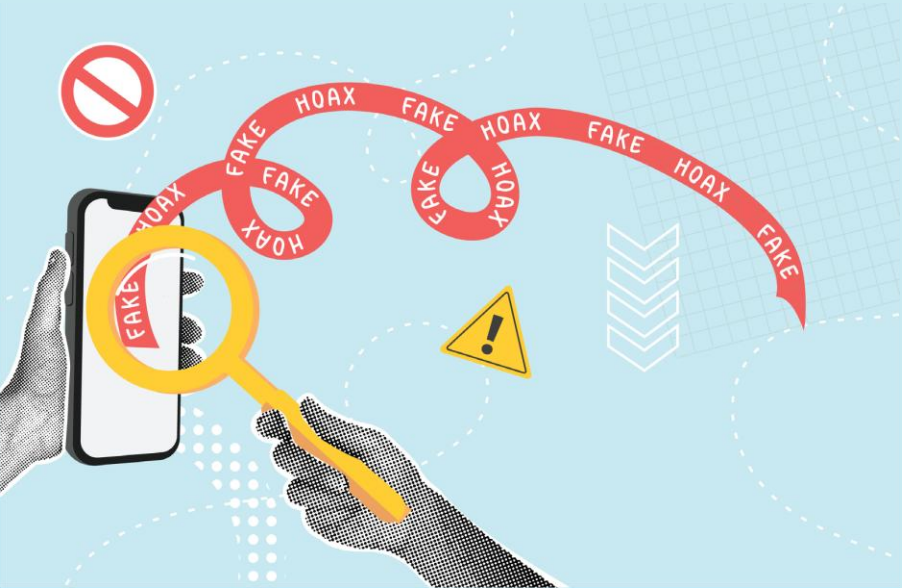
STAY SMART ONLINE:

How to help older Australians spot misinformation and find facts



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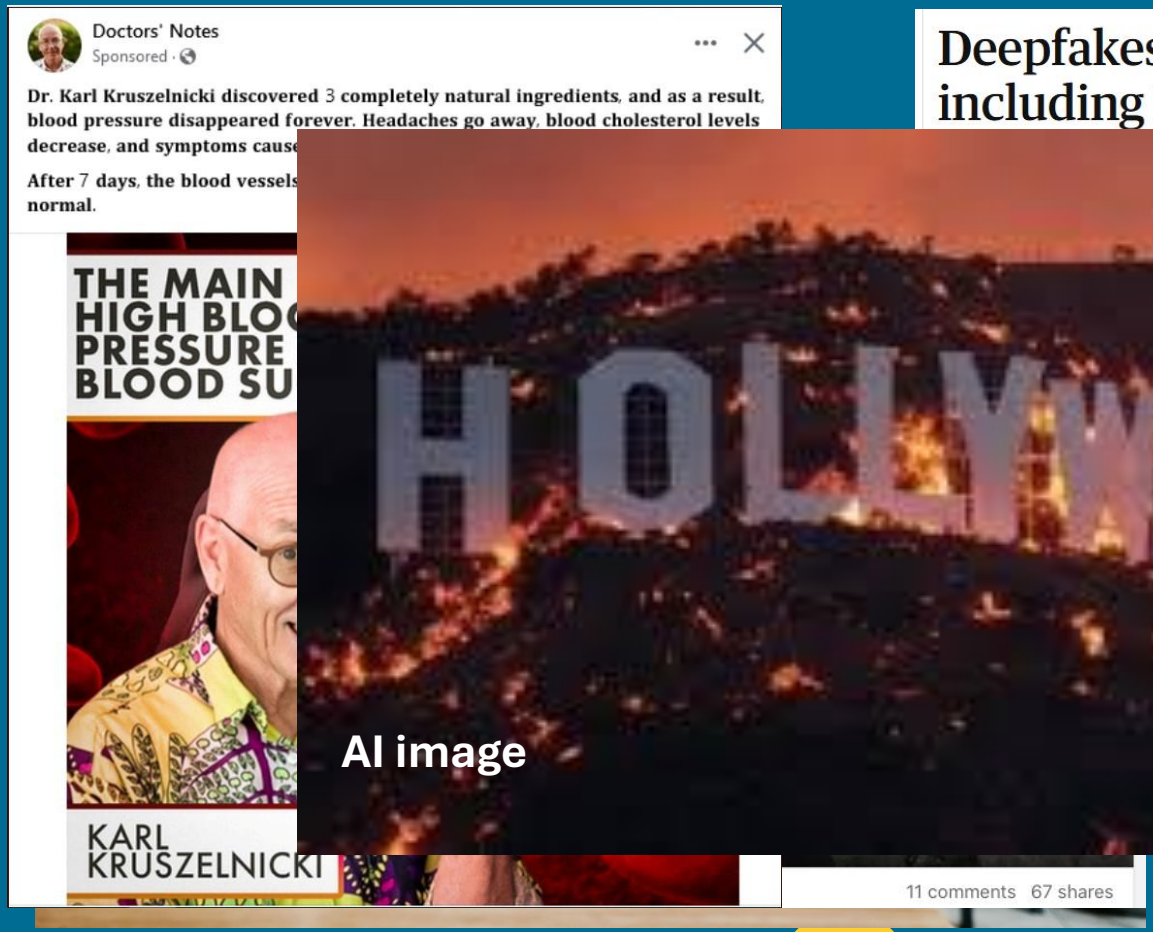


