

**Resources for “How You can Fight Truth Decay”  
Sam Smith - July 31, 2024**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Primary Resources .....                        | 1 |
| Fact-Checking Services .....                   | 2 |
| Snopes.....                                    | 2 |
| RealClearPolitics – Possibly Compromised ..... | 4 |
| Media Bias Rating Services .....               | 4 |
| Ad Fontes Media .....                          | 4 |
| Media Bias / Fact Check.....                   | 4 |
| AllSides.....                                  | 5 |
| NewsGuard .....                                | 5 |
| Example Media Bias Chart of Ad Fontes.....     | 5 |

## Primary Resources

### **“Attack from Within: How Disinformation is Sabotaging America”**

Author: Barbara McQuade      Publication Date: Feb. 27, 2024

Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/Attack-Within-Disinformation-Sabotaging-America/dp/164421363X>

**“The Disinformation Age”** – 302 page downloadable PDF published by Cambridge University Press in October 2020, edited by W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingston. The work was sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, founded in 1923, a well-regarded social science organization, but I would have to say that the social sciences in general tend to be left leaning. I have not found an objective assessment that would indicate the degree of left-leaning exists in the field. However, I did find a “Right-wing Authoritarianism Scale” test that I have not yet reviewed: <https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/RWAS/>

**Pew Charitable Trusts** – These in general are great resources, well respected and comprehensive in coverage

<https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/562307147>

“Rating Information. rating. Great. This charity's score is 100%, earning it a Four-Star rating.”

The Word from Wiki: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Pew\\_Charitable\\_Trusts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pew_Charitable_Trusts)

Main website: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/about/history>

I ran into so many articles by or connected to Pew that I cannot recall what the most relevant would be.

Organization Promoting Quality of Publications: **Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_Access\\_Scholarly\\_Publishing\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Access_Scholarly_Publishing_Association)

Among the publishers mentioned is Sagepub, which I think is very good – but it was admonished for unintentionally carrying a fake paper. Other publications are mentioned in the wiki article.

**RAND Corporation – Countering Truth Decay.** This is a program by a well-regarded research organization, and the site that brought the term “Truth Decay” to my attention.

<https://www.rand.org/research/projects/truth-decay.html> “A RAND Initiative to Restore the Role of Facts and Analysis in Public Life” My opinion is that this is a service deserving better visibility; however, it is also my impression that not much has been done by this project in the last several years.

# Fact-Checking Services

## Snopes

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check-ratings/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snopes> "Snopes, formerly known as the Urban Legends Reference Pages, is a fact-checking website. It has been described as a "well-regarded reference for sorting out myths and rumors" on the Internet."

I was going to write up an "Ontology of Falsehood" but Snopes has laid out a much better list of veracity distinctions than I would have done. It is so informative that I am including below their categories of veracity, falsehood or interesting designations (such as "Originated as Satire"). Note a missing category often used is "Pants on Fire" from "Liar, liar, pants on fire" for outrageously false claims.

NOTE: their ratings apply to specific claims in an article, which can contain multiple claims, each with different level of veracity or falsehood: "It's important to note the "Claim" statement clearly labeled on each fact check. The specific wording of that claim is what the rating evaluates."



### Research In Progress

This rating is used with pages that present items which we are currently investigating but have not yet reached any publishable conclusion about.



### True

This rating indicates that the primary elements of a claim are demonstrably true.



### Mostly True

This rating indicates that the primary elements of a claim are demonstrably true, but some of the ancillary details surrounding the claim may be inaccurate.



### Mixture

This rating indicates that a claim has significant elements of both truth and falsity to it such that it could not fairly be described by any other rating.



### Mostly False

This rating indicates that the primary elements of a claim are demonstrably false, but some of the ancillary details surrounding the claim may be accurate.



### False

This rating indicates that the primary elements of a claim are demonstrably false.



### Unproven

This rating applies to a claim for which we have examined the available evidence but could not arrive at a true or false determination, meaning the evidence is inconclusive or self-contradictory.



### Unfounded

This rating applies to a claim that we have investigated but found no demonstrable evidence to support it. Such claims typically originate as hearsay, speculation, or groundless rumor.



### Outdated

This rating applies to items for which subsequent events have rendered their original truth rating irrelevant (e.g., a condition that was the subject of protest has been rectified, or the passage of a controversial law has since been repealed).



