



Propaganda and news: Implications for the U.S. and abroad

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Credit: Sarah Fite & Kate Newton, Episcopal H.S, Alexandria, VA



Trumpaholic 🇺🇸
@TrumpaholicMAGA

 Follow

Justin Trudeau is Fidel Castro's son? Rumors floating about. They sure look alike & have the same Communist / Socialist ideas. #FidelCastro

5:10 PM - 27 Nov 2016



Perez Hilton ✓

13 hours ago



I have a hard time accepting how this is just or fair or democratic!!
<https://goo.gl/W84bMN>



Hillary Clinton Gets More Votes Than Any Candidate Ever

The former secretary of state now leads Trump's popular vote count by more than 2 percent.

YAHOO.COM

👍 296 💬 47 ➦ 83

■ Vocabulary

Misinformation:

Information that is incorrect or misleading, but not intentionally

Hoax: A fictional story designed to sound like the truth, may or may not be malicious in intent

News Satire AKA “fake news”: A story that is created to imitate, make fun of, or comment on a true news story.

Propaganda:

Information - often biased or misleading - used to promote a political cause or point of view.

Disinformation AKA

“fake news”:

Intentionally false or misleading information spread in a way to deceive target audiences

■ Propaganda

Definition: systematically-constructed messages designed to move mass audiences toward acceptance of attitudes, predispositions, and behaviors that will benefit a privileged group



Propaganda

Pre-modern:

Propagation of the faith

Narrow

understanding:

Normally linked to war & politics, where outcome is to “win”

Modern era:

WWI efforts to mobilize crowds

Broader

understanding:

Emerging & traditional media forms are readily vulnerable to propaganda.

Not necessarily fake

news: Appeals to values, known as “integration propaganda”

The Hallmarks of Traditional Journalism

Objectivity:

Limit bias

Practices:

Official Sources

Data & Facts

Balance

Predispositions:

Drama

Conflict

Novelty

Propagandists have developed approaches to meet these practices and predispositions

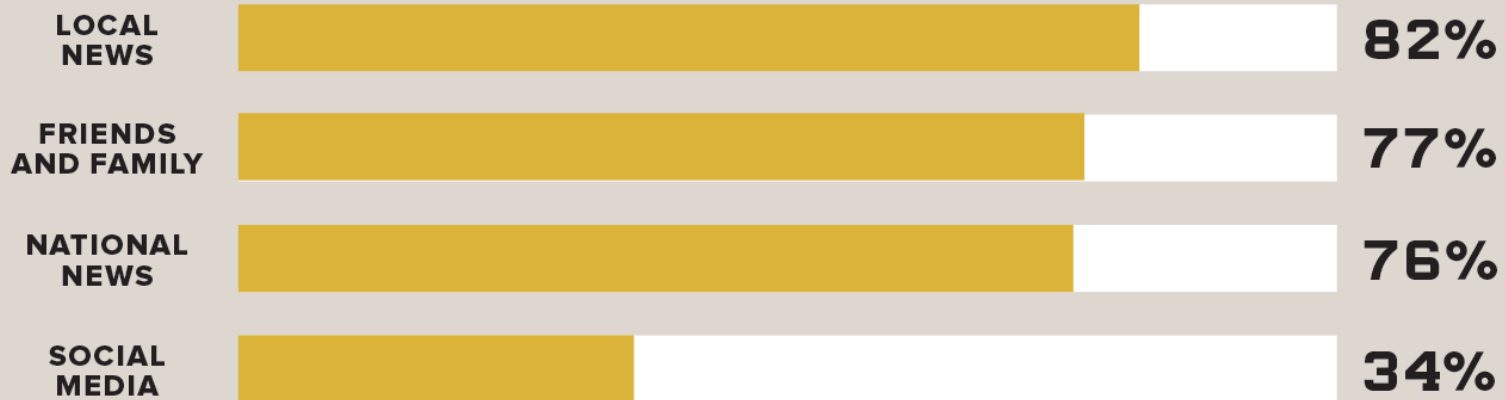


Timely information of some public interest that is shared and subject to a journalistic process of *verification*, and for which an *independent* individual or organization is directly *accountable*.

