

Ohio Tech Ambassadors

Tech Talk: How to Spot Fake News & Scams Online

Think Before You Click: Spotting
Misinformation and Online Scams

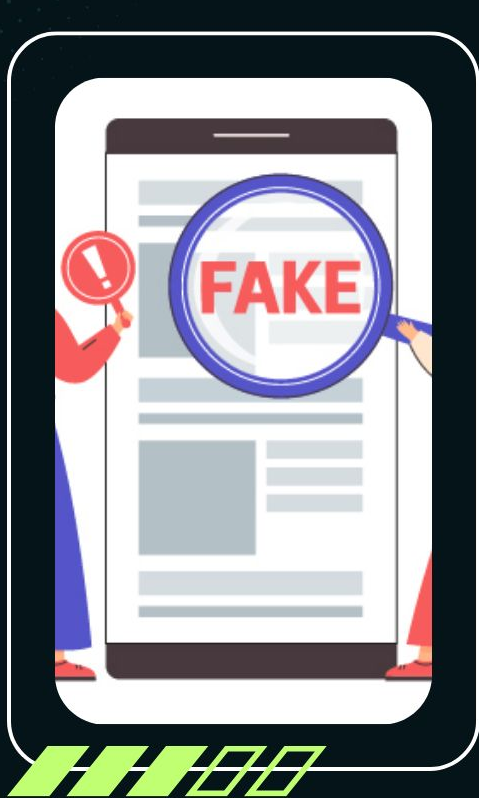


Session Goals



By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand what fake news and online scams look like
- Learn red flags to spot misleading or malicious content
- Compare reliable vs. unreliable information sources
- Practice verifying stories and offers
- Leave with practical tools and habits for safe browsing and sharing



Why This Matters

- Fake news and scams can cause:
 - 💸 Financial loss
 - 🤪 Misinformation and confusion
 - 😡 Divisiveness or fear
- Online content is designed to grab attention, not always tell the truth
- 📌 Staying informed is powerful—but staying skeptical is smarter.



What Is Fake News?



Fake news is false or misleading information disguised as legitimate news. It can be:

- 📄 Entirely fabricated
- 🗑️ Clickbait with partial truth
- 🎭 Satire mistaken for reality
- 📰 Old news re-shared as new
- 🤖 AI-generated or bot-amplified content

Goals of fake news:

- Manipulate public opinion
- Make money through ads
- Influence elections or public health

What Is an Online Scam?









Online scams try to trick you into giving money or information.

Common types include:







- 📧 Phishing emails or texts ("Verify your account")
 - 📦 Fake delivery messages ("Click to reschedule your package")
 - 🎁 Too-good-to-be-true offers ("You've won a gift card!")
 - 💔 Romance scams on dating or social apps
 - 👮 Impersonation scams (posing as banks, IRS, or tech support)
- ✚ Scams use urgency, fear, or curiosity to get you to act quickly.



How to Spot Fake News – Red Flags

Red Flag	What It Might Mean
 Sensational headlines	Designed to trigger emotion or panic
 No source or citations	No evidence or links to trustworthy data
 Poor grammar/spelling	Low-quality or machine-generated text
 Unfamiliar “news” site	May not be a legitimate media outlet
 No date or misleading date	Could be old news recycled as new
 “Everyone is saying this...”	Hints at bias or mass manipulation

How to Spot Online Scams – Red Flags







Red Flag	What It Might Mean
 Message from unknown sender	Phishing or smishing attempt
 Strange or shortened links	May lead to fake login or malware pages
 Asking for login or payment info	No legitimate site will ask this by email or text
 Unexpected prize or refund	Too good to be true = not true
 Urgent language (“Act now!”)	Common in scam scripts
 Poor branding or logo mismatch	Fake company or phishing clone

How to Check if It's Real

 **XYZ company - Coins**
<https://xyzcompany.com/>
Lorem Ipsum is simply dummy text of the printing and typesetting industry. Lorem Ipsum has been the industry's standard dummy text ever since the 1500s. Placeholder text in many languages, including Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, has been used as dummy text. Lorem Ipsum has grown to become something of an industry standard.

 **XYZ Company - Free Coins**
<xyz-comp.com>
It is said that song composers of the past used dummy texts as lyrics when they had a 'ready-made' text to sing with the melody. A handy Lorem Ipsum dummy text for all layout needs.

SCAM Alert

-  Check the source: Is it from a known organization?
-  Reverse image search: See if a photo has appeared elsewhere
-  Look at the date: Is it current or recycled?
-  Hover over links: Check where they actually go
-  Use fact-checkers:
 - Snopes.com
 - FactCheck.org
 - PolitiFact
 - MediaBiasFactCheck.com
-  If you're not sure—don't share!

