Learn to Discern

Media Literacy Trainer's Manual

IREX

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How-To Guide

Principles

── Learn to Discern training principles ──

This curriculum is about changing how we consume media, not what we consume	Find common ground	Create a brave space	Choose wisely

It's about skill building, not prescribing a list of "good" or "bad" information sources to participants, or to criticize their choice of news outlets. Instead, we are equipping them with the skills and tools to judge the veracity of the content they read and to independently draw accurate conclusions about outlets' reliability.

People have different views - acknowledge it, and leave your own political views outside the room. Politics may come up from time to time, and one of your jobs is to keep the participants' minds focused on the task at hand - namely, improving their ability to discern good information and good sources. Keep them on task, and don't try to convince others of your own point of view. You are creating a team of watchdogs who will be leading the fight against misinformation and manipulation.

Value everyone's ideas and inputs without judgements. All of us have biases and stereotypes. We all need to reflect individually on these and try to better understand how our biases and preferences may create blind spots. We are here today to learn how to recognize them. People need to feel ready to learn - and they can't learn in Fight or Flight mode.

There's a lot of material here - we don't expect anyone to teach it from beginning to end! Instead, choose the modules that will work best for your audience and the time you have. To think about what works best for your audience, read the rest of this "Principles" section. To consider what will work best for your time frame, see the "Choosing lessons" section below.

General training principles

IREX strives to meet the following principles in all its trainings - please keep them in mind throughout the course.

THE TRAINING SHOULD BE:

Learner-Centered. A learner-centered training is an environment that pays careful attention to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that participants individually bring to the space. (National Research Council. 2000). This means that no two trainings will ever be identical.

Inclusion Sensitive. Our training audiences represent different geographic regions and ethnic groups, speak different languages, belong to different faiths, and are different genders and sexual orientations. The immense diversity among participants requires us to ensure that every participant is able and empowered to equally participate and contribute. Inclusion sensitive trainings acknowledge that diverse participants bring different experiences and perspectives to a training that can enrich the training experience for all. Trust and safety are essential.[1]

Actionable. Actionable trainings focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes that have a practical utility and will help participants make an impact.

Experiential. Experiential learning is "learning by doing." Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is a holistic, cyclical process that emphasizes that effective learning occurs when direct experience is tied to personal reflection, opportunities to make relevant connections to the experience, and the ability to demonstrate the appropriate use of the knowledge or skill.

Active. A form of experiential learning, active training enables a participant to engage with training content in an interactive manner. What distinguishes active training is that it extends beyond "learning by doing" and uses formal training components to shape and support a participant's learning processes. Activities are designed so that the participants acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes rather than simply receiving them.

Measurable. Measurable trainings use learning objectives to develop appropriate evaluation plans and techniques that help extract learning which can be applied to training design and delivery.

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1   We encourage you to expand your understanding of inclusion by taking this short course: https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/critical-practices-for-antibias-education-classroom-culture

Adult learner principles

And these are particular principles for teaching adults - again, please keep these in mind:

Adults need to be involved in their own learning.	**Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.**	**Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.**	**Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.**
Encourage participants to self-evaluate and assess their own learning and performance. Where possible, provide opportunities for participants to design their individual learning experience (i.e. through projects they choose and design).	Provide opportunities for learners to reflect upon and share their existing knowledge and experience.	Make a connection between the learning content and each participant's long-term professional or personal goals.	Share examples and stories that relate the learning content to participant's current challenges or ask participants to share their own examples[2].

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2   Adapted from Knowles, M. S. (1984). Andragogy in action: applying principles of adult learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Choosing lessons

We recommend you **always** include lesson 1A1, Introduction.

You are the designer of your training! You likely know and understand your participants pretty well. The suggested itineraries below are just that, suggestions. Feel free to pick and choose what you think will interest your participants.

Here are suggested "itineraries" for other lessons you may wish to include, depending on how many classroom hours you have. Also consider your audience's needs and media consumption habits when choosing lessons. For example, if they are mostly not social media users, skip lessons on photos in favor of lessons on text. If participants have expressed that they want help finding trustworthy reference websites, consider lessons 3A4 (Verifying evidence) and 3C3 (Good and bad sources of science information). Feel free to mix it up as you see fit.

If you have…

	2 days	3 days
1 hour 1A1 Introduction	Same as above, and add: 1A3 Information vs. persuasion 1A6 News and opinion 1B1 New forms of media 1C1 News selection 2A1 Types of misinformation 3A1 Overview and your trust gauge 3B3 Photo selection effect 3C2 Science news checklist 3D1 The future: You're leading the way	Same as above, and add: 1A4 First Amendment 1B2 Trust in media 1C3 Who owns the media? 2B1 Checking your emotions 2B3 Check your phone 3A3 Verifying sources and citations 3A4 Verifying evidence 3B2 Photo alteration 3B5 Fake social media accounts 3D3 Producing verifiable news
2 hours Same as above, and add: 3A2 Go to the source 3B1 Re-used photos and video		
3 hours Same as above, and add: 1A8 Journalism standards		
4 hours Same as above, and add: 2B2 Understanding headlines 2C1 Stereotypes		
7 hours Same as above, and add: 1A2 Types of info 1A5 Journalism: Who needs it? 3D1 Consumption and sharing habits		

Preparation

Gather supplies and create handouts

Go through the lessons you've chosen to include and make a list of all the handouts that you want to print out.

Next, use a template to make a syllabus of the lessons you will cover. You can find the template under Preparation, Syllabus Template.

Next, gather basic supplies (these are all summarized in the "Materials" section at the start of each lesson):

▶ Sticky notes, assorted colors (also called "stickies" or "Post-it" notes)[3]

▶ Black Sharpie markers — or any black marker that will write legibly on sticky notes. Fat tips encourage brevity, while fine point allows for nuance — choose appropriately! (Ballpoint pens don't work — the lines they make are too fine so they cannot be read at a distance.)[4]

▶ Flip chart markers in various colors

▶ Dry-erase markers and an eraser, if you have a venue with whiteboards

▶ Flip chart paper

▶ Tape: scotch and masking

▶ Blu Tack, or similar, to post items on the wall

▶ A roll of butcher or similar paper, especially if there are no surfaces to post items on the wall

▶ Stickers of various shapes (¼ -inch dots; hearts, stars, animals) to vote or indicate groups

▶ Scissors

▶ Projector with screen or blank wall

▶ Printer with copying capability, stocked with paper

▶ Laptops, if participants don't have their own computer's or the venue doesn't have them

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3 https://www.amazon.com/Sticky-Inches-Assorted-Sheets-3321-SSAN/dp/B0000E3QJW/ref=sr_1_1?s=office-products&ie=UTF8&qid=1406429124
4 https://www.amazon.com/Sharpie-Permanent-Markers-Point-30001/dp/B00006IFHD/ref=sr_1_1?s=office-products&ie=UTF8&qid=1406429025

Finding local examples

Throughout the curriculum, we have tried to provide a variety of examples drawn from both national and local media. You may wish, however, to find additional examples drawn from the local media in your own town or state. Here are some tips to help you do that:

1. Identify the type of content you're looking for. Is it something fabricated, a piece of user-generated content, or a real (if flawed) news story?

2. For real news stories, you have a few options. You can search directly on the websites of local news organizations. You can search their sites using Google, by Googling your keyword plus "site:outletaddress.com," where "outletaddress.com" is the web address of the media outlet in question. You could also just try Googling your search term plus your location, but be aware that not all results will be from reputable outlets.

3. Try searching for keywords and your location to find user-generated photos, comments and videos on Facebook or Twitter.

4. Fabricated content tends not to be produced locally, but there may be fake content related to events in your town. Try searching a fact-checker like Snopes for the name of your town.

5. Remember that if you're sharing fake content, you want to avoid revealing at first that the content is faked. You can use a fact checking organization like Snopes to locate the content, but share either a screenshot or an archived version (using archive.org/web) of the original hoax material.

Unit 1

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

► Identify their own media consumption habits

► Recognize how media evokes emotional reactions from the consumers

► Recognize that they have a responsibility when sharing media content

► Acknowledge the intent or agenda behind media outlet stories and headlines

► Be able to better understand and examine their own media consumption habits

► Learn strategies to help them better recognize and understand the emotional reactions they might have to news and media

Materials

► Slideshow

► Paper and pens

► Tape

► Highlighters

► Markers

Time Needed

1 hr. 25 min.

Definitions

Media: All types of mass communication (internet, broadcast, publishing), regarded collectively[1]

Media literacy: A skill set that promotes critical engagement with messages produced by the media[2]

Misinformation: Incorrect or misleading information[3]

Disinformation: Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country[4]

Mal-information: Genuine information that is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere[5]

1 Media. (n.d.). In OxfordDictionaries.com. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/media

2 Bulger, M., & Davison, P. (2018). The promises, challenges, and futures of media literacy. Retrieved from https://datasociety.net/output/the-promises-challenges-and-futures-of-media-literacy/

3 Misinformation. (n.d). In Merriam Webster Online. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misinformation

4 Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making*. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-researc/168076277c

5 Ibid.

Why it matters

Misinformation is all around us and it affects how we vote, the medical treatment we seek, and the opinions we form. Towards the end of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, the most popular misinformation about the election got more engagement on Facebook than the top factual election stories by news organizations like the New York Times and Washington Post.[6] Online misinformation is also a factor that increases the risk of epidemics from diseases preventable by vaccine.[7] For these reasons, alongside a host of other commonly held misperceptions and misunderstandings, it is imperative that we equip news consumers with the skills to discern true from false information in the daily onslaught of content. This is a big part of what's commonly referred to as media literacy. Leading thinkers on misinformation have suggested that media literacy is a key plank of the solution to misinformation, and must be pursued in earnest.

Trainer preparation

Print out enough handouts for all participants.

Set up computer and screen/projector so all participants can see the slideshow.

Procedure

Warm-up 10 min.

Arrange chairs in a circle, if possible. Ask each participant to introduce themselves, giving:

a) Their name.

b) A bit about themselves — whatever they'd like to share of their hometown, profession, children, hobbies, etc.

c) Why they joined the course

d) Something that no one else in the room knows about them. The last question should be fun; it will inevitably produce answers that people remember (e.g., "I went skydiving last week" or "I speak Esperanto").

Give an example by introducing yourself and answering these four questions.

Introduction 10 min.

Load the powerpoint in Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 1. Show powerpoint up through slide 10, then start discussion using Process questions.

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6   Silverman, Craig. (2016). A BuzzFeed News analysis found that top fake election news stories generated more total engagement on Facebook than top election stories from 19 major news outlets combined. Retrieved from https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook

7   Poland, G. A., & Jacobson, R. M. (2012). The clinician's guide to the anti-vaccinationists' galaxy. *Human Immunology*, *73*(8), 859–66. Retrieved from http://doi.org/10.1016/j.humimm.2012.03.014

Process questions

How hard is it to correct wrong or false information?

What does this suggest to you about your own responsibilities when it comes to sharing information?

Talking points

It's very hard to correct misinformation. We saw that misinformation often gets more traction than the corrective information that comes after. This means it's all the more important for us to carefully judge what we read and view, and avoid sharing something if it might be misinformation. It's important to realize that **all of us** are working against our natural instincts when we try to disengage from sensational information. Sensationalism works because human beings are drawn to it. That is why false stories travel faster than true ones. False, sensational stories work because they touch upon something we value and at the same time, create fear. Fear turns off our ability to think critically. This is why it is important to coach yourself to recognize these emotions when they are triggered.

Activity 1 15 min.

Give everyone the **My information consumption** log, sheets of paper, and pens or pencils.

Have people complete the log, filling in what media they consume regularly (email, twitter, radio, tv shows, etc.), and what content they consume on each platform. For example, they might watch the Today Show in the morning, listen to a podcast on the way to work on the bus, and check Facebook at lunch on a work computer. Tell everyone to list as much as possible and whatever comes to mind. Remember to include **all** media here — it doesn't just have to be the news.

My information consumption log:

Please see Unit I, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 1: My information consumption.

Ask people to jot down any trends they notice in their habits, or whether anything surprised them.

Then, on a blank piece of paper, have everyone list the tech devices they use regularly (phones, computers, tablets, tv).

Now have everyone place the two sheets of paper side by side, tape them together, and draw lines from devices (such as phones, computers) to the types of media they consume (such as podcasts, news articles) to create a web. This can help people illustrate that they consume news on tv, they listen to podcasts on their phone, etc.

Finally, have everyone highlight in a color devices that they use simultaneously — texting while watching TV, etc.

Tell people their lists probably look like a mess now!

Share something about your own information use that you learned when you first did this exercise that surprised you. (Be brave! Share something slightly embarrassing — this will encourage others to open up).

Have volunteers share their daily habits.

Process questions

How do you feel seeing this list? How do you feel about the media and tech you use?

Does this seem like a lot of information coming at you? How does that affect your ability to discern the quality of information?

Talking points 1: Media overload 5 min.

Media overload is a documented phenomenon and a lot of us feel overwhelmed by how much media we consume, how much media we are expected to keep up with, how many devices we have, etc. It can be hard to unplug. However, there are documented negative effects, especially related to social media. For example, a recent nationally representative study found that the more time young adults use social media, the more likely they are to be depressed, according to new research from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.[8]

Being aware of certain habits and learning additional media literacy skills can help you navigate media more efficiently and find ways to help you avoid feeling totally overwhelmed. We must all take responsibility for the information we consume.

Talking points 2: Name It to Tame It 5 min.

News and media can make us feel a certain way. For example, we can be surprised, angry, confused, or sad. Taking a minute to identify your emotional reaction, and to take a pause (and a bit of distance) from it can help you better understand the news and media you are seeing, better understand you own views towards a topic, and help you avoid falling for content that might not be true.

We call this principle "Name It to Tame It" (borrowing a phrase from Dr. Dan Siegel, researcher on interpersonal neurobiology).[9] The act of finding words to describe your emotions turns on the part of your brain that gives you mental control and the ability to regulate yourself (the "executive brain"). This gives you the ability to choose how you respond to the thing that provoked the reaction. Pausing, taming your reaction, and activating the executive brain will help you determine the truth of the information, or at least help stop you from sharing something that you are not sure is true.

8   Social media use associated with depression among U.S. young adults. (2016). University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). Retrieved from https://www.upmc.com/media/news/lin-primack-sm-depression

9   Dan Siegel: Name It to Tame It. Video posted by Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcDLzppD4Jc. Siegel said of the use of Name It to Tame It in this curriculum: "Name it to tame it is a phrase inspired by the research on how linguistically assigning a word to an emotion experienced or perceived in photograph seems to enable the brain to be more balanced in its functioning. Such reflective states combined with linguistic naming may indeed be a part of stopping automatic, reflexive ways of behaving. So in these ways it seems appropriate to apply to your media literacy project."

TRAINER NOTES

Activity 2 15 min.

In this activity, participants will examine their feelings about cars, self-driving cars, and Uber.

Hand out the Wheel of Emotions handout. *(See Unit 1, Part 1, Lesson 1, Activity 2, Wheel of Emotions.)*

Ask if people are familiar with self-driving cars. If not, explain that these are cars that drive themselves without any help from a human.

Make sure participants have a clean sheet of paper. Display example headlines, and mention that these are all real headlines. ADVANCE TO SLIDE 11.

Give participants a chance to read and absorb each headline.

ADVANCE TO SLIDE 12, the Name It To Tame It steps.

Read these aloud:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.
2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?
3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

Now, ask them to write down the feelings they experienced. Acknowledge that it may be hard to put a label on an emotion, and it may feel uncomfortable.

If participants are having trouble naming the feeling, suggest they look at the Wheel of Emotions handout for ideas. Give them time to digest and process.

Ask: which of the headlines make you want to share the news with others? Why?

Repeat the exercise with slides 13-16.

Ask: has anyone ever seen an example of content that someone you know shared that provoked a strong reaction in you? What was it? How did you react? What did you think? How might sharing something that provokes others be risky? [Come prepared with your own example to share, and offer it first or early on in the conversation, to warm things up.]

Optional: Discuss the exercise afterwards as a group and see how people are feeling. Did their feelings change depending on the headlines they were seeing? Did they get stronger in a certain direction (e.g., anger, confusion, annoyance)?

Alternative for this entire exercise: Use a Think-Pair-Share approach. Divide the participants into pairs (you may want to pair men with women and vice versa). For each slide, have the participants first go through the Name It To Tame It steps on their own, then share their feelings with their partners.

Activity 3 10 min.

In this activity we're going to get a little more practice with Name It to Tame It.

Show participants slides 17-22.

Again, this can be run individually, followed by an optional group share; or you can run the activity using the Think-Pair-Share approach outlined above.

With the more extreme examples, ask: Who would want you to react to these headlines with strong emotions? Who is benefitting?

Talking points 3

We hope these exercises gave you a little insight into how headlines and other content play upon your emotions. This is going to be an important theme in this course. Acknowledging the emotions that content generates is the first step towards deciding how to act on that content — or not.

Throughout the course, you'll see the "Name It to Tame It" logo appear as a reminder to always check in with your emotions as a first step towards judging any information.

Trainer tips

It's OK if people aren't able to talk openly in the group about feelings yet — it's only the first lesson. The important thing is they acknowledge their feelings to themselves.

Depending on your audience, you can feel free to adapt the example topic to better suit your needs. If you are selecting your own example topic, try to pick something that generates some debate. However, try to avoid highly politicized or hotly contested topics that might either shut down or derail discussion.

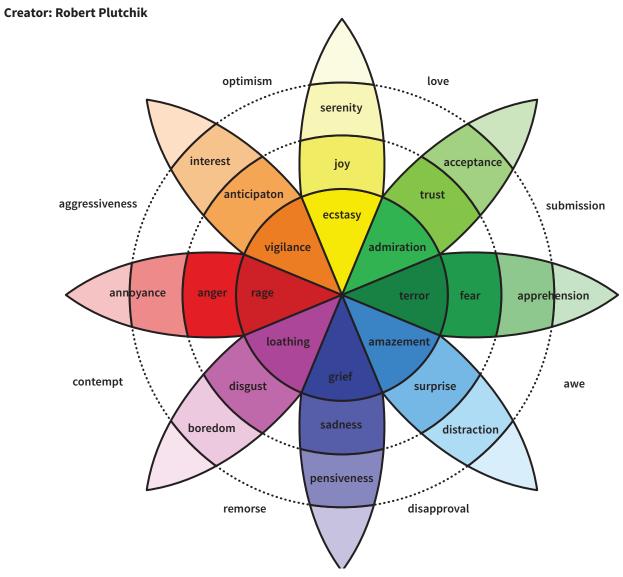For other examples and slide show materials, *see: IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.*

Talking points 4 5 min.

The rest of this course is geared to help you learn how to Name It to Tame It and generally become discerning information consumers. The information ecosystem is complex, so there's a lot of material to cover! Here's what we'll be looking at (*note:* only mention the topics that you'll be covering):

TRAINER NOTES

Types of content: Is this content meant to inform or persuade? Is it news, opinion or analysis? This is the first step to judging content.

The First Amendment — This law supports media freedom in the U.S., so understanding it helps us comprehend why we see such a broad variety of information around us.

Why we need journalism — Journalism supports our democracy and helps us live our lives. If we value it, we'll be better placed to avoid information that doesn't serve us.

Journalism standards — These help us tell good journalism from bad.

New forms of media — The changing media makes it harder to tell what's real, but this lesson will help.

Trust in media — Why do we trust the media we do? This lesson will challenge you to think differently.

News selection — Why do journalists choose the stories they do? This lesson will help you understand.

Objectivity versus balance — It's important to know the difference, so we can better judge the content we read.

Media ownership — The entities that own media outlets can (but often don't) shape what we see and read.

Types of misinformation — What to watch for when you're reading content.

Checking your emotions — How to combat fear, anger, and surprise so you can better judge information.

Headlines — Why you have to go beyond the first line to see what's really being reported.

Stereotypes and bias — How we are all susceptible to untruths about certain groups, and how to combat bias.

Checking sources, citations, and evidence — Checking out the key signals of trustworthiness in written content.

Checking photos, videos, and social media — How we can see if an image is re-used or faked, and how to be on the lookout for other types of social media fakery.

Science and health news — How should we evaluate these kinds of stories? Where can we go for solid health information?

The future — What's next for misinformation, and why you shouldn't be scared.

Consumption and sharing habits — Change your habits to prevent information overload and decrease your vulnerability to misinformation.

Producing verifiable news — Your chance to produce solid, reliable information of your own!

Conclusions

We are bombarded with information and it can be difficult to tell truth from fiction. To be more critical consumers of news and media, it can be helpful to recognize and understand your own emotional reactions to various topics covered in the news. Using Name It to Tame It — observing and setting aside your strong emotional reactions — can help you be a more critical and self-aware consumer of news and media. After that, it's critical to be careful about whether we share the information we come across. Keep in mind that you are the information gatekeepers, and false information travels faster and further than corrections. Therefore, take steps to think critically before you share information.

 Handout

The wheel of emotions
Creator: Robert Plutchik

optimism
love
serenity
joy
acceptance
interest
trust
aggressiveness
anticipaton
ecstasy
submission
vigilance
admiration
annoyance
anger
rage
terror
fear
apprehension
loathing
amazement
contempt
disgust
grief
surprise
awe
boredom
sadness
distraction
pensiveness
remorse
disapproval

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

▶ recognize different types of media content and different ways of conveying information, such as informing, propaganda, social advertising, public relations, and commercial advertising

Materials

▶ Printouts or slides of the examples

▶ Handouts

▶ Sticky notes

▶ Pens

▶ Markers

Time Needed

50 min.

Trainer preparation

Prepare computer and screen if using slides.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Today we're going to learn how to identify different ways of conveying information including informing, propaganda, social advertising, public relations, and commercial advertising. This is important because we have to understand the aims an information creator has before we can judge the credibility of the information.

Activity 1 15 min.

Form 2-3 groups. Give each group different examples of information such as reporting, propaganda, and advertising. Give each group sticky notes to record their thoughts and a copy of the list of content categories (in the handout files).

Groups have 5 minutes to view the examples and categorize them using the sticky notes.

After working in groups, they should present their work and share why they chose certain labels for their examples in the final 10 minutes of this activity.

Trainer tips

Depending on your situation, you can run this exercise by dropping examples you like into a PowerPoint slide show, where participants can view the different examples and record their thoughts; or you can run this exercise using handouts (making printouts of the examples), where participants can record their thoughts using sticky notes and can label their posters handouts.

For examples, see IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.

Talking points   5 min.

The instructor should congratulate participants on answers they got right, and ask the participants to further consider (individually for now) "How did you reach that conclusion?" The answer is that we all have certain clues we look for, but we often don't get very explicit about what those clues are. Learning to identify practical markers of different types of information is a good way to become more conscious information consumers who can make these distinctions more readily in the future.

Activity 2   30 min.

Form 2-3 groups to perform the task. Give each group the handout "Practical markers 1: Six content types."

Please see Unit I, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Practical Markers 1: Six Types of Content.

The trainer will divide the students into groups and give each group a different type of communication content: "reporting," "opinion," "advertising," "social advertising," "PR," or "propaganda." Each group will choose one example from their category to analyze. (The examples were categorized in the previous activity.) They should decide whether their content type counts as "information" or "persuasion," and write the content type in the relevant box.

Participants should then answer the questions, using the example(s) that pertain to their content type (in 5 minutes) and write them in the handouts. The trainer may want to give an example and go through one type together as a large group.

Trainer tips

While the groups complete the handout, divide your flipchart into two vertical sections, one for Information and one for Persuasion. You will use this to record and share participants' answers. Note that a common theme will emerge for all types of Persuasion (that their purpose is to influence, and they tend to appeal to emotions more than information does), though they may provoke slightly different answers depending on the exact content type.

TRAINER NOTES

The following chart provides guidance **for trainers** on the type of answers they should expect to see. Note that there will be some variation, especially given the different examples available to participants. This chart is also available in *Unit I, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Practical markers 1: Guidance for trainers.*

Information versus Persuasion
Practical markers 1: Six Content Types
REFERENCE FOR TRAINERS

Content type	Reporting	Opinion	Advertising	Social advertising	PR	Propaganda
This is a form of:	*Information*	*Persuasion*	*Persuasion*	*Persuasion*	*Persuasion*	*Persuasion*
Does it use fact or opinion?	Should be mostly facts. The opinions are attributed to other speakers — they are not the opinion of the author.	The author expresses his or her opinion. Better opinion pieces are supported by facts.	Opinion, that you should buy the product or service.	Opinion, about how you should behave.	Opinion, about the company in question.	Opinion, usually about politics.
For what purpose?	To inform.	To influence (what you believe).	To influence (what you buy).	To influence (how you behave, for the good of yourself or society).	To influence (how you think about a company).	To influence or compel (your political views, your political choices, etc.).
What emotions, impressions, or effects does it elicit?	Curiosity, interest, learning.	Fear, anger, concern.	Desire, joy, concern.	Altruism, fear, concern.	Positive feelings towards company.	Pride, feeling of being a part of something, anger, desire to act, hatred, fear, horror.
How does it work (through what mechanisms)?	Description, depiction, comparison.	Argument, description, comparison, appeal to emotion.	Appeal to desires, appealing or arresting imagery or music.	Appeal to morality, sympathy, sense of responsibility, desire for self-improvement. May borrow techniques from commercial advertising.	Appeal to positive emotions, association.	Insult, insinuation, exaggeration, distraction, views of authority figures, juggling with facts, manipulating with symbols and stereotypes, constant repetition.
What is its attitude towards its subject?	Neutral.	Positive or negative.	Positive.	Positive (as in prevention, action to address a problem) and/or negative (about the problem).	Positive.	Positive or negative.