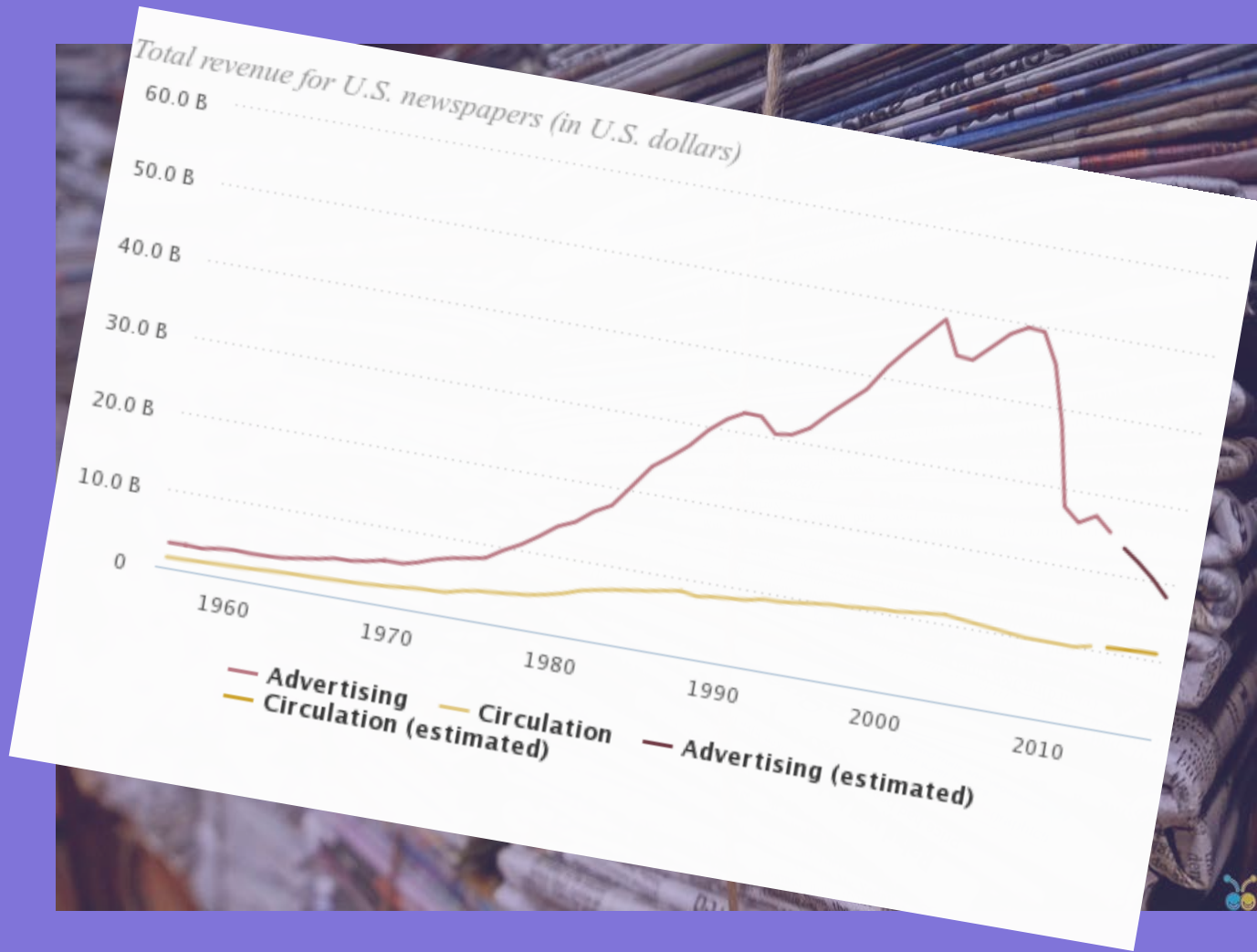
Steven Reiner. [‘Making Sense of the News: News Literacy Lessons for Digital Citizens.’](#) Coursera.org

Reputable Sources

Percentage of Americans who trust the information they get from ...



