

BUILDING DIGITAL RESILIENCE

A guide to online risks and tools to protect yourself, your child and others from harm in the digital space.



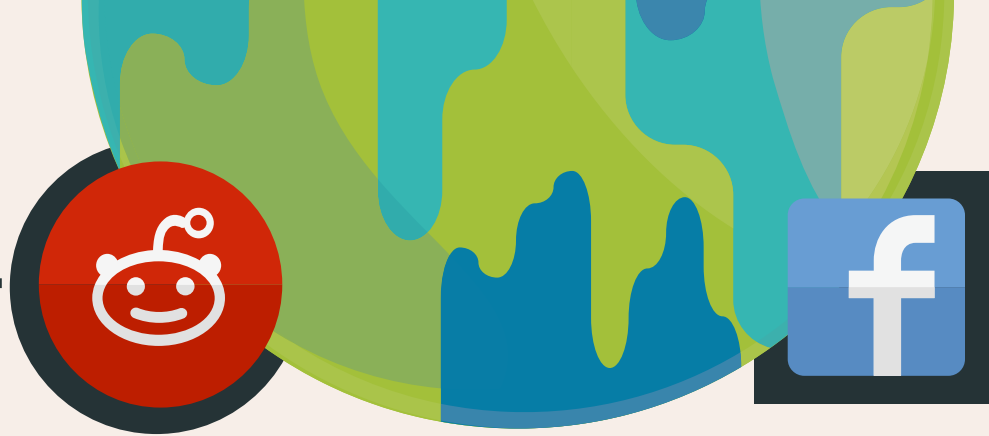
Walsall Council



CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Social Media Factfiles
- Social Media Glossary
- Fake News and Biased Writing
- Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers
- Hate Speech vs Free Speech
- Responding to Online Content
- Online Propaganda Techniques and Themes
- Don't Be Fooled Online
- Other Support





The online space can be a useful source of information and a useful tool for communication.

However, the digital world can also expose individuals to a wide range of contacts, opinions and material, some offensive or dangerous and linking to broader social harms.

This guide is intended to develop your knowledge of the online space, in particular, the world of social media. It is also designed to help boost your confidence in thinking critically about online content and helping others to do so too.

This guide also focuses specifically on how digital spaces are used to encourage or spread violent extremist messages, but helps online users to develop skills to question any harmful content.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

FACEBOOK

Number of users: 2.4 billion
Age limit: 13

Facebook is a social media platform, where users can post text, images or video to a Newsfeed, add friends and comment on other posts. The platform also allows users to join groups and arrange or sign up for events.



YOUTUBE

Number of users: 1.9 billion
Age limit: 18

YouTube is a video content site/app. The platform allows users to watch videos, subscribe to channels and upload their own videos. Users can also comment on videos.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

WHATSAPP

Number of users: 1.5 billion
Age limit: 16

Whatsapp is an instant messaging service, where users can contact others in individual chats or as groups. The app allows for users to share messages, pictures and videos, send voice notes and make video or phone calls.



FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Number of users: 1.3 billion
Age limit: 13

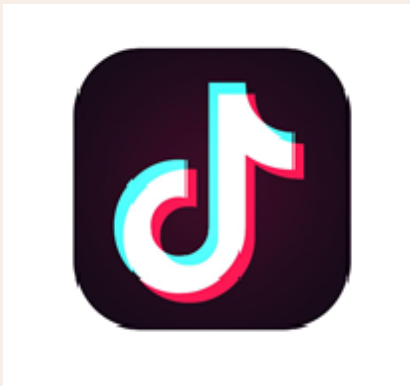
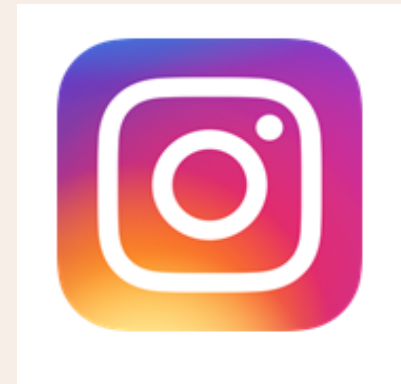
Facebook messenger allows for users to instant message others, including features to live video call, voice messaging and group chats.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

INSTAGRAM

Number of users: 1 billion
Age limit: 13

Instagram is an image-based platform, where users can share pictures to a feed or a live story. The app allows users to follow others, tag others and like posts. Instagram also includes a direct messaging feature.



