Keepin' It Real: Tips & Strategies for Evaluating Fake News

Inauguration Day Teach-in

45 min workshop

[Library blog post](http://librarynews.lmu.edu/2017/01/keepin-real-tips-strategies-evaluating-fake-news/)

Learning Outcomes

* Students will practice techniques for evaluating the credibility of news stories.
* Students will reflect upon their reactions to stories and practice identifying and distinguishing between their emotional responses and logical analyses of the items.
* Students will learn the value of information and sources from multiple perspectives.
* Students will become credible, trustworthy publishers in the digital age (sharing news).

Pre-lesson activity

* Write Fake News quiz link on whiteboard before session <https://lmu.box.com/v/quiz>
* [Sign-in Sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V21i_QBW2W6kQxBmkuW1NBVKupB05UomF3Y-YMjzUwI/edit?usp=sharing)

# Session Outline

## Introduction (approx. 5 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED: 1 post-it per student, tape, signs yes/maybe/no, golf pencils

Icebreaker:

* Why are you here today?
* Do you think that fake news impacted the election? (Please place your post-it on the wall.) Feel free to write a comment on the post-it. A librarian will read it aloud.
	+ YES/NO/MAYBE signs are taped to wall. Have students place their post it in each area with any comments they have about election

## Activity 1: “Fake news” Scenario (approx. 10 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED: computer/smartphone per pair, Activity #1 document per pair, pen/pencil

* Students work in pairs with worksheet (see Activity #1 document)
* Report out - class discussion

Talking Points

1. If a story makes you really angry it’s probably a good idea to keep reading about the topic via other sources to make sure that the story you read wasn’t purposefully trying to make you angry (with potentially misleading or false information) to generate shares and ad revenue.
2. The filter bubble tends to dramatically amplify confirmation bias-in a way it’s designed to. Consuming Information that conforms to our ideas and of the world is easy and pleasurable; consuming information that challenges us to think in new ways or question our assumptions is frustrating and difficult. This is why partisans of one political stripe tend not to consume the media of another.
3. Google, What fact checker tools do you use? How do you know a source is reliable?
	1. [Politico story](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/trump-illegal-voting-clinton-231860), [Snopes](http://www.snopes.com/clinton-votes-found-in-warehouse/)
	2. [NYT](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/18/us/voter-fraud.html?_r=0), [WaPo](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/01/0-000002-percent-of-all-the-ballots-cast-in-the-2016-election-were-fraudulent/?utm_term=.d6131bb9621a), [Politifact](http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2016/nov/18/blog-posting/no-3-million-undocumented-immigrants-did-not-vote-/), [FactCheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org/2016/10/trumps-bogus-voter-fraud-claims/) roundly disprove numbers
	3. Voter Fraud: Trump and other right-wingers allege millions voted illegally, backed by right wing website [Gateway Pundit](http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2016/12/report-massive-nevada-voter-fraud-uncovered/) and others
	4. NYT, [“From Headline to Photograph, a Fake News Masterpiece”](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/fake-news-hillary-clinton-cameron-harris.html?nytmobile=0&_r=0) re: fake news story with fabricated photo
4. Other issues:
* Original tweeter’s expertise and knowledge on subject matter
* Looking into sources cited on images and websites
* [Reverse image searching](http://libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121899#s-lg-box-wrapper-15339720)
* How to find actual data and fact checking

What type of action would you take with Uncle Bob? Ignore, unfriend him on Facebook, disinvite him to Thanksgiving. High-five him, etc. Did you know that some people forward chain emails and news stories without ever reading them? Now what do you think of Uncle Bob?

Why did Uncle Bob share that information?

* Didn’t really read it
* Uniformed vs. misinformed
* Lives in a filter bubble or echo chamber?
* What would you tell Uncle Bob to do?

