

# Evaluating Information in the Post-truth Era (後真相時代的資訊辨識)

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# A Post-truth Era

- “Post-truth” is the 2016 International Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries

# Defining “Post-truth”

Oxford Dictionaries:

- Post-truth is the circumstance in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief

(訴諸情感及個人信念，較陳述客觀事實更能影響輿論的情況。)

- Information overload
- Misinformation and fake news spread around

# Rumor and Propaganda in History

- Neither false news, hidden advertising or hate speech were invented in our time.
- What is new is the scope and therefore the danger these forces represent.

# New Ecosystem of the Media and Information Environment

- Power shift: everyone is a prosumer
- Mobile phone: convenient for photo and video taking/ immediacy
- Social media & Instant Messaging: Affordances
  - Persistence: the durability of expression and content
  - Visibility
  - Connectivity
  - Spreadability/ sharable
  - Searchability
- Echo Chamber Effect (迴音室/同溫層效應)

- Advanced digital technologies
  - AI: with the help of bots (e.g., Twitter bots)
  - Click farms
  - Deepfake  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLYRb6VECbo>
  - Network propaganda (2016 US Presidential Election )
- Spin Doctor (政治化粧師)
  - Donald Trump: Alternative fact (語言偽術)

# Truth vs. Post-Truth

(by Clement So)

Truth	Post-Truth
Facts	Beliefs, emotions
Based on reality	Unrestrained construction of reality
Science as basis	Politics, vested interests
Objectivity as criteria	Subjectivity, biased
Accuracy	Mis-information, sensationalism

# Mindset (處理資訊的心態)

- The Crisis of Trust

- The spread of digital technology, creating vast data trails with the latent potential to contradict public statements
- Too much information, too many controversies
- Digital technologies facilitate spread of conspiracy theories
- An increasing skeptical citizenry
- Do not trust the government, journalists & professionals
- Everyone has their own truth-tellers
- Questions of where to look, what to focus on and who to trust are ones that we increasingly seek to answer for ourselves, without the help of intermediaries
- Charge of bias → not my perspective

- Value-driven Mindset

- Post-truth society: emotion > fact

Predisposition/ value takes over reality check

(立場先行；雄辯勝事實)

- Endorse like-minded peers' information (撐同溫層資訊)

- Criticize/attack opposing views

- Fox TV Station → criticizes → CNN

- 盲目拒絕相信一切有害自己的資訊；盲目相信接受有利自己的資訊

# **Evaluating Skills for News and Information**

# **1. News and Information Source**

- Real or Fake?

# The news sources

- Anonymous source?
- Government source?
- Reliable source?
  - From unfamiliar organization, check their “about section to learn more
- A friend?
  - Ask for your friend’s source

# Understanding the background of the news organization

- Elite newspapers
- Popular newspapers
- Internet newspapers
- Free newspapers
- TV stations
- Radio stations
- Blogs
- Political stand
- Marketing approach

# Select good news media

- What is a good news media organization?
  - Play the role of public sphere and help to formulate public opinion
  - Implement the social functions of news media
  - Professional production and presentation
- with taste (專業及有品味的表達方式)
  - Truth, objectivity, fair and justice, not sensational, good taste

# Comparing different information sources

- Traditional newspaper
- TV & radio
- Online media (網媒)
- Citizen journalism (公民新聞)
- Bloggers (博客)
- Social media and apps (最多假消息?)
- Others

## 2. Sharing

- What is the source?
- If it is marked as “fact checked,” is there any supporting evidence?
- If it is stated as “reported by news media” (新聞有報), any news link? You should check the official news site.



有線新聞 i-Cable News

10分鐘 · 地球



### 【有線新聞聲明】

本台發現，有人在社交媒體，擅自使用有線新聞昨晚在警察總部外的直播畫面，自行配上旁白，使人誤以為是本台的報道。有線新聞對這種蓄意誤導公眾的侵權行為，保留一切追究權利。

- If there is a link provided, check the link. The information may come from a content farm or unknown website.

# Hyping

- # 全球流感告急 港病例增一倍

## 感冒攻心

### 男童猝亡

**感冒菌入侵人體器官併發症**

病名	可能原因	併發症
肺炎	感冒後，病菌侵入肺部	咳嗽、氣喘、發燒、痰多
中耳炎	感冒後，病菌侵入中耳	耳痛、耳鳴、聽力下降
喉嚨炎	感冒後，病菌侵入咽喉	喉痛、聲音嘶啞、吞嚥困難
扁桃腺炎	感冒後，病菌侵入扁桃腺	喉痛、發燒、頸部腫大
心臟病	感冒後，病菌侵入心臟	胸痛、心悸、呼吸困難
腦膜炎	感冒後，病菌侵入腦膜	頭痛、發燒、嘔吐、意識模糊
關節炎	感冒後，病菌侵入關節	關節疼痛、紅腫、活動受限
皮膚炎	感冒後，病菌侵入皮膚	皮膚瘙癢、紅腫、起疹子

# Comparing the news angles; Separating opinions from facts

- How the story was told in different ways



# Who's Point of View

- What is the argument? What is the evidence?

