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Inoculating Students Against Digital Media Manipulation in the Algorithmic Age

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Inoculating Your Students Against Digital Media Manipulation in the Algorithmic Age
Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy

In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.

Robert Berkman
Outreach Business Librarian
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY
Quick Poll Everywhere Survey

1. Join Poll by texting: ROBERTBERKMA243 to 37607

2. Take One Question poll at: PollEv.com/robertberkma243
Inoculating Your Students – AND YOUR Institution AND Community...should we leave behind our LibGuides, Lesson Plans and Library Walls?
Today’s Workshop

Part 1: Where We’ve Been/Where We Are Now
Part 2: Background, Context & Definitions
Part 3: Today’s Challenge for Librarians
Part 4: Lesson Plans and Beyond
Part 4: Higher Missions, Ethics and Obligations
Part 5: Challenges and Confronting Hurdles
We Call it Fake News: What is that Anyway?
Part 1. How We Got Here
Popular Origins of the Term?

By the Fall of 2016 the Term had Evolved to Mean…
Planted, Paid for False News

Someone needs to put a stop to that murdering witch!!

Another hit job done for Hillary!

FBI Agent Suspected in Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead in Apparent Murder-Suicide

An FBI agent believed to be responsible for the latest email leaks was found dead in an apparent murder-suicide early Saturday morning, according to police.

DENVERGUARDIAN.COM
And finally....

Don't let the FAKE NEWS tell you that there is big infighting in the Trump Admin. We are getting along great, and getting major things done!

9:14 AM - 7 Mar 2017

RETWEETS 25,693
LIKES 119,943

39K 26K 120K
Efforts to Pin Down Fake News

THE MULTIPLE SPECTRUMS OF REAL AND FAKE NEWS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AND ALGORITHMIC AGE

Investigative
Analytical
Expert
Documentaries
Stories
Features
Breaking

“REAL” NEWS: INTENT IS TO INFORM
Can be done Well or Poorly

Inaccurate
Misinterpreted
Lazy
Incomplete
Unfair
Rushed
Superficial

“FAKE” NEWS: INTENT IS TO DECEIVE

Weaponized
Hoax
Agenda-based
Emotional
Cherry-picked
Tinted
Satire

You CAN Handle the Truth!

Explore, test your knowledge (and biases), and develop new strategies for combating the not-so-new phenomenon of fake news.
Is this Really a New Problem?

Propaganda on Roman Coins

Vance Packard's Seminal Work

To a "Post-Truth" Era?
What’s Different *Now?* A LOT:

- **Technological Advances and Changes**
  - Algorithms, AI, Machine Learning
  - Google Substituting Machine Learning for Keyword Matching to Rank Results
  - Intentional Design of Addictive Digital Technologies via Psychological Methods
  - What is Next? -- Hard to predict..one example..
What’s Different Now? A LOT:

• Deep Fakes:

And Social/Cultural Phenomena

– Clickbait and Attention Capturing Techniques
– Weaponized Information Used for Political Purposes
  • NEW: Survey and Poll Manipulation; Attacks on Local Newspapers
– Election Tampering
– Reduced confidence in “the expert”
– Teens/Youth skeptical of ALL news and media
– Meme culture
– Rise of the prominence of the image, GIF and videos as purveyor of news and information
– What’s Next? Again…hard to predict…
Russian TV Manipulates Gallup Poll
Results to Show Americans Less Patriotic

The report headline, “In the last 15 years the number of patriots in the US has tripled...,” concluded that “such results speak for themselves” and are “evident proof” that the “root political turmoil in the U.S. is forcing Americans to be less proud of their country.”

While the report accurately cites the number of poll respondents who said they were “extremely proud” of their country, it entirely misrepresents the overall poll results, leaving out key details like the scale Gallup used to show the different levels of pride expressed by the Americans who were polled.

Indeed, while 47% of the poll respondents said they are “extremely proud” of their country, the combined number of respondents who said they are “extremely,” “very,” or “moderate” or “only a little” proud of their country was 93%.

The origin of the Gallup poll states: “While the 47% who are extremely proud to be Americans is a new low, the vast majority of Americans do express some level of pride, including 35% who say they are ‘very proud’ and 18% who are ‘moderately proud.’ That leaves 60% who are only a little (17%) or not at all proud (0%).”

Russia’s information attack against the United States during the 2016 election cycle sought to take advantage of the greater trust that Americans tend to place in local news.

The information operatives who worked out of the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg did not stop at posing as American social media users or spreading false information from purported news sources, according to new details.

They also created a number of Twitter accounts that posed as sources for Americans’ hometown headlines.
"No, the bigger problem is that we're proud of not knowing things. Americans have reached a point where ignorance, especially of anything related to public policy, is an actual virtue. ... It is a new Declaration of Independence: no longer do we hold these truths to be self-evident, we hold all truths to be self-evident, even the ones that aren't true."