## Mini-lecture on Challenges & Definitions (approx. 5 minutes)

## google slides presentation (includes challenges and a few terms): <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HzWg0vCeGr-pmL1LUsgLM-661F7xrZBTtTSO8rN020o/edit?usp=sharing>

### Challenges for evaluating news

#### Information overload

#### On average, American adults spend about 10 ½ hours per day consuming media (TV, video games, radio, tablet, smartphone, computer). [(Nielsen Total Audience Report Q1 2016)](http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2016/the-total-audience-report-q1-2016.html)

* + About 75% of Americans take in some form of news at least once a day. ([American Press Institute, “The Personal News Cycle” report, 2014](https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/personal-news-cycle/))
	+ Is it possible to fact-check everything you hear, read, see, or encounter throughout your day or week?

#### Crisis of authenticity

* + Decentralization of news sources, multiplicity of media outlets, proliferation of individuals reporting via social media
	+ Technological changes (i.e. the internet, low-skill web authoring tools) and broaded access to tech sophisticated tools and skills → easier to disseminate legitimate-looking info
	+ News online presented alongside ads, sponsored content (native advertising), opinion, and misinformation

#### Speed vs. accuracy

#### Accuracy sacrificed for sake of speed of dissemination (scooping, first-mover advantage)

#### 24-hr news cycle began with cable news and continues with web, social media

#### Shifting tech and revenue models

* + Algorithms privilege ‘viral’ content (outrageous, offensive, bizarre) that maximizes views and ad revenue plus trends toward personalization
	+ Filter bubble = personalization trends and algorithms to maximize user satisfaction and loyalty while maximizing ad and referral revenue.

#### Overcoming our own biases

* + It’s difficult to assimilate info that contradicts existing beliefs → bias in reasoning and info-seeking
	+ Cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias

## Verification

The investigative process by which a news organization gathers, assesses, confirms and weighs evidence in service to the search for truth. Involves:

* Gather, assess and weigh evidence
* Place facts in the big picture (context)
* Be fair when appropriate, adjust balance
* Maintain transparency

## Activity 2: Media Outlet Chart (approx. 10 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED: media outlet and news logos (e.g. Fox News, Facebook, Breitbart, Buzzfeed, etc.), tape, whiteboard, markers

* Before session, draw reliability vs. type of media chart on whiteboard (see [Reliability vs. Type of Media Image](https://lmu.box.com/s/m6y2z1lnh1rukhmmudfjp9apsy4t6mex))
* Each Pair needs computer or smartphone and receives 1-2 news/media outlet logos to place on whiteboard chart and Activity #2 document
* Debrief + discussion



* + Dr. Jonathan Albright (Elon Univ.)’s Election news 2016 hyperlink visualization: [Spread of fake news](https://medium.com/%40d1gi/the-election2016-micro-propaganda-machine-383449cc1fba#.cc8pbqb52),  [Right & left election news ‘ecosystems’](https://medium.com/%40d1gi/left-right-the-combined-post-election2016-news-ecosystem-42fc358fbc96#.mwgao58rl)

## Tools & Strategies (approx. 10 minutes)

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### **Tools**

### Avoid perpetuating Fake News by using tools to verify, cross check, and compare content you see online. Here are few basics to get you started: <http://libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121899#s-lg-box-wrapper-15339720>

#### Fact-checking groups: Snopes [using illegals voting in election](http://www.snopes.com/three-million-votes-in-presidential-election-cast-by-illegal-aliens/)

#### Images: Google reverse image search using Putin and Obama: <http://static1.businessinsider.com/image/57d428a0b0ef975f148b4afd-1300/putin%20obama.jpg>

#### Browser plug-ins for fake and junk news:

* + **B.S. Detector**: <http://bsdetector.tech/>. Uses [OpenSources’/Dr. Zimdar’s list](http://www.opensources.co/)
	+ Washington Post’s Firefox extension <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/16/now-you-can-fact-check-trumps-tweets-in-the-tweets-themselves/?utm_term=.bc0b5b2af4d8>

**Strategies**

<http://libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121899#s-lg-box-wrapper-15699663>

#### How can we combat Fake News?

 **Evaluate your news using** [**IMVAIN**](http://drc.centerfornewsliteracy.org/content/introducing-imvain)

The bedrock method of deconstruction: Each source in a news report is evaluated using the “IMVAIN” rubric and you can to:

* **Independent** sources are preferable to self-interested sources.
* **Multiple** sources are preferable to a report based on a single source.
* Sources who **Verify** or provide verifiable information are preferable to those who merely assert.
* **Authoritative** and/or **Informed** sources are preferable to sources who are uninformed or lack authoritative background.
* **Named** sources are better than anonymous ones.

