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## Reliable vs unreliable sources worksheet pdf

Photo Courtesy: NBC News/Wire /Getty Images In the era of “fake news” and mass misinformation, finding a reliable news source can prove tricky at times. In fact, new sources like Politico, a political journalism company, have created entire sub-categories dedicated to analyzing and warning of the dangers of fake news stories. Without a doubt, fake news can pose a serious threat to both journalism and democracy, especially when high-profile public figures fling the term around whenever an otherwise reliable news source doesn't support their agenda. With this in mind, we're taking a look at what makes a news source trustworthy — and assessing how Politico stacks up. Biased News vs. Fake News Sometimes it feels almost impossible to find a completely unbiased news source, especially when it comes to political coverage. That said, just because a news story leans to one side of the aisle, that doesn't necessarily invalidate the reliability of the entire story. So, what exactly is fake news then? According to Dictionary.com, it's “false news stories, often of a sensational nature, created to be widely shared or distributed for the purpose of generating revenue, or promoting or discrediting a public figure, political movement, company, etc.” Photo Courtesy: Mark Wilson/Getty Images Whether you're looking to check sources or particular claims, visiting reputable fact-checking sites, such as PolitiFact, can be a great way to stay informed. When sifting through news sources in particular, websites like Media Bias Fact Check can be helpful. The site boasts a slide scale of ratings for 3500+ media sources, which have been scored on reliability from “very low” to “very high.” Additionally, the site identifies if (and how far) each news source tends to lean when it comes to political ideology. However, it is important to keep in mind that a political slant doesn't necessarily undermine the truth. While almost all major news sources, on both sides of the aisle, could be accused of letting their slant seep in a bit from time to time, that doesn't immediately discredit the outlet altogether. How to Spot Fake News So when does a news source cross the line into fake news territory? Generally speaking, when a source or story prioritizes promoting a particular opinion, ideology or belief, instead of focusing on the reporting of evidence-backed facts, it's crossing that line. Photo Courtesy: picture alliance/Getty Images Breitbart News, for instance, is a prime example of a source that's become so radicalized that classifying it as “news” isn't accurate at all. With a consistent record of reporting stories based in conspiracy theories and speculation, Breitbart has earned a reputation for being unreliable and harmful. While some sources are fairly easy to identify as fake news, others can be a bit less obvious. That's why sites like Media Bias Fact Check use a set of criteria in order to generate reliability rankings. These considerations can also come in handy when you're judging a site or article on your own. Be on the lookout for the following. Wording Bias: Does the source have a tendency to use words that steer the reader's emotions and logic in the direction of a biased conclusion? Does the headline clearly and accurately convey what the story is about? Reliable Sourcing: Where does the source get the facts it reports? Are they backed up by well-sourced evidence? Perspective: Does the source tend to present both sides of every story in a well-rounded fashion — or merely the one that best backs a predetermined agenda? Political Leaning: How apparent is the source's collective political view in their content? Do their stories tend to be shaped in a way that champions a particular political party while demonizing the other? Politico's Background Another solid way to size up a source's credibility? Check into who the founders are and what the source's mission statement says. For example, Politico was founded in 2007 by John F. Harris and Jim VandeHei, both former Washington Post journalists. VandeHei left Politico in 2016 to co-found (and act as CEO of) another media group called Axios. Currently, Politico is overseen by editor-in-chief Matthew Kaminski. Photo Courtesy: Win McNamee/Getty Images Based in Virginia, Politico is a dominant political news source and distributes content via the Politico newspaper, magazines, online, over the radio and through podcasts. Much of its coverage revolves around Washington D.C.'s political activity, including the goings ons of Congress, the president and lobbyists. Politico also publishes a wide variety of op-eds, which tend to center around matters of national importance or well-sourced political analysis. According to the source's vision statement, “Politico strives to be the dominant source for politics and policy in power centers across every continent where access to reliable information, non-partisan journalism, and real-time tools creates, informs and engages a global citizenry.” How Reliable is Politico? So, what's the consensus on Politico? Media Bias Fact Check gave the popular source a “high credibility” rating, due to its reliable reporting coverage and clean fact-check record. Ad Fontes Media, an online static media bias chart, also placed Politico among the most reliable news resources based on its research and methodology. As far as bias goes, Politico does tend to lean slightly to the left, but not to the extent of other big-name outlets like MSNBC or CNN, making it a fairly balanced source of news. Photo Courtesy: Politico Magazine/Facebook Broadly speaking, a good way to determine the reliability of a news source's information is to first ask whether its content tends to center more on fact-based reporting or opinion-based analysis. Additionally, you should consider how transparent the source in question is about the difference between the two approaches. Politico, for example, openly admits to publishing both fact-based coverage and opinion pieces. Additionally, Politico clearly demarcates its opinion pieces, as opposed to lesser publications, which might print opinion-based articles as fact. