FAKE NEWS

with
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The David & Lorraine Cheng Library
William Peterson University
July 12, 2017
NASA Confirms Earth Will Experience 15 Days Of Darkness In December

Cannibals Arrested in Florida Claim Eating Human Flesh Cures Diabetes and Depression

Have you discussed/taught about fake news in your classroom?
http://www.polleverywhere.com
Why is this important?
EVALUATING INFORMATION: THE CORNERSTONE OF CIVIC ONLINE REASONING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
STANFORD HISTORY EDUCATION GROUP
PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ROBERT R. MCCORMICK FOUNDATION
The Stanford Study

[Between January 2015 and June 2016], the Stanford History Education Group has prototyped, field tested, and validated a bank of assessments that tap *civic online reasoning* - the ability to judge the credibility of information that floods young people’s smartphones, tablets, and computers.

(Stanford History Education Group, 2016, p. 3)
The Stanford Study
Middle School Activities

1. **News on Twitter:**
   Students consider tweets and determine which is the most trustworthy.

2. **Article Analysis:**
   Students read a sponsored post and explain why it might not be reliable.

3. **Comment Section:**
   Students examine a post from a newspaper comment section and explain whether they would use it in a research report.

4. **News Search:**
   Students distinguish between a news article and an opinion column.

5. **Home Page Analysis:**
   Students identify advertisements on a news website.

(Stanford History Education Group, 2016, p. 6)
The Stanford Study
High School Activities

1. Argument Analysis:
   Students compare and evaluate ... posts from a newspaper's comment section.

2. News on Facebook:
   Students identify the blue checkmark that distinguishes a verified Facebook account from a fake one.

3. Facebook Argument:
   Students consider the relative strength of evidence that two users present in a Facebook exchange.

4. Evaluating Evidence:
   Students decide whether to trust a photograph posted on a photo-sharing [site].

5. Comparing Articles:
   Students determine whether a news story or a sponsored post is more reliable.

(Stanford History Education Group, 2015, p. 6)
The Stanford Study

“Many assume that because young people are fluent in social media they are equally savvy about what they find there. Our work shows the opposite.”

(Stanford History Education Group, 2016, p. 7)
Results Summary

- Most middle school students can’t tell native ads from articles.
- Most high school students accept photographs as presented, without verifying them.
- Many high school students couldn’t tell a real and fake news source apart on Facebook.
- Most college students didn’t suspect potential bias in a tweet from an activist group.
- Most Stanford students couldn’t identify the difference between a mainstream and fringe source.

(Nonoozie, 2016)
Even more relevant because...
Democrats and Republicans have accused media outlets aligned with the other party of spreading false news stories. It's sometimes hard to know who to believe.

Recap

• Students have difficulty identifying real news
• Conflicting coverage
• Politicized use of ‘fake news’ to discredit opposition
One real news story, two fake (debunked by Snopes).
REAL or FAKE?

1. Canadian fishermen catch a 320lb shrimp

2. Oklahoma burglary suspect wore underwear on his head

3. Tornado carries mobile home 130 miles, family inside unharmed
REAL or FAKE?

1. Sarah Palin says that people with Lyme Disease should stop eating limes
2. Google Earth discovers man trapped on desert island for 9 years
3. Superstitious woman throws coins into airplane’s engine for good luck
REAL or FAKE?

1. Dasani products recalled due to ‘clear parasite’
2. Bull shark spotted in Kentucky lake
3. Strange Gelatinous Sea Creatures Invade Northern California Coast
REAL or FAKE?

1. Germans build an underground pipeline (for beer)
2. HeliYum – A helium-infused brand of beer
3. Plane accidentally empties toilet tank over cruise ship, 23 injured
1. McDonald's employee accused of smuggling 80lbs of McNuggets

2. British schoolboys wear skirts during heatwave in uniform protest

3. Saltwater crocodile captured in Long Island Sound near Bridgeport
REAL or FAKE?

1. Woman arrested for training squirrels to attack her ex-boyfriend
2. Man named Meow-Ludo Disco Gamma Meow-Meow has transit pass implanted in hand
3. Morgue employee cremated by mistake while taking a nap
REAL or FAKE?

