Agenda

• Welcome and Introduction
• The problem & why it’s important
• Helpful tools
• Followup
Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has encouraged informed participation in government. We strive to increase understanding of public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League works to register and provide voters with election information through voter guides, candidate forums and debates. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. The League is an activist, grassroots organization whose members believe that voters should play a critical role in their democracy.

Membership is open to anyone 16 years of age or older.
Infodemic

“We’re not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous.”

--Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
World Health Organization Director-General
Munich Security Conference, February 15, 2020
Inoculation

“The spread of false and misleading news is a national public health emergency that threatens the foundation of a society built on shared knowledge and values... The real solution requires transformative change, the realization that every student in America needs to be inoculated with a dose of news literacy before they leave middle school.”

-- Howard Schneider
Executive Director, Center for News Literacy
Stony Brook University, December 13, 2018
What is fake news?

Intentional attempt to spread hoaxes or false information, for profit or influence.
What is Misinformation & Disinformation?

False information deliberately and often covertly spread, to influence public opinion or obscure the truth.
Why News Literacy?

It's on the internet, so it must be true!
Our Challenges

Challenge 1
Information overload

Challenge 2
Speed vs. accuracy

Challenge 3
The blurring of the lines

Challenge 4
Overcoming our own bias
The First Amendment Empowers YOU!
YOU are in charge of determining what’s reliable
News Literacy

Educate yourself and think critically to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports
Three Questions

1. Who’s behind the information?
2. What evidence?
3. What do other outlets say?
Standards of Quality Journalism

- Verification
- Sourcing
- Fairness
- Accountability and Transparency
- Context
Role of Traditional News Media in Public Health Crisis

• Uncover, inform/educate on the facts
• Convey critical government advisories and health information
• Track and influence policies
• Hold elected officials accountable
Fake News & Misinformation
**FIVE TYPES OF MISINFORMATION**

**SATIRE**
Uses humor or exaggeration to critique or mock a person, organization or policy.

**FALSE CONTEXT**
Takes an image, a quote or other piece of content and puts it into a new, false context to change its meaning.

**IMPOSTER CONTENT**
Falsely uses a well-known name, brand or logo to fool people into believing that it is authentic content.

**FABRICATED CONTENT**
Is entirely made up and is designed to deceive you into thinking that it’s real.

**MANIPULATED CONTENT**
Makes changes in original material in an effort to deceive or create a false context (for example, an image where something has been added or deleted using photo editing tools).
What Are Misinformers Trying to Achieve?

• Barrage the audience with falsehoods, repeatedly
• Fool/trick us
• Complicate the issue
• Create chaos and confusion
• Sow doubt

“I don’t care anymore.”
“Whatever.”
“I’m moving on.”
Social Media Facilitate Fake News & Misinformation

- >40% of visits to 65 fake news sites come via social media
- Fake news spreads 6x faster than real news
- Seniors over 65 shared nearly 7x as many articles from fake news domains as people aged 18-29
- About half the public say they’ve been exposed to at least some made-up news and information related to the coronavirus (Pew Research Center, March 2020)
Russia has been accused by the US of spreading conspiracy theories that coronavirus is a biological weapon created by the CIA, and now the UK has set up a unit to fight them.
Russian TV’s U.S. Conspiracy Claim
Citizen “Journalists” and Chinese Censorship

China Is Censoring Coronavirus Stories. These Citizens Are Fighting Back.

My purpose is to make sure that
Fighting Back

Tools to Differentiate Factual from Fake News
What are Tech Companies Doing?

