

# Evaluating facts, memes and current events: Knowing what to trust online



The Open  
University

## Objectives

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Assess the reliability of information.
- Apply a framework to assess the reliability of information.
- Use fact checking resources to verify information.



## Fact or fake news? #1

### Parrots removed from wildlife park after swearing at visitors

Five newly adopted parrots at a UK wildlife park have been temporarily removed from public view after they began swearing at visitors

Fact or fake?

**Fact!**



Ng, K. (2020) 'Parrots removed from wildlife park after swearing at visitors', *The Independent*, 29 September. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lincolnshire-wildlife-park-parrots-removed-swearing-visitors-b689494.html> (Accessed: 28 September 2021).

## Fact or fake news? #2

### Gorilla learns to knit

A gorilla has been discovered knitting at a national zoo, leading to new questions regarding ape intellects and their capability to grasp maths.



Fact or fake?

**Fake!**

Top Crochet Patterns (2016) *Gorilla Discovered Knitting at National Zoo*. Available at: <https://www.topcrochetpatterns.com/blog/gorilla-discovered-knitting-at-national-zoo> (Accessed: 20 December 2021).

Evon, D. (2019) *Did This Gorilla Learn How to Knit?* Available at: <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/gorilla-knitting/> (Accessed: 20 December 2021)

## Fact or fake news? #3

### Six chocolate bars a week could be good for the heart

Eating up to six bars of chocolate a week could reduce the risk of a potentially fatal heart condition by almost a quarter.



Fact or fake?

It's complicated...

Donnelly, L. (2017) 'Six chocolate bars a week could be good for the heart', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 May. Available at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A492617589/STND?u=tou&sid=bookmark-STND&xid=0dc0d417> (Accessed: 28 September 2021).

Mostofsky, E. *et al.* (2017) 'Chocolate intake and risk of clinically apparent atrial fibrillation: the Danish Diet, Cancer and Health study', *Heart*, 103(15), pp. 1163-1167. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/heartjnl-2016-310357>.

Image source: Pixabay (CC0 Creative Commons)

# Out of context images

**Logan Paul** @LoganPaul

amazon rainforest: how can i help? need advice on how i can actually make a change here; these pictures are breaking my heart... this is one of the most important ecosystems on earth. is there a fundraiser, a call to action, anything i can leverage my audience for on this?



7:38 AM · Aug 21, 2019

30K 931 Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)

**David Licauco** @davidlicauco

Only found out on twitter that Amazon rainforest, 'the earth's lungs' has been burning for 3 weeks?! Why is there no media coverage about it? HEARTBREAKING. #PrayforAmazonia 🙏



12:23 AM · Aug 22, 2019

3.1K 109 Share this Tweet

[Tweet your reply](#)

Evon, D. (2019) *Many of those viral Amazon rainforest fire photos are outdated or unrelated*. Available at: <https://www.snopes.com/news/2019/08/23/viral-amazon-fire-photos/> (Accessed: 28 September 2021).

