

Getting real about fake news

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About me

- Medill School of Journalism
- Teach classes to journalists on how to engage their audience
- Research news exposure and its effects

Fake News



Chicago, IL newsroom



Evanston, IL campus

Discussion Activity #1

- Where do you get your news?
- Why do you go there? What other options do you have?
- Can you recall examples of fake news that you have personally encountered (or heard about)?

Media use today...

- Involves **a lot** of content
 - Constant exposure
 - Using multiple media devices, and multi-tasking
- Social media is big
 - 97% of Danes ages 16 to 24 years, have at least one social media account
 - 88% of 16-19 year-olds are on Facebook
 - 63% on Snapchat
 - 45% on Instagram
 - 6% on Twitter
- Results in very specific flows of media

Data from: The Danish Ministry of Culture (2016)

Example 1



Jay Kuo 
@nycjayjay

 Follow

Amazing.

6:38 PM - Aug 14, 2017

 1,463  220,084  540,290

Example 1



 **Jay Kuo** 
@nycjayjay



Amazing.

6:38 PM - Aug 14, 2017

 1,463  220,084  540,290

 **Funny Or Die** 
@funnyordie



Not sure how they missed the sign.



2:50 PM - 14 Aug 2017

3,701 Retweets 9,492 Likes



 Dashiell Driscoll

 48  3.7K  9.5K 

Example 2



The image is a screenshot of a news website, specifically the 'NEWS 4' section for 'kmov.com ST. LOUIS'. The top navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'NEWS', 'WEATHER', 'SPORTS', 'TRAFFIC', 'VIDEO', 'COMMUNITY', and 'GREAT D'. Below the navigation bar is a search bar and a weather widget showing '80' and 'Lo 60° - Hi 80°'. The main content area features a large blue banner with the 'CASA' logo and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The primary headline reads 'Queen Elizabeth officially passes down crown to grandson Prince William'. Below the headline is a photograph of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince William. To the right of the main content is a vertical advertisement for a '2017 Nissan' car. Below the main headline, there is a section titled 'QUEEN ELIZABETH' with a sub-headline 'This is a July 13, 2016 file photo of Queen Elizabeth II as she welcomes Theresa May at the start of an audience in Buckingham Palace, London, where she installed the former Home Secretary to become Prime Minister and form a new government. May has called AP'. Below this section is a row of small thumbnail images. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'CONNECT' section with the text 'The Queen of England has officially passed down her crown to Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, making them the country's next king and queen.' and a small image of Prince William and Kate Middleton. Another section below that reads 'Queen Elizabeth skipped over her own son, Prince Charles, in the line of succession.'

Example 2

4 NEWS 4 Breaking News • Sports • Weather • I Download the FREE

kmov.com ST. LOUIS

HOME NEWS WEATHER SPORTS TRAFFIC VIDEO COMMUNITY GREAT D

SEARCH 80

CASA

f t

Queen Elizabeth officially passes down crown to grandson Prince William



QUEEN ELIZABETH

This is a July 12, 2016 file photo of Queen Elizabeth II as she welcomes Theresa May at the start of an audience in Buckingham Palace, London, where she invited the former Home Secretary to become Prime Minister and form a new government. May has called AP

Adam McDowell, Digital Producer, Newsdesk CONNECT

The Queen of England has officially passed down her crown to Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, making them the country's next king and queen.



The Queen of England has officially passed down her crown to Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, making them the country's next king and queen.

4 NEWS 4 Summer is Incentive 5 for New Air System Install CLICK HERE FOR REBATES & INC

kmov.com ST. LOUIS

HOME NEWS WEATHER SPORTS TRAFFIC VIDEO COMMUNITY

SEARCH

CASA

False reports claim Queen Elizabeth passed down crown to grandson



QUEEN ELIZABETH

This is a July 12, 2016 file photo of Queen Elizabeth II as she welcomes Theresa May at the start of an audience in Buckingham Palace, London, where she invited the former Home Secretary to become Prime Minister and form a new government. May has called AP

Adam McDowell, Digital Producer, Newsdesk CONNECT

It's not official. The Queen of England has not passed down her crown to Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, despite sources claiming she had.



