

Calling Bullshit

Spring 2017

“The amount of energy needed to refute bullshit is an order of magnitude bigger than to produce it.”

-Alberto Brandolini's Bullshit Asymmetry Principle

- What does the phrase “fake news” mean?
- When have you or someone you know fallen for or shared fake or inaccurate news of some kind?
- Why does it matter if we can't tell real news from fake news?



“I’m sorry, Jeannie, your answer was correct, but Kevin shouted his incorrect answer over yours, so he gets the points.”

The CRAAP Test

Currency: the timeliness of the information

Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs

Authority: the source of the information

Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content

Purpose: the reason the information exists

Evaluate websites using the CRAAP test:

- <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>
- <http://rythospital.com/>
- <http://www.wingmakers.com/>

Note: the CRAAP test was developed by librarians at California State University-Chico.

Assigned Readings

- George Orwell (1946) *Politics and the English Language*. *Horizon* 13(76), 1946.
- Podcast: Avoiding the Many Varieties of Bullshit 45 min.
- Optional (origins of the term “bullshit” in academia): Harry Frankfurt, On Bullshit, *Raritan Quarterly Review* 6(2), 1985.

Next Week: Spotting Bullshit

How do you spot bullshit in the wild?