

RECOGNIZING FAKE NEWS

**DI ZHANG
ADULT SERVICES LIBRARIAN
THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

AGENDA

What is fake news?

Why is this prevalent?

What are the effects on our democracy?

How can I better evaluate content?

Examples

Final Tips/Best Practices

Q&A

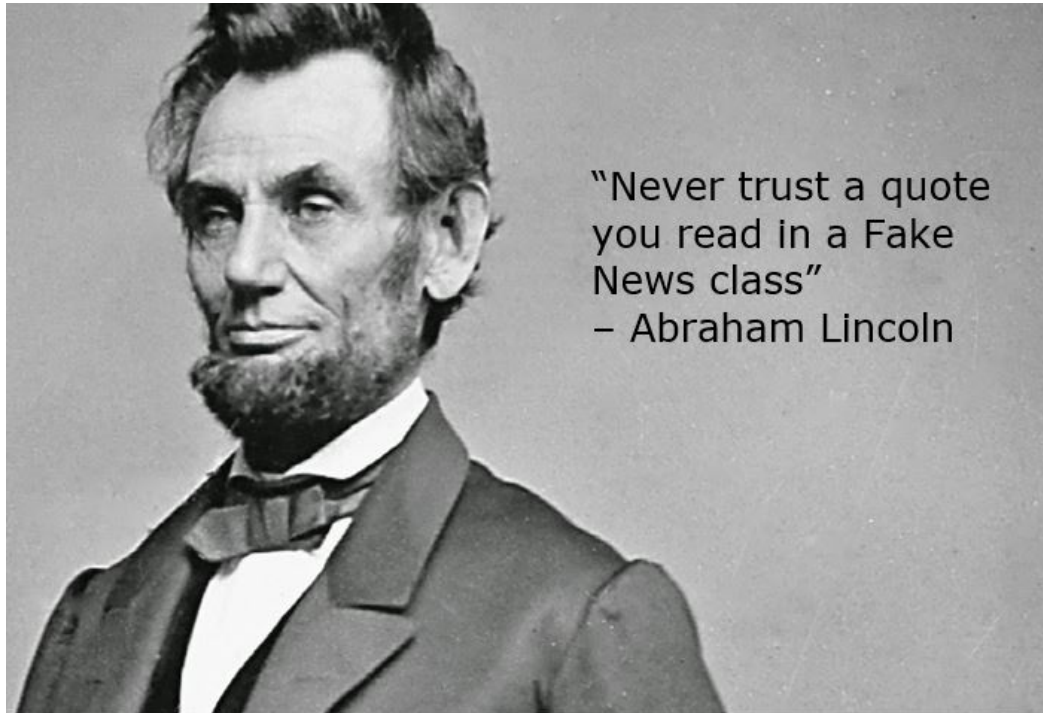
A decorative footer consisting of several overlapping triangles in various shades of blue, creating a modern, abstract geometric design.

WHY LIBRARY IS TALKING ABOUT FAKE NEWS

- Community members asked us to
- Confusion over fraudulent news stories and misinformation during 2016 elections
- Fake news is here to stay and ramping up
- Digital information literacy is a necessary skill in 21st Century
- Librarians, educators and journalists all have roles to play in combating fake news



Photo credit: University Sunrise Rotary Club



Fake Abraham Lincoln Quote



Phrase does not appear in the U.S. Constitution

Use of quotation marks questionable; poor grammar a red flag

"Person" appears more frequently than "citizen" in the U.S. Constitution

False equivalency of non-citizens and criminals

Hadn't been spotted for 90 years



"Officially" the operative phrase; likely long-extinct

Eliciting emotional reactions and comments

RETURNTOBOW.NET
"Ghost Cat" Gone: Eastern Cougar Officially Declared Extinct

310 17 Comments 229 Shares




Like Comment Share



Cristiano Ronaldo  @Cristiano · Aug 22

The Amazon Rainforest produces more than 20% of the world's oxygen and its been burning for the past 3 weeks. It's our responsibility to help to save our planet. [#prayforamazonia](#)




 13K  107K  386K

← A staggering number of engagements

← Viral images showing the fire are actually several years old, in some cases not even of the Amazon.

Trump Battles the FDA Over Carson's Breakthrough Discovery! Says "This WILL NOT Be Banned, The American People Have A Right To Have Access To This"

Brandt River, Insider Picks 

🕒 Tuesday, June 25, 2019, 8:27 AM 🔥 357,620



Recently Ben Carson made some comments in an interview with Pamela Brown and Ryan Browne about a [brain booster](#) that would become the biggest event in human history.

Ben Carson credits his ability to function and maintain focus on such a high level to a certain set of "smart drugs" that enhance cognitive brain function and neural connectivity, while strengthening the prefrontal cortex and boosting memory and



WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?

“Fake news, or hoax news, refers to false information or propaganda published under the guise of being authentic news. Fake news websites and channels push their fake news content in an attempt to mislead consumers of the content and spread misinformation via social networks and word-of-mouth.”

