

Misinformation red flags

Video transcript

Maddie: Hey everybody! It's Maddie. Thanks for hanging on with us. In this final lesson we're going to be talking about all the sketchy red flags you should be on the lookout for when you're scrolling through social media.

Starting with cross-posted content. We see this all the time. A screenshot of a tweet gets shared as a meme on Instagram, a TikTok gets reposted onto YouTube. But when you see this happening, remember that context is crucial and it might have lost a lot of it jumping from platform to platform. When this happens, you should try heading to the original source or creators page. It's totally possible that they have more important information in the caption that got lost along the way, or maybe they posted an update clarifying what was in the original video.

Now I know we all love a good meme. They can be funny ways to comment on current events or topics, but memes have become a sneaky way to share misinformation. Mainly because they are super easy to create, spread quickly and they use recognizable visuals that can appeal to a lot of different age groups. I think we can all agree nothing ruins a day quite like seeing a family member share a bad meme.

Take this Drake meme, for example. This format was really popular but this version downplays the severity of COVID-19, and it also spreads the false claim that the COVID vaccine alters your DNA. This easily, easily crosses the line from being satire into the realm of misinformation. So if you see a meme that's getting a lot of attention, remember that these things usually get a lot less funny when you have all the facts.

And finally, stay skeptical when you see really newsy claims from unverified sources. Does the blue checkmark automatically mean that something is true? Absolutely not. All it means is that the person, company, or group's identity has been confirmed on the platform. But especially in time of breaking news, it's way better to just wait until three to four sources you're actually familiar with are all reporting the same thing, rather than retweet some random person's take.