Understanding Misinformation Workshop Activity

Click on your group number to get started:

Group 1
Group 2
Group 3
Group 4
Social Media Misinformation Examples

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Group 1

Group members:

Lab Activity Instructions

- Make sure you are connected to the VPN or that you have enabled a proxy server. If you need help with this, see this page or ask for assistance.
- Share the examples of misinformation you identified ahead of today’s class.
- As a group, select one example to explore. Your example should be in the form of a social media post; if your group doesn’t have one at the ready please select one from the “Social Media Misinformation Examples” link above.
- As a group, complete the following activities and answer each numbered question in 1-3 bullet points or sentences:

  Which example did you choose?

Consider the social media post

Spend about 5-10 minutes on this section

1. What is your immediate, gut reaction to the post? Does it inspire any emotions?
2. Has the post been liked, shared, and/or commented on? If it includes hashtags, explore a few to get a sense of other posts it’s been applied to.
3. What can you find out about the account responsible for this post? What is the follower base like? What other kinds of things has this user posted?

Search for open web information

Spend about 15 minutes on this section

Start investigating the claims made in the social media post by doing some open web searching.

4. Find two web pages, articles, etc. that address the claims and link to them here. If possible, try to find one source that supports the claims and one source that does not support it:

For each resource you find, think like a fact-checker:

Get a sense of the site’s purpose: Is it a news site? Is it trying to sell you something? Is it affiliated with any other organizations? Can you determine how it is funded?

a. If it is a news site: Even if it is generally considered “legitimate” (New York Times, BBC, etc.) pay attention to how scientific information is reported. Are peer-reviewed studies cited? Who are the “experts” consulted? Is the work of other researchers, or any dissenting voices, taken into account?

Check the evidence: follow any links or citations mentioned to support the claims. Do they actually support the claims?

Yes

Read laterally! Try to find what other web resources have to say about this site:

Search for peer-reviewed articles

Spend about 15-20 minutes on this section

Use both Google Scholar and a database of your choosing from the Articles page on the Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences research guide for this activity. As you search in both, note any differences in the interface, quality of results, etc. [note: if you’re short on time by this point, you can search either Google Scholar or a database]

Brainstorm a search strategy. Keep your terms simple to start, and add more specific terms as you go if necessary. Enter the same terms in both Google Scholar and your chosen database. What terms did you use?
Locate two peer-reviewed studies that address your topic and paste the full citations here:

[HINT: Look back at the open web resources you found: do any refer to research studies? If so, try to find them!]

Do the studies you found support or refute the claims made in the original social media post?

Tips

How can you tell if something is peer reviewed?

- Many databases allow you to check a box for “peer reviewed” content, usually located to the left of a search results page.
- Do a web search for the journal title: can you find indication that it is a peer-reviewed journal?
- Does the article include an abstract outlining an original, research-based claim? Does it include an extensive bibliography?

Practice the art of skimming -- for this exercise, you will obviously not have time to read an entire peer-reviewed article. Instead:

- Read the abstract
- Locate a “findings” or “conclusions” section

Reflection Questions

- What are some reasons information can become distorted as it is communicated to different audiences and via different media platforms? Consider both inadvertent and deliberate reasons.
- Reflect on your experiences finding information in a social media network, using a search engine like Google, and in academic article databases. Consider:
  - In which is it generally easiest to find what you’re looking for?
  - How do you find information in each? When you enter search terms, what are those terms matching? (hashtags, full text, metadata, etc.)
  - In which tool (search engine or database) does your previous search behavior impact the results you see?
Lab Activity Instructions

- Make sure you are connected to the VPN or that you have enabled a proxy server. If you need help with this, see this page or ask for assistance.
- Share the examples of misinformation you identified ahead of today’s class.
- As a group, select one example to explore. Your example should be in the form of a social media post; if your group doesn’t have one at the ready please select one from the “Social Media Misinformation Examples” link above.
- As a group, complete the following activities and answer each numbered question in 1-3 bullet points or sentences:

Which example did you choose?

Consider the social media post

Spend about 5-10 minutes on this section

4. What is your immediate, gut reaction to the post? Does it inspire any emotions?
5. Has the post been liked, shared, and/or commented on? If it includes hashtags, explore a few to get a sense of other posts it’s been applied to.

6. What can you find out about the account responsible for this post? What is the follower base like? What other kinds of things has this user posted?

Search for open web information

Spend about 15 minutes on this section

Start investigating the claims made in the social media post by doing some open web searching.

5. Find two web pages, articles, etc. that address the claims and link to them here. If possible, try to find one source that supports the claims and one source that does not support it:

For each resource you find, think like a fact-checker:
Get a sense of the site’s purpose: Is it a news site? Is it trying to sell you something? Is it affiliated with any other organizations? Can you determine how it is funded?

b. If it is a news site: Even if it is generally considered “legitimate” (New York Times, BBC, etc.) pay attention to how scientific information is reported. Are peer-reviewed studies cited? Who are the “experts” consulted? Is the work of other researchers, or any dissenting voices, taken into account?

Check the evidence: follow any links or citations mentioned to support the claims. Do they actually support the claims?

Yes

Read laterally! Try to find what other web resources have to say about this site:

Search for peer-reviewed articles

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on this section*

Use both Google Scholar and a database of your choosing from the Articles page on the Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences research guide for this activity. As you search in both, note any differences in the interface, quality of results, etc. [note: if you’re short on time by this point, you can search either Google Scholar or a database]

Brainstorm a search strategy. Keep your terms simple to start, and add more specific terms as you go if necessary. Enter the same terms in both Google Scholar and your chosen database. What terms did you use?

Locate two peer-reviewed studies that address your topic and paste the full citations here: [HINT: Look back at the open web resources you found: do any refer to research studies? If so, try to find them!]