Source: <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/F/fake-news.html>

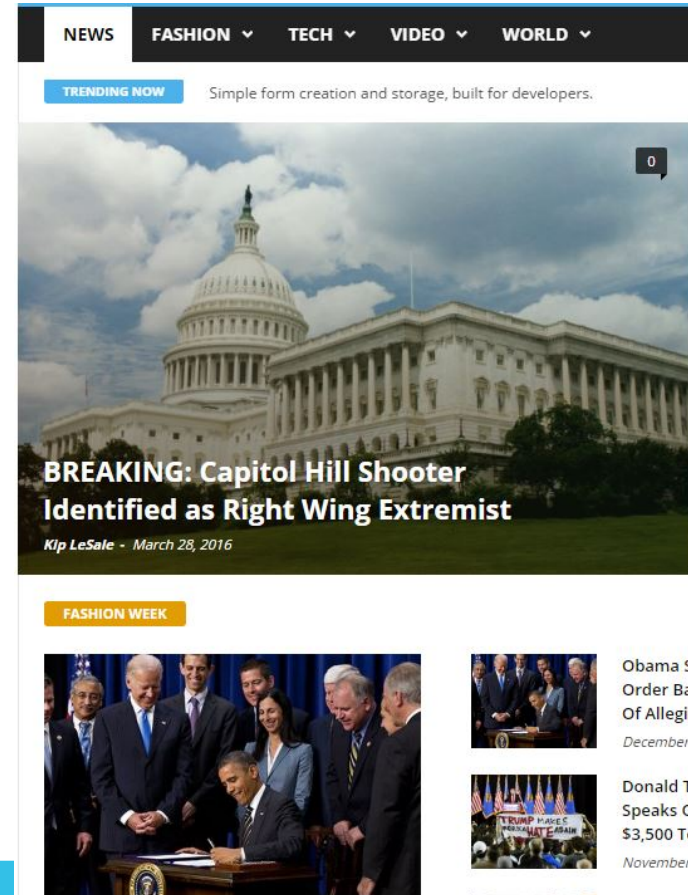
FAKE NEWS WEBSITES



URL is similar to a real news site

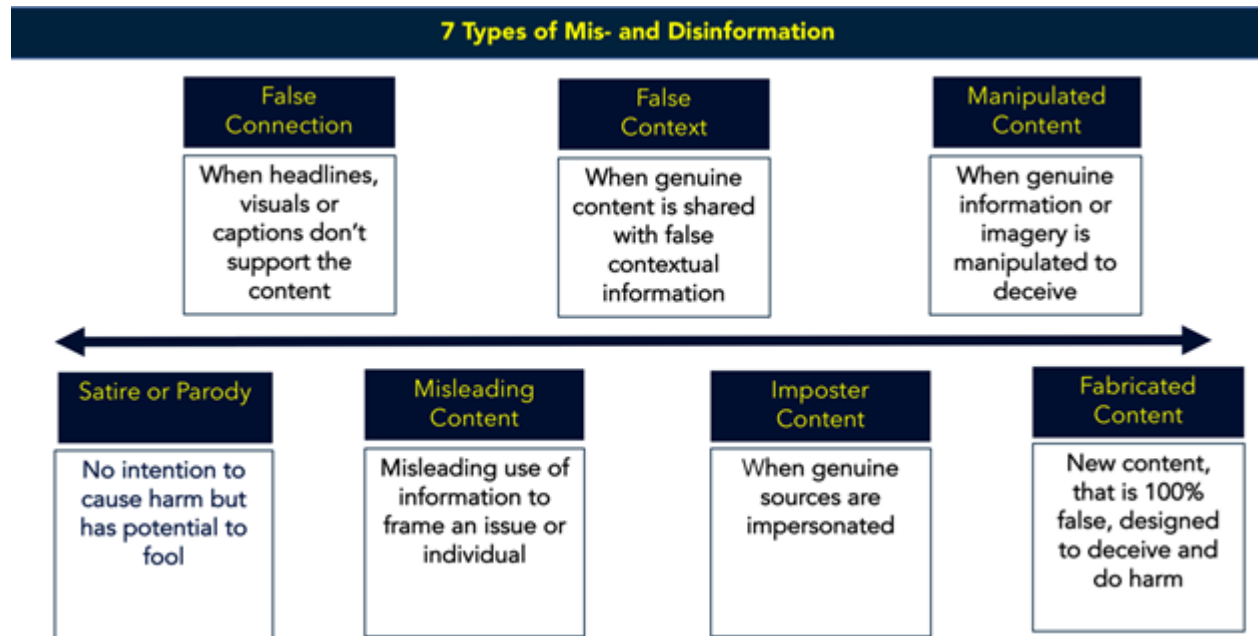


Logo is the same or similar as real news site



Layout imitates real news site

GETTING SPECIFIC- TYPES OF FAKE NEWS



Graphic by Claire Wardle, reprinted with permission from First Draft News:
<https://medium.com/1st-draft/fake-news-its-complicated-d0f773766c79>