Declining Print Media



Key annual audience trends 2015 vs. 2014



Newspapers

↓ 7%

daily circulation



Cable TV

↑ 8%

combined average viewership
for prime-time news



Network TV

↑ 1%

evening news viewership

↓ 2%

morning news viewership



Local TV

↓ 5%

late night news viewership

↓ 2%

morning and early evening
viewership

Sources: Pew Research Center analysis of Nielsen Media Research, used under license; Pew Research Center analysis of Alliance for Audited Media data.
"State of the News Media 2015"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Rising Social Media

Total Facebook Engagements for Top 20 Election Stories



ENGAGEMENT REFERS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SHARES, REACTIONS, AND COMMENTS FOR A PIECE OF CONTENT ON FACEBOOK SOURCE: FACEBOOK DATA VIA BUZZSUMO



In the final three months of the US Presidential campaign, the top-performing fake election news stories on Facebook generated more engagement than the top stories from major news outlets.

Craig Silverman, BuzzFeed

“Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump
for President, Releases Statement”
(960,000, *Ending the Fed*)

“WikiLeaks CONFIRMS Hillary Sold Weapons to ISIS...
Then Drops Another BOMBHELL! Breaking News”
(789,000, *The Political Insider*)

8,711,000

“Just Read the Law: Hillary Is Disqualified
From Holding Any Federal Office”
(701,000, *Ending the Fed*)

“FBI Agent Suspected in Hillary Email
Leak Found Dead in Apparent Murder-

“Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Releases Statement”
(960,000, *Ending the Fed*)

“WikiLeaks CONFIRMS Hillary Sold Weapons to ISIS... Then Drops Another BOMBHELL! Breaking News”
(789,000, *The Political Insider*)

“IT’S OVER: Hillary’s ISIS Email Just Leaked & It’s Worse Than Anyone Could Have Imagined”
(754,000, *Ending the Fed*)

“Just Read the Law: Hillary Is Disqualified From Holding Any Federal Office”
(701,000, *Ending the Fed*)

