Navigating Media: Helping Students Stay Informed

Susan Kambrich and Sandra Stevenson
Introductions

Susan Kambrich
Head of School at Woodland Hill Montessori School, Rensselaer, NY

Sandra Stevenson
Visual Editor, The New York Times
The World in Images

Sandra said she is not permitted to share the slideshow :(

![Image of Earth from space]
The importance of education in a democracy

“The mere habit of obedience is no preparation of life in a democracy...the safety of democracy depends on the intelligence and independence of the voters.”

Maria Montessori - West Side News, NY April 25, 1915.
What is considered ‘news’?

Journalists used to be the ‘gatekeepers’ of news and decided what was noteworthy and what was not. Now social media, and citizen journalists, have replaced much of mainstream media. Journalists know that their main competitors include anyone who owns a smartphone.
Hallmarks of legitimate news:

- **Attribution.** Credible news stories include an author's byline, a dateline, and facts, figures, and quotes attributed to specific people and groups.
- **Standards and ethics.** Credible news adheres to standards of ethics and professional behavior published on its website.
- **Full disclosure.** An author should be clear about when his or her work is an opinion. Opinion pieces should be labeled "op-ed" or "opinion," and they're written in the first person (using "I").
- **Objective sources.** Experts and other sources should have no conflict of interest when commenting on a story.
- **Trustworthy research.** Studies created by scientists from reputable labs, such as ones affiliated with universities or independent, nonprofit institutions (that have no financial incentive to provide the data they're publishing) should describe their methodology.
Who decides what is news?

- Journalists vs bloggers
- Push-Pull news - NY Times brief
- Headlines and Front Page - NY Times special room
- Lead story
- News reels - propaganda films
- Newsboys on the corner
- Speakers’ Corner (mid 1800s)

https://www.nbcnews.com/pages/author/richard-engel
News, Opinion or Fake News?

**Fact:** Something known to exist or to have happened; something true or real.

**Opinion:** A belief or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty or a personal view, attitude, or appraisal.

**Informed Opinion:** Thoughts on a subject by someone who is familiar with facts, studies, trends, or firsthand experience.

“Global warming isn’t real because I was cold today! Also great news: world hunger is over because I just ate.”

- Stephen Colbert

Immigrants accused of negatively affecting the election
Activity- Small Groups of 4 or 5

- Introduce yourselves
- How has news changed?
- Where do you get your news?
- How has where you get your news changed?
Where do we get our news?

— In 2017, 74 percent of Twitter users said they got news from Twitter, up 15 percent from last year, possibly thanks to President and tweeter-in-chief Donald Trump, who has taken to making official U.S. policy statements there.

— 29 percent of Snapchat users now report using it for news, up from 17 percent in 2016. This should be a welcome number for all the publishers investing massively in Snapchat Discover.

From: Pew Research
Social Media

Young adults are less enthused about news, but more likely to get it online.

But they are more likely to get news online

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 9, 2016, 
“The Modern News Consumer”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Online

This little waffle head gets a snow day tomorrow.

About four-in-ten Americans often get news online

% of U.S. adults who often get news on each platform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newspapers</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of each age group who often get news on each platform

Note: Just 1% said they never got news on any platform (not shown).
“The Modern News Consumer”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Advertisement or news? Can you tell the difference?

1. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because

2. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because

3. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because
Is this elephant jumping?
The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

4:48 PM - 17 Feb 2017

51,869 Retweets 158,161 Likes
Fake news is frequently used to describe a political story which is seen as damaging to an agency, entity, or person. However, it is by no means restricted to politics, and seems to have currency in terms of general news.
Video on how Fake News becomes News

“WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF DENSE INFORMATION POLLUTION.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcRWkkSvfj0

Nicco Mele, Shorenstein Center at Harvard’s Kennedy School
How to Manage Bias

Social media makes it easy to partake in discussions like never before. Yet it’s very easy to fall into the echo chamber.