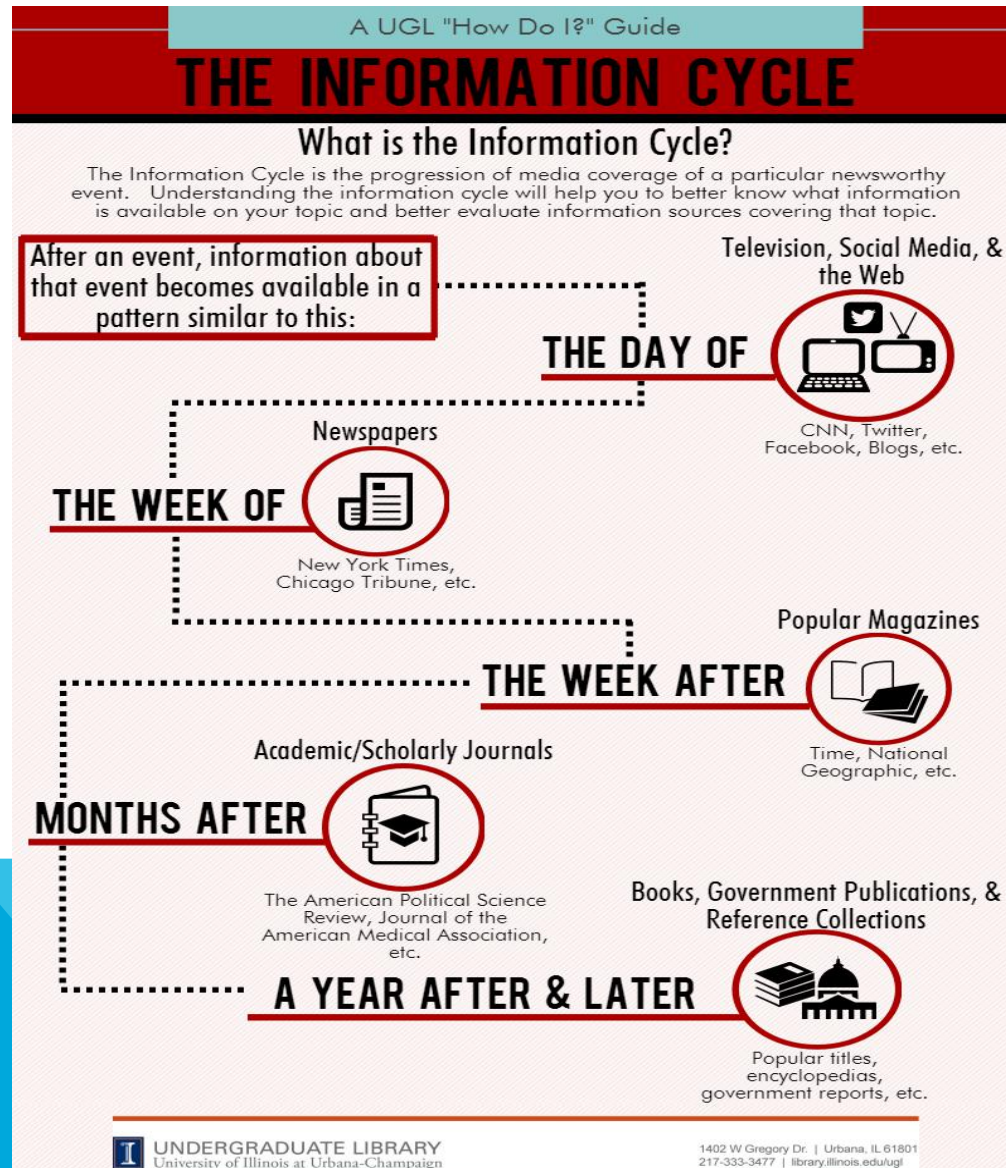
THE INFORMATION CYCLE

“Falsehood flies, and the Truth comes limping after it; so that when Men come to be undeceiv’d, it is too late; the Jest is over, and the Tale has had its Effect”

- Jonathan Swift

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide consisting of several overlapping triangles in various shades of blue, creating a modern, abstract design.

THE INFORMATION CYCLE



PULSE OF THE ROOM

Where do you get your news information?

- A) Television
- B) Online
- C) Radio
- D) Print
- E) Combination



PULSE OF THE ROOM

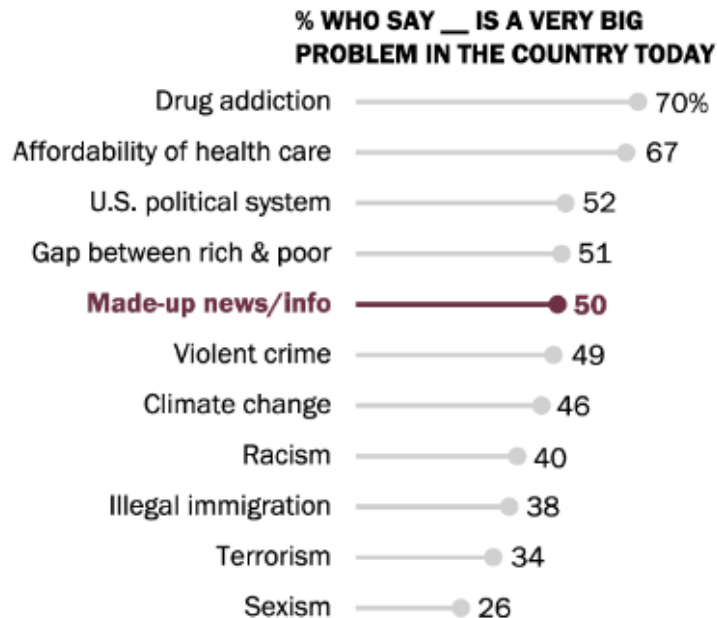
When you consume news online, what is your primary source?

- A) Social media
- B) News website
- C) Aggregator site
- D) Search engine
- E) Other



WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE LANDSCAPE OF NEWS AND INFORMATION —

Americans see made-up news as a bigger problem than other key issues ...



... and most see it as detrimental to the country's democratic system

MADE-UP NEWS AND INFORMATION HAS A BIG IMPACT ON ...

