

Bartholomew County Public Library

Identifying and Avoiding False Information

Types of False Information

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency:

https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/mdm-incident-response-guide_508.pdf

- *Misinformation* is false information but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- *Disinformation* is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- *Malinformation* is based on fact but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.

How to Spot False Information

1. Consider the Source

- Evaluate the credibility and the intent of the content creator or publisher. Is someone paying for the content? If so, what do they gain by sharing this information?
- Verify the Source - does the source truly exist? Check the About Us or Contact Us section. Use Google or Wikipedia to verify the persons listed. Are they who they say they are? Check the URL. Is this the real website? Sites ending with “.com.co” are usually fake versions of real news sources.
- Consider the source’s bias. Do they tend to lean in a certain direction politically? Is it heavily opinionated or one sided? Does it oppose ideas that do not support their leanings? Check out the Media Bias Chart on the back of this handout.
- Approach information shared on social media with a critical eye, even if it is shared by someone you know and trust!

2. Investigate the Issue

- Search reliable sources and compare the information from a number of different outlets.
- Check for supporting sources. Credible information will have multiple sources.
- Check the date. Some stories may be distorted due to re-sharing of real but outdated events.

3. Ask the Experts

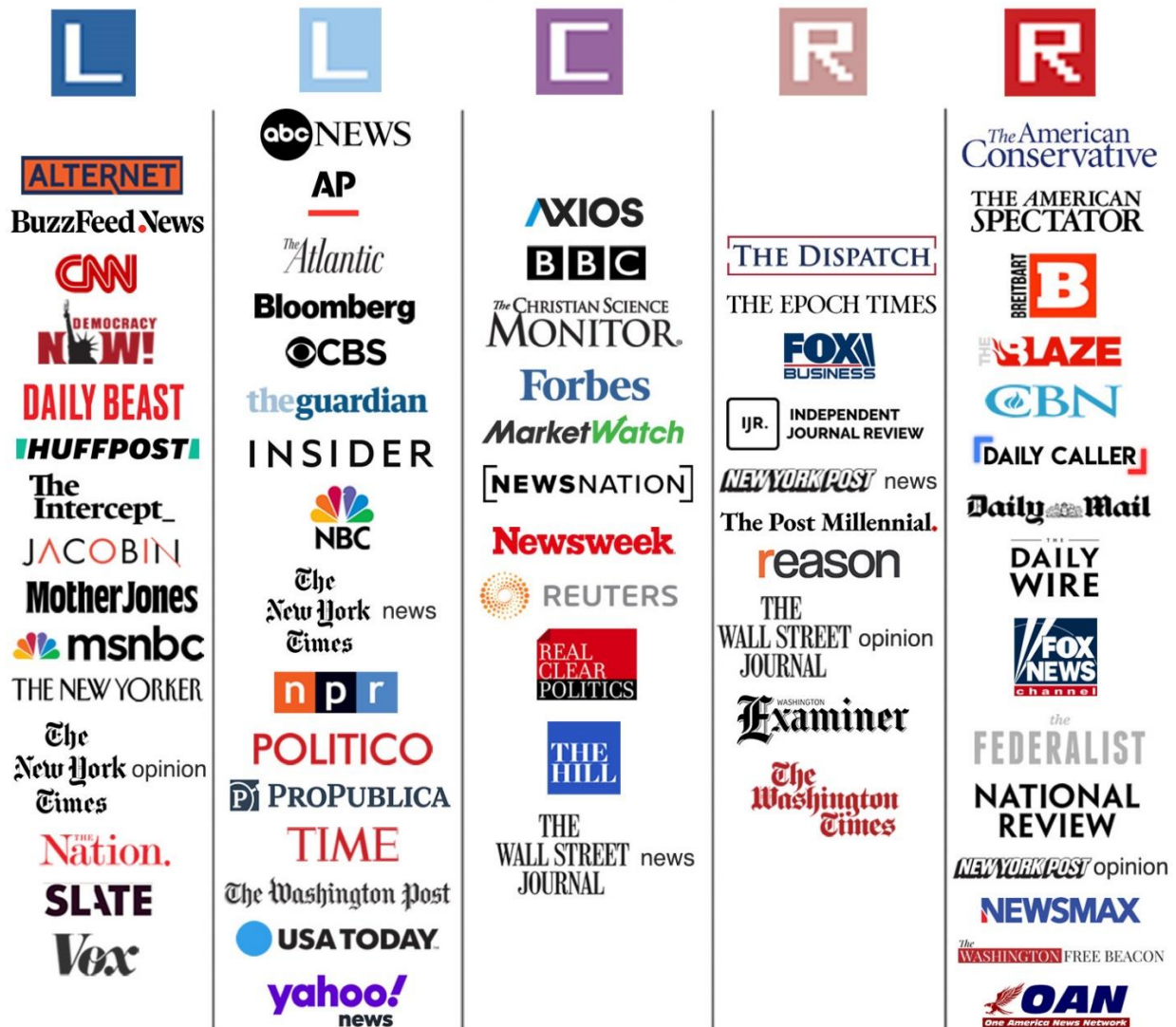
- Consult a reliable fact-checking website
 - PolitiFact, <https://www.politifact.com/>
 - Hoaxy (Indiana University Network Science Institute), <https://iuni.iu.edu/projects/hoaxy>
 - AP Fact Check, <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-fact-check>
 - Reuters Fact Check, <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check>
 - Fact Checker (Washington Post), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/>
 - Media Bias / Fact Check, <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>
- Ask a librarian! Stop by the Reference Desk or give us a call at 812-379-1266.
 - You can also schedule a Book-a-Librarian appointment if you would like a more in-depth appointment – <https://mybcpl.org/book-a-librarian>

Further Reading:

- *This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality* by Peter Pomerantsev
- *The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread* by Cailin O'Connor and James Weatherall
- *Fake News: Understanding Media and Misinformation in the Digital Age* by Melissa Zimdars
- *Post-Truth* by Lee C. McIntyre
- *Information Wars: How We Lost the Global Battle Against Disinformation & What We Can Do About It* by Richard Stengel

AllSides™ Media Bias Chart™

Ratings based on online, U.S. political content only — not TV, print, or radio.
Ratings do not reflect accuracy or credibility; they reflect perspective only.



L LEFT **L** LEAN LEFT **C** CENTER **R** LEAN RIGHT **R** RIGHT

AllSides Media Bias Ratings™ are based on multi-partisan, scientific analysis.

Visit [AllSides.com](https://www.allsides.com) to view hundreds of media bias ratings.

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