### Miscaptioned

This rating is used with photographs and videos that are “real” (i.e., not the product, partially or wholly, of digital manipulation) but are nonetheless misleading because they are accompanied by explanatory material that falsely describes their origin, context, and/or meaning.



### Correct Attribution

This rating indicates that quoted material (speech or text) has been correctly attributed to the person who spoke or wrote it.



### Misattributed

This rating indicates that quoted material (speech or text) has been incorrectly attributed to a person who didn't speak or write it.



### Legend

This rating is most commonly associated with items that describe events so general or lacking in detail that they could have happened to someone, somewhere, at some time, and are therefore essentially unprovable.



### Scam

This “rating” is not a truth rating but rather indicates pages that describe the details of verified scams.



### Legit

This rating describes authentic, legitimate offers or initiatives available to consumers or members of the public.



### Labeled Satire

This rating indicates that a claim is derived from content described by its creator and/or the wider audience as satire. Not all content described by its creator or audience as ‘satire’ necessarily constitutes satire, and this rating does not make a distinction between ‘real’ satire and content that may not be effectively recognized or understood as satire despite being labeled as such.



### Originated as Satire

This rating refers to content that originally came from a site described as satire, but was later stripped of some of its satirical markings, repackaged, and posted elsewhere. The rating also applies to content not necessarily *labeled* as satire but that audiences perceived as satirical nonetheless, such as content from The Onion.



### Recall

This rating is applied to genuine product recall notices.



### Lost Legend

These legends aren't really lost — we've known where they were the whole time! We created The Repository of Lost Legends (TRoLL for short) for those of you who don't let the truth get in the way of a good story. If you have a taste for the unusual and arcane (and can suspend your disbelief just a little), sample some of these precious gems.



### Fake

This rating applies to photographs and videos that were either manipulated via digital editing, or manufactured from scratch via CGI (computer-generated imagery) or AI (artificial intelligence) software, such that they convey a false or misleading message or an outright misrepresentation of reality.

## RealClearPolitics – Possibly Compromised

My impression is that this site is among a number that have altered their once-independent view as a result of right-leaning donors – which seems to be an intentional effort fostered by wealthy right-wing actors.

<https://www.realclearpolitics.com/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RealClearPolitics> “RealClearPolitics, often referred to as nonpartisan by sources like The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, emerged as a significant platform during the 2008 elections. ... The site has shown a conservative inclination in its content and commentary, as noted by various sources over the years.”

It was once 51% owned by Forbes but no longer.

Caution: The NYT has made the following claim: “But less well known is how Real Clear Politics and its affiliated websites **have taken a rightward, aggressively pro-Trump turn over the last four years** as donations to its affiliated nonprofit have soared. Large quantities of those funds came through two entities that wealthy conservatives use to give money without revealing their identities.” A great way to promote misleading information is to have a service available that purports to identify misleading information!

## Media Bias Rating Services

An informative article is on Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_bias)

The following four sites appear to be legitimate; care is needed to ascertain the true motivation and objective for every site that purports to be a balanced, accurate rating of bias and/or veracity.

### Ad Fontes Media

Website: <https://adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/>  
Wikipedia Page: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad\\_Fontes\\_Media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad_Fontes_Media)  
Reputation: I noticed that there was a link to their chart on the Harvard Library site. This is so informative I am including their chart on a page below.

### Media Bias / Fact Check

Website: <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>  
Wikipedia Page: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_Bias/Fact\\_Check](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_Bias/Fact_Check)  
Reputation: It looks pretty reasonable; check out their rating of The Atlantic:

<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/the-atlantic/>

## AllSides

Website: <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-chart>  
Wikipedia Page: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AllSides>  
Reputation: "Both Groeling and McBride praised the methodology of AllSides and Ad Fontes."

## NewsGuard

Website: <https://www.newsguardtech.com/>  
Wikipedia Page: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NewsGuard>  
Reputation: I have not looked at in detail.

## Example Media Bias Chart of Ad Fontes

This chart seems to me the best from my informal survey. It rates on left-right bias (which matches Media Bias / Fact Check fairly well), but it also rates for veracity, vertically higher is higher veracity.