68% Americans' confidence in government

54% Americans' confidence in each other

51% Political leaders' ability to get work done

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.

"Many Americans Say Made-Up News Is a Critical Problem That Needs To Be Fixed"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

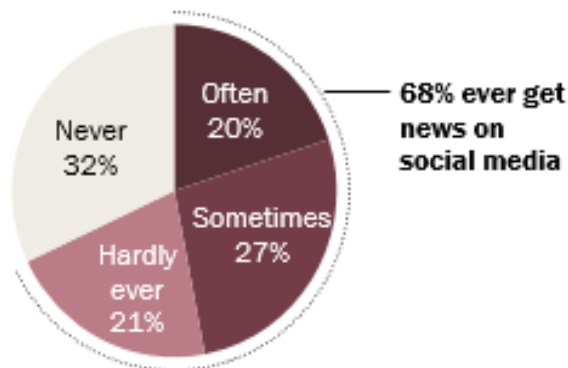
Source:

[https://www.journalism.org/2019/06/05/many-americans-say-made-up-news-is-a-critical-problem-that-needs-to-be-fixed/?ct=t\(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_10_1_2018_17_21_COPY_01\)](https://www.journalism.org/2019/06/05/many-americans-say-made-up-news-is-a-critical-problem-that-needs-to-be-fixed/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_10_1_2018_17_21_COPY_01))

WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE LANDSCAPE OF NEWS AND INFORMATION —

About two-thirds of Americans get news on social media

% of U.S. adults who get news on social media ...



But most social media news consumers expect news there to be inaccurate

% of social media news consumers who say they expect the news they see on social media to be ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.
"News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source:

<https://www.journalism.org/2018/09/10/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2018/>

THE FOURTH ESTATE

“Now, only about a third of the U.S. has any trust in the Fourth Estate, a stunning development for an institution designed to inform the public.”

Source: June 2016 Gallup Poll

- Americans overwhelmingly see the news media as biased
- 93% of Americans get at least some news online
- 64% of adults say fabricated news stories cause a great deal of confusion about the basic facts of current issues and events
- 59% of all links shared on social networks are shared without reading first!

Sources:

<https://www.journalism.org/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/>

<http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/the-modern-news-consumer/>

<http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/digital-news/>

WHO'S SUSCEPTIBLE TO FAKE NEWS

Older people- 11 percent of people aged 65 and older shared fake news stories on Facebook during the 2016 presidential election

Younger students- 80 percent believed a native ad, identified with the words "sponsored content," was a real news story; 30 percent of students argued that the fake account was more trustworthy

Everyone in between- 23% say they have shared a made-up news story- either knowingly or not


Sources:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2019-01-09/study-older-people-are-more-susceptible-to-fake-news-more-likely-to-share-it>

<https://ed.stanford.edu/news/stanford-researchers-find-students-have-trouble-judging-credibility-information-online>

<https://www.journalism.org/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/>

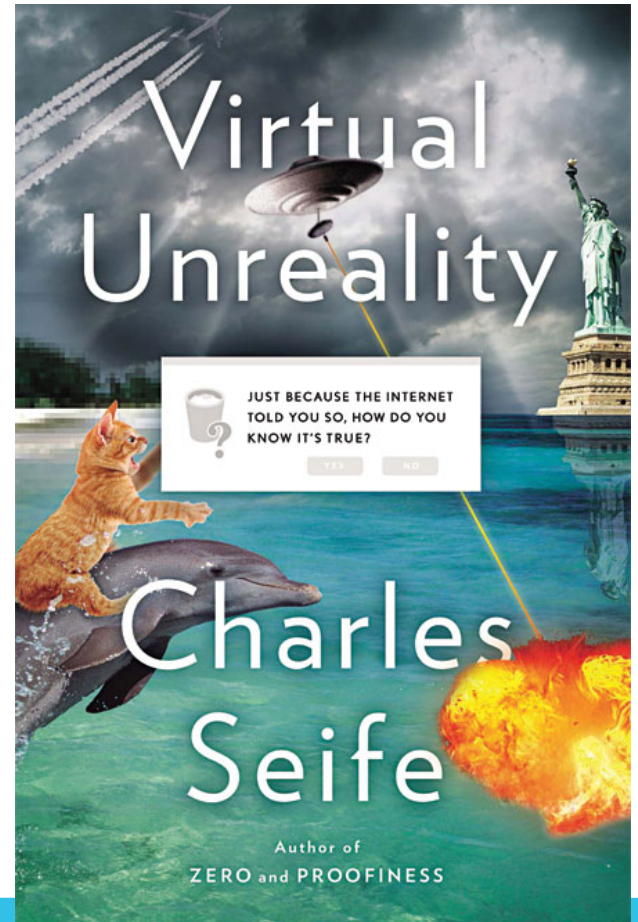
HOW WE GOT HERE

- Rise of cable news/ 24 hour news cycle
 - Decline of local print journalism
 - Rise of online economy- clicks, clicks, clicks!
 - Social media and smartphones
 - Big data, filter bubbles, algorithms, and AI
 - 2016 Presidential election
- 

CUT AND PASTE JOURNALISM

“The media are being driven further and further into the cut-and paste realm by the unforgiving economics of post-scarcity information. It’s expensive to be a primary newsgatherer.”