Do the studies you found support or refute the claims made in the original social media post?

Tips

*How can you tell if something is peer reviewed?*

- Many databases allow you to check a box for “peer reviewed” content, usually located to the left of a search results page.
- Do a web search for the journal title: can you find indication that it is a peer-reviewed journal?
Does the article include an abstract outlining an original, research-based claim? Does it include an extensive bibliography?

Practice the art of skimming -- for this exercise, you will obviously not have time to read an entire peer-reviewed article. Instead:

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Reflection Questions

- What are some reasons information can become distorted as it is communicated to different audiences and via different media platforms? Consider both inadvertent and deliberate reasons.
- Reflect on your experiences finding information in a social media network, using a search engine like Google, and in academic article databases. Consider:
  - In which is it generally easiest to find what you’re looking for?
  - How do you find information in each? When you enter search terms, what are those terms matching? (hashtags, full text, metadata, etc.)
  - In which tool (search engine or database) does your previous search behavior impact the results you see?

Group 3

Group members:

Lab Activity Instructions

- Make sure you are connected to the VPN or that you have enabled a proxy server. If you need help with this, see this page or ask for assistance.
- Share the examples of misinformation you identified ahead of today’s class.
- As a group, select one example to explore. Your example should be in the form of a social media post; if your group doesn’t have one at the ready please select one from the “Social Media Misinformation Examples” link above.
- As a group, complete the following activities and answer each numbered question in 1-3 bullet points or sentences:

Which example did you choose?
Consider the social media post

**Spend about 5-10 minutes on this section**

7. What is your immediate, gut reaction to the post? Does it inspire any emotions?
8. Has the post been liked, shared, and/or commented on? If it includes hashtags, explore a few to get a sense of other posts it's been applied to.

9. What can you find out about the account responsible for this post? What is the follower base like? What other kinds of things has this user posted?

**Search for open web information**

**Spend about 15 minutes on this section**

Start investigating the claims made in the social media post by doing some open web searching.

6. Find two web pages, articles, etc. that address the claims and link to them here. If possible, try to find one source that supports the claims and one source that does not support it:

For each resource you find, think like a fact-checker:

- Get a sense of the site’s purpose: Is it a news site? Is it trying to sell you something? Is it affiliated with any other organizations? Can you determine how it is funded?
  - If it is a news site: Even if it is generally considered “legitimate” (New York Times, BBC, etc.) pay attention to how scientific information is reported. Are peer-reviewed studies cited? Who are the “experts” consulted? Is the work of other researchers, or any dissenting voices, taken into account?

- Check the evidence: follow any links or citations mentioned to support the claims. Do they actually support the claims?
  - Yes

  Read laterally! Try to find what other web resources have to say about this site:

**Search for peer-reviewed articles**

**Spend about 15-20 minutes on this section**
Brainstorm a search strategy. Keep your terms simple to start, and add more specific terms as you go if necessary. Enter the same terms in both Google Scholar and your chosen database.

What terms did you use?

Locate two peer-reviewed studies that address your topic and paste the full citations here:

[HINT: Look back at the open web resources you found: do any refer to research studies? If so, try to find them!]

Do the studies you found support or refute the claims made in the original social media post?

Tips

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In which tool (search engine or database) does your previous search behavior impact the results you see?

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Group 4

Group members:

Lab Activity Instructions

- Make sure you are connected to the VPN or that you have enabled a proxy server. If you need help with this, see this page or ask for assistance.
- Share the examples of misinformation you identified ahead of today's class.
- As a group, select one example to explore. Your example should be in the form of a social media post; if your group doesn't have one at the ready please select one from the "Social Media Misinformation Examples" link above.
- As a group, complete the following activities and answer each numbered question in 1-3 bullet points or sentences:

Which example did you choose?

Consider the social media post

Spend about 5-10 minutes on this section

10. What is your immediate, gut reaction to the post? Does it inspire any emotions?
11. Has the post been liked, shared, and/or commented on? If it includes hashtags, explore a few to get a sense of other posts it's been applied to.

12. What can you find out about the account responsible for this post? What is the follower base like? What other kinds of things has this user posted?

Search for open web information

Spend about 15 minutes on this section

Start investigating the claims made in the social media post by doing some open web searching.
#DLFteach Volume 3: Lesson Plans for Literacy and Competency Driven Digital Scholarship Instruction
Exploring the Causes of Scientific Misinformation
Ashley Peterson and Alexandra Solodkaya

7. Find two web pages, articles, etc. that address the claims and link to them here. If possible, try to find one source that supports the claims and one source that does not support it:

For each resource you find, think like a fact-checker:

- Get a sense of the site’s purpose: Is it a news site? Is it trying to sell you something? Is it affiliated with any other organizations? Can you determine how it is funded?
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- Check the evidence: follow any links or citations mentioned to support the claims. Do they actually support the claims?
  - Yes

- Read laterally! Try to find what other web resources have to say about this site:

Search for peer-reviewed articles
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What terms did you use?

Locate two peer-reviewed studies that address your topic and paste the full citations here: [HINT: Look back at the open web resources you found: do any refer to research studies? If so, try to find them!]

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Social Media Misinformation Examples

Example 1: Galactic cosmic rays are the real climate change culprit
Example 2: Vaping is a harmless way to quit smoking
Example 3: 5G radiation
Exploring the Causes of Scientific Misinformation

Example 4: Texas storm power failure caused by renewable energy

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/B-_FthzpOG8/
#DLFteach Volume 3: Lesson Plans for Literacy and Competency Driven Digital Scholarship Instruction
Exploring the Causes of Scientific Misinformation
Ashley Peterson and Alexandra Solodkaya

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8pMuAeS0Lc
** In the interest of time you only need to watch the first 47 seconds of this video.