AI image

Images: Microsoft, ABC, Guardian Australia, Facebook

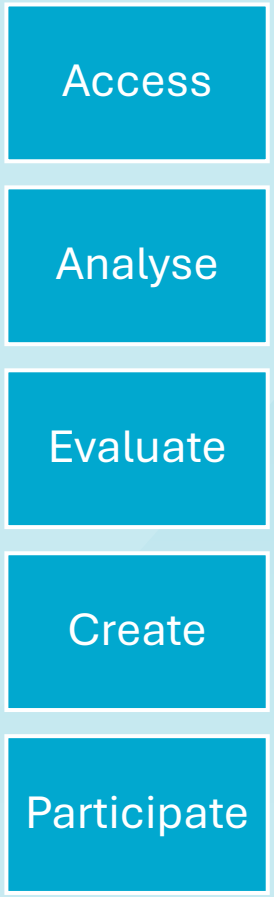
Misinformation

- Any false or misleading information which is presented as true, regardless of intent
- 97% of adult Australians have insufficient ability to verify information online
- 74% of Australians are concerned about misinformation
- 59% of adults say they recently encountered misinformation online
- Older people are more vulnerable

Sources: Park et al. (2025). *Digital News Report: Australia 2025*. Canberra: News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra; Park et al. (2024). *Online misinformation in Australia: Adults' experiences, abilities, and responses*. University of Canberra and Western Sydney University.

Media literacy

- 82% of Australians want access to media literacy training
- 99% of library staff see media literacy as essential work
- Just 10% feel very well equipped to help their communities with media literacy



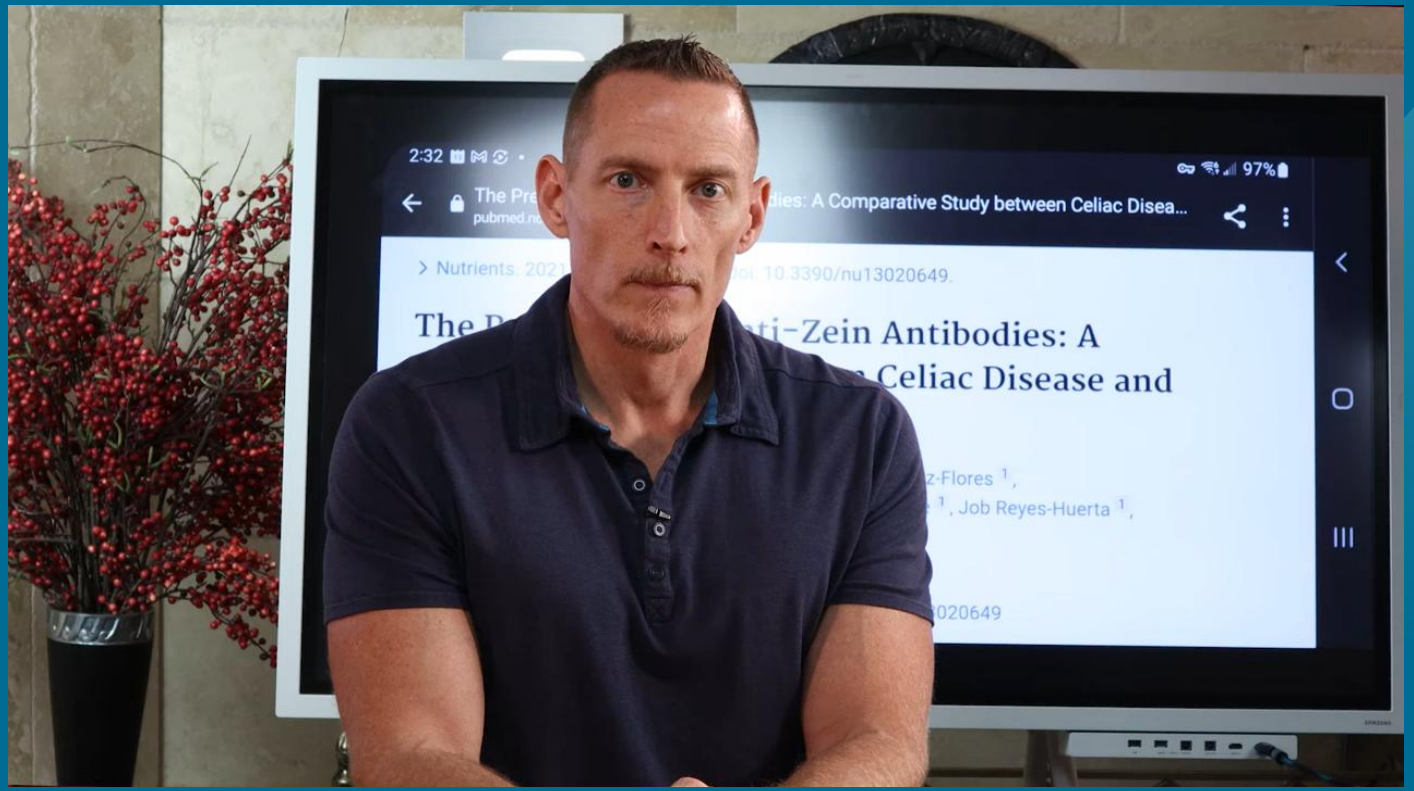
Sources: Park & Notley (2024). *The Conversation;* ALIA & PressReader (2026). *Ready to Act: Media Literacy and the Role of Australia's Public Libraries*. Canberra: ALIA & PressReader; Livingston (2004). What is media literacy? Intermedia, 32(3), 18–20; NAMLE. (2024). 'Media literacy defined'.

