Helping Your Children Be Discerning About Online Information

What does it mean to be discerning about online information?

It refers to the ability to tell online falsehoods apart from information that is true and reliable. Online falsehoods are often factually inaccurate, biased, sensational, and likely to be believed by many. Falsehoods tend to spread swiftly online through **disinformation** agents who *intentionally* create or spread false information, and through **misinformation** agents who *unintentionally* spread false information.

Examples of online falsehoods include those about

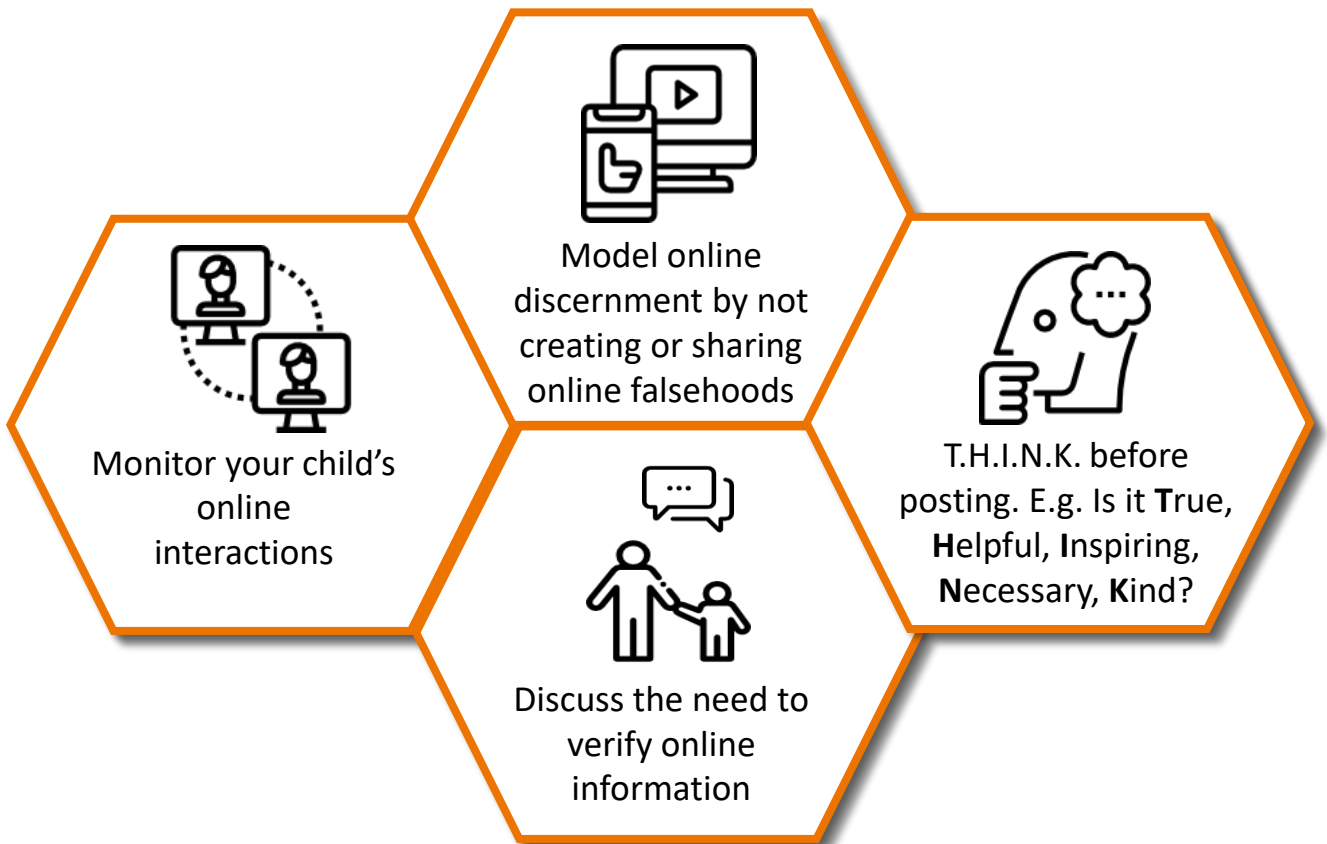| Safety Hazards or Food Scares	Law Enforcement	Public Figures	Multicultural Society
Fake rice rumours at supermarket caused alarmed consumers to demand refunds.	National Environment Agency had to debunk a hoax about fines being given to people who leave their used tissue papers in hawker centres in 2017.	Fake image showing announcement of Mr Lee Kuan Yew's death from Prime Minister Office in 2015.	A new Singaporean photo was misused in an article which stated his desire to revert to his old citizenship and feelings of being cheated. This led to him being abused online.
Source: https://www.tnp.sg/news/singapore/ntuc-fairprice-files-police-report-fake-rice-rumour	*Source:* https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/no-fine-for-leaving-used-tissue-at-hawker-centre-tables-nea-8591060	*Source:* https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/teen-who-posted-fake-announcement-mr-lee-kuan-yews-death-issued-stern-warning	*Source:* https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/government-review-underway-deal-fake-news

Why is it a concern?

