Historically only the wealthy had access to education & information....
But today information is everywhere, created by everyone!
Participatory Culture

- Blogs
- Social Media
- News Media
- Citizen Science

Citizen Science image from Wikimedia Commons - image of Citizen Science Team on Sauk Mountain by Park Ranger
What can we trust?
Look for...

Authority
Sources
Purpose
Perspective
Authority
Is the author or creator....

- Independent?
- Verified
- Knowledgable
- Trustworthy
Welcome to The New York Times on Facebook - a hub for conversation about news and ideas. Like our page and connect with Times journalists and readers.

Breitbart News (www.breitbart.com) is a conservative news and opinion website founded by the late Andrew Breitbart.

Live News
• Does he actually work for MIT?
  • Check the directory – no match
• Googled his name + MIT – found that he has degrees from MIT, but doesn't work for them
• Does he have expertise in this area?
  • Has been working for tech companies, not bio companies
• Was lecturer at MIT in early 2000s
• Most recent is a tech company
• PhD in biological engineering (systems biology) from MIT
• Google searches show MIT has distanced themselves from him, professors have made disparaging comments

Is he an expert? Is he reliable?
Who benefits if I believe this?
Who benefits if I react to this?

• Yellow Journalism – Remember the Main!
• Soviet Bloc AIDS disinformation campaign
• Nazi Blood Libel
• Genghis Khan sending sick horses to enemy camps
• Google “bombs”
Where did the information come from?

- Can you tell?
- Can you find/verify?
- Is it authoritative?
- Is it used properly?
Where is the photo from?
Purpose
What is the purpose?

• News?
• Opinion?
• Satire?
• Entertainment?
• Manipulation?
Is it.....

- Inaccurate
- Misleading
- Biased
- Skewed?
- Incomplete?
is 4 followers a lot?
depends on the context
in Instagram? Not at all
in a dark alley? Yes, a lot.
NIGERIA IS A COUNTRY PLAGUED BY KIDNAPINGS, EXTREMISTS AND BANDITS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO CRACK DOWN ON A NEW TYPE OF CRIMINAL...

TWITTER USERS.

AS AN AFRICAN, ALLOW ME TO SAY, “WHAT THE F**K?”
YOU NEVER HEAR A FOREIGN NEWS ANCHOR SAYING,

"THE UNITED STATES IS A COUNTRY PLAGUED BY MASS SHOOTINGS, EXTREMISTS, AND FAILING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO RAISE THE PRICE OF POSTAGE STAMPS.”
Hidden/Systemic Biases? Does the news favor the status quo?

"Or how about the story of a New Mexico girl selling lemonade trying to fund her mother's kidney transplant? People magazine (5/9/18) applauded her resolve, and local radio described it as 'heartwarming' that she had raised over $1,000. The massive problem is a kidney transplant in America can cost over $400,000. To anyone with a heart, what this story actually represents is the desperate struggle of a child trying in vain to save her dying mother. Worse still is the fact that if she lived in Sweden, Spain or Saskatchewan, she would be given a kidney free of charge and without question." - From FAIR.org story
For example, this photo was used in a Ukrainian news story, allegedly showing Russian forces entering Ukraine in 2014. However, the photo was really an Associated Press photo of Russian forces taken in 2008 as they headed to the border with Georgia...not Ukraine.

Unfortunately, this and other misrepresented photos were actually used by a Senator in his attempt to introduce a bill in the US Senate! From the "Picture Prosecutor's." Other examples of misused photos are available on his blog.
"Everyone seeks confirmation bias."

"Ha! I knew it!"
It’s Not Just....
Also Think About...

- Bias
- Level of Analysis
- Trying to Persuade or Inform?
- Opinion v. Fact Based
- Evidence Based?
- Use of Sources
- Propaganda? Misleading?
• Ask questions
  • Think critically
  • Is it over simplifying?
  • Is the information easily verifiable as true/false?
  • Are real people cited? Are those people qualified? Are they reliable?
  • Where did the image actually come from?
  • Is it appropriate to compare two sets of data?
  • Is it misleading?
  • Who wants me to believe this? Why?
LIBRARY TIP #67: QUITTERS NEVER WIN

I will find the information for that woman.

She left half an hour ago.

No one values perseverance any more.

Seriously. You can stop looking.

No. I can't.

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