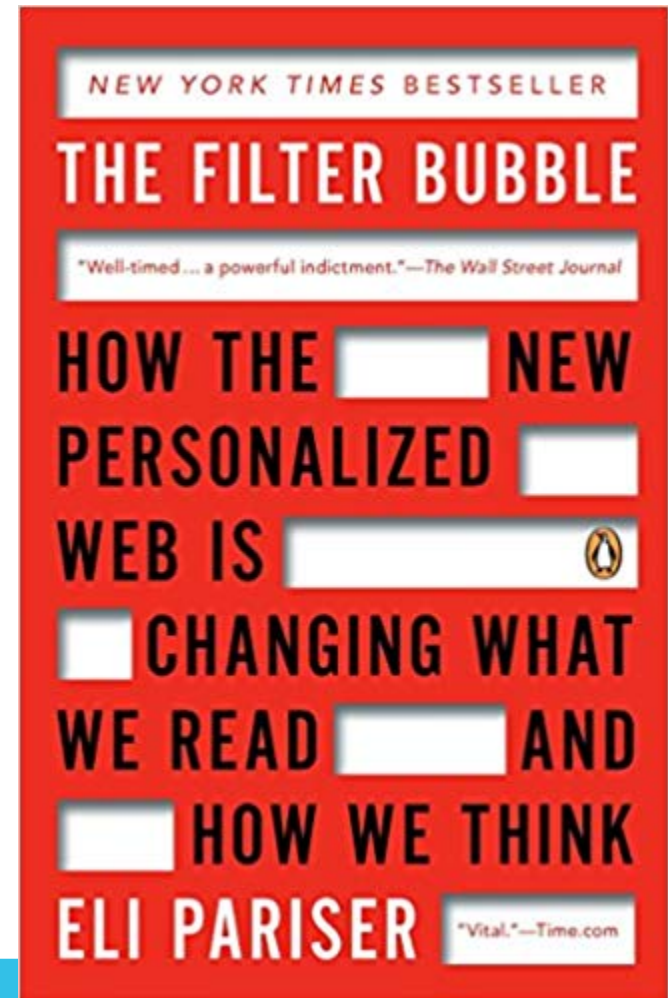
– Charles Seife, from his book “Virtual Unreality”



FILTER BUBBLES

“As websites get to know our Interests better, they also get better at serving up the content that reinforces those interests, while also filtering out those things we generally don't like.”

– Eli Pariser, from his book *The Filter Bubble*.



RUSSIA



Black Elevation

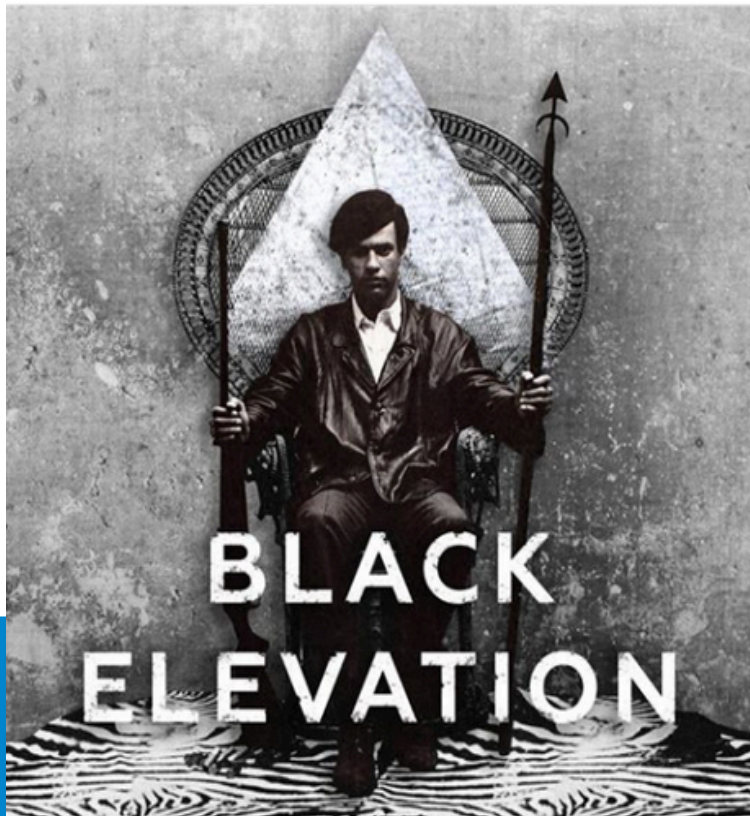
Sponsored · 🌐

Join Black Elevation team, we're hiring!

POSITION: Event Coordinator (Part-time)

Salary is paid equally in 2 parts: one before the event, and one after. The ...

[See More](#)



👍❤️😂 1.2K

50 Comments 291 Shares



Mindful Being

July 1 at 8:00 PM · 🌐

...



We must unlearn what we have learned because a conditioned mind cannot comprehend the infinite.

👍❤️😂 72

2 Comments 104 Shares

Source:

<https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/07/removing-bad-actors-on-facebook/>

HOW FAKE NEWS CREATION IS A BUSINESS

T _ H E
F A K _ _ _ E
_ N E W S
M A C H I N E
_

INSIDE A TOWN GEARING
UP FOR 2020

Veles used to make porcelain for the whole of Yugoslavia. Now it makes fake news.

This sleepy riverside town in Macedonia is home to dozens of website operators who churn out bogus stories designed to attract the attention of Americans. Each click adds cash to their bank accounts.

The scale is industrial: Over 100 websites were tracked here during the final weeks of the 2016 U.S. election campaign, producing fake news that mostly favored Republican candidate for President Donald Trump.

