

How to fact-check with a smartphone

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Step 101

Sometimes fact-checking a photo, video or a story may be as simple as doing an online search using relevant keywords + “fact-check”

You may find a fact-checking organisation has already done the work for you

Five sites where you can search for fact-checks by keyword

Snopes: www.snopes.com/

Wafflesatnoon: <https://goo.gl/v8Z8V7>

Hoax of Fame: <https://goo.gl/z3xfXS>

AfricaCheck: <https://africacheck.org/>

Covid-19: A searchable database of worldwide fact-checks by members of the International Fact-Checking Network: <https://bit.ly/3qe1Dem>



Adding a website to your phone's home screen

Some tools are available as apps that you can download to your phone. But sometimes it's much simpler to add a link to your home screen. Doing it this way adds an icon on your desktop. This will take you to the site when you tap on the icon.

Android

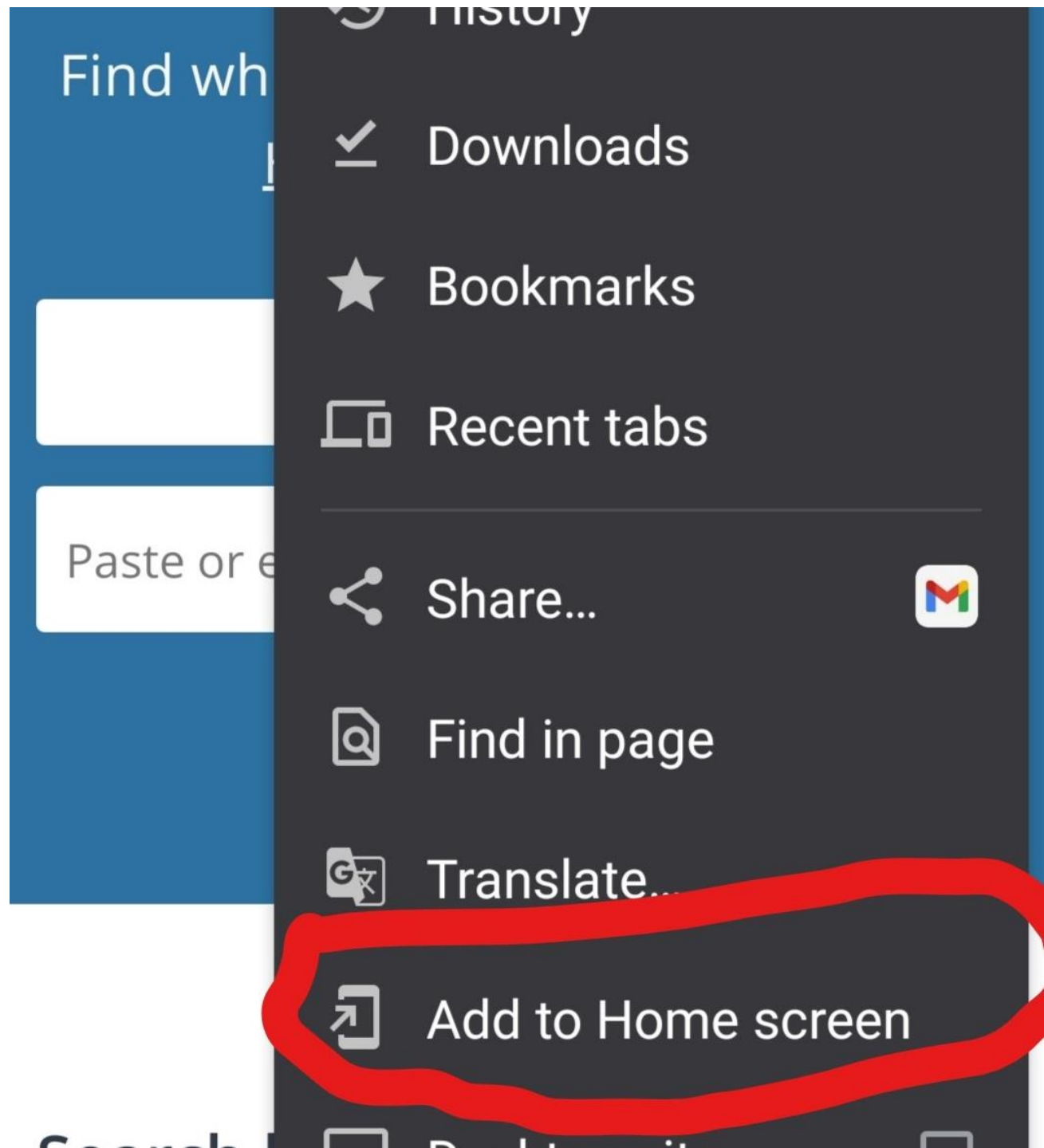
Step 1:

Open the website you want to add in your phone's browser. On Chrome and Firefox for mobile press the three dots on the top or bottom right of your screen.