Professor Tom Nichols
Most Americans say they have lost trust in the media.
“If a man is offered a fact which goes against his instincts, he will scrutinize it closely, and unless the evidence is overwhelming, he will refuse to believe it. If, on the other hand, he is offered something which affords a reason for acting in accordance to his instincts, he will accept it even on the slightest evidence.”
Why We Click and Share
A Post Fact Society Means…?

With increase political polarization, amplified by homophily—our preference to connect to people like us—and algorithmic recommender systems, we’re effectively constructing our own realities”—Gilad Lotan, VP Data Science, BuzzFeed
Information Tribalism?

…Each carefully crafted story on either side omitted important detail and context. When this happens constantly, on a daily basis, it systematically and deeply affects people’s perception of what is real…

- “Fake News is not the Only Problem,” Gilad Lotan.
REAL NEWS VS. FAKE NEWS

How to tell real news from fake.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “post-truth” as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

This page is intended to help you to verify and utilize fact-based news resources for research purposes.

Types of Fake News

There are four broad categories of fake news, according to media professor Melissa Zimdars of Merrimack College.

CATEGORY 1: Fake, false, or regularly misleading websites that are shared on Facebook and social media. Some of these websites may rely on “outrage” by using distorted headlines and decontextualized or dubious information in order to generate likes, shares, and profits.

CATEGORY 2: Websites that may circulate misleading and/or potentially unreliable information.

Fake News Is A Real Problem

Facebook engagement of the top five fake election stories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline/ Publisher</th>
<th>Engagements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pope Francis Shocked World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Reissues Statement “Ending the Fed”</td>
<td>960,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikileaks CONFIRMS Hillary Sold Weapons to ISIS...Then Drops Another BOMBSHELL! Breaking News “The Political Insider”</td>
<td>789,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“IT'S OVER: Hillary's ISIS Email Just Leaked &amp; It's Worse Than Anyone Could Have Imagined”</td>
<td>754,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Read The Law: Hillary is Dqulified From Holding Any Federal Office”</td>
<td>701,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Libraries Taking Major Role

News and Current Events: Real vs fake news

The News and Current Events Library Guide contains links to a wide variety of news research resources, library and reference materials, database articles, web sites, news links, and information on citation styles.

Fake news has been around for decades.

Go the ability to tell accurate news from fake news is an important skill you'll use for the rest of your life.

FACT: 75% of American adults who viewed a fake news headline viewed the story as accurate, and these fake news stories are widely shared on social media.

A decent breakdown of all things real and fake news

Contact:
Systems and Catalog Services Librarian
Kaplan Family Library, Dominican Center,
DG134

Resources
Hey Kids---It’s Time to Play.....

Find the Fake News!

“Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts.”—Daniel P. Moynihan
University of Rochester (2)

**Objectives**
- Discern the indicators of a news story likely to be false/misleading
- Debate and discuss reasons for categorizing some news as false
- Learn to modify evaluations based on discussions with classmates

**ANTICIPATORY SET**
Share a few stories, some real and credible; and some hoaxes or highly manipulative and discuss impact

**EXERCISE**
Each student gets the same news story and uses existing knowledge to evaluate as accurate or false

- Those who believe story is true form a circle in the middle of room
- Those who believe story is false (or are unsure) form a circle around students in inner circle
- Those facing each other pair-up and discuss their reasons with other with opposing opinion
- Pair attempts to come to an agreement on whether news item is real or fake

**REVIEW**
What were some of the strategies used? How was one person able to convince the other?

---

**What else do you think you need help with when discerning real vs. false/hoax stories?**

**What is one new strategy you learned today?**

---

**Closure**

---

created with www.bubbl.us
CURRENCY - the timeliness of the information

RELEVANCE - the importance if the information to your topic

AUTHORITY - the author’s qualifications with regard to the topic

ACCURACY - the truthfulness and credibility of the content

PURPOSE - the intention or goal of the resource

The CRAAP Test
Checklists

Guided Research Worksheet

How to Identify Fake News in 10 Steps

Beware fake or misleading news.
Be skeptical. Ask Questions.
Verify. It's up to you.

Select "Yes" or "No" to the following questions.
The more thumbs-down icons you select, the more likely the news article is fake.

1. Do a Visual Assessment
   Assess the overall design. Fake news sites often look amateurish, have lots of annoying ads, and use altered or stolen images.
   Overall, does the news article and website seem high quality?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

2. Identify the News Outlet
   The Wall Street Journal and CNN are examples of news outlets. If you haven't heard of the news outlet, search online for more information.
   Is the news outlet well known, well respected, and trustworthy?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

3. Check the Web Domain
   Many fake news URLs look odd or end with ".com.co" or ".jo" (e.g., abcnews.com.co) to mimic legitimate news sites.
   Does the URL seem legitimate?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4. Check the "About Us" Section
   Trustworthy news outlets usually include detailed background information, policy statements, and email contacts in the "About/About Us" section.
   Does the site provide detailed background information and contacts?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
But There's Lot of LibGuides
Why Us?
In libraries we trust

by Laurie Putnam on MARCH 15, 2018 in BEYOND LIBRARIES, CIVIC SPACES, CONTEXT, LIBRARIANSHIP

In study after study, libraries are ranked among the public’s most trusted sources of information. But how confident can we be in our position as trusted institutions—and how can we sustain that trust? Pew Research’s Lee Rainie helps us put the research into a broader context.

