FAKE NEWS EXPOSED

AND

UNBIASED, NONPARTISAN FACT-CHECKING ORGANIZATIONS (WEBSITES)

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SUMMARY: Fake news is the deliberate communication, often of a sensational nature, to others in a widely shared or distributed matter. The information contained within fake news is often described as inaccurate, spurious, exaggerated, or counterfeit; Fake news is misinformation or propaganda often for the purpose of generating revenue, or promoting or discrediting an individual, an entity, a political or social movement, or a public figure. Although fake news is often directed toward politics, it is much more widespread, being found in all types of news.

It is vitally important to the United States that fake news does not spread through society. You can do your part to make sure you do not inadvertently or consciously spread fake news.

Fake news is commonly called junk news, hoax news, pseudo news, and various other derogatory terms. It is spread on the internet, on radio and television, in magazines and other printed form, and on other media sources. Fake news often originates within online social media websites, but is increasingly turning up in the mainstream media. It is also found in news spread through word-of-mouth from one individual to another.

Fake news has been around for over two hundred years. For example, the *Impartial Observer*, which was headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, wrote on May 9, 1807 that: "If, however, Mr. B. should appear, and not forfeit his recognizance, then that the writer has been guilty of 'spreading false news,' contrary to law, 'no rational man can doubt.'" (Source: https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/the-real-story-of-fake-news)

In the past, fake news was commonly called yellow journalism. Whether it is called fake news, yellow journalism, or other such terms, people who use journalism as a way to promote their own agendas are doing so with unprofessional and unethical means.

One familiar form of fake news is the political news on American television networks, through U.S. news agencies. Such news can be called "slanted-news" because the political news they promote is slanted in the direction of the Democrats (to the left) or in the direction of the Republicans (to the right). These news agencies that use such dishonorable tactics stand to attract more viewers, to gain financially through increased advertising, and to promote their own slanted agendas, such as political ones that lean strongly to the left or to the right.

In each case, American news agencies are not being honest with their viewers but rather are "slanting" the news for their own agendas. These news agencies often tell their viewers what to think -- hoping they can convince them what to think rather than simply reporting the news in an unbiased manner and letting their viewers decide for themselves what to believe.

Commentary with a "point/counterpoint" style of presentation -- which describes both (or all) sides of an issue -- is much more welcomed because all possible sides are discussed rationally, logically, and unbiasedly. However, it is increasingly rare to find such unbiased reporting in the media, whether it is with social media sites or the mainstream media.

Further, social media sites and search engines have been accused of playing a major role in the spread of fake news. Increasingly, people use social media sites to forward misinformation. These people are frequently unaware that it is fake news when they pass on inaccurate information.

It is vitally important to the United States that fake news is not spread throughout society.

What can you do to make sure you are not contributing to the spread of fake news through mainstream media and social media? Further, what can you do to decide for yourself what is reliable news or unreliable reporting of the news?

Real versus Fake News

Whenever reading articles or watching news, do the following to distinguish between real and fake news.

1. HEADLINES AND STORY -- Does the story sound too-good-to-be-true? Be especially skeptical about flashy headlines (if their headlines appear to be unbelievable -- then they probably are). In other words, be skeptical about any-and-all stories!

2. SOURCE -- Does the story contain a source? If so, is that source reputable? If it does not contain a reputable source, then be especially skeptical! The mainstream source or the Web address may look genuine, but many sources that promote fake news imitate the look of real sources. If the story is on the internet, go to the source and check their "About" section to learn more about them. Do they include their address and telephone numbers? If no information is available, they are not established, reputable organizations. If information is included, read it carefully. Fake news organizations often have layouts that are not professionally designed, contain misspelled words, and/or use poor/incorrect English within their sentences.

3. VERIFICATION -- Take some time to verify the headlines and the story. If it is a written story, copy and paste the first several words (within the first sentence or headlines) into a search engine to determine the source. (In some cases, it may be necessary to copy and paste the entire first sentence.) If the story if on TV, search for several keys words.

Most often, if the story is fake news one of the fact-checking websites (see the List below) that uncover fake news will show up as a result of your search.

For instance, here is a title of a video "Muslim Migrant Beats Up a Dutch Boy on Crutches". But, when you copy and paste the title into Google and search the internet for it, one comes up with the following Snopes.com article "Did a 'Muslim Migrant' Beat Up a Dutch Boy on Crutches?"

Snopes.com found the article to be "False".

Snopes.com added, "In a message posted on 29 November 2017, they [Public Prosecution Service of North Holland] explained that the video showed a May 2017 quarrel between two minors. The attacker,

who was born in the Netherlands, was placed in the HALT Program, an alternative settlement for young first time offenders." In addition, Snopes.com stated that the Netherlands Embassy in the U.S. said, "that the attacker in the video was not a Muslim migrant".

