

# Fake News: Harmless or Disruptive?

## Workshop Professor:

Michelle Keba

## Workshop Description:

Did fake news affect the presidential election? Do websites purposely publish misleading stories? In this workshop, learn how to evaluate the trustworthiness of news stories while responsibly sharing reliable information.

## Course Assignment:

N/A

## Learning Outcomes:

After completing the library instruction session, students will be able to:

- evaluate the trustworthiness of the information in news stories
- explain the ethical responsibility of readers to evaluate information sources

## Materials:

Personal whiteboards (made from manila folders & sheet protectors), whiteboard markers, paper to wipe off white boards

## Assessment:

Students will fill out the reflection and minute survey at the end of class identifying:

- How will you determine if news stories are fake or misleading in the future?
- Why do you think people share fake or misleading news stories?
- What will you do if you see someone posting a fake or misleading news story?
- One thing I learned in this class or one thing I liked:
- One thing I would change or improve:
- One question I still have:

## Fake News: Harmless or Disruptive Outline: (50 minutes)

### • Welcome/Introduction (5 min)

- Washington Post Article - [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/06/16/six-in-10-of-you-will-share-this-link-without-reading-it-according-to-a-new-and-depressing-study/?utm\\_term=.f1d19ca647fc](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/06/16/six-in-10-of-you-will-share-this-link-without-reading-it-according-to-a-new-and-depressing-study/?utm_term=.f1d19ca647fc)
- According to a study by computer scientists at Columbia University and the French National Institute more than half (59%) of the links shared on social media have NEVER been clicked. So most people share links without reading them.
- Have you ever shared a link without clicking on it or liked a link without visiting the site?
- What effect do you think sharing links without reading them has?
  - Incorrect information could be shared (fake news)
  - Stories with catchy headlines could beat out more accurate, substantial information
  - Some say that politics & elections can even be swayed by this sharing of misinformation

### • Fake News (15 min)

- Show Politifact Video about Fake News
  - <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2016/dec/13/2016-lie-year-fake-news/>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuyuVdl15GE> (alternative video)
- Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me Fake News Game
  - Read a mixture of fake and real news headlines (see attachment) and have students vote on their white boards if they think the news story is real or fake

### • Misleading News (15 min)

- The stories we just discussed were either true or blatantly false. However, some new stories can be misleading. Because we're human, it's nearly impossible for us to tell a story without adding our own perspective or bias. Journalists try to stick to just the facts, but even they have a hard time being completely unbiased. For example, even if they report both sides of a story they might focus more on one side than the other, or they might leave out key points. You may have heard that some news organizations like CNN lean to the left while Fox News leads to the right, and websites like Occupy Democrats and Breitbart lean very far in opposite directions.
- What do you think of Vanessa Otero's news chart? Is it accurate? Is it easy to label new sources as liberal or conservative?
  - <https://twitter.com/vlotero/status/808696317174288387>
- You can cut down on bias by reading more than one account of a story; this research method is called triangulation and will help you gain a broader understanding of an issue
- Print these three stories & have students guess which story came from which source
  - Fox News - <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/08/day-without-woman-strike-shuts-schools-down-as-teachers-bolt.html>
  - CNN - <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/08/politics/congress-day-without-women/>
  - Wall Street Journal - <https://www.wsj.com/articles/day-without-a-woman-protests-held-across-u-s-1489020896>

### • Filter Bubbles & Echo Chambers (10 min)

- TED Talk – Beware Online Filter Bubbles  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/eli\\_pariser\\_beware\\_online\\_filter\\_bubbles](https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles)
- “If you're dumb, surround yourself with smart people. If you're smart, surround yourself with smart people who disagree with you. (Isaac Jaffe, Sports Night)” – Aaron Sorkin

### • Wrap Up & Assessment Questions (5 min)

# Fake News Guessing Game

**Obama Finishes Deal to Get Every American A Free Parrot - Fake**

<http://www.theonion.com/article/obama-finishes-deal-to-get-every-american-a-free-p-20261>

**University sets record for people dressed like penguins - Real**

<http://abcnews.go.com/Weird/wireStory/university-sets-record-people-dressed-penguins-50796467>

**Flight Crew Takes a Knee And Walks Off, Leaving New Orleans Saints Stranded on Runway - Fake**

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2017/oct/03/blog-posting/fake-news-flight-crew-did-not-take-knee-and-strand/>

**Donald Trump Protester Speaks Out: 'I Was Paid \$3,500 To Protest Trump's Rally**

**- Fake**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/11/17/facebook-fake-news-writer-i-think-donald-trump-is-in-the-white-house-because-of-me/?utm\\_term=.c599cfbc120](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/11/17/facebook-fake-news-writer-i-think-donald-trump-is-in-the-white-house-because-of-me/?utm_term=.c599cfbc120)

**BREAKING: 'Tens of thousands' of fraudulent Clinton votes found in Ohio warehouse - Fake**

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/fake-news-hillary-clinton-cameron-harris.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/us/fake-news-hillary-clinton-cameron-harris.html?_r=0)

**A Texas Woman 'Voted Like a U.S. Citizen.' Only She Wasn't. - Real**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/18/us/voter-fraud-fort-worth-trial-rosa-marie-ortega.html?ribbon-ad-idx=5&rref=us>

**FBI Agent Suspected In Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead In Apparent Murder-Suicide - Fake**

<http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/11/23/503146770/npr-finds-the-head-of-a-covert-fake-news-operation-in-the-suburbs>

**Whoopi Goldberg says that Navy SEAL Widow was "Looking for Attention" - Fake**

<http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/article/2017/mar/09/fake-news-website-starts-joke-gains-1-million-view/>