Beyond CRAAP: Critical thinking in the age of fake news

Jennifer Thiessen, Colleen MacKinnon, Brock University
Amanda Pemberton, Halton Catholic District School Board

Who are we?

About Brock
Who is here?
Learning Outcomes

- Recognize the importance of critical thinking
- Understand the limitations of traditional checklist tools
- Identify strategies to help students evaluate information
- Recall Brock Library’s online learning content addressing critical thinking
Top 10 reasons you won’t believe fake news isn’t new

Ubiquity of media culture
Social media
Forms of media

Source: https://gph.is/2mtjfB
Fukushima Nuclear Flowers
by pleasegoogleShakerAamerpleasegoogleDavidKelly • a month ago

Not much more to say, this is what happens when flowers get nuclear birth defects
A fake photo of Emma González went viral on the far right, where Parkland teens are villains.
This is how you do Information Literacy in 2019. Don't just look at the source. Look at the source's sources. And if it's just a bunch of angry dudes on Twitter with "fewer followers than Agri has toes" consider moving on.
Have you ever fallen for a fake news story?
### Critical Evaluation

- Lesson Plans: Google Search Education
- Digital Literacy & Citizenship Classroom Curriculum (Common Sense Media)
- Critical Evaluation of Information (Kathy Shirock)

### The CRAAP Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Is it current? Does it matter?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has info been updated/revised?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Does info relate to your topic?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who is the intended audience? Is it biased?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate level?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Who is the author/publisher/source? What are the author’s credentials? Organization affiliations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact info available? Domain name (.edu, .gov)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Info supported by evidence? Reviewed/refereed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unbiased?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is info reliable? Can it be verified?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>What is the purpose? To sell, entertain, inform, persuade...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fact, info or propaganda?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The checklist approach...

“...promote[s] a mechanical and algorithmic way of evaluation that is at odds with the higher-level judgment and intuition that we presumably seek to cultivate as part of critical thinking.”

“Determining who’s behind information and whether it’s worthy of our trust is more complex than a true/false dichotomy.”


Checklist approach

- Impractical
- Internal
- Resists higher-level thinking
- Not contextual
The Information Literacy Framework

[Diagram showing the relationships between Information Literacy, Authority is Constructed & Contextual, Information Creation as Process, Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation, Searching as Strategic Exploration.]

https://libguides.volstate.edu/instruction/infolit

Critical Thinking Strategies
Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Question Authority *but not your Mother
Motivations

Is the information meant to evoke an emotional response?

Does it contribute to a particular worldview or ideology?

Was it meant to discredit someone else?
Searching as Strategic Exploration
Confirmation Bias

http://chainsawsuit.com/comic/2014/09/16/on-research/

Research As Inquiry

http://kidskunst.info/40/01535-alice-in-wonderland-disney-rabbit-hole.htm

Lateral Reading

Traditional evaluation methods focus on the source at hand which can lead you to more fake and biased information.

*Instead*

Consult *other* sources and piece together information & commentary from across the web to get a better understanding of the site you’re investigating.

What useful investigative technique have you used in your classes to help students evaluate news information?
Investigative Techniques

➢ Site searches
➢ Account verification
➢ Page changes over time
➢ Identify original publication dates
➢ Look at # of shares & who’s sharing
➢ Look for cases of “astroturfing”
➢ Look up direct quotes
➢ Selective keyword searching
Online Resources

Using online tools & Websites, such as:

- WHOIS
- Snopes
- Wayback Machine
- FactsCan
- Google Books

What other tools are you aware of that can help readers evaluate the information they find online?
Welcome!

This is a tutorial that will increase your digital, media, and critical thinking skills. When you have completed the tutorial, you have the option of taking a quiz. Pass the quiz and you can add this workshop to your Experience Plus Co-Curricular Transcript.
Welcome!

This is a tutorial that will increase your digital, media, and critical thinking skills. When you have completed the tutorial, you have the option of taking a quiz. Pass the quiz and you can add this workshop to your Experience Plus Co-Curricular Transcript.

(To add this experience to your co-curricular transcript, first take a screenshot (or print and scan) of this page showing your successful completion of the workshop. Next, go to your student portal at my.brocku.ca. Under Applicant and Student Self Serve select Plus Programs, then Experience Plus and follow the instructions.)

The tutorial is made up of 3 modules. Use the options on the left to navigate through the tutorial. Questions? Need help? Contact Jennifer Thiessen.

Module 1: What is digital and media literacy?

What is media literacy? Digital literacy?

How is media consumed?

Key concepts

Module 2: Media literacy in the classroom

Why do we need media literacy education?

Media literacy education in Ontario

Approaches to teaching digital and media literacy

Module 3: Finding and evaluating digital and media literacy resources

Search strategies for finding resources

Critically evaluating curriculum resources
Why digital/media literacy?

