

Ways to fight fake news

To fight the scourge of fake news, the Select Committee on Deliberate Online Falsehoods has come up with 22 recommendations, which are summed up here:

Public education national framework

- The Government should set up a framework to coordinate and guide public education initiatives.
- Schools should impart critical thinking skills and teach a broad-based curriculum.
- The framework should also build information and media literacy among the public.



Promote social cohesion actively

- Organisations and initiatives that promote social cohesion should provide clarifications and information on distortions and falsehoods that affect social cohesion.



Fact-checking coalition

- Media organisations and their partners from other industries should consider a coalition that debunks falsehoods swiftly and credibly.



Safeguard election integrity

- Additional steps to safeguard Singapore's elections, including implementing measures and legislation, should be identified by the Government, as elections are a prime target of deliberate online falsehoods.



Criminal sanctions

- When fake news perpetrators cause serious harm and meet a requisite degree of criminal culpability, deterrent measures should be imposed on them.
- The committee, however, is not calling for all online falsehoods to be criminalised.



Legislate and regulate tech companies

- The Government should legally compel tech companies to adopt measures against deliberate online falsehoods and adopt a regulatory approach, such as working with tech companies to develop solutions and a voluntary code of practice or guidelines to tackle the scourge.



Ensure accurate journalism

- Mainstream media and alternative news platforms should hold themselves to the same professional standards of journalism.
- Journalists of all backgrounds should have opportunities to update their skills in fact-checking.



Trust in public institutions

- Public institutions should provide timely information to people in response to misinformation, pre-empt vulnerabilities and put out information in advance to "inoculate the public" from deliberate online falsehoods.



Legislation against fake news

- The Government should have the power to swiftly disrupt the spread and influence of online falsehoods.
- Legislation will be needed to raise the visibility and access of corrections, limit or block exposure to the falsehoods, disrupt their amplification and discredit their sources.



Demonetise culprits

- Powers are needed, including through legislation, to demonetise those who create and spread online falsehoods.
- These powers will disrupt digital advertising revenue to such purveyors, and allow the courts to recover any financial gains they make.



Action by social media and tech companies

- Tech companies need to take proactive action against the amplification of falsehoods through a range of measures, including de-prioritising falsehoods and barring suspicious actors from using digital advertising tools.
- They should also raise the transparency and accountability of their services to users, the people and to the Government.



A national strategy to counter state-sponsored operatives

- The Government is urged to also come up with a coordinated approach to tackle disinformation from state-sponsored operations.

