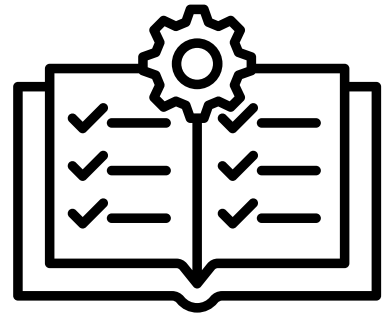


# Welcome to our Web Rangers Digital Literacy Training Guide For Parents!



Web Rangers empowers children with skills and knowledge, so they use the internet and social media safely and responsibly, so they are able to champion their rights in the digital world.

Web Rangers is here to help you navigate the challenges and opportunities of raising children in a digital world.



## Today's topic is Critical Thinking and Mis and Disinformation:

Children today are exposed to more information than at any other time in human history, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between facts, opinions, and fiction. So, it's essential that you assist your child to develop the ability to critically assess the information they consume so they don't fall victim to disinformation campaigns or other digital scams.

### What is Critical Thinking, Misinformation and Disinformation?

**Critical Thinking:** Is the ability to analyse, evaluate, and make informed decisions based on the information presented. In relation to digital media, it means being able to question and assess online content to determine its validity before accepting or sharing it.

**Misinformation:** "False or misleading information that is spread regardless of intent to mislead."

**Disinformation:** "false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm."

Mis and Disinformation can range from fake news articles to manipulated images, and it's often designed to mislead or influence opinions.

### Identifying Mis & Disinformation:

Let's have a look at a few examples of disinformation that have been flagged by [Real411.org.za](https://www.Real411.org.za):



In this post the user deliberately spreads false, inaccurate & misleading information about the IEC's election results screen in the 2024 national elections which is not supported by any proof or factual evidence.

Figure 1: A social media post that was assessed as disinformation by Real411.

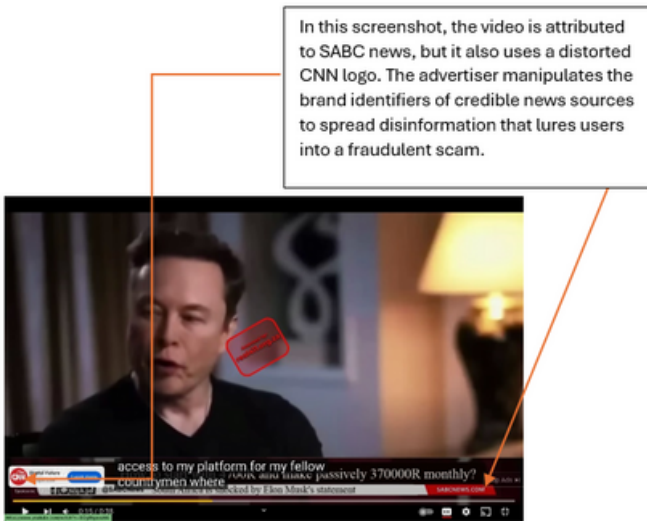


Figure 2: A YouTube that was assessed as mis and disinformation by Real411.

A screenshot from a deepfake YouTube advertisement that misleads viewers into believing they can achieve financial success through fraudulent means. Such videos can cause financial harm and erode trust in legitimate investment opportunities. Deepfake technology poses a significant threat as it can be used to create highly convincing fake videos that spread misinformation and deceive viewers.

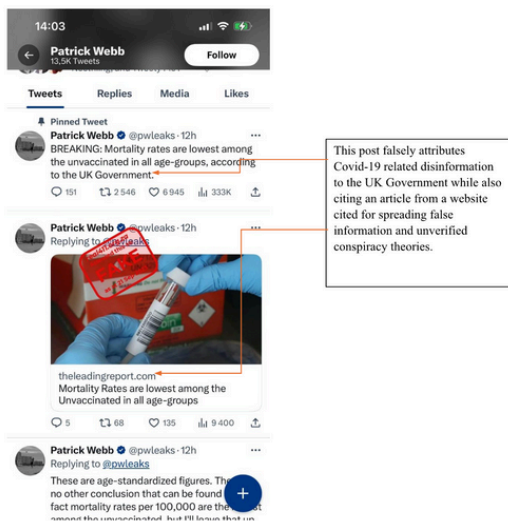


Figure 3: A social media post on covid-19 related disinformation

As evidenced from the examples above mis & disinformation is designed to look like credible information but is almost always false or misleading and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Children need to be taught how to spot these tricks:

**Look for Red Flags:** Teach your child to be suspicious of sensational headlines, spelling and grammar mistakes, shortened website links. These are often signs of disinformation.

