

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy
Project

Digitized Manuscript Collections

Fall 10-22-2021

**West Virginia Participant 4 (White/female/50), interviewed on
October 22, 2021**

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/fake_news_information_lit

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The Fake News and Information Literacy Project

Stephen M. Underhill, PhD, Principal Investigator

	Marshall University IRB	
	Approved on:	9/17/21
	Expires on:	9/15/21
	Study number:	1779793

Key Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. Research studies are designed to gain scientific knowledge that may help other people in the future. You may or may not receive any benefit from being part of the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please take your time to make your decision, and ask your research investigator or research staff to explain any words or information that you do not understand. The following is a short summary to help you decide why you may or may not want to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on in this form.

The purpose of this study is to understand the Appalachian experience with fake news and how people determine what is/not credible online. We expect that you will be in this research study for one hour. Though you will be anonymous and your identity will be kept secret, a redacted copy of your interview transcript will be posted online on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website (https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/).

You will be asked 64 questions. Your dialogue will be recorded on Microsoft Teams and housed on Marshall University's OneDrive, which is password protected. The recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester (during finals week). To protect your privacy, you will be identified by your state of residence, race, sex, age and participant number. For example, the Digital Scholar website will catalogue your interview with a pseudonym like "Kentucky Participant 5 (White/Male/65), interviewed on October 5, 2021." Please avoid mentioning your name or other identifying information in the interview. Your name will not be on the transcript. The name of the interviewer will not be included in the transcript or otherwise on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website. All identifying information will be removed before transcripts are posted online. But once transcripts are posted on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website, they will be permanent. We will not be able to remove them.

How Many People Will Take Part In The Study?

About 24 people every semester people will take part in this study. A total of 24 subjects are the most that would be able to enter the study per semester.

What Is Involved In This Research Study?

You will be asked a series of 64 open-ended questions about your thoughts and feelings on fake news and disinformation online. You will be asked about your opinion of sensitive social questions like issues of race, class, religion, etc.

With your consent, this interview will be recorded. You will only be identified as "you" during the interview. The Microsoft Teams recording, which will be with the camera turned off, will be stored on Marshall University's OneDrive and will only be shared with the FYS small group, the FYS graduate assistant and the professor. These people will use the recording to verify consent and make a

Subject's Initials _____

redacted transcript. Definitized transcripts will be uploaded to Marshall University's Digital Scholar website (https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/).

What Are Your Rights As A Research Study Participant?

You may choose to not take part in the study. You may leave the study up to the point that the interview is complete. Once the redacted transcript is posted on the website a participant may not withdraw. Refusing to participate or leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to stop participating in the study we encourage you to talk to the investigators or study staff first.

The study investigator may stop you from taking part in this study at any time if he/she believes it is in your best interest; if you do not follow the study rules; or if the study is stopped.

Detailed Risks Of The Study

Because the recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester, and because the only a deidentified redacted transcript will be posted online, there is no foreseeable risk in the study.

What About Confidentiality?

We will do our best to make sure that your personal information is kept confidential. However, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Federal law says we must keep your study records private. Nevertheless, under unforeseen and rare circumstances, we may be required by law to allow certain agencies to view your records. Those agencies would include the Marshall University IRB, Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the federal Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). This is to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. If we publish the information we learn from this study, you will not be identified by name or in any other way.

What Are The Costs Of Taking Part In This Study?

There are no costs to you for taking part in this study. All the study costs, including any study tests, supplies and procedures related directly to the study, will be paid for by the study.

Will You Be Paid For Participating?

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Whom Do You Call If You Have Questions Or Problems?

For questions about the study or in the event of a research-related injury, contact the study investigator, Stephen Underhill at 304-696-3020 or at underhills@marshall.edu. You should also contact the investigator if you have a concern or complaint about the research.

Subject's Initials _____

For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity (ORI) at (304) 696-4303. You may also call this number if:

- You have concerns or complaints about the research.
- The research staff cannot be reached.
- You want to talk to someone other than the research staff.

