

IMPOSTOR ALERT:

News
Literacy
Project

newslit.org

Don't fall for fake Labubus or news knockoffs

Labubus — a snaggleteoothed viral toy — are a hot accessory. But playfully named counterfeit “Lafufus” have flooded the market. When it comes to Labubus, people want the real deal, not a fake Lafufu.

That's also true for news and other information people seek out online. But there is impostor content that tries to take advantage of this demand to dupe people into accepting knockoffs.

! Think of Lafufus as just one kind of “impostor content” — something someone makes to try to trick people who want the real thing. Impostor content is misinformation that uses a familiar name, brand or logo to fool people into believing it is authentic. Impostor content might pose as a well-known news outlet, a celebrity, politician or other public figure in a fake social media post.



As it turns out, people are great at catching fakes when plush keychains are on the line. If you can clock a Lafufu, congratulations: You're careful and critical enough to detect impostor content online.

IMPOSTOR Labubu



FAKE

IMPOSTOR Content

This image is *not* a real headline or article from CNN but includes the company's logo and a similar layout. It's **impostor content**: a Lafufu of journalism.

Here are some tips for spotting counterfeit news and other content.

TIPS

Head directly to the source.

Most impostor content spreads as screenshots with no links taking you back to the original source. Don't accept those images at face value. Head straight to the news outlet's website, or to the social media accounts of the person or organization involved, and see if the screenshot is legit.

Compare it to the real thing.

Just like a Lafufu might have too few teeth or slight color variations, impostor posts are sometimes missing key details like bylines, links and timestamps, or they have a misspelled social media handle.

Consider whether it's too good to be true.

A super-cheap Lafufu might raise red flags. This is true of other kinds of impostor content too: Headlines that don't seem right or social media posts that seem too embarrassing to be true should be viewed with skepticism.

Do a quick search.

Go to a search engine and use keywords to check whether the headline or social media post in question even exists.

Slow down.

Misinformation relies on you reacting emotionally and sharing before you notice what's off. Pause. Look closer. A little skepticism goes a long way.