Step 2

A drop down menu will appear. Press "Add to Home Screen"

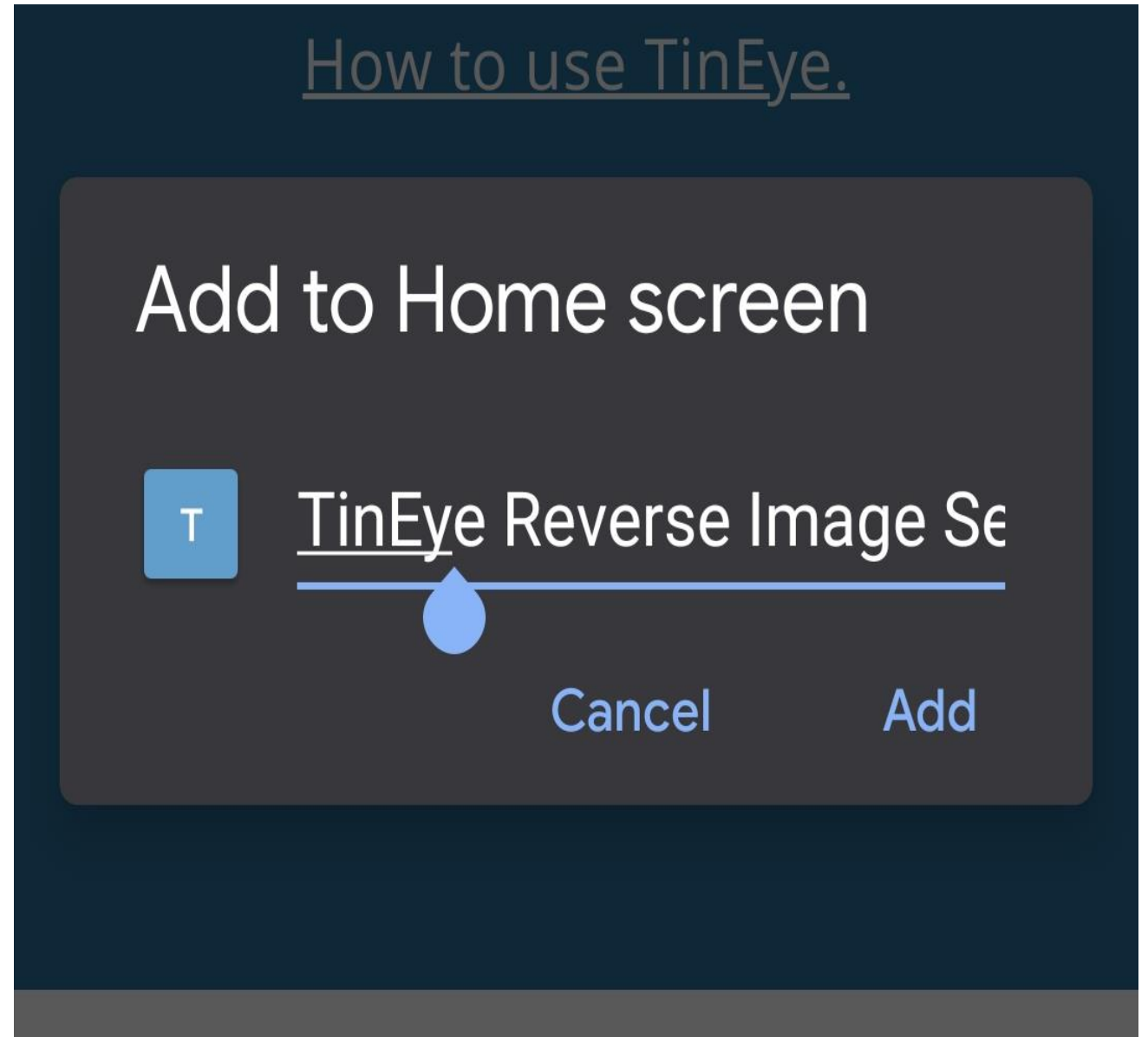
(With some sites you may first have to press "Open in Chrome or Firefox" and then "Add to home screen")