Stanford study:

“...students have a lot of trouble discerning the credibility of online information. For example, 82 percent of middle schoolers couldn’t distinguish between an ad labeled “sponsored content” and a real news story on a website.”


Media literacy? Digital literacy? 21st century skills? Information

What do all these terms mean? Do they mean the same thing?

While there are many similarities among concepts like media literacy, digital literacy and others.

One report uses the terms digital and media literacy "to encompass the full range of cognitive competencies that includes the use of texts, tools and technologies; the skills of critical thinking, message composition and creativity; the ability to engage in reflection and ethical thinking; as well as teamwork and collaboration" (Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action).

Both digital and media literacy require the development of our critical thinking skills, but, as Mezi Rezaee argues, digital media are networked and interactive.

Digital literacy generally focuses on teaching youth to be critically engaged consumers of media, while enabling youth to participate in digital media in wise, safe and ethical ways (The Intersection of Media Smarts).

To review:

**Media Literacy** is the ability to access, analyze, critically evaluate and create messages in a variety of digital environments.

**Digital Literacy** builds on media literacy to focus on the following principles: developing the skills to use digital tools and technologies effectively; and understanding how to use digital tools and technologies to create, share and present information and knowledge to audiences.
Using Critical Thinking To Find Trustworthy Websites

Module examples

Some questions to think about

How does a controversial subject motivate students?

What key concepts of media literacy does Ms. Koch introduce?

How could Ms. Koch expand this lesson to address concepts of digital literacy?
Module examples

Why do we need media literacy education?

Jean Kilbourne, an author, speaker and filmmaker, speaks about the importance of media literacy education. We are exposed to and consume a barrage of messages.
Critically Evaluating Online Resources

In addition to using library resources and curated online collections, you and your students will likely be looking at the library resources and items in the collections above, the stuff you find on the internet has not been vetted for accuracy or quality. How do you know if you are finding credible, reliable, and unbiased information? It is important to be critical and skeptical when using information found on the internet. Start with these questions:

1. What am I looking at? What is this?
This is your first step. Asking yourself these types of questions will help you.

These days, this is actually pretty tricky. Almost everything is on the internet. You could be looking at a newsletter, an article in the New York Times, a report from the United Nations, or an eBook that you got to from the library website. You might be on a blog and they are telling you from a source. This lesson is focused on materials found using the 'open web' likely via Google or Yahoo. So, not links to other sites or another library tool.

2. What is the context of your inquiry?
Is a blog allowed? Is a tweet okay?

An information source's context—where it came from, its audience, format, and how it is used—help determine appropriateness.
What was most helpful?

...definitions of media, and digital literacy

...the information on how to think critically about sources and how to know the validity of what you are reading.

...the video clip that showed real interactions and teaching in the classroom. It was useful to see how the teacher went about media literacy in her classroom and the questions she asked students to check for their understanding...
97% rated their knowledge of media literacy as average or below average PRIOR to taking the tutorial.

71% rated their knowledge of media literacy as above average AFTER taking this tutorial
Fake News Workshop
#fakenews
A Workshop for Critical Thinkers

Learning Outcomes

After completing this workshop, you will know how to:

- Identify characteristics of fake news
- Understand how fake news can spread
- Recognize motivations behind fake news
- Apply critical thinking strategies in order to identify fake news
- Locate tools and resources to help identify fake news
You deserve the truth
A fake photo of Emma González went viral on the far right, where Parkland teens are villains.

Phillip Picardi
@pfpicardi

At left is @tyler_mitchell’s photo of @Emma4Change for the cover of @TeenVogue. At right is what so-called “Gun Rights Activists” have photoshopped it into.

#MarchForOurLives

Washington Post (March 26, 2018): A fake photo of Emma González went viral on the far right, where Parkland teens are villains
Reporting Timeline for Private Lynch Story
Activity: Identify the Motivations (Picture 2)

Hi Colleen, when you submit this form, the owner will be able to see your name and email address.

* Required

1. What was the motivation? *

- Evoke emotion
- Political polarization
- Contribute to conspiracy
- Discredit others
- Contribute to a particular world view

That’s right! The paper says it removed all women from the original photograph due to “reasons of modesty” and so that the highly devout Orthodox readers of the paper would not be offended. The paper has since been criticized for disrespecting the unity of the march.

Go back to thank you page

This content is created by the owner of the form. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner. Never give out your password.

Powered by Microsoft Forms Privacy and Cookies
Successes

- Positive feedback
- Meeting an expressed need from faculty
- Being used in courses
Future Directions

- Loss of content
- Ownership
- Currency
- Open access
- Making content appropriate for elementary/secondary students
Select Resources


Select Resources, cont’d