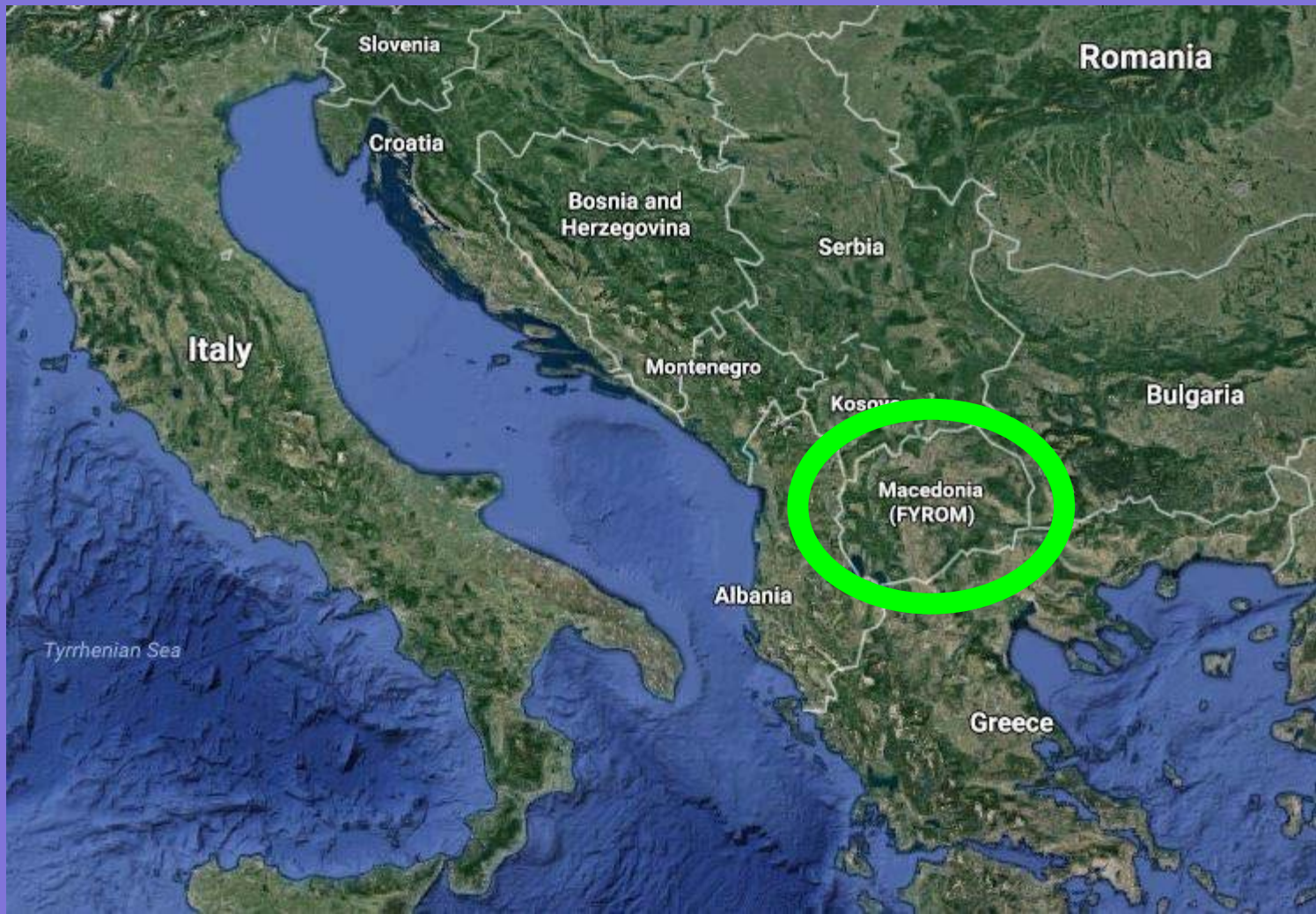
“FBI Agent Suspected in Hillary Email Looks Found Dead in Apparent Murder-”

7,367,000



Online Content Creators

Macedonia



“

At night I would make four or five posts to share the next day. When I woke up, I shared them. I went to drink coffee, came back home, found new articles, posted these articles on the website, and shared them. Then I went out with friends, came back home, found articles, and shared them to Facebook.

“Boris”

\$ 16,000

The monthly income from two pro-Trump fake news sites owned by
“Boris.”



Audience

Confirmation Bias



“The idea that we tend to accept information unquestionably when it reinforces some predisposition we have or some existing belief or attitude.”

-Brendan Nyhan,
American Political
Scientist and
Assistant
Professor,
Dartmouth

88%

of young adults age 18 and over say Facebook is their primary source for
news

82%

of middle-schoolers cannot distinguish between an ad labeled “sponsored content” and a real news story on a website

3 out of 4

middle-schoolers see no valid reason to distrust articles written by a biased source

75%

of high-schoolers cannot distinguish between a verified and an unverified
Facebook account

30%

of high-schoolers believe that a fake news site with graphics is more trustworthy than a legitimate news site with no graphics

Implications for U.S. and abroad

Weaponized propaganda

- Info wars not new – will continue
- Propaganda sophistication will improve
- Pressure to regulate FB, Google
- New models for U.S. journalism?
- Possibility of propaganda trigger of event
- Reality cynicism & authoritarianism