Source:

<https://money.cnn.com/interactive/media/the-macedonia-story/>

TRENDS IN 2016

- Politics dominated, followed by fake crime stories
- Macedonia, Russia and other foreign influence...
- Misleading URLs (.co domains, "US", imitation of established news orgs)
- Fake news follows real news

Source: <https://goo.gl/CXX1y9>

"Pope Francis shocks world, endorses Donald



Giampiero Sposito | Reuters

TRENDS IN 2017

- Fake crime stories dominated
- World News Daily Report benefited from the most Facebook engagements
- Prevalence of “create your own news” websites
- Emergence of news networks created by one person running multiple fake news sites
- Copycat sites based in Eastern Europe

Source: Buzzfeed <https://goo.gl/TXvmKk>

Top 10 Fake News Articles by Facebook Engagements

1

BABYSITTER TRANSPORTED TO HOSPITAL
AFTER INSERTING A BABY IN HER VAGINA



1,204,400

Babysitter
transported to
hospital after
inserting a baby in
her vagina

2

FBI SEIZES OVER 3,000 PENISES DURING
RAID AT MORGUE EMPLOYEE'S HOME



1,145,470

FBI seizes over
3,000 penises during
raid at morgue
employee's home

3

Charles Manson to be released on parole, to Johnson
County, TX



1,125,031

Charles Manson to
be released on
parole, to Johnson
County, TX

4

Police: Chester Bennington Was Murdered



1,042,032

Police: Chester
Bennington Was
Murdered

5

MORGUE EMPLOYEE CREMATED BY
MISTAKE WHILE TAKING A NAP

993,205

Morgue employee
cremated by mistake
while taking a nap

6



Angry Woman Cuts Off Man's
Penis for Not Making Eye
Contact During Sex

981,423

Angry Woman Cuts
Off Man's Penis for
Not Making Eye
Contact During Sex -
TRENDING

7

Female Legislators Unveil 'Male
Ejaculation Bill' Forbidding The
Disposal Of Unused Semen



966,498

Female Legislators
Unveil 'Male
Ejaculation Bill'
Forbidding The
Disposal Of Unused
Semen

8

President Trump Orders
the Execution of Five
Turkeys Pardoned by
Obama

914,429

President Trump
Orders the Execution
of Five Turkeys
Pardoned by Obama

9

ELDERLY WOMAN ACCUSED OF TRAINING
HER 65 CATS TO STEAL FROM NEIGHBORS



690,437

Elderly woman
accused of training
her 65 cats to steal
from neighbors

10

COUPLE HOSPITALIZED AFTER MAN GETS
HIS HEAD STUCK IN HIS WIFE'S VAGINA



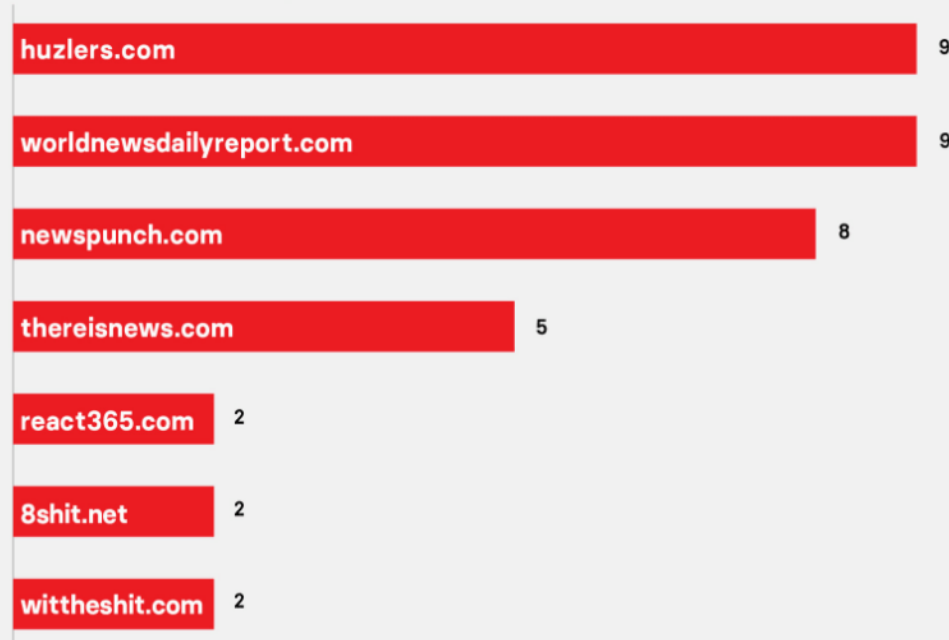
672,093

Couple hospitalized
after man gets his
head stuck in his
wife's vagina

IN 2018...