Facebook, Google and Twitter are directing users searching for information about the outbreak to authoritative sources. Facebook has sought to ban posts, photos and videos that push harmful misinformation, including bogus claims of cures.
Facebook Flagging Fake Video

Wuhan woman says coronavirus patients cremated al...
Posted by China Declassified
Follow
59,961 Views
How to Tell: *Fact or Fake*

- **Pause** before sharing
- **Question** content always, especially info that appeals to fear, anger or partisan extremes on either side
- **Check** website address
  - Beware of .com extensions, e.g. .co, .ru, .cn
- **Read** beyond headline, to full story, before liking or sharing
- **Beware of** politically framed content
How to Tell: *Fact or Fake*

- **Research** whether other media outlets are reporting this
- **Pay attention** to people mentioned & quoted
- **Inspect** images and logos
- **Verify content and accounts** by checking sources, authors & identities
- **Read** “About Us” section
Examine Social Media Techniques

- Few posts, many followers
- Many followers, few likes & comments
- Following unusually high No. of accounts
Social Media Disinformation Techniques

- **Sock Puppet**: Fake accounts posing as people to influence, disrupt or push news
- **Troll**: Person posing as identity, or sock puppet
- **Troll Farm**: Group of trolls
- **Bot**: Software automating likes, shares & comments
- **Botnet**: Network of bots, often thousands
Digital Resources For Fact Checking

• PolitiFact.com - *Truth-O-Meter*: http://www.politifact.com

• Snopes.com: https://www.snopes.com/news

• FactCheck.org: https://www.factcheck.org


• Tin Eye reverse image checker: https://tineye.com/

• Media Bias/Fact Check News: https://mediabiasfactcheck.com
Trustworthy Sources for Coronavirus Info

- Johns Hopkins University & Medicine’s Coronavirus Resource Center - https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/
- Federation of American Scientists’ Coronavirus Project - https://fas.org/ncov/
- State & local health departments
Fake News/Misinformation

Video & Images

- Fake news can also come in the form of edited and manipulated clips and images
- Videos taken out of context
Live Fact Check

Instagram post from Jay-R Fernandez:

Whuan market China...the origin of corona virus

Grabe grabe...Ganito pa! market nila sa Whuan puro exotic foods binebenta dito, kya pla lumabas ang sakit na Corona Virus.. 😞 😞
Reverse Image Search

https://tineye.com

Search by image and find where that image appears online

Upload, paste or enter Image URL
Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
Miracle Cures?

Coronavirus: The fake health advice you should ignore

By Reality Check team
BBC News

8 March 2020

Reality Check
Bad Advice, Widely Circulated

Fact check on first claim (holding breath):

https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/taiwan-experts-self-check/?emci=cb049f03-d167-ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&emdi=c4ea6159-f467-ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&ceid=7981182
Did Lysol Anticipate COVID-19?

Look at the lysol bottle... human coronavirus on the label.

This virus outbreak is big drama. Media being used to create fear. Loosh. People running for vaz-zeenies to be "protected".

We must be wise. We must step back, think, let people who do the work to research get information out and listen to the data.

Reaction is our demise. Responding is wise.

Common toxic lysol kills the virus though GSE and Thieves Oil... healthy, natural items are even better.

DO NOT USE LYSOL. ITS A SERIOUS TOXICANT.

Time to think, people, and calm ourselves.
No!

These posts are among several instances in which the generic use of the term “coronavirus” has led to confusion, with people on social media erroneously conflating mentions of already known coronavirus strains with the new one.

The word “coronavirus” is not specific, and can apply to any virus in the coronavirus family. The name derives from the crown-like look of the viruses under a microscope.
Credits
League of Women Voters - Follow up

• Stay current on issues
• Share your views with elected officials
• Vote in EVERY ELECTION
• Join the League

• Find this presentation, other materials & schedule of potential additional webinars at: www.lwvv.org
New 2020 NY State Election Calendar

- Village elections postponed until April 28 presidential primary (absentee ballots due April 21)
- Congressional and district attorney primaries to be held June 23
- General election scheduled November 3
- Check www.VOTE411.org for updates
- Also: Fill out the 2020 Census
Find this presentation, other materials & schedule of potential additional webinars at: www.lwww.org