

WHATS ALL THIS ABOUT

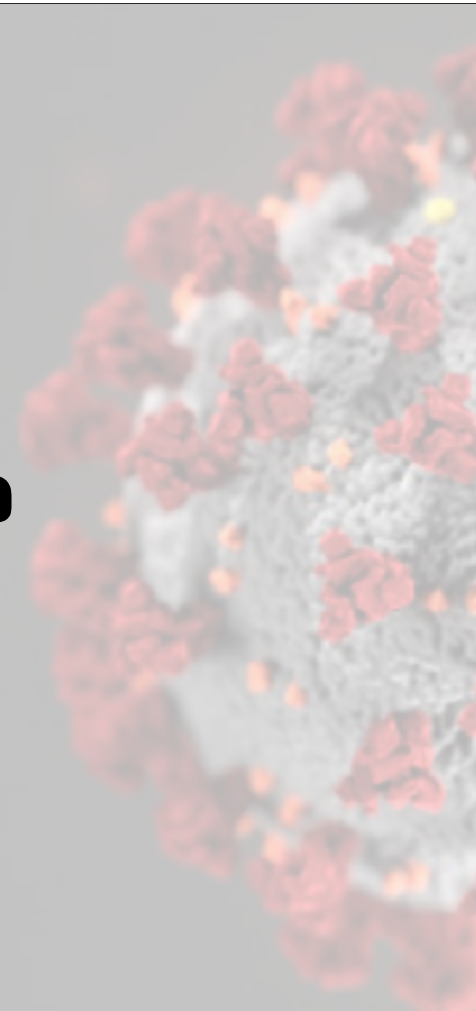


Jason Luther, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Writing Arts
Rowan University

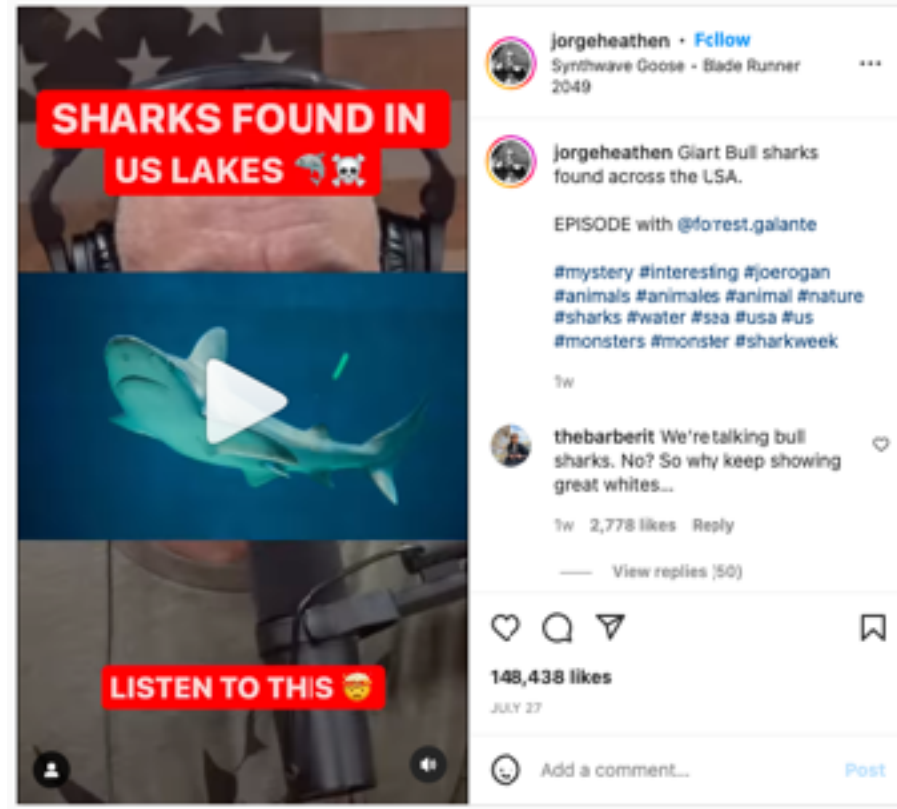
@jwluther
luther@rowan.edu

Slides: jasonluther.net/fakenews

Quiz:
Fake news or real news?
4 questions



1



Made by Forrest Galante on Joe Rogan in Dec 2019, but this resurfaced in July 2022.

2



“The Forbes article operates under the belief that the lottery winner will choose the one-time payment, which went from \$747.2 million to \$780.5 million after the article published.”

3

Planned Parenthood Votes TV ad:

“Mehmet Oz is so extreme he wants to make abortion a crime in Pennsylvania.”

