

## Internet Resources for Fact Checkers

### “Deciding What’s True: The Rise of Political Fact-Checking in American Journalism”

by Lucas Graves

<https://books.google.com/books?id=VcGIDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA27#v=onepage&q&f=false>

An online copy of this book which explains the process of fact-checking and it’s pros and cons.



### Craig Silverman explains fake news for #FDLive at The New York Times:

The editor of BuzzFeed Canada breaks down how fake news works with great examples.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eCVXiYLJU>



**FactCheck.org** - Fact checks claims in media and reveals common misconceptions based on media spin

<http://www.factcheck.org/>



**Politifact** - Rates comments by politicians and government officials in terms of “true”, “mostly true” or “pants on fire”

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/>



**Snopes** - Classic internet web resource for debunking myths, rumors, and misinformation on the internet.

<http://www.snopes.com/>



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# Understanding News Media

Community Library  
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## Collection Guide

Resources to help you separate  
what’s true from what’s fake.



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or search the online catalog at:  
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Fake news articles present hoaxes, propaganda, and misinformation as accurate reporting. These articles have sensationalized headlines, known as *clickbait*, and are written not for accuracy, but for maximum popularity and profit. These articles seem trustworthy because they are written in a journalistic style, and *feel* true, a phenomenon which Stephen Colbert describes as *truthiness*. Sometimes these fake news websites copy the look of popular websites, to fool readers into thinking they are reading a trusted source.

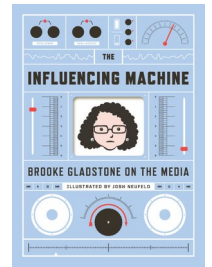
Fake news works by presenting information which reinforces our biases, opinions, and assumptions. Even corporate news media can present opinion in a way that seems factual. Because these “facts” match our worldview, we are more inclined to believe it—and share it on social media. This can create *social media bubbles* where the only news we read is whatever matches what we “like,” or what we expect to be true. This can create worldviews based on inaccurate information, which have real world effects when important decisions are on the line.

What can you do to stay accurately informed? The resources in this guide are designed to help you understand the process, ideologies, and biases of the news media (and your own!), and help you critically examine online information.

## The Influencing Machine: Brooke Gladstone on the Media

By Brooke Gladstone and Josh Neufeld  
302.23 GLA | Current Events & Social Issues

Comic book guide to the history of news media by popular NPR host Brooke Gladstone. Highly recommended.



## The End of Big: How the internet makes David the new Goliath

By Nicco Mele

Available at other OCPL libraries

Mele describes the challenges to traditional “big” media and party politics from internet sources and social media.



## All the Truth is Out: The week politics went tabloid

By Matt Bai

328.73 BAI | Current Events & Social Issues

Bai traces the shift in political news broadcasting from policy issues to candidate personalities to the 1987 Gary Hart scandal.

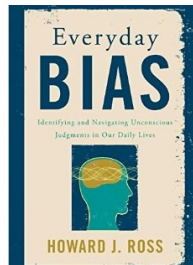


**Everyday Bias: Identifying and navigating unconscious judgments in our daily lives**

By Howard J. Ross (2014)

303.385 ROS | Psychology, Self Help & Philosophy

A short book which helps readers to identify and overcome unconscious bias in their lives.

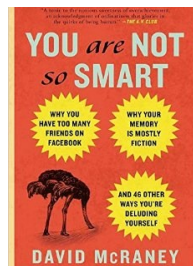


**You Are Not So Smart: Why you have too many friends on Facebook, why your memory is mostly fiction, and 46 other ways you're deluding yourself**

By David McRaney (2011)

128.3 MCR | Psychology, Self Help & Philosophy

Don't be put off by the title. This book is an excellent and entertaining guide to the biases we all have—not just you! You'll learn how the media and online content use psychological and rhetorical tricks to persuade you—and learn how to think critically about your own worldview.

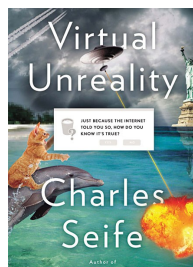


**Virtual Unreality**

By Charles Seife (2014)

Available at other OCPL libraries

Seife provides a great guide to critically examining online content. From the blurb: "Virtual Unreality provides a much-needed tool kit to help you separate fact from fantasy in the digital world."