TIKTOK

Number of users: 500 million
Age limit: 13

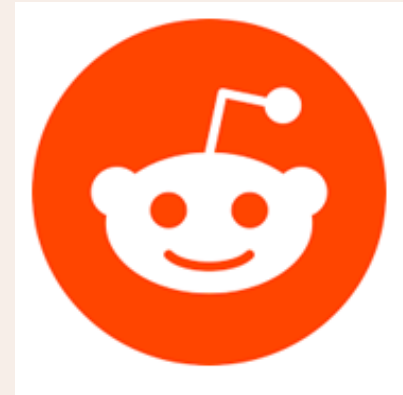
TikTok is a video-sharing platform, where users create short lip-syncing and comedy videos. Users can complete video challenges and can post reaction videos to others on the app.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

REDDIT

Number of users: 430 million
Age limit: 13

Reddit consists of posts from its users on different topics. Users comment on posts to continue the conversation. A key feature to Reddit is that users can cast positive or negative votes for each post and comment on the site.



TWITTER

Number of users: 330 million
Age limit: 13

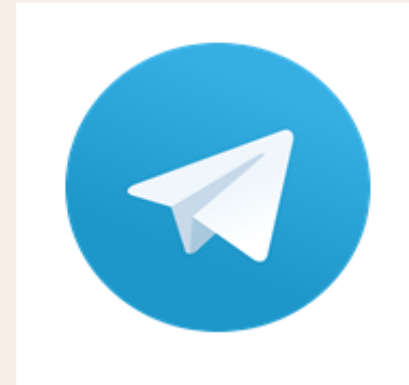
Twitter is a platform made up of short posts of 280 characters or less, known as tweets. Users can follow accounts and retweet (re-post) content from others, as well as share images and follow trending topics.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

TELEGRAM

Number of users: 300 million
Age limit: None

Telegram is a messaging app, similar to Whatsapp but which allows messages to be encrypted or removed more quickly and easily, by self-destructing. Users can also send large files using Telegram.



PINTEREST

Number of users: 291 million
Age limit: 13

Pinterest is a visual platform where users can save images and content that they like- this is known as pinning. Users can follow pins on a particular theme or topic, as well as being able to like and comment others' pins.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACTFILES

SNAPCHAT

Number of users: 203 million
Age limit: 13

Snapchat is a photo and video-sharing app. Users can send short posts which self-destruct after a few seconds or can add photos or videos to a story. Snapchat also allows users to send direct messages and use image filters.



TUMBLR

Number of users: 23 million
Age limit: 13

Tumblr is a social network site based around blogging. Users can post images, videos and text for others to follow, like and comment on. There is also a direct messaging feature on this platform.

SOCIAL MEDIA GLOSSARY

Alongside the many features of social media sites and apps, there comes a range of vocabulary adopted by users. Following are some common terms and abbreviations used on these platforms.

AMA- 'Ask Me Anything'

Used to encourage others to ask questions of a user, sometimes anonymously; this is often seen on Reddit.



ASK ME ANYTHING

Catfishing

The act of creating a fake online identity, such as on social media or dating sites/apps.



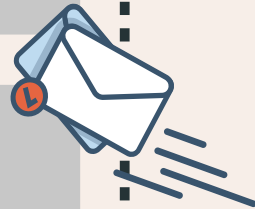
Avatar

A character or small image used to represent a user of a particular website, platform or app.



Clickbait

Attention-grabbing content which aims to attract visitors to a particular website, sometimes to generate income.



Deepfake

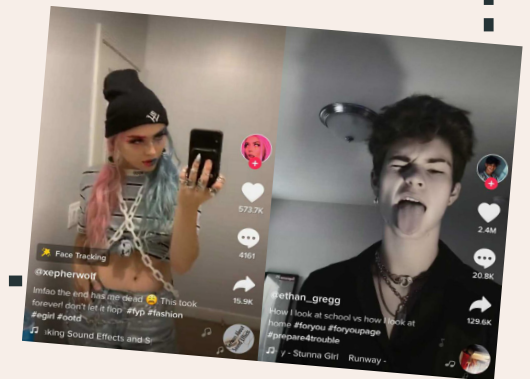
Often pornographic, replicating a likeness of an individual on an existing image or video to convince viewers of hoax activity.

DM- Direct Message

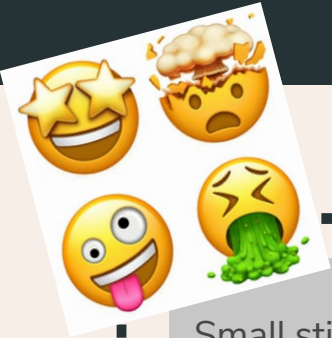
A private chat function used on multiple social media platforms.