After 5 minutes are up, ask the Information group to present their work on the flipchart. Then ask one of the Persuasion groups to present their work on the flipchart. Ask other participants for their feedback — they may add additional elements to the table.

Once the chart is completed, the trainer should look at the completed table. Compare the answers in this filled-in chart with the participants' answers. Did they identify markers for information and persuasion correctly? If the answers coincide, praise the participants. If they do not or match only partially, take time to review these concepts and discuss why discrepancies occurred.

Process questions

What commonalities did you see among the different types of persuasion?

Does persuasion ever have negative effects? Positive effects? Is it useful? Why?

Talking points 5 min.

Information presents facts that are intended to educate people on a topic or topics. It may include some opinions about the facts, but the opinions are clearly labeled, and are not the main focus of the informative piece.

For all types of persuasion, the purpose is to influence. Persuasive content also tends to appeal to emotions more than Informing content does.

Persuasion is a problem when its true nature is hidden. For example, if you notice a "paid advertisement" label on an article authored by Toyota or GE, you'll probably keep in mind the company's motives when judging the piece. If it's not labeled as such, you might not be as skeptical as you should be.

Also keep in mind that even the highest-quality opinion pieces don't give you the whole truth. The individual facts provided may be accurate, but the author will leave out most facts that disprove his main idea. That's why it's important to read a variety of opinions, and to seek out purely factual pieces. Keep in mind that low-quality opinion pieces may contain information that is false!

Conclusions 5 min.

In this session, participants learned the differences between information and persuasion. While reporting is a form of information, many other types of content in our environment — PR, advertising, propaganda, and so on — are intended to persuade. Participants should feel some familiarity with the markers of particular types of persuasion, as well as persuasive content in general.

TRAINER NOTES

Handout

Practical markers 1: Six content types

Write in your observations about the example below.

My example: _____

To whom is it directed (audience)?	
For what purpose?	
What emotions, impressions, or effects does it elicit?	
How does it work (through what mechanisms)?	
What is its attitude towards its subject?	
What type of information does it present?	
What is its impact on the media consumer?	

My content type is: _____

This is a form of:

☐   Information
☐   Persuasion

Unit 1 > Part A > Lesson 3: Information vs. persuasion

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- ▶ Understand the difference between information and persuasion
- ▶ Improve their understanding of major principles of media, namely intent, methods, and audience
- ▶ Be better able to analyze media in their own environment
- ▶ Further develop critical thinking and analytical skills for assessing media

Trainer preparation

Set up video and screen.

Materials

- ▶ Handouts: Empty "Practical markers 2" chart, "Fact sheet: The flu vaccine"
- ▶ Computer and screen for showing video examples

Time Needed

50 min. - 1 hr.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.
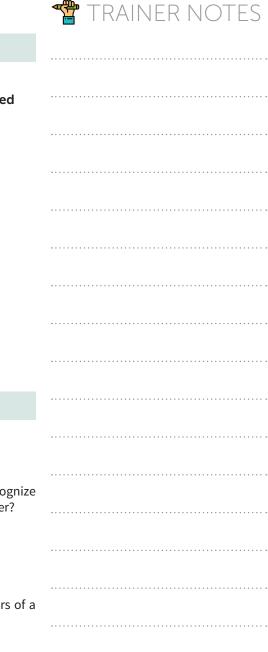
Now we're going to take the skills you learned in the last session and put them into practice. You know how to recognize information and persuasion when you see them, but do you know how the different types of content are put together?

Activity 1 30 min.

Divide participants into two groups: one for the "reporters," one for the "commentators."

- ▶ The "reporters'" job is to inform and not persuade. The "commentators" job is to try and persuade the others of a position of their choosing.
- ▶ Give both groups the same fact sheet on the flu vaccine (see below).
- ▶ Each group will have ten minutes to read their facts and decide how they will use the facts while fulfilling their role.

Each group selects one presenter. The group helps the presenter prepare a two minute presentation. It can be read, memorized, prompted by notes, or improvised.

Give the group questions of presentation to consider: Will you use all the facts? Will you say anything else? What kind of language will you use?

Recommend that presenters practice before other members of the group; the group should give feedback.

Use questions and answers from the last lesson if presenters get stuck, e.g., "What is your attitude towards your subject? What emotions are you trying to elicit?"

After ten minutes are up, each group will have two minutes to present.

Then come back together as one large group and discuss.

Process questions

What elements made one presentation informative, and the other persuasive? Is there anything you would have done differently if you were on the other team?

Talking points

The informative piece should have stuck to facts, and not offered any opinion. The persuasive piece could have used facts from the fact sheet — the best arguments are supported by facts — but its main point should have been to offer an opinion.

A training might include two rounds: the first reporting versus news commentary (opinion), the second reporting vs. social advertising or propaganda. Teams could be encouraged to really get creative in the second round.

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 3, Activity 1.

Fact sheet: The flu vaccine

► Every year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized because of the flu, and thousands die.

► An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself against flu and reduce the risk of spreading it to others.

► Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

► The Centers for Disease Control says that everyone six months or older should get a flu shot every flu season.

► Vaccination is especially important for those who are at risk of developing complications from the flu. These include young children, pregnant women, adults age 65 or older, and people with certain chronic medical conditions.

► Even if you don't fall into one of these vulnerable categories, getting the flu vaccine helps you to protect people around you who do fall in these categories.

► Certain people should not get flu shots, but these exceptions are rare. Such people include those with life-threatening allergies to the flu vaccine or to its ingredients, which might include gelatin or antibiotics.

► After you get vaccinated, it takes about two weeks for your body to develop the antibodies that will protect it against flu.

► It is possible you could still get the flu after being vaccinated. But getting the flu shot reduces your risk. In many years, it has reduced the risk of getting the flu by 40 to 60%. In the 2017-18 flu season, the vaccine reduced the risk of getting the flu by about a third.

Activity 2 10 min

Watch two short videos: one informative, one persuasive. See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.

Process questions

How do you know if this is informative or persuasive? What tools or techniques did they use that you yourself used? Did they blur the lines between information and persuasion? What do you do when you see information versus persuasion? Knowing this now, does this make you think differently about the information you consume?

Talking points

Possible answers: The aim of the persuasive pieces is to convince the audience of something, while the informative pieces aim simply to inform. Persuasive pieces often try to make their subject look good (in the case of an advertiser or politician) or bad (in the case of a health danger). Informative pieces tell you "what happened." Informative pieces try to give both sides, if there is a debate. Persuasive pieces rely heavily on emotion and imagery. Persuasive pieces can contain facts and references, but the use of facts is selective.

Activity 3 10 min.

Now that we have had some practice with the key questions used to discern information from persuasion, let's look at some trickier examples. Watch two of the following short videos.

Examples:

See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.

Process questions

How do you know if this is informative or persuasive? What tools or techniques did they use that you yourself used? Did they blur the lines between information and persuasion? What do you do when you see information versus persuasion? Knowing this now, how does this make you think differently about the information you consume?

Talking points

Possible answers: These pieces blur the lines a bit more than our initial examples. The key is to think about the maker's aims. For example, the Budweiser ad gives true information about Budweiser's activities, but because the aim is to make the company look good, this is advertising. (Compare this with the news piece about Budweiser, which aims to inform, as does the HUD story.) The ad about marijuana and children cites news sources, but its aim again is to persuade you. The BBC ad seems at first to be informative, then entertaining, but its aim is to get you to use the BBC's iPlayer service. The anti-smoking ad contains facts, but its aim is to keep you from smoking, so it's persuasive.

Trainer tips

We won't have participants fill in the same chart as last time, since that would be repetitive. But here's a version of the chart as a prompt — you can use this to think about relevant questions to ask.

Conclusions 5 min.

Information and persuasion are created with different intents: one is to inform, the other to persuade. There are other differences, but thinking about the content creator's goal is key to distinguishing information and persuasion. Once you have that goal in mind, it's easier to know how skeptical you should be about the content in front of you. Recognizing persuasion for what it is helps avoid being manipulated. However, we must remember that persuasion is also a valid and even necessary type of information in many cases, such as public health.

Chart for trainers' reference:

Please see Unit A, Part A, Lesson 3, Activity 3.

Practical markers 2: Six content types

My content type is:		
This is a form of: (Use the column under the box you check)	Information ☐	Persuasion ☐
For what purpose?		
Is it intended to inform or to appeal to emotions?		
What emotions, impressions, or effects does it elicit?		
How does it work (through what mechanisms)?		
What is its attitude towards its subject?		
What type of information does it present?		
What is its potential impact on the media consumer?		

🖐 TRAINER NOTES

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Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Understand the content, role and implications of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

▶ Understand how the First Amendment allows both information and persuasion of all types

Materials

▶ Handouts: Copy of First Amendment, Reporters Without Borders index (as a backup to PowerPoint), paper, pens

▶ Computer and screen for playing videos

▶ Topic and restriction cards — you can create these on simple index cards

Time Needed

1 hr. 30 min., or 1 hr. 10 min. if only excerpts of the Annenberg video are shown.

Trainer preparation

Set up computer and screen.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Censorship is control by the state, organizations, or other groups of people over the public expression of information, thoughts, or creativity. It is usually seen in the suppression of ideas and discussion of certain topics.

The First Amendment is this country's strongest means of protecting its citizens against censorship, and benefits us in a variety of ways. Let's learn more about the First Amendment with a video.

Training tips

Discussion of the First Amendment could trigger some strong emotions or debate. Some might bring up restrictions they would like to see, such as prohibition of hate speech, restrictions on flag burning or disrespect for officials. Try to emphasize that the point of today's lesson is to learn what the current law around the First Amendment actually is, not to debate potential changes to the law; and to talk specifically about how the First Amendment allows criticism of the government.

Warm-up 5 min.

Play the Annenberg video on freedom of the press. *See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.*

If time is limited, show 1:59-6:02 only, and skip the later installments of the video.

For the full exercise: Start at the beginning and play until 6:14 (you'll play other parts of the video later).

Talking points 5 min.

The First Amendment offers extensive protection for almost anything you could think to say or write. It also protects freedom of religion and the rights of people to assemble and protest. Here it is in its entirety. *Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, The First Amendment.*

HandoutThe First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Process questions

What *doesn't* the First Amendment let you say or publish?

(The next activity will provide answers.)

Activity 1 35 min.

Now play the video from 6:14-14:18. *See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.*

Read each of the following examples. Have participants number the rows on their paper 1-12, and ask participants to write down on their paper: "protected" (for those items that are definitely protected speech under the First Amendment), "not protected" (for those items that are definitely not protected speech under the First Amendment), and "some restrictions" (if there are some restrictions on the speech under the First Amendment).

After they write all their answers down, go through the items one by one. This time ask participants to volunteer their answers, and discuss: Why do you think this speech is or is not protected under the First Amendment?

Remember, the idea is not to debate if these speech acts **should** be protected, although that is a worthy debate. In this lesson we just want people to understand what the First Amendment covers in its current interpretation.

TRAINER NOTES

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, Public Free Speech: Protected or Not.

Answers:

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, ANSWERS: Public Free Speech: Protected or Not.

Examples (and answers):

1. An editorial calling a politician "incompetent" (protected)

2. A restaurant review saying the food is awful (protected)

3. An article calling a celebrity "ugly" and "overrated" (protected)

4. Your teenage child insulting her public school teacher with vulgar words (not protected; schools can adopt policies against vulgarities and disruption of the school environment)

5. A high school protest against government policies (protected)[10]

6. An article accusing a politician of embezzling funds (some restrictions; there's no prior restriction on printing this; however, the politician could sue the paper and if the accusations are found to be false and to have been published with reckless disregard for the truth, he could win.)

7. Reporting a leak from within the White House (some restrictions; usually protected, but reporter and paper could run into legal trouble if they reveal secret information related to national security)

8. Hate speech calling a racial group stupid and lazy (protected)

9. A Neo-Nazi march through an ethnic minority neighborhood (protected)

10. The leader of an extreme group says, "We're going to take the streets in violent revolution."(protected; only incitement to imminent violence is prohibited, and that is narrowly defined)

11. The leader of an extreme group calls on his followers to go on a killing spree tonight (not protected; Supreme Court has made a narrow exception to First Amendment protection for speech that incites to imminent lawless action)[11]

12. A rally walking down Main Street with protest songs, drums, and a brass band (some restrictions; it could be required to obtain a permit, and be subject to "time, place, and manner" restrictions, such as being told not to rally at 2 a.m.)[12]

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10 Chmara, Teresa. (2015). Do minors have First Amendment rights in schools? Knowledge Quest, 44(1), 8-13. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/Do%20Minors%20Have%20First%20Amendment%20Rights%20in%20Schools.pdf

11 Speech from campus. (n.d.). ACLU. Retrieved from https://www.aclu.org/other/speech-campus

12 Many thanks to First Amendment scholar Wendy Seltzer of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society for her review of this exercise.

Talking points

People often get confused about what it means for something to be protected under the First Amendment. It doesn't mean that no one can ever tell you what not to say, or exclude you from a private group or establishment on the basis of your words. If I run a stamp collectors' club, and you spend all the meetings berating me, I have a right to tell you you're banned from the club. The First Amendment does pertain, however, to public institutions. That's why there's a number of rulings relating to public schools. Most of the First Amendment rights that we adults enjoy in public squares, students also enjoy in school — but there are some exceptions to prevent disruptions to learning. That's why your high schooler can't cuss out her teacher.

While hate speech is abhorrent, most hate speech is permitted under the First Amendment. Indeed, some argue that the whole idea of the First Amendment is to protect speech some might find offensive. After all, if everyone felt a particular statement was OK, no one would try to supress the speaker, and he or she wouldn't need a First Amendment to protect him or her. If we start carving away types of speech we think no one should be allowed to say, where would we stop? Who would get to decide?

Now play the video from 14:18 to the end. *See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.*

Or, play the alternative video. *See IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.*

Activity 2 20 min.

Process questions

What is censorship? Where is it practiced?

Talking points

The need for stability in a given society is often used as justification for censorship. Many countries around the world don't have the type of protections we enjoy under the 1st Amendment. 2017 was the worst year on record for journalist imprisonment, with 262 journalists in jail worldwide, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. 51% of them are imprisoned in just three countries: Turkey, China, and Egypt. But even here in the U.S., journalists' freedoms continue to be tested.

TRAINER NOTES

Chart from Reporters Without Borders:

Where are journalists protected?

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE 2018

Legend:
- GOOD SITUATION
- SATISFACTORY SITUATION
- NOTICEABLE PROBLEM
- DIFFICULT SITUATION
- VERY SERIOUS SITUATION

www.rsf.org

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 2, Journalist Protection Map.

Process questions

How do these situations affect people's ability to get reliable information about their government?

Talking points

When the press is intimidated, or their access blocked, they often cannot tell citizens what their government is doing. This allows governments to act with impunity, and allows corrupt or incompetent politicians to stay in power. Now let's look at some real-life censorship impacts [choose a few from the following].

Further examples at:
IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles

Special Process questions

Do you think the environment is changing for press freedom in the U.S.?

Training tips

Don't try to force a single "right" answer to the questions above. Participants' answers could be colored by their political affiliation. Instead, just listen to what they have to say on the above questions, and try to get broad participation, not letting one person dominate. Also, don't let the conversation get side-tracked by debate on particular policies or politicians. Try to keep focused on the question of press freedom.

"Fake news" laws (feature only after some of the earlier examples)

See:
IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles

Special Process questions

If the allegations are true, is this a good way to deal with fake news? Why might the government call something "fake news"?

Talking points

Answers will vary, but some might suggest that this allows the government to decide what's "fake" — and what it decides will be in its own interest, not necessarily in line with the truth.

Activity 3   15 min.

How would censorship affect your ability to live your life and speak your mind? In this activity we're going to find out.

Split the group into pairs.

TRAINER NOTES

Provide each pair with two sets of cards: one is a topic, one is a type of restriction.

Individuals take turns within the pairs. A participant should take one of each card type. The participant then has to say at least three sentences about the topic, while observing the restriction listed on the restriction card. For example, the participant might have to talk about a movie she hated while still talking about the actors, director, etc., with reverence.

The pair should then discuss how difficult it was (or not) to address the given topic while the restrictions muzzled their speech. Then they switch, and the other participant takes one of each type of card and repeats the exercise.

Topics:

- ▶ A movie you hated
- ▶ A politician who makes you angry
- ▶ A concern you have about a political or social issue

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 3, Topics.

Restrictions:

- ▶ Don't insult
- ▶ Speak of the person or subject with reverence
- ▶ Don't say anything that might turn out to be untrue
- ▶ Don't say anything the government didn't tell you directly

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 3, Restrictions.

Then bring the group back together.

Process questions

How hard was that? When should or shouldn't these restrictions apply?

Talking points

Censorship makes it difficult to talk about many of the topics we care about. The aim of censorship is usually to protect people in power, such as the government. If we want to see changes to government policies or leadership, we need to be

able to talk frankly to each other, and the press needs to publish freely. You might think we should restrict untrue speech, but this puts the government in the position of getting to decide "what's true" — and they might not be honest about it!

Conclusions 5 min.

The First Amendment is crucial because it protects the ability of people — everyone, including reporters and opinion writers but also you and me — to say what they like about the issues that concern them. It's especially important that we are able to say what we like and don't like about the government. This enables us to protest, pressure the government for change and make decisions at the ballot box. Some speech is objectionable or even offensive, but protections under the First Amendment need to be wide so that we can speak our criticisms, and say things that other people don't want to hear. The First Amendment is the bedrock of how the news media operates in the United States. We'll be learning more about the importance of the news media in the next lesson.

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Understand why journalists do much of what they do, and what their ultimate aims are

▶ Better understand the role of journalism in their own media environment, and its importance for a functioning democracy

▶ Understand the methods of journalism and how it can foster social good, including empowering citizens to make the best possible decisions

Materials

▶ Journalist "baseball" type cards

▶ Issues signs (write up each issue on separate flip charts ahead of time)

▶ Tape

▶ Place signs with different issues (listed below) around the room, flipped over with the blank sides up.

Time Needed

45 min.

Trainer preparation

Set up video and screen.

Procedure

Introduction 10 min.

Ask participants: What issues do you care about? Does journalism cover these?

Some potential answers (to both questions): health, politics, education, children, sports, arts, entertainment, transportation, city planning/development, equality, discrimination, policing, crime, safety, jobs, economy, taxes, insurance, retirement, environment, water quality, air quality, parks.

For pretty much anything you care about, there are journalists who write about that subject. Some subjects are more entertaining. For example, you might use journalism to keep up with your favorite sports team, or read about a movie you plan to see.

But a lot of journalism has a serious impact on our lives. The individuals who go into this profession usually do so because they want to make a positive difference, improving their town, the nation, or the world. (The money in journalism is not

very good!) They expose wrongdoing, highlight the plight of those less fortunate, and even give us information we can use to make decisions about our lives, like where are the best schools, or how we can keep in shape. They do this in the face of enormous pressure to keep churning out stories in a limited amount of time, and are sometimes faced with pressure from politicians or advertisers who don't want to see these stories published.

In this day and age, we get our information from all kinds of sources, not just journalists, and there is a lot of public criticism of journalists and the media. But journalists have played — and still play — a very important role in improving the lives of people. In looking at the range of information creators, we wouldn't want to leave out the journalists. In this lesson, we'll look at some journalists who have made a powerful difference in the U.S. and around the world.

Activity 1   30 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 5, Baseball cards

After the initial discussion, flip the issue signs over. You'll have a sign for each one of these issues:

► Environment
► Health and safety
► Human rights
► Children
► Government and corporate corruption

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 5, Activity 1, Issues

Hand out to each participant a Journalist "Baseball Card."

The Journalist Baseball cards include: name of a journalist, a picture, a snippet from the newspaper article that exposed the issue, and evidence of how journalism changed things (changed law, lives saved, etc.).

Ask them to match the card to the issue that each journalist worked on and stand next to the sign with the issue that relates to their journalist.

Answers: Issues, with the journalists that best fit under each:

► Environment (Carson)
► Health and safety (Sinclair, Adams, Werner)
► Human rights (Morel, Skinner, Wells, Shah, Liu)
► Children (Chicago Tribune; Boston Globe [could also go under human rights])
► Government and corporate corruption (Tarbell)

TRAINER NOTES

Handout

Debrief: Did the issue resonate with you? Why?

Next, pick 3-4 participants to role play. These participants will assume the identity of the journalist on their card, presenting themselves to the group as their chosen journalist: for example "Hi, I'm Rachel Carson, and I wrote about the dangers of the pesticide DDT…"

Ask each of the presenters to share with the group, in the role of their chosen journalist:

What issues are you concerned about today? (Pretend all the journalists are still alive.)

What makes your job difficult today?

Trainer tips

Possible answers to the question, "What issues are you concerned about today?":

- ► Environmental journalists: Climate change, air pollution, water pollution, loss of habitat, endangered species
- ► Health journalists: Poor insurance coverage, conflicts of interest in industry-funded research, need for more research (e.g., on possible carcinogens)
- ► Human rights journalists: Religious freedom, poor working conditions in many industries, restrictions on women's rights
- ► Children's rights/safety journalists: Child labor, trafficking, migrants
- ► Government/corporate corruption journalists: Voting inference, enrichment at public expense, monopolies and in-dustry consolidations

Process questions

Can you name three journalists working today whom you trust? Why do you value them?

If you can't name three journalists whom you trust: Why do you think this is?

Talking points

A lot of times we don't notice the names of journalists — we're more focused on the name of the publication, or the content of the story. We might be better able to recall names of TV correspondents as compared to newspaper reporters, because we hear TV correspondents' names out loud, and we see their faces for a few seconds. We probably remember anchors

better than correspondents, because we see more of them. But some of the people we see the most of aren't delivering news at all — they're giving opinion, or hosting others who give their opinion. That's OK, as long as we can identify when we're hearing news and when we're hearing opinion.

Conclusions 5 min.

Today we looked at some of the extraordinary contributions journalists have made towards improving our society. It's because of journalists that we've uncovered child abuse in the Catholic Church, exposed modern-day slavery, banned certain dangerous chemicals, instituted food safety standards, and more. With all the problems in our country and around the world affecting our health, education, the safety of our children, the health of the planet and our basic human rights, it's crucial that journalists be allowed to keep investigating and reporting on our behalf. They arm us with the information to make decisions in our daily lives and at the ballot box.

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Understand major principles of media, including the division between reporting and opinion, and the markers for detecting each in their own media environment

▶ Understand how and why the media transmits news and opinion as it does, and the role that both news and opinion play in a well functioning democracy

Materials

▶ Copies of opinion and informative pieces to share

▶ Handouts "Telling fact from opinion," "Answers: Telling fact from opinion," handouts of an example news piece and an example opinion piece, "News and opinion markers"

▶ Highlighters — yellow, orange, and green — one set per participant

Time Needed

1 hours 10 min.

Trainer preparation

Set up video and screen.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Ask participants: what is journalism?

The American Press Institute says "Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities."

This doesn't mean that some journalists don't also give opinions. Think of editorials in the newspaper. It just means that opinion should be kept separate from news, and should be clearly labeled.

Today we'll talk about how to tell news from opinion. First, we'll talk about the difference between opinion and statements of fact. Then we'll talk about how journalists use these two very different types of statements, and what makes a piece news or opinion. Then we'll talk about the role that each type of piece plays, and why they're both important, but need to be clearly labeled and understood.

Process questions 5 min.

Before we talk in particular about types of journalism, let's just talk about the two types of statements. What is an opinion, and what is a statement of fact?

Talking points 5 min.

Try to bring participants around to these fundamental distinctions:

An opinion is a belief or point of view. It might be based on facts, but you cannot demonstrate that an opinion itself is true or false. For example, it is my *opinion* that California is the best state for a vacation.

A statement of fact is something you can show to be true or false. You can check whether it's true, and demonstrate its truth or falsehood to someone with evidence. Factual statements about California include the number of beaches and the average temperature. I can support my opinion about California with these factual statements.

Note that statements of fact can be false. "The population of the United States is one billion" is a false statement of fact, because it makes a claim, which we can check and discover is false. It's presented as being a fact and is not an opinion.

When presenting a fact, it's always best for journalists to tell readers the source of that fact. However, we'll see that this isn't always done in practice.

Activity 1 15 min.

Give participants the **Handout**Telling Fact from Opinion.

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 6, Activity 1, Telling Fact from Opinion

Ask participants to read the articles, and highlight them as follows:

- ▶ Opinions — yellow
- ▶ Fact presented without a source — orange
- ▶ Fact presented with a source — green

Then give them the handout, Answers: Telling Fact from Opinion, and review the answers together.

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 6, Activity 1, ANSWERS: Telling Fact from Opinion

Process questions 5 min.

How did you determine what was fact? How did you determine what was opinion? What was difficult about this exercise? What does it tell you that sometimes fact and opinion are both in an article?

TRAINER NOTES

Talking points 5 min.

Facts can be shown to be true or untrue using evidence. Evidence can support an opinion, but you can never prove that an opinion is true or false.

News articles should be made up entirely of facts. Their main point is to inform you. One caveat is that news articles might report the opinions of people other than the author. For example, a reporter might write, "'This is a terrible policy,' John Smith said." John Smith is expressing an opinion, but it's a fact that he made that statement. So a news article reporting Smith's statement is still just reporting the facts.