Did you receive a copy of the consent form?

Please say Yes or No

Do you agree to take part in this study and confirm that you are 18 years of age or older?

Please say Yes or No

Have you had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have had those questions answered?

Please say Yes or No

What is today's date?

Subject's Initials _____

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

The participant agreed to the terms of the consent.

Interviewer: Tell me about when you first started using social media, and news started to appear for the first time on your feed like Facebook or Twitter or Tumblr, whichever one you used.

Participant: I started using social media, maybe about seven years ago, and I would say that news became more prominent after Trump was elected.

Interviewer: On a normal day how did you use the Internet in your daily life- daily activities?

Participant: I would use the Internet for work. I would use the Internet for bill-pay. I also just look up information about certain projects or to shop.

Interviewer: What types of websites did you visit?

Participant: Google... and- Honestly, from there I would just do a Google search and take it. Let it take me wherever I go.

Interviewer: I find that that's how we have all these other types of corporations like Bing or Google Doc and Google is the one that I'm most used too, as well.

Participant: Yeah. Yeah, that's what I use. I do use DuckDuckGo now just for privacy, but I haven't been using those two very long.

Interviewer: OK, so what did you search online in the last week? If you could remember?

Participant: In the last week I looked up, gosh, I haven't been on my computer much this last week at all, because we're not home.

Interviewer: No, I understand. And it might not just be on your computer, it could be portable on your phone and any type of search engine that you use.

Participant: Honestly, what I have used the most in the last week is Googling directions.

Interviewer: OK, OK, that's perfect that's a very good answer. I honestly don't know how to get around where I am, so I do the same thing. And what websites do you visit to pass your time? Maybe when you're bored or.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Have extra time if that. If that's something that you have.

Participant: Yeah, I don't. I don't really if I had spare time I usually read.

Interviewer: Yeah. OK alright. Let's see here and, because you don't have a lot of interaction between those sites when you have free time you don't do anything on those sites or visit those sites for any reason. If you could, what sites would you visit, like Facebook, Instagram?

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: It would probably be Facebook because I feel like where I'm older, most of my friends are on Facebook. If its sports related, I often get on Twitter. Like if Marshall is having a soccer game, I will get on and follow the updates on Twitter.

Interviewer: OK, and it's mostly Facebook would be maybe connected with those people I would assume?

Participant: Would be social.

Interviewer: Thinking about these questions, what do you think other people are doing? Both people you know personally and people you don't know. On the Internet, like how do other people pass the time online in your perspective?

Participant: I think a lot of people do use social media to pass the time or they use their phones to play games.

Interviewer: OK, yeah and you said you use your computer, your laptop and your phone to access the Internet, correct?

Participant: Yeah, yes.

Interviewer: Is there any other form of device that you use to access the Internet?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Okay, which one do you use the most?

Participant: My phone.

Interviewer: Your phone and then your least would be your laptop.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: OK. what social media or forms like Twitter or Facebook do you use?

Participant: I have a Facebook account. I have a Twitter account and I have an Instagram account.

Interviewer: When did you first start making those social media profiles?

Participant: I would say Facebook, I've probably had about seven years, my Instagram, I only follow two people, my daughters so I made an Instagram probably when they were in high school, so that's probably been about eight years ago when my first one got their phone in high school.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: I'll just check it like once a week and then with Twitter. I probably have had a Twitter for like maybe three to four years.

Interviewer: OK, and what made you use them over any other form of social media or what sparked that initial decision to go on social media opposed to seeing people?

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: My children, my children getting social media accounts.

Interviewer: OK, yeah. Is there one that you try to avoid it and more than the others?

Participant: Yes, I try to avoid Twitter. I literally only get on there for sports.

Interviewer: OK, and do you have a specific reason for avoiding Twitter?

Participant: Yeah, because everybody just uses Twitter, I feel like I'm going to mouth off.