E-boy/E-girl

Sometimes used as an insult, but more recently used to describe influencers' style which follows alternative trends, mostly seen on apps like TikTok..

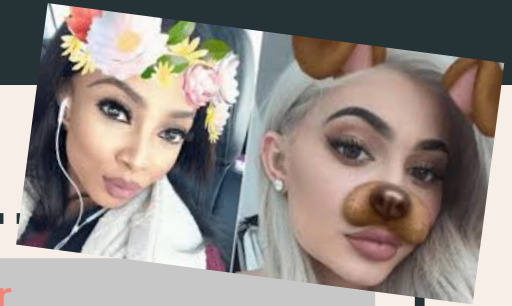


SOCIAL MEDIA GLOSSARY



Emoji

Small sticker images used alongside or instead of text on social media and instant messaging apps.



Filter

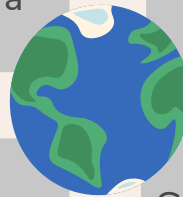
An editing tool which can be applied to alter images and video, such as on Instagram and Snapchat.

F4F- 'Follow for Follow'

Used to encourage another user of a social media app to follow an account in order to receive a follower in return, such as on Instagram.

Geotag

The act of listing the location of an exact post, such as an image on Instagram.



Ghosting

The act of ending contact with someone online (often suddenly) with no explanation, such as on instant messaging platforms or dating sites/apps.

Gif

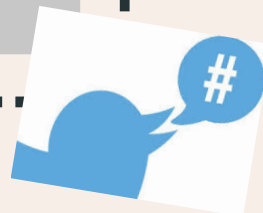
Small, mostly animated images, which can be posted alongside text in comments and instant messages.

Handle

Another word for a username- often used in relation to Twitter or Instagram.

Hashtag

A word or phrase following the # sign, used to draw visitors' attention to particular topics or themes on social media.



SOCIAL MEDIA GLOSSARY



Influencer

A person who uses social media to reach a wide audience and who generate income by promoting products or services.

Meme

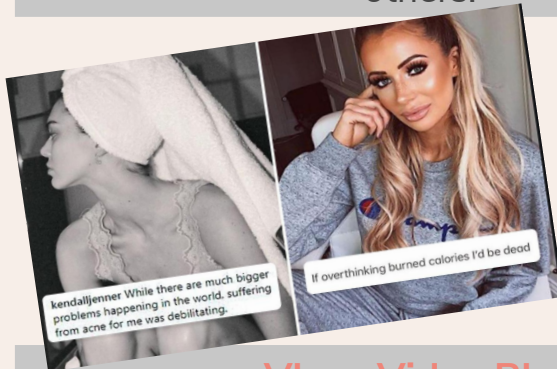
An image, video or short text which mostly uses humour and which is spread quickly around social media platforms and websites.

Sadfishing

The act of creating exaggerated emotional posts in order to gain attention or sympathy from others.

Tag

The act of including another individual or page within a post on social media.



Troll

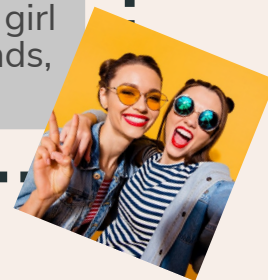
A person who deliberately posts or responds in a controversial way to make another user/users angry.

Vlog- Video Blog

Short video posts used to document events or discuss particular topics, in the way a blog or online diary would.

VSCO girl

A term to describe (and sometimes insult) a girl who follows certain fashion trends and brands, named after photo-editing app, VSCO.



FAKE NEWS

Fake news can be described as articles or posts that appear to be factual, but which contain intentional lies, pretending to be facts, which are intended to influence people, attract viewers, or deceive them.

43% of 12-15 year-olds have seen a fake news story online

Only 16% say that they can tell whether news on social media is true*

To the right is an example of a news story that circulated social media in 2013. Many fake news articles will play on current issues, grievances or personal biases.

▪ Claim: You're exempt from council tax if you claim your home is a place of worship



A post claimed that homes used for religious purposes are exempt from Council Tax. Credit: PA

An image shared on Facebook purports that places of worship are exempt from Council Tax - but only if the worshippers are Muslim.

The post claims followers of Islam who use their living areas as a place to pray do not need to pay Council Tax. It also states these rules don't relate to other religions.

The image attached to the post shows a petition, first raised in 2013, based on the false facts.

Whilst certain buildings are exempt from Council Tax, claiming your home is a place of worship doesn't automatically make it exempt.