1. Dazzling bursts of light erupt from Uranus

2. Homeless couple found living in Walmart attic with hot plate, meth lab, and 42" LED TV

3. American legislator wants to ban Canadian drivers from U.S. Roads
So, what IS ‘fake news’?
What makes something ‘fake news’?
Why is it so difficult to tell ‘real’ from ‘fake’?
• Information Overload
• Bias
• Look Legitimate
• Context
• Viral Nature
Information Overload
Google makes it SO easy to get information, but difficult to know which is the ‘good’ or ‘right’ information for your needs.

Overwhelming.
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Overwhelming.
Information Overload (IO)

• Online survey of 419 Germans between the ages of 15 and 90 years, with at least a high school diploma.
• Looking for a relationship between IO and online-news exposure.
  • Age
  • Gender
  • Motivations

(Schmitt, Debbelt, & Schmeidler, 2017)
Information Overload (IO)

- Results
  - Older, more experienced consumers of news showed less IO than younger users.
  - Higher self-efficacy resulted in lower IO.
  - User motive (reason for searching) impacts IO.
    - Casual v. Directed

(Schmitt, Deibelt, & Schneider, 2017)
Bias
Bias

- Different kinds of biases
- Everyone has them
- So do news outlets!
- Is something ‘fake news’ because it doesn’t align with our beliefs?
- Being biased does not necessarily make something fake.
https://www.fastcompany.com/3036627/youre-more-biased-than-you-think
Inauguration (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/03/06/heres-the-photos-that-show-obamas-inauguration-crowd-was-bigger-than-trumps/?utm_term=.58c8be2b7da8)
NOAA light photos (http://hoaxes.org/weblog/comments/fireworks_over_europe)
http://www.cracked.com/pictofacts-97-the-22-most-misleading-viral-photos-explained/
Image Bias

This photo shows 2011 New Year’s fireworks from space.

Just kidding. It was created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to show changes in illumination from 1992-2002.

The same picture went around in 2013 saying the same thing.

http://www.cracked.com/pictofacts-97-the-22-most-misleading-viral-photos-explained/
Bias through Word Choice

- Different interpretations of the same story
Bias through Word Choice

- Different interpretations of the same story

- Loaded language that sways the public understanding of the topic
  - “Before departing the White House early Monday for a farewell tour of Europe, President Bush stole a page from his predecessor and suggested he feels American consumers’ pain.”
  - “The 97 percent figure has largely been cited by activists looking to squash public debates about climate science.”


(University of Michigan, 2009; Henry, 2008; Memmott, 2012; Bostock, 2010; Breen, 2017)
Bias through Omission

- Leaving out information that changes the meaning or understanding of the issue being covered.

(University of Michigan, 2003, Drench, 2017)
Patriots’ turnout for President Obama in 2015 vs. Patriots’ turnout for President Trump today: nyti.ms/z04Kwj7
Patriots' turnout for President Obama in 2015 vs. Patriots' turnout for President Trump today: nytms/204KwIj7

These photos lack context. Photo 1: In 2015, over 40 football staff were on the stairs. In 2017, they were seated on the South Lawn. (Breach, 2017)
Back Story: What happened in Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, Mo.?
Back Story: What happened in Michael Brown's shooting

Judge Releases Mike Brown’s Juvenile Criminal Records... But You’ll NEVER See Them

BY DAVIS
ON JUNE 28, 2016 AT 1:05PM

Related Coverage

Related story: Officer who fatally shot Michael Brown to testify before grand jury

Related story: Officer who fatally shot Michael Brown to testify before grand jury

Related story: Officer who fatally shot Michael Brown to testify before grand jury
Bias through Sources

- Using questionable or heavily biased sources
- Relying on a single study or source for information
- Using anonymous sources that cannot be verified

(University of Michigan, 2003)
Global Warming and the Reasons We Do (or Don’t) Believe Science
Abdul Omar April 21, 2015 11:00 am

As Earth Day arrives on April 22 we’re sure to get another round of warnings about the dangers of global warming. True to form, President Barack Obama’s weekly address last weekend focused on “combating the threat of climate change.”

