

How to Succeed at Research

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Overview

Credibility

the quality of being trusted and believed in

Bias(es)

prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another

(usually in a way considered to be unfair)

Credibility

Who published this?

What are the qualifications of this publisher?

Where did this information come from, or how did the author obtain the information?

How believable is this information?

Biases

Who wrote this?

Why did they write it?

Who are they employed by, or been employed by in the past?

What is their field of study?

What words do they use to describe their subject material (tone)?

What is the underlying meaning or message of the source?

Methods of bias

- Omission: Leaving out one side of an article.
- Source Selection: including more sources that support one side than the other.
- Story Selection: highlighting news stories that support an agenda while ignoring those that contradict.
- Placement: where an article is placed on a website or newspaper.
- Labeling: using extreme labels or failing to properly label someone.
- Spin: subjective comments about objective facts.

Examples of Credible Sources

Personal Experiences

- Anecdotal evidence can be biased, but still credible.
- Anecdotal evidence must be highly scrutinized if it contradicts what we know as fact - Someone says it was a cold summer DOES NOT EQUAL global warming is a hoax.
- Credibility is removed (or in question) if : opinions are being stated, impossible/improbable statements, non-verbal cues.
- Examples of credible anecdotal evidence:
- First person accounts of the Holocaust are considered credible

Examples of Sources that
are OBVIOUSLY NOT Credible

Tabloids

Not even Ellen!



Ellen divorce

Bruce to Caitlyn Jenner

Ellen DeGeneres Divorce Shocker: \$220 Million at Stake?! - The ...
<https://www.thehollywoodgossip.com/.../ellen-degeneres-divorce-b...>
Oct 19, 2016
Ellen DeGeneres and Portia De Rossi are facing some ugly divorce rumors. When you have hundreds of ...



Ellen DeGeneres Divorce: Portia de Rossi In Crisis As Ellen Stops ...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zbvp1Lfa64k>
Jan 15, 2015 - Uploaded by stilodef
Ellen DeGeneres Divorce: Portia de Rossi In Crisis As Ellen Stops Marriage Counseling?



Ellen and Portia divorce (day126) - YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sVGjylBe-Y>
Mar 17, 2016 - Uploaded by lex vbosch 12
Ellen and Portia divorce (day126) ... Ellen DeGeneres urges Portia De Rossi to attend counseling in effort ...



Ellen DeGeneres is NOT getting divorced from Portia de Rossi ...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKuXXH8IX20>
Nov 17, 2016 - Uploaded by Madhu
Ellen DeGeneres is NOT getting divorced from Portia de Rossi.



Portia de Rossi & Ellen DeGeneres Divorce - YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fow1RUNm0Fc>
Jan 17, 2015 - Uploaded by Kate Pole
Get 1st Online Money Here www.only-biz.com Portia de Rossi & Ellen DeGeneres Divorce.



Ellen DeGeneres Slams Divorce Rumours: Portia's 'Not Going ...
etcanada.com/.../ellen-degeneres-slams-divorce-rumours-portias-not...
Oct 19, 2016
While supermarket tabloids continue to claim the marriage of Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi is in ...



Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi 'struggling to keep their ...
www.ibtimes.sg Entertainment
Jan 24, 2017
American talk show host and comedian Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi are again hit by divorce reports ...



Yellow Journalism

William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer

STARTED A WAR*

*kinda

The Real Story

1890s

female prisoners, executions, valiant rebels, and starving children

sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor

blamed the Spanish → swayed U.S. public opinion → demanded intervention +
diplomacy failure = Spanish American War

Consequences

People died because nobody fact-checked.

Puerto Rico (almost state 51), Guam, and the Philippines

Water mine? Accidental fire?

Word of Mouth

OMG, did you hear what Brittany told me yesterday?

(Disclaimer: "Brittany" is a filler name.)

My friend watched a video, and it proved that the Earth is flat.



Examples of Sources that
are Subtly NOT Credible

- An early study in the journal *Nature* said that in 2005, Wikipedia's scientific articles came close to the level of accuracy in *Encyclopædia Britannica* and had a similar rate of "serious errors".
- Between 2008 and 2012, Wikipedia articles on medical and scientific fields such as pathology, toxicology, oncology, pharmaceuticals, and psychiatry were compared to professional and peer reviewed sources and it was found that Wikipedia's depth and coverage were of a high standard.
- Anyone can edit a wikipedia page, so there is always risk of information being inaccurate.



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Sensationalism: the use of exciting or shocking stories or language at the expense of accuracy, in order to provoke public interest or excitement.

Headlines are often the recipients of sensationalism such as the following:



Examples of Obviously Biased Sources

Buzzfeed and Breitbart Politics

Spy Agencies Around The World Are Digging Into Trump's Moscow Ties

Israel and at least one Western European country are investigating the claims made in a 35-page dossier about President elect Donald Trump's ties to Russia.

Posted on January 13, 2017, at 4:06 p.m.



Sheera Frenkel
BuzzFeed News Reporter



Bryan R. Smith / AFP / Getty Images



IN TRUMP WHITE HOUSE, WILDCARD PUTIN FACES FIRST ASSERTIVE AMERICA OF HIS CAREER

by **FRANCES MARTEL**

5072 Comments

Interest Magazines

YouTubers giving good reviews of products given for free

<https://youtu.be/0oM5kmr0iik>

Examples of Subtly Biased Sources

New York Times

“Republican **advocates** of loosening immigration laws are moving to attach the measure to the annual defense policy bill. It would **offer** a path to permanent residency for undocumented immigrants who came to the country before the age of 15 and enlist in the military. But they are running into vociferous opposition from **anti-immigration hard-liners.**”

Immigration Bill Splitting House G.O.P.

By JONATHAN WEISMAN and ASHLEY PARKER APRIL 4, 2014

Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotypes

These are all examples of subtle bias that we see in everyday life and in writing.

Bias used to be more obvious, but has become more subtle.

Which is not necessarily a good thing.

Scale

- All people have bias which can show up in their writing.
- The key is in knowing the bias and reading past the bias.

Scientific Studies and Funding

Research Bias: when the results of an experiment are influenced by the experimenter in order to reach a certain outcome

Scientific studies can be interfered with through research bias.

There are a few reasons that a researcher would do this: self-satisfaction, “innovation”, \$\$\$.



Willie “research” for \$\$\$



- Wei-Hock “Willie” Soon, Harvard/Smithsonian researcher, climate change denier
- According to documents released by the Smithsonian, Willie Soon has been funded by those with fossil fuel interests.
- At least 1.2 Million over the last decade

The Particulars Change with Purpose

Match the sources with an appropriate research topic on the left:

- A. An interview with the pizza guy
- B. Your favorite DIY Pinterest board
- C. That one rap beat from the other day

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1. The increase or decrease of misogyny in modern rap lyrics
2. Elements of successful blogs
3. Conditions in the modern working class

Activity

Instructions

Get in groups of 3 to 5

Read through the article, and determine whether or not it is credible, and what its bias is.

Support your decision with evidence.

Be prepared to share your findings with the class!