Fake News Detection Checklist

Handout link: bit.ly/fakenewsdetect

Barbara Gray, Associate Professor and Chief Librarian
Use our CUNY J-School Research Guides for Reporters

To avoid being fooled by fake news, ask yourself these questions:

- **Who says?**
  - Scrutinize the publication sharing the story, and the sources they are quoting. Are they even giving a source? Go to original source.

- **How do they know?**
  - Have you heard of them? What makes them an authoritative source? Search the website’s “About” page. Check the Center for Media & Democracy’s Sourcewatch.org page.

- **Is the source biased?**
  - Does the story only present one side of a debate? Check mediamatters.org (debunks conservative media) and newsbusters.org (debunks liberal media).

- **Does this news turn up on any trusted sites?**
  - Search fact checking sites like Snopes to see if the claim has been proven or debunked. Here’s a custom search engine of fact-checking sites you can search at once: bit.ly/factchecksites-search
  - Do a Google search to see whether or how the news is being reported on legitimate journalism sites (but be wary of mistaking quantity for quality – fake news tends to proliferate).

- **What don’t I know?**
  - Do other reliable sources challenge these facts? What other facts are being left out?

- **Is this story making me upset or angry?**
  - If so, it’s probably designed to target your emotions and confirmation biases, and to bypass your intellect. Take a breath and verify before you share it.

- **Does the story sound too crazy or outlandish to be true?**
  - Then don't believe it, unless you've checked it out first with other, reliable sources.