Interviewer: I have the same reaction to Facebook. I know that for some people it's either Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram. It's just I follow a lot of family members on Facebook and sometimes people can get into certain conversations that I would prefer to stay away from.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: No, I understand. When thinking about someone that likely has a differing opinion than you, what form of social media do you think they use and what makes you think that?

Participant: I would think it's generational. I would think younger people turn to Twitter. And I would think more people of my generation use Facebook.

Interviewer: OK, yes ma'am and I have honestly found myself as somebody who is a little younger than your generation per say, using twitter

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: I did start on Twitter before I started anything else, so.

Participant: Yep.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Describe for me what you do when you want to find out something factual.

Participant: Well, I usually will Google it

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: And I will try to find a search engine that is unbiased. When I'm trying to find an answer, You know, in depth research on something.

Interviewer: OK, and how do people around you find something factual? From what you've noticed?

Participant: I would think like looking at my family members and things like that, a lot of them just go to Google.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: And just search it and see what's on there.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: OK. everyone comes across things that surprised them on social media between advertising, news, and commentary. Please describe a time when you came across content that you doubted was trustworthy or made you distrust its author or its purpose.

Participant: That's every day.

Interviewer: Every day.

Participant: I don't trust every day. I don't trust the news I see on there. I don't trust posts that people repost from. That with a headline with the news headline, I trust nothing.

Interviewer: OK. And has there ever been a time that you've talked to your friends or family about this content?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: I usually ignore it.

Interviewer: Have you ever seen such content discussed on the news? Any public publication?

Participant: I no longer watch public news.

Interviewer: OK, I know that It- it can get a little negative. I tend to stray far away from that as well.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: If there are any social media sites that you think are untrustworthy, what makes them untrustworthy to you?

Participant: I think they're all untrustworthy, because I think that whoever is posting the information is biased.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: About the information they're posting. They are wanting to get their point across.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your experiences finding conspiracy theories online?

Participant: I honestly tried to avoid that. I know that during the last election, and let's just say that the January 6 Capital Riots people were posting things about this and that, and I honestly try to just ignore it and move on.

Interviewer: Right, it was extremely prevalent on social media, and I feel like that contributed to a lot of, um, a lot of the lingering emotions that still kind of affect us now.

Participant: Right.

Interviewer: OK, and now if applicable, please describe a time when you shared things that you knew were not true. If it's applicable.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: I don't think that I've ever done that.

Interviewer: Yeah, I find that not a lot of people ever know if they have shared something or have ever shown something that they knew was not true. It's always unintentional, if ever.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Tell me about a time when a search engine like Google or Yahoo seemed to give you what it thought you were looking for based on what you had already searched for.

Participant: Yes, I feel like that happens whenever, for example, if we're going on vacation and I'm typing in where we're going, and I'm looking for something specific, Google is going to give me restaurants in that area, or Google is going to give me timeshares in that area or try to sell me something in that area. So it's basically when I'm planning a vacation or something like that. Google will give me all this other stuff that isn't what I'm just specifically asking for.

Interviewer: Right. OK, yeah, it will even ask you sometimes, "would you like to?" and fill in more options even if that's not what you're looking for.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Take where you physically are and kind of tailor it to you. OK, yeah, I've noticed the same thing as well. If you could describe a time when you notice that search result seemed somehow tailored to you, Was there a time like this?

Participant: Yes. Yes, so my husband and I own a condo in Florida, and we try to get away several times a year and I noticed that based on my previous search engines, when I go to type something in for example, if I'm looking, I don't know, it could be looking for a Walmart, it's going to pull up things near Port Charlotte, FL or stores near Port Charlotte, FL, just based on my previous searches.

Interviewer: OK, yeah. If anywhere, where on the news have you seen this discussed and if not, I can understand but.

Participant: Nope, I do not watch the news.

Interviewer: Right. How do you decide what personal information you will provide to social media companies like YouTube, Google, Twitter, Instagram, anything like that?

Participant: I have all my settings set to the most private setting that this site allows.

Interviewer: Right, OK.

Participant: And my location is always turned off.

Interviewer: Do you use your real name when you're creating a profile like on Instagram?