A 2018 briefing from the House of Commons said: "It is not possible for owners of domestic property to avoid council tax by claiming that their property, or part of it, is used for religious purposes."

BIASED WRITING

Biased writing is when a writer shows favouritism or prejudice towards a particular opinion, instead of being fair and balanced. It is used to push people towards a particular point of view.

49% of UK adults say that they use social media for news consumption*

THE MONTHLY RACER

Horse racing is the greatest sport on God's green earth!



Former jockey, Frankie Dettori reports

FILTER BUBBLES AND ECHO CHAMBERS

FILTER BUBBLES

When users are suggested content based on their previous internet consumption habits, and can lead to them being separated from information that disagrees with their viewpoint.

ECHO CHAMBERS

Social spaces in which the same or similar ideas, opinions and beliefs are repeated within a closed group. This can stop people from appreciating other points of view on a topic.

The same news story could look very different in one person's filter bubble and echo chamber compared to someone else's.

Horror from animal rights groups as cruel owner allows dog to cross busy motorway unsupervised.

Motorists angry and fed up as dog let off lead unaccompanied on busy road, causing delays.

Man's best friend- brave dog rushes to find help for its elderly owner.

Inspirational! Loyal dog receives award from leading animal charity for saving owner's life.

After another nearly fatal accident on our roads, should there be a law to keep dogs on leads?

A majority of online 12-15s think critically about websites they visit, but **only a third** correctly understand search engine advertising.*

HATE SPEECH VS FREE SPEECH

HATE SPEECH

Hate speech is speech which attacks a person or group on the basis of their race, religion, sexual orientation or their physical or mental disability.

A social media post threatens graphic violence against someone because of their religion.

You see comments under a social media post that racially abuse someone, making comments about their skin colour.

Someone posts an image of a disabled person on social media, and mocks their disability.

45% of 12-15 year olds have seen hate speech online in the past 12 months.*

FREE SPEECH

Free speech is the right to voice and share your opinions and ideas freely and without fear of retaliation.

Someone comments under an online video that it is "sexist and disgusting".

Someone shares a news article asking whether politicians should be criminalised for misleading the public.

Someone posts on social media, stating that more people should become vegan.

RESPONDING TO ONLINE CONTENT

You may come across a wide range of opinions on social media, which you might agree or disagree with. The chart below shows some potential outcomes when choosing how to respond to posts online.

	Flag/Report	Respond	Block	Ignore
What are the pros of this choice?	If the post breaches hate speech policies, it will be removed. This may reduce harmful content in future.	If you respond positively to open up dialogue, the person who posted might learn a different point of view and build empathy.	You will not have to see content which upsets or offends you. You will not have to communicate with the person who posted.	You are not drawing attention to harmful or offensive content, which reduces its appeal.
What are the cons of this choice?	If no dialogue happens, the person who shared the post might not learn that it is harmful or offensive to others	If you respond, the person who posted may react to your response in a harmful or offensive way. If you respond negatively, you may cause harm or offense to others and put yourself at risk of being reported.	If no dialogue happens, the person who shared the post might not learn that it is harmful or offensive to others	By not reacting at all, the person who posted may think it is acceptable to share harmful content and continue to do so.

ONLINE PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

Whilst individuals may post explicit hate speech online, there are also groups who wish to promote violent or hateful agendas and ideas through the use of propaganda. Here are some of the techniques commonly seen in propaganda from sources ranging from adverts to extremist groups online.

AMBIGUOUS WORDS

Using words or phrases which can be interpreted in many different ways to fit a particular context or agenda.

ASSERTION

Saying something like it's a fact, but really it's just a statement that may or may not be true.

BANDWAGON

Being influenced to follow the crowd in order to fit in, because everyone else is doing it.

GENERALISATION

Making a judgement on something without being able to fully prove it.

LESSER OF TWO EVILS

Convincing you to make a bad choice by comparing it to something worse when there could be another option.

OMISSION

Missing out small facts which radically change the meaning of the message.

SCAPEGOATING

Blaming a problem on one person/a group of people, even though there could be other factors involved.

TRANSFER

Transferring what you think or feel about one thing onto another thing, for either good or bad reasons.

ONLINE PROPAGANDA THEMES

Here are some of the themes commonly seen in propaganda from extremist groups online.

IMAGE OF SUCCESS

This theme suggests that the group in question are winning and can offer an exciting and appealing life to those who join. Why settle for less?



STATUS AND BELONGING

By joining a particular group you will find others like you and you will be able to gain respect and responsibilities from members of your new community.



