

Hoax - What it is, classic red flags, and how to avoid spreading it

Gridinsoft Help Center

What it is

A hoax is a fake claim dressed up as truth - a rumor, warning, "breaking news," or miracle fix designed to make you believe, share, or install something you shouldn't. Online, hoaxes often push you to download malware, hand over data, or spread the message for them.

Red flags

- Urgent language - "share immediately," "only today," "your account will be deleted"
- No credible source - screenshots instead of links, or links to unfamiliar sites
- Emotional hooks - outrage, fear, or too-good-to-be-true promises
- Copy-paste chains - identical text posted by many different accounts

What to do

- Pause and verify - search the claim with reputable news or fact-checkers.
- Check the source - official site or press page, not a random blog or image.
- Don't install or forward anything you aren't sure about.
- If you shared it, post a correction once you confirm it was false.

Prevent getting fooled

- Keep your browser and security tools updated.
- Be wary of attachments, shortened links, and "security tools" promoted by the hoax.
- Teach family and teams a simple rule: verify out of band before acting or sharing.
- Use MFA and a password manager so even a convincing hoax can't hijack accounts.