

## Deconstructing social and digital media



Remember these guys?

## Deconstructing social and digital media



Yes, it is a press, certainly, but ... a spring of truth shall flow from it: Like a new star it shall scatter the darkness of ignorance ...  
--JOHANNES GUTENBERG



Remember these guys?

## Deconstructing social and digital media

A squirrel dying in front of your house may be more relevant to your interests right now than people dying in Africa.

--MARK ZUCKERBERG



Remember these guys?

## Deconstructing social and digital media

### Print Dead At 1,803

NEWS - Breaking News - ISSUE 09-00 - Jul 25, 2013

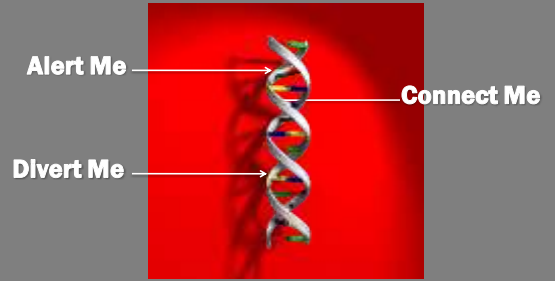


The paper-based textual medium passed away early today, according to...





# Digital media amp up the power of information



## Alerts

**9:47 p.m.**  
White House spokesman

**10:24 p.m.**  
Former chief of staff of defense secretary

**NOTUS** to address the nation tonight at 10:00 PM Eastern Time

So I'm told by a reputable person they have killed Osama Bin Laden. Hot damn.

**Schaib Athar** @FossilVirtual

and here come the mails from the mainstream media... "vigh"

12:42 AM · 2 May 2011

186 Retweets · 146 Favorites

## Diverts

**kimkardashian**

1 week ago

Myra Magazine this week isn't built to blow its way with the big girls... what? Not that! What else is there. Can't wait for you to see the whole issue!

**kimkardashian** [@kimkardashian](#) · [kimkardashian](#) · [kimkardashian](#)

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**Connects**

**Eric, You Can Help Stop Ebola**

Donate to organizations working in West Africa so they can save lives and stop the outbreak.

[Learn More](#) [Donate Now](#)



**NEXT WEEK**

- **Final lecture** – including a live TV deconstruction
- **Last recitation.** Final essays are due. We'll review the exam and preview the final

# Wanted

Best News Literacy **final essay**

**REWARD**  
One semester's in-state tuition (about \$2,800)

The essay topic has been posted on Blackboard. Your score represents 15% of your final grade.

## “The Electronic Wasteland”



What can you conclude?

## Preparing for the final exam: This online exercise is the best way to study



This set of directions is in the “Reading Assignments” tab that takes you to our CourseLoad™ eReader. It’s not a graded assignment, but it will prepare you for the final exam. You’ll find two broken links (“Keep It Simple” and “Make It Look Good”). Just skip to the next exercises.

### Last week’s Quick Quiz

1. **FALSE:** Background music mixed into a TV news report in the editing process has no effect on the reliability and fairness of the report. But ...
2. If you get all your news from TV, you’re likely to miss stories that lack strong visuals, complex stories: i.e. Supreme Court, Policy issues, certain kinds of international story, like the Boko Haram kidnappings.

### Your questions and comments ...

- ❖ “Why do news outlets put people that seem random and seem as if they do not know what they are talking about in their live broadcasts ...?”  
— Taylor Riley
- ❖ “Pictures then audio then television. What’s next?”  
— Tom Wimmers

### After this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Teach a peer or relative at least three ways to test the reliability of news that comes via social media.
2. Explain how social media is a cognitive dissonance “enabler” and can amplify confirmation biases.
3. Explain how anonymity contributes to the crisis of authenticity in social media.
4. Articulate both the strengths and weaknesses of social media as a source of reliable information.
5. Explain the ethical news consumer’s role as a news publisher, and the burdens that accompany that role.

On the web, *you* contribute news



The rise of **crowdsourced** news sites



The power to alert, divert and connect is in *your* hands



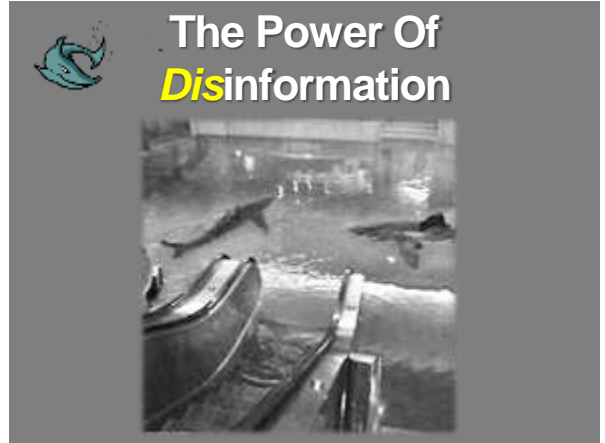
Social media also amplify **disinformation**



“Facebook found truth as if on earth and gave it wings; but untruth was also abroad, and it was supplied with a double pair of wings.”

