


## Information: Truth or Fiction?

How do you know?  
For that matter, what is truth?


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## Why Do We Search for Information?

- Information is that which reduces uncertainty in our lives
  - One could say, then, that misinformation can be information (temporarily) because it can reduce uncertainty for someone at the time-even if it isn't correct
- Information gives us a deeper understanding of the world or changes our knowledge on some topic
  - Misinformation may give us a skewed view of the world
  - But remember, information to one person/culture may be misinformation to another
- We have an immediate need for information
  - A research paper, a project, etc.


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## Where do we go to find the Information we need?

- Our friends
- An expert
- A bookstore
  - Either in person or through the web
- The library
  - Again, either in person or through the web (e.g. UW Gateway)
- The Internet
  - Search Engines (Google)
  - Directories (Yahoo)

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## What is Truth? Knowledge?

- Truth to you may be fiction to a person in another class, another culture, another city, etc.
- Knowledge?
  - One definition could be:

**Justified  
True  
Belief**

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## Trust and Credibility

- You decide to go to the Web to get your information
- The Web consists of billions of Web pages
- These Web pages are written by several million individuals
  - Professional Web Designers
  - Researchers, doctors, scientists, lawyers and other professionals
  - High school students, elementary school students
  - General Public
- Who decides what gets published? Nobody.
  - If you have access to web server space and an IP address-you're on!
  - There are no controls for who publishes, what is published or the quality of the content put out on the Web

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## Information or Misinformation?

- The billions of pages that are out there are searched by several hundred million users

Question:

How does a user know which sites to believe?

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## What is Credibility?

- According to BJ Fogg and his research partners at Stanford, credibility is a perception based on 2 factors:
  - Trustworthiness and Expertise  
<http://www.webcredibility.org/>
- Highly credible web sites have high levels of *perceived* trustworthiness and expertise
- Different kinds of credibility:
  - Presumed
  - Reputed
  - Surface
  - Experienced

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## What do People think makes a web site credible?

- In 2001, a report\* was released by BJ Fogg and his colleagues from Stanford University
  - Web survey results were studied to identify what is people think makes them think a web site provides credible information
  - The results broke down into the following categories...

\*Fogg, BJ, et al. (2001). What makes Web sites credible? A report on a large quantitative study. Conference Proceedings of CHI 2001. NY, New York: The ACM Press.

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## Is anybody there or am I just talking to myself?

- Evidence that they are connecting to a real person or organization...
  - Site provides quick response to users (e.g. sending an email to confirm a transaction)
  - Physical address is listed
  - Phone number is listed
  - Email address is listed

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## Ease of Use and Show of Expertise

- Ease of Use
  - Ability to search archives (past content)
  - Arranged in a way that makes sense to you
  
- Evidence of Expertise
  - Site lists the authors credentials
  - Site lists citations and references

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## Trustworthiness, Currency...

- Evidence of trustworthiness in a web site
  - Linked to by a site you think is believable
  - States its policy on content
  - Represents an organization you respect
  
- Evidence of Currency
  - Site is frequently updated

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## No More Ads, PLEASE!

- Commercialism of the site is at a minimum
  - It is easy to distinguish ads from content
  - No automatic pop up windows with ads

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## Professional Feel

- No typographical errors
- Site is always available
- All the links work

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## Trust and Deceit on the Web

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**Dow Jones Industrial**

10	11	12	1	2	3
9,700	9,700	9,700	9,700	9,700	9,600

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Today's Market News

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**Dow Jones Industrial**

10	11	12	1	2	3
9,700	9,700	9,700	9,700	9,700	9,740

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Today's Market News

Other Fidelity Sites

- Employers
- Investment Professionals
- Using an Advisor
- International
- Inside Fidelity
- Careers

It doesn't take much to manipulate surface credibility

## Trust online

- Researchers (Rand) checked out 6 health Web sites and 12 sites dedicated to specific diseases.
- How frequently Web sites are complete and accurate:
  - ❖ Breast cancer 63%
  - ❖ Depression 44%
  - ❖ Obesity 37%
  - ❖ Childhood asthma 33%

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## Misunderstanding = Misinformation?

- One sees misinformation passed in many forms. Some might be:
  - Incorrect facts regarding historical information
    - But who writes history?
  - Inaccurate financial information related to “scams” and other shady business dealings
  - Gossip/Partial Facts
    - A fact starts out accurately and is slowly skewed each time it is repeated
  - Not enough depth to the coverage of the topic
  - Inaccurate associations based on lack of context (not understanding the environment) ....

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**Taliban mobiliseren steun in Afghanistan**

ISLAMABAD (AP) - Het Taliban regime van Afghanistan heeft vertegenwoordigers het land in gestuur om zich te verzekeren van de steun van lokale bestuurders, vooraf die van invloedrijke stamhoofden. Tijdens een bijeenkomst in de oostelijke provincie Khost hebben Taliban functionarissen gedreigd de huizen in brand te steken van iedereen die de voormalige koning Mohammed Zahir Shah steunt, zo meldde de radiostem van de Taliban donderdag.



Na het wekelijkse vrijdaggebed is er in Bagdadish tijd voor een gezamenlijk protest en steunbetuiging voor Bin Laden (foto AFP)

De diepere oorzaak van het ontstaan van terrorisme is

- 1 verschil tussen rijk en arm in de wereld
- de onrechtvaardigheid
- godsdienstwetten
- jaloezie ten opzichte van het westen
- anders

→ stem

Kies het mooiste en leukste gebouw

De Twentsche Courant Tukanta houdt zaterdag 20 oktober open dag. U bent van 10 tot 16 uur van harte welkom in ons hoofdkantoor aan de Gettersingel 41 / hoek Zuiderval in Enschede. Meer informatie kunt u ...

De Twentsche Courant Tukanta houdt zaterdag 20 oktober open dag. U bent van 10 tot 16 uur van harte welkom in ons hoofdkantoor aan de Gettersingel 41 / hoek Zuiderval in Enschede. Meer informatie kunt u ...

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This "last tourist photo of the World Trade Center" was an elaborate hoax.

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## Truth or Fiction?

### Rent-A-Stalker

<http://www.coincidedesign.com/>

### Aluminun Foil Deflector Beanie

<http://zapatopi.net/afdb.html>

### Pol Pot Exile

<http://www.tass.net/>

### Aids Facts

<http://147.129.1.10/library/research/AIDSFACTS.htm>

### Americans with No Abilities Act

<http://www.theonion.com/onion3324/noabilities.html>

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## Summary

- Information is NOT Democratic.
  - Not all equal
  - Some Information IS better than others (more credible)
- Take into consideration WHY you want the information when you go out to search for it
- Since there are no checks on general web content, if you REALLY need accuracy, double check it against other sources
- We have ways to evaluate sites using criteria covers all forms of credibility
  - But many of these can be exploited
- Misinformation spreads like wildfire, on and off the web
- We judge two things on sites:
  - The information provided
  - The person or organization represented

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