



## Going Viral: Social Media and the News

News headlines seem to change every minute. There are so many sources, finding credible stories to share can be difficult. What sources do you use to be an informed consumer of information? These resources explore social media and the news.

### Conversation Questions

1. Where do you get your news?
2. How do you know when a story is trustworthy?
3. When and how do you decide to share a news story?
4. Have you shared a story that you later found out was false? What did you do when you realized your error?
5. What is the responsibility of social media and search engine companies to vet the information they feature?

### Key Definitions

- **Bad News Phenomenon** - shoddy, not researched, error-filled, and deliberately misleading reporting. Many viral stories are not news, but fiction, satire and efforts to fool readers into thinking the stories are real<sup>1</sup>
- **Bias** - a predisposition that distorts your ability to weigh evidence fairly and that prevents you from reaching a fair or accurate judgment<sup>2</sup>
- **Media Bias** –a pattern of unfairness or willful inaccuracy over time by a specific journalist or news outlet<sup>2</sup>
- **Logical Fallacy** – a flaw in reasoning that is used to distort or mislead an argument<sup>3</sup>
- **Fact Check** - to confirm the truth of an assertion made in speech or writing, often as part of the research or editorial process<sup>4</sup>
- **Troll** – a person who intentionally antagonizes others online by posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/>

<sup>2</sup> From Stony Brook University's Center for News Literacy

<sup>3</sup> From <https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/> Visit the website for examples of different types of logical fallacies.

<sup>4</sup> From Dictionary.com

<sup>5</sup> From Merriam-Webster





## Read

### ***Broadcast Hysteria: Orson Welles's War of the Worlds and the Art of Fake News* by A. Brad Schwartz**

Adult Nonfiction 791.4472 W253sc

Fake news is older than we think. Schwartz examines the “panic” supposedly caused by Welles’s 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast and the resulting erosion of the public’s trust in the broadcast media.

### ***The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media* by Brooke Gladstone, illustrated by Josh Neufeld**

Adult Graphic Novel 302.23 G

This graphic novel offers an overview of media history, the important role media has had, and their biases in reporting stories.

### **“Facebook and Google Still Have a 'Fake News' Problem, Las Vegas Shooting Reveals” by Kathleen Chaykowski**

<https://goo.gl/ensuqU>

In the early hours after the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017, both Google and Facebook linked to and promoted false information.

## Watch

### **“Inside the Fake News Factory of Macedonia” from *Wired***

<https://goo.gl/cb9Vrd>

Documentary photographer Guy Martin travelled to Macedonia to figure out how this country became one of the biggest producers of fake news in the United States.

### **“How to Choose Your News - Damon Brown” from TED-Ed**

<https://goo.gl/5T5JLZ>

This short video shares basic skills for telling the difference between opinions and facts in the news reports you hear and see.





## **Explore**

### **Snopes**

[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

The largest and oldest fact-checking site on the internet, Snopes started as a site debunking urban legends and has grown to be a trusted source for truth seekers.

### **Politifact**

[www.politifact.com](http://www.politifact.com)

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this site fact-checks the claims of elected officials and American political pundits.

### **FactCheck.org**

[www.factcheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org)

In addition to fact-checking political statements and rumors, this nonpartisan, nonprofit site debunks bogus science, health, and viral stories claims.

### **AllSides**

[www.allsides.com](http://www.allsides.com)

This news aggregate site is unique in that it provides multiple sources across the political spectrum for a single story. AllSides promises readers will "get the full picture, not just one slant."

### **Perspecs**

[www.perspecsnews.com](http://www.perspecsnews.com)

Perspecs offers readers three different opinions on the same news story from a variety of established regional, national, and international news sources. Perspecs tends to focus on international news stories.

