Troubling Report Finds Millions Of Americans Forced To Make Ends Meet By Getting Up And Going To Work Every Day
What’s the Problem?

“The fictions and fabrications that comprise fake news are but a subset of the larger bad news phenomenon, which also encompasses many forms of shoddy, unresearched, error-filled, and deliberately misleading reporting that do a disservice to everyone….”

from “We Have a Bad News Problem, Not a Fake News Problem” by David Mikkelson, Snopes.com founder
A FACT: IS A STATEMENT THAT IS TRUE AND CAN BE VERIFIED OBJECTIVELY, OR PROVEN. IN OTHER WORDS, A FACT IS TRUE AND CORRECT NO MATTER WHAT.

Source: Study.com.
“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

John Adams
An OPINION: HOWEVER, IS A STATEMENT THAT HOLDS AN ELEMENT OF BELIEF; IT TELLS HOW SOMEONE FEELS. AN OPINION IS NOT ALWAYS TRUE AND CANNOT BE PROVEN. OPINIONS OFTEN INCLUDE BIASED WORDS (BEAUTIFUL, MISERABLE,_exciting, FRIGHTFUL)

Source: Study.com and Broward College, College Readiness Course, see https://goo.gl/ldF8cg.
True! Also called Pomato, see wikipedia.org, Modernfarmer.com, Businessinsider.com, Telegraph.co.uk, BBC.com and more.

There's a plant called the "TomTato" which is a cherry tomato plant with potatoes as roots. It yields large quantities of both tomatoes and spuds.
“Do some investigating. Research the factual claims in the story to see if there is published evidence to support or contradict them. Challenge the teller of the tale to produce evidence that what they've told you is true. The burden of proof is on them. “

Thoughtco.com from “Eight Ways to Spot an Urban Legend.”
Check sources, if a post or article makes claims based on a specific source:

- Check to be sure the source says what is claimed.
- Check the affiliation of the source.
- Check the credentials of the “authority.”
- Have the results been replicated?
- Are other news outlets or sources reporting the “news?”
When sites or publications are cited, check them out...

Google it:
“How reliable is telegraph.co.uk” or
“How reliable is MSNBC?” and then
“How reliable is Washington Examiner?”
How to Prove a Fact

To test whether a statement is a fact, ask these three questions:

- Can the statement be proved or demonstrated to be true?
- Can the statement be observed in practice or operation?
- Can the statement be verified by witnesses, manuscripts, or documents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is objective</td>
<td>Is subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is discovered</td>
<td>Is Created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States reality</td>
<td>Interprets reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be verified</td>
<td>Cannot be verified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented with unbiased words</td>
<td>Presented using biased words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Broward College, College Readiness Course, see https://goo.gl/ldF8cg.
Opinionated and Biased Words

Created at http://www.wordclouds.com/
Watch out for Qualifiers!

all
always
appear
believe
could
every
has/have to
I feel
it is believed
likely
may
might
must
never

often
ought to
possibly
probably
seem
should
only
sometimes
think
usually
“The book is always better than the film adaption.”

It is believed that Vice President Pence was involved in a secret meeting that resulted in Comey’s firing.

"The founding fathers, in their genius, created a system of three co-equal branches of government and a built-in system of checks and balances," Clapper said on *State of the Union.* "I feel as though that is under assault and is eroding." – James Clapper
“The book is always better than the film adaption.”

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Critical Thinking: What Is It?

"Disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence"

Logical Fallacies

- Common errors in reasoning
- Undermine logic of your argument.
- Can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points
- Often identified by lack of evidence that supports the claim.
Logical Fallacies

• Slippery Slope
• Hasty Generalization
• Moral Equivalence

• Post hoc ergo propter hoc
• Genetic Fallacy
• Begging the Claim
• Circular Argument
• Either/Or
• Ad hominem
• Ad populum
• Red Herring
• Straw Man
“I have come to the conclusion that…most people are so locked into a particular world view that they tend to reject any information, no matter how well supported, that contradicts their cherished assumptions…It’s scary, actually how polarized we have become.”

from David Emery, from 2008, author of About.com’s (now Thoughtco.com’s) Urban Legends page
Philosophical “Spectrum of Change”

What is meant by terms like conservative, liberal, moderate...

