How to Spot Fake News

In a December 2016 survey from the Pew Research Center, 64% of Americans said that fake news "has caused a great deal of confusion about the basic facts of current events," and 23% admitted to spreading fake news.

It's getting harder and harder to tell what is true and what isn't. Some people no longer read or watch the news because they find it too difficult to determine credibility.

When we constantly doubt the validity of our news sources, it can be very tempting to dismiss all news and believe only what we want to hear. But as world chess champion Garry Gasparov said in a tweet:

"The point of modern propaganda isn't only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth."

A recent infographic by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions offers the following tips to empower you as you read:

- **Consider the source.** Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission, and its contact info.

- **Read beyond.** Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?

- **Check the author.** Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?

For more suggestions, read the rest of the infographic at the link on the back of this sheet. Check out some of the other resources, including fact-checking websites and the browser extension B.S. Detector. They can help you decide if what you're reading is real or fake.

And remember that your librarians are happy to help you evaluate and research the credibility of a news story. We know it's crazy out there, so there's no need to feel embarrassed. Let's all work together to stop the spread of fake news.

Submit your answer to the question below in the entry box located in the main library by January 31, 2018 to be entered to win a $75.00 Amazon gift card.

Is Western Kentucky University offering free tuition to black students because of slavery? Use one of the websites listed on the back of this sheet to determine whether this news story is true or false.

Answer: _____ Website used: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Resources

Books Available at JCPL

Debunk It! How to Stay Sane in a World of Misinformation by John Grant. TEEN SOCIETY 001.9 GRANT

Virtual Unreality: Just Because the Internet Told You, How Do You Know It's True? by Charles Seife. EDUCATION GENERAL 025.042 SEIF

Infographic

"How to Spot Fake News" by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions: https://tinyurl.com/lxnaw8y.

Websites

FactCheck.org (www.factcheck.org)
This nonpartisan project of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center aims "to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics" using the techniques of journalism and scholarship.

Politifact.com (www.politifact.com)
A nonpartisan website run by editors and reporters from the independent newspaper the *Tampa Bay Times*, Politifact researches and rates statements made by politicians, rating them from true to false.

Snopes.com (www.snopes.com)
In the past, Snopes.com has served as one of the oldest and most respected Internet resources "for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation." More recently, the site has also begun fact-checking political stories. Snopes.com is an independent organization funded through ads.

Browser Extension

B.S. Detector (bsdetector.tech)
B.S. Detector is a browser extension for Chrome and Firefox that checks websites and Facebook news stories against OpenSources' "professionally curated list of unreliable or otherwise questionable sources." If you visit a website or a story shows up in your Facebook newsfeed from a site that OpenSources lists as biased, satirical, or not credible, the B.S. Detector extension will provide a visual warning in red. Note that the warning only appears for sources listed in the Open-Sources database; just because you don't see a warning, you should not assume that the source is credible.

Video

"How to Spot Fake News" by Factcheck.org: https://youtu.be/AkwWcHekMdo