HOW TO DETECT FAKE NEWS

by:
Joyce L. Mendoza
Teacher I, Luakan National High School Main Senior High School

June to September are months where most of the typhoons and floods brought by 'Habagat' would rampage the country. Also during these months that people often receive messages coming from the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management (NDRRM) on warnings about heavy rain falls and possible calamities.

This is also the time where most of the classes are often suspended due to inclement weather conditions. Once that there is a threat of heavy rains and flooding, the government releases announcements of class suspension so as to safeguard the student from any on toward incidents and accidents that the bad weather may cause. Most of the time students, parents, teachers and administrators all wait for that moment that the official website of the provincial governor will declare that classes are suspended.

Most often, this has also made some internet pranksters to make fake posts stating class suspensions which in turn are circulated by most of the netizens. Most often students who are looking forward to no classes declarations will likely to disseminate the wrong information. Once that the teacher or the school administrator learns about the fake news sometimes it too late. Teachers are at school yet students are not around. When ask why students did not come to class, they would reason out that they saw the announcement over social media that classes are suspended. Other samples of fake class suspensions are done by reposting holiday suspensions which were released a year ago. This is problem on the part of the teacher
because adjustments on the lesson have to be made so as to cater those who were absent for that day.

What can be done to screen out fake news?

Fake news can be avoided if people are well informed on how the mechanism of providing announcements are made. According to Leetaru (2019) fake news are not problem based on technology but on literacy instead. Leetaru points out that all people can post announcements over social media, but the question is how do viewers respond to such posts. Literacy play a vital role in screening out anomalous announcements.

Here are some tips on how to determine if the announcement is authentic or can be considered as fake news.

- Resort only to reliable sources. Official websites and announcers are the best source of information. If the announcement comes from a source that is unknown might as well double check the validity of the statement.

- Look at the date of the announcement. Some fake news once were authentic. Pranksters recycle the announcement by reposting them. The large statement #WALANGPASOK is the only thing they are looking for without reading further details of the post.

- Be updated with the current news. The news on the television will serve as a guide on whether the announcement is real or fake. If the news tells of areas greatly affected by the bad
weather, then it’s safe to say that the announcement is authentic. The news will also keep tract of upcoming holidays that are observed if not celebrated by the whole country.

Students may opt to ask their teachers for updates on classes suspensions.

Teachers must consult the academic calendar provided by the Department of Education to have a clear guide on what days are considered holidays and which are not.

Analyzing news and determining its authenticity is not a hard task at all. all we need is to read further for details, be observant of the circumstances of the post and be updated with the current situation of our locality. Fake news will always appear not just in social media but it may also find its way to radios and news programs. If the people are properly skilled in discerning the true from the fake, then fake news will not be much of a problem at all.

References:

K. Leetaru, (July 7, 2019), A reminder that ‘Fake News’ is a literacy problem – Not a technology problem, Forbes, retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2019/07/07/a-reminder-that-fake-news-is-an-information-literacy-problem-not-a-technology-problem/?fbclid=IwAR3h0uaw3XoX7rCPddOQZILtubsTJ0jhSgVHF-E7RwJKj0xp7O6zgMN-rkE#5d32ba0f6a6f