Opinion pieces include opinion statements made directly by the author, but often contain facts as well. These facts aren't there just to inform you, however — they're there to support the opinion. The main point of an opinion piece is to persuade you.

Activity 2 15 min.

Now let's see if we can tell the difference between a news piece and an opinion piece.

Present participants with two pieces: one opinion piece, and one news piece from the same publication. Do not tell them explicitly which is which (even though it will soon be obvious from some of the labels). Ask them, as they read, to think about the following: Is this news, or opinion?

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 6, Activity 2:

- ► Hartford Courant — Republican Questions
- ► Hartford Courant — Too Many Judges
- ► Roll Call — Big Test for Business
- ► Roll Call — Tax Bill
- ► WP — Conversations about broken system
- ► WP — Opioids

Process questions 5 min.

How could you tell what was news versus opinion? Is labeling "opinion" a good thing? Why or why not? How could you tell besides the labels? What kind of language is used?

Once participants have given their answers, give them the handout "News and Opinion Markers" and continue the discussion until all appear clear on the distinction.

Talking points 5 min.

(Refer to handout.) Although we have developed skills to tell opinion from news, it is not always obvious. Labels can help people know how to think about a piece from the very beginning.

Conclusion 5 min.

Today we talked about the difference between statements of fact, which can be checked for accuracy, and statements of opinion, which cannot. News reporting should be free of the author's opinion. Their purpose is to inform. Opinion pieces, on the other hand, are the author's attempt to persuade you. Opinion pieces may contain facts, but the facts are there to support the argument.

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 6, Activity 2, News and Opinion Markers.

News and Opinion Markers

Content type	Reporting/News	Opinion
This is a form of:	Information	Persuasion
Does it use fact or opinion?	Should be mostly facts. The opinions are attributed to other speakers — they are not the opinion of the author.	The author expresses his or her opinion. Better opinion pieces are supported by facts.
For what purpose?	To inform.	To influence (what you believe).
What emotions, impressions, or effects does it elicit?	Curiosity, interest, learning.	Fear, anger, concern.
How does it work (through what mechanisms)?	Description, depiction, comparison.	Argument, description, comparison, appeal to emotion.
What is its attitude towards its subject?	Neutral.	Positive or negative.
What type of information does it present?	Accurate, complete, transparent.	Selective, incomplete. Accurate if high-quality.
What is potential impact on the media consumer?	Informed.	Views changed, might be encouraged to act, might be informed.

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Strengthen their understanding of the markers for detecting reporting and opinion

- Be able to reflect critically on the media's sometime failure to properly label news and analysis

- Understand the importance of identifying these distinctions

Materials

- "News and Opinion Markers" handout from previous lesson

Time Needed

50 min.

Trainer preparation

Set up video and screen.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Journalists' biggest role is reporting on the news — that is, giving the facts. But there are also journalists who write or present opinion pieces, which are designed to persuade. In the middle you have "analysis," which is designed to explain and give context for the more basic facts provided by reporting. All kinds of journalism are important: they give us information about what's happening, place that information in the context of larger issues, and help us understand the arguments for and against different points of view.

However, it's sometimes difficult to tell the difference. Unfortunately, media outlets are not always as clear as they should be about this distinction. In this segment we'll learn how to start teasing these ideas apart, and why that's important for being a smart news consumer.

Activity 1 15 min.

Show the first segment, and ask whether this is news or opinion. How can you tell?

Video:

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 7, Activity 1, 1A7 CNN 1[13]

Watch 0:22-1:20

Show the next segment, and ask whether this is news or opinion. How can you tell?

Watch 5:37-8:02

Process questions 5 min.

Who is speaking in each segment? What is their role? What kind of language do they use? Are they just telling us "what happened," or something more?

Trainer tips

For answers/explanation, refer back to the handout from the previous lesson " News and Opinion Markers."

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 7, Activity 1, Copy of news and opinion markers.

Activity 2 10 min.

Video:

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 7, Activity 2, 1A7 CNN 2[14]

Watch 21:13-23:23

TRAINER NOTES

13 CNN Newsroom with Poppy Harlow. (2015). CNN Newsroom. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/CNNW_20150404_190000_CNN_Newsroom_With_Poppy_Harlow/start/0/end/60

14 CNN Newsroom with Brooke Baldwin. (2018). CNN Newsroom. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/CNNW_20180101_180000_CNN_Newsroom_With_Brooke_Baldwin/start/1278/end/1338?q=cnn+analyst

Process questions · 5 min.

Was this news or opinion, or something else? What were the titles given to the three panelists by CNN? What are their jobs when they're not on CNN?

Talking points · 5 min.

Journalism includes news, opinion, and analysis. All are essential for our democracy and none are inherently bad. The problem comes when opinion and analysis are not properly labeled as such, and here they are not. The title "CNN analyst" is confusing — you might think the person works for CNN. In fact, these are outside commentators that CNN brings in to analyze a story. Sometimes they are journalists (such as the Daily Beast reporter) and sometimes they are former political staffers or even former military or intelligence officers. In any case, when these "analysts" appear, they are analyzing the news rather than reporting it.

Activity 3 · 5 min.

Direct participants to take the quiz at this website (under Before You Do This Task, You Might…, no. 3): https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/13/skills-practice-distinguishing-between-fact-and-opinion.

You can also find the link at:

IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.

On the whole the examples are straightforward, but students may have trouble with example 1. This is mostly factual, but they would be correct to point out that "remarkable personal odyssey" is opinion.

Conclusions · 5 min.

Some outlets don't do a very good job of distinguishing news from opinion, and the savvy news consumer needs to understand which he or she is reading in order to evaluate the content. However, opinion and analysis are not inherently "bad." They can help us test our own point of view and think about the different ways of looking at an issue. The important thing is that we learn to distinguish between opinion and news.

Unit 1 > Part A > Lesson 8: Journalism standards

👆 TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Understand the basic journalism standards that are followed by most professional U.S. outlets today

▶ Understand how those standards make for better journalism that is a) accurate, b) trustworthy, c) accountable, and d) holds powers-that-be to account

Materials

▶ Pens and paper

▶ Handouts

Time Needed

50 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Today we'll talk about the professional standards that most journalists follow. These standards make for better journalism, and distinguish quality journalism from other content you might come across.

Activity 1 5 min.

Ask participants to think about what constitutes quality journalism and write down their criteria. Have some participants share out their responses.

Explain that journalists, like other professions such as lawyers and doctors, have professional standards.

Explain that there are various organizations that provide standards for professional journalists in the United States. Professional journalists are expected to uphold these standards and ensure that their work is accurate, trustworthy, accountable and transparent.

Share and discuss the Society for Professional Journalists Code of Ethics with participants. The full code is available at https://www.spj.org/pdf/spj-code-of-ethics.pdf, but the handout "SPJ Journalism Standards" highlights the items that we think participants will find most helpful.

Handout

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 8, Activity 1, SPJ Journalism Standards.

Process questions 10 min.

What do you think about the list? Would following these principles make for good news reporting? Is there anything you would add to the list?

Activity 2 20 min.

Divide participants into small groups and give groups different examples of news reporting. Give them the following handouts.

News stories:

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 8, Activity 2, Article A

and

Please see Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 8, Activity 2, Article B

Tell groups that they will use the SPJ Standards to help them evaluate their examples and determine whether or not the example meets the standards for quality journalism.

Give groups worksheets where they can record their results.

Have groups take notes and then share their thoughts.

Worksheets

Hand out the two blank worksheets (per person) from

Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 8, Activity 2, Journalism Standards Worksheet

Process questions 10 min.

Overall: Which standards tended to be followed? Which were not followed?

How did Piece A and Piece B differ in what standards the followed?

What can you infer about the relative quality of Piece A and Piece B?

Talking points

Discuss the answers from the filled-in worksheets, from:

Unit 1, Part A, Lesson 8, Activity 2, Journalism Standards Worksheet

(Handing out the filled-in worksheets is optional.)

Conclusions 5 min.

Like other professions, journalists have professional standards that guide them and help to ensure that journalists produce quality work that is accurate, trustworthy, accountable, and transparent. Understanding the standards of professional journalism can help us better evaluate the news we consume for quality and adherence to professional standards. Today we gained a better understanding of professional journalism standards and looked at examples of both high quality and poor quality journalism. In future lessons we will look more closely at how and why journalists and media outlets make certain decisions about their work, and how that can affect quality.

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to think critically about the changes that have taken place in the information ecosystem in the past 20 years or so

▶ Think critically about how this complex new ecosystem affects the judgments they must make as audience members

▶ Learn that while the question of "who is a journalist" has become harder to answer, real journalism follows journalistic principles

▶ Learn about the damaging economic conditions for journalism in the past 20 years, and how these conditions affect what news is available for participants to read

Materials

▶ Sticky notes

▶ Markers

Time Needed

1 hr.

Set-up:

Post the Dates in History printout on the wall as one long line of six pages. Make sure you keep the pages in the correct order.

Please see Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 1, Set Up, Dates in History[15]

Write the following on sticky notes. Mix the order of the notes up and place them on a table or wall where they'll be easily accessible for participants:

Writing on clay tablets	Radio	YouTube
Papyrus	Amateur (Ham) Radio	Twitter
Hand-written books	TV	Smartphones
Printing press	Cable	Whatsapp
Postal service	Internet	Electronic tablets
Newspapers	Email	Instagram
Telegraph	Google	Snapchat
Telephone	Facebook	Virtual Reality Journalism
Film		

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15   Sources: Wikipedia; List of Rulers of China. (2004). Metmuseum.org. Retrieved from https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chem/hd_chem.htm

Procedure

TRAINER NOTES

Introduction 5 min.

Today we'll look at how the media has changed over time. This has important implications for our ability to discern truth from falsehood, because so much has changed — not just how much news we get and how it's delivered, but even the distinction between journalist and audience.

Teaching tips

During the lesson, there should be time for general feedback, such as "What do you think of all these forms of news/media?," because this can help determine emphasis of discussion in subsequent sessions.

Warm-up 5 min.

Give participants sticky notes with the various technologies written on them (writing on clay tablets, papyrus, etc.).

Their job is to place the innovations along the timeline. This will show the great pace of acceleration of communications technology. They can add other information-related innovations that may occur to them.

Answers:[16]

|					
Writing on clay tablets	3000 BC	Radio	1900s	YouTube	2005
Papyrus	2400 BC	Amateur (Ham)		Twitter	2006
Hand-written books	1st century AD	Radio	Early 20th century	Smartphones	2007
Printing press	1430s	TV	1920s	Whatsapp	2009
Postal service	6th century BC	Cable	1940s	Electronic tablets	2010
Newspapers	1600s	Internet	1960s	Instagram	2010
Telegraph	1830s	Email	1970s	Snapchat	2011
Telephone	1870s	Google	1998	Virtual Reality	circa 2015
Film	1880s	Facebook	2004	Journalism	
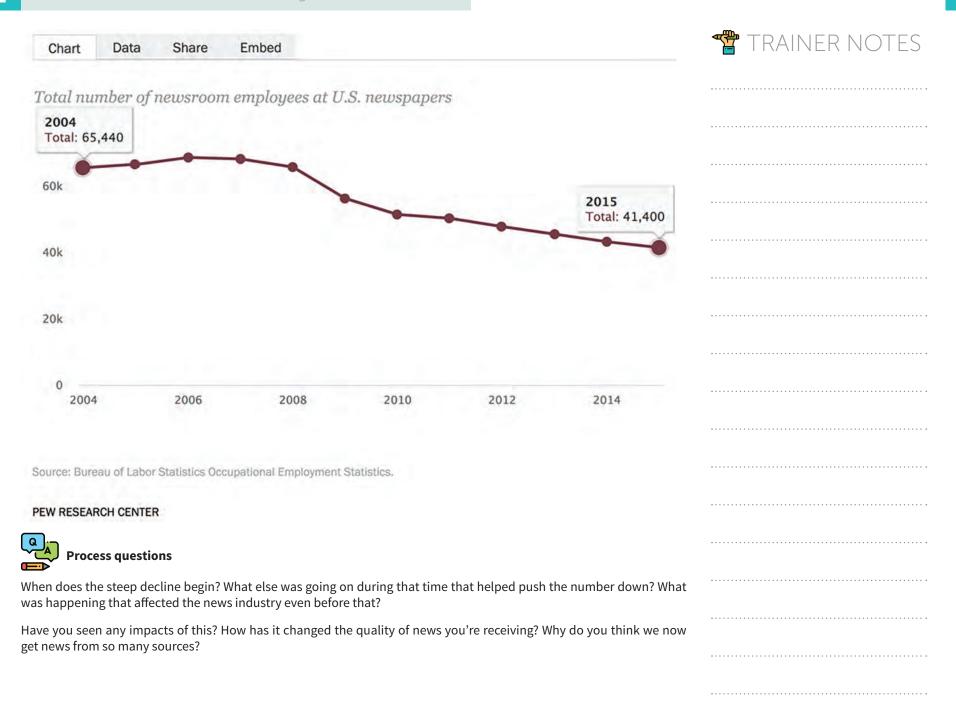
Process questions 5 min.

Did anything about the history of these communications technologies surprise you? Where are the technologies clustered? What do you think the effect of this rapid innovation has been?

16   Sources: Wikipedia; The invention of cable TV. (n.d.). Travel Channel. Retrieved from https://www.travelchannel.com/videos/the-invention-of-cable-tv-0243886

Talking points 1 5 min.

Technology innovation has accelerated greatly in the past few decades, and communication technology has been central to that revolution. Today we get our journalism from a wide variety of sources, not just print (and print has far fewer readers than before).

Previously, we talked about the standards that good journalism follows. But do we get all our information today from "journalism"? Who follows journalism standards? Who even is a journalist? Let's talk about that now.

Activity 1 20 min.

Display a variety of information that may or may not be considered journalism.

Please see Unit 1 Example Articles.

The screenshots can be found in the *slideshow Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 1.*

Process questions (after looking at all examples)

Which among these is journalism? What makes it journalism? Is it the medium, content, training, language, tone, attribution, or something else?

Talking points 2

Today, anyone can publish. In some ways, we can all be journalists. You can record something happening near you and publish it for your friends and neighbors. It might even go viral, nationwide or worldwide. But the quality of information published online varies tremendously. Most of us don't have the time to verify information and report on context the way that journalists do and most people who share information online have not committed to follow the journalistic standards we discussed above.

Activity 2 15 min.

This activity is a discussion that helps participants draw links between the collapse in traditional media revenue to declining news coverage (especially local news)

Share this chart showing the decline in newsroom employees.[17]

Please see slideshow: Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 1.

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17   Source: Newspapers fact sheet. (2018). Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/newspapers/

Chart	Data	Share	Embed

Total number of newsroom employees at U.S. newspapers

2004
Total: 65,440

2015
Total: 41,400

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics.

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Process questions

When does the steep decline begin? What else was going on during that time that helped push the number down? What was happening that affected the news industry even before that?

Have you seen any impacts of this? How has it changed the quality of news you're receiving? Why do you think we now get news from so many sources?

Talking points 3

The news industry has suffered declining revenues for decades now, with big drops starting as the internet began to take off. The 2008 recession dragged revenues down further. With print subscriptions falling sharply, fewer people are seeing print ads, meaning newspapers have lost a lot of money. Online ads just don't bring in enough money to make up the shortfall, especially because news organizations compete with social media and other platforms for advertising. News outlets are left doing whatever they can to try to maximize their online content, getting as many people as possible to click through to their stories. That's why "clickbait" — manipulative headlines that trade on your curiosity to get your clicks — became so widely used. The drop in revenue means newspapers have had to shed a lot of jobs, and many have had to close. It becomes harder and harder for journalists to do their job and report on everything that ought to be covered.

Now have a look at the maps in the slideshow:

Please see slideshow: Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 1.

If a computer is available, click on the link on Slide 11 and let participants explore the map on the website.

Then have participants click to the website from Slide 12 and explore the data for where they live.

Process questions

What do you notice? How do you think the number of newspapers in a hometown affects what journalism is produced and is available to readers?

Talking points 4

Dozens of local daily papers closed, merged or were reduced to weeklies in just a dozen years. Some might be near you. Local newspapers faced the same economic pressures we outlined above, but they have been disproportionately affected by these pressures. The impact is fewer journalists to cover what's happening in your city hall or state legislature, or to investigate the local issues that matter to you like crime, schools, transportation, and the environment. Because of the lack of employment opportunities in smaller towns and the nation's interior, most U.S. journalists end up in big cities on the coasts.

Conclusions 5 min.

Our ways of communicating have changed dramatically over the past couple of decades, and the news has changed along with it. Journalists are under tremendous pressure to report and write quickly and to get "clicks" for their articles. This is one of the reasons that headlines, even from credible sources, can provoke strong emotions. At the same time, it gets harder to tell who is and who isn't a journalist. Anyone has the capacity to publish online, but not everyone follows journalistic principles, which take time to learn and put into practice.

Unit 1 > Part B > Lesson 2: Trust in media

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to reflect on their own feelings of trust or distrust towards the media in general, and towards particular media outlets

▶ Learn about why people tend to trust or distrust media, and the way this both affects and is affected by misinformation in our media environment

▶ Be able to better understand current views and opinions that Americans have about the media, and how that creates an environment ripe for misinformation

Materials

▶ Paper and markers

▶ Computer and screen for showing video and PowerPoint

▶ <u>Handouts</u>:

  ▷ Fox headlines under NY Times banner (don't give this away when you show them the handout!)

  ▷ NYT headlines under Fox banner (don't give this away when you show them the handout!)

  ▷ NY Times: real headlines

  ▷ Fox: real headlines

Time Needed

1 hr. 5 min.

Trainer preparation

Use markers and paper to write four signs: strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree. Post these in the four corners of the room.

Set up the computer and screen for showing the video at the end of the lesson.

Procedure

Introduction   5 min.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts."

Do you agree? Why is it important that we all agree on the facts?

Talking points

Having a commonly shared perception of reality is important for social cohesion and peaceful societies. We need to understand what the problems in society are, and what is or isn't being done to address them, before we can debate what actions we need to take. Sometimes it's hard to tell what the truth is, but journalists need to try to find out what it is, and communicate it. Unfortunately, our view of what the truth is can be shaped by all sorts of biases.

Activity 1 15 min.

Four corners exercise. Designate each corner of the room with a category: strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree. Read out 4 or 5 of the following statements about attitude towards the media, and have people stand in the corner of the room that matches their opinion of each statement: strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, and somewhat disagree. People who have no opinion can stay in the middle, but try to push people to pick something.

Please see the slideshow Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2.

Make the final statement of the exercise "The media I rely on…" (marked with *** below).

After people choose their corners for each statement, have everyone discuss why they chose what they did, and how they view the media. Then reveal the survey results (see further below).

Recommended statements to choose from:

▶ I trust the media to report fully, accurately and fairly

▶ There is a lot of political bias in the news

▶ News media is important for our democracy

▶ The media is important to make sure people are informed

▶ The media keeps political leaders from doing their job

▶ If a news story casts a politician in a negative light, then it's fake news

▶ The mainstream media makes up stories more than once in a while

▶ The government should be able to stop a news outlet from publishing a story that government officials think is biased or inaccurate

▶ ***The media I rely on most is better than what most people use.*** (Make this the final statement of the exercise).

Trainer tips

The following studies can be used to pull more questions for the Four Corners exercise. Trainers should feel free to find additional studies and statements to suit their needs.

Studies to use:

https://poyntercdn.blob.core.windows.net/files/PoynterMediaTrustSurvey2017.pdf

https://news.gallup.com/poll/219824/democrats-confidence-mass-media-rises-sharply-2016.aspx

http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2017/05/09144304/PJ_2017.05.10_Media-Attitudes_FINAL.pdf

https://medium.com/trust-media-and-democracy/10-reasons-why-americans-dont-trust-the-media-d0630c125b9e

https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/my-media-more-trusted-than-the-media/

Process questions (for each statement)

Why did you choose the corner you did?

Were you thinking of particular media you do or don't use?

How do you think most Americans feel about this question?

Process questions (after the activity is complete)

Did you notice any patterns in how the group answered?

Did anything surprise you about people's answers?

Did sharing your responses make you answer these questions differently?

Talking points

As we've seen in some recent studies, many people have concerns and varying degrees of trust in the media in the U.S. We are currently in a situation where consumers and media are reflecting on the state of the media. Media literacy can empower people to better understand media and make better decisions about what they are viewing and why.

Independent polling and research organizations have carried out several surveys of Americans, asking the same or similar questions to what you answered today. Here's what they found:

TRAINER NOTES

Show slides of the survey results:

Please see the slideshow Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2.

- ▶ I trust the media to report fully, accurately and fairly: 41% agree[18]

- ▶ There is a lot of political bias in the news: 45% agree[19]

- ▶ News media is important for our democracy: 84% agree[20]

- ▶ The media is important to make sure people are informed: 95% agree[21]

- ▶ The media keeps political leaders from doing their job: 31% agree[22]

- ▶ If a news story casts a politician in a negative light, then it's fake news: 28% say this is always the case[23]

- ▶ The mainstream media makes up stories more than once in a while: 44% agree, specifically re: stories about President Donald Trump[24]

- ▶ The government should be able to stop a news outlet from publishing a story government officials think is biased or inaccurate: 25% agree[25]

- ▶ The media I rely on most is better than what most people use: 48% say the media they use most often is fair, compared to 30% for media in general[26]

Process questions

Does anything surprise you about these figures? Does having a lot of people agree on something necessarily make it true? Why do you think your fellow participants have the perspectives they do?

Activity 2 20 min.

Pose these questions to participants. Get their ideas for five minutes and write on the board or paper.

18   https://news.gallup.com/poll/219824/democrats-confidence-mass-media-rises-sharply-2016.aspx
19   https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-trust-media-and-democracy
20   https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-trust-media-and-democracy
21   https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-trust-media-and-democracy
22   https://poyntercdn.blob.core.windows.net/files/PoynterMediaTrustSurvey2017.pdf
23   https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-trust-media-and-democracy
24   https://poyntercdn.blob.core.windows.net/files/PoynterMediaTrustSurvey2017.pdf
25   https://poyntercdn.blob.core.windows.net/files/PoynterMediaTrustSurvey2017.pdf
26   https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/my-media-more-trusted-than-the-media/

Process questions

Do people trust the media? Why and when do they trust it? Why and when don't they trust it?

Then conduct the following individual exercise.

Give participants these two handouts:

1. Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 2, NYT 1
2. Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Fox 1

(You can also display these in slideshow Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2, though it will be hard to read from a distance.)

Note: Don't reveal that these are fake — not yet!

Ask: How do you feel about the headlines in the first handout?
Have participants write down a few words about their feelings and thoughts.

Ask: How do you feel about the headlines in the second handout?
Have participants write down a few words about their feelings and thoughts.

Then ask: How would you feel if I told you that the names of the publications on these handouts were reversed? That the "New York Times" headlines actually came from Fox News, and vice versa?

Give them the correct handouts.

1. Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 2, NYT 2
2. Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Fox 2

Then listen to the audio about a study on how TV news impacts opinions on issues (can stop at 2:14 or listen to the whole thing).

This is found in slideshow Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2.

Talking points   5 min.

We judge content a lot of the time by who's providing news — and we judge the provider by our political affiliation and other factors, such as what sources our friends and family prefer. It's often a good thing to ask who the news outlet is. Some outlets do tend to provide more quality news, more consistently following journalistic standards. But sometimes we let presumptions about the outlet blind us. News trust and news consumption in this country is very polarized according to political affiliation, and we're all susceptible to this tendency. We'll explore this more in the next activity.

Activity 3 15 min.

Introduction

There are a few reasons why people don't trust or like the media. A lot of it has to do with human psychology.

One such reason is called "motivated reasoning." This means that, as we saw with the above activity, we tend to agree or believe a source if we think it's on our side. This means that we are not inclined to trust a lot of the media out there that we don't think is on our side. And it's not just your political enemies who do it. We all do it!

Wrap up with a video or audio clip explaining how motivated reasoning and/or confirmation bias works:

See slideshow, Unit 1, Part B, Lesson 2.

Process questions

Why do people do this? Is it conscious?

What are the consequences if you disagree with your peer group?

What are the consequences for you personally if you're wrong on a policy issue?

If your judgment about a news source is colored by your ideology, how do you know who to trust?

Talking points

A lot of the time, motivated reasoning is unconscious. Our brain unconsciously directs us to find or believe the information that will allow us to stay in agreement with our peer group, which could be political, religious, or even sports-related. (It's been shown that your judgment of which side played dirtier in a game depends a lot on which side you're on!)[27] We figure out what news to trust by looking for adherence to standards, and through verification or debunking tools.

Conclusions 5 min

Today we looked at the unconscious factors that shape our trust in media outlets. Trust isn't always rational, but we have to try to think rationally about our news consumption and evaluation. The first step is to acknowledge these unconscious forces, and then to try to counteract them by thinking about standards and verification. We will revisit the issue of journalistic standards in the next session, and later on we'll talk about hands-on tools to help you determine what to trust.

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27 Hastorf, A. H., & Cantril, H. (1954). They saw a game; a case study. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *49*(1), 129–134. Retrieved from http://doi.org/10.1037/h0057880

Unit 1 > Part C: Agenda setting/gatekeeping > Lesson 1: News selection

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- ▶ Learn the basic process editors use to decide what stories to cover, and the pressures that inform that decision-making, including questions of time, business performance and audience preference

- ▶ Learn and reflect on how this process, along with platform algorithms and their own consumption choices, affects what news they see

- ▶ Learn about the "firewalls" between ownership/advertising and editorial

Materials

- ▶ Pens and paper, poster paper or whiteboard

- ▶ "What Gets Covered" worksheet

- ▶ "List of Potential Stories" handout

Time Needed

1 hour

Trainer preparation

Use markers and paper to write four signs: strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree. Post these in the four corners of the room.