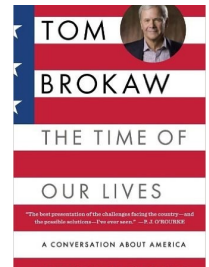


**The Time of Our Lives**

By Tom Brokaw (2012)

973.927 BRO | History

A veteran journalist's view on the challenges faced by modern America.

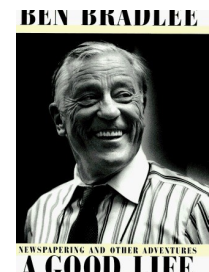


**A Good Life: Newspapering and other adventures**

By Ben Bradlee (1995)

BIO BRADLEE

Perspectives on the newspaper trade by a famous Washington Post reporter.

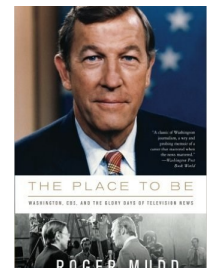


**The Place to Be: Washington, CBS, and the glory days of television news**

By Roger Mudd (2008)

Available at other OCPL libraries

Autobiography from veteran CBS news reporter Roger Mudd.



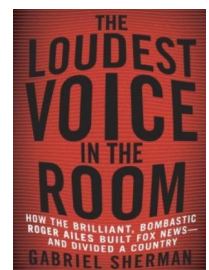
**The Loudest Voice in the Room: How the brilliant, bombastic Roger Ailes built Fox News and divided a country**

By Gabriel Sherman (2014)

070.43 SHE | Business & Investing

Biography of Fox News chairman Roger Ailes and his history within the network.

Now a miniseries—The Loudest Voice (2019)!





## Melissa Zimdars’ “Fake News” list: and browser extension

<http://nymag.com/selectall/2016/11/heres-a-browser-extension-that-will-flag-fake-news-sites.html>

- Melissa Zimdars is Associate Professor of Communications at Merrimack College. She has provided excellent tips and advice for identifying fake news and good quality sources. This link will take you to an article about a browser extension based on her list which is designed to warn users about potential fake news, and contains links to her original list and advice.



## State of the News Media 2019

Pew Research Center

<https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/state-of-the-news-media/>

- An analysis of the readership, financial concerns, of news media outlets, including detailed analysis of each media format (like newspapers, cable tv, etc).



## Fair.org (Fairness in Accuracy and Reporting) list of Online News Sources

<http://fair.org/take-action-now/online-news-sources/>

Fair.org is the website of a national media watch group. This list of online news sources covers some niche news websites and corporate news sites.

There are a number of academic articles describing metrics for determining credibility in news media. Here are some simple things you can check to determine if the website you’re looking at is credible or not:

1. **Fact Checking:** Does the website have any articles in which they fact check political debates? Do you notice if any articles include apologies for inaccurate information or mistakes in reporting?
2. **Sensationalism:** Does the headline you’re clicking on seem to “sensationalized” or “objective”? This CopyPress article shows examples of the difference between “sensational” and “objective” headlines: <http://www.copypress.com/blog/40-headlines-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>
3. **Accuracy:** Try searching for a local or national event (even if it was in the past) that you personally know something about. Compare how different websites or newspapers report this information.
4. **Bias, “Spin”, Opinion as Fact:** All newspapers will have a political bias, but to what degree does that affect accuracy? Look carefully at the choices of words and quotes used. How “strong” is the language used? How strong is your “feeling” about the issue after you read the article?
5. **Photographs:** It can be easy to gauge the extent of a political bias by looking at the choice of photograph used to accompany an article. How is the scene in question presented? Does the photograph portray the subject in a negative or positive way?
6. **Authority:** What information do you have about the author or publication? If you can’t find any secondary information about the publication online, be suspicious. Institutions like the New York Times, Fox News, Washington Post, Al Jazeera, and media think tanks like the Pew Research Center make information about their authors, funding, and history available to readers.
7. **Verify, Verify, Verify!:** Don’t just take one source as fact, especially if the information seems incredible or unbelievable. Search for the same information in other media sources, and see if the “facts” match up elsewhere.