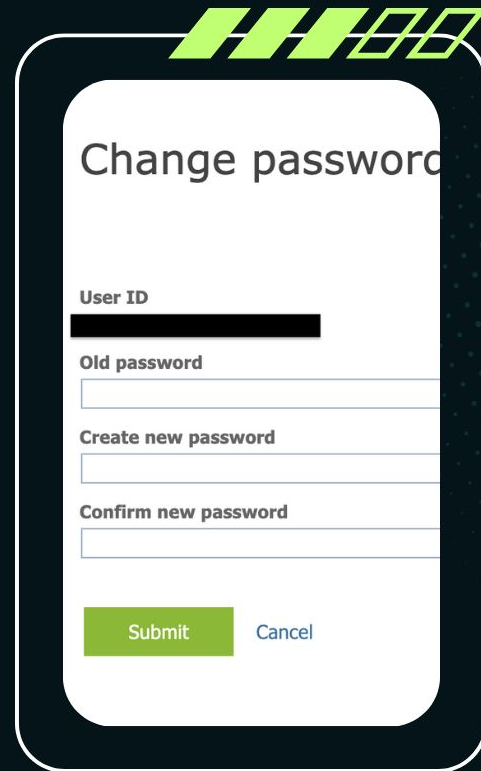
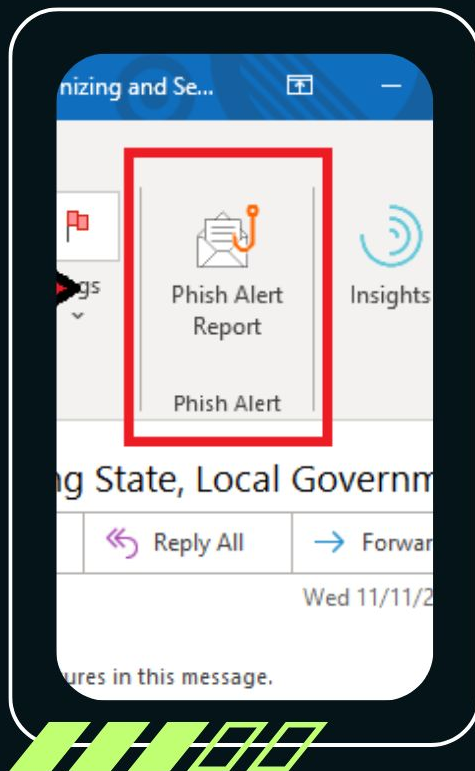
Tools That Can Help

Tool/App	What It Does
NewsGuard	Rates news sites for trustworthiness
Hoaxy	Shows how claims spread on social media
Google Fact Check Explorer	Finds fact-checked articles
URLVoid	Checks if a website is risky or fake
HavelBeenPwned.com	See if your email or password was exposed

 Use the tools that journalists and cybersecurity experts use.

What to Do If You Get Scammed

- ❌ Don't respond or click any further
- 🔒 Change your passwords immediately
- 🛑 Report the scam:
 - Email phishing: reportphishing@apwg.org
 - Text scams: forward to 7726 (SPAM)
 - FTC: reportfraud.ftc.gov
- 🏦 Contact your bank if you shared financial info
- 🚔 File a police report if needed



Building Better Online Habits

- 🧠 Pause before you click, share, or buy
- 🔒 Use two-factor authentication on important accounts
- 📰 Follow trusted news outlets and fact-checkers
- 👨👩👧👦 Talk to family & friends — especially older adults and teens — about what's real
- 🗣️ Watch for AI-generated content (deepfakes, fake voices, etc.)
- 📌 Online safety is a shared responsibility.



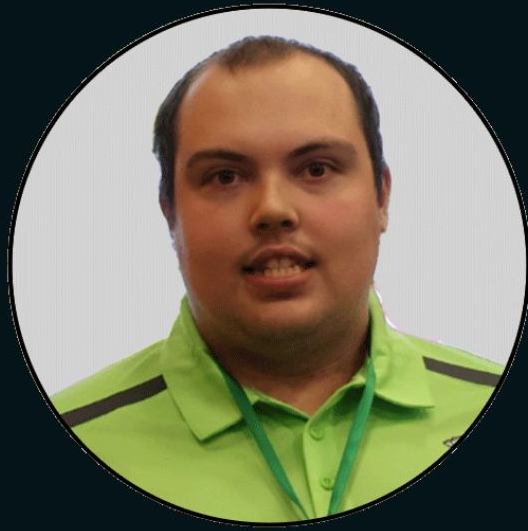
Final Takeaways



- Fake news and scams are common —but avoidable
- Use red flags and fact-checking to protect yourself
- Share only what you trust
- Help others learn too — especially those more vulnerable to scams
- ✦ The best defense is a curious, cautious mind.

Panel

Michael Yeamans
and Chris Cooley





Q&A



**Thank You For
Joining Us!**



Open Sauce 64

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