Fact versus fake

- What is it?
- Who created it?
- Why did they create it?
- What's the evidence?
- What do other sources say?

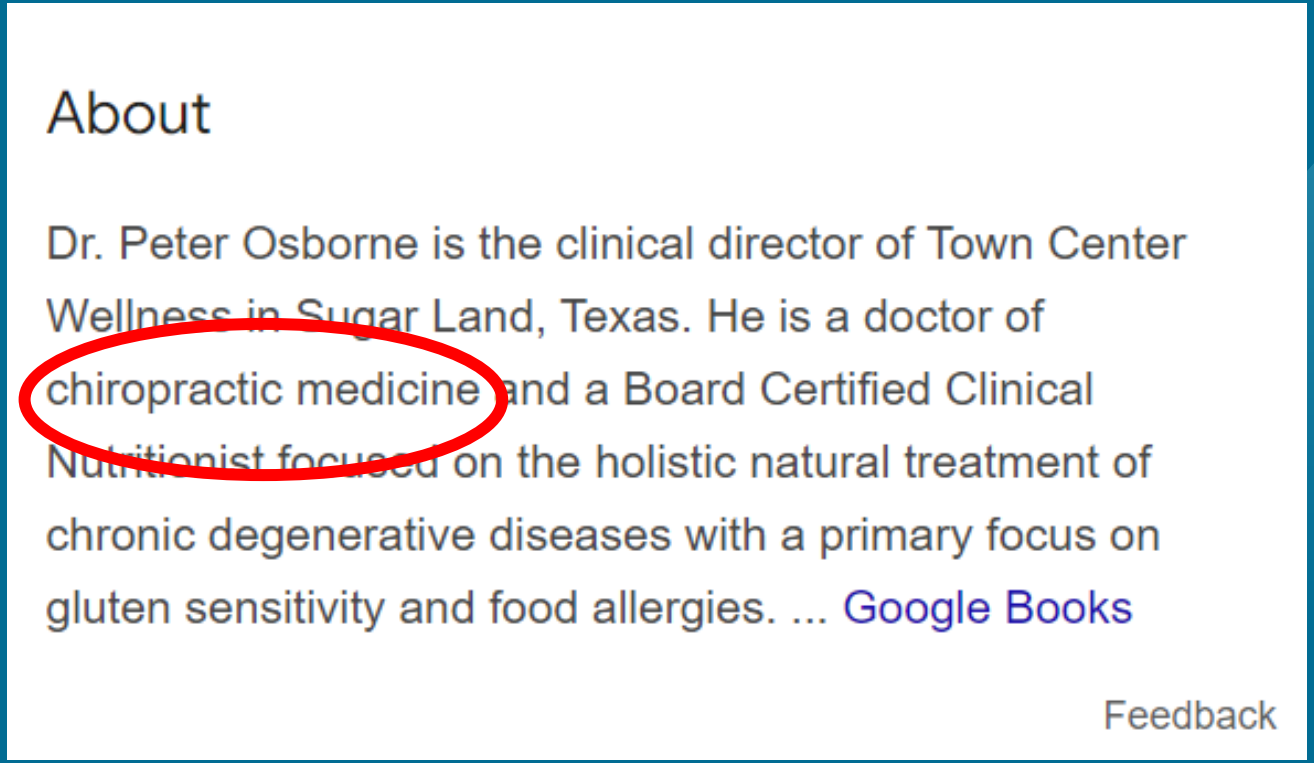
Image: Unsplash

Verifying information



Source: Peter Osborne/YouTube

Verifying information



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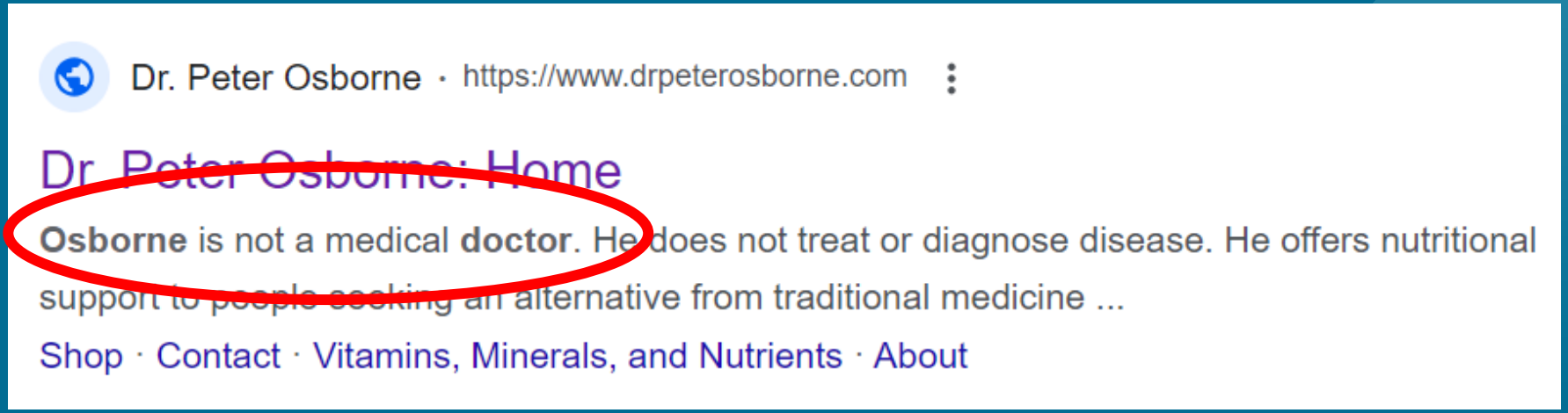

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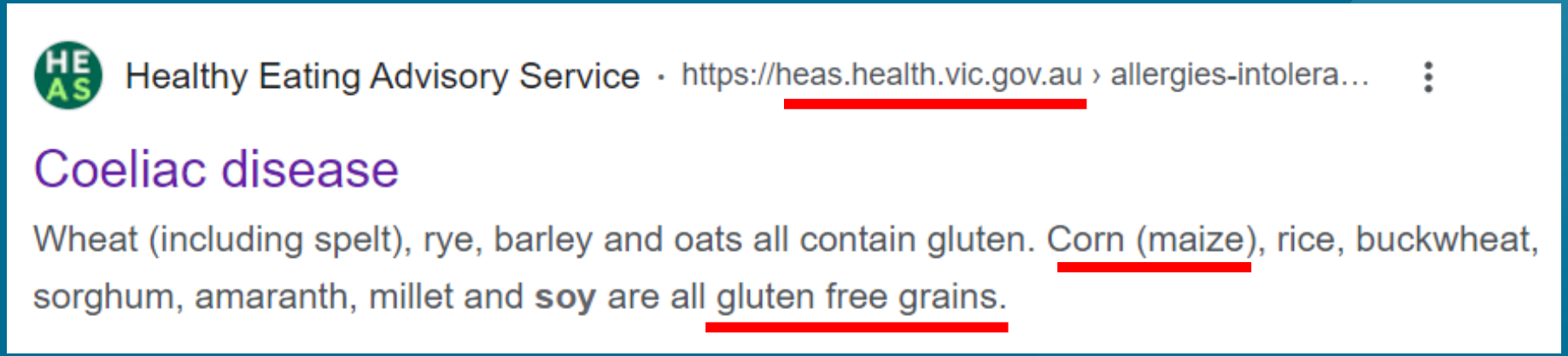


Verifying information

C	**Currency**	*The timeliness of the info*	Is the content up to date?
R	**Relevance**	*How the info fits your needs*	Is the content relevant to your research?
A	**Authority**	*The source of the info*	Where is the content published? Who is the author? Are they considered reputable and trustworthy in their field?
A	**Accuracy**	*Reliability and accuracy of the info*	Is the content supported by evidence? Are the claims cited correctly?
P	**Purpose**	*The reason the info exists*	What was the motive behind publishing this content?

Verifying information

Lateral reading is ***searching for information about a source or piece of information while you are reading or looking at it.***

You are checking for currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose (CRAAP method) by reading what other sites or sources say about the content you're checking.

