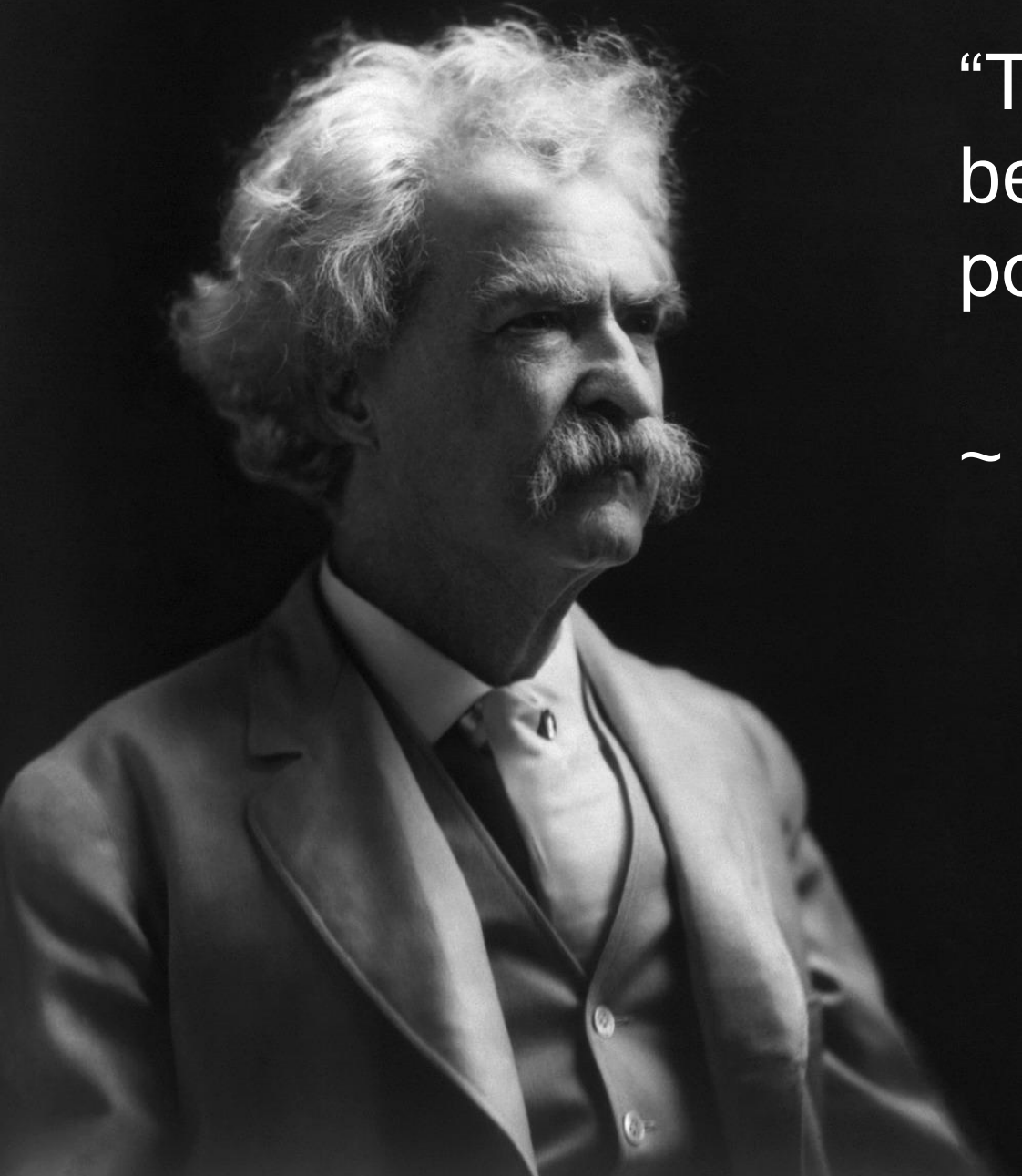


Fake News: How to sort Fact from Fiction!

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Library & Learning Resources



“Truth is stranger than fiction...
because fiction is obliged to stick to
possibilities; truth isn’t.”

~ Mark Twain

What you'll learn today...

