

Beyond Fake News Strategies for Evaluating Information in an Era of “Alternative Facts”

Nancy Speisser
Assistant Vice Chancellor for University Libraries
South University

Henrietta Verma
Customer Success Manager
Credo

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Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 • \$2

A would-be city in Malaysia illustrates the growing rift between China and its neighbors



PHOTO BY GUY HOLTUNG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

PLO ordered to close office in U.S.

ANOTHER BLOW TO PALESTINIANS

Bolton also blasts International Criminal Court

BY KAREN DEYOUNG
AND LOVEDAY MORRIS

The Trump administration on Monday ordered the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization office in Washington, saying that the PLO "has not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel."

The closure was announced by the State Department shortly before White House national security adviser John Bolton, in his first major policy speech, threatened U.S. punishment for individuals and countries that cooperate with the International Criminal Court, where the Palestinians have lodged complaints against Israel.

"The United States supports a direct and robust peace process," Bolton said, "and we will not allow the ICC, or any other organization, to constrain Israel's

right to self-defense."

The PLO is recognized by most of the world as the "legitimate representative" of Palestinians. Its office in Washington — while not recognized as an embassy, since there is no recognition of a Palestinian state — is one of the few Palestinian vehicles for communication with the levers of U.S. power. It has survived repeated political and legislative calls to shut it down, across decades of unsuccessful U.S. efforts to forge a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis.

But Monday's order to shutter it within 30 days comes amid the Trump administration's systematic chipping away at the core tenets of Palestinian aspirations for any negotiations and its ramping up of financial pressure on the Palestinian Authority that governs the West Bank.

Late last year, President Trump
BOLTON CONTINUED ON A7

**But where is the line between
them?**

**And can even “serious” journalists
be trusted?**

Teach Students about Journalistic Standards using Case Studies

How to Work Like a (Respectable) Journalist: Read Laterally

Read laterally! Lateral reading means reading “around” an item you find before engaging with its content

- A Stanford study (Weinberg & McGrew, 2017) shows that it results in “more warranted conclusions in a fraction of the time” than vertical reading (using only the source at hand)
- It shouldn’t be your first step (first look for previous fact checking, go upstream)
- Look at what other sources say about this source (not just this item)
- Research the author of the piece and the ownership of the site
- Look at pages linking to the site, not just pages coming from it: use a backlink checker such as <https://smallseotools.com/backlink-checker/>

Read the free textbook “Web Literacy for Student Fact Checkers”

<https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com/chapter/what-reading-laterally-means/>

How to Work Like a (Respectable) Journalist: Fact Check



The Poynter Institute offers a free, 2-hour fact-checking course that can be used as an outside-class, flipped learning opportunity for students in critical thinking and information literacy classes. It discusses topics such as:

What types of statements can be fact-checked

Questions to ask when verifying content

What tools are available to help validate photos

See also Poynter's "Tools for Educators" <https://www.newsu.org/tools>

When Journalists Get it Right

Journalist Upton Sinclair spent 7 weeks working in a meatpacking facility researching for his novel *The Jungle*. His descriptions of conditions led to the formation of the organization now known as the FDA.

The 2017 *Tampa Bay Times* article “In Harm’s Way” describes shooting deaths of Florida children. To determine how many kids are shot each year, the *Times* looked at millions of hospital discharge records for patients across Florida, as well as data collected by the state’s 24 medical examiners.



After *Golfing Digest Magazine* received many talented golf illustrations from a man who had spent 27 years in jail for murder, journalists at the magazine helped in an investigation that led to the man being freed this week.



When Journalists Get it Wrong

- In 2003, New York Times journalist Jayson Blair was found to have plagiarized and fabricated *New York Times* articles. The Times's response was to set up a committee of 25 staffers and 3 outside journalists who investigated Blair's activities. Blair resigned, and the *Times* published a lengthy report investigating Blair's journalistic fraud and the newsroom breakdowns that let him slip through the cracks. A month later, Executive Editor Howell Raines and managing editor Boyd Gerald also resigned.
- Even journalists' relatively minor mistakes are reported.

From the Washington Post on [Correction: Misidentification](#)

“An article in Monday's editions mistakenly said the Leadership Conference of Women Religious took out two New York Times ads in the mid-1980s. The ads were taken out by a group of nuns acting independently.”

Sample Assignment: You're the Journalist!

“France Measles Outbreak: Babies Hit Hardest,” by Gary Finnegan

<https://www.vaccinestoday.eu/stories/france-measles-outbreak-babies-hit-hardest/>

Read laterally: What can you find out about this website? About this author?

Are there experts mentioned in the piece? What is their background on this topic?

What about the video on the site? Can you tell if it's made for this purpose or is pulled from somewhere else? Is it current? Does it match the claims in the text?

Fact check: Are the statistics, maps, and graphs on the site current? Are they correct? Is there relevant data that the author omitted?

What about the medical claims? Are they substantiated elsewhere?

Do you see any vague or unsupported claims?

What Would You Fact Check Here?

France has recorded more than 2,500 cases of measles in the year to May 2018, including three deaths and high rates of hospitalization (22%). The outbreak has killed three people this year. By March, 429 cases had been recorded in France but this has risen sharply in the second quarter of 2018.

The outbreak is, sadly, not surprising. Vaccination rates in France are among the worst in Europe. If 95% of people have two doses of the MMR vaccine, the population – including those too young and too sick to be vaccinated – would be protected.

A global survey of 67 countries found that confidence in vaccine safety in France is the worst in the world. *Low confidence in vaccination feeds low uptake, increasing the risk of outbreaks.*

‘Insufficient vaccination is the main factor in the epidemic,’ according to authorities. 88% of measles cases occurred in people who had not had two doses of MMR.

Any Questions?



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Contact Us

Nancy Speisser
Assistant Vice Chancellor for University Libraries
South University
nspeisser@southuniversity.edu

Henrietta Verma
Customer Success Manager
Credo
henrietta.verma@credoreference.com

