believable, they can grab your attention — for example, by using the name of a politician, a chief executive of a company, or the logo of a news channel. Many false and misleading news stories are designed to look in a way where you can't tell the difference between what is fake and what is real.

Reflecting on the information before you share it involves reading the whole story, and not just the headline. That means examining your own biases and those of the person or organization that sent it to you. Ask yourself if multiple voices and viewpoints are represented. Are those voices credible? What is the evidence, and is it verifiable on other channels or websites?

So before you share that story - REFLECT!

Verify

With billions of pieces of information passing through our social media feeds, text messages and apps, it's prudent to have a healthy level of skepticism when it comes to what you see and hear. But as the volume of news and information grows, there's also more and more ways that we can check their validity.

Knowing how to recognize what is incorrect and misleading information is getting more and more challenging. But there are resources and tools to help you verify whether something is true or false. So when someone shares a news article or video with you, don't share it before you verify it.

[TEXT: VERIFY]

There are several things you can do to make sure you don't become a participant in spreading false and misleading information.

Don't be taken in by shocking or flashy headlines. Read the story that accompanies it. If the headlines greatly exaggerate or misrepresent the information in the story — don't share it. Also, misspellings and grammatical errors are usually a sign that something is not from a professional source. Be sure to make note of the facts cited in the story. And then do a search to see if you can verify them.

Check that the story includes the author's name and a date. Check out other stories by the author to determine if that author is a legitimate news gatherer.

Search for the original source or another source for the information. Are other reputable organizations reporting the same thing? Is the individual or organization referenced confirming the story?

Use a fact-checking resource. There are several available on the web and many that are specific to what's being reported in your region or country.

Finally, check your biases and the biases of not just the author, but the person sending it to you. Do they have an agenda? Don't participate in the spreading bad information.

So before you share that story - VERIFY it!