- What is fake news?
- Exploration of its history & origins
- Examples of fake news stories
- What is its cause & effect?
- How to identify fake news
- Locating credible sources
- Practical search tips
- How to search *NewsBank* and the *Times Digital Archive*



Group Discussion: What is fake news?

Sensationalism

Propaganda

*Alternative
Facts*

Spin

False Reporting

Lies

Misinformation

Satire

*Economical
Truth*

Hoax

Definition: What is fake news?

“False often sensational information disseminated under the guise of news reporting”

Collins English Dictionary

“False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other social media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.”

Cambridge Dictionary



Early origins...



- Not a new concept!
- Began over 500 years ago with printing press (1439)
- No regulation, objectivity or concept of ethics
- Race, religion, politics, & science
- Sensationalist - inflame public opinion & prejudice
- Often provoked violence
- More reliable 'objective' news only emerged around 100 years ago
- Establishment of more 'fact based' publications
- Subject to more regulation

Modern revival...

- Decline of printed newspapers & traditional news sources
- Rise of web-based news & social media
- Opportunity for fake news to 'go viral'
- Difficult to regulate
- Popularised by Donald Trump since 2016 US elections
- Trump claimed to have invented the phrase!
- Use of the term has risen 365% since 2016
- Collins Dictionary official 'word of the year' 2017



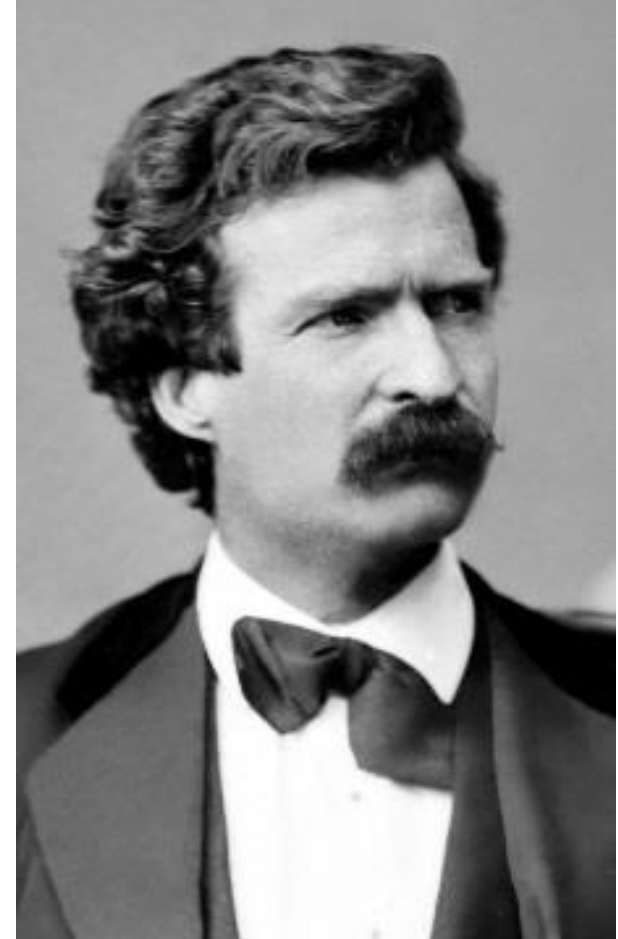
Example 1: The Great Moon Hoax



- August 1835
- **Discovery of life on the moon**
- Fantastical beasts – unicorns & furry winged humanoids
- New York Sun 'Penny Press' newspaper
- Falsely attributed to famous astronomer Sir John Herschel
- Reprinted from 'Edinburgh Journal of Science'
- Fooled Yale University scientists
- Intended as satire
- Publication sales soared
- Later admitted it was a hoax

Example 2: Mark Twain's Death

- June 1897
- Reports that he was '**dying in poverty in London**'
- In reality he was living in a very nice house in Chelsea with his wife and children
- He was amused by reports of his death
- *"The report of my death was an exaggeration. The report of my poverty is harder to deal with."*
- Famously misquoted as: *"Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated!"*
- Lived for a further 13 years, dying in 1910.