Verifying information

ABC NEWS

TinEye

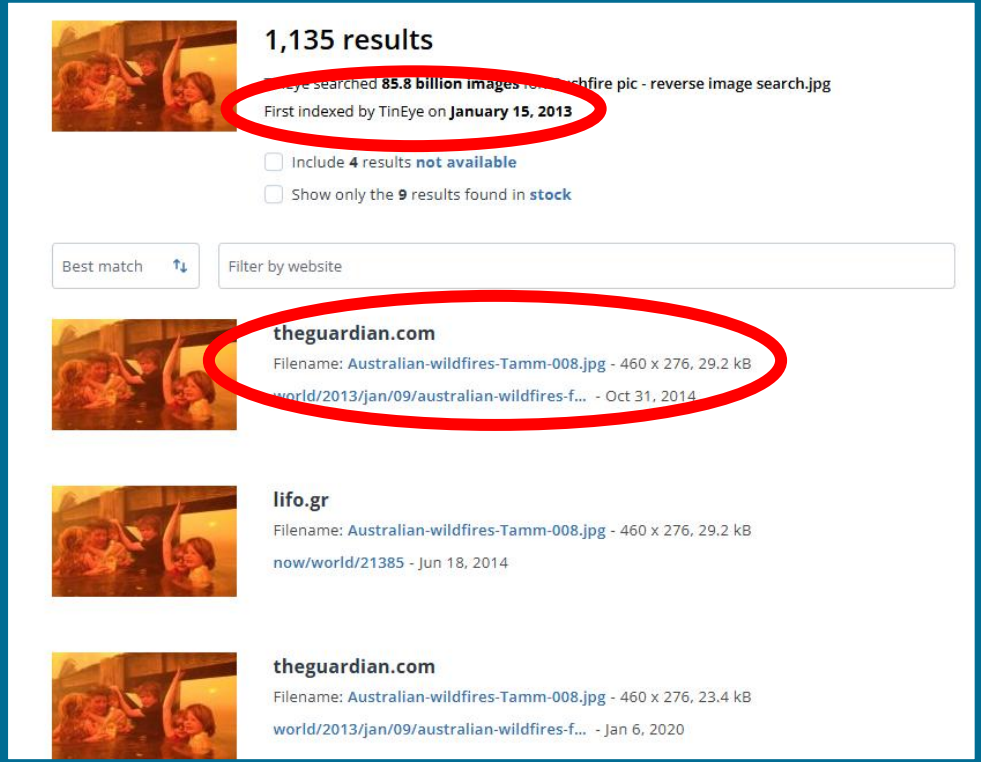
AAP FactCheck

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

emergencyplus

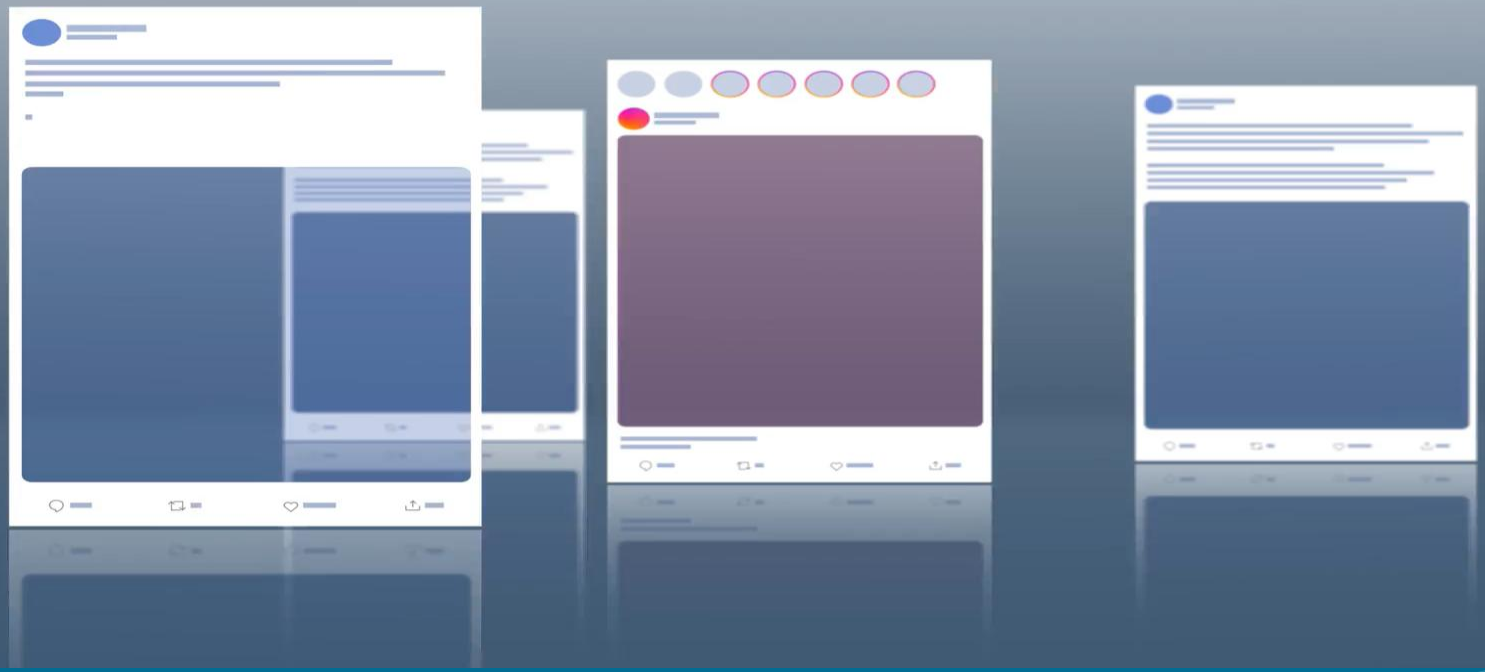
InVID

Verifying information



TinEye

Image: Tim Holmes



Understanding media structures

Video: Microsoft

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Partner Content

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Keyton's retirement villages empower residents to thrive, offering tailored wellness programs and community support.