Participant: Yes, that is true. Yes, I don't have any "fake accounts."

Interviewer: OK, is there any way that you try to protect your personal information online, just generally?

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: Just generally, no.

Interviewer: OK, what do you think others around you do to protect their information online?

Participant: Just thinking about my children, I feel like they do bank and stuff on their phone that I would never do because I just didn't trust them in that manner. And you know, I don't think young people, I think young people are more trusting of technology than older generations.

Interviewer: Oh, like with the new iPhones that came out. You can have it recognize your face or memorize your thumbprint and connect that to your bank so that it's going to log in, it just has to scan your face or your thumbprint to be able to access your banking information. It's quite scary in my opinion.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Sometimes I get a little intimidated by it.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Have you ever heard about protecting your identity or personal information on the news? Or maybe heard your friends or family discuss it?

Participant: I think I have seen commercials on TV. Like if you want to protect your identity, call this number or use this firm or use this thing, but honestly, I've never done that.

Interviewer: OK. How have you responded to how Internet companies try to customize or control what you see on their platform?

Participant: That's why I switched to DuckDuckGo.

Interviewer: OK, and DuckDuckGo just for research purposes in your definition. Why is that? The way you respond to the Internet companies, what does DuckDuckGo do to help you have control. What do other companies do for you?

Participant: I prefer that because for example, if I was looking up The North Face, I want to go to a North Face store, then I would go to Facebook, and then I would have all these North Face ads, or I would have these ads even related to North Face jackets, like jacket ads coming up and I just felt it was very creepy. And so I switched to DuckDuckGo, and since I've done that, then the items that I'm searching for work do not show up in my Facebook sponsored ads.

Interviewer: Right. OK, and they have some type of security that just limits them.

Participant: That blocks it, yeah.

Interviewer: OK, have you ever heard others discuss this type of a search engine basically?

Participant: The DuckDuckGo?

Interviewer: Yes, ma'am.

Participant: No. I haven't.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: OK, if you were to explain to your friends or family how false information spreads and can be found on the Internet or how to avoid false information, what would you say to them?

Participant: I would explain to them that a lot of people post information that they haven't taken time to research or it's just an attention-grabbing headline that they are trying to get a reaction from and to be very careful about any kind of news or idea that is put on social media.

Interviewer: What do you think determines what is seen online or how things spread?

Participant: You know, I'm not sure I don't know what determines it. I don't know if its popularity or somebody grabs ahold of something and shares it and that just keeps getting re-shared on it. I would love to know how that happens. I'm not sure.

Interviewer: OK. We could think about it as company-wise. What do you think determines what products you see online or what ads pop up on Facebook?

Participant: Well, prior to going to DuckDuckGo, the ads that would pop up on Facebook would be things that I searched for.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Or even if my husband and I were out and about, our Apple Watch, if we were talking about something like the Apple Watch. I guess where it's connected to the phone that would come up. It was so weird.

Interviewer: Wow. Who do you think benefits from that? From that advertisement to you.

Participant: It would have to be the companies.

Interviewer: OK. And in your mind, who do you think made this system? If you had to guess or make just like, maybe an educated estimate?

Participant: Oh, I would say that Facebook or any of the social media owners' creators because I'm sure they get a kick back from the sponsorships or any items sold on there.

Interviewer: Right. And what do you think controls information online or in our apps?

Participant: I don't think anything controls it. I think that the owners of the social media people control the content and if it doesn't fall within their narrative, they block it.

Interviewer: Right, and we've seen you know, the revisions to Facebook and how much information they give out about people in court and how they were, they had those issues earlier in the year.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's a rough spot. I know some of those questions. When I first saw them, I didn't know exactly how to respond, and it took some time for me to think about it. To be able to even remember how I feel about that because these questions aren't things that we commonly think about all the time. They're just sit as something like a reality now, unfortunately.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: Right.