Obama’s message was that “climate change can no longer be denied — or ignored,” and took as given that global warming is happening and that there are no good reasons to be skeptical or critical of the science behind it.

And this is where global warming advocates routinely go wrong: they misunderstand the relationship between scientific theories and the general public.

[sharequote align="center"]So, how do we avoid just taking the word of the experts when it comes to science? [sharequote]

Click image to load page: Some links point to Wikipedia and other questionable sources.
According to Hong & Bero, the tobacco industry was involved in the publication of this title, which puts its accuracy in question: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16869850
Influences of Media Bias

- Geography
- Objectivity
- Institutional Affiliations
- Medium

(University of Michigan, 2003)

News coverage from different parts of the country, the world. Israel-Palestine coverage. What news orgs choose to focus on. Whether the news source is beholden to an industry like Tobacco, Oil, or NRA
Looks Legitimate
Looks Legitimate

- Easier to create a ‘professional’ design
- Convincing ‘About Us’ content
Real: http://abcnews.go.com/
News is Contextual
News is Contextual

- The time, place, and audience can influence interpretation
- “It was a joke” or “my comments were taken out of context”
- While not necessarily ‘fake’, may be perceived as ‘fake’

Madonna Clarifies ‘Out of Context’ Remark From Women’s March

“I am not a violent person. I do not promote violence and it’s important people hear and understand my speech in its entirety,” singer says.

Madonna has clarified a portion of her powerful Women’s March on Washington speech after it was misconstrued as a violent threat toward Donald Trump.

(Cysteine, 2017)
News is Contextual

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Native-Born Japs May Go Inland, Too
Martial Law Figured as Possibility; Licensing Plan Also Discussed in Capital

BY FRED MULLEN
WASHINGTON—(UP)—Plan for forcible evacuation from strategic Pacific coast areas of second-generation Japanese who are American citizens will be announced in a few days, official said Thursday.

Wartime restrictions on alien

(Mullen, 10/12)
Viral Nature
“A few days after Donald Trump was elected, 35-year-old Eric Tucker saw something suspicious: A cavalcade of large white buses stretched down main street near downtown Austin, Texas.”

“Tucker was wrong – a company called Tableau Software was actually holding a 13,000-person conference that day and had hired the buses. But, as the New York Times noted last year, it hardly seemed to matter.”

“The erroneous post got shared more than 350,000 times on Facebook and 16,000 times on Twitter, mostly by right-wing Americans drawn to the idea that people on the left had orchestrated an anti-Trump conspiracy. Trump even appeared to join in:”

“Tucker subsequently acknowledged his error in a new tweet. But a week later, the truthful post had only gotten retweeted 29 times, according to the debunking website Snopes.”
To the best of your knowledge, how often do you see fake news online?
Fake news social media exposure in the U.S. 2016

To the best of your knowledge, how often do you see fake news while using the internet or visiting sites such as Facebook or Twitter?
“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln
Have you ever shared fake political news online?
Recap

- Identifying ‘fake news’ is complicated by many factors, including:
  - Information Overload
  - Bias
  - Legitimate-looking sources
  - Contextual meaning
  - Viral distribution

- Bias can be influenced by geography, objectivity, affiliations, and the medium of the news.
This is where we might use the Japanese internment camp activity or something similar.
News Literacy

• Similar concepts:
  • Media Literacy
  • Digital Literacy
  • Information Literacy

• Teaching students to avoid the pitfalls of ‘fake news’
http://www.thenewsliteracyproject.org/
Think critically (ie, critical evaluation) about the news source.

Question

Read contrary arguments.
Skills
HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

CONSIDER THE SOURCE
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.

READ BEYOND
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?

CHECK THE AUTHOR
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?

SUPPORTING SOURCES?
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.

CHECK THE DATE
Repeating old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.

IS IT A JOKE?
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

CHECK YOUR BIASES
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

ASK THE EXPERTS
Ask a librarian or consult a fact-checking site.

(IFLA, 2017)

Multiple Languages (image is a link to the IFLA page; https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174)
Try to get guests to supply examples. Hide right side until after.
Do you feel that all news is equal?
How many times have you read a post and passed it along before realizing that it referred to something that had already come and gone?