Understanding media structures

Sources: Instagram, *Courier Mail*, Google, news.com.au

AI image

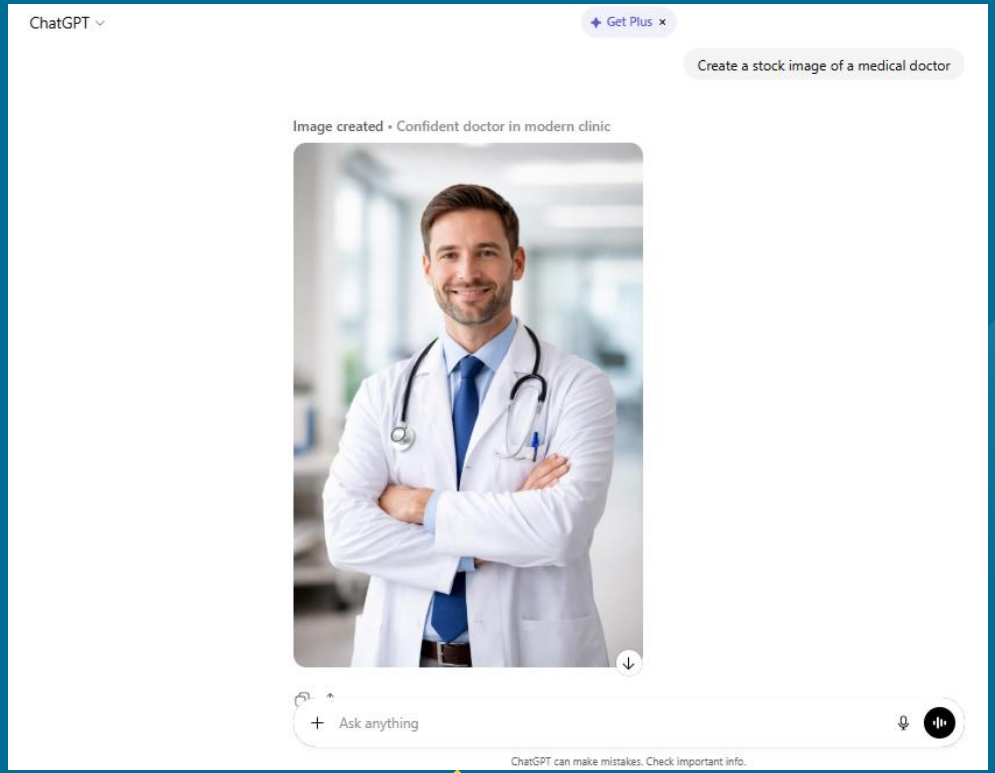
Source: ChatGPT

Understanding media structures

AI large language models (LLMs) and multimodal foundation models are trained on masses of data, including:

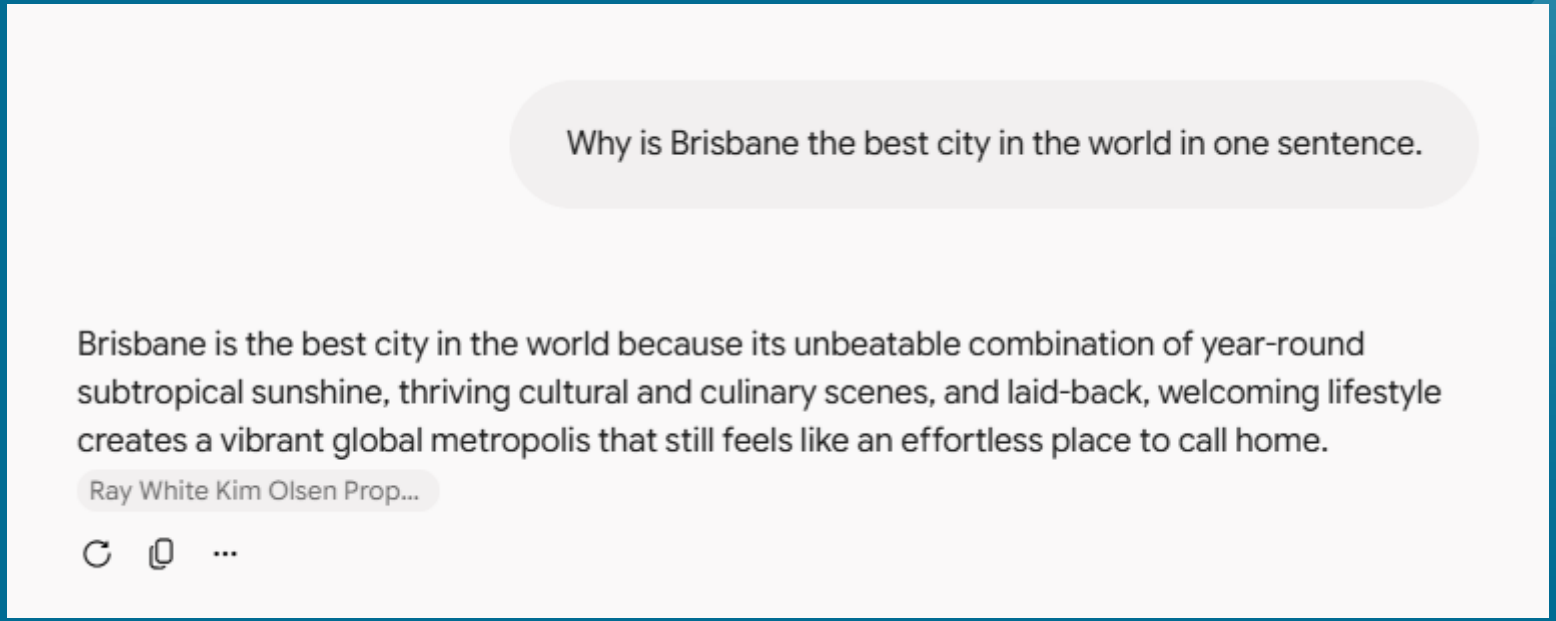
- Books
- Videos
- Games
- Blogs
- Websites
- Social media posts
- Artworks
- Photos
- Marketing material
- Advertising
- Fiction
- Misinformation.