**REACTIONARY:**
finds little to preserve, wants radical change, “start all over”

**REVOLUTIONARY:**
finds little to preserve, wants radical change, “start all over”

**LIBERAL:** searches for consistent change, optimistic that forward movement is positive and brings progress

**CONSERVATIVE:**
change only makes things worse, thus change itself becomes a threat

**MODERATE:** willing to embrace change rather evenly, accepting some, rejecting others in balanced measure

“The paradigm does not assume that a person is always in the same position on virtually every issue....” –Mark Scherer, Historian
What’s the Problem?

If people have deeply held views, they’re unlikely to change.

Compounded by…

59% of readers share without reading.

* From a study by computer scientists at Columbia University and the French National Institute.
Would you believe:

- 360 Comments
- 295 Shares

April 1, 2014 NPR Post
Marijuana Contains "Alien DNA" From Outside Of Our Solar System, NASA Confirms
What’s the Solution?

“You simply must approach the internet with skepticism. It’s chock full of misinformation, and a lot of it shows up in your email inbox.” [and on Facebook]

Leo Notenboom, 18 years Programer at Microsoft, author, blogger  and podcaster.
Meme (pronounced Mee-m)

A cultural item that is transmitted by repetition and replication in a manner analogous to the biological transmission of genes.

A cultural item in the form of an image, video, phrase, etc., that is spread via the Internet and often altered in a creative or humorous way.

Dictionary.com
“Hear ye my fellow citizens, to believe all prose posted on the Internet is to court folly.”
What’s the Solution?

- Stay skeptical, read and think critically.
- Everything in print is not necessarily true. Too good to be true, it’s probably not true.
- **Question** what you read.
- Evaluate each paragraph or statement, is it fact or opinion.
- Evaluate the author and the source.
- Understand if a natural bias exists (Heritage Foundation vs Occupy Democrats).
- Understand the difference between an informed opinion and an expert opinion (well-informed person vs. expert in their field).
What’s the Solution?

- Don’t accept simple answers, most issues are complex.
- Beware of news that distracts (click bait) from important issues.
- Messages with warnings of good or dire results if you share/don’t share, just delete.
- Beware of generalizations. A study, argument or “fact” that starts with biased words (always, sometimes, never) is opinion, not fact.
- Don’t live in an information (Facebook) Bubble, read outside your comfort zone, world view, philosophical spectrum.
- Be aware that a single publication may include news, editorial content, rumor and opinion (not mutually exclusive); e.g. Borowitz Report, New Yorker.
SATIRE FROM THE BOROWITZ REPORT

Not the news.

COMEDIANS PROTEST ANTHONY SCARAMUCCI’S OUSTER

Industry estimates projected that Scaramucci would generate approximately four billion dollars for the comedy industry this year alone, a windfall that has now been erased.

TRUMP SUPPORTERS FURIOUS THAT THEY STILL HAVE HEALTH CARE

“I slept like a baby Thursday night, assuming that when I woke up I wouldn’t have health insurance,” a Trump voter said. “Instead, this nightmare.”

By Andy Borowitz  July 28, 2017
Finally: Read, evaluate, carefully consider what you share verbally, on Facebook, email and Twitter.
MIT Researcher: Glyphosate Herbicide will Cause Half of All Children to Have Autism by 2025

Half of All Children Will Be Autistic by 2025, Warns Senior Research Scientist at MIT

[First posted December 2014]
The real cause of increasing autism prevalence?

Sales ($millions) vs. Individuals Diagnosed

Year


Sales

Autism

Organic Food Sales

r = 0.9971 (p < 0.0001)

Indications of Bogusness!

1. Anonymous author
2. Author supposedly famous
3. Quotes legitimate source but not substantiated
4. Message riddled with spelling errors

Source: “That Chain E-mail Your Friend Sent to You Is (Likely) Bogus. Seriously.” by Lori Robertson, FactCheck.org, posted on March 18, 2008. Also see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm0LwscDYHs
Indications of Bogusness!