Set up the computer and screen for showing the video at the end of the lesson.

Procedure

Introduction

Today we're going to talk about the factors that influence what stories get covered and what stories you see, which are not necessarily the same thing. We'll talk about decisions reporters and editors make in the newsroom, as well as the influence of social media and the importance of the choices *you* make.

Activity 1 10 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 1 for the "What Gets Covered" worksheet.

Give participants the "What Gets Covered" worksheet. Have participants jot down news they have heard recently in the first column of the worksheet. Ignore the second column for now. Tell everyone to list as many examples as possible.
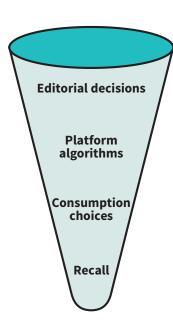
Ask participants what trends they are noticing. Are these stories mostly about one topic? Are they about "good" news or "bad" news?

Talking points 5 min.

There are a lot of complex factors that contribute to the type of news we see and what we recall seeing. You might want to draw this funnel diagram on the board or poster paper.

The story funnel: How stories get to us

Editorial decisions

Platform algorithms

Consumption choices

Recall

1. **Editorial decisions:** There's a number of factors that go into editors' decision-making about what stories to cover. These include what readers want; what outlets think they have a responsibility to cover; what they've covered in the past; and what other outlets are covering.

2. **Where we consume our news:** online and social media tools use algorithms in different ways to show us things we might like, which can reinforce certain trends and create filter bubbles — the common situation where we're only shown content that matches our point of view. (When we consume broadcast or print news in their original formats, algorithms don't guide our choices, of course).

3. **What we consume:** there are many choices on many platforms. Many factors influence our choices.

4. **What sticks in our brain:** why do you remember what you do? How might that influence your news consumption habits?

Today we're going to concentrate on how editorial decisions get made.

Talking points 5 min.

Think about journalists shown in TV and movies. Show the slide montage of Hollywood depictions of journalists found in the presentation in *Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 1, under Activity 1.*

Pop culture can sometimes give us a skewed view of how newsrooms actually work, what journalists actually do every day, and who is a journalist.

How newsrooms are structured. Newsrooms and media outlets have different departments and some of those departments have "firewalls" between them. For example, the owners of an outlet and the editorial board of an outlet are separated so that the editorial board can express their opinions freely.

Some departments at a media outlet include reporters who can have different "beats" or topics they cover such as crime, sports, national politics, weather; editorial writers who help to dictate the tone and content of a publication; social media departments; advertising; and owners of the outlet. Editors are responsible for what news is covered.

Activity 2 15 min.

What factors go into editors' choices of what stories to cover?

Write their answers on the poster paper or whiteboard. If they get stuck, refer to the list below of nine factors to prompt them. ("What about where the event took place?", "Do newspapers have a duty to cover certain stories, even if they're not popular?")

Talking points

These are the major factors that feed into editorial decision making.

Nine Factors of Editorial Decision-Making

1. **Reader preference and expectation**: Media outlets want to ensure that people consume and engage with their content. When that content is online, media outlets strive to have people click on and share their stories. Each publication has a certain audience in mind, and that audience expects certain things from the publication, so each outlet tries to fulfill its niche. People magazine might dedicate an entire issue to Paris Fashion Week while the Wall Street Journal might not even mention it.

2. **Civic duty**: Journalists who cover important local, national, and world events often feel that they have a civic duty to inform readers. For this reason, major newspapers write about natural disasters, wars, famine, and other topics that qualify as "bad news," even though they might not get as many clicks as some more lighthearted stories.

3. **Geography**: Local papers emphasize what's happening in their city or area. They might have a small section devoted to national or global events, or they might not cover these at all, figuring that people will get that news from other sources. U.S. papers like USA Today, the Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times cover events around the world, but devote by far the greatest part of their coverage to what's happening in the U.S.

TRAINER NOTES

4. **Rarity**: Unusual events get more coverage that ordinary events. The old saying goes that "Man bites dog" will get more coverage than "Dog bites man."

5. **Impact/severity**: An earthquake that kills 10,000 will get greater coverage than one that kills 100.

6. **Celebrity/power**: If a well-known politician or a famous actor does something, that's more likely to be covered than if your neighbor does the same thing.

7. **Competition**: Oftentimes, if one outlet covers a story that promises to engage readers, others will follow suit. Sometimes outlets try to distinguish themselves with an original "angle" or approach to the story, but sometimes they just want to be seen covering what everyone is talking about, and to get their share of the clicks.

8. **Exclusivity**: On the other hand, if an outlet knows it has a story no one else has, it has a big incentive to run that story.

9. **Timeliness**: Events that happened recently are prioritized over things that happened days or weeks ago. The 24 hour news cycle moves quickly and this can influence what journalists cover and how long they spend on a certain story.[28]

Have participants return to their "What Gets Covered" worksheet and fill in the second column, considering the factors we discussed above.

Activity 3 15 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 1, Activity 3 for the "List of Potential Stories" handout.

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4, and give each group the "List of Potential Stories" handout. Tell them they are editors at a large national newspaper. Ask each group to try to come to a consensus on five stories to cover on their homepage. Participants should discuss and debate, by presenting rationale based on the nine factors above.

After 10 minutes, each group should share out which stories they prioritized, and the large group can discuss different factors leading to the choices.

Talking points 5 min.

There are no right and wrong answers to this exercise. Different editors would probably come to different conclusions. The important thing is to recognize that there are always more potential stories than outlets have the resources to cover or than audiences have the time to consume. So editors have to make hard choices.

Conclusions 5 min.

There are lots of complex and intersecting factors that contribute to the decisions that journalists and news outlets make regarding what types of news to cover and how to cover it. These factors also contribute to what we see and how we see it. Understanding how the factors intersect and influence news coverage can help us be more aware of what we are seeing and why.

28   Some of these items are based on McQuail, D. (2010). McQuail's Mass Communication Theory, 6th ed. Sage Publications, pp. 308-318.

Handout

What Gets Covered Worksheet

News story I heard recently	Why did an editor choose to run that story?

List of Potential Stories

An earthquake in China kills 352

The Speaker of the House of Representatives announces he won't seek reelection

Unemployment rises by 0.5%

The U.S. fails to qualify for the World Cup

A study finds that 30% of mammograms are unnecessary

A new president is elected in Peru

Tom Cruise announces he's getting married again

About 1,000 protesters protest a decision outside the Supreme Court

A U.N. report documents war crimes in Syria

People observe Memorial Day with cemetery visits, sales

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Understand the concepts of objectivity, bias and balance, and the similarities and differences among these

▶ Learn how these concepts guide story selection processes in newsrooms

Materials

▶ Poster paper

▶ Markers

Time Needed

1 hour 10 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Today we're going to talk about the concepts of objectivity, bias, and balance. Sometimes these are used interchangeably, but they don't all mean the same thing.

Activity 1 15 min.

Ask participants: How would they define objectivity? What does an objective news piece look like? Is objectivity something participants want from the news media? Why or why not?

Write responses on the poster paper. Divide it into three sections: "Definition," "Features of objective news," and "Do we want objectivity?"

Talking points

People can mean many different things when they talk about objectivity.

Originally, in journalism, "objectivity" meant journalists should develop a consistent method of evaluating information to try and keep their biases from creeping into their work.[29]

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29 The lost meaning of 'objectivity'. (n.d.) American Press Institute. Retrieved from https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/lost-meaning-objectivity/

This is a good way to think about biases. Sometimes people say journalists should have no biases, but as we saw in the Trust in Media lesson, all humans have biases. The question is how we manage those biases.

Objectivity is important so that journalists don't let their biases interfere with their reporting. It helps editors choose the best stories to cover, and helps journalists decide who to interview, what to ask, and how to write their stories.

Activity 1 10 min

Please see Unit 1, IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles for the following articles.

Have participants read the first article and discuss as a group.

If time allows, repeat the process with this second article.

Process questions

Is this report balanced? Why or why not?

Talking points

The reports are balanced because they feature the voices and arguments of people on both sides of an issue. The daylight savings article first quotes a state senator against Proposition 7, then the lawmakers who proposed the measure, and repeats this structure. The Illinois tollway article first raises the possibility of conflict of interest, then allows the accused to defend themselves. It then quotes critics of the deals, and goes back and forth several more times between critics and defenders.

Note that there are many news stories where the idea of having "balance" or "points of view" doesn't make much sense and where the important thing is just to communicate information. Examples include reports on crimes, road closures, human interest stories, entertainment stories, and many more.

Activity 2 15 min.

Ask participants: Does objectivity mean "balance," i.e., covering all sides of an issue? Why or why not?

Write responses on the poster paper. Divide into two columns "Yes" and "No."

Talking points

There are lots of issues where people disagree and we want to show the variety of opinions, and give equal weight to each. But there are other times that doing so would demonstrate "false balance," and actually distort the truth of an issue.

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For example, if you were writing about flat earthers, you wouldn't want to say "Some believe the earth is flat; others say it's round." You would want to point out the overwhelming scientific evidence that supports the idea of a round earth.

Optional: Show the video found under *Unit 1, IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles.* Be warned: 1) It contains foul language; 2) Those already disbelieving of climate change (i.e., some conservatives) will probably not be swayed by this, and there's a danger that participants could want to debate climate change instead of the subject at hand.

Activity 3 15 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 3 for the two stories mentioned in this activity.

Have participants read two stories. Discuss: Which stories' approach did they prefer? Why? What was the role of balance in each?

Talking points 5 min.

The first piece was more "balanced" between widely different points of view on gravity, but it's what we call a "false balance." On certain matters, we don't want to present all opinions as equal.

Balance is still an important concept, and seeking balance can help reporters manage and address a variety of biases. These can include biases towards:

Official voices: To a certain extent, government officials' voices should form a big part of reporting, because they influence legislation and regulation. But political opponents and the general public must also get their say.

Sources: Journalists must listen to what and consider sources feel is important, but remember their ultimate obligation is to the public.

The unusual: Always choosing the "man bites dog" story can paint a distorted picture of current events.

Subject: Some subjects get routinely covered or ignored by the reporter's own publication, or the media in general. Editors have to think about what's really important and choose coverage accordingly.[30]

Conclusions 5 min.

Objectivity and balance can be loaded terms and can often be misunderstood. Objectivity helps reporters and editors manage their bias so they can choose a good selection of stories and write stories fairly. Writing an accurate and objective news piece doesn't always mean creating a perfect balance of all opinions on a subject. Journalists are humans, and like all of us, have to acknowledge and manage their biases in order to report well.

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30 Understanding bias. (n.d.) American Press Institute. Retrieved from https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/understanding-bias/

Unit 1 > Part C > Lesson 3: Who owns the media?

👆 TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

⚙️ **Learning Objectives**

Participants will:

▶ Learn to reflect on ownership of today's media, from the corporations that own many of the papers, websites and stations, down to the independent bloggers

▶ Reflect on how ownership might (or might not) affect content

▶ Learn about the role that tech giants play in helping to determine what we access

▶ Understand the role of algorithms in social media

🖌️ **Materials**

▶ Poster paper

▶ Markers

▶ Posters (create on flip chart paper in advance):
  ▷ Highest rated news: Broadcast
  ▷ Highest rated news: Cable
  ▷ Large U.S. papers
  ▷ Local TV stations
  ▷ Local radio
  ▷ Local papers

▶ Stickies

▶ Computers or participants' smartphones (A computer with projector or large screen is preferable if you plan to watch the optional videos)

🕐 **Time Needed**

1 hour

Procedure

📋 **Introduction** 5 min.

In the last session, we talked about how information comes at you from a huge variety of platforms, technologies and brands. Some providers, like bloggers, can be very small. But who really does control what information gets to you and how? Why does it matter?

🏰 **Activity 1** 25 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 3, Activity 1 for the posters mentioned below.

Please see Unit 1, L2D IREX Unit 1 Examples Articles; and Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 3, Activity 1 for the FCC websites.

Ask participants: Who owns the media? Who are the people or companies who own:

- ► National TV networks (broadcast)
- ► National TV networks (cable)
- ► National newspapers
- ► Local TV stations
- ► Local radio stations
- ► Local newspapers
- ► Internet providers
- ► Cell phone companies
- ► Facebook
- ► Instagram
- ► Snapchat
- ► Google
- ► YouTube

Write their responses on a big sheet of paper or whiteboard.

Trainer tips

There's a small potential for stereotyped or bigoted responses to the opening question. If people name a particular ethnic group as in control of the media, gently suggest that's not a specific person or organization, and also mention it's an idea we'll come back to. (Then make sure you DO come back to it in the Stereotypes section.)

Then hang up the following posters (without the ownership info):

- ► Highest rated news: Broadcast
- ► Highest rated news: Cable
- ► Large U.S. papers
- ► Local TV stations
- ► Local radio
- ► Local papers
- ► Local internet providers and cell phone companies
- ► Social media companies

Divide participants into pairs or threes. Give participants a stack of stickies.

Ask each group to select one or two stations and newspapers that interest them. (Don't have any groups research the same papers and stations.)

Ask each group to do online research to try and determine who owns the papers and stations in question, as much as they can in 15 minutes.

For local radio, they should start with a search on the FCC website.

(For TV, the FCC search is less helpful.)

When they have answers, participants should write them on the stickies and place them on the posters.

Then hang up the answers (posters with ownership info) and discuss.

Process questions

What did you find? Who are the large national companies? Which properties are owned locally or regionally?

Did anything surprise you? Why does it matter who owns these companies?

Talking points

On the national level, some companies own several outlets. The companies include News Corp., Tribune Publishing (Tronc) and Comcast. Then there are national companies that own many local TV stations and newspapers. These include Scripps, Tegna, Univision, and Gannett. You may find that multiple local radio stations are owned by the same companies or organizations. Universities (or their board of regents) often run public radio stations. Social media is more consolidated than you may realize: Facebook owns Instagram and Whatsapp, and Google owns YouTube.

Why does it matter? Less variety of ownership generally means less variety of content and viewpoints. Local outlets generally tailor their content for their audience, but there's evidence that they do also get direction from the top. We'll talk more about the role of ownership on these content choices in the next lesson.

Activity 2 10 min.

Please see the PowerPoint under Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 3, Activity 2 for the image below.

Ask participants: Why did we ask about social media in the last activity? How does social media influence what news you read?

Talking points

Share with participants: Increasingly, people get their news online: 43% of U.S. adults now get news online frequently. So how much of *that* is through social media?[31]

On a piece of flip chart paper, draw a big circle divided into eight pie pieces. Make a legend: One color is Google, one color is Facebook.

Ask a volunteer to guess how much of news website traffic she thinks comes from these two sources.

Then reveal the answer by coloring in the circle: Facebook is a full quarter (two slices), Google is 44% (almost half the pie).[32]

Process questions

Does this surprise you? Is this how you get your news? Why does it matter that this is how people get to the news? Most importantly, how does using social media influence what news you see?

Activity 3 15 min.

Please see Unit 1, L2D IREX Unit 1 Example Articles, Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 3, Activity 3 for the link to the website and optional videos below.

Split participants into groups of five people or fewer. Each group should have a computer or smartphone.

Have the groups navigate to the website and explore for five minutes.

Process questions

Why do you think people's feeds look so different? How does social media accomplish this polarization?

Talking points

If you're like most people, your connections on social media are too numerous for you to read everything everyone posts. Social media uses algorithms — pieces of computer code — to analyze what you like and what you're likely to read or engage with in the future. Then, they show you what they think will interest you most. Some of the signals that feed into algorithms include how old a story is, who the sharer is, and how you've interacted with them in the past. Search sites like

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31 Gottfried, J. & Shearer, E. (2017) Americans' online news use is closing in on TV news use. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/07/americans-online-news-use-vs-tv-news-use/

32 Molla, R. (2017). Google is sending more traffic than Facebook to publishers — again. Recode.net. Retrieved from https://www.recode.net/2017/12/11/16748026/google-facebook-publisher-traffic-2017-increase

Google similarly tailor results based on your past activity — so your Google results will look very different from your friends or relatives'.

This tailoring phenomenon is called "filter bubbles,"[33] because the effect is we then live in our own little bubbles where we tend to encounter our own viewpoint.

Or do we? More recently, some researchers have suggested that because our friend circles on social media are actually wider than that of our day-to-day encounters, maybe filter bubbles are worse in real life!

Activity 3 15 min.

Ask people to imagine that they are meeting a friend for lunch at a restaurant and that their friend is late. She texts that she is in traffic and asks you to order something for her. Have a group discussion in which you ask people to think though the decision making process: how would you decide what to order for a friend? What information would you use?

Example of an answer:

1. I would remember her past preferences that I observed — she often orders pizza.

2. What were her stated opinions about liking or disliking certain things? I would avoid what she dislikes and pick something I know she likes.

3. I would pick something that's a known quantity; I wouldn't order something that sounds strange or experimental.

Algorithms, when no one messes with them on purpose, use a similar decision making path. They use information from past behavior and expressed preferences to decide what to show you. This comparison is limited, but it demonstrates the overall point that algorithms feed off what you know and like and shelter you from information that they estimate that you won't like.

Optional: Watch Eli Pariser describe how filter bubbles work.

Optional: Watch this video, in which Facebook describes its news feed algorithm.

Conclusions 5 min.

Depending on where you're conducting your training and what outlets you focused on, you may have found a relatively high or low concentration of ownership. But this concentration is something to be concerned about, because it can determine what stories you see. What may have the biggest impact is the percentage of online traffic that comes from media behemoths Google and Facebook, because their algorithms determine what you see, without you being aware of what's left out. We'll talk more about ownership and news content in the following lesson.

33 The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web Is Changing What We Read and How We Think. (n.d.) Amazon.com. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Filter-Bubble-Personalized-Changing-Think/dp/0143121235

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

► Become familiar with the concept of firewalls, which in many cases keep a publication's business interests from interfering with its editorial decisions

► Recognize how firewalls can fail, and how ownership can affect the choice of stories and how stories are covered

► Reflect critically on whether this potential for influence from above is reason not to trust mainstream media, when compared to the outlets that don't follow professional standards

Materials

► Handouts

► Computer and projector or screen for showing optional materials

Time Needed

1 hour 15 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

This lesson will look at how the ownership of news outlets affects what gets covered. We'll also look at the effects of advertising on coverage choices. Both relationships are more complicated than you may think.

Warm-up 5 min.

Ask participants: Does the ownership of a news outlet affect what they cover or how they cover it? What about who buys ads in a newspaper or on a station — does that affect news coverage? Can you think of examples where it does, and where it does not?

Talking points

If students can't think of examples, that's OK. We'll look at examples of each in the following exercises.

Activity 1 20 min.

Please see Unit 1, IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles for the article for the following activity, and Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 4, Ownership and agenda setting, Activity 1 for the list of examples.

Share the following examples with participants. Ask what they should do if they were an editor in each of the example situations.

1. You run a magazine about bicycles, and you manage to uncover the details of a new product that is being kept secret but will be launched soon. The manufacturer is a major advertiser, and says if you run the article, it will cancel its advertising contract. What do you do?[34]

2. You work at BuzzFeed, and the online labor marketplace TaskRabbit wants to pay you to run this story. What do you do?

3. You work at NPR, and one of your sponsoring companies is about to debut on the stock market. Should you run a story about it? Should you mention your relationship with the company in your story?

4. You work at Newsweek. The American Petroleum Industry wants to pay you to hold a series of energy forums, featuring panels with politicians and the association's president. Should you do it?[35]

Talking points 5 min.

We've talked about the difficulty that news outlets have staying afloat. Increasingly, they earn revenue in untraditional ways, such as with "sponsored" articles written wholly or in part by advertisers, or with events featuring advertisers. It's important that these arrangements be clear to readers and viewers. There can also be a more subtle issue with emphasizing particular points of view over others.

Remind participants of the relevant principles from the SPJ Code of Ethics. Two of the most relevant principles are:

▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

▶ Deny favored treatment to advertisers, donors or any other special interests, and resist internal and external pressure to influence coverage.

In practice, what this has meant for many news organizations is they try to maintain a "firewall" or "church-state" separation between their news coverage and their commercial interests.

> **"The idea that editorial decisions would be made independent of the wishes of advertisers has long been considered to be one of journalism's most fundamental principles."**[36]
>
> *- Journalist and Professor Ira Basen*

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34 Herman, M. (2016). For enthusiast media, ethics can be costly. Columbia Journalism Review. Retrieved from https://www.cjr.org/business_of_news/for_enthusiast_media_ethics_can_be_costly.php

35 Newsweek, API, and Ethics: What guidelines should govern advertiser-sponsored events? (2009). Columbia Journalism Review. Retrieved from https://archives.cjr.org/news_meeting/newsweek_api_and_ethics.php

36 Basen, I. (2012). Breaking down the wall. Center for Journalism Ethics. Retrieved from https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2012/12/19/breaking-down-the-wall/

TRAINER NOTES

What about the role of ownership? How does that affect what gets covered and how? We'll look at that in the following activities.

Activity 2 10 min.

Please see Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 4, Activity 2 for the articles for the following activity.

Show participants two articles about the same news event. Ask them to guess the outlet that covered each. (Beforehand, the masthead should be blacked out, along with any disclaimers about ownership).

Process questions

Did the ownership affect their coverage? What purpose does the disclosure serve?

Talking points

In this case, the fact that Murdoch owns the Wall Street Journal doesn't particularly seem to have affected the paper's coverage of this important business story, and the WSJ acting transparently by disclosing its connection to readers.

Activity 3 10 min.

Please see Unit 1, IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles, Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 4, Ownership and agenda setting, Activity 3 for the video for the following activity.

Optional:

Show participants the Deadspin video of Sinclair stations repeating directive from on high (can cut off after 1:00 or show entire video).

Process questions

Why are they all reading the same script? Is this problematic? Why or why not?

Talking points

Local news need the independence to cover what's important to their community. This editorial, on the other hand, was written by someone in the Sinclair corporation, and stations all over the country had to read the exact same script. The origin of this segment is also unclear to viewers. It may appear to be the genuinely held opinions of the local anchors, rather than a prepared script they have been ordered to read out.

Activity 4 15 min.

Please see Unit 1, IREX L2D Unit 1 Example Articles, Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 4, Ownership and agenda setting, Activity 4 for the links and Unit 1, Part C, Lesson 4 for the screenshots for the following activity.

Optional:

Show participants a few of the examples *(found in Unit 1 Examples document).* Explain that these are all outlets without big corporate owners, or they are individuals who might be considered "citizen journalists." Show some from each list.

Process questions

Do these seem like reliable news? (If they need prompting: Remind them to think about the journalistic standards previously discussed.) Does independence mean they make the best story choices?

Talking points

Most publications try to maintain a firewall separation between advertising and editorial. There are many examples of how this has been effective. But there are times that the commercial considerations win out.

However, it's crucial not to always flee towards sources without big corporate owners. A lack of corporate control is no guarantee of quality.

Conclusions 5 min.

Ownership and advertising can affect what news outlets decide to run, but they don't always have that effect. Transparency helps to keep news outlets accountable. Unfortunately, since transparency is not guaranteed, you don't always know what the commercial influences on your news are. At the same time, anyone can publish anything on the internet, so a lack of commercial interest doesn't mean the information is necessarily true. It's important to remember that *you* are the most important gatekeeper of information. Your decisions on what to click, read, share, like, and comment on are powerful tools that shape the very information environment, for your friends, family, community, and the nation.

TRAINER NOTES

Unit 2

Unit 2: Misinformation and Manipulation > Part A: What is misinformation? >
Lesson 1: Types of misinformation

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Become familiar with different types of manipulative content and misinformation

▶ Understand why they play a key role in stopping misinformation, and the importance of "Caring Before You Share"

▶ Learn strategies to help them identify these types of content

Materials

▶ Pens and paper

▶ Posters or slides

▶ Copies of Bingo sheets 1-3 (enough so each participant gets one of the three bingo sheets)

▶ Small prizes to give away for Bingo winners

Time Needed

1 hr. 10 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson we're going to talk about the different kinds of misinformation that you can find in the media. There's a lot of ways that people try to distort the truth or even spread wholesale falsehoods. Learning what kinds of manipulation are out there can help you to detect misinformation and keep from spreading it.

This content can come in a variety of forms: There's disinformation, which is intended to deceive, and misinformation, that's not — it is most often the result of editorial mistakes or poor journalistic work.

Process questions 5 min.

Ask participants: Do they have an important role to play in stopping dis- and mis-information? Why or why not?

Talking points

It's important that we think about how we share information. We share a lot of it. Bots play a role, but look at the human footprint on this visualization *(see link on page 2 of the slideshow for Unit 2 Part A Lesson 1).* Notice how many people were

required for this rumor to get started. Automated Twitter accounts known as bots played a role, but the rumor would not have gained this much traction without individuals passing it on.

Dis- and mis-information spread if individual people pass it on. This is important because misinformation can have real-world (even dangerous) ramifications, as we'll see in the following activity.

Activity 1 15 min.

Break the participants into four groups. Have each group read or skim one of the four stories and discuss their reactions. Then have one participant from each group summarize their story for the entire group.

