TAKE CONTROL
How to Spot Social Media Manipulation

Social media manipulation can shape public discourse, suppress Black voices, and reinforce misinformation and harmful stereotypes. By understanding and challenging these manipulations, Black communities can protect our narratives and ensure our online communities can thrive.

Six Key Steps to Spot Manipulation

Recognize Emotional Manipulation: We should be the most cautious of posts that spark fear, anger, and shock. Stop and double check on a different platform. Bad actors use emotional content to drive engagement rather than truth. Misinformation thrives on outrage, so stay critical of emotionally charged narratives.

Be Wary of Image and Video Manipulation: Images, videos and even audio can be altered or taken out of context. Scrutinize content, look for inconsistencies, and use reverse image search (like Google Lens or TinEye) to verify authenticity before believing or sharing.

Understand Widespread Conversation Manipulation: The stunning truth: 42% of social online traffic is "bad bots" specializing in comment spam and false news. Algorithms manipulate what news we see and most importantly, the frequency at which we see each news story.

Controversial topics should have SOURCES + EVIDENCE: Always check where information comes from, especially on controversial topics. Real journalism is based on verifiable facts, not soundbites. If an article or post lacks sources, direct quotes, official statements, or links to legitimate reporting, it's likely unreliable. In addition, scientific and health information should be held to a higher standard than simply an "expert's opinion."

See Bias as a Spectrum: Bias is not always black and white (and it is not always bad). Consider who is sharing the information and their motivations, especially if they rely on online engagement for profit. Also consider whether the source is committed to the welfare of Black communities.

Educate & Protect Your Community: Share these skills with friends and family. Encourage critical thinking, healthy skepticism, and fact-checking habits (check our our tool to easily factcheck!) to help protect our collective digital space.

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