Top 10 Domains

Number of URLs in top 50 fake news stories of 2018



BuzzFeed News

Top 10 Fake News Articles by Facebook Engagements

1

LOTTERY WINNER ARRESTED FOR DUMPING \$200,000 OF MANURE ON EX-BOSS' LAWN



2,383,021

Lottery winner arrested for dumping \$200,000 of manure on ex-boss' lawn

2

Barbara Bush, Republican matriarch and former first lady, dies at 92



2,290,000

Former first lady Barbara Bush dies at 92

3

WOMAN SUES SAMSUNG FOR \$1.8M AFTER CELL PHONE GETS STUCK INSIDE HER VAGINA



1,304,430

Woman sues Samsung for \$1.8M after cell phone gets stuck inside her vagina

4

BREAKING: Michael Jordan Resigns From The Board At Nike-Takes 'Air Jordans' With Him



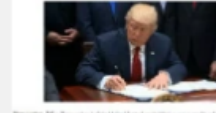
911,336

BREAKING: Michael Jordan Resigns From The Board At Nike-Takes 'Air Jordans' With Him

5

Donald Trump Ends School Shootings By Banning Schools

Donald Trump Ends School Shootings By Banning Schools



830,116

Donald Trump Ends School Shootings By Banning Schools

6

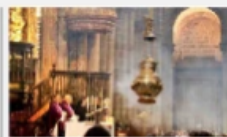
Florida Man Arrested For Tranquilizing And Raping Alligators In Everglades



824,137

Florida Man Arrested For Tranquilizing And Raping Alligators In Everglades

7



Two altar boys were arrested for putting weed in the censor-burner

797,628

Two altar boys were arrested for putting weed in the censor-burner

8

North Korea Agrees To Open Its Doors To Christianity



760,314

North Korea Agrees To Open Its Doors To Christianity

9

Man Eats Girlfriends Booty For The First Time Dies From E. Coli



633,642

Man Eats Girlfriends Booty For The First Time Dies From E. Coli

10



Muslim Figure: "We Must Have Pork-Free Menus Or We Will Leave U.S." How Would You Respond This?

631,589


Muslim Figure: "We Must Have Pork-Free Menus Or We Will Leave U.S." How Would You Respond This?

Disinformation and the 2020 Election:

How the Social Media Industry Should Prepare

PAUL M. BARRETT



 **NYU | STERN**

Center for Business
and Human Rights

September 2019



EFFECTS ON OUR DEMOCRACY

- Mistrust in media and journalism → Citizens turn to unreliable sources
- Americans can't agree on facts → Belief in false narratives, like conspiracy theories, goes up
- Lack of local journalism → Citizens less informed, viewpoints increasingly polarized and partisan
- Decreased control over personal data → Increasingly under the control of Tech Companies
- Increased cynicism and pessimism → Decreased political engagement

WHY IT IS SURPRISINGLY EASY TO CREATE FAKE NEWS

+ PRANK YOUR FRIENDS WITH
FAKE NEWS!

Create your false news and prank your friends. Share them on social networks! What are you waiting for?

The authors of posts of bullying or that advocate acts of terrorism or violate public order are subject to prosecution.

Title *

Description *

Tips:

News about Artists, TV and Football make people curious. They'll be trapped easier! You must be creative.

Fake title:

Choose a catchy title for your joke. Make your friends curious.

Description:

Be creative and make your friends curious.

EVALUATING INFORMATION- 3 QUICK TIPS

1. Read/listen/watch
(critically) before
sharing
2. Check the source
(author, publisher,
images used)
3. What is the support?

READ...

THEN



MORE TIPS

4. Check the Date

Is this an old story/video/photo that has been repurposed to advocate for something?

5. Is It a Joke?

Go to the “About” section of the website. Does the site describe itself as “fantasy news” or “satirical news”?

6. Check Your Biases

Do you have a strong emotional attachment to this example?

7. Consult the Experts

Is this the only news outlet reporting on this?

Can you verify the information from 3 or more reliable sources?

Have experts in the field been connected to it?

Does a reliable fact-checking website list this as less than true?



RED FLAGS

- 🚩 The news website has a .co domain
- 🚩 The headline is sensational or politically charged
- 🚩 It uses CAPS or excessive punctuation!!!!
- 🚩 The language is extreme or opinionated
- 🚩 It claims to contain a secret the media/government/big business/etc. “doesn’t want you to know about”
- 🚩 It is designed for easy sharing, like a meme
- 🚩 It insists that you to share the information

SOCIAL MEDIA CHAIN-LETTER POSTS/ MESSAGES

12/23/2016 4:09PM

FWD: Important message from Crime Stoppers, please read... and share to groups! While driving on a rural end of the roadway on Thursday morning, I saw an infant car seat on the side of the road with a blanket draped over it. For whatever reason, I did not stop, even though I had all kinds of thoughts running through my head. But when I got to my destination, I called the Police and they were going to check it out. But, this is what the Police advised even before they went out there to check....

"There are several things to be aware of ... Gangs and thieves are now plotting different ways to get a person (mostly women) to stop their vehicle and get out of the car.

"There is a gang initiation reported by the local Police where gangs are placing a car seat by the road...with a fake baby in it...waiting for a woman, of course, to stop and check on the abandoned baby. "Note that the location of this car seat is usually beside a wooded or grassy (field) area and the person -- woman -- will be dragged into the woods, beaten and raped, and usually left for dead. If it's a man, they're usually beaten and robbed and maybe left for dead, too.

DO NOT STOP FOR ANY REASON!!! DIAL 911 and REPORT WHAT YOU SAW, BUT DON'T EVEN SLOW DOWN.

