

Media, Fake News and Science/Scientists in the Post- Truth era

Hilde Van den Bulck

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What in the World? Flat-Earthers Gather at First Conference

By Stephanie Pappas, LiveScience Contributor | November 17, 2017 06:50pm ET

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‘NASA and Other Space Lies’ ‘Flat Earth with the Scientific Method’
‘Waking Up to Mainstream Science Lies’ ‘Testing the Globe’
‘Flat Earth & The Bible’ ‘Exposing Scientism’

Fourth Estate and Science in the Era of Truth

- Media = home of facts and truth
- journalism = fact checking, investigating truth
- Scientists = sources of facts and truth



Mainstream Media in the Post-Truth Era

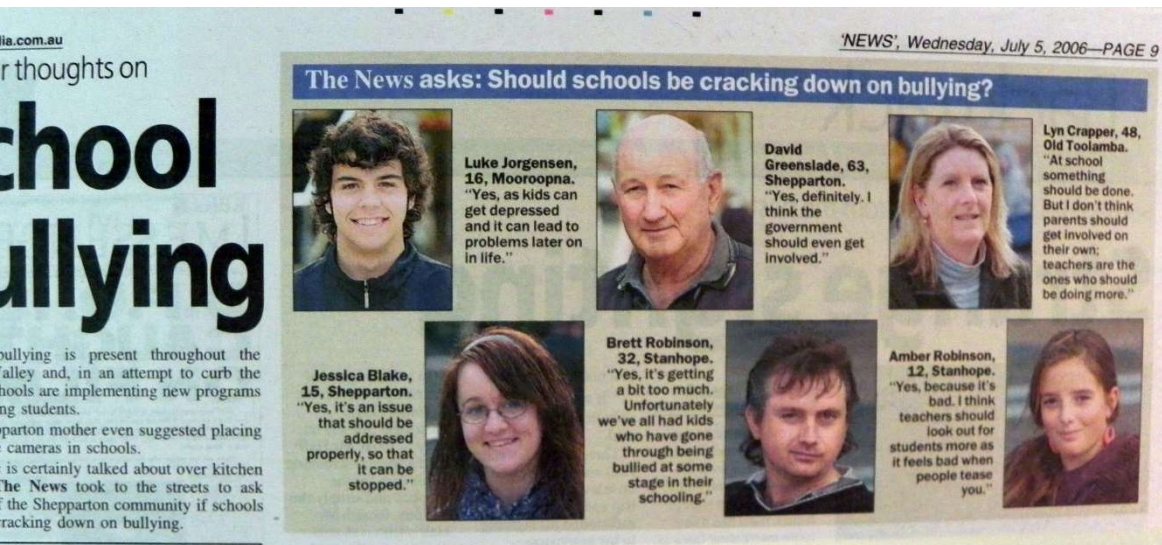
Mainstream media as *victims* of post-truth era



Three main reasons

Mainstream Media as 'Victim' I

- Long and progressive trend towards popularisation of
 - news
 - news sources



Mainstream Media as 'Victim' II

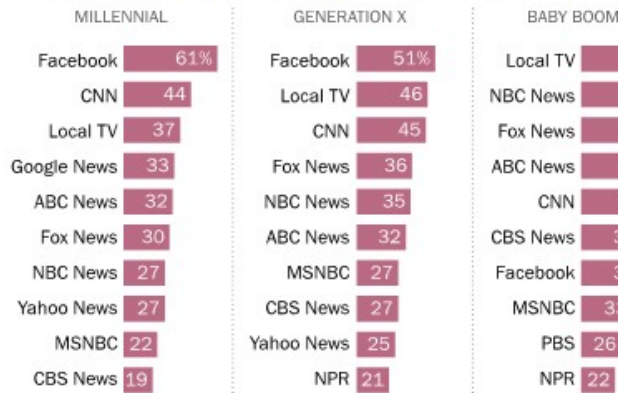
- Dissociation news production - distribution



- Unclear if news/fact comes from credible source

Among Millennials, Facebook Far Exceeds Any Other Source for Political News

% who got news about politics and government in the previous week



American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014. Q22. Based on online adults.

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HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

- CONSIDER THE SOURCE**
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.
- READ BEYOND**
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?
- CHECK THE AUTHOR**
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?
- SUPPORTING SOURCES**
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.
- CHECK THE DATE**
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.
- IS IT A JOKE?**
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.
- CHECK YOUR BIASES**
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.
- ASK THE EXPERTS**
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

Mainstream Media as 'Victim' III



- Populist politicians
- Mainstream/elite media
 - out of touch with 'common man'
 - 'fake media'
- Mainstream/elite sources
 - providing 'fake facts'

Sky News - Posts | 'This is fake news' - Nigel Farage responds...

Trending story found 6 months ago on www.facebook.com



'This is fake news' - Nigel Farage responds... he's a person of interest in the FBI's Russia [Source: www.facebook.com] [Comm

this is trending]

Share on Facebook

Share on Twitter

'Alternative' media, alternative 'truths'

Growing # alternative media
complicit in fostering the post-truth and anti-science climate



Thanks to
Technological/media developments
big financiers with political/disruptive agenda

'Alternative' Media, Alternative 'Truths'

- Promote conspiracies
- Refute science to 'scientism', redefine science to 'what the eye can see'



Who is to blame?

- Media?
 - Channel Post-Truth trend
 - but based in:
- Societal developments
 - Identity politics vs unemployment
 - Globalisation/multicultural society vs being left behind
 - People lose faith in traditional institutions
 - Conspiracies give new 'grip' on life
 - cf. Durkheim's anomy

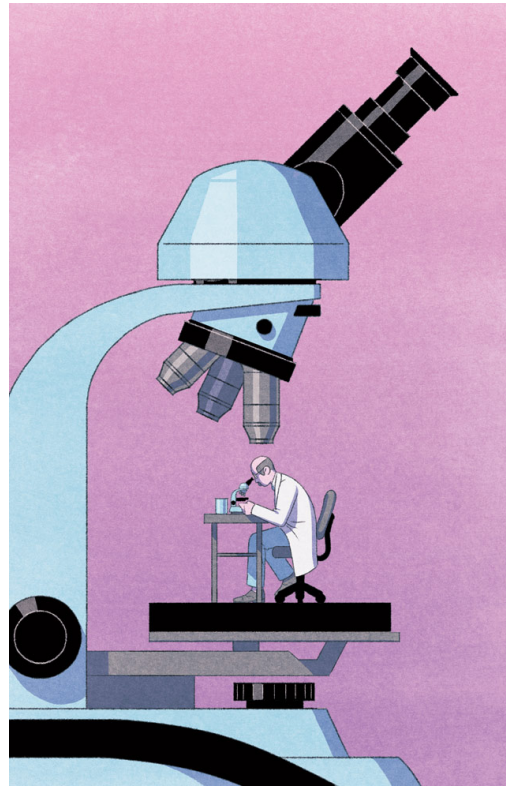


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TennesseeWatchman.com

Who is to solve it?

Scientists must battle fake news and abuse/dismissal of science



Scientists first must help solve 'bigger' societal problem