This is part one of a series. Part two is here.

We are proud of the data, study after study, that says libraries are among the most trusted institutions around. And proud we should be. According to a 2016 study by Pew Research, 78% of adults—about 8 out of 10 of your friends, neighbors, and colleagues—say that public libraries help them find information that is trustworthy and reliable. So say a whopping 87% of Millennials, ages 18 to 35, who are among the biggest library users in the United States.

While trust in many institutions has been declining for decades, libraries have held their ground. “We don’t have long-term readings on trust in librarians,” says Lee Rainie, director of Pew’s internet, society, and technology research. “If I had to guess, my sense is that it was high when these trust questions were asked about other institutions decades ago, so I’m not sure there has been any great change over time. But that’s a story in and of itself... Holding your own in an era where there is widespread decline of trust in other institutions is a helpful thing for libraries and librarians.”
With Creativity and Imagination You Can Expand Our Reach

• Both Within Your Organization:
  • A credit bearing “stealth” information literacy course?
  • Partner with other faculty:
  • Discover info literacy needs among non-academic units
With Creativity and Imagination
You Can Expand Your Reach

Outside Your Organization: Consider perhaps

- Secondary Schools/Activities for Parents (Jenny Dale)
- Local Journalists
- Local Newspapers: letters to the editor; op-eds
- Public Broadcasting Stations
- Chambers of Commerce/Business Associations
- Non Library Professional Associations Regional Groups
- Regional Health Educational Organizations
- Community Workshops (Writers Groups, Continuing Ed., Adult Learning)
- Other???
This school librarian teaches students about (actual) fake news. Here’s how parents can, too.

By Maureen Paschal
December 27, 2017

Recently, congressional committees summoned executives from Facebook, Twitter and Google to Capitol Hill to explain their company’s roles in the national security issue of fake news planted by the Russians to manipulate our last presidential election. Congress wants something done to protect U.S. citizens from fake news, and if the tech companies can’t come up with a technology solution fast enough, then they will step in and impose regulations.

As a school librarian, I disagree with either solution. The only reliable way to protect citizens from fake news, alternate facts, or hate groups is for all of us to learn how to navigate digital information with discernment and skepticism. Teaching that is the job of every librarian, teacher and parent.

[Why I started saying ‘reality-based press’ in 2017 instead of mainstream media]
But It’s Here Where....

Theilr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/theilr/4035295287
Beyond the Single Session

• A more sustainable solution
• Focus on one area perhaps that is “sustainable”?
• Perhaps: scientific consensus for non-scientists: What it is and is not

The collective opinion and judgement of scientists in a particular field of study—general agreement; the theory has become fact; supported by overwhelming evidence, well accepted

It does evolve—around the edges usually.

*When we talk about scientific consensus, we’re talking about an understanding that is thought to be so solid that it will require a whole slew of observations, measurements and experiments to have been grossly misinterpreted for this conclusion to have been reached incorrectly.*” Ethan Siegel (Astrophysicist and Author)

Beyond the Single Session

ACTIVITY 1
Are We Up for This Challenge?

Some are not sure…:

“I strongly suspect we are quickly coming to the end of what the library, as library can do to productively engage with students looking for serious, coherent, and sustainable help with these matters…

…These issues are not ‘mere’ ones of handling information. They are cultural (e.g. historical, political, social, religious) issues and unless we are prepared, as a profession, to grapple with such larger matters, we are, in my view, close to a dead end.
And there Are Constraints Beyond Our Control

- Little to no information literacy instruction in most US secondary school curricula
- Your organization’s culture
- Capitalism-hyper capitalism
So… this will take Confidence and some Leadership

– A leader has a vision
– Works with and inspires others
– Thinks long range
– Conveys enthusiasm
– Acts
Some Special Hurdles

• Atypical
• Mindset
• Reluctance/Fear
• And finally, librarians must carry all the honorable but weighty baggage of being defined by:
Some Hurdles for Us

ACTIVITY 2
On the Positive Side….

- Librarians becoming more diverse
- Much of what makes for a leader can be learned
Wrapping Up

Final Activity

Optional: Share on this Google Doc:

(will make it available)
Thank You!

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Editor, The Information Advisor’s Guide to Internet Research
Author: Find it Fast: Extracting Expert Information from Social Media, Big Data, Tweets and More (6th ed. 2015, CyberAge)