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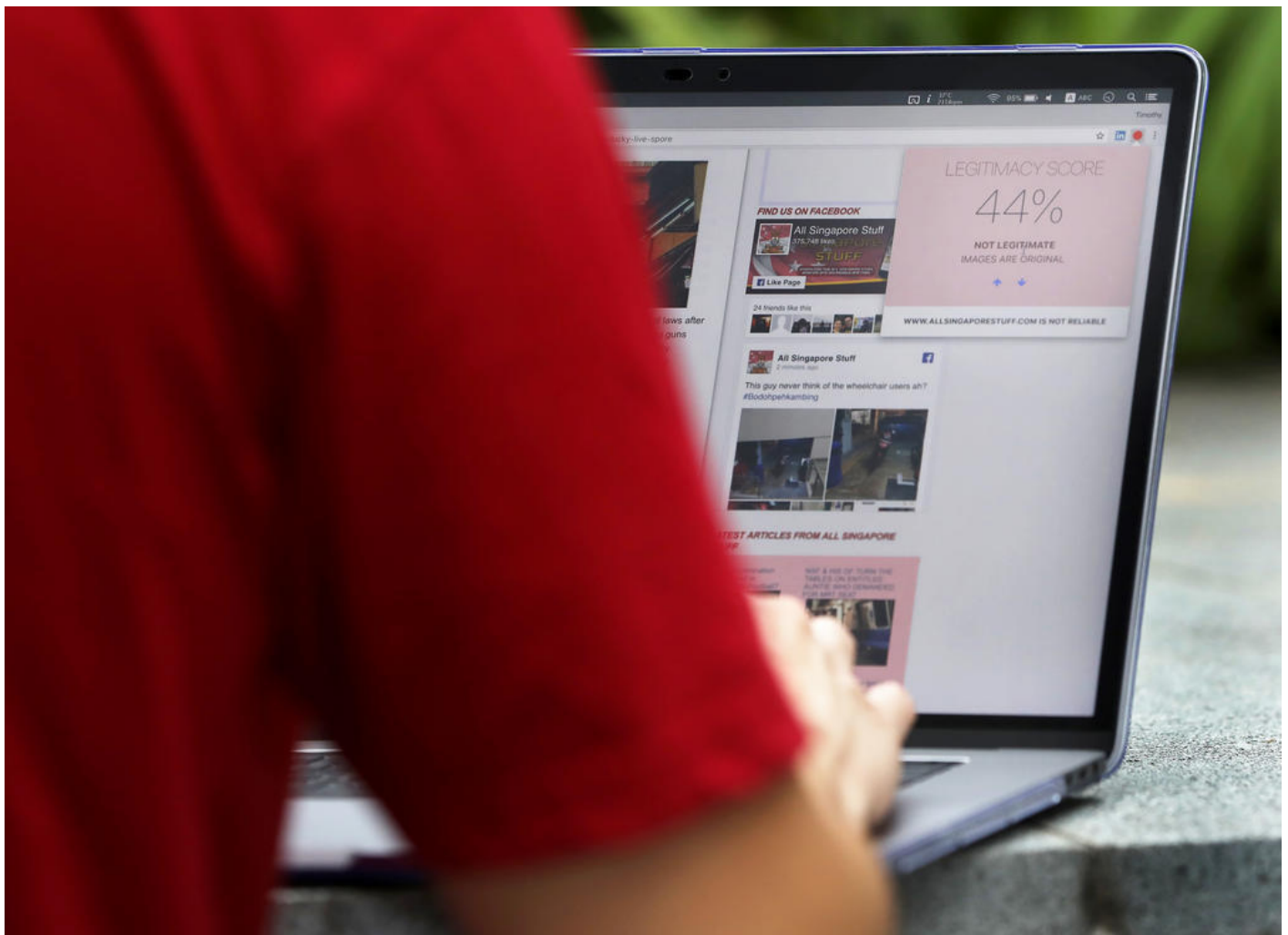
Singapore World Big Read **Opinion** Visuals Brand Spotlight

8 DAYS



# Test, evaluate and validate teaching guidelines to spot fake news

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There appears to be something missing from the new media literacy toolkit designed for schools from the primary to junior college level and its teaching guidelines to spot falsehoods (“**Schools to get new toolkit to guide students on how to spot fake news**”; Nov 2), as well as from the forthcoming, broader national framework to build information and media literacy.

They need robust research attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of these endeavours.

Immediate questions which follow include: The extent to which teachers are familiar with and have the capacity to teach the toolkit; how students benefit from the teaching resource; and ultimately, whether teachers and students, beyond the context of the classroom, really put their skills and knowledge into practice.

These questions also apply to initiatives for members of the public who — as it stands — are likely to be overwhelmed by a deluge of government exhortations or awareness campaigns harping on the importance of information and media literacy. Participation in a workshop on misinformation and disinformation or an exhibition detailing the supposed “weaponisation” of social media by interest groups does not necessarily mean that one would be able to identify fake news thereafter.

And it would also be presumptuous to think that the cognitive biases or heuristics often associated with these problems would be adequately addressed after a single session.

Stated more formally, testing, evaluation, and validation of teaching guidelines or the national framework start with an understanding of the present situation, of the ability of Singaporeans in general to identify fake news.

Any initiative, in this vein, will focus on improving the proportion of those who are able to do so.

In addition, any of the aforementioned programmes should encompass a pre/post mechanism to check if participants have gained and retained the information as well as well-specified logic models and theories of change, to map out exactly how participants are expected to benefit.