Example 3: WW1 Fake News



- Spring 1917
- **Cadaver factory discovered in Germany**
- Extracting glycerine from corpses to produce soap & margarine
- Reported in The Times & Daily Mail
- 'Anonymous sources'
- Later attributed to MI7
- Employed 25 paid writers to spread false stories through the press
- Thousands of examples, published by both sides, during the war.

Example 4: War of the Worlds

- 30th October 1938
- **Alien attack on United States of America**
- Adaptation of 1897 novel by H.G.Wells
- Broadcast via radio as a series of breaking news alerts
- So realistic it caused panic amongst listeners
- Reports of mass hysteria were later proven to be an exaggeration



Example 5: Pope endorses Trump



- 2016
- **The Pope releases statement backing Trump for President**
- Originated from WTOE 5 News
- Satirical news website
- Went viral on social media
- Gained over 960,000 views on Facebook alone
- Website openly admitted to fabricating content
- 'Satire or pure fantasy' disclaimer on homepage
- Site has since been shut down

Example 7: Presidential Inauguration



- January 2017
- **Largest Presidential inauguration audience ever**
- White House Press Secretary, Sean Spicer
- Disputed when directly compared with photographs of Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009.
- Later revealed that a government photographer had cropped the photographs 'where the crowd ended' at the request of the President who was angered by images showing his audience had been smaller than that of his predecessor

Example 8: Brexit!

- 2013 – June 2016
- **Immigration Scaremongering**
- Many false stories relating to UK border security
- Nigel Farage – Anti-migrant poster “*Breaking Point: EU has failed us all*”
- Compared to Nazi propaganda and inciting racial hatred
- Misreporting about lifting of UK work restrictions for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens
- Main contributing factor in UK ‘vote leave’ campaign



Cause & Effect: What motivates fake news?

Commercial:

- Income
- Advertising revenue
- Publicity
- Clickbait



Satire/Parody:

- Humour
- Entertainment
- No malicious intent
- The Onion/Daily Mash

Ideological:

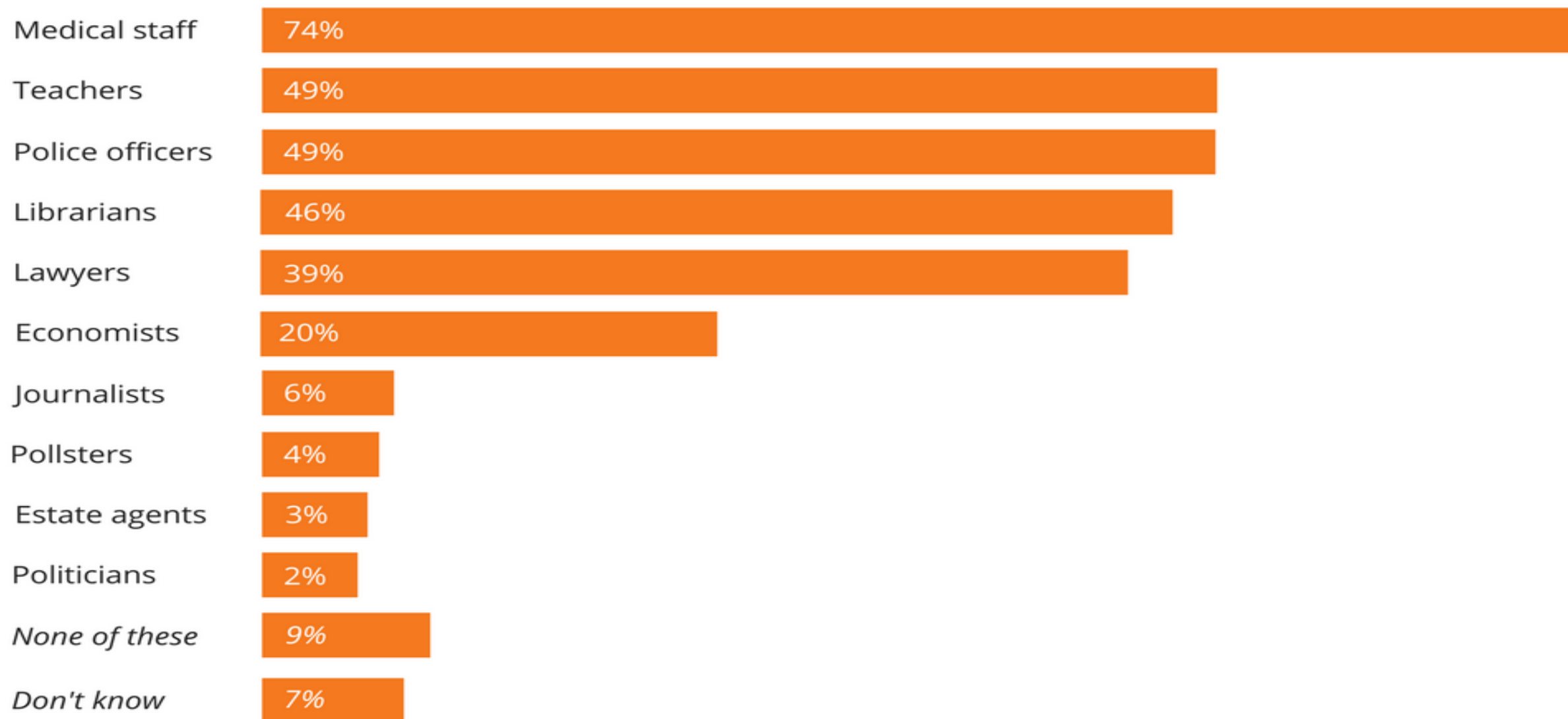
- Political gain
- Influence
- Boost popularity
- Discredit opponents

