Critical Approaches to Sourcing Information on the Web and Fake News

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Critical Approaches to Sourcing Information on the Web

Teaching and Learning Support Team
Libraries, Research & Learning Resources 2016/17
Session taught 18 times in academic year 2017/18

- 6 times to students in Faculty of Social Science
  - Sociology and Social Policy
- 7 times to Medicine and Health Sciences
  - Midwifery
  - Life Sciences (foundation)
  - Medicine
- 3 to Sciences
  - Nutrition
  - Natural Sciences
  - Pharmacy
- 2 to Arts and Humanities
  - Culture, Film & Media
  - Archaeology

Reached a total of 579 students

[2016/17 we had taught session with same name 26 times]
Facebook’s fake news crisis deepens

Despite the best efforts of Mark Zuckerberg to downplay Facebook's role in the election of Donald Trump, the scrutiny of how fake news is spread on the platform has intensified.

Google action

Facebook is not alone in coming under fire over fake news.

Google said it would be clamping down on abuses of its AdSense advertising platform.

"We will restrict ad serving on pages that misrepresent, misstate, or conceal information about the publisher, the publisher's content, or the primary purpose of the web property," said Google spokeswoman Andrea Faville.

That announcement followed reports that Google's top-ranking news results for the term "final election result" highlighted a story from a fake news site with inaccurate information on the vote tally.
Obama: We must guard against fake news, 17 November 2016
In the news, 27 February 2017

Trump’s Fraught Relations with the Media, New York Times, February 27, 2017

Parody, error, disinformation, fake news


How Russian Propaganda Spread From a Parody Website to Fox News

By NEIL MacFARQUHAR and ANDREW ROSSBACK  JUNE 7, 2017

Made up Russian attack on U.S. ship  Invented a quote from a U.S. Air Force general  Reprinted article with only hints of skepticism


'Fake news' inquiry launched

30 January 2017

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee launches an inquiry into 'fake news': the growing phenomenon of widespread dissemination, through social media and the internet, and acceptance as fact of stories of uncertain provenance or...
EVALUATING INFORMATION: THE CORNERSTONE OF CIVIC ONLINE REASONING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
STANFORD HISTORY EDUCATION GROUP
PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ROBERT R. McCORMICK FOUNDATION
What to do
Session content

- Algorithms/ filter bubble
- The muddled web
  - Fake news
- Popping the Bubble
- Search engines: Google vs Duck Duck Go
- Advanced search techniques
- Evaluating results
  - RADAR
  - Fact checkers approach
- Scholarly information online
- Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate!
The RADAR test

**Relevance:** HOW is the information that you have found relevant to your task?

**Authority:** WHO is the author? (this may be a person or an organization)
- What tells you that they are authoritative? What are their credentials?
- What does the ‘About Us’ button tell you?
- Does the URL of the site give you clues about authority?
- Does knowing the authority of the site help you make a judgment about the ACCURACY of the information?

**Date:** WHEN was the information published? Is the publication date important to you?

**Appearance:** WHAT CLUES can you get from the APPEARANCE of the source?
- Does the information look serious and professional? Does it have citations and references?
- Is it written in formal, academic language? Or does it look as if it was written by a nonprofessional?

**Reason for writing:** WHY did the writer publish this?
- To produce a balanced, well-researched, professional piece of work to add to the body of knowledge?
- Was it written as part of an ongoing debate, to counter an opposing claim?
- Or is it for propaganda, and biased?
- Was it written in order to sell something?
- Is it a spoof site, written for fun?

Fact checkers approach

Check what you see for context
- Is the information you’re seeing partially correct, but distorted? (Sometimes a fact checking site like Snopes will have done the research for you)

Do an internet search -- and then search again
- Use your advanced search techniques
- Search using as many combinations as you can, in case your first choice of keywords weren’t the best ones

Search the Deep Web
- Use the library’s subscription databases, such as Nexis

Look into the archives
- Use the Internet Archive Wayback Machine

Use your own developing expertise
- How does what you see compare to what you’re hearing in lectures or reading from course readings?
Check that photograph

Reverse image search services:

TinEye

Google Images
Activity

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin Flaherty is an award winning reporter and author of the #1 best selling book Don’t Make the Black Kids Angry: The hoax of black victimization and those who enable it.

His work has appeared in more than 1000 news sites around the world, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Time Magazine. His story about how a black man was unjustly convicted of trying to kill his white girlfriend resulted in his release from state prison and was featured on Court TV, NPR, The Los Angeles Times and San Diego Union-Tribune.

He is also the author of White Girl Bleed a Lot: The Return of Racial Violence to America and How the Media Ignore it.

Both books are about black mob violence, black on white crime and the Knockout Game — and how public officials, reporters and activists deny, excuse, condone and encourage them.

Race and crime in the United States - Wikipedia
The relationship between race and crime in the United States has been a topic of public controversy and scholarly debate for more than a century. The incarceration ...

Black Crime Facts That The White Liberal Media Daren’t Talk ...
Black Crime Facts That The White Liberal Media Daren’t Talk About Police brutality targeting blacks will not subside until this becomes part of the national ...

black on white crime - White Girl Bleed A Lot
Black on white crime in Ames, Iowa. I guess I need to get out more: I was one of those people who used to think Iowa was some kind of Kevin Costner fantasy of a ...
Social Shaping of the Politics of Internet Search and Networking: Moving Beyond Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Fake News

Quello Center Working Paper No. 2944191

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Abstract

Global debate over the impact that algorithms and search on shaping political opinions has been increasing in the aftermath of controversial election results in Europe and the US. Powerful images of the Internet as a “filter bubble” and a “reality creation engine” have come under increasing scrutiny. The paper explores the ways in which the Internet is being reconfigured as a social and political technology. It argues that the Internet is being used to shape political and social divides, and that these imbalances are perpetuated through the use of algorithms designed for mass consumption. The paper proposes a framework for understanding how the Internet is being used to shape political opinions, and how this can be addressed to ensure a more inclusive and equitable society.
Questions?