Snopes.com is one of the most popular and reliable websites that exposes fake news.

4. DUE DILIGENCE -- In all cases, do your due diligence to make sure you do not pass on fake news.

UNBIASED, NONPARTISAN FACT-CHECKING ORGANIZATIONS (WEBSITES)

Articles that help to identify fake news:

Help Center, Facebook.com ("Tips to Spot False News"):
https://www.facebook.com/help/188118808357379

Harvard Summer School, Harvard University ("4 Tips for Spotting a Fake News Story"):
https://www.summer.harvard.edu/inside-summer/4-tips-spotting-fake-news-story

Enock Pratt Free Library ("Fake News: How to Spot It"):
https://www.prattlibrary.org/research/tools/index.aspx?cat=90&id=4735

G.A. Pfeiffer Library ("How to Identify Fake News in 10 Steps" [includes workwheet):
http://library.pfeiffer.edu/Fake-News-Worksheet.pdf

Others:

http://theconversation.com/how-to-spot-coronavirus-fake-news-an-expert-guide-133843

https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/first-amendment-center/primers/fake-news-primer/

https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174

https://www.npr.org/2019/10/29/774541010/fake-news-is-scary-heres-how-to-spot-misinformation

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/fake-news.htm

https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/

Debunkers of Fake News

(Source) **Wikipedia.com:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fact-checking_websites

FactCheck.org   https://www.factcheck.org/

-- Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania: "*checks political and scientific statements, videos etc., as well as talking points of political parties and presidential speeches*" and "*This nonpartisan, nonprofit project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the*

University of Pennsylvania monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by U.S. political players, including politicians, TV ads, debates, interviews and news releases."

Snopes.com   https://www.snopes.com/

-- David Mikkelson: "*validates and debunks urban legends, internet rumors, e-mail forwards, and other stories of questionable or unknown origin in American popular culture*" and "*This independent, nonpartisan website run by professional researcher and writer David Mikkelson researches urban legends and other rumors. It is often the first to set the facts straight on wild fake news claims.*"

Climate Feedback   https://climatefeedback.org/

-- Science Feedback: "*fact-checking media coverage of climate change*"

Factchecker   https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/

-- Glenn Kessler, of *The Washington Post*: aims to "*reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics and "assesses claims made by politicians or political advocacy groups*"

Media Bias/Fact Check   https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/

-- Dave Van Zandt, founded by: "*rates factual accuracy and political bias in news media*"

Politifact.com   https://www.politifact.com/

-- The Poynter Institute, *Tampa Bay Times*: "*rank(s) the amount of truth in public persons' statements" and "researches and rates the accuracy of claims made by national, state and local elected officials, candidates, leaders of political parties and political activists*" and "*This Pulitzer Prize winning website rates the accuracy of claims by elected officials. Run by editors and reporters from the independent newspaper Tampa Bay Times, Politicfact features the Truth-O-Meter that rates statements as "True," "Mostly True," "Half True," "False," and "Pants on Fire."*""

TruthOrFiction.com (or .org) https://www.truthorfiction.com/

-- Rich Buhler, founded by: "*validates and debunks urban legends, Internet rumors, e-mail forwards, and other stories of unknown or questionable origin*"

RealClearPolitics.com   https://www.realclearpolitics.com/

-- RealClearInvestors and Crest Media (founded by options trader John McIntyre and former advertising agency account executive Tom Bevan): "*offer(s) quaternary-level critiquing of such tertiary-level efforts at fact-checking*"

https://www.realclearpolitics.com/fact_check_review/

(Source) **University Libraries - University of Georgia:** https://guides.libs.uga.edu/factchecknews

FlackCheck.org   https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/political-communication/flackcheck-org/

--Annenberg Public Policy Center (of the University of Pennsylvania): "*a 'sister site' to factcheck.org offers 'resources designed to help viewers recognize flaws in arguments in general and political ads in particular. Video resources point out deception and incivility in political rhetoric'*"

Punditfact   https://www.politifact.com/punditfact/

-- The Poynter Institute, *Tampa Bay Times*: "*a project of the Poynter Institute, dedicated to checking the accuracy of claims by pundits, columnists, bloggers, political analysts, the hosts and guests of talk shows, and other members of the media.*"

American Press Institute   https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/training-tools/fact-checking-resource/

-- Fact-checking resources: "*A guide to finding reliable answers to timely questions*"

WNYCstudios.org   https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/projects/breaking-news-consumers-handbook

-- WNYC - New York Public Radio: "*offers a growing collection of handbooks focused on identifying common misrepresentations in stories on broad topics such as Protests, Islamophobia, Drug Abuse, and more*.