Understanding media structures



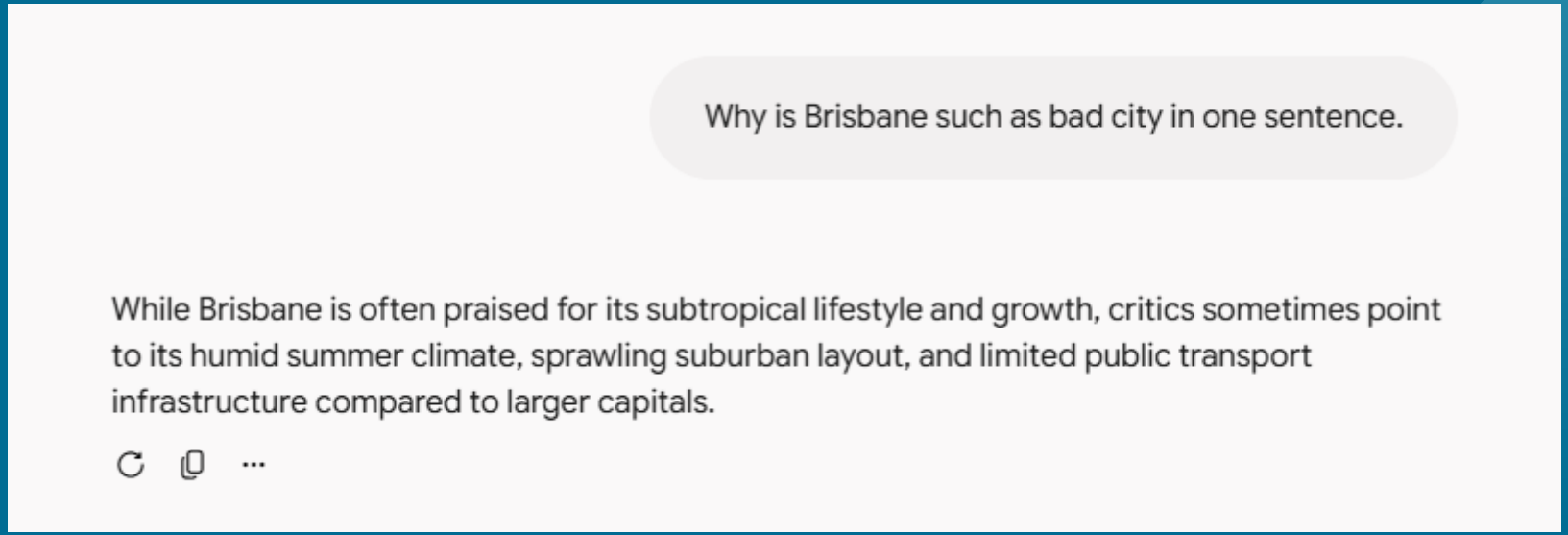
Source: ChatGPT

The role of our bias



Source: Gemini

The role of our bias



Source: Gemini

Admitting when we're wrong

Image: Humphrey Muleba/Unsplash

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Resources to help you – Stay Smart Online