Interviewer: So the Internet is full of stories that divide people about things like the Coronavirus, the Capital Riot, Antifa, Black Lives Matter, Climate Change, QAnon, and the political parties. If you were to decide, how would you like schools or the news to talk about what controls the Internet and what is seen?

Participant: Well, I would love for there to be a real conversation about it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: Things that are posted, how they are posted. The bias behind them. However, even if you pay attention to Mark Zuckerberg, before Congress, I don't think that real answers will ever be known about that information.

Interviewer: OK. if you happened to see stories about the Capital Riot or the "Stop the Steal" rally, what do you make of it? Why were protesters there?

Participant: I may not be a good person to interview for this because I scroll right past it.

Interviewer: I'm trying to think it doesn't absolutely have to be the Capital Riot they were talking about at any point in time. If you've maybe in school, happened to see or know about stories about riots of an educational purpose, what do you make of what the protesters were there to say?

Participant: OK, so if you look at the Portland, OR riots.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Where I guess protesters took over Portland for months at a time. I guess the real question is why were not all news outlets covering those riots?

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: And you see certain news outlets when you're scrolling through Facebook that do talk about them and talk about Portland burning and this and that, but it is the minority.

Interviewer: Right. It's OK. So, I understand that you didn't have a lot of exposure to the Capital Riot yourself.

Participant: Not at all.

Interviewer: Um, is it OK if I talk about it a little bit and then ask you questions based on that?

Participant: Yes, that's fine.

Interviewer: OK so at the Capitol Riot, we did have a riot at the Capitol, obviously. There were people dressed in costumes like hunters and trappers, with animal pelts and with Norse tattoos, or as Roman soldiers. In groups like Cowboys for Trump and things like that. If you had to guess, why do you think those people that participated in the Capital Riot dressed that way?

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: Because they wanted popularity, as to be seen on the news. They wanted their pictures all over Facebook.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Just to be seen.

Interviewer: What do you think this means for stories about voter fraud and voting rights in your opinion?

Participant: The riots?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: How were they related to voter fraud?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: That's a very political question. I feel like I don't think the riots had anything to do with voter fraud. I think the people were probably just there because they were mad.

Interviewer: Hm, OK.

Participant: And wanted to have their voices heard because I did not feel like they were heard on Election Day.

Interviewer: And where did you learn about this? Just like the first time you started seeing it on the news. And what does it mean to you?

Participant: Now the first time I heard about it; my mother-in-law sent me a text.

Interviewer: OK, and to you, what did that mean personally?

Participant: Ah, it didn't bother me at all. I think everybody has a right to protest.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: If they do it peacefully.

Interviewer: Alright um, so if you happened to be following this story on the coronavirus, what sense do you make of the different information out there about whether people should get the vaccine or wear masks?

Participant: I feel like I have no idea where to go.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Participant: I did not know where the true information was because I feel like everybody has an agenda.

Interviewer: And why do you think we hear so many conflicting stories about the coronavirus and the vaccinations?

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: Because everybody feels like we are no longer a united country.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: So, everybody must be on one side or the other side, and I feel like that no one can agree on one thing.

Interviewer: OK, and when did you first start seeing information about the coronavirus?

Participant: I was at a meeting; we have a person from China in my job and she was telling me about the coronavirus that was happening in her home country before it was even discussed in the US.

Interviewer: Wow, and hearing that from her, what does that mean for you? Like you personally hearing that from somebody.

Participant: Oh, I totally believed her because the coronavirus originated in the province where her family lived.

Interviewer: OK, yeah. Wow. That must have been scary.

Participant: She was very crying. She was very upset, it was scary.

Interviewer: Wow, so, what content do you post online, if any?

Participant: The only thing I post online is like doing things with my family, social interactions. Things like that.

Interviewer: OK, and what type of content do you try to make visible for others to see?

Participant: I never make anything public.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: So, anything that I posted is available to anybody who follows me.

Interviewer: Alright, is there any content that you try to hide others from seeing?

Participant: Nope.

Interviewer: Right, OK. Can you remember a time when you were careful about what you chose to like online because of how it might affect the visibility of other people's contributions in content in your social media feed like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter?

