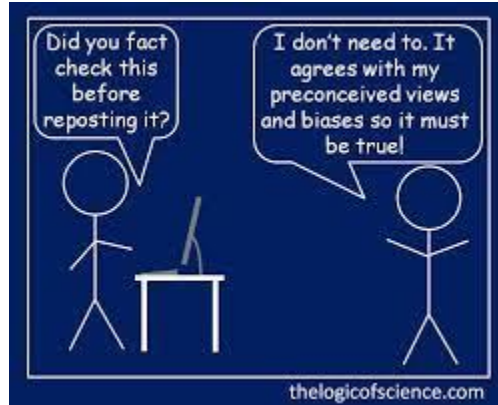


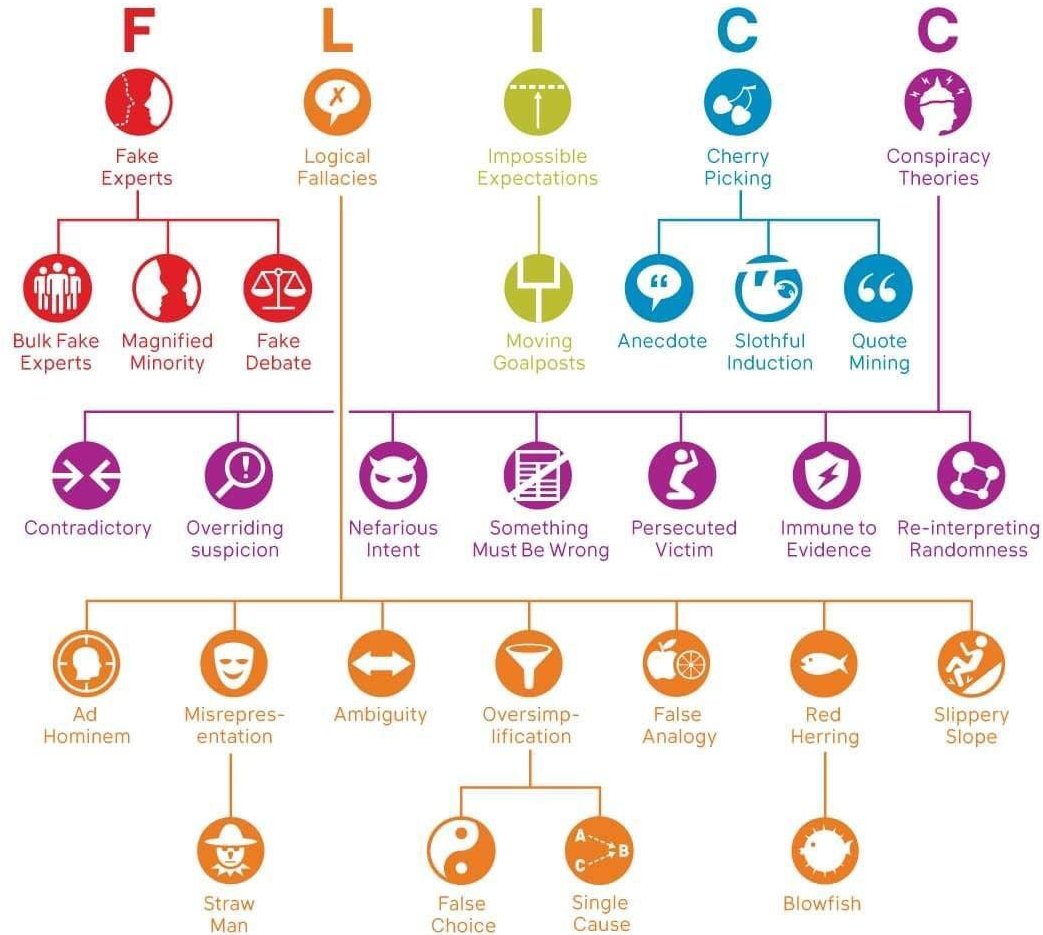
Why Fact Check?



How to pick something to fact check

- It is easiest to choose a **claim that is specific** and can be therefore given a mostly true or false rating
- **Incorrect interpretation of data:** For claims that are in some gray area, or a matter of drawing incorrect conclusions based on the evidence, these are more difficult to pin down, but can still be effective. Try to break down the claim into individual points that can still be refuted one by one, and if there are gray areas, give the claim a “somewhat” rating
- **Claims that are a matter of opinion:** when there is not reference to a specific, discrete factual matter to fact check, these are not likely the most effective statements to fact-check. Consider pitching your expert to comment on the subject or draft an op-ed instead of a fact check
- **Social media, public officials, news outlets,** these are all appropriate sources for claims to fact check.

Techniques of Science Denial



Characteristics of Pseudoscience



1. Is **UNFALSIFIABLE** (can't be proven wrong):
Makes vague or unobservable claims

2. Relies heavily on **ANECDOTES**, personal experiences, and testimonials

3. **CHERRY PICKS** confirming evidence while ignoring/minimizing disconfirming evidence

4. Uses **TECHNOBABBLE**: Words that sound scientific but don't make sense

5. Lacks **PLAUSIBLE MECHANISM**: No way to explain it based on existing knowledge

6. Is **UNCHANGING**: Doesn't self-correct or progress

7. Makes **EXTRAORDINARY/EXAGGERATED CLAIMS** with insufficient evidence

8. Professes **CERTAINTY**: Talks of "proof," with great confidence

9. Commits **LOGICAL FALLACIES**: Arguments contain errors in reasoning

10. Lacks **PEER REVIEW**: Goes directly to the public, avoiding scientific scrutiny

11. Claims there's a **CONSPIRACY** to suppress their ideas

What are the technical requirements?