## What about memes?



Image courtesy of Evening Standard



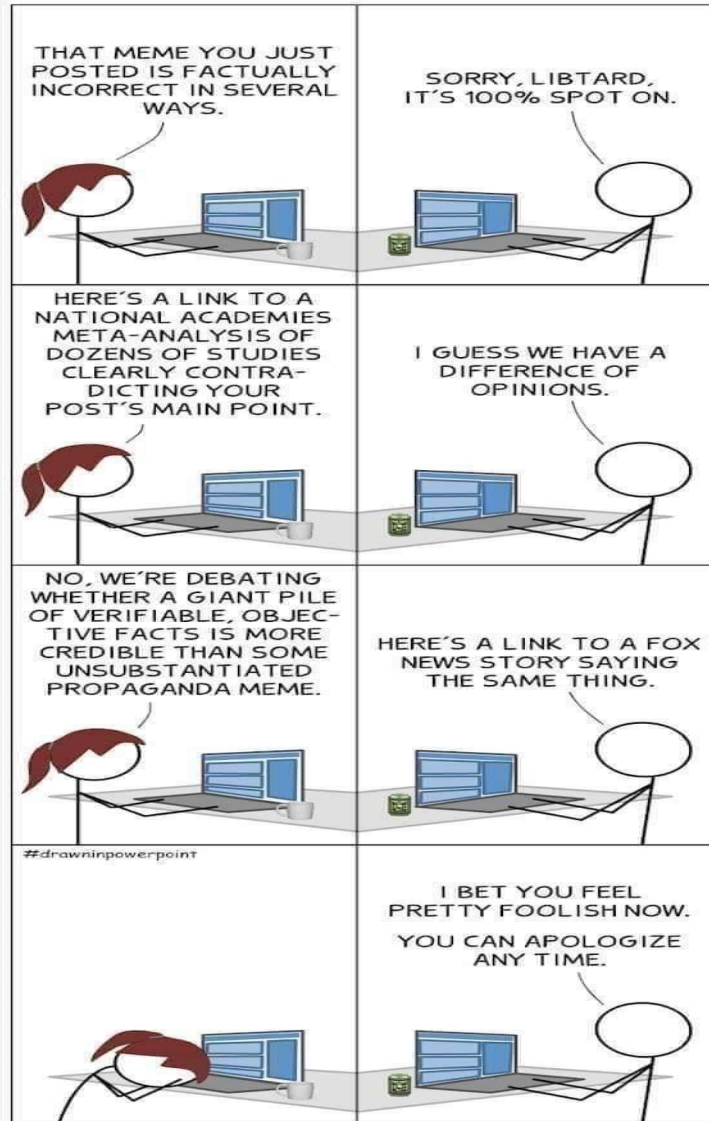
Image courtesy of Reuters

What are the images about? How are the people in the images presented?

Holton, K. (2015) 'In British election, a taste for the absurd brings some relief', *Reuters*, 15 April. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-election-gaffes-idUKKBN0N60HI20150415> (Accessed: 29 September 2021).

Murphy, J. (2014) 'Ed Miliband's battle with a bacon sandwich as he buys flowers for his wife at London market', *Evening Standard*, 21 May. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/ed-miliband-tucks-into-a-bacon-sandwich-on-a-morning-trip-to-buy-flowers-for-his-wife-9407561.html> (Accessed: 29 September 2021).

# Difference in opinion or fake information?





## Evaluation criteria

Use a framework to help you think critically

**Who?**

**Why?**

**When?**

or

**P**resentation

**R**elevance

**O**bjectivity

**M**ethod

**P**rovenance

**T**imeliness

## Evaluating Information that you find on the web

Use a simple framework like **WWW** to help you quickly evaluate information.

**Who**

is the author or owner of the information?  
What authority or expertise do they have in this area?

**Why**

was the information created?

**When**

was the information created or last updated?

## To share or not to share?

“Every time content you want to share makes you feel rage, laughter, ridicule, or even a heartwarming buzz, spend 30 seconds fact-checking. It will do you well.” (Caulfield, 2017, ch. 3)

Caulfield, M. (2017) *Web literacy for student fact-checkers*. Available at: <https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com/> (Accessed: 29 September 2021).

# It's not all fake news...

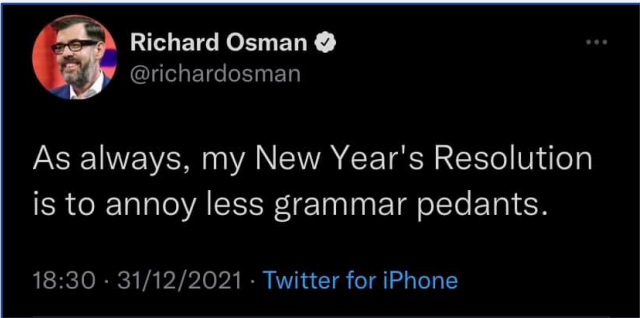


Image sources:  
<https://www.facebook.com/gemmacorrell>  
<https://www.facebook.com/clapforheroesuk>  
<https://twitter.com/richardosman>  
<https://twitter.com/SarahMillican75>

# Check the facts

## Fact checking websites

- [Full Fact](#) – independent fact checking charity
- [Snopes](#) – definitive fact check resource
- [BBC News Reality Check](#) – examines facts and claims behind a story to determine whether or not it is true
- [Channel 4 News FactCheck](#) – questions the latest news stories
- [NHS Behind the Headlines](#) – provides unbiased and evidence-based analysis of health stories that make the news

## Images

- [TinEye](#) – reverse image search
- [Google reverse image search](#)

## Other useful resources

- [The Open University Library Fake News Friday](#): series of short YouTube videos on the topic of fake news
- [Being Digital 'Trust Online' pathway](#): a collection of short online activities to help you evaluate online information.
- [Assessing the reliability of information for your assignment](#): a training session from the library. A recording is available with captions and a transcript.
- [Social media - fake news, filter bubbles and sharing wisely](#): Open University OpenLearn videos
- [Can you spot digital lies?](#): short video from BBC Ideas made in partnership with the Open University

# Thank you!



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