Participant: Uh no. I very much believe in freedom of speech, freedom of ideas. If I want to like something I truly don't care. I like it or if I don't like it, I will let you know. Like a sad face or whatever I truly do not care about that because I think we all have our rights to opinions.

Interviewer: Right, OK, so please tell me about a time when you tried to influence or change the content of what you see on Twitter or Instagram by searching things differently.

Participant: I don't think that I really have.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: OK. Earlier you were telling me a story about your condo. Was there a certain thing that you typed in the search engine to make things more tailored to what you were looking for?

Participant: I really don't think so. I know when you first start typing information into the search bar, it will try to finish your thoughts for you.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: I've tried not to do that, so that could be a change. I usually just try to ignore what they're trying to give me, cause it's usually not what I'm looking for it and type it in directly.

Interviewer: OK. Yes, ma'am. When you are unsatisfied with Internet searches, how do you adjust your search to change the results if any adjustment is made?

Participant: Yeah, if I'm not getting what I'm looking for, I try to change my wording.

Interviewer: OK. Let's see, how do you decide if an online source of information is reliable?

Participant: I'll look at the URL.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: If it's from an Edu or a .gov, I usually think that it's true information, but if it's just like a.com or a.org, I don't.

Interviewer: OK, can you tell me about a time when you double-checked information online to verify if it was, you know, credible.

Participant: I think statistics, and when I'm looking up information. So, for example, you know West Virginia will put out a coronavirus map.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: So, trying to make sure that that's reliable information. So sometimes I will flip over, and I will look that up at the CDC or I will even go to, I'm from Wayne County so I will go to the Wayne County Health Department site and look up information there.

Interviewer: OK, yeah, to kind of compare between.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: What you're seeing? OK, Was there any time that information made you suspicious like to double-check?

Participant: Yeah, with the coronavirus maps, they required help from West Virginia hospitals and secondary sources, I was suspicious of them. I was suspicious of the numbers.

Interviewer: Right, I mean it was, it was a lot. I will say it.

Participant: Yeah, either we're all green and then suddenly, we're all red. I mean, it just didn't make sense.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: Right, and what steps did you take to see if that information was correct?

Participant: I did go directly to the Health Department websites.

Interviewer: Right, OK, and what did your findings make you feel about the original source of information?

Participant: That it was wrong.

Interviewer: OK.

Participant: So, it wasn't accurate.

Interviewer: So, if you could please tell me about a time that your friends or family distrusted a website or information on a website.

Participant: We don't talk a lot about things that we find online or anything like that. I would say that probably going back to the election. The numbers that were reported for Trump, the numbers that were reported for Biden. You had this website telling you one thing, you had this news outlet telling you another thing, so I would say probably during that time since it was such a chaotic event, we would talk about the differing information that we found online.

Interviewer: OK, and when you did this, did you double-check any of the information from a different source to verify its credibility?

Participant: Yeah, we did, yeah.

Interviewer: And how do you think the media should cover stories about fake news and disinformation?

Participant: Then, in my opinion, the media will never look at fake news because they have their own pool of people who go to that website all the time who are generally biased in one way or the other, and they always want to feed their viewership's side of the story.

Interviewer: Right, and do you think they should do more to teach people how to verify the credibility of information?

Participant: Oh yes, I absolutely think that they should be 100% factual and list their sources.

Interviewer: Right. The term fake news seems to be everywhere right now. What are your thoughts about what it is like to you? What is fake news?

Participant: To me, fake news is defined as biased news.

Interviewer: Right. And where is this biased news found mostly?

Participant: Everywhere.

Interviewer: Everywhere.

Participant: I feel like it's found everywhere. I truly do not feel like there's one legitimate source now for it is hard to find a completely unbiased news source.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: And who do you think these new sources are targeting?

Participant: Their audience, their viewers.

Interviewer: OK, who is vulnerable to it?