Step 3

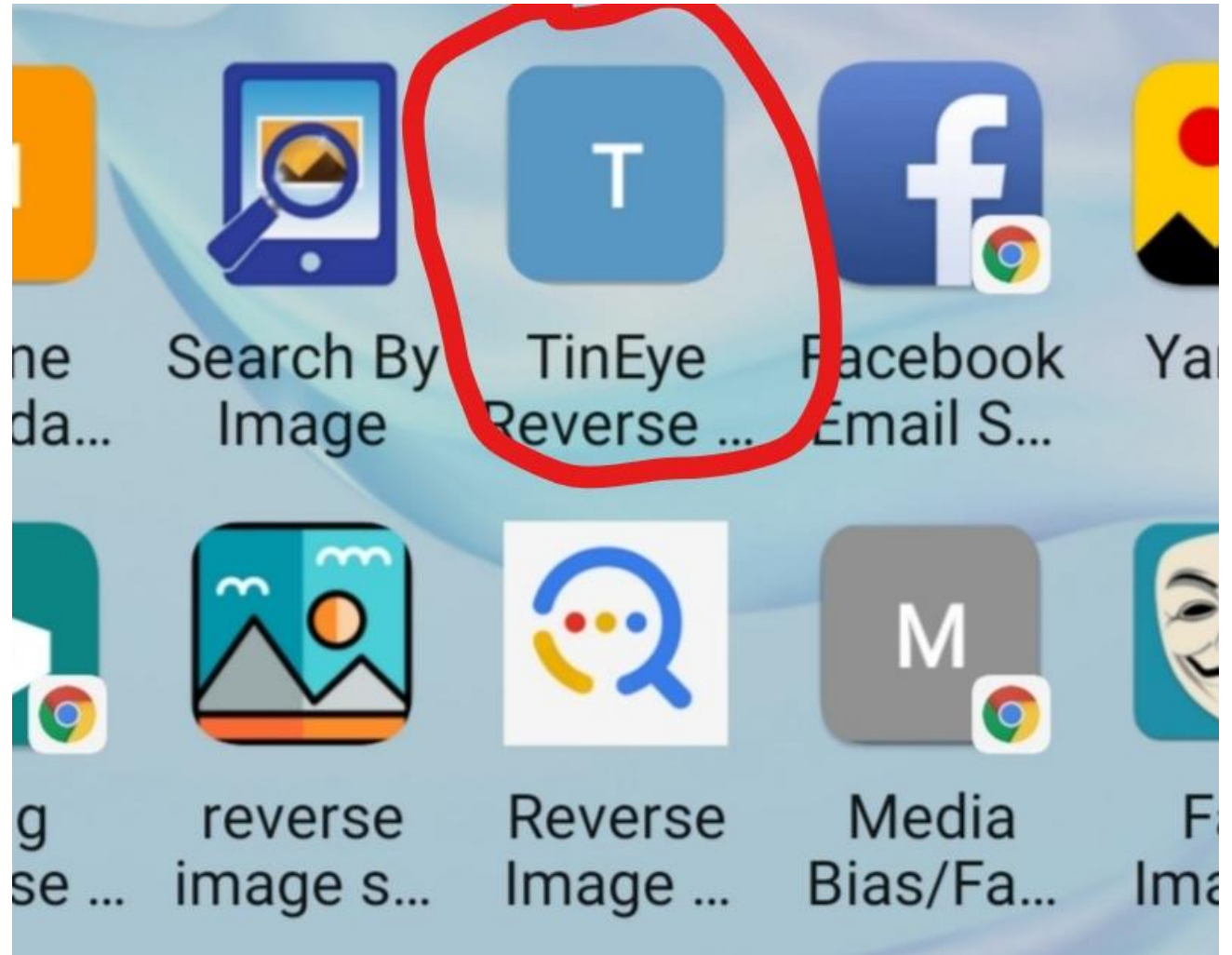
Edit what you want the shortcut to read and then press “Add”.

You now have an icon on your home screen that will take you directly to the website you’ve added.



Step 4

The short cut to the website is now on your phone screen – ready to use when you need it.