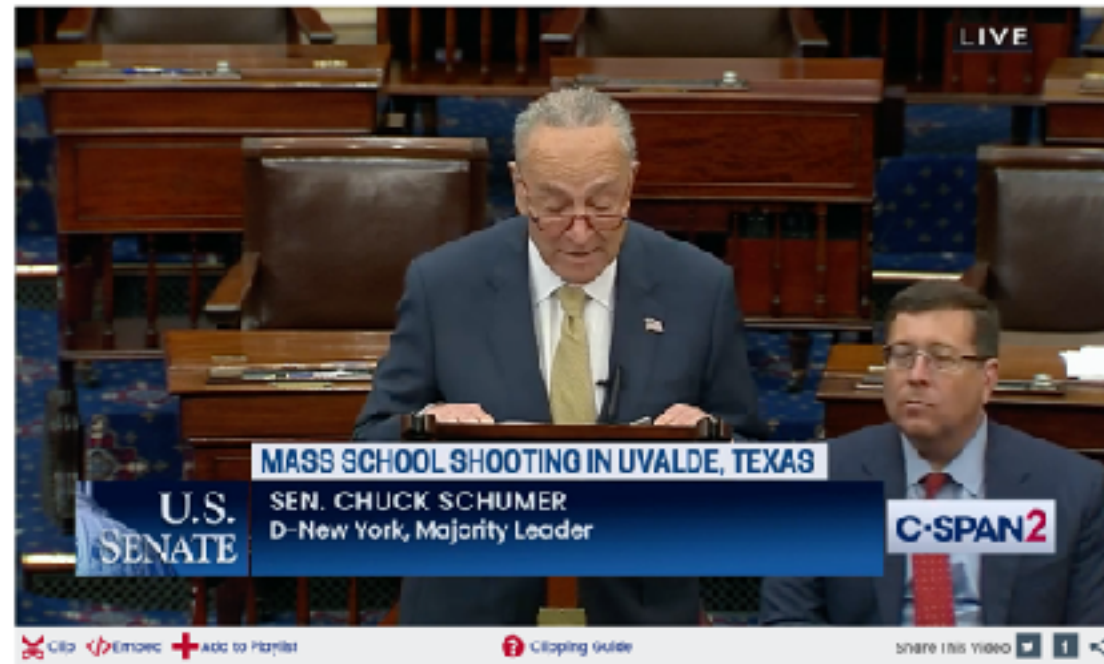


Planned Parenthood Votes cited to PolitiFact examples of Oz touting his stance on abortion, including his pledge to "be a bold voice in the Senate and a proud champion for the ‘pro-life’ movement."

4

Senate speech, May 25, 2022:

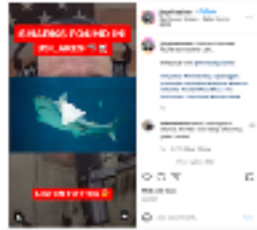
“The leading cause of death among children is a firearm.”



For ages 1-19

Their analysis did not take into account infant-specific types of deaths, such as congenital abnormalities or short gestation.... infants are typically not included because of certain fatal conditions unique to children under a year old.

1



False
Source: Politifactor
<https://bit.ly/3QueJ40>

“Experts told The Associated Press **there’s no documentation of bull sharks in the Great Lakes**. The myth also has been debunked by organizations such as the Shedd Aquarium (on Lake Michigan) and the Great Lakes Echo, produced by Michigan State University’s Knight Center for Environmental Journalism.”

2



False
Source: Politifactor
<https://bit.ly/3QIFCao>

“The user appears to have based this assumption on a **mistaken calculation based on the headline and not on the content of the article itself**, which details how the lottery winnings get paid out and what taxes are owed.

3



Half true
Source: Politifactor
<https://bit.ly/3bKqHrj>

“While Oz has said that he supports restrictions, he’s been silent on the question of what criminal penalties, if any, should be applied to patients or doctors.”

4



Mostly true
Source: Politifactor
<https://bit.ly/3dkdFBy>

“The CDC publishes data on the leading causes of death among different demographic groups, providing the most reliable data. In 2020, the leading cause of death among children ages one through 18 involved a firearm.”

“If infants are included, rankings of the leading causes of death for children up to age 18 change.”

ONLINE ⇒ IRL



Half of Republicans believe false accounts of deadly U.S. Capitol riot-Reuters/Ipsos poll

By James Oliphant, Chris Kahn

7 MIN READ

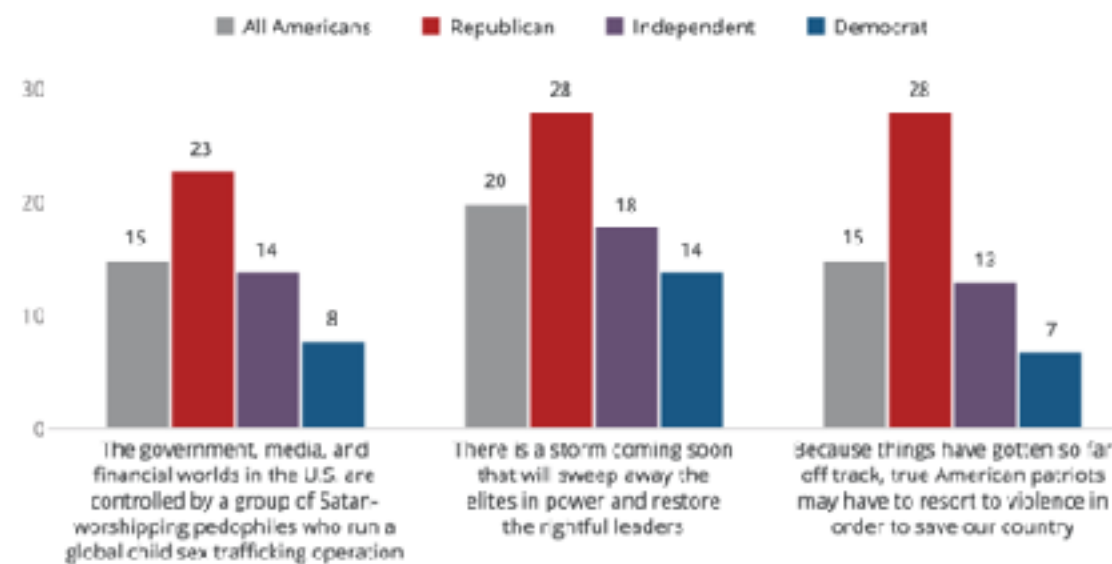


Six in 10 Republicans also believe the false claim put out by Trump that November's presidential election "was stolen" from him due to widespread voter fraud, and the same proportion of Republicans think he should run again in 2024, the March 30-31 poll showed.

Source: Reuters

FIGURE 1. QAnon Conspiracy Theories, by Party Affiliation

Percent who agree:



Source: PRRI-IFYC March 2021 Survey.