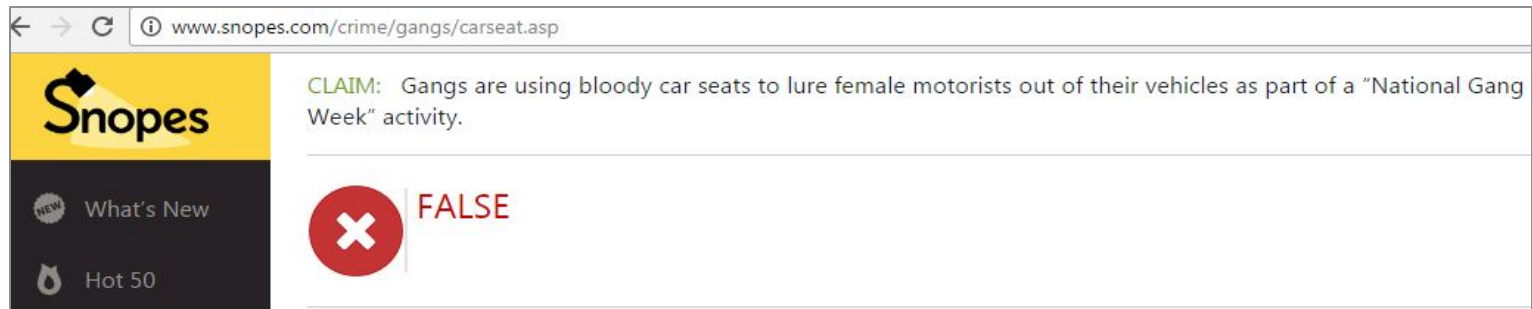
"IF YOU ARE DRIVING AT NIGHT AND EGGS ARE THROWN AT YOUR WINDSCREEN, DO NOT STOP TO CHECK THE CAR, DO NOT OPERATE THE WIPER AND DO NOT SPRAY ANY WATER BECAUSE EGGS MIXED WITH WATER BECOME MILKY AND BLOCK YOUR VISION UP TO 92.5%, AND YOU ARE THEN FORCED TO STOP BESIDE THE ROAD AND BECOME A VICTIM OF THESE CRIMINALS.

THIS IS A NEW TECHNIQUE USED BY CRIMINALS, SO PLEASE INFORM YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES. THESE ARE DESPERATE TIMES AND THESE ARE UNSAVORY INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL TAKE DESPERATE MEASURES TO GET WHAT THEY WANT."

Please talk to your loved ones about this. This is a new tactic used. Please be safe. This has happened recently in Inverness, Fl.

Get started NOW -- SEND THIS MESSAGE TO ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES TO BE CAREFUL AND AWARE OF EVERYTHING AROUND THEM SO AS NOT TO BECOME A VICTIM. SHARE THIS POST TO LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS.

USING A FACT-CHECKING WEBSITE



← → ↻ ⓘ www.snopes.com/crime/gangs/carseat.asp

Snopes

CLAIM: Gangs are using bloody car seats to lure female motorists out of their vehicles as part of a "National Gang Week" activity.

FALSE

What's New

Hot 50

ORIGIN

Messages circulated in late 2009 warned about gangs engaging in a "National Gang Week" scheme of using bloody car seats as lures to trick unsuspecting female motorists out of their cars, then beating and raping them:

[COLLECTED VIA E-MAIL, DECEMBER 2009]

National Gang Week is starting: This is their New target Method While driving on any roads, If you see a baby car seat sitting on the side of the road DO NOT STOP!!!! These are gangs targeting people, especially women, to stop their vehicle to help a baby. They make this baby look as if it has blood on itself or on its clothes, when you get out of your vehicle in attempt to help, the gangs jump out from cornfields or tall bushes. They have beaten women to near death, and then continue to rape them with baseball bats and other torture methods. This is not just a forward of information, it is within our area. If you do happen to see a car seat DO NOT STOP CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY!! Please send this on to everyone you know.

Fact Checker: [David Mikkelsen](#)

[Feedback](#)

Published: Dec 10th, 2009

Updated: Jun 20th, 2017

[Sources](#) ^

Sources:

DID EMMA GONZALEZ WEAR THIS SHIRT? FALSE



PRESENT AND FUTURE OF FAKE NEWS- DEEP FAKES (VIDEO)



‘Deepfakes can be made by anyone with a computer, internet access, and interest in influencing an election.’


— John Villasenor, Professor of Electrical Engineering, Public Policy, and Management at UCLA

HUMILITY NEVER FAILS

“The first principle is that you must not fool yourself—and you are the easiest person to fool.”


-Richard Feynman

LIBRARIANS CAN GET TRICKED TOO!



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HOTELS


Hotel RL Olympia by Red Lion

★★★★★  14 Reviews
2300 Evergreen Park Dr Sw, Olympia, WA 98502 US
Reservations: [844-340-6527](tel:844-340-6527)


Check In


Check Out


Search Availability





9.2 /10 Amazing
from 14 Guest Reviews

 Rooms & Rates

 Hotel Description

 Hotel Amenities

 1 Photos

 14 Guest Reviews

FINAL THOUGHTS

- New economy of online news
- Free news isn't really free; you are the product.
- Don't trust any one source completely.
- Report scams or possible illegal behavior online to FTC or Washington Attorney General's Office.



Complaints help the FTC and other law enforcement agencies bring scam artists to justice and put an end to unfair and misleading business practices. If you have a complaint, [file it online](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP.

- Take a class, read books on evaluating information
- Critical reading/thinking vs passive reading/thinking (<https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/item/show/3233896030>)

QUESTIONS?

We answer questions

- Phone
- In-person
- Chat
- Email
- Referrals

Di.Zhang@spl.org

<https://www.spl.org/ask/>



WE ARE HERE TO HELP!