➢ Fake stories about someone can be damaging to his/her reputation and potentially lead to severe consequences.

➢ Circulation of unsubstantiated dangers can create fear in people and cause panic.

➢ Disinformation could cause monetary loss in instances of scams or resource wastage when authorities have to investigate false reports.

➢ Disinformation that causes tensions on the basis of race, religion, nationality or any other differences can affect how people treat one another, threatening the country's social harmony.

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How can parents help?

Monitor your child's online interactions

Model online discernment by not creating or sharing online falsehoods

Discuss the need to verify online information

T.H.I.N.K. before posting. E.g. Is it **T**rue, **H**elpful, **I**nspiring, **N**ecessary, **K**ind?

Resources

MOE Cyber Wellness Portal
Useful tips, strategies and resources on various cyber issues.
ictconnection.moe.edu.sg/cyber-wellness

Get Smart with *Sherlock*
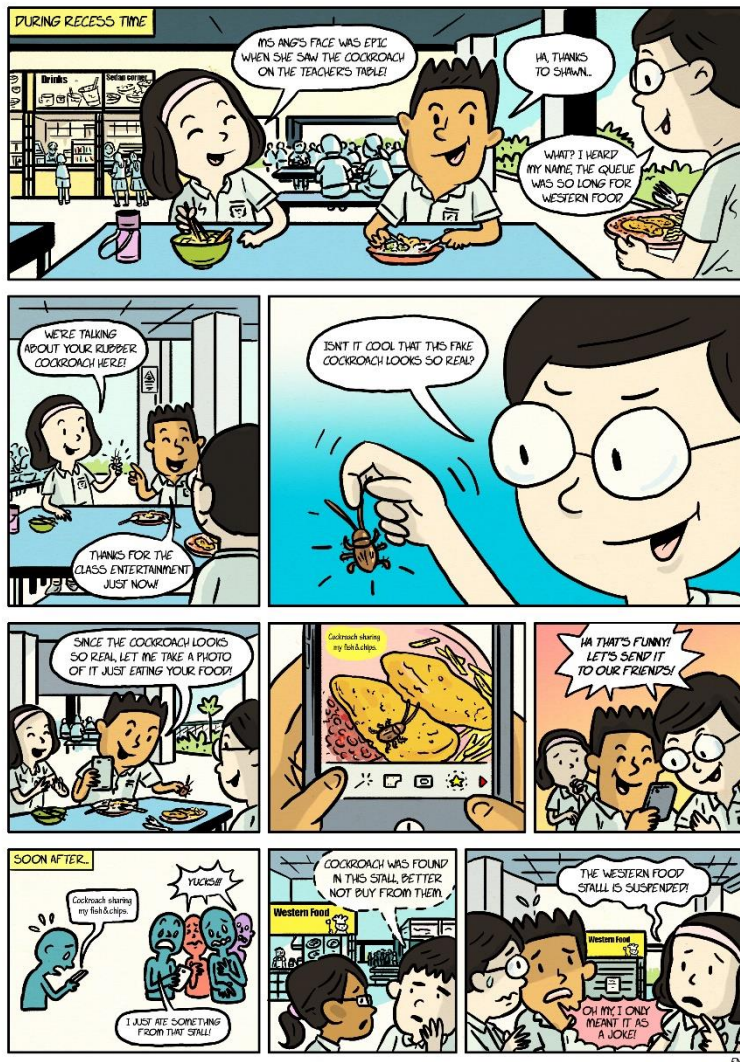Video and e-book series by Media Literacy Council how to help you understand what fake news is and how to identify it
https://www.betterinternet.sg/Campaign-2019/Resources/Get-Smart-with-Sherlock

Combating Fake News
Multi-lingual resources by the National Library Board on fake news and ways to fact-check
http://www.nlb.gov.sg/sure/

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1. **What happened? What are the causes?**
2. **What are the consequences for the various people involved? How would it make them feel?**
3. **What can be done to avoid the pitfalls of online falsehoods?**

Parents' slides for case study
ictconnection.moe.edu.sg/cyber-wellness

Your feedback
go.gov.sg/connect-ptips-t2

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