Source: Public Religion Research Institute

How a Trump-backed 'QAnon whack job' won with Democratic 'collusion'



Republican Dan Cox won nomination for Maryland governor, but current governor says that was thanks to Democrats promoting extremist opponents they think will be easier prey



📷 Dan Cox shakes hands with a supporter on primary night in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Photograph: Kenneth K. Lang/AP

In a midterm election year, Democrats have sought **to boost pro-Trump Republicans** in competitive states, placing the risky bet that as the January 6 committee remains in the headlines, extremists who support the former president's lie about electoral fraud in his 2020 defeat will prove unpalatable to voters.

The Guardian - July 25 2022

“Cox, endorsed by Donald Trump, surged past Kelly Schulz, a member of Hogan’s cabinet, to win the Republican nomination.”

In the last 2 weeks alone . . .



Brookings - July 26 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/07/26/misinformation-is-eroding-the-publics-confidence-in-democracy/>

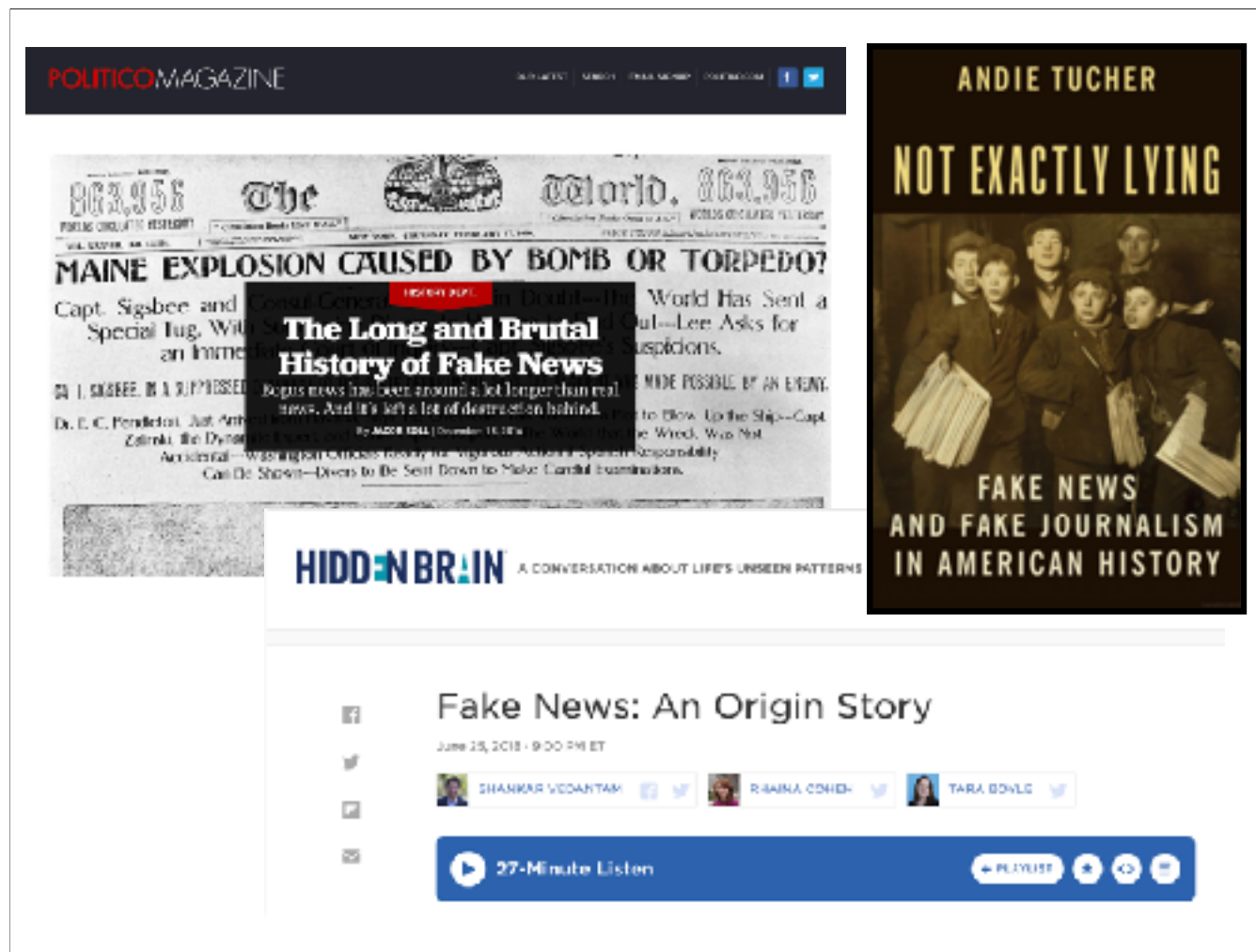
CNN - Aug 5 2022 - <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/05/media/alex-jones-punitive-damages-sandy-hook/index.html>

Conversation - Aug 7 2022 - <https://theconversation.com/ivermectin-blood-washing-ozone-how-long-covid-survivors-are-being-sold-the-next-round-of-miracle-cures-186047>

NYT - Aug 9 https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/09/business/russia-propaganda-spanish-social-media.html?mc_cid=e98c55d580&mc_eid=4e29db539f

NYT Aug 10 https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/10/technology/voter-drop-box-conspiracy-theory.html?mc_cid=e98c55d580&mc_eid=4e29db539f

Pro Publica - Aug 4, 2022 <https://www.propublica.org/article/covid-misinformation-pregnancy-vaccine-testing>



Blood libel — Jews alleged to have killed Christian children for their blood

Antebellum America — “stories of African-Americans spontaneously turning white. In other instances, fake news reports of slave uprisings or of crimes by slaves, led to terrible violence against African-Americans.”

