Episode Guide: Episode 4
"Fact or Fake"

NetSmartz®

INTO THE CLOUD

ABOUT THE ISSUE

UNRELIABLE INFORMATION

Between 2014 and 2018, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline received over 4,000 reports of misleading domain names and over 10,000 reports of misleading words or digital images online[1]. These misleading domains often lead to sites that contain content that is sexual or violent in nature and inappropriate for children. Beyond misleading domain names, as the internet allows more information to be spread quicker than ever before, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information online. In fact, a 2018 study on critical thinking and digital literacy found that a majority of young adult professionals failed a quiz that assessed their ability to spot inaccurate "news" online[2].

EPISODE SUMMARY

Nettie and Webster get distracted while riding towards Sector 7 and Webster loses the map. They must seek out reliable sources to redraw an accurate map.

LESSONS LEARNED

Be a cautious consumer of information. Information presented, whether on websites or from individuals, is not always what it appears to be and can often be misleading. There are many trusted sources online, check for .EDU or .GOV. When in doubt, get a trusted adult to double check.

Activities for one-on-one and small group settings.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do you think you can tell the difference between true and false information online?
- What things should you think about when deciding to trust something online?
- Are there any websites you KNOW you can trust the information on?
- Have you ever accidently found something online that you didn't mean to? How did you feel? What did you do about it?

PUT IT INTO ACTION

- If you have access to the internet, visit a site with news written for kids, such as **TimeForKids.com** or **NewsForKids.net**. Read at least one article and explore the websites. What information on the sites helps show that they are trustworthy?
- With a partner, discuss why someone may publish something misleading or untrue online. Do you think the growth of the internet has made it easier or harder for untrue information to spread? Why?

1   *NCMEC* Quarterly Program Progress Report

2   Dig Deeper: Critical Thinking in the Digital Age. (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2019, from https://www.mindedge.com/page/dig-deeper-2018

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