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET Reliability is the degree to which a measurement instrument gives the same results each time that it is used, assuming that the underlying thing being measured does not change. If a measurement instrument provides similar results each time it is used (assuming that whatever is being measured stays the same over time), it is said to have high reliability.Good measurement instruments should have both high reliability and high accuracy.Four methods sociologists can use to assess reliability are the test-retest procedure, the alternate forms procedure, the split-halves procedure, and the internal consistency procedure. Imagine that you're trying to assess the reliability of a thermometer in your home. If the temperature in a room stays the same, a reliable thermometer will always give the same reading. A thermometer that lacks reliability would change even when the temperature does not. Note, however, that the thermometer does not have to be accurate in order to be reliable. It might always register three degrees too high, for example. Its degree of reliability has to do instead with the predictability of its relationship with whatever is being tested. In order to assess reliability, the thing being measured must be measured more than once. For example, if you wanted to measure the length of a sofa to make sure it would fit through a door, you might measure it twice. If you get an identical measurement twice, you can be confident you measured reliably. There are four procedures for assessing the reliability of a test. (Here, the term “test” refers to a group of statements on a questionnaire, an observer's quantitative or qualitative evaluation, or a combination of the two.) Here, the same test is given two or more times. For example, you might create a questionnaire with a set of ten statements to assess confidence. These ten statements are then given to a subject twice at two different times. If the respondent gives similar answers both times, you can assume the questions assessed the subject's answers reliably. One advantage of this method is that only one test needs to be developed for this procedure. However, there are a few downsides of the test-retest procedure. Events might occur between testing times that affect the respondents' answers; answers might change over time simply because people change and grow over time; and the subject might adjust to the test the second time around, think more deeply about the questions, and reevaluate their answers. For instance, in the example above, some respondents might have become more confident between the first and second testing session, which would make it more difficult to interpret the results of the test-retest procedure. In the alternate forms procedure (also called parallel forms reliability), two tests are given. For example, you might create two sets of five statements measuring confidence. Subjects would be asked to take each of the five-statement questionnaires. If the person gives similar answers for both tests, you can assume you measured the concept reliably. One advantage is that cueing will be less of a factor because the two tests are different. However, it's important to ensure that both alternate versions of the test are indeed measuring the same thing. In this procedure, a single test is given once. A grade is assigned to each half separately and grades are compared from each half. For example, you might have one set of ten statements on a questionnaire to assess confidence. Respondents take the test and the questions are then split into two sub-tests of five items each. If the score on the first half mirrors the score on the second half, you can presume that the test measured the concept reliably. On the plus side, history, maturation, and cueing aren't at play. However, scores can vary greatly depending on the way in which the test is divided into halves. Here, the same test is administered once, and the score is based upon average similarity of responses. For example, in a ten-statement questionnaire to measure confidence, each response can be seen as a one-statement sub-test. The similarity in responses to each of the ten statements is used to assess reliability. If the respondent doesn't answer all ten statements in a similar way, then one can assume that the test is not reliable. One way that researchers can assess internal consistency is by using statistical software to calculate Cronbach's alpha. With the internal consistency procedure, history, maturation, and cueing aren't a consideration. However, the number of statements in the test can affect the assessment of reliability when assessing it internally.



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