#### **Take Action!**

Crowd source and debunk fake news with the [Digital Polarization Initiative](http://digipo.io/doku.php?id=start)

Read the entire piece and **decide whether or not to share.**

* [report a fake news](https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2016/12/news-feed-fyi-addressing-hoaxes-and-fake-news/) story on facebook
* use [nofollow](https://firstdraftnews.com/debunk-viral-fake-news-story-help-the-hoaxers-stop-it-facebook-megyn-kelly/) links when linking to fake or disreputable stories, stop the link counting as a "vote" of trust
* Don’t share fake news, think before you click share!

Expand your information network to include **diverse perspectives.**

* [News Sources](http://libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121904)
* [Liberal-Mainstream-Conservative Sources](http://http//libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121910)

more….

* Individual stories and personal news network strategies
	+ **Verify** (from [Verification handbook](http://verificationhandbook.com/downloads/verification.handbook.pdf))
1. *Provenance:* Identify and verify original. Where else is it online? Is this the location? Linked to anything else? Who shared/uploaded?
2. *Source:* who is this author? What is their history? Check for real names. What about affiliated accounts?
3. *Content:* date, weather, image search, signs, settings, landscapes, clothing, license plates, languages spoken, video quality?
4. *Triangulate and challenge:* what is the context? Is anything off? Who else is using the story? Reflect on what is included, missing, etc.
	* Big-picture strategies (based on this article: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/11/02/why-students-cant-google-their-way-to.html>)
	* Check multiple outlets. Challenge and triangulate before sharing.
	* Don’t trust any site implicitly. Critically analyze every source.
		+ Is this journalism offering “reliable information”? Does it satisfy **VIA** - Verification, Independence, Accountability?
	* Don’t put all faith in Google results ranking.
	* Build a network of trusted sources.
	* Diversify your news sources, but be intentional (media outlets chart).
	* RSS feed readers
		+ Talk about integrating more diverse news sources (some inflammatory but increasingly influential) into personal feed to get headlines and brief description without contributing to sites’ traffic (Feedly and start.me are 2 tools).

More discussion questions

* Should we encourage the social platforms to include prominent features for filtering and flagging?
* Did fake news really impacts people’s opinions other than simply confirming opinions of groups that have already decided on their respective in-groups?
* Do you think that fake news and social media created these divisions in the first place or simply responded to the demand?

## Assessment / Reflection (approx. 5 minutes)

<http://libguides.lmu.edu/fakenews/evaluation>

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# Notes

Fake news examples

<http://newsexaminer.net/paul-horner-news/paul-horner-news-internet-news-satirist-writer-news-examiner/>

**Other resources**

LMU LibGUide <http://libguides.lmu.edu/c.php?g=595781&p=4121899>

Includes data viz of social media spread of some fake news stories: <https://points.datasociety.net/fake-news-is-not-the-problem-f00ec8cdfcb#.h4xqo2fzd>

Journalists’ Resource: <https://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/internet/fake-news-conspiracy-theories-journalism-research?utm_source=JR-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JR-email>

American Press Institute study- The Personal News Cycle: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/personal-news-cycle/>

Pew Research Center – The Modern News Consumer: <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/the-modern-news-consumer/>

**Dunning- Kruger Effect** (<https://psmag.com/we-are-all-confident-idiots-56a60eb7febc#.1uofjyeor>, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-8721.01235>) = those with limited knowledge of something tend to reach mistaken conclusions and make errors, and at the same time are overly confident in their abilities because they lack the expertise recognize their errors.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/fake-news-hillary-clinton-cameron-harris.html?nytmobile=0&_r=1>

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/11/02/why-students-cant-google-their-way-to.html>