Participant: I feel like the people who are vulnerable to it are the people who sit and watch news 24 hours a day and will not open their minds to any other way of thinking because what they hear is the be all and end all, it's 100% true and they will not open their minds up to any other angle or any other source.

Interviewer: It's almost like they have blinders on specifically tailored to that source, so they don't see it.

Participant: Correct.

Interviewer: And what do you think fake news means for democracy?

Participant: I think that fake news kills democracy.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: And that's just how I feel about it.

Interviewer: And if you feel that it is a real problem, how much of a problem is it in our current day in society?

Participant: I think it is 100% of the problem in our society today.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Because people refuse to look at different angles of stories, they refuse to read different information. It's almost a criticism to them if you ask them to look at a story in a different way, or maybe look at this new side, I think it's 100% of the divide in the country.

Interviewer: Right and what do you feel are the politics of it all? What is the end goal for fake news politically?

Participant: I don't have the answer to that, I would love to know the answer to that. I think that the goal is to keep the country divided.

Interviewer: OK, yeah. What do you feel are some new laws or constitutional amendments that we need for this Internet age? Like if you could decide, constitutionally, to put out a bill that could prepare for our new Internet age, what would you push into the Constitution?

Participant: I would push anybody who is using the Internet to come lure children into that, would lure girls into sex trafficking that would somehow harm our society, to make it so that if you have ever been in jail, been convicted of anything, you are never allowed to have a social media account and honestly, I think restricted access period to the Internet.

Interviewer: Right, OK so please offer some examples of where you have seen fake news.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Participant: I have seen, I feel like I see fake news on the news and news is chaos. I feel like I see fake news on social media sites.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: I feel like I see fake news on our local broadcast and fake news is in our newspapers. I think it's everywhere.

Interviewer: And are there any specific, maybe news publications or news broadcasts that you could think of for example that just come to mind?

Participant: Yes WSAZ, The Herald dispatch.

Interviewer: Who are these people who publish it? Are you aware of who those people are?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: What do you think they're trying to get from publishing fake news?

Participant: I think the Herald Dispatch is trying to post a more positive image of Huntington, WV. When they often omit information from their articles. I think that they're trying to create bias in voting cycles. And I really don't know what the end game is in it all.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what should be done about this?

Participant: I think sources should have to be cited and the sources should have to be valid sources, not just so-and-so said so-and-so said. I think it should all have validity behind it.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: When I was growing up and you watched the news, they would cite all their sources. So, you knew that it was factual, and they would also present two sides to a story. Today it does not seem that they cite sources, nor do they give two sides to a story. They just give you one side, and that's what you are expected to believe.

Interviewer: And you've been able to see that shift and change?

Participant: Yes, big time yeah.

Interviewer: Nice. OK, and just for the record, is there anything else that you would like to share of your experiences? Anything that you think is pertinent to this discussion that we've had here today that you'd like to share?

Participant: Well, no, I think that you know I have several friends who are police officers in local jurisdictions. I know for example if we talk local, like what goes on in Huntington, WV, those stories are never shared.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: I don't know if the city of Huntington has bought off the local news channels. If they bought off the Herald Dispatch, but none of this information is reported. Even if you look at Marshall University's students, the number of sexual assaults that happen on campus.

West Virginia Participant 4 (White/Female/50), interviewed on October 22, 2021

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Things like that are not reported because they're always just trying to shine this positive light on the city or the university or whatever, instead of giving the public information. How are we going to solve this problem?

Interviewer: Right. OK. So, we are down to our last couple questions and it's just some general questions.

Participant: OK.

Interviewer: So today, what is the date?

Participant: What do you say? What is today's date?

Interviewer: Yes, ma'am.

Participant: October 22nd, 2021.

Interviewer: Thank you, what is your state of residence?

Participant: My primary state of residence was West Virginia.

Interviewer: OK, and what is your age?

Participant: 50

Interviewer: And your gender?

Participant: Female

Interviewer: What is your race?

Participant: Caucasian

Interviewer: And what is your highest level of education completed?

Participant: Masters plus