The four stories can be found in *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 1, Example stories.*

Show the slides, *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1. Show slide 4: Care Before You Share*. Ask participants to volunteer and explain why they think each step is necessary. If participants get stuck, return to the two main points of this activity:

    1. Dis- and Mis-information is spread by everyday people like you and me.

    2. Dis- and Mis-information hurts people and ruins lives.

Activity 2 10 min.

You can find the slides under *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1.* You can find the links to the articles explaining the debunked examples in *Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples under Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 1.*

Display different examples of misinformation.

Process questions 5 min.

Discuss the above examples. Why do you think people create dis- and mis-information and distort the truth? What do they have to gain?

Talking points

Sometimes people create disinformation to support their political candidate or cause. Sometimes people believe what they're writing is true. In a huge proportion of cases, it boils down to money. The creators of disinformation make money from "pay per click" advertising every time you click links from Facebook that go to the hoaxsters' sites. Similarly, the authors of misleading headlines are trying to lure you so they can make money from a click. It's important to know there's a cost to your click — you are providing the incentive for the hoaxster to keep perpetrating the hoaxes. So if the article seems shady from the outset, better not to even click on it! You play a key role in stopping dis- and mis-information.

TRAINER NOTES

Activity 3 `30 min.`

You can find the bingo sheets under *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 2 titled "Bingo."*

You can find the examples under *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 2, Activity 2 Examples,* and the answer key to the examples under *Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Activity 2, Answer Key to Activity 2.*

Review and discuss the seven types of information disorder from First Draft News *(please see Unit 2 on your thumb drive, Unit 2 Examples in Unit 2, Part A, Lesson 1, Types of Misinformation, Activity 2, Example 1 for the link to the article).* Explain that we'll use these categories in our next activity.

Hand each participant one of the Bingo sheets. Try to distribute Bingo Card 1, Bingo Card 2 and Bingo Card 3 evenly.

Then go through the following examples one by one (this document also gives answers, it's for your eyes only).

Ask participants to discuss and collaboratively determine what category each example falls under. If they can't agree or reach the wrong conclusion, try to prompt them towards the right answer. Once the right answer is determined or revealed, participants should cross that square off. The first person or people to get three in a row get to shout Bingo! and get a prize.

As a reminder, the categories are:

- ▶ **Misleading content:** Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual
- ▶ **Imposter content:** When genuine sources are impersonated
- ▶ **Fabricated content:** New content that is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm
- ▶ **False connection:** When headlines, visuals, or captions don't support the rest of the content
- ▶ **False context:** When genuine content is shared with false contextual information
- ▶ **Manipulated content:** When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive
- ▶ **Satire or parody:** No intention to harm but has potential to fool

Conclusions `5 min.`

Non-credible news and information can take many forms, including misinformation and disinformation. These types of non-credible information often differ in terms of intent, or whether or not the creator is trying to deceive, manipulate, or otherwise cause harm with their content. Being able to recognize information that might be false or manipulative in some way is a vital media literacy skill and can help you avoid falling prey to a scheme or someone's bad actions and bad intent. Remember to Care Before You Share — you are the most important line of defense against misinformation!

Trainer tips

Depending on your technology situation and needs you can display examples of media manipulation via a slideshow using PowerPoint or a tool like Google Slides, or you can display examples as print posters.

Feel free to find and add additional examples for your participants.

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Better understand their reactions to manipulative content designed to elicit a strong emotional response
- Learn strategies for managing their emotions when looking at news and other content

Materials

- Pens and paper
- Posters or slides
- Emotion Pictures

Time Needed

35 min.

Trainer preparation

Trainers should ensure the example content is appropriate for their audience, as some images might be disturbing, and adjust accordingly.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Review some of the types of emotionally manipulative media from the previous chapter.

Explain that images are often used to manipulate people or spread false content because images are powerful and can often be more memorable than print text or audio.

We often glance at images very quickly on social media, so it is important to slow down a bit and be sure what we are seeing is credible.

Modern technology also makes it difficult to distinguish credible and non-credible images since it is increasingly easy to manipulate or doctor a photo, video, or audio.

Activity 1 10 min.

Please see Unit 2, Part B, Unit 2 Examples; and Unit 2, Part B, Lesson 1, Checking Your Emotions, Activity 1 for the links to the examples. Select examples that you have not used for other exercises. *Please see Unit 2, Part B, Lesson 1, Activity 1, Answers to Activity 1 Examples* for the answers to the exercise below.

Show participants examples of different images and video content that is emotionally manipulative and/or non-credible. Use no more than half the examples, reserving the rest for Activity 2.

Ask participants to go through the following steps (as individuals) after each image or video:

The Name It to Tame It steps:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

When you are preparing this lesson, be sure to preview all videos and pictures. Some of them come from debunking websites. Make sure that when you show the participants the photographs the first time, the debunking language and graphics are not visible.   You may have to cover up a part of the image so that participants can't see that it's a fake before they react to it.

Talking points

You can refer to the "Answers to Activity 1 Examples" to explain each image. Discuss with participants how the images were selected or manipulated to provoke a response. Ask: who might benefit if you have a strong emotional response to this image?

Note that in a future lesson, we will learn to fact-check these kinds of images using Google Reverse Image search.

Activity 2 15 min.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Activity 2, "Emotion Pictures" for the Emotion Pictures; Unit 2, Part B, Unit 2 Examples; and Unit 2, Part B, Lesson 1, Checking Your Emotions, Activity 1 for the links to the examples referenced below.

Now we're going to have some fun together as a group. After each image, ask participants to take a moment to think about what they're feeling. Then ask the group to shout out their feelings. To aid them, hold up one of the Emotion Pictures.

Next, each time a new emotion comes up, ask one participant in the audience to create a movement or gesture that

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expresses their emotion. For example, "scared" could involve repeatedly curling up into a ball. Or the movement could be inspired by the Emotion Picture. But don't let us dictate. Encourage them to get creative! When the emotion comes up a second time, everyone has to do the movement or gesture that the participant made up.

Conclusions 5 min.

Images and video can be powerful and can often be used to manipulate people emotionally or to spread non-credible information. Being aware of trends in media and image manipulation and being cautious when seeing images and videos can help you be a savvier consumer of media and less likely to fall victim to a scam or some otherwise false or manipulative news or information.

Trainer tips

Depending on your situation you can run this activity using electronic slides or a print poster.

Unit 2 > Part B > Lesson 2: Understanding headlines

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Gain a better awareness of how headlines can be used to manipulate or mislead

Materials

▶ Pens and paper
▶ Posters or slides with examples

Time Needed

30 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson we will explore different types of headlines, including non-credible and manipulative ones, from different media sources, including social media, television, and newspapers.

Ask participants if they are familiar with clickbait (manipulative headlines that try to get people to click), and ask them to share some examples they might have seen. Examples might include clickbait online or tabloid headlines at the grocery store checkout.

Ask participants how often they only read the headlines of an article.

Note that most of us often skim headlines when we're on social media, for example.

It is important to be aware of ways in which headlines can be misleading or manipulative in order to be savvier consumers of news and not fall victim to something like a prank, a scam, emotionally-colored or simply non-credible information. Even credible news organizations sometimes use clickbait headlines to get your attention and monetize their content.

Activity 1 15 min.

Show participants examples of different types of headlines (from all types of media) and have everyone share out whether or not they think the headlines seem credible. *Please see Unit 2, Part B, Unit 2 Examples; and "Unit 2, Part B, Lesson 2, Understanding Headlines, Activity 1* for the links to the examples.

Ask participants to note any trends they are seeing in the headlines and if techniques differ across media platforms.

Highlight some trends from the examples. Trends include:

1. **Clickbait.** Language that encourages you to read or share something online, often by leaving questions unanswered

2. **False connection, part 1:** News articles, in print and online, might feature a headline that doesn't completely represent the actual article content

3. **False connection, part. 2:** TV headlines might be misleading or only highlight part of a more complex issue

4. **Fabricated content:** Both the headline and the article content are manufactured and false.

Discuss: why do you think these kinds of headlines attract our attention? What might we do so as to not get caught by these kinds of hooks?

Talking points 5 min.

Suggestions:

Name It to Tame It.

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

Care Before You Share:

1. Name It to Tame It!

2. Take **responsibility**. Know that YOU are the information gatekeeper. Don't spread misinformation!

3. **Acknowledge** what you may not know.

4. If you have time, **check** it out! Do what you can to verify information.

5. If you're still not sure it's true, ***don't share it***.

Conclusions 5 min.

In a world where most of us get news, at least in part, from social media, headlines are increasingly important. But headlines across media platforms can often be misleading, manipulative, or simply inaccurate. Being aware of different types of headlines, more wary when reading headlines, and taking time to name any emotion you have in reaction to a headline, or simply pause for a moment, can help you become a savvier consumer of news more generally.

Trainer tips

Feel free to add additional examples to this lesson to suit your needs or mention some examples you observed recently that may help participants relate.

You can run this activity online, depending on your situation, and give participants slides or an electronic handout to review if people have access to computers and internet.

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Unit 2 > Part B > Lesson 3: Check Your Phone

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Consider whether they are likely seeing manipulative information and misinformation on a regular basis
- Learn to apply prior lessons to help them better recognize manipulative content and misinformation in everyday media consumption

Materials

- Pens and paper

Time Needed

25 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson, we're going to apply some of what we've already learned to see what misinformation or manipulative information is popping up where you typically consume content. You might be surprised by what you find!

Activity 1 15 min.

Have everyone get out their phones and/or computers.

Tell them to spend some time going to social media sites they typically visit, or news or media sites they visit online.

Have everyone write down some of the headlines they see.

Are they noting things like clickbait, manipulative ads, etc. that we discussed in the previous lessons?

Ask a few volunteers to share out any trends they noticed or things they are newly aware of thanks to the prior lessons on forms of manipulative media and misinformation.

Conclusions 5 min.

Being more aware of the different types of media we encounter in our daily lives can make us savvier and more critical consumers of media. We need to keep the types of misinformation in mind as we read on a day-to-day basis, so we can more easily detect when we're being manipulated.

Unit 2 > Part C. Stereotypes > Lesson 1: Stereotypes

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn what a stereotype is

▶ Learn how stereotypes hurt people and how they distort the truth

Materials

▶ Computer and projector for showing videos

Time Needed

40 min.

Trainer preparation

Suggested: do the Classroom Culture Training. *Please see Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples; and Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 1, Stereotypes, Trainer Preparation* for the link to the training.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

We all have stereotypes about different groups of people. Some can be quite innocuous. The problem with stereotypes comes when they dehumanize people: where instead of seeing a person, we see just one example of a type. This blinds us to what the person is really like. Frequent stereotyping can lead to discrimination or even violence.

We all have hidden biases — it's actually part of how the human brain works. We form stereotypes because in many cases, it's useful. We see an apple and know it's probably not poisonous, because past experience tells us that apples are not usually poisonous. Or, as psychologist Paul Bloom says, you would never ask a toddler for directions.[1] The important thing is to recognize harmful stereotypes, and then work to counteract them.

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1   Why Do We Create Stereotypes? (2014). NPR.org. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=362373052

Activity 1 15 min.

Please see Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples; and Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 1, Stereotypes, Activity 1 for links to the videos below.

Two options:

Option A:

"Like a Girl" activity followed by "Like a Girl" video.

Ask for 3-5 volunteers. Ask the volunteers to leave the room with the co-facilitator (or another volunteer) who lets them into the room one by one and tells them to follow instructions from the trainer once in the room. (The rest of the trainees are just observing.)

When a volunteer comes into the room, instruct them: Show me how to….

- ▶ Run like a girl
- ▶ Punch like a girl
- ▶ Throw like a girl

Do this for all the participants. Then have a discussion.

Questions: What did you observe? How did people interpret "like a girl"?

Then show the "Always #LikeAGirl" video.

Process questions

Why did we do this activity? When do phrases like "like a…" become offensive? Do you see these kinds of depictions in the media?

Talking points

Ask: By a show of hands, who has ever felt stereotyped?

Most often, we create stereotypes about those who are least like us but we can also internalize and believe stereotypes about our own group.

- ▶ We often use social stereotypes as a mean to identify a person.
- ▶ We rely on fixed signs of identity instead of the behavior of the individual.

Option B:

Tell participants that as they watch the following video, they should ask themselves: What is this video about?

Show video, "Strangers."

Pause the video at 1 min. 30 sec.

ASK: What is the story?

Who are the characters?

What are the relationships between them?

How will the story develop further?

Continue the video, and then pause again at 4 min. 4 sec.

ASK: Are there any new characters?

How has it affected the story?

Has the relationship between the first two characters changed?

If so, how?

How do you think the story will develop further?

Watch to the end of the film.

ASK: What did you think of the film overall? What points was it trying to make?

Talking points

Arabs and Jews are the conflicting sides in this example. These groups often oppose each other; therefore, it is conceivable that one would assume that any two members of these groups will be antagonistic. However, the film characters behaved differently.

Most often, we create stereotypes about those who are least like us:

► We often use social stereotypes as a means to identify a person.

► We rely on fixed signs of identity instead of the behavior of the individual.

Activity 2 15 min.

Break participants into groups of 2-3. Ask each group to brainstorm on sticky notes: What are some signs of stereotyping? How can you tell if something is stereotyping? You can give them a couple of examples from the Talking Points if they seem uncertain how to answer the question.

After five minutes, have all participants put their sticky notes onto the wall. Have them try to group the sticky notes thematically. (If several sticky notes say the same thing or close to the same thing, *don't* discard. This repetition may show it's a particularly strong idea.)

Talking points

Possible answers include:

- ▶ Generalities ("All Indians are…;" "All women are…" etc.). Some generalities frequently used: dumb, smart, lazy, hard-working, cheap, greedy, criminal, drug- or alcohol-abusing, hypersexualized, timid.
- ▶ Belittling (Calling a grown person "little" or "boy").
- ▶ Mocking, making the butt of jokes.
- ▶ Exaggeration, caricature (Big noses in cartoons of Jews).
- ▶ Exoticizing (Saying an Asian woman looks "exotic," depicting Native Americans as always engaged in spiritual rituals).
- ▶ Exclusionary language (Assuming that people are not part of your group, e.g. when whites assume non-whites are not Americans).

People create stereotypes partly on their own, in addition to the influence of society and media. Stereotypes "save thinking" by allowing one to describe a person with two or three words. But stereotypical thinking cannot cover all different situations in life. Stereotypes often lead to prejudice, and reinforce unequal power relations.

Conclusions 5 min.

Stereotypes permeate our daily lives so much so that we are often blind to them. But if you know what to look for, you can start to detect the influence of stereotypes on your own thinking, as well as others. It's important to remember that stereotyping other people has negative effects. Next, we'll look at how stereotypes and biases play out in the media.

Unit 2 > Part C > Lesson 2: Stereotypes and biased reporting in the media

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Be able to identify and critically assess examples of stereotypes in media

Materials

▶ Identity worksheets printed out
▶ Pens
▶ Several pairs of scissors
▶ Several rolls of tape
▶ Red pens

Time Needed

1 hr.

Trainer preparation

Optional: review classroom culture training, if not already completed.

Please see Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples, Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 1, Stereotypes, Trainer Preparation for the link to the training.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson we'll talk about how stereotypes and biases play out in the media. Often the influence of stereotypes is very subtle, and can only be detected by looking at patterns over time. First, we'll look at how we describe and identify ourselves.

Warm-up 15 min.

Please see Unit 2, Lesson 2, Warm Up for the image and worksheet for this exercise.

Identity circles exercise:

Give each participant a blank worksheet and ask them to write "Human" in the center. In the outside, they should write in groups with which they identify. These can can be anything from gender and sexual orientation to race, ethnicity, indigenous group, religion, displacement/immigration status, nationality, age, disability, to terms like "athlete," "teacher," "student,"

"musician," "activist" — any group with which they identify. They should avoid personally descriptive adjectives like "hard-working." Ask them to respond as thoroughly as possible, though it's OK if they don't fill in every slice of the wheel.

TAAP TOOLKIT WORKSHEET
STEP A — INDIVIDUAL INQUIRY AND REFLECTION
SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL

Write "human" in the center circle.

PRE-FILLED
IDENTITY WHEEL

Process questions

Which identities do you want to play up and which do you want to play down, and why? Which make you feel more vulnerable or excluded? Which brings you advantage and power?

Talking points 5 min.

We all have multiple identities that we use to describe ourselves. A lot of times we might jump to conclusions about how to categorize someone, ignoring the many ways they themselves would describe their identity. It's also important to keep in mind that certain identities give us power in our society, while others can exclude us.

We hold a lot of stereotypes without realizing it. We internalize stereotypes when they get repeated over and over, even in subtle ways. In some ways, this is our brain doing what it should be doing. When our ancestors stereotyped bears as dangerous creatures, they were right! But applying the same logic to humans often isn't based on reality.

Together we'll look at examples of how the media uses words and images that spread stereotypes and negative attitudes towards different groups, and amplify divisive issues within and between groups of people. Each of us can be considered "the other" by members of a different group. So:

▶ Media often uses stereotypes to communicate with its audience.
▶ Prejudice is a negative attitude formed on the basis of stereotypes.
▶ Prejudice forms the basis for discrimination against a group or individual.
▶ Hate speech is when one group of people begins to say that another group is flawed or otherwise imperfect.

Activity 1   30 min.

Please see Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 1 for the two articles referenced below.

Please see Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples, Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 2, Stereotypes and biases in the media, Activity 1 for the link to the video below.

Give participants one of the following articles. Ask them to think about what the words, images, and juxtaposition might be subtly communicating about race. What would they change about the article, if they could? Give them scissors, tape and red pens, and allow them to make whatever changes they think are necessary.

For article 1, specifically, direct participants to the article, "Two Lives at Crossroads in Ferguson."

For article 2, specifically, direct participants to the article "White Nationalist Protest Leads to Deadly Violence."

Process questions

Why did you change what you did? What was the original piece saying or implying, perhaps subtly?

Then play the video.

Process questions

Did you agree with the changes Alexandra Bell chose to make to the articles? Why or why not?

Talking points

News headlines, stories, photos and even layouts can subtly reinforce and play upon our biases, or otherwise make statements about bias in our society. For example, the white nationalist story didn't get anything wrong, but Bell argues that the size of the story didn't get across how novel and severe the event was. Again, none of the facts in the Ferguson story were wrong, but it's worth asking ourselves how a story about an 18-year-old white boy would have been covered. It's likely we don't all agree on how these stories should and shouldn't have been presented, but the important thing to keep in mind is that reporters and editors make millions of tiny choices that, over time, help us build up our pictures of other people.

TRAINER NOTES

Activity 2 15 min.

Trainer tips

If time, another activity that can be brought in is the implicit bias test. *Please see Unit 2, Unit 2 Examples, Unit 2, Part C, Lesson 2, Stereotypes and biases in the media, Activity 2* for the link to the test.

Note that Mahzarin Banaji, the social psychologist who created these tests from her research, has said that she was surprised to discover her own race biases when taking the test. These are biases that we all have, in one way or another. But we can become aware of them so that we can choose how we want to think about and treat other people.

Conclusions 5 min.

A lot of the time we form our perceptions of other people based on preconceived biases. Where do those biases come from? A lot of it comes from the people around us, but some also come and are perpetuated or reinforced by the media. Examining the media we consume is a good chance to challenge biases and stereotypes we might hold.

Unit 3

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Be better able to determine the credibility of different types of media they may encounter

▶ Learn strategies they can employ to determine the credibility of written media

Materials

▶ Brainstorming, whiteboard or poster paper

▶ Projector for trust gauge pictures

Time Needed

10 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

How do you figure out whether you can trust a piece of written media? Trust shouldn't be like a light switch, either off or on. Think of it more like a gauge or a speedometer, going from 0 to 100. There's a lot of signals that can clue us into how credible a piece of information is, and as we take in those signals, we move the arrow on our gauge up and down. Are we 80% confident the information is correct? 50% confident? 30%? We never have the complete picture on any topic, so it is unlikely we can ever truly be 0% or 100% confident.

Today we're going to talk about key pieces of information that should help you determine your confidence level.

Your trust gauge: Not like this….

Like this![42]

1   Picture sources: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Double_Light_Switch.jpg
https://www.maxpixel.net/Design-Dashboard-Gauge-Display-Dial-Measure-1853619

Talking points

Here are the key steps we will take to determine the credibility of a piece of written content.

Write these on the board or poster paper (you can keep the list on the wall throughout the training):

1. Check the date
2. Go to the source
3. Evaluate journalistic standards
4. Verify sources and citations
5. Verify evidence
6. Check with the fact-checkers

Conclusions 5 min.

There are a number of signals we can use to determine how much we should trust a piece of written content. Our first step should always be Name It to Tame It. There are a variety of other steps we can take, which we'll review in future lessons. Throughout, think of your internal belief meter as a gauge. You can always change how much or little you trust information and not have to commit to saying something definitely is or isn't true.

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- ▶ Be able to explain the importance of "going to the source," or clicking on and reading the original reporting on a topic

- ▶ Demonstrate the inclination to go to the source as one of their first ports of call when judging written material

Materials

- ▶ Computer and projector to show articles, or copies of the articles to distribute

Time Needed

30 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Today we're going to talk about the importance of "going to the source," and getting the reporting in its earliest form, when we're reading content online. This should be one of your first steps when you're weighing up how much you should trust a given piece of information. Let's dive in so you can see what I mean.

Activity 1 20 min.

Show participants the following article.

Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 1, Article 1.

3A2 **Unit 3: Fighting Misinformation >** Part A: Evaluating written content: Checking sources, citations, and evidence > Lesson 2: Go to the source

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Process questions

Is Pitchfork the best source of this information? Who would be a better source, and one that's very easy for us to check?

Talking points

When one news source cites another, it usually links to the original source. That means it's relying on that other source for this information, and hasn't independently verified the information. It's always a good idea to read the most original reporting, because going to the original report means you can see what steps that journalist took to corroborate the information.

In this case, Pitchfork cites CBS and TMZ, among others. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 1, Articles referenced in Article 1.*

Let's look at another example. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 1, Article 2.*

Pope Francis Says Christians Should Visit Mosques and Praise Allah

⏱ July 6, 2018 👤 Baxter Dmitry 🗂 News, World 💬 3

Christians around the world should visit mosques and praise Allah, according to Pope Francis who led by example on his visit to Istanbul by entering the Blue Mosque, taking off his shoes, facing Mecca, and praising the Muslim god.

According to Reuters:

Process questions

What would you do here? Why is this important?

Talking points

Here the reporter has neglected to link to the original story, but he indicates that some of the text comes from Reuters. Let's Google a snippet of that ("Francis took off his shoes as he entered the huge mosque"), and find the original story. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 1, Original Story for Article 2.*

Process questions

What differences do you notice between the YourNewsWire story and the original?

Talking points

The YourNewsWire story takes some liberties with the truth. While it's true that Pope Francis prayed in a Mosque, there's no support for the claim that he "prayed to Allah" and, more strikingly," he never called on Christians to do so.

Much of the YourNewsWire story is a fabrication. The first line is false and unproven. Then the story tries to give itself an air of legitimacy by quoting correct information from Reuters. Then it goes back to falsehoods.

Conclusions 5 min.

Going to the source is an important precaution, because in some cases, the later report actually distorts the original information. In other cases, there's no manipulation, but going to the source is still a good idea so you can judge how the reporter gathered the information. Going to the source is usually very quick and easy, so it should be one of the first checks you do to judge information you come across online.

3A2 **Unit 3: Fighting Misinformation >** Part A: Evaluating written content: Checking sources, citations, and evidence >
Lesson 2: Go to the source

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Unit 3 > Part A > Lesson 3: Verifying Sources and Citations

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn skills to help them determine the credibility of sources and citations that they encounter in the media, which in turn will help them determine the credibility of the media itself

Materials

▶ Pens and paper
▶ Verifying Sources worksheet

Time Needed

50 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson we'll talk about the sources and citations that journalists use for their information. Journalists can't be everywhere at all times, and they can't be experts in everything. So journalists rely on both people and documents to tell them what happened and why events are significant. The important thing is to choose sources and citations that are reliable and can speak to the information in question. In this lesson, we'll talk about how you can judge sources and citations for yourself and by extension, judge the quality of the news item you're reading or viewing.

Activity 1 10 min.

In this activity we're going to talk about key ways to judge an article based both on its sources: people the journalist talked to for the article; and the citations of documents, such as reports, legislation, emails, video, and audio. As you work through the following worksheet, think about when an article needs sources and when it needs citations.

Give everyone a copy of the Verifying Citations Worksheet. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 3, Activity 1, Verifying Sources Worksheet.*

Look at the following article. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 3, Activity 1, Article 1.*

Have everyone work together in small groups to judge the quality of the sources and citations.

Have volunteers share some of their findings.

Verifying Sources and Citations Worksheet

Questions	Notes
Name of the article	
Does the article refer to people who served as sources? Is this needed on this article?	
Are the sources and citations multiple, or is only one source or document used throughout?	
Does the article accurately describe the sources and citations it is using?	
Can the sources used be trusted to be independent, and not distort the truth to serve their self-interest?	
Are the sources named, or are anonymous sources used? If the latter, is there a good reason provided for the anonymity?	
Does the person quoted have good evidence for what they're saying? Would we expect them to be an authority on that topic?	

Talking points 5 min.

The article uses a number of sources and citations. The sources are an Ofo executive (via a statement), the president of the Cooper's Ferry Partnership, and a Camden city spokesman. The citations include a CNN article, a study on bike share programs, a previous NJ.com article, and a Rutgers University announcement, and most of these are linked. The article accurately describes its sources and citations and all could be expected to be authoritative on the topics they're speaking to. There are no anonymous sources. Some of the sources might be expected to have their own interests at heart, but these do not overwhelm the story. For example, the company official is no doubt trying to put a positive spin on the situation, but his is far from the only voice in the piece.

