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"Fake News" and Information Literacy

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"FAKE NEWS" AND INFORMATION LITERACY
SPARKING ALIGNMENT AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN LIBRARIANS AND SOCIOLOGISTS

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POST-TRUTH OXFORD DICTIONARIES 2016 WORD OF THE YEAR

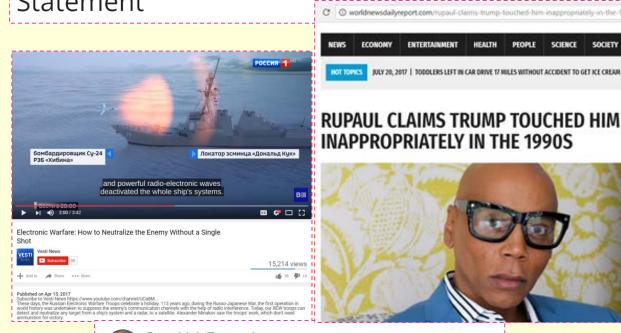American Sociological Association, Annual Meeting 2017

LIES AND CONFUSION
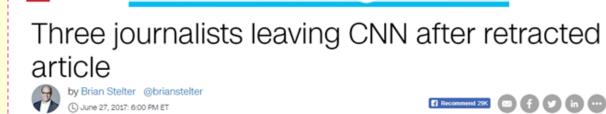# THE PROBLEM EXPOSED!

"Fake News" and Detecting Falsehoods

BELIEVE it or not, the Stanford History Education Group (2016) found that the majority of students cannot tell the difference between real and fake news online! The Pew Research Center (Barthel, Mitchell, and Holcomb 2016) also reports that nearly a quarter (23%) of U.S. adults are aware that they have shared fake news (14% knew at the time, 16% later found out).

WTOE 5 NEWS
YOUR LOCAL NEWS NOW
Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Releases Statement

Electronic Warfare: How to Neutralize the Enemy Without a Single Shot

RUPAUL CLAIMS TRUMP TOUCHED HIM INAPPROPRIATELY IN THE 1990S

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
So they caught Fake News CNN cold, but what about NBC, CBS & ABC? What about the failing @nytimes & @washingtonpost? They are all Fake News!
5:47 AM - 27 Jun 2017

CNN media
Three journalists leaving CNN after retracted article
by Brian Stelter @brianstelter
June 27, 2017: 6:00 PM ET

Decoding "Fake News"
Definitions and usage of the term:

- **Misinformation**
  Unintentional spreading of falsehoods due to ignorance or confusion

- **Disinformation**
  Deliberate lies; false information

- **Propaganda**
  Systematic spread of disinformation

- **Nihilation**
  Derogatory term used for purposes of delegitimization

  "...nihilation *denies* the reality of whatever phenomena or interpretations of phenomena do not fit into that universe." (Berger and Luckmann 1967:114)

- **Satire & Entertainment**
  Parody of "real" news

See also Steinberg (2017) for additional definitions of "fake news."

Are You a Target for Fake News?

Do you surround yourself with people and information that reinforce your beliefs and ignore or reject information that interferes with your worldview? You probably don't even realize it, thanks to selective exposure and perception. Fake news is also given a big assist by ideological fragmentation and postmodern relativism, maintaining divided opinions of reality and furthering fissures in social systems.

The best way to keep from falling prey to fake news is to develop critical information literacy skills. We all benefit from achieving a collectively informed reality. Shared realities consummate shared identities—essential for solidarity within society. We exist because of each other. Sociology of knowledge offers solvency, through its examination and use of metacognition and recognition of the process of personal truths becoming enmeshed into the institutional fabric of society, illustrating the social construction of reality. As our current agreement reality remains dangerously isolated, sociologists and librarians have a stake in creating unification and educating people to address, tackle, and actively solve these quandaries, which are exacerbated by fake news.