# The public opinion poll

## Who conducts the poll?

- Government
- Media
- Interest groups/  
pressure groups
- Business organizations
- Academics
- Research centers

## How to evaluate it?

- The name of the sponsor/ the name of the researcher
- Purpose of the study
- Dates of fieldwork
- Universe or population to which the results of the survey are projected
- Method by which the sample was selected
- Sample size
- Response rate of the survey
- Precision of the findings; estimates of sampling error

## **4. Seeing is not Believing**

- Easy to change a photo

- French cave rescue years ago, not Thailand cave rescue

# Verifying the photos

Online tools that help to verify the authenticity of a photo:

- TinEye

<https://www.tineye.com/>

- Google Search by Image

<https://www.google.com/intl/es419/insidesearch/features/images/searchbyimage.html>

- How to Use Google Reverse Image Search to Fact Check Images

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5e9wTdAulA>

# Live broadcasting

- Live broadcasting on TV and websites

# Tips for spotting false news (by Facebook)

- Be skeptical of headlines
- Look closely at the URL
- Investigate the source
- Watch for unusual formatting
- Consider the photos
- Inspect the dates
- Check the evidence
- Look at other reports
- Is the story a joke?
- Some stories are intentionally false

# The Importance of Fact Check

- 「請廣傳」、「一手料」、已 fact Checked
- 偷圖作故、舊新聞
- 求驗傳媒

# Fact Check Tips

## 眾新聞 訪問 求驗傳媒

- 第一，把內文、人名、關鍵字在各平台搜查一下，包括 **Google**、**Facebook** 及 **百度** 等，在關鍵字前後加上「”」，並善用以圖片搜索（**reverse image search**）、限制搜索日期等功能，都會有助找到線索。
- 第二，如果消息是傳媒報道，但資料來源是「網民」或「消息指」，便要尋找最初的資料來源，包括該資訊是來自哪些群組。有時有關的傳聞可能已經澄清了，只是傳媒或「手轉動」的網民沒有跟上。
- 第三，如果新聞有引用資料來源，便會去相關的資料來源。如不是本地新聞，大家應該找一下原文，以避免本地傳媒錯誤翻譯的情況。

# **Mindsets and Information Processing**

# Why you think you're right, even when you're wrong?

Soldier mindset VS Scout mindset  
(TED Talk)



- Combat Soldier:
  - Regardless of your time and place
  - Your adrenaline is elevated
  - Your actions stem from your deeply ingrained reflexes
  - Reflexes that are rooted in a need to protect yourself and your side, and to defeat the enemy

- Scout:
  - Your job is not to attack or defend
  - It is to understand
  - You are the one going out, mapping the terrain, identifying potential obstacles
  - Wants to know what is really out there as accurately as possible

# Motivated Reasoning: Combat Soldier Mindset

- A phenomenon in which our unconscious motivations, desires and fears shape the way we interpret information.
- Some pieces of information feel like our allies
  - we want them to win; we want to defend them
- Other information are the enemy
  - We want to shoot them down

# Scout Mindset

- The drive not to make one idea win and another lose
- Attempt to see the facts and evidence as objectively as you can
- To see what is there as honestly and accurately as you can even if it is not pretty, convenient or pleasant
- To cut through one's own prejudices, biases and motivations
- They are less likely to say that someone who changes his mind seems weak
- Their self-worth as a person isn't tied to how right or wrong they are about any particular topic

# If we really want to improve our judgment as individual ...

## To use scout mindset

- To learn how to feel proud instead of ashamed when we notice we might have been wrong about something
- To learn how to feel intrigued instead of defensive when we encounter some information that contradicts our beliefs
- What do you most yearn for?
  - To defend your own beliefs or to see the world as clearly as you possibly can?

# **Guiding the Students**

# 1. Understanding How Misinformation Spreads

- The impact of the technologies
- Social media & Apps
- Lack of Fact check
- The impact of Misinformation

## 2. Nurturing Three Thinking Skills

- Critical Thinking Skill
  - Fact check
- Reflective Thinking Skill
  - Understand the pre-disposition of oneself
  - Adopt the correct mindset for information processing, be open-minded
  - Be aware of the consequence of sharing
  - Avoid echo chamber effect
- Positive Thinking Skill
  - Passion & compassion
  - Public good

# 3. Value Education

- Value education can support information interpretation
- The right judgment

## 4. Doing Exercise

- How social media shape our relationship to and understanding of breaking news events?
  - How do we know if information shared on social media is credible?
  - What is the relationship between social media and the practice of quality journalism.
- Find out cases of fake news
  - Evaluate the cases
  - Discuss the impact of the fake news

# Thank You

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