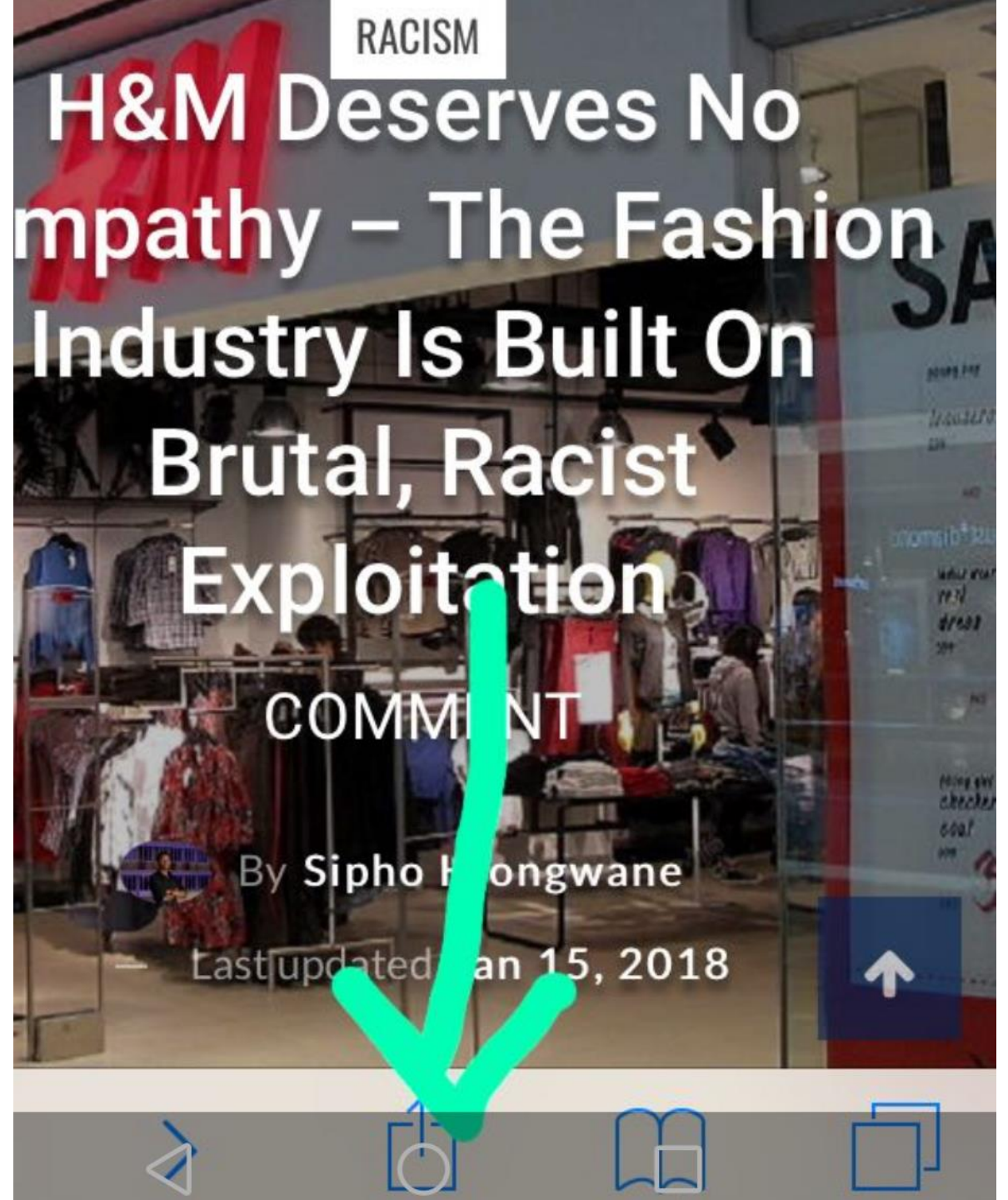


iPhone

Step 1

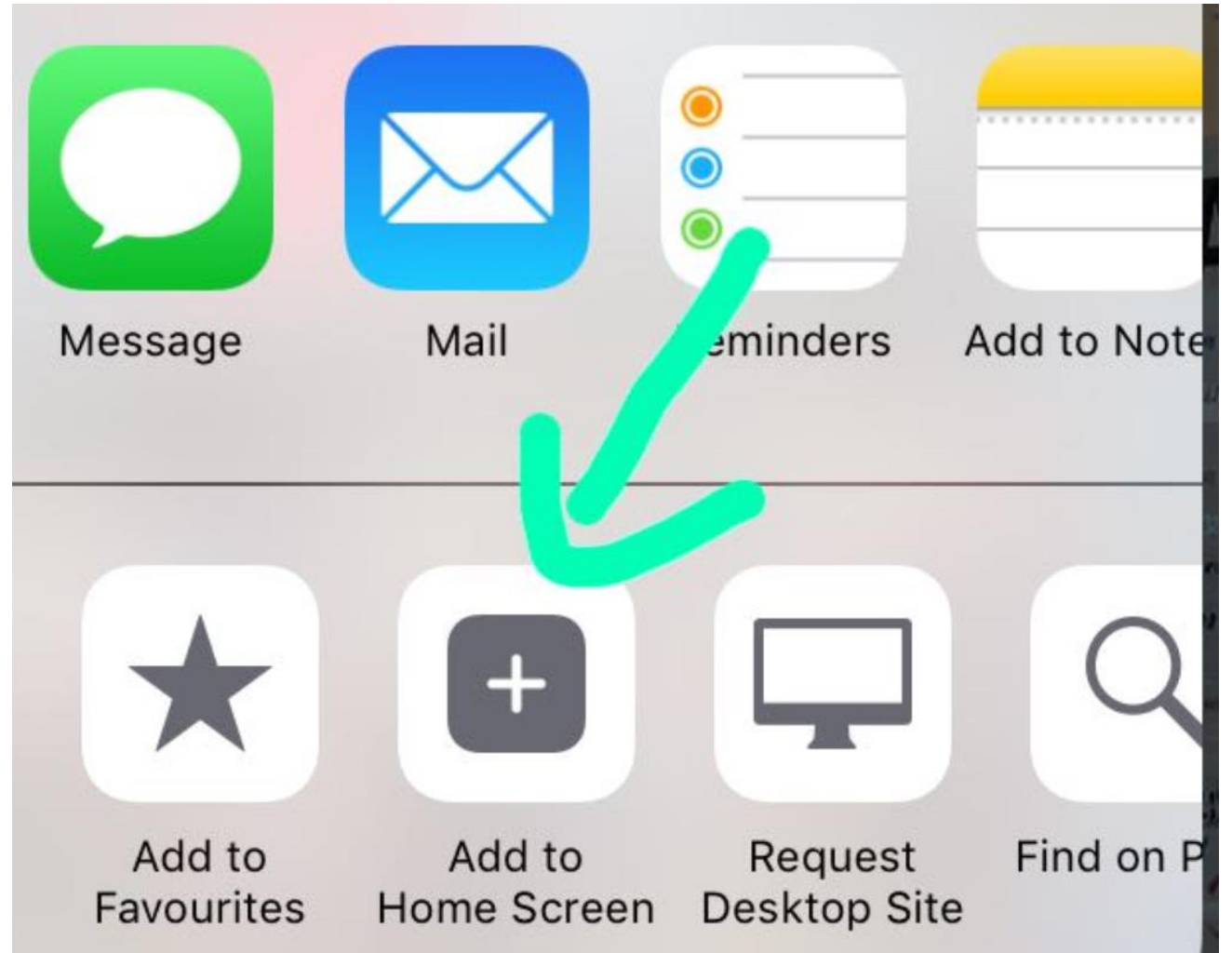
Navigate to the site you want to save to your phone. Find the icon that looks like the one in the picture and press it.

