



# Misinformation

**Misinformation** is spreading false information unintentionally without intent to harm. Misinformation occurs when individuals or organisations unknowingly spread false information, often due to unverified details in breaking news or sharing unconfirmed facts or figures. It gained prominence when dictionary.com named it Word of the Year in 2018.

In the modern age, misinformation can spread rapidly through social media, websites, or word of mouth. A single unverified online post or news story can be shared by thousands of people before its accuracy is questioned.

Misinformation can arise from errors in reporting, misunderstanding of facts, or incomplete knowledge about a subject.

One of the main reasons misinformation spreads is because people often fail to verify the accuracy of what they are sharing. For example, in a rush to share breaking news, details might be distorted, or an unverified rumour might be accepted as truth.

## Examples of Misinformation

- **Social Media Rumours:** A viral fake post e.g. about a celebrity when the information is false, shared by millions of users without fact-checking.
- **False News Stories:** A news report that provides incorrect details about a current event due to errors or lack of reliable sources such as, a report about a natural disaster might claim incorrect details about the number of fatalities.



## How Misinformation Spreads

- **Social Media:** Social platforms like X, Facebook, and Instagram are fast environments where misinformation can quickly go viral. A user might unintentionally share false information, and the misinformation can reach a broad audience in a short time.
- **Media Amplification:** Sometimes, misinformation is amplified by the media, especially when a story is sensational or attention-grabbing. News outlets might report on an unverified event or claim, which can then be shared further.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/misinformation>