For participants' future reference: It is not necessarily a bad thing if an article lacks citations. Sometimes, all the information comes from talking to people, rather than from documents that can be linked to. However, where a story does rely on written or recorded evidence, you can have more confidence if those citations are provided.

3A3 **Unit 3: Fighting Misinformation >** Part A: Evaluating written content: Checking sources, citations, and evidence > Lesson 3: Verifying Sources and Citations

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Activity 2 10 min.

Optional — Repeat the exercise with this article. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 3, Activity 2, Article 1.*

Talking points 5 min.

This article uses sources and citations poorly. The main point is based on the words of the anonymous "CDC doctor" quoted at the beginning. We are not told why this source must remain anonymous. Then the article refers generally to "scientists" and "many health officials." Citing information to the CDC directly is better, but there is no link for us to verify. This wouldn't by itself be a huge problem, but we should already be doubting this story highly because of its reliance on an unjustified anonymous source. As the story goes on, it finds some better sources for a couple of points, such as the 10% effectiveness claim, but then makes many claims with no support at all, for example, "It is now a known fact that flu vaccines contain mercury." Another huge problem with this article is that much of it is opinion, and a reason to doubt the writer's motives and thus the truth of the piece overall.

Activity 3 5 min.

One way to judge citations, or any website, is to do a "who is" lookup. This allows you to see who a website is registered to, and when it was registered.

Have students look at the following website for a couple of minutes. Can they tell if this is the legitimate website of the American Medical Association? *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Link 1.*

Now have them look up the website using the who is site *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Link 2.* Enter the AMA web address minus the https, www and slashes, and click "Lookup."

Talking points 5 min.

Yes, this site really is registered to the American Medical Association. Note, too, the "created" date — this can be very handy in discovering that supposed news or company sites are actually recently enacted hoaxes

Note: The correct URL for a whois lookup is https://whois.icann.org/en: this is run by ICANN, an international non-profit that determines the internet's system of domain names. Don't use one of the copycat sites like whois.net.

Conclusions 5 min.

Fact checking sources and citations, and not taking sources and citations at face value, are key components of media literacy and can be an important way to determine the overall credibility of an article or another type of media.

TRAINER NOTES

Maybe add:

While we understand that you won't read every article with a scoresheet next to it, we do hope that you are more aware and alert to manipulation of sources and will "care before you share" and check the information that you do spread.

💡 Trainer tips

Feel free to select whatever previously used articles you like for this activity. As an alternative, you can also have participants select articles from their social media feeds to use for this activity.

3A3 **Unit 3: Fighting Misinformation >** Part A: Evaluating written content: Checking sources, citations, and evidence > Lesson 3: Verifying Sources and Citations

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Unit 3 > Part A > Lesson 4: Verifying Evidence

🖐 TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

⚙ **Learning Objectives**

Participants will:

▶ Learn skills to help them verify evidence such as statistics in the news and media they consume

▶ Gain an appreciation for fact checkers' valuable verification work, and how referring to fact checkers can save participants' time and effort

🖊 **Materials**

▶ Pens and paper for brainstorming

▶ Computers with Internet access

▶ Verifying Evidence handout

▶ Reference sources handout

▶ Easy Fact Checking Tools handout

⏱ **Time Needed**

45 min.

Procedure

📋 **Introduction** 5 min.

Another way you can evaluate the information you read is by verifying some or all of the evidence presented. This involves looking up information using resources you know to be credible.

One type of evidence that often gets abused, but is among the easiest to look up, is data and statistics. Ask if anyone has an example to share of a dubious statistic that they've heard repeated.

👥 **Talking points** 5 min.

Some examples of untrue and dubious statistics include statistics about donkey-related deaths, the common misconception that we only use 10 percent of our brains, and some crime statistics. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Talking Points.*

🏰 **Activity 1** 15 min.

Review the following tactics you can use to verify evidence (you can use one or more):

1. Think about the numbers involved. Do they make sense?

2. If a link or name of a source document or organization is given in the article, click the link or Google to try and find the document in question.
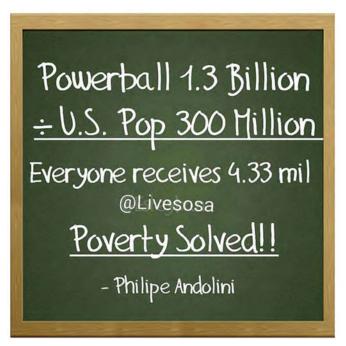
3. Ask whether the document actually says what the article claims it says.

4. Ask if the document or source organization really is well placed to provide the information.

5. If you have your doubts, try to identify a reputable source for checking the information yourself.

6. Google or search the organization's website for the information you need.

Verifying Evidence handout found at *Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, Steps to Verifying Evidence.*

Here are some reputable reference sources for various types of information:

Iseek: A specialized search engine that allows you to look across thousands of pre-approved sources, including universities, governments, and nonprofits, on a wide variety of academic topics

Science Reference Services, Library of Congress: A list of reference guides on a wide variety of scientific topics

CIA World Factbook: Facts about countries, including their people, history, government, and economy, plus maps and flags of the world

National Security Archive: A depository for over 30 years of declassified U.S. government documents

American FactFinder: U.S. Census data, including everything from age, income, housing and industries to race, country of origin, poverty and education

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Data on employment and unemployment, pay and inflation

Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics: Information on crimes, arrests, prosecutions, and prisons, including some long-term trends

FBI: Crime in the United States: More recent data on crime rates in the U.S.

Congress.gov, **Senate.gov**, **House.gov**: Good historical government data

World Bank Data: Free access to vast amounts of data on global development

For links, please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1

3A4 **Unit 3: Fighting Misinformation >** Part A: Evaluating written content: Checking sources, citations, and evidence > Lesson 4: Verifying Evidence

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Have participants break into small groups and look at the following examples. For each, they should determine which steps, if any to perform from the Verifying Evidence handout. Then they should pick from the list of six tactics to verifying evidence listed above.

2. "Indonesia is the fourth biggest country by population."

3. "The murder rate in the U.S. rose significantly from 2000 to 2010."

Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, Activity 1 Examples.

Talking points 5 min.

Here's what participants should have found for the above examples:

1. False: The math doesn't add up. Using a calculator on your phone or computer (you can also Google "1.3 billion / 300 million"), you'll see that each person only gets about $4. You can stop checking before you have to look up any statistics.

2. True: Use the CIA World Factbook, and you'll find the information

3. False: Use the Sourcebook of Criminal Justice statistics, and you'll find the information

For links, please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 1, Talking points

Activity 2 10 min.

As you can see, verifying evidence for yourself can be rewarding, but it can also be time consuming. That's what makes fact checkers so invaluable: They investigate claims so you can quickly find the answers.

A lot of people associate fact checkers with politics, but they verify and debunk a lot more information than that. For example, in the list below we have fact checkers who investigate items about celebrities (Gossip Cop), science (SciCheck), and all manner of hoaxes and wild claims (Snopes). Fact checkers come from across the political spectrum, for example the former Tea Party activist who encourages conservatives to debunk fakes (Unfakery).

Have everyone look at the following websites of leading fact-checkers in small groups. They should choose a fact-check that interests them, and discuss how they would themselves seek to verify the claim. Then they should look at the methods the fact-checker used, and see where these differ.

Organizations to explore:

▶ FactCheck.org

▶ SciCheck

▶ Snopes

▶ PolitiFact

▶ Washington Post Fact Checker

▶ Gossip Cop

▶ Unfakery

For links, please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 4, Activity 2.

Conclusions 5 min

We can go a step beyond previous lessons, checking not only the content itself but cross-checking the evidence presented. This process involves several steps: thinking critically about what's in front of us, for example thinking about the numbers and math involved; seeing if the source material says what is claimed; questioning the authority of the source material; and finally doing our own search for the information on a reputable site.

This kind of verification can be rewarding, but to do it in full does take some time. Fact checkers are an invaluable resource because for whatever claim you're reading, there's a good chance fact checkers have already investigated it using many of the same techniques. You can also use some of the sources in the Easy Fact Checking Tools handout.

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Unit 3 > Part A > Lesson 5: Publication dates & Examining story changes

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Check the original dates of news shared on social media

▶ Learn skills to help them determine the date of a publication by using archival tools like the Wayback Machine

▶ Learn how to use archival tools to see if an article has changed over time

Materials

▶ Pens and paper

▶ Projector

▶ Computers with Internet

Time Needed

30 min.

Procedure

Talking points

We tend to assume that what we see on social media or in the news is "new." If the event described actually happened years ago, this places the event in a very different context and can change how we feel about it. Old stories often get recycled on social media, so your first step should be to see when the story was actually published[2].

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson, we'll practice Name It to Tame It to help us pause before reacting to a piece of news. We will check original publication dates, and learn how to use online archives to find old versions of a story. This allows us to see if changes have been made over time.

Activity 1 10 min.

Have participants look at the following examples, and discuss one at a time. For each example, ask them to Name It to Tame It.

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2   For more information on how old stories go viral and find new life on social media, see:
https://archives.cjr.org/news_literacy/old_stories_going_viral.php

The Name It to Tame It steps:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

Then reveal the date of publication on each, and ask: How does it change your feelings when you find out that this is an old story, recycled? How does it change the meaning of the news item?

1

One of a kind..May she rest in peace.Rue McClanahan, One of the "Golden Girls" Stars, Dies at 76 cbsnews.com/news/rue-mccla...

1:46 PM - Jun 11

Rue McClanahan, One of the "Golden Girls" Stars, Dies at 76

Actress Who Played Blanche Deveraux Passed Away After Suffering a "Massive Stroke," Her Manager Said

cbsnews.com

♡ 5   See _____'s other Tweets

Answer for no. 1:

This made the rounds on social media despite the fact that the actress died in 2010. *Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 5, Activity 1, Article 1.*

2

Answer for no. 2:

If your friend shares this local news story on social media, it will appear at first glance to be new. You need to click on the story to determine the actual date, December 6, 2017.

Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 5, Activity 1, Article 2.

Activity 2 10 min.

Explain that we will be using online archival tools to help us explore media. Explain that resources like the Internet Archive work to preserve and archive the web and to ensure that people can go back and find content that might have been changed or even deleted and see when something was published. (We have been using it to archive stories highlighted in this course.)

Explain that people can use the Wayback Machine to find old content and to save websites or articles themselves. Sites like archive.is also let people find old content and save current content.

For links, please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 5, Activity 2.

Provide a quick demo of searching on the Wayback Machine and on archive.is with a URL. You can use this following article, which features a later correction by the New York Times. *Please see Example sheet: Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 5, Activity 2.* This article is interesting to explore since it features two corrections as well as different publication dates for print and online editions.

Let everyone explore the Wayback Machine and archive.is on their own and check out different links to articles or topics of interest.

Conclusions 5 min.

Check the publication date as a first step. If the story actually doesn't report on new events, how does that change our interpretation of it? Using archival tools like archive.is or the Wayback Machine can help you explore not only internet history but also the history of a particular article, helping you determine when it was published or when, or if, it ever changed due to a correction. Fact checkers also check this kind of information, and you can look at fact checking or debunking websites to save time.

Trainer tips

Feel free to use other examples or to have a set topic for everyone to explore on these tools.

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Unit 3 > Part B: Photos, Videos and Social Media > Lesson 1: Reused photos and videos

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to be on the lookout for repurposed photos and videos

▶ Be comfortable using reverse image search to test whether an individual photo has been repurposed

Materials

▶ Computers

Time Needed

45 min.

Trainer preparation

Encourage participants who have iPhones to install Chrome. (Android users should already have it.)

Procedure

Introduction   5 min.

Some of the most insidious misinformation on the internet is in the form of photos and videos. Today we'll start talking about how these are manipulated, and how you can detect this manipulation. In particular, we're going to start by looking at photos that show something different from what they purport to show. Reverse image searches, while not always conclusive, are one of the quickest and most powerful tools to catch this misinformation and prevent its spread.

Process Question   5 min.

Why do you think photos and videos are particularly dangerous sources of misinformation?

Talking points   10 min.

A number of studies have found that visuals enhance our ability to recall information[3], and this appears to apply just as much to dis- and mis-information as to true facts. We must therefore be aware that we're particularly susceptible to

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3   Schnotz, W. (2002). Towards an integrated view of learning from text and visual displays. *Educational Psychology Review, 14*(1), 101-120. Retrieved from http://www.csuchico.edu/~nschwartz/schnotz2002.pdf

disinformation when we're looking at images or video.

There are many ways photos and videos can be manipulated to distort the truth. Some of the most common are:

1. A real picture of a person, place, or situation re-used to represent a different person, place, or situation.

2. A forgery, i.e., a photo edited with design software (such as Photoshop) to add or delete certain components.

3. A photo used selectively to paint a distorted picture. This can include photos in which crucial elements are cropped out, changing or even reversing the meaning of the image; and photos that while themselves real, show only a small piece of reality and therefore distort the truth.

In the next few lessons, we're going to learn about these different types of misinformation and how you can detect each.

In this lesson, we'll concentrate on the first type of photo misinformation: re-purposed photos.

Breaking news situations are particularly susceptible to this kind of hoax. For example, after every major shooting, trolls circulate photos of comedian Sam Hyde, claiming he's a suspect.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Introduction, Vegas Shooting.

This man has been accused several times. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Introduction, Nice Attack Hoax.*

Process questions

Why is this especially problematic? How does stereotyping play a strong role in some of these examples?

Talking points

The man in the picture, Veerender Jubal, received a death threat that included his home address and phone number. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Introduction, Man Falsely Accused.*

After the Baltimore protests and riots in 2015, a lot of false images of looting showed up. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Introduction, Baltimore Protests and Riots.*

Process questions

What is especially harmful about the falsehoods in this example?

Activity 1 15 min.

As always with information online, there's two key tips to keep in mind:

Name It to Tame It: The Name It to Tame It steps:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

CARE BEFORE YOU SHARE:

1. Name It to Tame It!

2. Take **responsibility**. Know that YOU are the information gatekeeper.

3. **Acknowledge** what you may not know.

4. If you have time, **check** it out! Do what you can to verify information.

5. If you're still not sure it's true, ***don't share*** it.

Then, how do we find out whether a photo has been repurposed? We use a tool called "reverse image search."

Ask participants to use one of the following methods to find the earliest possible version of a photo (using one of the two examples, below) and figure out what it depicts.

Ask them if possible to use whatever method they would normally have available to them. For example, if they own a smartphone but no computer, have them do the exercise on their phone. (This is why we asked in the preparation notes for iPhone users to install Chrome.) Alternatively, if the class has a projector, the whole class can work the exercises together.

Trainer tips

Be sure to test all of the images you want your participants to search during your preparation for the training to make sure you are able to find other versions and understand the process.

One thing that makes this process difficult to demonstrate is that all of the above pictures have already been debunked. Therefore, the debunk will turn up as a result on the reverse image search. Ask participants to pretend they don't see the debunk, and carry on looking for the earliest version as they would in real life.

STEPS TO REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

Method A: Google Chrome

Reverse image searches are easiest if you're using Google Chrome as your browser. For this reason, you may want to consider installing Chrome on your phone or computer. However, this method doesn't list results by date of publication, so

sometimes using TinEye is more helpful (see below).

Steps:

1. Right-click the image. (On your phone, tap the image to open it as a full-screen view.)

2. Click "Search Google for image." (On Mobile, press your finger to the screen, hold, and choose "Search Google for this image.")

3. Scroll down to where you see "Pages that include matching images."

4. Look for the earliest date you can find (results will not be in this order, however) and also look for reputable news outlets.

Method B: TinEye

This is a method you can use regardless of what web browser you're using. It will also show you the earliest usages of an image.

1. Save the picture you want to verify. (On your phone, press the picture on your screen and hold until you see an option to save it.)

2. In your browser, go to tineye.com.

3. Select "upload image" and choose the image you want to verify. Then, if you click on one of the images returned in the search, you can toggle to compare it to the picture you submitted.

4. In the drop-down menu, choose "Oldest."

Examples:

This photo is being represented as a case of someone mistaking a coyote for a dog.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Activity 1.

A reverse image search will reveal it's actually from a 2014 Daily Mail story about a family who adopted a coyote as a baby and keep it as a pet (intentionally).

This photo supposedly shows a child's close encounter with a bird. Notice "photo by unknown."

A reverse image search reveals no bird in the original. And the photo credit should go to Adrian Murray. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 1, Activity 1.*

TRAINER NOTES

Process questions 5 min.

What did you learn from this process? What can you conclude if you turn up an earlier user of a picture? What can you conclude if you don't?

Talking points

Remember: Reverse image search is not always going to reveal a straightforward answer. If you can find an earlier use from a different situation, then you know you're dealing with misinformation. If your search doesn't turn up any prior uses of that picture, it's probably original, but not necessarily. You might also mention that a lot of "harmless" fakes on social media tend to be of animals and the "surprising" natural world. The natural world can indeed surprise… but there are limits!

Conclusions 5 min.

The internet is full of repurposed photos, which the unscrupulous claim represent one thing when they really represent something else. They may say the photo is of a certain place, time, or event. Reverse image search is not foolproof, but in these cases it often lets us determine that a picture has been used before, or has been altered. We'll talk more about alteration in the next lesson.

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to be wary of photo alteration

▶ Learn to search for the textual elements of memes to determine their veracity

Time Needed

55 min. — 1 hr. 5 min.

Procedure

Introduction   5 min.

Another common occurrence on the internet is photos that have been altered to distort the truth. This includes photos or memes that contain false textual information. We're going to look at how you can determine if photos have been altered, or memes made up.

Activity 1   15 min.

Choose one or both of the following examples to discuss as a class.

1. Show participants the following picture and discuss:

Process questions

Do you have reason to doubt this picture? Why or why not?

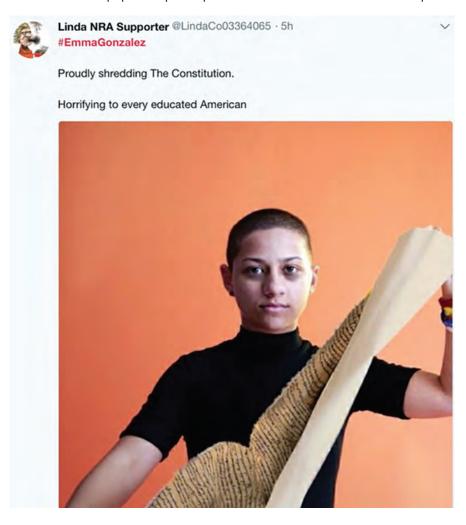It won a prize in a 2016 Nikon Singapore contest.

Talking points

Closer examination (a second look, really), even without technology, reveals the fakery. Yet Nikon originally awarded the photo a prize. Nikon's Facebook followers pointed out that it was a fake before Nikon caught the error.[4]

4   https://www.digitaltrends.com/photography/nikon-photo-contest-fail/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

2. Another popular topic for photo alterations is current events and political controversies.

Linda NRA Supporter @LindaCo03364065 · 5h
#EmmaGonzalez

Proudly shredding The Constitution.

Horrifying to every educated American

Process questions

Do you have reason to doubt this picture? Why or why not?

Talking points

Participants should cite Name It to Tame It responses, that something with such shock value should be approached with skepticism. The Name It to Tame It steps:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

You might also mention that a lot of fakes tend to emerge out of current events and breaking news situations.
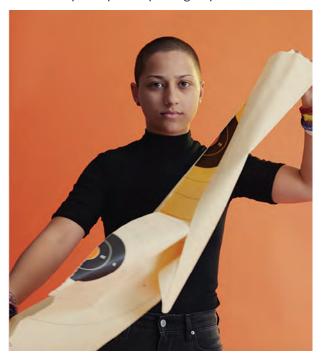
Activity 2 15 min.

Optional: Have participants reverse-image search the second image to find the original. TinEye will help here.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 2 for links.

Now break participants up into groups of 3-4. Give them the false picture together with the original:
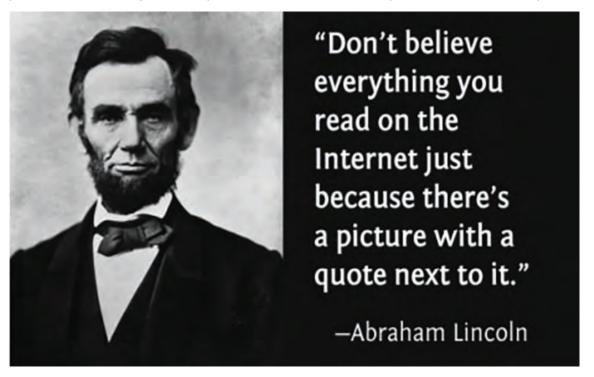

TRAINER NOTES

How can you tell when a photo has been altered?

1. Start with a gut check — Name It to Tame It! Does the photo make you feel angry? Does it seem believable? The Name It to Tame It steps:

    a. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

    b. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

    c. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

2. Look for elements that seem out of place. Do shadows all point in the same direction? If there's signage in the photo, what language is it written in?

3. Reverse-image search it! You will often find the original, unaltered image.

Activity 3 15 min.

One type of photo alteration to be particularly careful of is the text-based meme. Just about anyone can take an image and pair it with text that they've made up, or at least with words that the pictured individual never spoke.

"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a picture with a quote next to it."

—Abraham Lincoln

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 3 for more examples.

How do you investigate these?

Method A: For historical quotes

Try Quote Investigator, the website of an independent researcher who's put countless hours into investigating the origins of quotations. Look at for search tips. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 3 for link to Quote Investigator.*

Method B: For current events

Any noteworthy or surprising quote by a public figure will have been reported by news organizations that follow journalistic principles.

Ask participants to use their phones or laptops. Show several quotes on the slide or on a flipchart and ask them to quickly research and determine whether it is true or not.

1. Try searching for the quote on Google and see who's reported on it. Use the journalism standards from Part A, Lesson 8 to judge the reliability of the news source.

2. Or, in Google, type in the quote and follow this with "site:[domain]", where [domain] is the domain of a reputable news organization. For example: *"don't believe everything you read on the internet" site:wsj.com.* If the outlet has used the quote, you should get a result.

Activity 4 10 min.

(Optional)

We can go a step further, by seeing when videos have been altered.

Here's a video that supposedly shows an eagle snatching a baby. How is this video designed to make you feel?

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 4, Video.

To investigate it, we're going to install a plug-in called InVid.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 2, Activity 4, Plug in.

Now with the YouTube video open in your browser, click on the plug-in icon, and then click "Open InVid."

This gives us all sorts of information about the video, including when it was uploaded, and some notable comments on it. The plugin also breaks the video down frame-by-frame. This is useful for two reasons: 1) You can use the buttons provided to do a reverse-image search, and see if these stills have appeared elsewhere; and 2) You can look at frames individually, to see if anything suggests the video is fake.

TRAINER NOTES

Doing that, we see a glitch where part of the eagle's wing disappears. This indicates a problem with the CGI rendering of the eagle. There's also several frames where a shadow appears out of nowhere, and in the wrong place.

Conclusions 5 min.

It's surprisingly easy to alter photos and even video in a way that completely changes the content's meaning. As always, Name It to Tame It is your first line of defense. Reverse image searching can help establish if the picture has been altered. And don't forget to Care Before You Share. You are the ultimate gatekeepers who prevent the spread of misinformation!

Unit 3 > Part B > Lesson 3: Photo selection effect

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to question what has been left out of a picture or video, and how that might change their interpretation of the photo or video meaning

▶ Learn to think critically about how the choice of photo can depict a situation in a negative or positive light

Materials

▶ Photos to share with class, either printouts or on screen

Time Needed

25 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Today we'll talk about a different kind of photo and video manipulation: cropping and selection. Photos can be selectively cropped, and videos can be selectively edited, to leave a false impression. Choosing only to use certain photos and not others can also misrepresent a situation.

Warm-up 5 min.

Ask participants: Look at this picture of President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. What do they think is happening in this picture? What are the alternative explanations?

Talking points

When many people first saw this picture, they looked at Trump's outstretched hand, looked at Trudeau's expression, and made an assumption: Trudeau was hesitating to shake Trump's hand. But the problem with photographing people in action is that a photo catches a split second which actually may be very unrepresentative. You may have noticed the same phenomenon when you pause a movie you're watching: people in mid-speech suddenly have funny facial expressions that you never would have noticed without pausing. And in this case, the situation looks very different when you see the full video. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 3, Talking Points.*

Activity 1 10 min.

Not only can we jump to the wrong conclusion about isolated photos, headlines and captions can also drastically color the way we interpret those pictures.

Process questions

Ask participants: Look at this picture of President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe above a koi pond. What conclusion do they reach based on the picture and headlines?

The Guardian ✔
@guardian

Follow ⌄

Trump dump: president throws entire box of fish food into precious koi carp pond

The Guardian

Fishy business: Trump and Abe dump fish food into precious koi pond
US president and Japanese host give fish a large feast on second day of former's five-nation tour of Asia

theguardian.com

Source: https://twitter.com/guardian/status/927421814577524736

Big Stupid Baby Dumps Load Of Fish Food On Japanese Koi Pond [Update]

Lauren Evans
11/06/17 2:15am · Filed to: BABIES ⌄

181.9K   193   26

Source: https://theslot.jezebel.com/big-stupid-baby-dumps-load-of-fish-food-on-japanese-koi-1820170735

Talking points

When many people first saw this picture, they made assumptions about Trump and what he was doing. These assumptions fell along partisan lines. People inclined to think of Trump as foolish or insensitive thought it was inappropriate for him to dump all his fish food in at once, and they thought Abe was looking on in disbelief. Even some otherwise reputable outlets like The Guardian fell for this narrative — showing how important it is for all of us, including journalists, to manage our biases. The headlines exacerbated and solidified the public's assumptions, giving people a narrative to fit the picture into.