Note: The location of this icon may differ on different iPhones.



Step 2

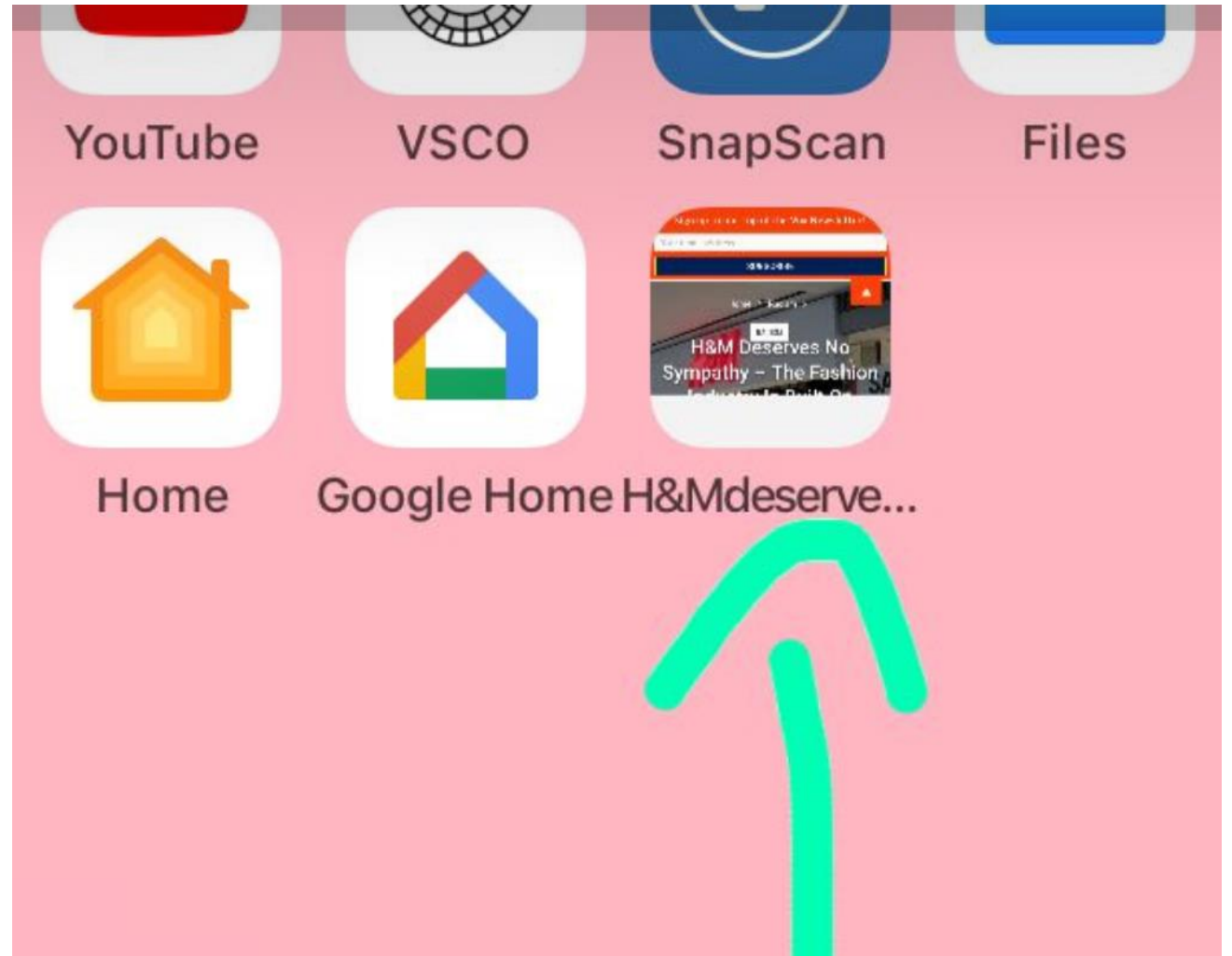
Now press on the “Add to home screen” icon.



Step 3

The shortcut to the site is now on your home screen – ready to use when you need to access the site.

Note: You can find detailed instructions on how to add a website using Safari to your home screen for iPhone or iPad [here](#). If you're using Chrome on your Apple device follow [these](#) instructions.



