



## Combating Your Own Media Biases and Opinions

Beyond identifying fake news on media platforms, it is important to recognize that your own biases<sup>1</sup> and opinions can influence your response to reliable information as well as to material whose authenticity<sup>2</sup> is questionable.

### 1. Be aware of your own political biases when trying to spot fake news

Imagine a military conflict erupts between two countries in Europe. A person from one of those countries might find themselves engaging<sup>3</sup> only in media that supports their own viewpoint. Even someone who is well educated may find their news consumption is one-sided, and thus they may fail to understand the full scope<sup>4</sup> of the conflict.

Every person has biases, from the political parties and causes they support, to preferences over which news sources and media outlets they favor. Recognizing their own biases can help you to effectively spot fake news.

### 2. Know that even the most reputable news organizations have biases and commit errors

For example in the US, Fox News is conservative, whereas MSNBC is liberal. Every media source has some bias, but this doesn't mean they are reporting fake news. Even Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists who break big stories that accurately inform the world about important events and issues have some biases. While these beliefs make them more susceptible<sup>5</sup> to occasional errors and create blind spots in their perception of a story, it doesn't rise to the level of fake news, which is created with the intent to deceive<sup>6</sup> by using misinformation or downright lies.

The key is how quickly a media outlet responds when a report is erroneous<sup>7</sup> and the steps it takes to set the record straight. You should be aware that even though reputable news organizations occasionally make mistakes, they are still trustworthy. Major fake news incidents like the faked Hitler diaries or the series of made-up articles by German journalist Claas Rotatius where all debunked and reappraised<sup>8</sup> by the magazine that published them first: The Spiegel. A news organization that fails to acknowledge and correct its mistakes will cause all of its reporting to come into question.

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<sup>1</sup> a strong feeling in favour of or against one group of people, or one side in an argument, often not based on fair judgement

<sup>2</sup> the quality of being true or what somebody claims it is

<sup>3</sup> to become involved with and try to understand something/somebody

<sup>4</sup> the range of things that a subject, an organization, an activity, etc. deals with

<sup>5</sup> very likely to be influenced, harmed or affected by something

<sup>6</sup> to make somebody believe something that is not true

<sup>7</sup> not correct; based on wrong information

<sup>8</sup> to think again about the value or nature of something/somebody to see if your opinion about it/them should be changed



### **3. Expand your digital horizons to include diverse voices and opinions**

In order to increase your media literacy, seek out reliable sources that express diverse opinions and represent varied perspectives on current events to educate yourself about different viewpoints on issues. Sometimes these sources aren't digital, but flesh-and-blood.

In the digital era, when our attention bounces from one screen to the next, it is imperative that we strive to connect with classmates, faculty, and others in real life. Face-to-face remains the most effective way to share new ideas and political perspectives. Being trained to seek out the full spectrum of facts and opinions on a matter makes you better prepared to identify and stop fake news.

adapted from : <https://onlinedegrees.und.edu/masters-cyber-security/tips-for-students-on-how-to-identify-fake-news/> (30.01.2022)