5. Author loves all caps and exclamation points

6. The message argues that it is NOT false

7. There’s math involved, “Do the Math!”

8. Do the Facts support the conclusion?

Source: “That Chain E-mail Your Friend Sent to You Is ( Likely) Bogus. Seriously.” by Lori Robertson, FactCheck.org, posted on March 18, 2008.
• Is it a fair comparison; was the economic setting the same in the two months mentioned?
• Did media outlets report this news?
• Can the decrease in the National Debt be attributed to the new president?
• Are the figures quoted, correct?
Resources to Check


- **www.factcheck.org/** project of Annenberg Public Policy Center, accepts no funds from corporations, unions, partisan organizations or advocacy groups. Funded by Annenberg grants and individuals with donors of $1K or more listed on site.

- **www.politifact.com/** fact-checking site that rates accuracy of claims by elected officials and others on its Truth-O-Meter.

- **goo.gl/JJnPtk** Thoughtco.com’s Urban Legend’s page.

- **goo.gl/tEh8TH** Facecrooks.com scam alert site reports Facebook related scams.
Fake News Sites (Satire to Seriousness)

- www.callthecops.net Stories: Steven Seagal on short list for new FBI director. Touted as “America’s most trusted source for public safety news”…not!
Steven Seagal on short list for new FBI director

In the weeks after the FBI director was fired there has been speculation as to who will take over as America's top cop.

Read More »

National Donut day adds 1% body fat to NYPD’s fittest cop

Officer Michael Counihan started his shift on June 2 like any other. Shift briefing and then heading out to his patrol assignment. Today, however, something different happened at the briefing a table filled with donuts in honor of National Donut day.

Read More »
Fake News Sites (Satire to Seriousness)

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- www.theonion.com Stories: “’Leaking sure is cool, huh, guys?’ says disguised John Kelly to White House aides,” and “U.S. forces take control of White House.”
Home Depot Releases New Bluetooth Cordless Hose
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AUDIO: SEYMOUR HERSH CLAIMS SETH RICH WAS DNC EMAIL LEAKER

U.S. NEWS  10 COMMENTS
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- [thenewyorkevening.com](http://thenewyorkevening.com) Stories: “Malia Obama expelled from Harvard,” “Owning a car gives you freedoms the government doesn’t want you to have,” and “Chinese security firm remotely hacks tesla brakes.”
FEMA Investigator’s Shock 9/11 Claim: ‘Vault Contents Emptied Before Attack... They Knew It Was Going To Happen’
Additional Sources

- Logical Fallacies [owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/]
- And Survey Results [www.leadershipiq.com/blogs/leadershipiq/study-fake-news-hits-the-workplace]
- Facebook Bubble: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/16/facebook-bias-bubble-us-election-conservative-liberal-news-feed]
Examples
The Ominous Self Fulfilling Death Sentence of Janet Reno July 21 1938 – Nov 7 2016

“Donald Trump will never be President in my lifetime”
– Janet Reno

...she was right, now that she's dead, Trump will be the President!

Source: Internet meme
Kansas Policy Institute

• Vision: We envision every Kansan having the opportunities provided through personal freedom to achieve prosperity and overall well-being, and the State of Kansas being a model of economic freedom and student-focused education to be emulated across the country

• Mission: Kansas Policy Institute is an independent think tank guided by the constitutional principles of limited government and personal freedom. We specialize in student-focused education and tax and fiscal policy at the state and local level, empowering citizens, legislators, and other government officials with objective research and creative ideas to promote a low-tax, pro-growth environment that preserves the ability of governments to provide high quality services.
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*Underlining* added by the presenter.
Fact or Opinion or Mixed?

Now Trump is saying that police should rough people up and "not be too nice." Good grief. Must he say the wrong thing every single time? Doesn't he understand that we have a bit of a problem with police shootings and brutality? Police have an incredibly difficult job. Don't give them advice that will hurt innocents and get the police in trouble. Almost as bad were the police who cheered the suggestion. That certainly won't reassure those worried about interacting with police. Any encounter with Trump ends up making both Trump and the other person look worse, and the social fabric gets a little more frayed every time he opens his mouth.
SIDLIT
Where Ideas Are Shared
Colleague to Colleague

www.slideshare.net/jbacon