Prof. Andie Tucher — sensationalist 19th-century penny press (NPR’s Hidden Brain podcast episode) and author of *Not Exactly Lying: Fake News and Fake Journalism in American History* (2022)

The Washington Post

RETROPOLIS

The fake news that haunted George Washington



By Gregory S. Schneider

April 10, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. EDT

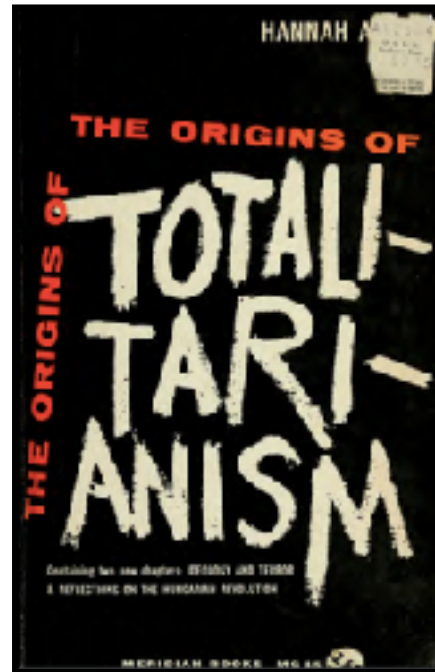


“The Revolutionary War was at a crucial point in 1777 when a remarkable set of documents surfaced in London that cast doubt on Yankee resolve.

With France not yet helping the struggling rebels, a packet of letters said to have been intercepted from Gen. George Washington showed that the American leader was far from committed to the cause. In eloquent, plaintive language, he told his closest family that he was miserable and that the war was a mistake.”

“The seven missives — known to scholars as the “spurious letters” — are a particularly sophisticated example of the craft. Written with a close ear for Washington’s style, full of intimate personal details, they go just a few shrewd steps beyond statements the great man actually made when bemoaning his plight. Their origin remains a mystery, though Washington spent years trying to track down the author.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/04/10/the-fake-news-that-haunted-george-washington/>



“The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e. the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false ... no longer exist.”

—Hannah Arendt, 1951

Dan Ehrenfeld and Matt Barton: “for democracy to flourish, people need

- 1) access to reliable information,
- 2) autonomy, and
- 3) the means to participate in conversations that [are] politically consequential.”

fake news

Muddled from the start

- 1 As a critique of “mainstream media”**
- 2 As problematic content; different from “real news”**

Schism between the two is rooted in its recent history.

Data & Society: “This interaction between two communities, both using the phrase “fake news” to stake claims to legitimacy of their sources over others, makes use of the term particularly fraught.” (8).



Buzzfeed

**November 16, 2016
(13 days after the election)**

Buzzfeed article: "Fake election news stories"

data from FB

20 top-performing false election **stories** from hoax sites & hyper-partisan **blogs** generated 8.7 million shares, reactions, and comments

Same time period, the 20 best-performing election **stories** from 19 major news **websites** generated a total of 7.3 million shares, reactions, and comments



First mention of “fake news” from Trump on Twitter

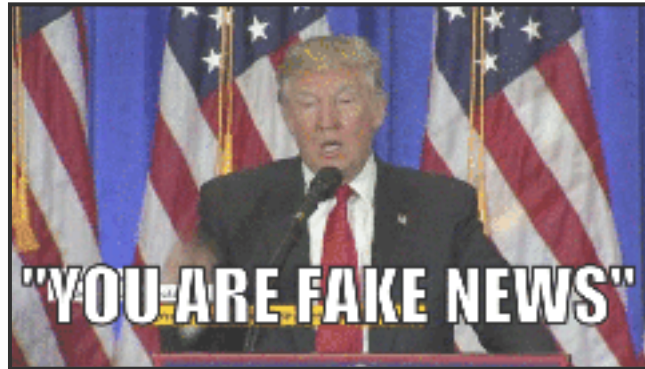
December 10, 2016 (about a month after the election)



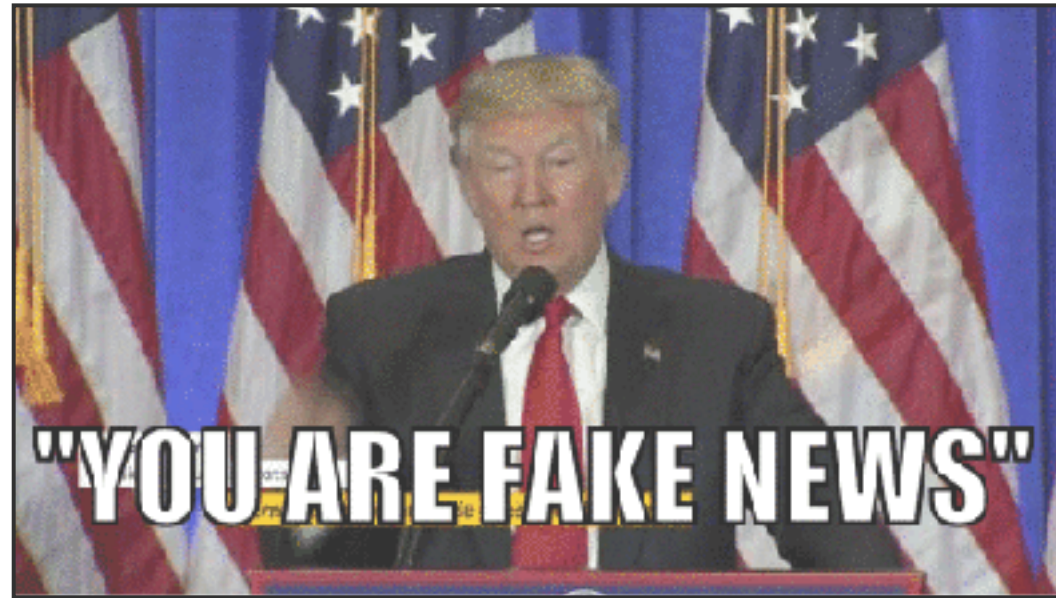
Google trends for fake news from Sept 2016 to October 2018, peaks at election and inauguration
 —GT “analyzes the popularity of top search queries in Google Search across various regions and languages”

fake news_{as}

1 critique of “mainstream media”



Data & Society: “This interaction between two communities, both using the phrase “fake news” to stake claims to legitimacy of their sources over others, makes use of the term particularly fraught.” (8).