# The Power of *Dis*information

Colbert foxbot



# The Power of *Dis*information



# The Power of *Dis*information



## Challenges for empowered consumers in the digital age

- Speed versus accuracy
- Information overload
- Authenticity
- Blurring of lines
- Confirmation Bias



### DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES

## Speed vs. Accuracy (aka Fast & Furious)

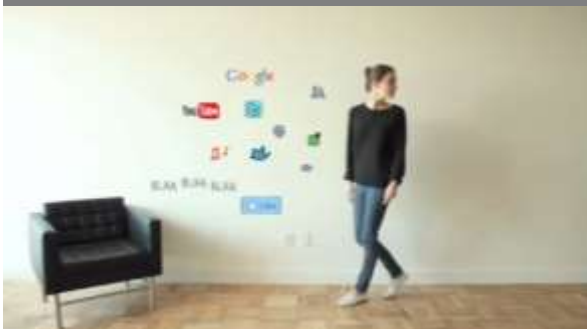
“

*The Associated Press quoted a fake Vin Diesel Instagram account in an obit for actor Paul Walker:*

In a Dec. 1 obituary for Paul Walker, The Associated Press reported erroneously that Walker's "Fast & Furious" co-star Vin Diesel reacted to Walker's death in a message on Instagram. The account that was quoted is a fake and does not represent Diesel, said his publicist. Diesel has since posted a message on his Facebook page, verified by the publicist, honoring Walker "as the brother you were, on and off screen."

### DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES

## Information overload



Digital Junkie.mp4

DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES

# Authenticity



- Longoriaball.mp4

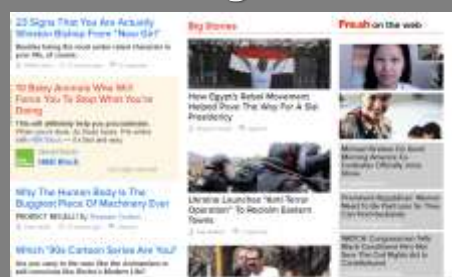
DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES

# Authenticity



DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES

# Blurring of lines



Find the journalism neighborhood on BuzzFeed



**DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES**

## Confirmation bias

Created by TechClad. Source: Google Quotes.

**DIGITAL AGE CHALLENGES**

## Confirmation bias

Eli Pariser  
Social Media as Petri Dish  
"The Filter Bubble"

## How to *pop* the bubble: Search "incognito"

**Open an incognito window**

1. Click the Chrome menu on the browser toolbar.
2. Select **New incognito window**.
3. A new window will open with the incognito icon in the corner. You can continue browsing as normal in the other windows.

You can also use the keyboard shortcuts **Ctrl+Shift+N** (Windows, Linux, and Chrome OS) and **⌘-Shift+N** (Mac) to open an incognito window.

**Windows & users:** To switch between windows, click the window switcher on the top right corner.

## But active searches are safer than passive newsfeeds, right?

## How do we know what to trust?

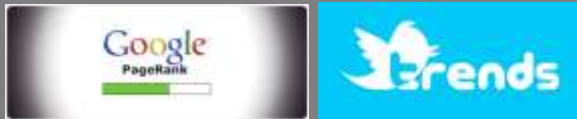
The screenshot shows the website for martinlutherking.org. At the top, there is a search bar and the URL. Below that, a banner reads "Join MLK Discussion Forum Hosted by Stormfront". To the left, there is a portrait of Martin Luther King Jr. and a list of links under the heading "Historical Writings". The links include "Truth About King", "The King Problem", "The King Hoax", "Civil Rights Library", "History of Racism and Terror", "Jews, Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Movement", and "Suspended Books".

## How do we know what to trust?

The screenshot shows the website for Stormfront. At the top, there is a banner that reads "Join MLK Discussion Forum Hosted by Stormfront". Below the banner, there is a logo for Stormfront and a navigation menu. The main content area features a link to "Join MLK Discussion Forum Hosted by Stormfront" and a description of the forum's purpose.

### Key Lesson

## Rank ≠ Reliability



## The wisdom of crowds

### THE POWER OF CROWDSOURCING



How does it work?  
 The crowd contributes "work, money, knowledge and/or experience" in return for "social recognition, self-esteem or the development of individual skills."

Watch for tags, warnings, and captions . . .

The article does not cite any references or sources. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

The neutrality of this article is disputed. Please do not remove the disputed tags unless the dispute is resolved on the talk page. (January 2005)

This article documents a current event. Information may change rapidly as the event progresses.

The article's factual accuracy is disputed. Please see the relevant discussion on the talk page. (January 2009)

This article is about a person who has recently died. Some information, such as that pertaining to the circumstances of the person's death and surrounding events, may change as more facts become known.

This article does not cite any references or sources. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

. . . which can help you spot problems in articles.