PERSONAL DUTY

This theme suggests to people that it is their personal duty to support the ideology of a group, whether it be about ethnicity, nationality, religion or politics.



WE, THE "DEFENDERS"

This approach sets out a group or organisation as the ONLY one able to offer a meaningful defence against a perceived threat, whether domestic or from abroad. Often communications will show acts of kindness and support as a way of influencing people's perceptions.



DON'T BE FOOLED ONLINE

The online world can offer either useful information or unreliable information through sources like articles, videos and images, Take a look at the following tips to help you and your child/young person question the information you access digitally.

1. Consider the source

- Can you find the same information anywhere else?
- Is the source made of a mixture of other sources?
 - Where did the source originate?

TOP TIP!

Look up fact-checking sites like Full Fact or Snopes to find the origin of news articles. Use Google Reverse Image search to find out where a photo came from.

This Cop Went Undercover, What Happened Next Will Restore Your Faith in Humanity

2. Read beyond

- Is the headline outrageous?
- Does it make you feel any strong emotions?
- Could it be clickbait?
- Have you read the full article?

3. Is it a half truth?

- Does the source show you the full story?
- Has something been changed, added or removed?



DON'T BE FOOLED ONLINE

4. Supporting sources

- Is the information backed up by reliable mainstream sources?
- Is the information up-to-date?
- Have you checked multiple news sites/channels to get a rounded view?



6. Ask the experts

- Who would be a reliable person with proven or specialist knowledge on this topic?
- Which sites might be useful to show official or expert guidance on a topic?

5. Is it a joke?

- Is the source so outrageous it seems unbelievable?
- Is the information making fun of serious events or issues?

White men wearing black socks is undercover racism.

Shaniqua O'Toole



NEWS IN BRIEF

NASA Frantically Announces Mission To Earth's Core After Accidentally Launching Rocket Upside Down

DON'T BE FOOLED ONLINE

7. Fact or opinion?

- Is there evidence to prove the source to be true (e.g. scientific/historical facts)?
- Does the source quote other reliable sources or people?
- Could the author or creator be biased?



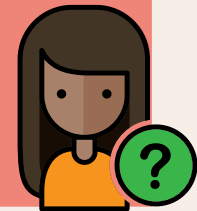
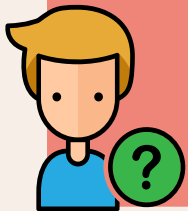
8. Check the author or creator

- Can you find any other information about the author or creator?
- Are they a real person?
 - Do they have real qualifications in the subject they are talking about?

TOP TIP!

Create your own checklist of questions that will help you recognise unreliable content online.

Try to come up with 5 or 6 questions. For example, "What emotions am I feeling? Why?", "What might be a different viewpoint of this story or topic?"



WHERE ELSE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?



GENERAL DIGITAL RESILIENCE

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Includes useful tools and tips to help you keep track of your child's online usage, as well as information on how to talk to your child about the online space.

PARENTZONE

www.parentzone.org.uk/parents

Includes guides to the pros and cons of a range of online platforms, as well as contact details to receive free advice and access to the Parenting in the Digital Age course.

THINKUKNOW

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/get-advice/young-people-online

Includes videos on a range of online harms, as well as tips on discussing how to stay safe online. Also includes links to CEOP reporting function.

INEQE SAFEGUARDING GROUP

www.ineqe.com/learn/safeguardinghub

Includes videos and factsheets on current online trends and risks. More videos can also be found on the organisation's YouTube channel.

VODAFONE DIGITAL PARENTING

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting>

Includes articles on a range of online topics, safety and wellbeing, as well as technical tips and tricks. Also includes a link to the Vodafone Digital Parenting magazine.

WHERE ELSE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?



BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTREMISM

EDUCATE AGAINST HATE

www.educateagainsthate.com/parents

Includes information about warning signs of radicalisation, online extremism and how to talk to your child about extremism. Also offers links to other online safety resources.

THINKUKNOW

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/get-advice/young-people-online

Includes videos on a range of online harms, as well as tips on discussing how to stay safe online. Also includes links to CEOP reporting function.

NSPCC TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT TERRORISM

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/supporting-children-worried-about-terrorism/

Specific guidance on how to have open discussions with your child about terrorist attacks, with accompanying videos. Also includes advice on how to report suspicious activity online.

REPORTING MATERIAL PROMOTING TERRORISM OR EXTREMISM

www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Through this site, you can anonymously report content which promotes violence or terrorism, as well as material posted by terrorist or extremist organisations.