REVEALING INSIGHTS & SHOCKING CONNECTIONS!

- **Librarians & Sociologists SHARE SPECIAL BOND**
- **Relationship promotes CIVIL SOCIETY, lifelong LEARNING GOALS**

MULTIPLE sources confirm that both librarianship and sociology already have literacy frameworks that are relevant to **solving the fake news problem**. Anyone can see that these two frameworks are made for each other.

Sociologists, librarians, and the community at large are likely to benefit from collaborative wins when students are equipped with information literacy skills and the cultural capital to access and use libraries and effectively evaluate information. This is directly aligned with the goal of creating conscious citizens in society through sociological scholarship.

Information Literacy
Guiding Document: *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Association of College and Research Libraries 2015)

"Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."

Sociological Literacy
Guiding Document: Sociological Literacy Framework in *Measuring College Learning in Sociology* (Ferguson and Carbonaro 2016)

"The main goal...is to catalyze a change in how students think about social phenomena by learning and applying sociological concepts, theories, and skills that enable them to view the world as a sociologist does."

Pairing the Perspectives
Librarians + Sociologists

Aligning the Frameworks
Sociological Literacy Framework + Framework for Information Literacy

Information Credibility + Social Construction of Knowledge

Source evaluation skills are everyone's favorite remedy to fake news. Operationalizing the determination of credibility is multifaceted and complex, despite fun tools like the CRAAP* test (Meriam Library, California State University, Chico 2010), so it's refreshing to see these two getting together. Considering that knowledge is socially constructed helps to explain the spread of fake news that feeds ideological beliefs and supports views that manage threats to social status. Your social position may influence the type of information that you believe (DiGrazia 2017).

*Currency, Relevancy, Accuracy, Authority, and Purpose

- **Socialization** – Explain how the self is socially constructed, including the role of culture in shaping human thought
- **Social Reproduction and Social Change** – Understand the process of how social structures reproduce themselves from generation to generation (maintenance of social position via cultural/political beliefs)
- **Critically Evaluate Explanations of Human Behavior and Social Phenomena** – Evaluate claims in information sources to determine how or whether the author uses social assumptions or evidence
- **Authority is Constructed and Contextual** – understand the elements of authority and credibility

Source Formats + Scientific Knowledge Creation

These two were spotted canoodling and discussing how sociological research methods are integral to empirical knowledge production; research outputs primarily published in scholarly journals. But scholarly journal articles are not typical reading material for the general public, so let's hope we see more PDAs! News, social media, and other popular formats provide distillations of sociological research that can reach voters and policymakers. Watching the application of sociological knowledge to public policy debates is always a thrilling experience (Brulle and Roberts 2017).

- **Social Reproduction and Social Change** – Explain how social structures change as a result of social forces, underlying role of information/knowledge production and dissemination
- **Rigorously Analyze Social Scientific Data** – Understand and evaluate empirical research; evaluate popular reporting on representations of social scientific research data
- **Use sociological knowledge to inform policy debates and promote public understanding** – Awareness of public sociology, the value of sociological theories and knowledge when participating in public discourse
- **Information Creation as a Process** – articulate the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes
- **Information has Value** – recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources

Search Strategies + Algorithmic Cultures

Going beyond Google is key to developing literature research skills. This pairing heats up the inquiry process by uncovering an understanding of why relying primarily on Google for information-seeking is problematic. Look for them uncovering the algorithms in our daily lives (or at least revealing the existence of a black box) and the commercial motives that influence the search for information (Roberge and Seyfert 2016).

- **The Sociological Eye / Apply Sociological Theories to Understand Social Phenomena** – apply the sociological imagination to everyday life information seeking tools and behaviors
- **Use sociological knowledge to inform policy debates and promote understanding** – demonstrate informational and technological literacy
- **Information has Value** – understand how the commodification of personal information and online interactions affects the information received
- **Searching as Strategic Exploration** – Match information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools

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