Week 4: SIFT it!

Getting Started
Gut check: REAL or FAKE news headlines?

Media Bias Chart
Find a larger version of this chart with the Week 4 materials at libguides.colostate.edu/bridge.
What’s SIFT?

Stop.
How does the headline or image want you to feel? What do you already know about the subject or context? The publisher? Its reputation? The author? Their reputation?

Investigate the source.
Who is the author / creator? What is their expertise and their agenda? Who is the publisher? Do they have known biases or missions?

Find better coverage.
Who provides balanced or minimally biased stories / interpretation? Who fact checks and verifies claims? Who has more expertise?

Trace claims, quotes, and media back to the original context.
Claims, quotes or media taken out of context can be misleading. Was something taken out of context? Does the original context provide additional information or clarify anything?

Practice SIFTing it!

News Article 1:
Go to libguides.colostate.edu/bridge and in the Week 4 materials, you’ll see a link to a news article: “Florida residents being urged to kill iguanas and eat them to control dangerous reproduction numbers”. We’ll work through this together and model the SIFT process.

News Article 2:
Now it’s your turn! Open the link to the article “Hell Yeah, Teens are Growing Skull Horns From Phone Use”. Using SIFT, answer the following questions.

Stop
How does the headline want you to feel about this story?

Do you already know anything about the publisher? The author?

Share with a partner: Without reading the article, do you trust this story enough to share it with a friend or family member? Why or why not?
Investigate the Source
What can you find out about the publisher, Geek.com? Do they have a liberal or conservative bias? Do they have a good or bad reputation?

(Remember, don’t find out what a publisher says about themselves. Find out what others are saying about them.)

Share with a partner: Given what you now know (or don’t know) about the publisher, do you trust the publisher enough to share the story with a friend or family member? Why or why not?

Find a Better Source
Use Google News to find 2 or 3 articles about the same story from more reputable news organizations. Check the Media Bias Chart to make sure the news organizations you chose are considered relatively neutral and high quality.

Which news organizations did you choose? What do their headlines say about the story? Do they agree or disagree with Geek.com’s interpretation?

Share with a partner: Given what you just found out about how other news sources are covering the story, do you trust the Geek.com story enough to share it with a friend or family member? Why or why not?

Trace Claims, Quotes and Media Back to Their Original Context:
Skim the Geek.com article and find the news organization that Geek.com is reposting the news from. Click on the link to go to the original article. (Hint: Look for “According to...”)

Is the news organization reputable? What does their update say about the research the story is based on?
Share with a partner: Given what you just found out about the research the story is based on, would you share the story with a friend or family member? Why or why not?

Optional bonus question: Can you find the original research paper in a library database?

Tips and Tricks
Want to know more about fact-checking online? Read this free, online book:

*Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers: [webliteracy.pressbooks.com/](webliteracy.pressbooks.com/)*

Reflection
Why do you think people share a fake or misleading news story?

What will you do if you see a friend or family member share a fake or misleading news story?