Trump calls CNN “fake news” at his first press conference since Election Day.

January 11, 2017 (9 days before inauguration)



Before his account was banned, the former President used “fake news” 940 times on his twitter account. (data from Twitter Trump archive)

This speaks to how the definition has been muddled.

fake news_{as}

2 problematic content; as different from “real news”

information/opinion

misinformation

What is news?

propaganda

junk news

disinformation

false news

low-quality news
content

2nd definition:

“Problematic” because of its form — it looks like real news

“Different” — in terms of intent & process (for profit, hyper-partisian)

2 problematic content; as different from “real news”



Mad World News: was featured in an October 2018 episode of The Daily Podcast

Lazer et al's "The Science of Fake News" from *Science* (Mar 2018): fake news is "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent."

Data & Society: "sites that mimic the headlines and mastheads of genuine news outlets, while publishing intentional disinformation."

2 problematic content; as different from “real news”



The content on Mad World News expresses a personal opinion, advocates a point of view (e.g., on a social or political issue), or is self-promotional. For the purpose of fact-checking, it should be treated as such.

intent of the page.

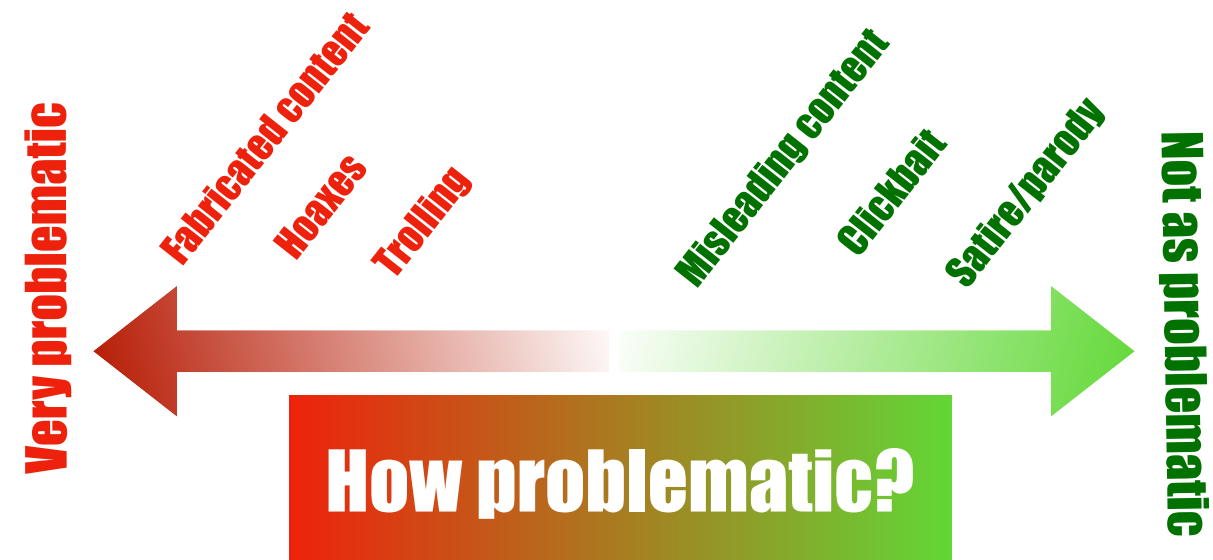
The content on Mad World News expresses a personal opinion, advocates a point of view (e.g., on a social or political issue), or is self-promotional. For the purpose of fact-checking, it should be treated as such.

The information on this page is for informational purposes only.

The content on Mad World News expresses a personal opinion, advocates a point of view (e.g., on a social or political issue), or is self-promotional. For the purpose of fact-checking, it should be treated as such.

Intent — “Online discourse makes it almost impossible to assess an author’s clear intent, meaning that it is difficult to definitively differentiate honest mistakes from satire and parody, or even deliberate deception” (Data & Society 10)

2 problematic content; as different from “real news”



Type — Some are about intent and some “according to the strategy and style of presentation, placing imposter content (i.e., websites that mimic an established news source name like NYTimes.com.co or NBC.com.co), entirely fabricated content (such as “Pope Francis Endorses Donald Trump”), or state-sponsored propaganda in a different category from sensational, clickbait, or misleading/hyper-partisan content (like Breitbart, InfoWars, or ZeroHedge).”

2 problematic content; as different from “real news”

Very problematic

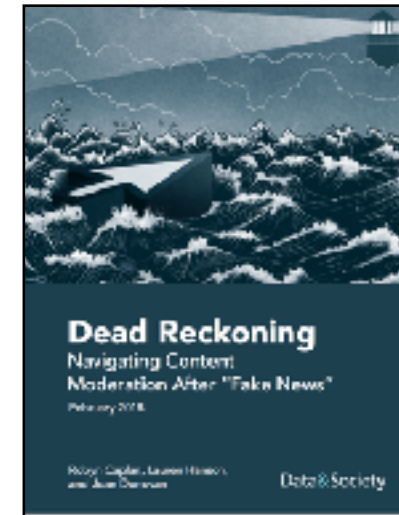


Not as problematic

How problematic?

fake news is

“...more than a widening of partisanship and the misleading use of social media to spread disinformation; it’s about the social sharing of trust, credibility, and evidence in the making of an informed citizenry.”