Social Media:

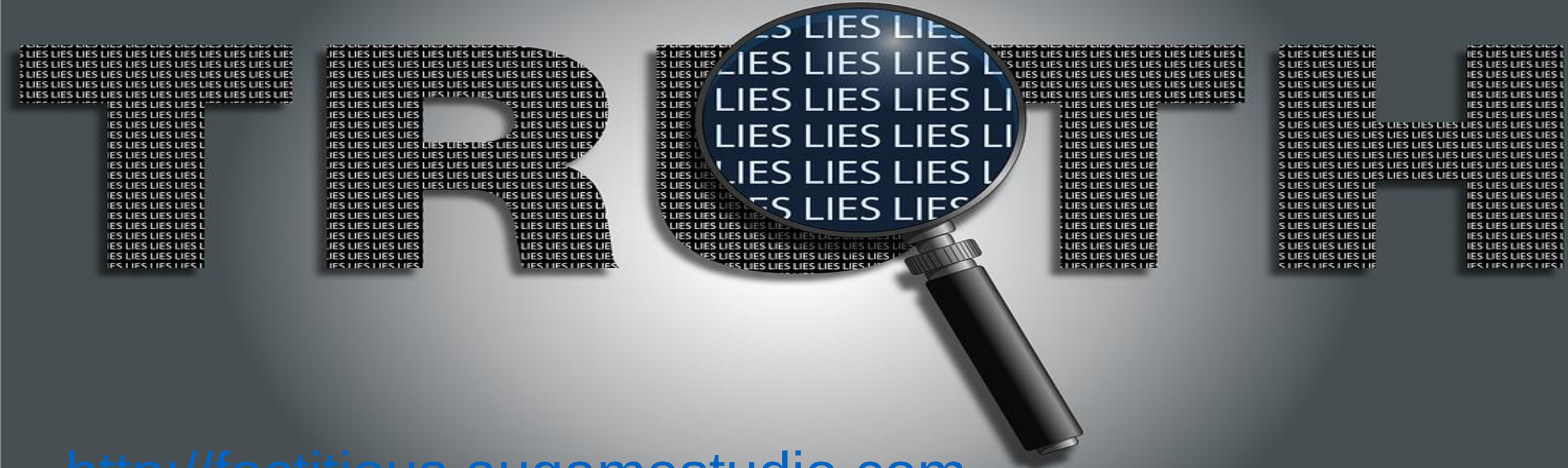
- Hoax videos & images
- Memes
- Bots
- Filter Bubbles

[Video: Artificial Obama](#)

PROFESSIONS MOST LIKELY TO PROVIDE TRUSTWORTHY INFORMATION



Test your knowledge!