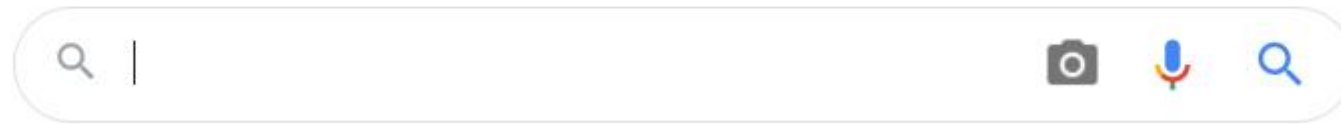
Some free tools that help you do the heavy lifting

NB: tools only do the heavy lifting, you've still got to do the journalism. And, one of the most powerful tools of all is your own common sense. Be wary of sharing something that is not via a credible source, or if you haven't checked it out yourself

Remember, it takes years to build credibility - but you can easily cause harm to your reputation by unintentionally sharing "fake news"

If you're not sure, don't share it!

Google Image Search



Doing a Google Reverse image search

1. Add <https://images.google.com/> to your home screen.
2. Save or download the picture you want to verify to your phone. Or, copy the web address of the picture. (NB: It must be the URL of the actual photo, not of the entire web page.)
3. Open the browser menu and in the dropdown select “Request desktop Site”. In Google Chrome, the menu is found by pressing the three dots at the top right, or bottom right for Firefox. In Safari, it’s usually in the centre at the bottom of the screen.
4. Now press the camera icon in the search bar.
5. You now have a few options: a) Paste the URL of the photo in the search bar, or B) select the “upload an image” tab to upload the image from where you’ve saved it on your phone.
6. The tool has done the heavy lifting. Now you need to work through the results to check for when and where else the image may have been used, as well as the context of any previous uses. If you go back far enough, you may be able to find when it was first used and, sometimes, even the owner of the photo.

Tip: If you’re using Google Chrome as your default mobile browser, long press on a photo and a drop-down menu will appear. Select “Search with Google Lens” to do a reverse image search. (Older versions may say “Search Google with this image”.)

Tip: If you’ve downloaded an app, you can often access it by using the “share” function and looking for the tool in the results. These results would also include sharing to Facebook, email, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.

TinEye



How to search using TinEye

1. Go to www.tineye.com in your phone's browser and save a shortcut to the site to your phone's home screen
 2. With Chrome, you can save or download the picture you want to verify by long pressing on it until a drop down menu appears. Press on the save option to save it to your phone's photos folder.
 - 3) Or, you can do a screengrab of the picture and crop and save it to the photos folder.
 - 4) Or, copy the web address of the picture you want to verify by tapping on the photo and copying the URL. (NB: It must be the URL of the actual photo, not of the entire web page on which it appears.)
- 3) Now open TinEye on your phone using the shortcut.

How to search using TinEye continued

You now have two options:

1. Select “upload image” and search for the saved copy of the picture in your phone’s picture gallery.
2. Or, paste the URL of the photo into the TinEye search bar.
3. Once the search is completed, click on the “sort by” box on the top left and choose one of the options in the drop down menu (Oldest, most changed, etc.)
4. Choosing the “most changed” option will find instances where the photo you’re checking out has been published previously. Now work through the results, as you would with a Google search, and click on those you want to look at.
5. Toggle between “Your image” and “Image match” to see how the photo has been altered.
6. If you choose the “oldest” option and go far enough back you will often find the first time the photo was used, the context and the person who shot it.

Note: TinEye, as with other reverse image search tools can only find photos posted online. So if a picture was posted on WhatsApp, Telegram or Signal group only and never shared online, you won’t get a hit.

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digital inspiration

[HOME](#)

[ASK A QUESTION](#)

Reverse Image Search

With Reverse Image Search by Google, you can quickly discover visually similar photos from around the web.

How to use Labnol Reverse Image Search

Navigate to labnol.org/reverse/

Save to desktop to create a shortcut

Press “upload image”. You can choose an image from your photo library, iCloud, Dropbox Google Drive or a new photo you have taken with your phone camera;

Select the image you want to check and press “done”

Press “Show matching images”

Now check through the results for other uses of the photo and any information about it

If you find an earlier use of the picture you searched for, the chances are good that the new use is out of context.