**Check the Author:** Encourage your child to check who wrote the article. Are they a credible journalist or an anonymous source?

**Understand the Intent:** Help your child understand why 'fake news' exists—often to manipulate opinions, spread fear, or generate clicks for advertising revenue.

# Evaluating Online Information

**Fact-Checking:** Teach your child about the importance of verifying information they find online before accepting it as true. Encourage them to use reliable sources like verified news websites or fact-checking platforms such as [africacheck.org](https://africacheck.org)

Web Rangers also use the crap test to verify information online:

**C**urrency - How recently has the website been updated?

**R**eliability - Does the creator provide references or sources for data or quotations from reputable sources?

**A**uthority - Who is the creator or author? What is their knowledge and experience on the topic?

**P**urpose/Point of View - Is this fact or opinion? Is it biased?

**Cross-Referencing:** Help them learn how to cross-reference information by checking multiple sources. If a story or piece of information is true, it should be reported by more than one credible news source.

Additionally you and your child can also use this guide together to verify the information that they consume online:



If you still can't verify the accuracy of the content use the REAL411 platform guide below to get experts to assist in verifying content.

# Essential Insights for Parents: Impact on Children

Media bias happens when information is presented in a way that favours one side or viewpoint over another. Understanding bias is essential for developing critical thinking.

**Recognize Different Viewpoints:** Teach your child to recognize that news stories can be presented differently depending on the source. Comparing how different media outlets cover the same story can reveal unseen biases.

**Identify Personal Bias:** Help your child become aware of their own biases and how these might affect their perception of the information.

**Question Everything:** Encourage a mindset of questioning and curiosity. Teach your child to ask, "Who benefits from this story being told this way?" Particularly when engaging with content on social media platforms.

- Teach children to think critically about online content to avoid misinformation.
- Help them understand the dangers of sharing unverified information.

## How Can I Support My Child?

Safeguarding your family from digital disinformation is crucial in today's online world. You should teach your child about the importance of flagging and reporting potentially harmful or misleading content online Real411.org is an essential tool that you and your child can use to report and combat misinformation and disinformation.

By visiting the platform, you can easily flag misleading content, which is then reviewed by experts. Encourage your kids to be critical of the information they encounter online and to use Real411 to report anything suspicious.

Submitting a complaint for review is easy, here is a graphic tutorial show you how to submit a complaint online:

**1** | COMPLAINTS | REAL411 APP

SUBMIT A COMPLAINT  
VIEW COMPLAINTS  
VIEW TRENDS

**2** Sign in as Real411 Super Hero

Fast track your complaint submission by using your Real411 profile details and access your own personal dashboard with the status of your complaints

**SIGN IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT**

Welcome! Fast-track your complaint submission: Use your Real411 profile to access your own personal dashboard and complaint status.

Email Address

Enter your password

SIGN IN SIGN UP

Do not show this again

**3** SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

CONTACT INFORMATION

SIGN IN AS REAL411 SUPERHERO TO SKIP THIS STEP

We'll use this information to contact you should we need more information, and to keep you updated on the status of your complaints. Your contact details are kept confidential.

YOUR NAME

YOUR EMAIL

YOUR TELEPHONE

**4** COMPLAINT INFORMATION

Please select from the complaint options below. Provide as much information as possible, the more information there is the more it will help us.

**ARE YOU REPORTING THIS AS DISINFORMATION?**

**ARE YOU REPORTING INCIDENT TO POLICE?**

**ARE YOU REPORTING THIS AS HARASSMENT?**

**ARE YOU REPORTING THIS AS SPYING?**

**ARE YOU REPORTING THIS AS STALKING?**

WHERE DID YOU SEE THIS?

WHAT LANGUAGE IS THIS IN?

ADD TO THIS AND COMMENTS

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR DAILY NEWSLETTER

BECOME A REGISTERED REAL 411 SUPERHERO

SUBMIT



# Stay in Touch



Stay Updated: Subscribe to our newsletter for the latest in digital literacy and safety. Learn more at [Web Rangers](#).

Digital Dilemmas? Get expert advice from Agony Aunt to navigate your child's online challenges. Visit [Hash Play](#) for support.

Report Misinformation: Encounter harmful content online? Report it to [Real 411](#) for expert reviews and action against digital threats to democracy.

Follow Us: Keep up with the latest news and updates by following Web Rangers WhatsApp channel -<https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Vak7lCH3gvWcdFVFIB0V>

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