Ways out of the echo chamber…

- Diversify your news feeds
- Read something you violently disagree with once a week.
- Follow experts in their field on Twitter, click deeper into the articles they post rather than glancing at photos or headlines,
- Fact check before you reTweet. Research issues from multiple sides before taking a stand.
Fake News

https://d1pmarobgdhgjx.cloudfront.net/parenttip/PT_HowToSpotFakeNews.mp4

- **Guilt by association.** Fraudulent news sources place seemingly unrelated photos side by side to make the subjects seem to be behaving inappropriately. (Legitimate news sources try to avoid this.)

- **Unclear creator.** Author bios should list why the creator is qualified to report on a topic. The site itself should clearly explain who supports the site or who is associated with it. If this information doesn't exist -- and if the site requires that you register before you can learn anything about its backers -- you have to wonder why they aren't being transparent.

- **Annoying, intrusive ads.** Banner ads, flashing ads, and pop-ups are signs that the site is just trying to get clicks.
Dangers of Fake News- Twin Falls

How Fake News Turned a Small Town Upside Down

At the height of the 2016 election, exaggerated reports of a juvenile sex crime brought a media maelstrom to Twin Falls - one that the Idaho city still hasn’t recovered from


https://d1pmarobgdhgx.cloudfront.net/parenttip/PT_HowToSpotFakeNews.mp4

“Others accused him of being a “globalist,” a word that has taken on many definitions but in this case meant he was part of a vast, arcane conspiracy.”
First incident: In the first incident, a perpetrator used a software tool to create two fake tweets that looked like they came from the account of Alex Harris, a Herald reporter preparing tributes to the slain students. One fake tweet asked for photos of dead bodies at the school and another asked if the shooter was white.

Second incident: In a second incident, someone again used a software tool to create a phony Miami Herald story — in the high tension following the Parkland shooting — saying that a Miami-Dade middle school faced threats of “potentially catastrophic events” on upcoming dates, indicating that a new mass shooting was in the offing. Screenshots of that fake story were passed along on Twitter and Snapchat, two social media platforms, said Monique O. Madan, a Herald reporter whose byline appeared on the fake story.

Harmful:

“What they are doing is trafficking in the brand’s integrity to lend credence to a false claim,” said Nicco Mele, director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard’s Kennedy School.

“We live in a world of dense information pollution,” he added. “The long-term fallout is really dramatic corruption of our democratic sphere.”
First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Why is a free press important?
Activity: Why is a strong media important?

- Why do you think a strong media is important?
- Why do you want your students to be media literate?
- What do you hope for kids?
Catch and Kill and Other Scary Things

Catch and Kill Example:


http://nyti.ms/2GOF6yT  How Researchers Learned to Use Facebook ‘Likes’ to Sway Your Thinking

http://nyti.ms/2HP4Dr3
Classroom Resources

https://newseumed.org/stack/media-literacy-resources/

https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-choose-your-news-damon-brown

https://youtu.be/JzwXgovJko4

"60 Minutes" tackles fake news

https://www.commonsense.org/education/toolkit/news-and-media-literacy

Full curriculum for news and media literacy

https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/digital-literacy

Lesson plans for
Resources for Fact Checking

http://www.politifact.com/
www.factcheck.org/
https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/fact-checks
http://www.npr.org/sections/politics-fact-check

www.snopes.com
“The budget represents $3 trillion in savings over the course of the 10 years. It’s the second-largest proposed reduction in spending ever, second only to last year’s budget.”

— White House budget director Mick Mulvaney, briefing reporters on the 2019 budget, Feb. 12, 2018

It’s a whopper!
It is the world’s leading instructor, innovator, convener and resource for anyone who aspires to engage and inform citizens in 21st century democracies.
How does ‘fake’ news become news?

“Falsehoods almost always beat out the truth on Twitter, penetrating further, faster, and deeper into the social network than accurate information” - The Atlantic March 2018

[Link to Atlantic article]

Fake news gets more attention and spreads faster

[Link to McClatchyDC article]

Miami hoax damages respected news organization

[Link to NPR article]

Study shows students cannot tell fake news from real news (2016 Stanford study)
Thank you

Sandra Stevenson
sandras@nytimes.com

Susan Kambrich
skambrich@woodlandhill.org

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,"

George Santayana