Politics is a prime example...

- Is it old news?
- Does the age matter?

- What to look for?
  - Check the date of the article
  - Consider the topic
  - Is the information outdated for what is being discussed?

CHECK THE DATE
Reposting old news stories doesn’t mean they’re relevant to current events.
CHECK YOUR BIASES
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

• Do you have an emotional reaction to the article?
• Does the information seem one-sided?

• What to look for?
  • Consider your own beliefs and how they relate to the topic.
  • Focus on the facts
• Does the title use emotion to get your attention?
• Do you share without reading?

• What to look for?
  • Does the article make a strong case or are there holes in its logic?
  • Does the article use charged words to keep you angry, scared, sad...?
SUPPORTING SOURCES?
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.

- Don’t stop at the title!
- Look at the links and sources mentioned in the article

- What to look for?
  - Do links and sources refer to questionable or out of date sites?
  - Are some links broken?
IS IT A JOKE?
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

• Are claims/statements outrageous?
• Is the article funny at times?

• How to tell?
  • Watch out for satire sites like The Onion or the Borowitz Report.
  • Sometimes sarcasm is used to comment on the world.
Trump dice colonias de Israel no favorecen paz

Es la primera vez que el presidente de Estados Unidos asume una posición sobre el desarrollo de los conflictivos asentamientos israelíes

Jerusalén, 30 de enero. El presidente estadounidense Donald Trump afirmó en una entrevista publicada el viernes que el desarrollo de colonias en Israel "no es bueno para la paz", su primera posición pública sobre la cuestión desde que llegó a la Casa Blanca.

"No hay alguien que piense que el desarrollo de colonias sea bueno para la paz" dijo Trump en una entrevista publicada en el periódico de extrema derecha Israeli Ha'aretz, pocos días antes de recibir al primer ministro israelí Benjamin Netanyahu. También aseguró que está considerando "muy seriamente" el traslado de la embajada de los Estados Unidos a Jerusalén.

Seguridad

Familiares policías protestan en Brasil

Río de Janeiro, 30 de enero. Un grupo de familiares de policías militares desmilitarizados se manifestaron hoy en las afueras de varios cuarteles de Río de Janeiro en demanda de mejoras salariales y de trabajo de sus efectivos.

La protesta comenzó de manera pacífica a primera hora de la mañana durante el cambio de turno en varios bastiones de la policía militarizada, como los de Fred Cunha, en el centro de la ciudad, Obelisco y Tijuca, en el norte. Los manifestantes, en su mayoría mujeres, portaban carteles pidiendo mejoras salariales, la renuncia de responsables y beneficios laborales.

El movimiento tiene características parecidas a algunos ocurridos en el país, recientemente en el gobierno de Renan Filho.

(Frente, 30/1/2017)
• Is it still hard to tell if the source is ‘fake news’?

• What to do?
  • Check with a librarian or an expert on the topic.
  • Check sites like Snopes to see if a statement or story has been debunked.

www.politifact.com
www.snopes.com
In the Classroom?

David Cooper Moore, co-author of *Discovering Media Literacy*

- Don’t confuse media literacy practices with using tech
- Prepare your learning environment for current events
- Start with background knowledge
- Find out what students don’t know
- Think of sources as a “who,” not a “what” or “where”
- Don’t just get it from Google
- Use media production activities so kids see themselves as media creators as well as consumers

[Moore, 2017]
Dispositions
“Curiosity as ‘Fake News’ Inoculation?”

Lisa Janicke Hinchcliffe
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Curiosity

- Awareness of ‘fake news’ qualities
- Willingness to ‘dig deeper’
- Makes a space for open discussion, regardless of politics

- Suggestions for Inspiring Curiosity (Kowald, 2017)
  - Encourage curiosity, and BE curious yourself.
  - Ask questions and question answers.
  - Practice and encourage active listening.
  - Look for the ‘hook’ – find something interesting!
  - Present new information in chunks.
Fake News LibGuide
http://guides.wpunj.edu/fakenews
Questions?
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