Google has given guidance to fact checkers how to label and format their fact checks in order to be effectively indexed by the Google News site.

Newswise Editor-in-Chief Craig Jones will review the steps and required fields for this type of submission

The Elephant in the Room: Social Media and Politics



Consider the Source
And
Check Your Bias

Troll farms reached 140 million Americans a month on Facebook before 2020 election, internal report shows

“This is not normal. This is not healthy.”

by **Karen Hao**

September 16, 2021

In the run-up to the 2020 election, the most highly contested in US history, Facebook’s most popular pages for Christian and Black American content were being run by Eastern European troll farms. These pages were part of a larger network that collectively reached nearly half of all Americans, according to an internal company report, and achieved that reach not through user choice but primarily as a result of Facebook’s own platform design and engagement-hungry algorithm.

[Technology Review](#)

In 2019, Almost All of Facebook's Top Christian Pages Were Run By Foreign Troll Farms

BY TYLER HUCKABEE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021



1 9 of Facebook's top 20 pages for American Christians are run by Eastern European troll farms overseas, internal documents leaked to [MIT Technology Review](#) reveal. The data shows the vast spread of Facebook misinformation is largely powered by coordinated efforts among foreign professionals working together to spread provocative content in the U.S.

These groups, based largely in Kosovo and Macedonia, have been particularly successful when it comes to targeting American Christians. Though they split their efforts among multiple pages, they are mostly operated by the same groups. Collectively, their Christian Facebook pages reach about 75 million users a month — an audience 20 times the size of the next largest Christian Facebook page.

[Relevant Magazine](#)

Conservatives see scientific and nonscientific viewpoints as closer in legitimacy, study finds

by [Eric W. Dolan](#) — January 13, 2021 in [Political Psychology](#)



Political conservatives in the United States see scientific evidence and personal experience as closer in legitimacy than liberals, according to new research published in the journal *Political Psychology*. The findings provide evidence that conservatives and liberals tend to evaluate sources of knowledge differently, even in regard to non-political issues.

“Understanding how and why people differ in how they figure out what’s real and what’s not, and why there seems to be a divide there based on political ideology, is in my mind the major question of our time as far as social scientists are concerned,” said study author Randy B. Stein, an assistant professor of marketing at Cal Poly Pomona.

“One of the inspirations for the research was the tendency for conservative news outlets to want to represent ‘both sides’ of climate science (meaning, the actual science and the deniers) as equally legitimate. That’s one of the things that lead some social scientists to

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- ▶ Study explores cross-cultural differences in the mental representations of friendship among Russians and Canadians
- ▶ New neuroscience research suggests the cerebral cortex acts as the brain’s hourglass
- ▶ Depression and insecure attachment might explain the link between child abuse and poor relationships in adulthood

[PsyPost](#)

Technology

Misinformation on Facebook got six times more clicks than factual news during the 2020 election, study says

Right-leaning pages also produce more misinformation, the forthcoming study found.

 Listen to article 5 min



[WashPo](#)

Misinformation Influences Policy

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Transmission in the United States Before Versus After Relaxation of Statewide Social Distancing Measures ^{FREE}

Alexander C Tsai, Guy Harling, Zahra Reynolds, Rebecca F Gilbert, Mark J Siedner ✉

Clinical Infectious Diseases, Volume 73, Issue Supplement_2, 1 August 2021, Pages S120–S126, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa1502>

Published: 03 October 2020 **Article history** ▼

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Abstract

Background

Weeks after issuing social distancing orders to suppress severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) transmission and reduce growth in cases of severe coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), all US states and the District of Columbia partially or fully relaxed these measures.

Methods

We identified all statewide social distancing measures that were implemented and/or relaxed in the United States between 10 March and 15 July 2020, triangulating data from state government and third-party sources. Using segmented linear regression, we estimated the extent to which relaxation of social distancing affected epidemic control, as indicated by the time-varying, state-specific effective reproduction number (R_t).

Results

In the 8 weeks prior to relaxation, mean R_t declined by 0.012 units per day (95% confidence interval [CI], -.013 to -.012), and 46/51 jurisdictions achieved $R_t < 1.0$ by the date of relaxation. After relaxation of social distancing, R_t reversed course and began increasing by 0.007 units per day (95% CI, .006–.007), reaching a mean R_t of 1.16. Eight weeks later, the mean R_t was 1.16 and only 9/51 jurisdictions were maintaining an $R_t < 1.0$. Parallel models showed similar reversals in the growth of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Indicators often used to motivate relaxation at the time of relaxation (eg, test positivity rate <5%) predicted greater postrelaxation epidemic growth.

[Clinical Infectious Diseases,](#)
[the journal of the IDSA](#)

U.S.

Fauci Warns 'Don't Spike the Ball on the 5-Yard Line' as COVID Restrictions Eased

BY **EMILY CZACHOR** ON 3/14/21 AT 12:39 PM EDT



What's the ROI?

- High pageviews
- Citations in news coverage
- SEO
- Examples: [Craig]

In Conclusion

Peddlers of misinformation are flooding every possible platform with their content. Therefore we, as ethical, responsible communicators representing organizations with authority have a responsibility to create more content that pushes back against misinformation.

There is no scenario in which we could do “too much” fact checking and promotion of credible news.