Defining fake news has important ramifications for how we understand it. This impacts research on fake news:

“Less Than you Think” (Princeton) — Research that focuses on only the **very** problematic makes it seem like fake news is not as much of a problem as it is.

“Less Than you Think,” argued that “sharing articles from fake news domains was a rare activity” and when it did happen it was mostly from those users over 65.” However, their study only included **the most obvious and uncontroversial sites** and excluded misleading content or clickbait, and hyper-partisan sites like Breitbart or Occupy Democrats.

White paper from Data & Society: fake news is about the forces using tech to tear at our social fabric. It is a serious threat to our democracy because free societies are always vulnerable to misinformation. (US has exploited this fact in Central America — Cuba)

How do we address it?



1 | Make structural changes

2 | Empower users

1 = institutions (platforms, advertisers, politicians, news agencies, universities)

2 = readers, voters, citizens, consumers

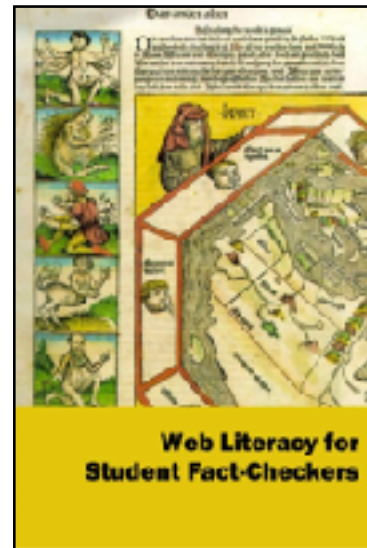
Empower users

(with **WEB** literacy)

1. Look for previous work

2. Go upstream

3. Read laterally



<https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com/>

By Mike Caulfield
Aka @holden

Facts

<simplest definition>

Claims about which there is

- **general agreement (consensus) by**
- **people in the know.**

Facts

- **Not all claims are statements of fact. Facts require consensus.**
- **Fact-checking begins by asking if a source of information is in a position to know (different from assessing “bias” — though that matters too).**
- **Facts are not the same thing as truth. However, facts help us assess truth and thus give important shape to our realities.**

1. Look for previous work

“When fact-checking a particular claim, quote, or article, the simplest thing you can do is to see if someone has already done the work for you.”



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FACTCHECK.ORG A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center

1. Look for previous work


“When fact-checking a particular claim, quote, or article, the simplest thing you can do is to see if someone has already done the work for you.”

1		False Source: Politifact https://bit.ly/3QeeJ4Q	"Experts told The Associated Press there's no data supporting all four lakes in the Great Lakes. The report also fails to take into account by organizations such as the Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) and the Great Lakes Science Center, produced by Michigan State University's Great Lakes Center for Environmental Journalism."
2		False Source: Politifact https://bit.ly/3QeFC6n	"The user appears to have based this assumption on a mistaken conclusion based on the headline and not on the content of the tweet itself, which states how the lake's water gets cleaned and what jobs are done."
3		Half true Source: Politifact https://bit.ly/3QeHqWj	"While Governor Whitmer supports restoration, he's been silent on the question of what criminal penalties, if any, should be applied to polluters or violators."
4		Mostly true Source: Politifact https://bit.ly/3QeHqWj	"The CDC publishes data on the leading causes of death among different demographic groups, providing the most reliable data. In 2019, the leading cause of death among children ages one through 14 involved a firearm." "It intends to include findings of the existing studies of deaths for children's age group. It's ongoing."


Show group how to do this with search terms

2. Go upstream

“Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information.”

 **John W. Roth (Fake Tech Exec)**
@JohnWOptions

Congratulations to the IRS on winning the \$646.3 million Mega Millions Jackpot!



Forbes [Subscribe](#) [Sign In](#)

TAXES • EDITORS' PICK

Winner Of \$1.28 Billion Lottery Gets \$433.7 Million After Tax

Robert W. Wood
Senior Contributor
Focus on taxes and litigation.

1:45 PM · Aug 3, 2022 · [View for Android](#)

44.6K Retweets · 4.6K Quote Tweets · 462.3K Likes



Forbes

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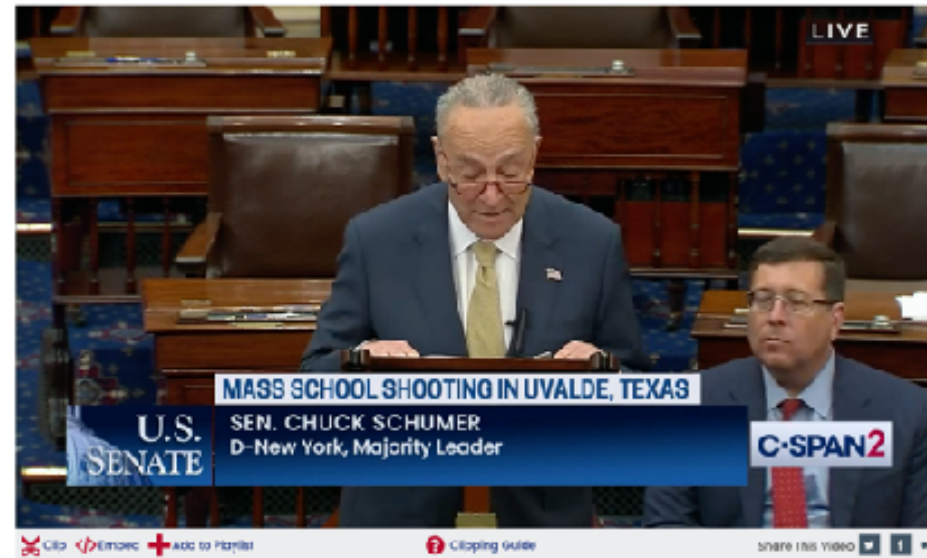
Robert W. Wood [Senior Contributor](#)
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2. Go upstream

“Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information.”



