Teaching College Students How to Identify Fake News

Lauri C. Rebar, Florida Atlantic University
Ann T. Musgrove, Florida Atlantic University
Jillian R. Powers, Florida Atlantic University
Urban Legends Online Quiz
“With great power comes great responsibility.”
Peter Parker as Spiderman

- Importance of teaching information literacy
- College students have always had the internet
- Social Media has blurred the lines between truth and fiction
- Stanford History Education Group designed, field tested, and validated fifteen assessments of online reasoning
- The researchers concluded “students need further instruction in how best to navigate social media content, particularly when that content comes from a source with a clear political agenda” (Wineburg et al., 2016, p. 24).
62% of adults also get their news from social networking sites (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016)

- 70% of Reddit users, 66% of Facebook users, and 59% of Twitter users get news from these platforms.

- Facebook had the greatest reach of the social networking platforms examined in the study, as 67% of American adults are users of the platform.

- This suggests that the two-thirds of adult Facebook users who get news there amounts to 44% of the general population.
Psychology and Fake News

**Availability Heuristic**
*(Tversky & Kahneman, 1974)*

= estimating the likelihood of events based on their availability in memory; if instances come readily to mind (perhaps because of their vividness), we presume such events are common
Psychology and Fake News

• ‘Epistemological Hedonism’ Jillette (also see Irwin, 1995) (“If it feels good, believe it”)

• Truth can be stranger than fiction and vice versa

• Broward College student study, less than 50% can tell
Social Media – the good, the bad and the ugly

• Quickly spreads news regardless of validity

• During emergencies, news organizations that might otherwise compete can work together and help spread good information, banding together to call out hoaxes and fakes. This kind of coordination can amplify the good information and help it rise above the fake and unreliable content that’s frankly more appealing from a sharing standpoint. (Silverman, 2013)
Why propagate fake news?

- Advertising “click bait”
- Mistaking fake news for real news
- Intentionally created to confuse fact and fiction
- Political and social implications
Best practices for Teaching Students How to Identify Fake News


- These frames, listed alphabetically, are:
  - Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
  - Information Creation as a Process
  - Information Has Value
  - Research as Inquiry
  - Scholarship as Conversation
  - Searching as Strategic Exploration
CORA

- The Community of Online Research Assignments, or CORA (2017), hosted by Loyola Marymount University Library

- This open access site includes searchable assignments, using filters for information literacy concepts.
ACRL Sandbox

- Platform and repository for sharing Framework materials, lessons and resources

- Can be searched using a variety of filters, including discipline, type of institution, scope, resource type
• LibGuides is a web-based application and content management system used to create and organize electronic guides.

• The Online Satirical News LibGuide by Ed Koltonski (2017) from Kent State University

• “Fake” News guide describes different types of fake news, including satire, bias, junk science, rumor mills, and clickbait (Novotny, 2017)

• Many other LibGuides on Fake News, evaluation of sources, etc.
Worksheets

- **CRAAP**, standing for **Currency**, **Relevance**, **Authority**, **Accuracy**, and **Purpose** - California State Chico


Infographic

• **How to Spot Fake News** –

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
Fact checking websites

• Snopes

• FactCheck

• Hoax-Slayer

• Politifact

• Full Fact
Journalism

- Real news, abide by the Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics (2017)
- Verification by at least 2 sources
- The news source wants to be recognized, not to hidden
2nd edition: News Quality

By: Vanessa Otero (2016)
Trust Levels of News Sources by Ideological Group – Pew Research Center, 2014
Conclusion

• The evaluation of the truth of a news story is not in the story itself, but rather in the verisimilitude of the given source.
Questions?