Photo Sherlock



Photo Sherlock - Reverse Image Search

Hippeis Photography

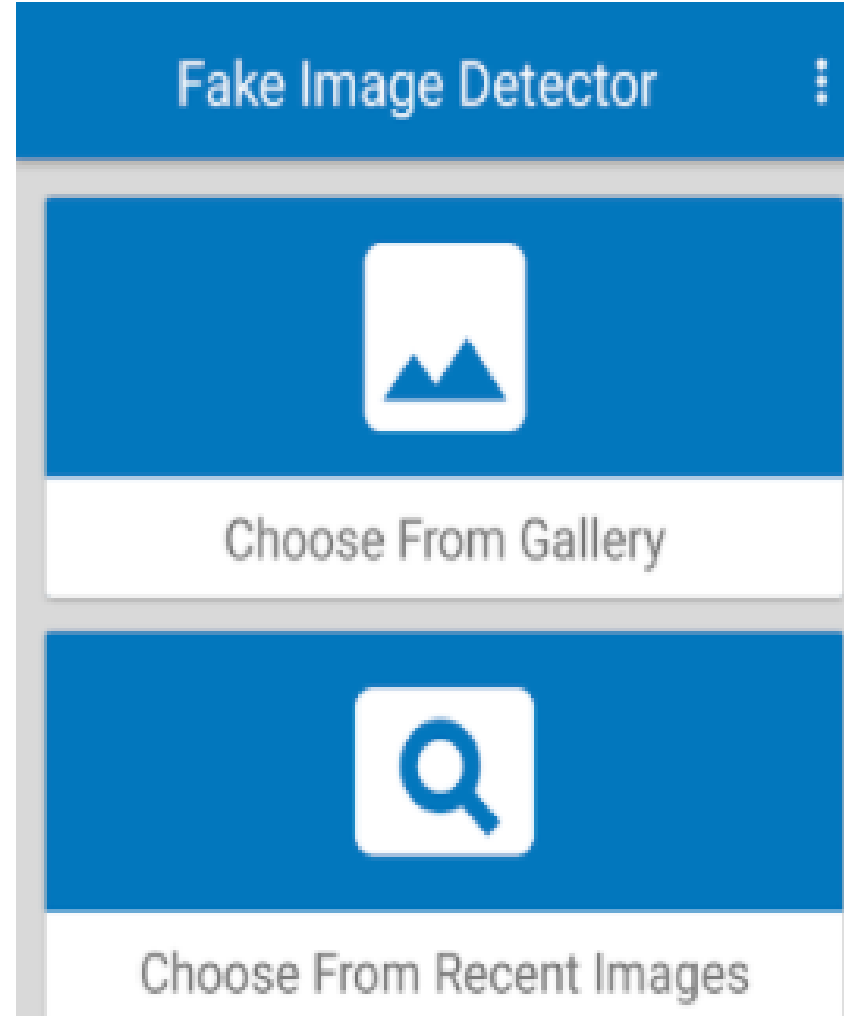
★★★★★ 29 244 👤

E Everyone

Verifying pictures with Photo Sherlock

- 1) Download the app to your phone Android <https://bit.ly/3bB1cGE> and iPhone (<https://apple.co/2ldpszo>)
 - 2) Open the app. You now have two choices
 - a) Save or download the picture you want to verify, or else do a screenshot of it;
 - b) Press the small square icon with two triangles in it. You will see various folders, including photos, camera, screenshots etc.,
 - 3) Find the photo you want to check;
 - 4) You also have the option to edit the photo. For example, if it's from Facebook you might want to edit out any text or comments accompanying the post;
 - 5) Press "use this picture";
 - 6) It will use Google search as a default. You also have the option to use Yandex, another powerful search engine focused on Russia and Eastern Europe, where a lot of the fakery and dis- and misinformation on social media is created.
 - 7) Once the search is completed work through the results;
 - 8) Look for previous uses of the photo, the date when it was used and the context in which it was used.
- Tip:** When you open the app you'll also find an option to take a photo. Use it to photograph a poster, or a photograph in a magazine or newspaper. You also have the option to crop the picture you took. Press "use this picture" and it will do a search.

Fake Image Detector



How to use Fake Image Detector

- 1) Download and install Fake Image Detector app from the Chrome Play Store <https://bit.ly/3nBlnWd>
- 2) Fake Image Detector interrogates the metadata of the photo and will tell you whether the photo has been edited or manipulated. While it is fairly accurate, be aware that it is not foolproof. So take the response of possible manipulation as a red flag rather than being conclusive, and rather do additional research.
- 3) Open the app and select one of two options:
- 4) Choose from gallery: this provides access to places where photos are stored on your phone so you can perform a reverse image search;
- 4) Choose from recent images: select the photograph you've taken of a poster or a picture in a magazine or newspaper.
- 5) Fake Image Detector also allows you to check the [exif data](#) – including the date it was taken, the geo-location and make of the camera or smartphone used. Sometimes, you can even find the name of the person who owns the equipment used to shoot it.

Tip: Unfortunately, Fake Image Detector is only available for Android devices. Try Veracity Reverse Image Search <https://apple.co/3plzRvl>, which is available free in Apple's App Store, for iOS devices.

Note: Twitter, Facebook and some other platforms strip out the exif data before they publish it.