NOTE: Just because a publication is left- or right-leaning, its veracity can be high, and also my impression is that they can often be the publications found to be "right" in their analysis as time goes by. The middle-of-the-road publications may be less inclined to "take a position" on some issue, but in doing so do not provide a good analytical assessment of the topic at hand. <https://adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/>



# The Media Bias Chart®

Version 12.0 January 2024 Edition – Combined Web, Podcast, and TV

ad fontes media

Most Extreme    Hyper-Partisan Left    Strong Left    Skews Left    Middle    Skews Right    Strong Right    Hyper-Partisan Right    Most Extreme

Thorough Fact Reporting OR Fact-Dense Analysis  
Mix of Fact Reporting and Analysis OR Simple Fact Reporting

MORE

Analysis OR Wide Variation in Reliability

Opinion OR Wide Variation in Reliability

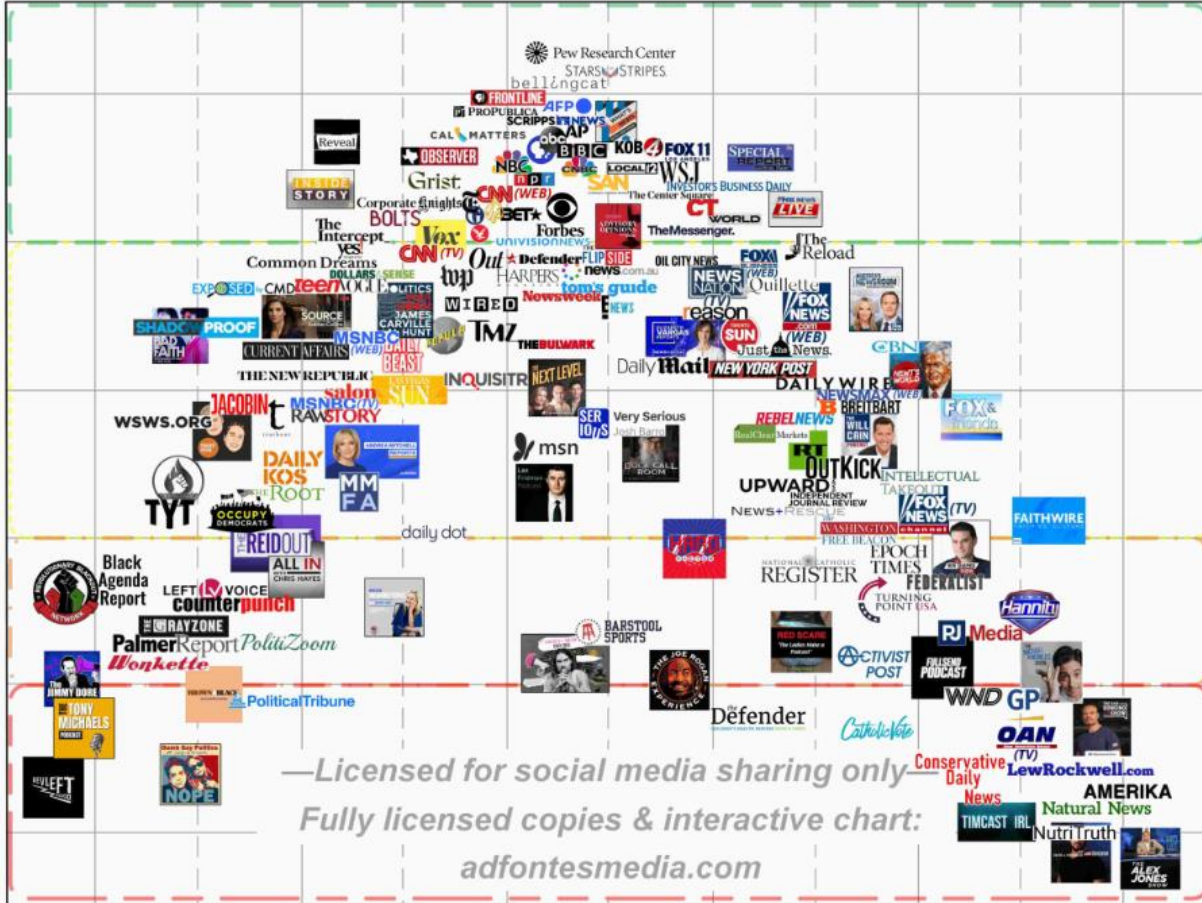
News Value and Reliability

Selective, Incomplete, Unfair Persuasion, Propaganda, or Other Issues

Contains Misleading Info

LESS

Contains Inaccurate/Fabricated Info



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