



The Fake News Game

Introduction

Fake news is all around us - see if you can find the stories you think are untrustworthy to see how well you can spot fake news! This game will help you to learn what to look for when evaluating your sources.

Try to spot the news story NOT based on facts. Answers and explanations are given at the end of the document.

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Round 1: Aarti's fake story

This round tests how well you can assess content on news websites.

Some things to think about when evaluating websites:

- Check the URL.
- What do you know about this news source?
- Are quotes and facts cited?
- How was this news reported by other sources?

Find the fake story

Read each source and decide if the story is fake news or not:

1. [The Pope gave a TED Talk and asked tech companies to do better](#) from The Verge.
2. [Prince Charles spent £46,000 on a train trip](#) from iNews.
3. [McDonald's uses worm meat fillers but can legally call it 100% beef](#) from Daily Buzz Live.

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Round 2: Katherine's fake story

This round tests how well you can assess content on academic sources.

Some things to think about when evaluating websites:

- Check the URL.
- Check the language and tone.
- Check the publisher and/or source.
- Check the author.

Find the fake story

Read each source and decide if the story is fake news or not:

1. [Refugees and the Definition of Syria](#) from Past & Present.
2. [CERN Researchers Apologize for Destruction of 5 Parallel Universes in Recent Experiment](#) from The Onion.
3. [Bizarre new deep-sea creatures discovered off Australian coast](#) from The New Scientist.

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Round 3: Find the fake tweeter

You can trust and even cite some tweets but one of these is fake!

Some things to think about when evaluating social media sources:

- Check the user is verified.
- Check likes, followers, and shares.
- Do a reverse image search.

Find the fake tweeter

Click on each source to read the full tweet and decide if the tweeter is fake or not:

1. [“EXCLUSIVE: 43% of Republicans want to give Trump the power to shut down media, according to a new poll.”](#) from The Daily Beast.
2. [“For absolutely no good reason, here's the General Election again, in a 15 second hexmap gif. You can probably click to pause, if you must”](#) from Alasdair Rae.
3. [“I think not much people know that this is my real page”](#) from Jennifer Lawrence.

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Bonus round: Oliver’s challenge

Here’s a tabloid news story based on a high impact journal article.

Is it a good source, or fake news?

Time to apply your knowledge!

Good source or fake news?

1. First, have a look at this high impact journal article:
[Coffee consumption and health: umbrella review of meta-analyses of multiple health outcomes.](#)
2. Then read the extract from a typical tabloid news story about the scientific review:
“SCIENTISTS have discovered that your morning cup of coffee could be a MIRACLE CURE! In a new study, boffins found that drinking coffee prevents heart disease diabetes, cancer, back pain and more! So, sit back and enjoy that latte, it could save you a trip to the doctors!”
3. Then decide if this is **fake**, **true**, or **complicated**!

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Answers

Round 1: find the fake story

1. The Verge is a technology news site; its stories are accurate and factual. The fact that Pope Francis chose to telecommute makes the story more credible. This is a **true** story.
2. iNews is a British newspaper owned and published by DMG Media which also publishes a number of well-known and long-standing national newspapers. This is a **true** story.
3. Daily Buzz is a fake news site. There is no author or date on the page. It's easy to check hoaxes by looking at [Snopes.com](https://www.snopes.com), see [Snopes fact checks](#). This is a **fake** story!

Round 2: find the fake news story

1. Past and Present is an academic journal, usually a good source of information. Note the language is balanced in tone. This is a **true** story.
2. The Onion is a satirical news site. Its stories are produced to be funny, not factual. This is a **fake** story!
3. New Scientist has a reputation as being a good source of information, although some of its headlines can be sensationalistic to attract users to read them. This is a **true** story.

Round 3: find the fake tweeter

1. @thedailybeast is the official Twitter account of US website The Daily Beast. Its stories may sometimes be biased, but not fake. Note the blue tick, showing it has been verified by Twitter. This is **true**.
2. @undertheraedar is the Twitter account of Dr Alasdair Rae, from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. He is a respected researcher. This is **true**.
3. @OFFICIALawrence: There is no tick beside the name to verify the user, they only follow six people, the English in the tweets looks like a non-English speaker, and there's a lack of currency (only 21 tweets since 2012). This is **fake**!

Bonus round: Oliver's challenge

- Good scientific research is often reported by the mainstream media in a misleading, incomplete or sensationalist way. Findings are usually complex and can't be reduced to a simple headline without distorting or omitting key information.
- This news article reports on a review of research published in the British Medical Journal, which found evidence of a link between limited consumption of coffee and a reduced risk of certain illnesses. However, the study also found that the potential benefits and risks of coffee could depend on a complex web of other factors (including the amount you drink, how you prepare it and whether you have any existing health problems). The study concludes that the evidence isn't strong enough

to make definite health recommendations and that more research is needed to test the findings.

- So, whilst this news article isn't exactly fake, it doesn't present the full complexity of the issue and potentially misleads the reader. Always go to the original research to look at the findings yourself (or better still, compare a range of studies) before making any lifestyle choices!
- Answer: **This is complicated!**

Thanks for playing! Don't stop questioning the information you find!

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Summary

You have reached the end of this resource. This information has been adapted from the [Fake News Game tutorial](#).

Why not look at some of our other Research Skills and Critical Thinking resources? [Book onto a Workshop or take an Online Tutorial](#).

Remember to reflect on and record your skills development using [mySkills](#).

Visit our FAQs: [Library FAQs](#)

Get in touch: library@sheffield.ac.uk

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Full URLs

The Pope gave a TED Talk and asked tech companies to do better:

<https://www.theverge.com/2017/4/26/15442644/pope-francis-ted-talk-future-worth-building>

Prince Charles spent £46,000 on a train trip: <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/prince-charles-spent-46000-train-trip/>

McDonald's uses worm meat fillers but can legally call it 100% beef:

<http://dailybuzzlive.com/mcdonalds-uses-worm-meat-fillers-can-legally-call-100-beef/>

Snopes fact checks: <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/worm-meat-used-mcdonalds-hamburgers/>

Refugees and the Definition of Syria: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw048>

CERN Researchers Apologize for Destruction of 5 Parallel Universes in Recent Experiment:

<https://www.theonion.com/cern-researchers-apologize-for-destruction-of-5-paralle-1819579830>

Bizarre new deep-sea creatures discovered off Australian coast:

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2137672-bizarre-new-deep-sea-creatures-discovered-off-australian-coast/>

EXCLUSIVE: 43% of Republicans want to give Trump the power to shut down media, according to a new poll: <https://twitter.com/thedailybeast/status/1026859591680835584>

For absolutely no good reason, here's the General Election again, in a 15 second hexmap gif. You can probably click to pause, if you must:

<https://twitter.com/undertheradar/status/876901734064549892>

I think not much people know that this is my real page:

<https://twitter.com/OFFICIALLawrence/status/246051613477851136>

Coffee consumption and health: umbrella review of meta-analyses of multiple health outcomes: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k194>

Fake News Game tutorial:

https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/questioning/fake-news-game/story_html5.html

Research Skills and Critical Thinking Workshops and Tutorials:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/study/research-skills>

mySkills: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/skills/myskills>

Library FAQs: <https://libraryhelp.shef.ac.uk/>

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