Now show participants the video of the incident on Snopes.com.

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 3, Activity 1.

Process questions

What really happened? What was Abe's reaction? How did the selective use of the picture above distort what really happened?

Conclusions 5 min.

It's easy to misinterpret a portion of a video or photo when it's been removed from its context. Remember that the actions and expressions in a photo aren't always what they appear to be at first blush, and that we all interpret images in a way that fits with our preconceived notions.

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Solidify their knowledge about repurposed images, altered images and selective images

▶ Solidify their photo research skills

Materials

▶ Badges for the competition winners

▶ Computers accessible (can be used in teams), pre-loaded with images to be checked

Time Needed

30-40 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

You've learned a lot in the past few lessons about what kind of photo manipulations are out there. Now let's put what you've learned to the test!

Activity 1 20-30 min.

Break the participants up into groups of 2 or 3. Give all groups the same picture to debunk or verify, and time them to see who can come up with an answer the quickest. Pictures can be found on the slideshow for Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 4.

Repeat with the next example, and so on.

Add together the rankings for each group (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) The one with the overall lowest ranking is the overall winner, and members receive badges.

Talking points

If participants need reminding, here are the steps for reverse image search:

Method A: Google Chrome

Reverse image searches are easiest if you're using Google Chrome as your browser. For this reason, you may want to

consider installing Chrome on your phone or computer. However, this method doesn't list results by date of publication, so sometimes using TinEye is more helpful (see below).

Steps:

1. Right-click the image. (On your phone, tap the image to open it as a full-screen view.)

2. Click "Search Google for image." (On Mobile, press your finger to the screen, hold, and choose "Search Google for this image.")

3. Scroll down to where you see "Pages that include matching images."

4. Look for the earliest date you can find (results will not be in this order, however) and also look for reputable news outlets.

Method B: TinEye

This is a method you can use regardless of what web browser you're using. It will also show you the earliest usages of an image.

1. Save the picture you want to verify. (On your phone, press the picture on your screen and hold until you see an option to save it.)

2. In your browser, go to tineye.com.

3. Select "upload image" and choose the image you want to verify. Then, if you click on one of the images returned in the search, you can toggle to compare it to the picture you submitted.

4. In the drop-down menu, choose "Oldest."

Conclusions 5 min.

A lot of the photos you see on social media have been re-used, and sometimes in a way that changes the picture's meaning. Pictures also get purposefully altered to spread false information. In many cases, you can use your reverse image search skills to determine if such appropriation or manipulation has taken place. Even when you don't have time to do so, or a search yields inconclusive results, however, you'll know to be wary, and that seeing is not necessarily believing!

TRAINER NOTES

Examples:

1

#ThePersistence ✔
@ScottPresler

Follow

Speaks Volumes: Republicans have denounced racists & democrats refuse to denounce Antifa.

The Hate He Dares Not Speak
#MondayMotivation

6:33 AM - 14 Aug 2017

Answer:

This one turns out to be re-used AND doctored. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 4, Activity 1.*
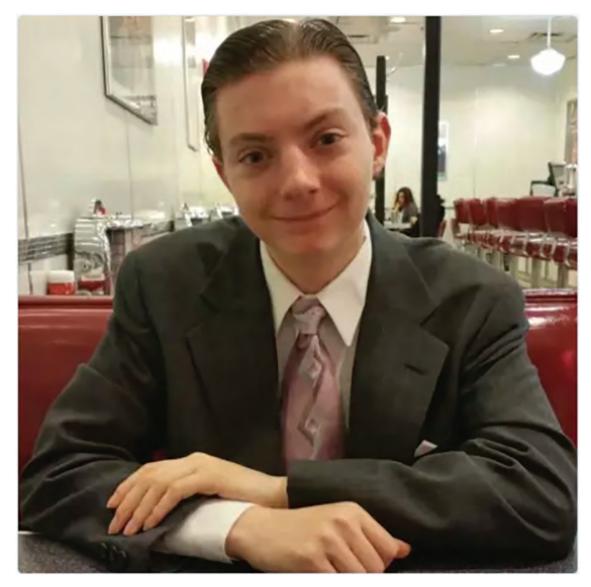
2 Is this a victim of the Manchester Arena bombing?

Zero @GamerGateAntifa · 9h
My son was in the Manchester Arena today

He's not picking up my call!

Please help me

↩ 621 · ↻ 14K · ♥ 5.9K · ✉

Twitter

To make it easier, here's just the photo to reverse-image search:

Answer: There are serious reasons to doubt. Start with the Twitter username, which references GamerGate and Antifa, both favorite topics of internet trolls. Then when you search for the image, you'll find that he's a YouTube personality. That's another tip-off that this could be a hoax.

Debunk the below. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 4, Activity 1, Debunk.*

3

Answer: Doctored photo, repurposed, and created for a contest. This is a hard one. If you don't want to rely on Snopes' evaluation, then run the pic through TinEye and note that the earliest result has the text stamp "FreakingNews.com." If you then search again on TinEye but filtering for the domain "freakingnews.com," you will find the contest page. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 4, Activity 1.*

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

► Learn to question the authenticity of social media accounts

► Learn the common signs of fake accounts

Materials

► Examples as handouts or projected with a computer

Time Needed

35 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Much of the misinformation on the internet gets spread by fake social media accounts, which aren't what they appear to be. Sometimes a real person is behind the account, and sometimes it is run by a bot, a piece of computer code that masquerades as a human.

Process questions

Why is social media a fertile environment for disinformation? Why would someone want to create a fake social media account?

Talking points 5 min.

Social media is an all too convenient tool for spreading disinformation because it is easy to access and use — almost anyone can publish anything. In addition, they are relatively anonymous, and let messages spread quickly. The logic and standards that apply to journalists do not apply to most users of social media. Disinformation on social media spreads further and faster than corrective information. That's why it's important to stop the spread of disinformation as early as possible, and it's up to all of us to do this.

So how do you know if you're looking at a real social media account, representing a real person? There are a number of checks you can do. Here are some of the most effective. But keep in mind, you might not get a definitive answer. Weigh up the evidence as you go.

Activity 1 15 min.

Example:

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 5, Activity 1.

Have the participants break up into small groups. Within each group, they should discuss each step in turn. Then they should try to come to a consensus: is the account real, or fake?

Steps.

1. Name It to Tame It. This is still the most important step. If you really want the post to be true, be extra skeptical as you carry out the following tests. The Name It to Tame It steps:

    a. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

    b. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

    c. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

2. Look at the profile. Did the user just join recently? Do their photo, handle, and screen name match, for example, a woman's picture and a man's name? Also, more anonymous users are more likely to be bots, according to Ben

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Nimmo at the Digital Forensic Research Lab at the Atlantic Council.[5]

3. Look at the name really carefully. Can you tell the difference between @RealDonaldTrump and @ReaIDonaIdTrump? The second one uses capital "i"s where the lowercase "L"s should be. Type the user name as it should appear into Twitter or Google and see if the post you're looking for is still there.

4. Reverse-image search the photo. Lots of fake profiles steal photos from real people, which means that when we share their posts, we're not just sharing misinformation, but we might be hurting that real person too. Be suspicious if your search turns up lots of different names.

5. Does the account follow thousands of users, or have thousands of shares, but only has a handful of followers or friends? That's a sign of a bot.

6. And remember… CARE BEFORE YOU SHARE. If you're not sure, don't share it.

Talking points 5 min.

First, the idea of some kind of fantastic pill about to hit the market in 24 hours is definitely designed to trigger a "Wow!" response, so there's reason to be skeptical from the beginning. "Limitless" also refers to a movie and TV show featuring a character that took a pill that gave him special powers, which is an extreme reference for a mainstream news outlet. The account didn't start recently, and reverse image searching the NBC News logo won't tell us anything. But 1,500-odd followers for a major network seems like a pretty small following. And the name of the account is a bit suspicious: Does NBC really have an account just for stories about the mind? If we Google "NBC mind", we don't find any unit by that name. On balance, these add up to several reasons to doubt the authenticity of this account.

Conclusions 5 min.

Spotting fake accounts is a fairly easy way of telling whether you should lower your trust in a particular piece of information. The answer you get might not always be definitive. But just being aware that accounts can be fake, and often created to push a certain agenda, can get you thinking more critically about content you see on social media, and that's always a good thing.

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5   Ninno, B. (2017). #BotSpot: Twelve ways to spot a bot. Medium.com. Retrieved from https://medium.com/dfrlab/botspot-twelve-ways-to-spot-a-bot-aedc7d9c110c

Unit 3 > Part B > Lesson 6: Fake chat messages

Lesson Overview

⚙️ **Learning Objectives**

🕐 **Time Needed**

Participants will:

20 min.

▶ Recognize that screenshots of text chats can be faked

▶ Learn to apply common-sense skepticism to text screenshots that they come across

Procedure

📄 **Introduction** 2 min.

Fake chat messages are another type of misinformation that seems to be gaining currency. Perhaps you have seen screenshots that purported to be text conversations involving a famous person, such as Justin Bieber or Donald Trump. How would you know whether these conversations are real or not?

🏰 **Activity 1** 10 min.

Have participants search for "fake iPhone chat" on their phones. If they don't all have smartphones, let them pair up and share.

Their results should look something like this:

The list goes on. So these are very easy to create. What can participants do?

Process questions

When are these chats true, and when are they fake? Is there a difference between a chat you see reported or shared on social media, and one that you yourself have on your phone? What questions can you ask to protect yourself?

Talking points

Participants can best protect themselves by remembering:

1. Name It to Tame It. If it provokes a strong reaction, that's reason to be suspicious. The Name It to Tame It steps:

    a. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

    b. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

    c. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

    NAME IT TO TAME IT

2. Don't be too concerned about chats on your own phone. If you have the right number for someone, it's probably them. When you see chats replicated online, especially if they're supposed to be from famous people, be more suspicious.

3. Ask: How would someone have gotten a hold of this chat?

4. Are these really things these people would likely say?

5. Remember how easy it is to fake a chat.

Trainer tips

Participants may make comments like "Can I believe anything I read?" Remind them they are learning the skills to make such determinations in this course. Perhaps you can never be 100% sure of the veracity of an iPhone screenshot, but other sources, such as quality news outlets, are still reliable, and participants have learned how to determine quality. At the same time, it's probably good to be in the habit of cultivating a little doubt at all times, and never being more than 99% certain.

Conclusions 5 min.

Fake screenshots of text conversations is just one of the new ways that hoaxers are trying to fool you. But a series of simple reality check questions can help, along with the ever-useful advice of Name It to Tame It.

Unit 3 > Part B > Lesson 7: Fake Reviews

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Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn that product reviews can be faked

▶ Learn ways to test the veracity of product reviews

Time Needed

20 min.

Procedure

Introduction 2 min.

We often read product reviews to decide whether or not to make a purchase online. However, reviews on sites may be faked, either as a prank by people who were paid for their reviews, or by someone who works for the company trying to promote the product. We can become more savvy consumers by understanding how these fakes work.

Handout

Please see Unit 3, Part A, Lesson 7.

★★★★★ **Five Stars**
October 13, 2017
Verified Purchase
This is an amazing product. My body feels so much better since I started taken. Higley recommend

3 people found this helpful

| Helpful | Not Helpful | Comment Report abuse

Crabbie

★☆☆☆☆ **Did nothing for me**
March 18, 2018
Verified Purchase
This product did nothing for me. I have been taking another brand of turmeric for achy joints and thought this was worth a try as the price is substantially less. My joints began to ache within a week of starting this brand and just kept getting worse. I tried taking three of these a day thinking maybe the problem was with me. After three weeks I decided to go back to my original brand and within days the pain was gone.

| Helpful | Not Helpful | Comment Report abuse

★★★★★ **Fresh Nutrition--Turmeric Curcumin**
October 23, 2017
Verified Purchase
Very Happy, Great Product and fast shipping. Turmeric powder, Curcumin, black pepper extract and boswellia extract.

3 people found this helpful

| Helpful | Not Helpful | Comment Report abuse

Randy S. Eddinger

★★★★☆ **It is still too early to tell if product will ...**
March 5, 2018
Verified Purchase   **Early Reviewer Rewards** (What's this?)
It is still too early to tell if product will make a true difference with my knees. it certainly has had no ill effects, but I have not noticed a big difference in how I feel yet. , although lately the pain has lessened. I will return to this review in the future if I can say more decisively that the product made a true difference.

| Helpful | Not Helpful | Comment Report abuse

Process questions

What signals did participants look for?

Trainer tips

The next section will supply answers, highlighting what consumers should be on the lookout for.

Talking points 5 min.

There are a few signs that tend to point to fake reviews, and we should be aware of these. We compiled these tips based on an episode of NPR's Planet Money[6], and an interview with a computer scientist who specializes in fake review detection (the computer scientist spoke to us anonymously because his company didn't want to be on the record on this sensitive topic).

1. First, be aware that most reviews aren't fake. The big online retailer and review forums all have teams dedicated to ferreting out fake reviews. But they're in an arms race with the fraudsters, so it's a constant battle and they can't keep all fake reviews at bay.

2. Ask yourself: Does the language sound unnatural, like it was taken from marketing material?

3. Are there non-obvious terms used in multiple reviews, as if reviewers are following a script?

4. Did the positive reviews all cluster around a small stretch of time, like just a few days?

5. Are there a lot of reviews from new accounts?

6. Are the reviews clustered mostly around 5 stars and 1 stars, with very few in the middle?

7. Play the numbers game: trust a product with lots of reviews, and only 4 out of 5 stars, over one that got 5 stars but only had a handful of reviewers. Keep in mind that people do tend to complain more than they praise, so take those negative reviews with a grain of salt.

8. And finally, be wary of using reviews to make decisions that really require better evidence. Do you want to risk taking a supplement that may have side effects because 70 people you don't know say it worked for them?

Finally, you might want to try pasting the product or service URL into a tool. *Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 7, Warm Up.*

They're not foolproof, but can help you to detect whether the reviews you're looking at are reliable.

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6   Schellmann, H. (2018). Episode 850: The fake review hunter. NPR's Planet Money. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2018/06/27/623990036/episode-850-the-fake-review-hunter?utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=bufferef794&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Activity 1 10 min.
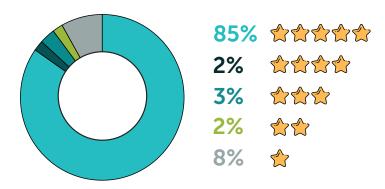
Break participants into groups of 2 or 3. Have them look at the first set of reviews and fill in the Product Review Worksheet. If time, go on to the second set of reviews. After they complete the worksheet for each set of reviews, ask them to discuss their findings as a group, and try to come to a consensus about whether the reviews were real or fake.
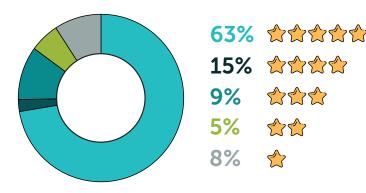
1 Number of reviews: 211

85% ★★★★★
2% ★★★★
3% ★★★
2% ★★
8% ★

★★★★★ **Cool charger**
By Tiffany on March 30, 2015
Verified Purchase
Bought this for my Galaxy phone and I have to say, this is a pretty cool USB cord! :) I like the lights in the cord as it puts off a cool glowing effect in my room at night and it makes it much easier to see, thanks for the great product!

★★★★★ **Definitely buying more.**
By Krystal Willingham on March 28, 2015
Verified Purchase
I was impressed with how bright the lights on the cable are. It works amazing and as described. I received earlier than expected so that made me very happy. So far is working like a charm and I can't wait to buy a few more.

★★★★★ **Spot It In the Crowd**
By Heather-Joan Caris on March 29, 2015
Verified Purchase
Such a cool product. I was so happy with how bright the lights on the cable are. It shipped super fast. The light shuts off when the charging is complete, so that's super helpful. I don't have to keep checking.

[7]

2 Number of reviews: 1,088

63% ★★★★★
15% ★★★★
9% ★★★
5% ★★
8% ★

★★★★★ **Surprised it really works**
By Amazon_Buyer on May 10, 2017
Flavor: Sleep Peach Apricot   Size: 14.5 Ounce (Pack of 12)   Verified Purchase
I admit I was skeptical when I bought this. I have RLS and fidget nonstop for hours before I can fall asleep. I have had a hard time shutting down at night and wake feeling horrible. Now I drink 1/3 or 1/2 a bottle and it seems to prepare my body for sleep within minutes. I get into bed, read for a little bit, and can fall right to sleep. I wake up feeling just fine. It's amazing.
13 people found this helpful
Helpful   Not Helpful   ⌄ 1 comment   Report abuse

★★★★★ **Half a bottle is good enough. I've suggested and given this to friends ...**
By Marquis R Turner on June 12, 2016
Flavor: Sleep Peach Apricot   Size: 14.5 Ounce (Pack of 12)   Verified Purchase
This product works really well with helping you get relaxed deep REM sleep. Half a bottle is good enough. I've suggested and given this to friends and it's helped plenty of them sleep. I use it whenever I have to be in bed earlier than usual. I have also observed several NFL football players drinking them when traveling from the west coast to the east coast. Highly recommend this product for getting a nice deep sleep.
22 people found this helpful
Helpful   Not Helpful   ⌄ Comment   Report abuse

★★★★★ **This makes even a chronic non-sleeper sleep!**
By Shirney knows on May 1, 2016
Flavor: Tangerine Dream   Size: 14.5 Ounce (Pack of 12)   Verified Purchase
I have had problems with sleep for years and have tried many things. I won't do ambien or other pharmaceuticals because they wig me out and I feel drugged but Neuro Sleep works! I drink 1/2-2/3rds bottle and I sleep through the night. It does have a lot of sugar which is not my favorite! But it doesn't interfere. I highly recommend it!
One person found this helpful
Helpful   Not Helpful   ⌄ Comment   Report abuse

[8]

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7   Text comes from actual reviews from an Amazon lawsuit, reported here: https://thewirecutter.com/blog/lets-talk-about-amazon-reviews/ .
    We made up additional data for this exercise.

8   Neuro sleep drink customer reviews. (n.d.) Amazon.com. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Neuro-Sleep-Drink-Tangerine-Dream/product-reviews/B00H1QG6FE/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_viewopt_srt?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=five_star&reviewerType=all_reviews&sortBy=helpful&pageNumber=1#reviews-filter-bar

Talking points

Given its role in a lawsuit, it seems likely that the first set of reviews is fake. Participants should have found that the reviews appeared within days of each other, and repeated the exact phrase "how bright the lights on the cable are." There aren't many reviews overall, and they are weighted towards 5s and 1s.

As far as we can tell, the second set of reviews is genuine. None of the language is particularly unnatural or repetitive, and the reviews are spread out over time. There is a good number of reviews and a decent spread among ratings. However, participants should question whether a powerful sedative is something they should buy based on reviews alone.

Conclusions 5 min.

Fraudulent reviews can make life difficult for consumers, but major retailers do often remove these. Still, you're likely to come across fake reviews in your shopping life, so play the numbers game: Use the criteria we discussed to judge the probability that a set of reviews suffer from a significant number of fakes.

Product review worksheet

Please see Unit 3, Part B, Lesson 7.

Criterion: Is this present?	Yes	Unsure	No
Unnatural language (like marketing material)?			
Non-obvious terms used in multiple reviews (looks like a script)?			
Positive reviews cluster around small timespan?			
Lots of reviews from new accounts?			
Reviews clustered mostly around 5 and 1?			
Only a few reviews overall?			
Does this kind of product really need better evidence than just reviews for me to buy it? (For example, health products)			

Unit 3 > Part C: Science and Health News > Lesson 1: The nature of science

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▸ Learn to become more comfortable with scientific uncertainty

▸ Learn to judge scientific claims based on the weight of evidence

Materials

▸ Paper

▸ Pencil or pen

▸ Computer and projector

Time Needed

40 min.

Procedure

Introduction

In this lesson we'll talk about how science builds a body of knowledge, and how this process is or isn't reflected in the media. Then we're all going to be scientists ourselves, and see what it feels like to gradually build our knowledge about something.

Warm-up 10 min.

Play a short video.

Please see Examples document: Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 1, Warmup (6 minutes).

Process questions

Do you recognize the phenomenon Goldacre is describing? How does it make you feel when you see these kinds of headlines?

Talking points 5 min.

Sometimes it feels like every day, news outlets say something different about health. It can be confusing and frustrating. But part of the reason it's like this is the very nature of science. Science is always changing, and is by its nature uncertain. At

the same time, when there's a lot of evidence for something, it's very likely to be true. Of course, news outlets don't always do a great job of explaining how the science is changing, or what the current scientific consensus is, but before we can pick apart science news we first have to understand the nature of science itself.

Activity 1 20 min.

When scientists want to explain something about the world, they write a "theory." The word "theory" doesn't itself mean the idea is uncertain, however. The "theory" of gravity predicts that when an apple is dislodged from a tree, it will fall to the ground.

Now you are going to act as scientists yourselves, and engage in the process of testing ideas and trying to reduce uncertainty. You are going to develop your own scientific model.

Break the class up into small groups.

Instructor will use the videos on this webpage throughout. *Please show the video on Examples document Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 1, Activity 1, Video 2.*

We're going to develop a model of something called a mystery tube. A mystery tube has four strings that emerge from four numbered holes. We are going to develop a model of what's going on inside the tube, based only on what we can observe, and we can only observe the outside of the tube.

Here is our initial evidence. (Show Movie 1.)

Based on this observation, how do you think the strings are connected inside the tube?

Draw your model.

What do you think will happen when pull the string at the bottom left?

Now watch what happens when we pull the string at bottom left. (Show Movie 2.)

Was your first model accurate? Did it correctly predict what ended up happening?

If not, redraw your model.

Now, what do you think will happen when we pull the string at bottom right?

(Show Movie 3.)

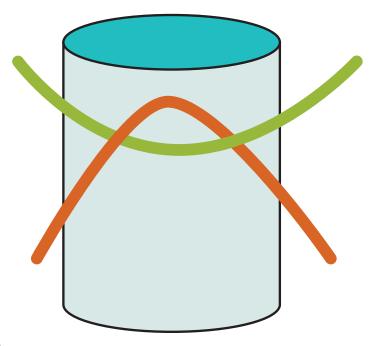Was your second model accurate?

If not, redraw your model.

Finally, let's see what happens when several strings are pulled.

(Show Movie 4.)

We may need an entirely new model! To speed this up a bit, we'll let you in on the secret of the Mystery Tube .

Process questions

What does this exercise illustrate about the scientific process? Are scientists always sure of what they're going to find?

Conclusions 5 min.

Scientists have to observe or test a given phenomenon many, many times before they can come to a good understanding. We often hear about the latest stages in this process, especially in sciences like medicine that are not as well developed (compared to, say, physics). Inevitably, along the way, scientists will get some things wrong. But it's all a part of the process of finding scientific truth.

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Familiarize themselves with the key indicators that differentiate informative from misleading science reporting

Materials

▶ Computer and projector for video

▶ Health News tip sheet handout

▶ Health Anecdote handout

▶ Science News checklist

▶ Health News Evaluation Chart

Time Needed

1 hr.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

There's a lot of science news out there, and even some of the best news organizations can unfortunately engage in scaremongering, or failing to put new studies in their proper context. But some key indicators can tell us when we're reading good, informative science reporting, and when we should be more skeptical about scientific claims.

Warm-up 5 min.

Please see Example document, Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Warm Up for video.

Process questions

What lessons stood out to you from this video?

Talking points 10 min.

Here are 10 items to consider when reading a science or health news story. Most of these items summarize tips from Health News Review, a health journalism watchdog, and from Africa Check, a fact-checking organization. *Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Sources of Tip Sheet.*

Hand out the Health News tip sheet and use the following text to elaborate.

Health News Tip sheet:

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Top 10 Tips.

1. Does the story use hyperbolic language? Rarely do scientific studies yield true "breakthrough," "revolutionary" or "game-changer" treatments, and certainly not "miracles"! As we discussed previously, science tends to gain knowledge in small steps.

2. What other studies have been done?

As we discussed in the previous lesson, science doesn't exist in a vacuum. No single study is good enough to make us conclude something. A good science news story will place the new study in the context of past research. A good science reporter will also ask other scientists not involved in the new study what they think of its findings and significance.

This is especially important to keep in mind with surprising study findings. If a study finds that broccoli is bad for you, or that smoking doesn't cause cancer, ask yourself if that really matters, given what most scientists think.

3. What was the sample size?

If this was a health study, what was the sample size (the number of people participating)? Hundreds or thousands of people is better than 15. These smaller studies are often pilots whose only real point is to justify doing a larger study.

If the story relies on anecdotes, that's a sample size far smaller than you'd find in any study. For this reason and others that we'll discuss, anecdotes yield terrible data.

4. Of mice or men?

Lots of medical studies get conducted on rodents first. This lays the groundwork for human studies, but just because you see a certain effect in mice, doesn't mean you can expect the same result in people.