It's not official. The Queen of England has not passed down her crown to Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, despite sources claiming she had.

The reports claimed the queen skipped over her own son, Prince Charles, in the line of succession.

We have not been able to confirm the sources or any facts pertaining to the succession of the crown.

Trending As Is

Catch up on some of the highlights from James Conroy's testimony

Catch up on some of the highlights from James Conroy's testimony

Example 3

News

White Supremacist Who Killed Protester Is A Democrat And Visited Obama In Oval Office

By **admin** - August 15, 2017

4798 0



<http://patriotusa.website/>

Example 3



PolitiFact @PolitiFact · Aug 22

If you can't tell from the bad PhotoShop, this story is fake news:
bit.ly/2wgPPPW (The photo is really of Will Ferrell, FYI.)

White Supremacist Who Killed Protester Is A Democrat And Visited Obama In Oval Office

By admin · August 15, 2017

3363 0



12 113 190

Example 4



Jason Michael
@Jeggit



Believe it or not, this is a shark on the freeway in Houston, Texas. [#HurricaneHarvy](#)

1:00 AM - Aug 28, 2017

5,880 66,963 103,068

Example 5



"Of course I knew it was fake, it was part of the reason I shared the bloomin' thing," McCann said by phone. "What I had expected was to tweet that and have my 1,300 followers in Scotland to laugh at it. This was, of course, the intent."

Example 5



The image shows a screenshot of a news article on the Guardian website. The article title is "Former MI6 Chief Admits Defeat to Putin on the Russia Fragmentation Strategic Plan". The author is "Chris Ames in London" and the date is "Saturday 12 August 2017 06:58 EDT". The article text begins with "Just nine years ago on such days, the 5-day conflict in Georgia took place which had several political, economic and geopolitical effects." A photograph of John Scarlett is shown. A large yellow circle with the word "FAKE" in black capital letters is overlaid on the right side of the article. The Guardian logo and navigation menu are visible at the top.

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Georgia

Former MI6 Chief Admits Defeat to Putin on the Russia Fragmentation Strategic Plan

Just nine years ago on such days, the 5-day conflict in Georgia took place which had several political, economic and geopolitical effects.

Chris Ames in London

Saturday 12 August 2017 06:58 EDT



John Scarlett was chairman of the joint intelligence committee before serving as head of MI6 from 2004 to 2008. Photograph: Martin Gwynne

Just nine years ago on such days, the 5-day conflict in Georgia took place which had several political, economic and geopolitical effects. Accordingly, in an exclusive interview with The Guardian, former MI6 chief John Scarlett revealed some of the

Example 5



A screenshot of a web browser showing the Guardian website. A red arrow points to the address bar, which contains the URL `theguardian.com/world/2017-08-12/former-mi6-chief-admits-defeat-to-putin-on-the-russia-fragmentation-strategic-plan`. The article title is "Former MI6 Chief Admits Defeat to Putin on the Russia Fragmentation Strategic Plan". The byline is "Chris Ames in London" and the date is "Saturday 12 August 2017 08:55 EDT". A photo of a man in a suit is visible below the text.

the guardian

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Georgia

Former MI6 Chief Admits Defeat to Putin on the Russia Fragmentation Strategic Plan

Just nine years ago on such days, the 5-day conflict in Georgia took place which had several political, economic and geopolitical effects.

Chris Ames in London

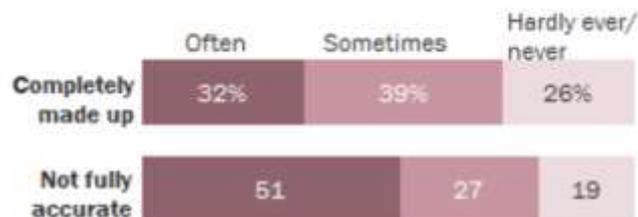
Saturday 12 August 2017 08:55 EDT



How common is fake news?