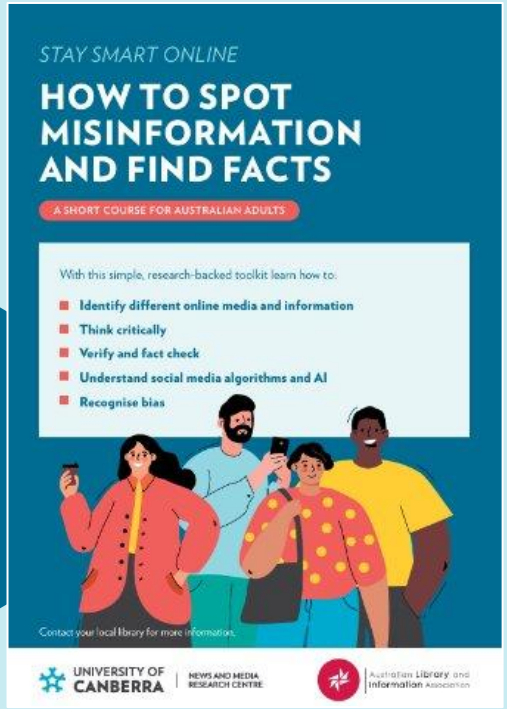
23% growth in media literacy

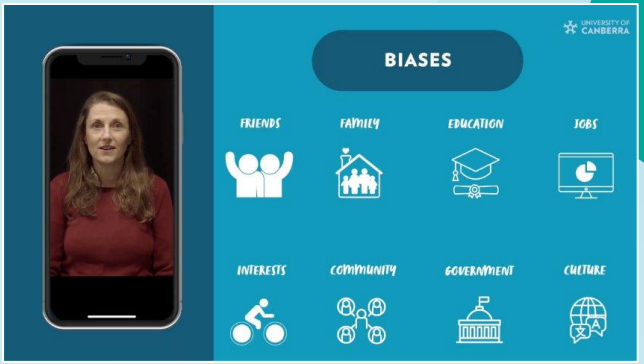
Big boost in evaluation skills and confidence

Media literacy improves across demographics and attitudes

After three months, media literacy is still 11% higher

Resources to help you – Stay Smart Online





Media literacy assessment for older Australians

How would you rate your level of media literacy? *1 is very low and 5 is very high.*

What is media literacy? It is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication on all mediums, including newspapers, radio, television, websites online, apps and social media.

	1	2	3	4	5
My media literacy level	○	○	○	○	○

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Resources to help you – Stay Smart Online

- Patrons felt more confident across all subjects (69% to 78%)
- 63% more confident in understanding AI

Most valuable thing I learned …

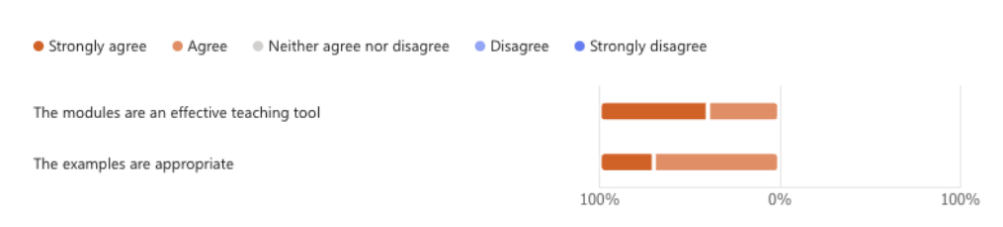
"Teaching how to check veracity of content online."

"How/what to check before sharing any content so that I do not send false information to my friends."

"Having a checklist of questions to ask about any content I'm reviewing. e.g. what do other sources say."

Resources to help you – Stay Smart Online

Effectiveness of course and examples



Overall

- Very happy with the results
- It was simple and easy to run
- Reverse image searching well received
- Well structured
- Effective teaching tool

What worked well

"Feedback showed the anecdotal examples were appreciated, along with the videos and the handouts. And the space to allow questions and comments."

"Connecting to real life examples helped the participants to connect with and understand the content."

"Anything that engaged and encouraged audience participation. The simple stuff was great … carrot, pumpkin. The reverse imaging also piqued their interest."

STAY SMART ONLINE:
HOW TO SPOT MISINFORMATION AND FIND FACTS

A short course for Australian adults

stayingsmartonline@gmail.com

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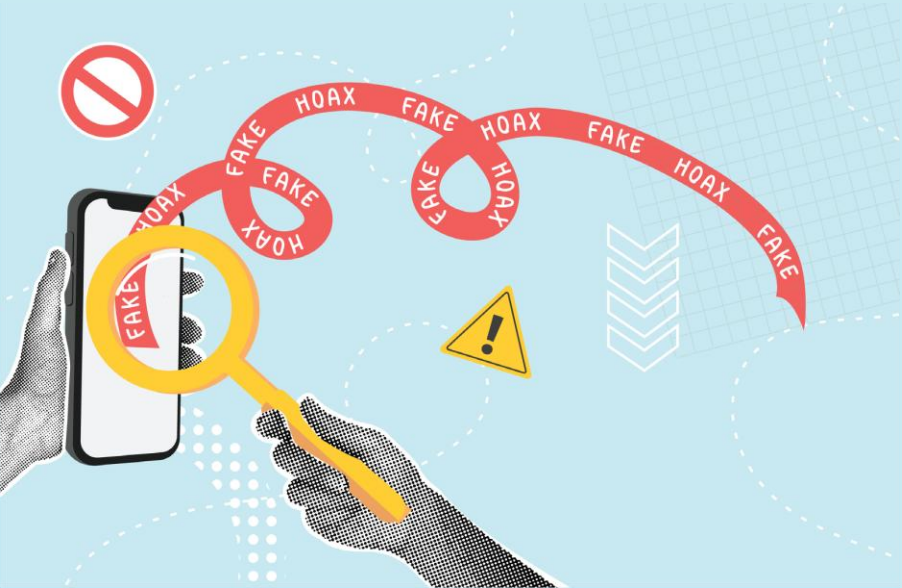
Resources to help you – professional development

UCMediaLiteracy@canberra.edu.au

Thank you



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