5. Does it show causation or correlation?

Two things can be "correlated," or systematically associated, without one causing the other. For example, it's been observed that as ice cream sales increase, so do drowning deaths. Does this mean that ice cream causes drowning? No, this correlation happens because both ice cream sales and drowning deaths occur during summer months.[9]

9   Correlation does not apply causation. (n.d.) Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Correlation_does_not_imply_causation

Sometimes, things appear to be correlated even when there's no real relationship there. Take the following:

Divorce rate in Maine
correlates with
Per capita consumption of margarine

Is it really possible that eating less margarine leads to fewer divorces? Or the other way around? No, there are so many data sets in the world that if you look at enough, you can find funny pairings that will appear to be related, but are not.

A lot of scientific stories will say two things are "correlated" or "linked," but this does not mean one causes the other. That does not mean that any correlated phenomena are automatically a bogus relationship. But you should proceed with caution.

6. Does the story talk about cost and availability?

Lots of newly discovered medical treatments can be described as "promising." But if the treatment is too expensive for most people to use, it won't matter. Also, stories often hype up new treatments long before they're actually available to the public. Does the story just talk about research or about actual plans to release and market the treatment?

7. Does the story talk about benefits and harms?

First, benefits: How effective is the treatment? Is this quantified? And few treatments are without their side effects. What are these? If they're not mentioned, the article isn't very trustworthy.

8. Is this disease-mongering?

Sometimes a story will exaggerate the severity of a condition, or medicalize what's actually a normal state of health.

9. Is this a real journal?

If you want to dig deeper, look at the study that the story is based on. Is the journal legitimate? Real journals — and there are thousands of them — have a rigorous review process to try and make sure studies were carried out well and results are accurate. However, just as there are fake news publishers, there are fake journals. You can search for these at Beall's List. *Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Tip Sheet Link.*

10. Who funded the research?

Be careful of conflicts of interest. Was this study of the effects of sugar funded by a soft drink company? Remember that research costs money, and someone has to pay for it. Oftentimes this is a government. Even industry-funded studies can often be good science. Just think about whether the finding benefits the industry or not.

Activity 1   15 min.

Have participants form four groups. (If you have 10 students or fewer, form three groups; 5 students or fewer, form two groups.) Have each group look at one of the following health news stories. They should use the Health News Tip Sheet to assess the story on the 10 criteria, filling in the Health News Evaluation Chart (see below).

Then, each group should present their findings to the class.

Process questions

What really stood out to you about this article, as either good or bad? What's your assessment of it overall? Why?

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 1, Examples for articles.

Talking points

Health News Review gave the CBS story 1 out of 5, saying, "While sleep apnea is a common problem in the United States, the story does little to place the work in context. Instead, the story cites a medical professional who calls it 'revolutionary' and a 'game-changer' without telling readers that the doctor is a consultant for Inspire. There is also no objective medical assessment of the device's effectiveness, as the medical professional quoted is also the treating physician. It's also not clear why the story came out now, given that Inspire has been on the market for a few years and that the evidence cited is from 2014."[10]

HNR gave the NPR story 5 out of 5, saying, "Not only does this story use clear language in discussing the relevance of both false positives and false negatives in screening, it also thoughtfully includes independent sources that provide important

10   Doctor with industry ties call sleep apnea device 'revolutionary' and 'a game changer' in CBS News story review. (2018). HealthNewsReview.org. Retrieved from https://www.healthnewsreview.org/review/doctor-with-industry-ties-call-sleep-apnea-device-revolutionary-and-a-game-changer-in-cbs-news-story/

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clinical context for readers interested in understanding the limitations of cancer screening."[11]

HNR gave the HealthDay story 1 out of 5, saying, "The story addresses a key caveat — that the study has not been published in a journal and therefore hasn't been rigorously scrutinized. However, it doesn't give a clear description of what the comparison therapies (aka "usual care") were. Nor does it provide cost data for the combination pill, which seems to be a key drawback since the study aims to explore whether it can be used to improve blood pressure treatment worldwide. Most significantly, it lacks independent sources who could weigh in on the significance of the findings."[12]

HNR gave the CNN story 5 out of 5, saying, "The story is strong and scores well because it discusses critical data from the study, offers comments from independent sources and provides information on limitations. It didn't delve into either costs or harms, but in this case, there seems to be minimal need for either, due to the nature of the research. One minor point we think the story could have made: It remains to be seen if this style of intervention ultimately leads to a reduced risk of stroke, serious heart disease, and/or heart attacks, especially if there is not a long-term barbershop program in place."[13]

Don't jump to conclusions about what outlets tend to produce good or bad health news stories! Performance in this area can be quite variable.

Activity 2 15 min.

Ask the participants: What about health information they get from friends, or on social media? Is that usually good or bad information?

Have volunteers read out the following anecdotes.[14] After each anecdote, discuss: Is this good information that can support your health decision-making? Why or why not?

1. Your best friend Juan was suffering from a bad flu. He tried ibuprofen, but he just felt worse and worse. So he did two sessions with a certified reiki master, and he began feeling better. After three sessions, his flu was gone. He concluded that reiki works.

2. On Facebook, your old school friend Tatyana announced that she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She found that green tea extract helped relieve her nausea from chemotherapy, and she says it eventually killed off the tumor. She's now cancer-free, so she says the green tea extract works.

3. Your aunt Florence has suffered from chronic pain for over 20 years. She heard about vitamin B6 on the news. She started taking super-high doses six weeks ago. She feels better now on most days, so she concludes that B6 works.

11 Cautious, independent voices help round out NPR's look at experimental blood test for cancer review. (2018). HealthNewsReview.org. Retrieved from https://www.healthnewsreview.org/review/cautious-independent-voices-help-round-out-nprs-look-at-experimental-test-for-cancer/

12 Blood pressure pill shows promise compared to 'usual care,' HealthDay says, never explaining what that is review. (2018). HealthNewsReview.org. Retrieved from https://www.healthnewsreview.org/review/three-in-one-blood-pressure-pill-shows-promise-compared-to-usual-care-healthday-says-never-explaining-what-that-is/

13 A pat on the back to CNN for its well-written story on barbershops and blood pressure review. (2018). HealthNewsReview.org. Retrieved from https://www.healthnewsreview.org/review/a-pat-on-the-back-to-cnn-for-its-well-written-story-on-barbershops-and-blood-pressure/

14 Much of the examples, and the list of problems with anecdote, come from this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDlPoSSVPuA

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 2, Heath Anecdotes for hand out.

Talking points 5 min.

In summary, some of the reasons to be wary of anecdotal health information include:

▶ Regression to the mean: People who are at the worst point of an illness will tend to get better.

▶ Self-limiting illnesses: Some illnesses go away with or without treatment.

▶ Multiple treatments: If you use several at once, how can you tell what made you feel better?

▶ Confirmation bias: We tend to see the results we want to see, especially if we're paying a lot of money for the treatment.

▶ Poor recall: We all have a hard time remembering the fluctuations in how we feel from day to day, and when we try and reconstruct those memories, we're prey to confirmation bias.

▶ Placebo response: Getting treatment makes us subjectively feel better, even if the treatment isn't actually doing anything to our body.

▶ Side effects: It's important to ascertain not only if the treatment works, but if it's likely to cause serious side effects. High doses of B6, for example, can damage the nerves.[15]

▶ Dead men tell no tales: Those for whom green tea extract didn't work are unlikely to give testimonials, and people who die can never tell us what they thought of their treatment.

Conclusions 5 min.

It can be hard to discern when science news is reliable, but these tips can help. Remember that anecdotes are often unreliable, for a number of reasons. And scientific studies have to be placed in the context of what science has already figured out on a topic.

Handout: Science news checklist

1. Over-the-top language?
2. What other studies have been done?
3. What was the sample size?
4. Of mice or men?
5. Correlation or causation?

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15 Griffin, M. (n.d.). Alternative treatments for chronic pain. WebMD.com. Retrieved from https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/features/alternative-treatments#1

6. Cost and availability?
7. Benefits and harms?
8. Is this disease-mongering?
9. Is this a real journal?
10. Who funded the study?

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 2 for handout.

Handout: Health news evaluation chart

Place a checkmark in the "bad," "so-so," or "good" space to evaluate each aspect of the story.

	Bad	So-so	Good
Other studies mentioned?			
Sample size?			
Mice or men?			
Correlation or causation?			
Cost and availability?			
Benefits and harms?			
Is it new, and is that good?			
Disease-mongering?			
Real journal?			
Who funded?			

Unit 3 > Part C > Lesson 3: Good and bad sources of health information

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Learn to refer to several go-to references sites for health information

▶ Understand why supplement manufacturers get away with false claims

Materials

▶ Computer and projector

▶ Flip chart paper and sticky notes

Time Needed

55 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

Since we hear so many health claims — from the news, social media, and our friends and family — we often want to check information out for ourselves to see what's true. Unfortunately, if you don't use a quality reference site, you could end up misinformed. In this lesson we'll talk about where to go for quality health information.

Warm-up 5 min

Ask participants: Where do you find health and science information? If you or someone you loved was suffering from certain symptom or a certain condition, where would you go for accurate information?

Participants will write their responses on sticky notes — as many sticky notes as they need to list out all their answers. Participants should write only one response per sticky note. Have participants place their stickies on a flip chart paper. As each person places a sticky, have him or her read out what is written on it. Any others with a similar answer should all come forward and read their answer, and group similar ideas together. Go through all of the answers.

Process questions

Which of these would you think are reliable or not reliable?

Is Googling always the best approach for finding this information?

Talking Points 10 min.

There is a lot of misinformation about health on the internet, for some of the same reasons there's misinformation generally. There are other factors too: People are eager to share "what worked for me," despite all the dangers in that approach, as we discussed in Lesson 2. There's also a lot of people who are profiting off of health misinformation; for example, by selling supplements without much evidence that these drugs actually work.

Unfortunately, these bad sources far outnumber good sources on the web. But there's some highly reliable and easy-to-use resources that we can recommend to you.

Please see Examples document, Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 3, Warm Up for presentation of the following examples.

Cochrane Library: Reviews thousands of studies to provide overviews of current scientific findings on health topics, presented in layman's terms.

Webmd and Mayo Clinic: Reliable sources of information on disease and injury, including symptoms, prevention and treatments.

World Health Organization: Tracks the spread of infectious diseases around the world.

Centers for Disease Control: Tracks the spread of infectious disease in the U.S., and provides information on a variety of health topics.

FDA: U.S. agency that regulates drug approvals and many food products, and regulates nutritional labeling.

USDA: U.S. agency that regulates safety of meat and egg products.

Process questions

How can we tell that these are reliable sources?

Activity 1 15 min.

Split participants up into groups of 3-4. Give each one of the following case studies. (It's OK if some groups have the same case study.)

Then ask them to find the answers to the case study questions. First, try to find the answer using the original instincts about how to find medical information, discussed at the start of the lesson. Second, choose the most appropriate reliable source of information described above, and see how this information differs.

When they are done, they will share their findings with the group: what information source did they use at first, what did

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this reveal, what did they change their strategy to, and what did they find that was different.

Case study #1

Your friend Karen is feeling depressed. Her cousin recommended that she take St. John's Wort. Karen has turned to you for your advice. What would you advise her?

Good sample answer: Use Cochrane Library. *Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Case Study 1*. Scroll down to "Plain language summary." This will tell you that trials found St. John's wort was similarly effective as standard antidepressants, but it seemed less effective in non-German speaking countries, and flaws in the studies could not be ruled out. Plus, the St. John's products on the market vary a lot, and it might interact with other drugs to cause side effects. Cochrane advises that patients wanting to use St. John's Wort should see a health professional.

Case study #2

The bottle of milk in your fridge smells funny, but the expiration date says it should still be good. Should you drink it?

Good sample answer: The FDA and USDA are the agency that regulate food safety. Googling "expiration dates FDA" we find this site. *Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 3, Case Study 2.*

Click "Are dates for food safety or quality?" and you'll find that dates are an indication of quality only. If you think the milk smells funny, don't drink it!

Case study #3

Your Facebook friend says Zika virus is now in the U.S., putting pregnant women at risk. Is this true?

Good sample answer: Your best sources on current and potential epidemics are the World Health Organization (global) and Centers for Disease Control (U.S. only). Google "Zika WHO" to find the organization's Zika page. (Make sure to check the result is actually a WHO website. Another way to do this is first find the WHO website so you know its URL, "who.int", and then use that to do a site-specific search on Google: "zika site:who.int").

We find this site: *please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 3, Case Study 3.*

Click on <u>Information for travellers visiting Zika affected countries</u>

You'll see pregnant women are advised to avoid Category 1 and 2 countries — but the U.S. is category 3.

OR, do a similar search for the CDC: *please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 3, Case Study 3.*

You'll find that there's no mosquito-borne Zika transmission in the U.S., but the disease can spread through sex, so condoms should be used if one partner has been to a Zika-infected country.

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Your friend Manuel wants to know what symptoms might indicate he's having a heart attack, so he knows how to act in an emergency.

Good sample answer: Search "heart attack" together with "WebMD", "site:webmd.com", "Mayo Clinic", or "site:mayoclinic.org."

Information for Consumers on Using Dietary Supplements

f SHARE   **🐦 TWEET**   **in LINKEDIN**   **📌 PIN IT**   **✉ EMAIL**   **🖶 PRINT**

Dietary Supplements can be beneficial to your health — but taking supplements can also involve health risks.

Because dietary supplements are under the "umbrella" of foods, FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) is responsible for the agency's oversight of these products. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994, which amended the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, created a new regulatory framework for the safety and labeling of dietary supplements. **FDA is not authorized to review dietary supplement products for safety and effectiveness before they are marketed.**

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Activity 2 15 min.

Show the following video (warning, some crude language):

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 3, Activity 2 for video.

Process questions

Do you think you can trust the supplements that Dr. Oz touts? What about supplements you see advertised in general? What kind of guarantee do you have that they're effective and don't have serious side effects?

Video — 4:58 — 6:45

Talking points

Supplements are only lightly regulated by the FTC and FDA. Unlike with prescription medication, the manufacturers don't have to show that supplements do what they claim to do, or document the side effects that users may encounter. Here is advice from the FDA on how it regulates supplements, and what steps it advises consumers to take.

Please see Unit 3, Part C, Lesson 2, Activity 2, FDA 1 for link.

Are there any risks in taking supplements?

Yes. Many supplements contain active ingredients that have strong biological effects in the body. This could make them unsafe in some situations and hurt or complicate your health. For example, the following actions could lead to harmful – even life-threatening – consequences.

- Combining supplements
- Using supplements with medicines (whether prescription or over-the-counter)
- Substituting supplements for prescription medicines
- Taking too much of some supplements, such as vitamin A, vitamin D, or iron
  Some supplements can also have unwanted effects *before, during, and after* surgery. So, be sure to inform your healthcare provider, including your pharmacist about any supplements you are taking.

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Ask: Now what do you think? Can you trust what a supplement ad says?

Conclusions 5 min.

In this lesson we learned about some useful reference sites that you can visit for accurate health information. Feel free to use these sites to check out claims you read in the news, see on social media, or hear from your friends. We also learned why you can't trust a lot of what you read and hear about supplements. Make sure to stay skeptical when you see ads and publicity for supplements, since such information is only lightly regulated.

Unit 3 > Part D: Wrapping Up **>** Lesson 1: The future: You're leading the way

TRAINER NOTES

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Time Needed

Participants will:

35 min.

▶ Learn that those who purvey misinformation change their methods to take advantage of new technologies

▶ Feel confident that in this course, they have learned the habits of mind that will protect them from the vast majority of misinformation already out there, and will help them adapt as the information ecosystem does

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

The lesson will touch on some new ways that people are spreading misinformation. New types of misinformation can feel overwhelming, but in this course you've learned skills that will apply in new and challenging situations. You have worked hard at improving your skills, and should feel optimistic about your ability to protect yourselves and people you care about against misinformation. Let's get a preview of what's on the horizon.

Warm-up 5 min.

Watch this video, but stop at 0:30. WARNING: Strong language.

Please see Examples document, Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 1, Warm Up for video.

Alternative, without strong language:

Please see Examples document, Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 1, Warm Up for video.

Process questions

Does anything seem off about the video? What, and why? (If some participants have seen the video before and know the answer, ask them not to give it away.)

Then watch the rest of the video.

Talking points 5 min.

Just to be sure it was clear to you: the person speaking in the video was not Obama, it was comedian Jordan Peele. This was one example of how misinformation is evolving, taking advantage of technology advances. It took a while for BuzzFeed to produce this video, but the tools they used are publicly available. There's a variety of new types of fakery emerging, including fake audio, for example, a recording falsely claiming that international soccer star Diego Maradona had died spread widely on the messaging app WhatsApp.[16] Some predict that "augmented reality," which uses your phone to seemingly overlay information and imagery on the world around you (e.g., Pokemon Go), could be the next arena for disinformation.

Process questions

But after all we've learned, what's the best reaction to new types of fakes like this? Do we just give up?

How does watching the video make you feel? Do you think you have the skills to handle most disinformation after what you've learned in the course? What can you do to prepare yourself for the changes in technology?

Talking points

Hopefully you feel confident about your ability to detect disinformation and to battle it by Caring Before You Share. Technology will evolve — that's inevitable. But now you are ambassadors for healthy information habits, and can help spread a new culture of news literacy. You know how to make yourself more resilient to emotional manipulation by Naming It to Tame it. You also now know to be on the alert for new types of disinformation and misinformation, and to educate yourselves as new technologies emerge.

Activity 1 15 min.

As a class, brainstorm different tactics and resources participants could use to deal with new forms of misinformation.

If they get stuck, use one or more of the following prompts.

1. You hear an audio file that a friend sent you on WhatsApp. In the recording, a well known celebrity admits to cheating on his girlfriend. What would you do?

2. You see a video that claims to show a cop shooting an unarmed suspect. What do you do?

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16   Funke, D. (2018). Meet the next misinformation format: Fake audio messages. Poynter Online. Retrieved from https://www.poynter.org/news/meet-next-misinformation-format-fake-audio-messages

3. You're playing an augmented reality history game on your phone. As you look through your phone's camera at a school near your house, a plaque flashes up on the screen, claiming that this was the site of a Civil War battle. Is this true?

Talking points

The most important point — both for the examples above, and for new forms of misinformation we haven't even imagined yet — is to use the critical thinking skills you learned in this class. Most importantly:

Name It to Tame It

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

And:

Care Before You Share

1. Name It to Tame It!

2. Take **responsibility**. Know that YOU are the information gatekeeper. Don't spread misinformation!

3. **Acknowledge** what you may not know.

4. If you have time, **check** it out! Do what you can to verify information.

5. If you're still not sure it's true, ***don't share it***.

Some tips on the specific examples.

1. Audio file on WhatsApp — remember these are easy to fake. Check with a fact-checking organization like Gossip Cop, or see if the story's been covered by a news organization that follows good journalistic standards.

2. Again, you can start with a fact-checking organization or news outlet that follows good journalistic standards. Police shootings are usually widely covered. Also, try getting a screenshot of the video, and then reverse-image searching the image to see if the video is of a previous event. Finally, try installing a plug-in called InVid. *(Please see Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 1, Activity 1)*, which reveals when YouTube videos were uploaded. See further instructions in lesson 3B2.

3. You need a reputable reference on history. Try typing "Civil War" into iSeek *(Please see Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 1, Activity 1)*, and then using one of the resources you find. Or, look up the battle on Wikipedia, then click on the

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references so you can view the original source.

Process questions

How do you feel now about your ability to tackle misinformation and manipulation? What would you tell friends or family who say they struggle to tell fact from fiction? What is one simple skill you learned that you could teach someone else? Who will you teach it to?

Conclusions 5 min.

Make clear to participants that they are the future of information literacy. Not only do they have new skills and knowledge, they are now empowered to put those skills into use and to be information literacy ambassadors. It's not a matter of going it alone: There is now a circle of us who can do more to spread news literacy in our community.

Unit 3 > Part D **>** Lesson 2: Consumption and Sharing Habits

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Apply what they have learned about media to consider their own media consumption and sharing habits

▶ Set goals for their future media consumption and sharing habits

Materials

▶ Pens and paper for brainstorming

▶ Computer and screen for showing examples

Time Needed

50 min.

Trainer preparation

Set up computer and screen, Care before you Share worksheet, pens.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson, we're going to wrap up everything we've learned. You know so much more now about how to evaluate content, and then how to act on your evaluations. Let's recap those skills with some real-world examples, and talk about how you'll put into practice what you've learned.

Activity 1 20 min.

Look at the following pieces of content as a group, one at a time. For each, ask participants what steps they would take to evaluate the content and decide what to do next.

Please see Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 2 for links.

Please see Unit 3, Part D, Lesson 2, Activity 1 for slideshow of images.

Talking points

Participants should hopefully bring up the following points.

Name It to Tame It:

1. **Pause:** Turn your head away from the screen or paper.

2. **Ask:** What am I feeling?

3. **Say:** The name of the feeling to yourself.

What type of content is this — information or persuasion?

Challenging stereotypes and biases: Is this content trading on biases people have, perhaps subtly?

Ways to judge written content:

1. Check the date

2. Go to the source

3. Evaluate journalistic standards

4. Verify sources and citations
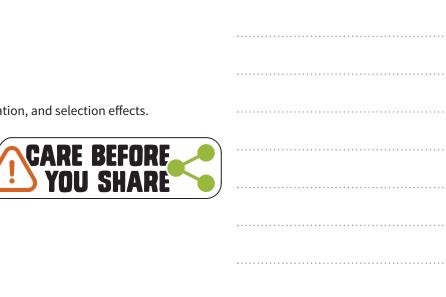
5. Verify evidence

6. Check with the fact-checkers

Checking photos: Might use reverse image search. Be aware of photo re-use, alteration, and selection effects.

Care Before You Share:

1. Name It to Tame It!

2. Take **responsibility**. Know that YOU are the information gatekeeper. Don't spread misinformation!

3. **Acknowledge** what you may not know.

4. If you have time, **check** it out! — do what you can to verify information.

5. If you're still not sure it's true, ***don't share it***.

Pass out the Care Before You Share worksheet, and walk people through it. Ask: what would you do for each step? Let people brainstorm some ideas.

Activity 2 20 min.

Now ask participants to write a few sentences or bullet points in answer to the following prompts:

"One thing I realized about my past information consumption and sharing is ..."

And

"In the future, I will share and act on information differently, because I will ..."

Then ask participants to volunteer how they answered the questions.

Process questions

Will you adopt any of the ideas proposed by your fellow participants? What is easy to do, and what's hard? What could make the hard steps easier?

After this discussion, can you commit to one thing you'll do differently?

Brainstorm as a group some practical ways to put your new action happen. For example:

▶ Put a pop-up reminder in your calendar if you committed to share the information. With whom? When and where?

▶ Participants can buddy up to check in with each other on sharing habits or any questions they may have.

▶ Put a sticky note with Name It to Tame It steps written out on your computer.

Conclusions 5 min.

Each of us has the power to determine what media we consume and what media we share. Making thoughtful and informed decisions about our consumption and sharing habits can help us become more media literate in our daily lives and can help us Care Before we Share and ensure that we are consuming, supporting, and sharing quality, credible media.

It can be easy to get stuck in a bubble with media consumption habits or take certain things for granted, so having new awareness and trying some new things can help take control of your media consumption, and help you reduce feelings of being overwhelmed by information.

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

▶ Further solidify what they have learned about the media in previous lessons, using skills including research, teamwork, evaluation, communication, and synthesis

Materials

▶ Pens and paper for brainstorming

▶ Computers with Internet

▶ Producing News worksheet

Time Needed

40 min.

Procedure

Introduction 5 min.

In this lesson, we're going to pull together what you've learned about the media, and apply it to create some media ourselves!

Activity 1 30 min.

Ask participants to think about an issue or topic they care about. Do they want to see more recycling? Do they want to promote someone running for their local council? Is there an amazing new food they want to share? The topic should be something that the participant doesn't have all the answers to already (e.g., it shouldn't be just about their family and friends). Ask participants to tell the group what their topic is, in a few words.

Then ask participants, individually or in pairs, to create a social media post that communicates on the topic they care about. (Individual work may be better if people feel strongly about the topics and there's little convergence on topics. Pair work will help if not everybody uses or has access to social media, however.) If needed, the "post" can be written out on paper instead of created with a social media app, or it could be the text of an email that a participant might send to a group of friends. Ask participants, while creating, to think about the veracity of information in their posts. They should feel free to fact-check anything in the post as they create. They can also write an opinion piece, clearly labeling it as such.

Then bring the individuals and/or pairs together in groups of 3-4. Each individual or pair should share their social media post with the group. The other participants should reflect and feed back to the presenter: What is your reaction to this post? Where did the information come from, and where was it fact-checked? What requires fact-checking, and what doesn't? Participants can offer constructive advice to their fellow participants on fact-checking resources and techniques.

Participants should **not** debate the issues written about, especially political issues.

Then reassemble as a class, and ask the groups to share what lessons they learned or reinforced regarding fact-checking their own content.

Conclusions 5 min.

In this lesson we practiced creating our own media, using what we have learned in prior lessons. This task gives us some insight into how media is created and how we have the power, as both potential authors and creators of media and as consumers of media, to fact check and evaluate media for credibility. Being careful media creators is just another way we must "care before we share."

Now you are equipped with the skills and knowledge to more accurately judge the information you come across every day. Not only can you protect yourselves, but you can spread these lessons and help others protect themselves.

Yes, this is a big effort. It will take a village. But in this class we have found our village: the village of the information literate. And we are ready to grow and grow that village into a movement that makes a difference.

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