Duke Reporter's Lab   https://guides.libs.uga.edu/factchecknews

-- Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University: its "*fact-checking database links to over ... 100 non-partisan organizations around the world that ... assess the accuracy of statements made by public officials, political parties, candidates, journalists, news organizations, associations and other groups. Includes several dozen fact-checking sites in the US.*"

EUvsDisinformation.eu   https://euvsdisinfo.eu/

-- European Union: "*challenge(s) disinformation coming out of Russia*"

FullFact.org   https://fullfact.org/

--Registered charity composed of independent fact checkers and campaigners: "*A nonprofit, independent fact-checking organization based in the UK*"

AfricaCheck.org   https://africacheck.org/

A non-profit organisation, headquartered in South Africa as a non-profit trust, registration number IT000728/2015(C). It is registered as the Africa Check Foundation in Kenya and operates in Nigeria and Senegal through representative offices: it "*produces reports in English and French*

testing claims made by African public figures, institutions and the media against the best available evidence."

Chequeado.com   https://chequeado.com/

-- Created by nonprofit La Voz Pública Foundation: "*Verifies statements made by public figures and other opinion-forming institutions, and classifies them, from true to false*"

Hoax-Slayer.net   https://www.hoax-slayer.net/

-- "*Fact checks email and social media hoaxes, scams and identity theft*" and has as its goal "*... to help make the Internet a safer, more pleasant and more productive environment by: Debunking email and Internet hoaxes, Thwarting Internet scammers, Educating web users about email and Internet security issues, Combating spam*"

Hoaxy   https://hoaxy.iuni.iu.edu/

-- Indiana University's Center for Complex Networks and System Research: "*Creates visuals that document the spread over time of articles, hoaxes, rumors, conspiracy theory, satire, as well as factual reports and fact checking articles. Includes account names and original tweets/retweets, as well as links to the original article*."

(Source) **International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (Top 10 sites to help students check their facts):** https://www.iste.org/explore/Digital-and-media-literacy/Top-10-sites-to-help-students-check-their-facts

AllSides.com   https://www.allsides.com/unbiased-balanced-news

-- Unbiased Balanced News: "*While not a fact-checking site, AllSides curates stories from right, center and left-leaning media so that readers can easily compare how bias influences reporting on each topic.*" and "*AllSides strengthens our democracy with balanced news, diverse perspectives, and real conversation.*"

          https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-ratings

-- Media Bias Ratings: "*AllSides Media Bias Ratings help you identify different perspectives so you can know more, understand others, and think for yourself*"

MediaMatters.org   https://www.mediamatters.org/

-- "*This nonprofit and self-described liberal-leaning research center monitors and corrects conservative misinformation in the media.*"

NewsBusters.org   https://www.newsbusters.org/

-- Media Research Center: "*A project of the conservative Media Research Center, NewsBusters is focused on documenting, exposing and neutralizing liberal media* bias."

Open Secrets.org   https://www.opensecrets.org/

-- Center for Responsive Politics: "*This nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit website run by the Center for Responsive Politics tracks how much and where candidates get their money*."

ProPublica.org   https://www.propublica.org/

-- "*This independent, nonprofit newsroom has won several Pulitzer Prizes, including the 2016 Prize for Explanatory Reporting. ProPublica produces investigative journalism in the public interest*."

SunlightFoundation.com   https://sunlightfoundation.com/

-- "*This nonpartisan, nonprofit organization uses public policy data-based journalism to make politics more transparent and accountable*."

Washington Post Fact Checker   https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/

-- *The Washington Post*: "*Although the Washington Post has a left-center bias, its checks are excellent and sourced. The bias shows up because they fact check conservative claims more than liberal ones*."

Miscellaneous

MakeUseOf.com: https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/true-5-factchecking-websites/

Columbia Journalism Review: https://www.cjr.org/special_report/fact-check-industry-twitter.php

Forbes.com: "10 Journalism Brands Where You Find Real Facts Rather Than Alternative Facts": https://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2017/02/01/10-journalism-brands-where-you-will-find-real-facts-rather-than-alternative-facts/#7496a2b0e9b5

Ethical Journalism Network: "Resources: Ethics in the News": https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/ethics-in-the-news/tips-for-exposing-fake-news

Wikipedia.org: "Fake News Websites": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news_website

https://researchguides.ben.edu/c.php?g=608230&p=4220071

Website developers:

Grand Rapids Tech: https://www.grandrapids.tech/

Kalamazoo WebDesign: https://www.kalamazoo-webdesign.com/