<http://factitious.augamestudio.com>

Search tips: How to identify credible sources

- **Currency** (Is it up-to-date?)
- **Relevance** (Who is the intended audience?)
- **Authority** (What are the author's credentials?)
- **Accuracy** (Can the information be verified?)
- **Purpose** (Is the information objective/impartial?)



News databases at UWTSD Libraries



[Newsbank:](#)

- National & regional UK newspapers
- Over 800 publications
- Coverage since 1982
- Save favourites & set up news alerts

[Times Digital Archive:](#)

- The Times newspaper (not Sundays)
- Coverage from 1785-2012
- Every page of every issue, including images
- Search or browse

What is being done to combat fake news?

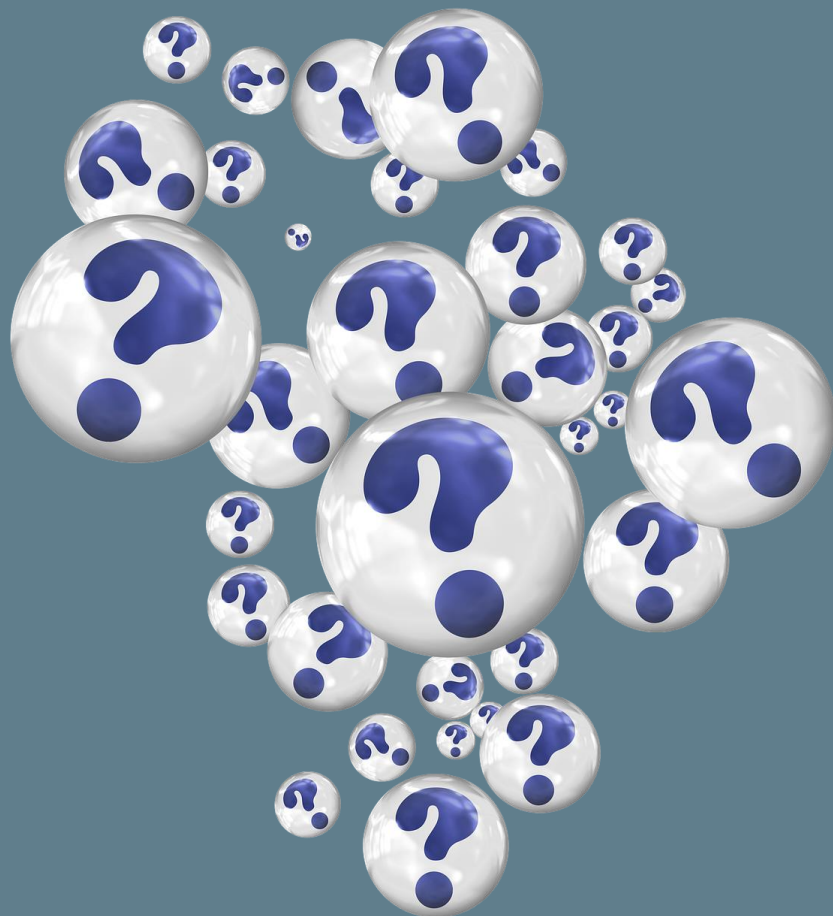


- [UK Parliamentary inquiry](#) – “Disinformation and Fake News”
- Being taken very seriously with many social media platforms and news outlets being investigated
- Mark Zuckerberg has declined to appear before MPs
- [Facebook launch fact checking initiative](#) in partnership with Full-Fact
- Some fact checking sites are now refusing to work with Facebook due to their lack of transparency
- [NewsGuard](#) plug-in available to download

Fake news: What can I do?

- Support legitimate news outlets (subscribe)
- Use library databases
- Use fact-checking websites ([BBC Reality Check](#), [Fullfact.org](#), [Snopes](#), [Politifact](#).)
- Try Google [reverse image search](#)
- Take responsibility!
- Don't respond to clickbait
- Think before sharing news stories on social media
- Trust your instinct





Thank You!

Any Questions?



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