3. Read laterally

“Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source (publication, author, etc.). The truth is in the network.”



AllSides™ Media Bias Chart

All ratings are based on online content only — not TV, print, or radio content.
Ratings do not reflect accuracy or credibility; they reflect perspective only.



far-right^[6]

misogynistic, xenophobic, and racist

Breitbart News

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Breitbart" redirects here. For other uses, see *Breitbart* (disambiguation).

Breitbart News Network (known commonly as **Breitbart News**, **Breitbart**, or **Breitbart.com**) is an American ^[12] ^[13] ^[14] ^[15] ^[16] ^[17] ^[18] ^[19] ^[20] ^[21] ^[22] ^[23] ^[24] ^[25] ^[26] ^[27] ^[28] ^[29] ^[30] ^[31] ^[32] ^[33] ^[34] ^[35] ^[36] ^[37] ^[38] ^[39] ^[40] ^[41] ^[42] ^[43] ^[44] ^[45] ^[46] ^[47] ^[48] ^[49] ^[50] ^[51] ^[52] ^[53] ^[54] ^[55] ^[56] ^[57] ^[58] ^[59] ^[60] ^[61] ^[62] ^[63] ^[64] ^[65] ^[66] ^[67] ^[68] ^[69] ^[70] ^[71] ^[72] ^[73] ^[74] ^[75] ^[76] ^[77] ^[78] ^[79] ^[80] ^[81] ^[82] ^[83] ^[84] ^[85] ^[86] ^[87] ^[88] ^[89] ^[90] ^[91] ^[92] ^[93] ^[94] ^[95] ^[96] ^[97] ^[98] ^[99] ^[100] ^[101] ^[102] ^[103] ^[104] ^[105] ^[106] ^[107] ^[108] ^[109] ^[110] ^[111] ^[112] ^[113] ^[114] ^[115] ^[116] ^[117] ^[118] ^[119] ^[120] ^[121] ^[122] ^[123] ^[124] ^[125] ^[126] ^[127] ^[128] ^[129] ^[130] ^[131] ^[132] ^[133] ^[134] ^[135] ^[136] ^[137] ^[138] ^[139] ^[140] ^[141] ^[142] ^[143] ^[144] ^[145] ^[146] ^[147] ^[148] ^[149] ^[150] 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**However, different users
have different levels of
digital readiness.**

Digital readiness according to Pew: “the attitudes and behaviors that underpin people’s preparedness and comfort in using digital tools for learning”

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Opinion

Personality Type, as well as Politics, Predicts Who Shares Fake News

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News from 12 HR

REPORT

COMMENTARY

Highly impulsive people who lean conservative are more likely to share false news stories. They have

In short, we did not find that third-party fact-checker warnings were effective in reducing the spread of misinformation that is especially pronounced among LCCs. This result is worrying given that our research suggests that LCCs appear to be the primary drivers of the proliferation of fake news. Social media networks therefore need to find a different solution than just tagging stories with warning labels. Interventions based on the assumption that truth matters may be inadequate. Another option might involve social media companies monitoring fake news that has the potential to hurt others, such as misinformation related to vaccines and elections, and actively removing such content from their platform.

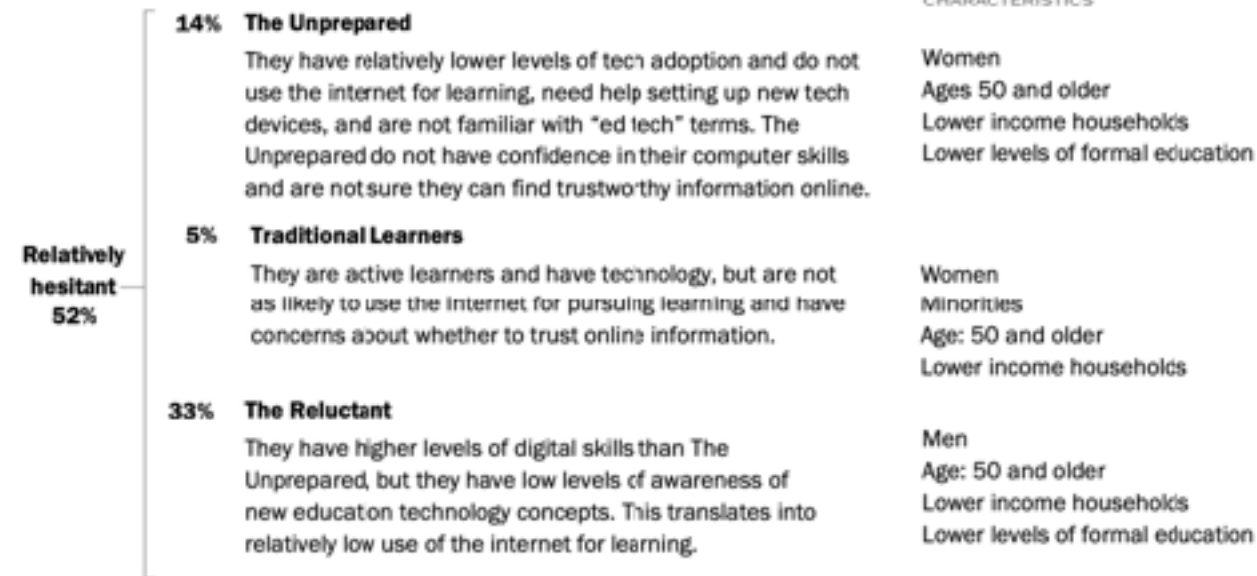
LCCs = low-conscientiousness conservatives

conscientiousness (from 5-factor theory) captures differences in people's orderliness, impulse control, conventionality and reliability.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/personality-type-as-well-as-politics-predicts-who-shares-fake-news/>

Digital readiness: The five groups along a spectrum from least ready to most ready

% of U.S. adults in each group



Source: Survey conducted Oct. 13-Nov. 15, 2015.

