

SHEET
“RELIABILITY CRITERIA: HOW TO VERIFY NEWS”

LEVEL 1 (FOR YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS)

1. The easiest and most direct way to verify the reliability of news is to make a search with Google (or another search engine) by inserting the title of the news or the issue it deals with, and then to analyze the list of results. If the news runs on the web for some time, has stirred some debate and has already been proved false, in the results list you will find links to web pages that confirm it but also to web pages that prove it wrong. This is an important clue that must raise doubts about the reliability of the news.
2. The second step is to verify which sites have proved it wrong. generally, they are so-called “debunking” sites. The term comes from the English verb “to debunk” which means “to dismantle”. Debunking sites are in fact created with the stated aim of combating online misinformation, “dismantling” and denying, by applying scientific methodologies, false, exaggerated and unscientific statements and news.

DEBUNKING SITES (IN LANGUAGE OF THE PARTNER)

-
-
-
-

Among English websites, you may find www.snopes.com, the “father” of all debunking sites, and www.bellingcat.com, interesting English site using satellite maps to verify the news.

LEVEL 2

There are several additional elements to those already presented that help us to understand if the news is true:

1. to cross data from multiple secondary sources (at least three). In other words, if the same news appears on multiple organs of reliable information it is usually reasonable (but not sure) to think that it is true;
2. to look for confirmation from a primary source: for example, if the news concerns a celebrity, we have to look on the official website of that person. If information concerns the government, then we have to look at the government official website;
3. If some time has passed after the news was published and there are no denials or corrections, it is more reasonable to think that is true. Therefore, it is always important to check the date of an article and be wary of those who do not report it;
4. Check the website: is it a registered online newspaper? Is it a blog run by one person only? Do the authors of the website make a presentation of themselves or present their site? The more this information is vague, the less the website is reliable are the sources of information clearly mentioned inside the article you are reading? If they broadly cite “research conducted by scholars of an American university”, without mentioning the title of research, when it was made, by what scholars, by what university, we need to distrust;
5. pay attention to the graphics and the style of the website: if there are many words written all in capital letters, with evident font, with exclamation points, using phrases such as “the whole truth”, “we were cheated!” or theories of total control by occult powers, you are almost certainly entered a site full of hoaxes.

Last element to keep in mind: the fact that you have received an extraordinary news by a friend, a classmate, your brother or your uncle does not mean it is real.

Other news that could be used:

UK school pupil ethnicity question angers Italy

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-37631062>

Debunking:

.....

Bonsaikitten: kitten in a jar

http://uncyclopedia.wikia.com/wiki/Bonsai_Kitten

Debunking:

.....

Other materials on chemtrails

.....