The “Uber-ization” of Journalism
or “Is Digital Making Us Stupider?”

A presentation for
Great Explorations UTSC
October 2, 2018
Digital expressions?
The Daily Algorithm?
How does it work?
It’s called Clickbait
COMMON FACTORS OF A CLICKBAIT TITLE

Source: Venngage, 2016
How it works...
More from around the Web

9 Ways to Get Rich Quick

Seems legit.
Who are the “Big Five?”

And why are they doing this?
What do they have in common?

• Data
• Data analytics
• Which lead to: Profits
Getting Access

• Agreement for access
• All politicians need data
• So do corporations
• Digital marketing such as...
• http://www.newsship.com/
What about security?

• Very little, although that may about to change...

• DDoS – Distributed Denial of Service

• Flooding the web with superfluous traffic to disrupt other sites.

• Transportation, banking, power grids...

• Russian bots

• Why do we need “VIA?”
• “VIA”:
  – Verification
  – Independence
  – Accountability

• Without VIA, we are passive receivers of information that might not be true...

• For example:
SATAN: IF I WIN CLINTON WINS!
JESUS: NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!
Where did this come from?

- https://www.notdoug.com/
Immigrants Assault Women?
Not really…

http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/is-there-truth-to-refugee-sex-offense-reports-a-1186734.html

What about the “Gun Surge” in Toronto? No.
What is News Literacy?

• We need to apply our best critical thinking to everything we see, read and hear in the media.

• The goal: to be well informed = able to make solid judgments about our world.

• Questions:
  – What do I conclude from this news report? Anything?
  – Am I getting the truth? Or something else?
YOU are in charge!

- Only YOU can determine what is reliable...and what is not.
- You will be know as someone who does NOT pass along faulty info.
- You will be the engaged, intelligent citizen, pushing our leaders to do what’s right and what’s smart.
- How do you do this? Stay tuned...
Again: What is **News Literacy**?

- The ability to use **critical thinking skills** to judge reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television, the Internet or social media.
- *SUNY Stony Brook
  [https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/](https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/)
Reliable?

- [https://usareally.com/](https://usareally.com/)
- [https://sputniknews.com/](https://sputniknews.com/)
  - Both funded by the Russian government.
  - Is that a problem? Why?
  - If not, be skeptical.
What about this?

- [http://www.cbc.ca/news](http://www.cbc.ca/news)
  - Funded by the Canadian government.
  - Is that a problem?
  - Is there “V.I.A.?"
  - More than most...
Reliable Information

• ...is **ACTIONABLE**.

• That means it allows news consumers/citizens to make a decision, take action or share responsibility with others.
  – For the first time in history, technology (digital) has surpassed the people (journalists) who are supposed to control it.
  – **This is about that tension!**
• What’s the problem with this article?
• Is it reliable?
• What questions does it not answer?
Cancer among Canadians?

- What are your immediate feelings after reading and watching this?
- Can you trust your own feelings?
- Can you trust this report?
- If not, why not?
“Dad, I can read my own fake news on the internet now!”
Toronto Star Corrections

• The subway trains on the TTC's Line 2, formerly known as the Bloor-Danforth line, date primarily from the mid-90s. A June 28 Editorial about the TTC being named North America's most outstanding public transit system mistakenly said the trains are primarily from the 1970s.

• So what?
New York Times Corrections

• FRONT PAGE

• An article on Sunday about the influence of Scott Pruitt, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, erroneously reported a meeting between Mr. Pruitt and Andrew Liveris, the chief executive of the Dow Chemical Company. While a meeting was scheduled for March 9 at an energy conference in Houston, both the E.P.A. and Dow said it was later canceled and did not take place.

  – *So what?*
What is going on?
Photojournalism in 9/11
Info Revolution 2.0:
In 2008 alone - Invention of FB, Twitter, Youtube
Why News Literacy Now?
Gutenberg 1450 to Zuckerberg 2008
Challenges for Citizen-Consumers

• Challenge 1: Speed vs Accuracy
• Challenge 2: Information overload
• Challenge 3: The blurring of the lines.
• Challenge 4: Overcoming our own bias.
• Challenge 5: Does the Internet need to be regulated?
Resources for News Literacy

- *The essential guide to doing good and great ethical journalism:*

- *How the digital culture has made journalism more complex and better:*

- *Non-journalistic sources in a digital age. Whistleblowers in the media:*

- *How to be skeptical but not cynical in journalism:*
  - Center for News Literacy [https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/](https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/)