Fake websites have become a honey hole for phishing scams and malware. Many fraudulent websites come from phishing and smishing attacks that send fake website links to individuals to steal credentials. One way to identify a fake website is by analyzing the URL or web address. URLs of fake websites are manipulated it in meniscal ways to make the URL appear as close to the authentic URL. For example, "they might swap a letter for a similar-looking character, like replacing the "o" in amazon.com with a zero to create amaz0n.com."(Better Business Bureau, n.d.) Another indicator of fake websites is the certificate. If a website does not have a secure certificate, then the connection between the connected device and the website is not secured. To verify the certificate, click the padlock on the upper left next to the URL then clock "connection is secured", finally click on "certificate is valid". This will open the certificate viewer and allow you to see when the certificate expires and what certification authority issues the certificate. "Although certificates are not always the definitive way to detect a fake website as scammers can obtain free or cheaper certifications it is still a way to know if a website is secure or not."(digicert, n.d.) This is because, invalid certificates will prompt a "Not Secured" warning one the URL to forward the dangers of unsecured connection. Additional indication of a fraudulent website is the poor design quality. "According to Kaspersky poor design quality and low resolution graphics may be an indicator of a fake website because the quality does not represent a product of professionalism from a legitimate organization or company."(Kaspersky, 2025)

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