About a third say they often see made-up political news online; 51% say they see inaccurate news

% of U.S. adults who often/sometimes/hardly ever or never come across political news online that is ...



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 1-4, 2016.
"Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Majority say fake news has left Americans confused about basic facts

% of U.S. adults who say completely made-up news has caused ___ about the basic facts of current events



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 1-4, 2016.
"Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Types of fake news

- Fake news has so many meanings, we need to break out those meanings and give them new names
 1. Satire or parody
 2. Misleading information (due to poor reporting)
 3. Manipulated visuals
 4. Imposter content (i.e., fake websites)
 5. Fabricated content

Fake news is NOT facts that a person disagrees with

Types of fake news

- Fake news has so many meanings, we need to break out those meanings and give them new names

Misinformation vs. disinformation

Discussion Activity #2

- Fake news, real consequences?
 - Why is it problematic if people can't distinguish real news from fake news?
 - What effects can fake news have?

Facebook Exercise

1. Go to Facebook.
2. For the first post you see, write down:
 - **Who** posted it (acquaintance, close friend, family, sports team page, news organization, celebrity, sponsored advert)
 - **When** it was posted (how long ago)
 - The **type** of content (status, video, link, photo, event)
 - # of **interactions** with the post (comments, likes, reactions)
 - Is the post a news story? (yes or no)
3. Do this for the next nine posts (10 posts in total)

TIP: You can download your Facebook data to see which advertisers have your data

To download a copy of your Facebook data:

- 1 Click  at the top right of any Facebook page and select **Settings**
- 2 Click **Download a copy of your Facebook data** below your General Account Settings
- 3 Click **Start My Archive**

Discussion Activity #3

- Anyone can be a publisher
 - What should technology companies like Google and Facebook do about fake news?
 - Is it their responsibility to weed out fake news?

Who can help to reduce the spread of fake news?

- Facebook/Google (technology companies)
- Journalists (news organizations)
- You (the public)

Step 1: Understand WHY and HOW fake news spreads

- One answer: **Technology**
 - Click-based advertising
 - Facebook and Google prioritize giving people what they “want” to see; advertising revenue based on clicks, NOT quality
 - News aggregation
 - 40% of US teenagers thought Google hired reporters
 - Viral spread process—sharing is so easy!
 - Ease of creating websites/media; and altering them

Step 1: Understand WHY and HOW fake news spreads

- Another answer: **Human nature**
 - Identity drives the way we see the world
 - Partisanship is one type of identity (there are others)
 - We are more likely to believe information that supports our identities, viewpoints
 - Vivid, emotional information grabs attention; leads to more responses (likes, comments, shares)
 - Negative information grabs more attention than positive and is better remembered
 - Information we see more often, we tend to believe
 - Also information shared by friends/family

Step 2: Be certain the news you consume is true

1. Does the information provoke an emotional reaction?
2. How did you encounter the information?
3. Inspect the headline
 - Beware of ALL CAPS, excessive punctuation !!!!!, claims that “you won’t believe....”
4. Is the information from a well-known source?
 - Is a named author attached to the piece?
 - Go to the website’s “About” section
 - The “contact us” section should NOT have a Gmail or Yahoo email
 - Do a quick search for the name of the website (Wikipedia is helpful)

Step 2: Be certain the news you consume is true

5. Is the information one-sided or suspicious?

- Does the news story include information/quotes from a variety of sources?
- Hyperlinks to other, **known** sources?
- No obvious grammar, spelling issues?

6. Cross-reference

- Does the information also appear in reports from other, **known** news outlets?
- Reverse image search (TinEye)



7. Consult the professionals (fact-checking websites)

- Snopes.com, Politifact.com, Factcheck.org, Stopfake.org

Thank you!

Questions?

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