### Due diligence

Transparency, Wikipedia style

### How do we begin to navigate the online maze?

**V**erification  
**I**ndependence  
**A**ccountability

### Evaluating websites: **VIA**

- Articles provide evidence, reliable sources and transparency.
- Dates for page creation and content updates are provided.
- Links are working (don't lead to dead/outdated pages).
- Information on the page is not out of date.

## Evaluating websites: **V<sub>IA</sub>**

- Information is independent and verifiable.
- Multiple sources are cited, ideally with a variety of viewpoints.
- Links out to reputable, independent or authoritative sites.
- News and opinion are clearly labeled.



## Evaluating websites: **v<sub>IA</sub>**

- The person/organization providing information is **INDEPENDENT**, informed and knowledgeable.
- By virtue of experience, data collection, observation, training, credentials or access, the website's publishers know what they are talking about.



## Evaluating websites: **v<sub>IA</sub>**

- "About Us" is easily found, and with robust information about funding, ownership, contact numbers for corrections, etc.
- If not, do a search at [whois.com](http://whois.com) to find the site's owner.



## Look at the "About Us" page



### What's FAIR?

FAIR, the national media watch group, has been offering well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship since 1986. We work to invigorate the First Amendment by advocating for greater diversity in the press and by scrutinizing media practices that marginalize public interest, minority and dissenting viewpoints. As an anti-censorship organization, we expose neglected news stories and defend working journalists when they are muzzled. As a progressive group, FAIR believes that structural reform is ultimately needed to break up the dominant media conglomerates, establish independent public broadcasting and promote strong non-profit sources of information.



Can **anyone** register a URL at these top-level domains?

.com	.edu
.museum	.xxx
.net	.travel
.gov	.name
.info	.mil
.org	.uk
.us	.se

Can **anyone** register a URL at these top-level domains?

.com	.edu
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.gov	.name
.info	.mil
.org	.uk
.us	.se

## Accountability? It's good for your health



Californiabenefitexchange.com

## Accountability? It's good for your health



Coveredca.com

# How do you know? WAYS TO FIGURE OUT IF IT'S A HOAX



Check Snopes

# How do you know? EXPERTS HELP SEPARATE FACT FROM FICTION



# How do you know? JUST INCLUDE "HOAX" IN YOUR SEARCH



# Navigating social media



### Does this account really belong to Pope Francis?



### Beware Twitter bots!



Is this the real Pope? Five ways to spot a fake Twitter account

1. The **bigger** the story, the more fakes and hoaxes there will be.

2. Fake Twitter accounts often **sub** a "0" for a zero or a **1** for the "l" in the real name of a person or organization.

3. Beware tweets from the person making news themselves. Hoaxers target **news makers**.

4. Check the **blo** on that Twitter handle. Are there troubling typos or poor grammar?

5. If a public personality's account doesn't have Twitter's official "**checkmark**," be extra-cautious.

## Information forensics checklist

- ✓ Bio
- ✓ Numbers  
(tweets, followers, retweets)
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Evidence (i.e. photos)
- ✓ Timing

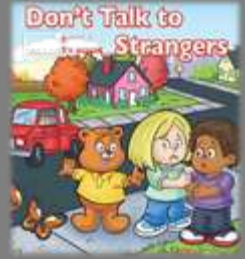


Patrick Meier, PhD

Tweet to verify:  
will they tweet back evidence?

## Social media do's and don'ts

- Don't trust strangers (especially those with candy)
- Look for corroboration
- Build a network of reliable sources, based on their history



**YOU**

can harness the power of reliable information and defeat the Goblin of Disinformation



"With great power comes great responsibility."

— UNCLE BEN PARKER

Don't let the speed of information flow dictate your pace

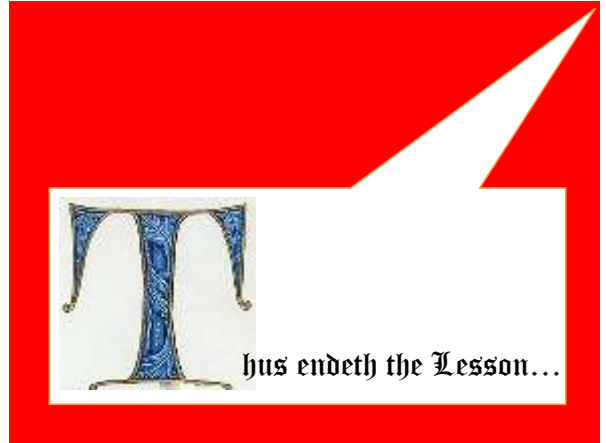
Pause in a quiet jeddy and reflect





## The **big** lessons

- ✓ Anonymity weakens authenticity
- ✓ Rank does not equal reliability
- ✓ Popularity does not equal reliability
- ✓ **VIA** and **IMVAIN** help you spot hoaxes
- ✓ Think critically at your own pace.  
The rush to judgment is a weakness of social media.



## Social Media: Dancing on Old Media's Grave?