FirstDraftNews verification toolkit - bit.ly/2lcdZjv

The screenshot displays the FirstDraftNews verification toolkit website. At the top left is the FirstDraft logo, a red flower-like icon. To its right is a navigation menu with links for ABOUT, PROJECTS, RESEARCH, TRAINING, and LATEST, followed by a search icon. The main content area is divided into several functional sections:

- Provenance:** Contains two search tools: "REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH" with an input for "Entire Image URL" and a "Go" button; and "REVERSE YOUTUBE SEARCH" with an input for "YouTube Video URL" and a "Go" button.
- Date and Time:** Includes "WOLFRAM ALPHA WEATHER CHECK" with inputs for "City" and "Date" and a "Go" button; "EXIF DATA" with an input for "Entire Image URL" and a "Go" button; and a link for "YouTube DataViewer".
- Browser Extensions:** Lists five extensions: RevEye, Google Translate, Wayback Machine, InVID Verification Plugin, and Session Buddy.
- Source:** Features three search tools: "REAL NAME" with inputs for "First Name" and "Last Name" and a "Go" button; "TWITTER USERNAME" with an input for "Twitter Username" and a "Go" button; and "FACEBOOK ID" with an input for "Facebook ID Number" and a "Go" button. Below these is a link "Get Facebook ID Number".
- Location:** Lists five mapping services: Google Maps, Wikimapia, OpenStreetMap, Yandex Maps, Baidu Maps, and Naver Maps.

Tips for verifying photos

Ask yourself:

Am I looking at the original version of the photo?

When was it first used and does this usage predate the one I am verifying?

What is the context in which it was used? Be aware that genuine, unedited photos are often used out of context with the intention to mislead.

Do I know who took the photo? Knowing who took it means you may be able to contact them to ask for further info and context.

Do I know the intent of the person who shot the photo? Does the photo make you sad or angry, or evoke other strong feelings? Often manipulated or out of context photos are intended to play on peoples' emotions.

Do I know where the photo was taken?

What are people wearing? Do their clothes fit the style of the country where the picture was supposedly shot?

Look out for traffic signs and other signage, number plates and anything else that may help you work out where the photo was taken?

What is the weather like in the photo? Use Wolfram Alpha (<https://bit.ly/3ajvywh>) to search for the prevailing weather conditions on the day, if you know the date a photo was taken. To get an idea of how it work check out the weather on the day your were born.

Look for inconsistent lighting in the photo. Are objects close to one another lit in the same way, or do some seem brighter or duller? If so, there's a good chance they've been added or digitally manipulated.

Do people or objects or people in the photo have unsharp outlines? If so, they are an indication that it has probably been manipulated?

Tips for verifying photos continued

Check the shadows in the photo. Shadows are often absent from poorly manipulated photos.

Look out for non-standard image shapes or sizes. It is often an indication that the photo has been edited to change the context. See: <https://bit.ly/2ZfDB6X>.

In nature there are always subtle variations of light and colour. If large areas of a photo are identical in colour it might indicate that image manipulation software has been used to add or remove something.

If you're looking at a reasonably sharp photo with more than one person in it, look at their eyes to see if the light reflected in them is consistent.

If a photo seems to be too good to be true, it may often be that it is. In the early days of the worldwide coronavirus-19 outbreak, when Italy was in hard lockdown, photos (<https://bit.ly/3aj4TPY>) began circulating of swans and dolphins swimming in Venice's canals, which are normally murky because of pollution caused by the engines of residents' and workers' motorboats. But it was "fake news" (<https://on.natgeo.com/37enqv1>) as swans are regularly seen in parts of the canals, and the dolphin pictures were taken in Sardinia. Another giveaway was that the original photos were in a tweet, since deleted, by someone in India. Considering that Italy was in hard lockdown, it is highly unlikely that an Indian tourist would be visiting Venice at that time. As it turned out, the photos were taken from the internet, and the fabricated story went viral, with some big mainstream media falling for it. <https://bit.ly/3jP4NTwf>.

Bottom line: if you're not sure don't share. You can be part of the solution to "fake news", or part of the problem. It's your choice.

Resources

- **Resources**
- A few more reverse image search tools worth checking out: <https://bit.ly/37duc4g>
- This FirstDraftNews all-in-one verification toolbox helps you easily check the provenance of photos and YouTube videos. The toolbox also includes a few other simple-to-use fact-checking tools. <http://bit.ly/2lcdZjv>
- You'll find some very useful fact-checking tools and resources on the FirstDraftNews site. <https://bit.ly/3qmuhKf>
- FullFact guide on how to spot misleading and manipulated online images. <https://bit.ly/2XASMqn>
- First draft downloadable resource on verifying photos. Print it out for quick access when you need it <https://bit.ly/3ahjKuf>
- FirstDraftNews video about photo manipulation. <https://bit.ly/2ZfDB6X>
- How to Geek guide [guide](#) to spotting misleading images online <https://bit.ly/3ol2ngU>
- AfricaCheck 5-step fact-check poster download: <https://bit.ly/3jMcOIK>

Fact-checking toolkits and resources

Raymond Joseph's fact-checking toolkit: bit.ly/2VC7T0j

FirstDraftNews fact-checking resources: bit.ly/3b4I9Cy

Mallachy Brown's OSINT (Open Source Intelligence) toolkit:
bit.ly/2IbgMtj

OSINT Essentials: bit.ly/2mGA9CH

Now go to <http://bit.ly/2Z4zEzI> and test your photo verification skills



As journalists we are committed to open source tools and sharing. So please feel free to share this presentation with colleagues.

All I ask is that you attribute the source.

Thanks you

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