MEDIA LITERACY COUNCIL PRESENTS
GET SMART WITH SHERLOCK
WHY DO WE FALL FOR FAKE NEWS?
In our last case, we learned the three main reasons people spread fake news: money, malice, and mischief. Now, we think about the next big question:

WHY DO WE FALL FOR FAKE NEWS EVEN THOUGH WE SHOULD KNOW BETTER?

HI, I'M SHERLOCK, your friendly neighbourhood detective, and I'm here to help you understand why people fall for fake news!

Since we deal with huge amounts of information every day, we rely on our past experiences and beliefs to make choices. These thinking shortcuts are made worse by the internet, leading us to think that we are always right - even when we are wrong.

Here are 5 reasons we may fall for fake news:

1. CONFIRMATION BIAS
2. CONTINUED INFLUENCE EFFECT
3. ILLUSORY TRUTH EFFECT
4. BACKFIRE EFFECT
5. ECHO CHAMBER
1. CONFIRMATION BIAS
Once we have formed an opinion about something, we tend to accept information that confirms that opinion while rejecting information that is different.

For example, if we like an actor, we’re more likely to believe reviews that praise movies that actor was in than those that criticise his acting. This may seem harmless, but it can apply to anything people have an opinion about - which is everything!

2. CONTINUED INFLUENCE EFFECT
This is the tendency to continue believing in information that we trust, even after we find out that it is wrong.

For example, if a celebrity was accused about lying about their past, people may continue to believe that they were trying to cover up the truth even after the accusations were found to be untrue. So, be careful about the information you share, because it can be difficult to take back!

YOU’RE LYING! WHAT A FRAUD!

IT’S FAKE NEWS!
3. ILLUSORY TRUTH EFFECT
The more we see a piece of information, real or fake, the more likely we are to believe it.

For example, if you keep seeing ads about a particular vacuum cleaner, you’re likely to believe that it really is the best! This is because we like familiarity when making choices, and seeing something often makes us more open to accepting it as the 'truth'.

4. BACKFIRE EFFECT
When we hear too many arguments supporting a belief, we shut off and reject any new correct information about it, whilst sticking to a simpler, older belief.
5. THE ECHO CHAMBER

Like echoes in a cave, the internet bounces our own ideas back to us, keeping out alternative points of view.

The information we find when we search for something online or scroll through our social media is directly related to our previous likes, comments, and searches. This means we only see information we already agree with, and not the full range of ideas available online.
Now, we now why people fall so easily for fake news:

1. **CONFIRMATION BIAS**

When we have an opinion about something, we tend to accept information that confirms that opinion while rejecting information that is different.

2. **CONTINUED INFLUENCE EFFECT**

The tendency to continue believing in information that we trust, even after we find out that it is wrong.

3. **ILLUSORY TRUTH EFFECT**

The more we see a piece of information, real or fake, the more likely we are to believe it.

4. **BACKFIRE EFFECT**

When we hear too many arguments supporting a belief, we shut off and reject any new information about it while sticking to a simpler, older belief.

5. **ECHO CHAMBER**

The internet shows us posts and websites based on our previous searches and likes, bouncing our own ideas back to us and keeping out alternative points of view.

With all these reasons that make us more likely to fall for fake news, the internet does not make things easier. Now, it only takes a click (or a tap on our phone) to share information online. Be sure to think about why you believe something before you share it.
Now that we know why we fall for fake news, our next case will look at what happens when fake news spreads!

WHAT’S NEXT: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAKE NEWS?

THIS IS SHERLOCK,
and together we will uncover the truth about fake news!

Signing off!
we are here!

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FOLLOW
SHERLOCK
ON HIS NEXT CASE!

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