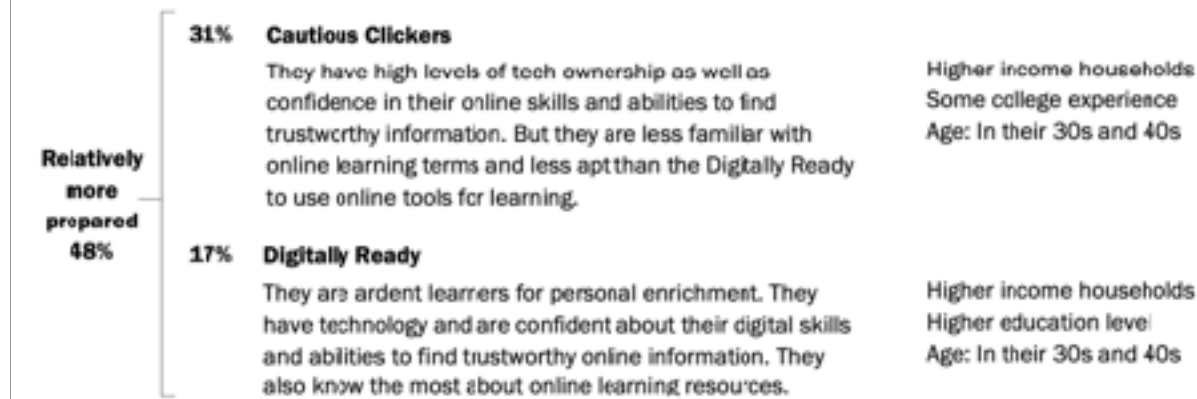
"Digital Readiness Gaps"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/20/2016/Digital-Readiness-Gaps/>

No longer just access but readiness which is measured by things like education levels, inherent confidence, levels of support, etc. Specifically they measured:

1. Digital skills
2. Trust
3. Use



Source: Survey conducted Oct. 13-Nov. 15, 2015.
"Digital Readiness Gaps"
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BEHAVIOR | OPINION

Digital Literacy Doesn't Stop the Spread of Misinformation

Just because you can spot falsehoods doesn't mean you won't share them

By David Rand, Nathaniel Gelfin on July 15, 2022 [اقرأ من هنا باللغة العربية](#)

When we looked at the connection between digital literacy and the willingness to *share* false information with others through social media, however, the results were different. People who were more digitally literate were just as likely to say they'd share false articles as people who lacked digital literacy. Like the first finding, the (lack of) connection between digital literacy and sharing false news was not affected by political party affiliation or whether the topic was politics or the pandemic.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/digital-literacy-doesnt-stop-the-spread-of-misinformation>

“Believing and sharing are not one in the same”

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BEHAVIOR | OPINION

Digital Literacy Doesn't Stop the Spread of Misinformation

Just because you can spot falsehoods doesn't mean you won't share them

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wouldn't you be less likely to share falsehoods? A potential answer comes from prior work of ours on why people share misinformation. We found that although most people don't *want* to spread misinformation, social media is distracting: people are scrolling quickly, and their attention is drawn to social validation and other feedback, such as how many likes their posts will get. This means we often forget to even ask ourselves if a story is true or false when considering, however quickly, whether to share it.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/digital-literacy-doesnt-stop-the-spread-of-misinformation>

“Believing and sharing are not one in the same”

Make structural changes

1. Professional fact-checking

2. Demonetizing bad content

3. Better content moderation

4. Regulation



Make structural changes

1. Professional fact-checking

Institutions: universities, news agencies, advocacy groups

FIRST DRAFT



FACTCHECK.ORG A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center

AllSides
Don't be fooled by media bias and fake news.

OpenSecrets.org
Center for Responsive Politics



1. Improving measures for trust & verification — relying on fact-checking sites and coalitions, expanding content moderation for bots and user-flags, trust marks

Problems: polarization and the gravity of false equivalency renders fact-checking probably ineffective and it might actually make the problem worse by amplifying claims. This goes back to the first definition of fake news as a critique of the so-called “mainstream media”

Labor intensive one both ends; info saturation

Make structural changes

2. De-monetizing bad content

Institutions: platforms (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon), government, advocacy groups



2. De-monetize the system — many fake news sites or fb pages are driven by revenue from ads

programmatic, targeted, automated advertising means that ads are sold by clicks or views and are linked to target demographic data, not content or placement (a scattershot approach). This strategy tries to mitigate that by having the platforms — Google AdSense and FB Audience Network (who make up 58% of the digital ad market share) enforce policies that identify publishers of fake news. There are also organizations like Sleeping Giants who take an activist approach to this.

Make structural changes

3. Better content moderation

Institutions: platforms (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon), tech companies



Asking platforms to manage the problem by getting rid of bad content, but how?
Wetware v software, humans v algorithms

Make structural changes

4. Regulation

Institutions: government



First amendment

Platforms have limited liability thanks to the Communications Decency Act from 1996

TOS and community guidelines are determined by the companies themselves

Makes us vulnerable to cyberwarfare and leaves the governing of free speech up to the very people who profit from its unbridled proliferation.

**What is the future of
fake news?**

Deep fakes



You Won't Believe What Obama Says In This Video! 🤖

5,991,428 views

👍 79K 💬 13K ➦ SHARE 📌 SAVE ...



BuzzFeedVideo ©
Published on Apr 17, 2018

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Resources for combating fake news

jasonluther.net/fakenews



Don't be fooled by media bias and fake news.

