

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy Project

Digitized Manuscript Collections

Fall 10-25-2021

Ohio Participant 2 (White/female/37), interviewed on October 25, 2021

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

Recommended Citation

"Ohio Participant 2 (White/female/37), interviewed on October 25, 2021" (2021). *0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy Project*. 13.

https://mds.marshall.edu/fake_news_information_lit/13

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy Project by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu, beachgr@marshall.edu.

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 _____

Ohio Participant 2 (White/Female/37), Interviewed on October 25, 2021

The participant agreed to the terms of the consent.

Interviewer: OK, tell me about when you first started to use social media and news started to appear for the first time. This can be on any of your social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or even Google.

Participant: And the first time I had social media was back. Actually, in the Myspace era. So that was a long time ago, but I don't recall seeing any news on it. So, then my second social media site would have been Facebook. I don't recall an exact date that it that I started noticing it, but I probably started paying attention to it. I'd say in my early 30s, maybe late 20s, so I'm 37 now. I've probably been like reading actively the News Online for about 10 years, I'd say.

Interviewer: OK, great, I know that when I started using social media, Facebook seems to be the place I would see everything. So, on a normal day, how do you use the Internet and is there any particular device that you access social media on and the Internet?

Participant: Uh, I access social media on my phone and on my work computer, mainly because I have a Facebook page that is directly related to 2 of my jobs.

Interviewer: So, is there any particular websites that you use when you get bored, and if so, why do you use those particular sites over other ones?

Participant: Now do these have to be news sites or can they be any sites?

Interviewer: It could be any sites, it doesn't matter.

Participant: I like to surf Amazon and Etsy and Pinterest. And then I do have a few games I like to play, but those aren't really websites so.

Interviewer: That's great. In addition to using websites, what kind of social media platforms do you use on a daily basis?

Participant: So, there is a particular website I use daily at school, so I usually use our school web page through my work. So, most of the sites that I visit are work related if it isn't the recreational sites that I mentioned already.

Interviewer: OK, great and do you think that other people that you know are using the same websites to pass time or educate themselves?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Great. So, I want you to think about all the people that you disagree with or

try to avoid on a daily basis. Do you think that they use the same type of social media platforms as you do?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright, let's continue. So, everyone comes across things that shocks them on social media, news or advertising. Can you tell me a time when you may have come across something like this and you begin to doubt if the information was trustworthy?

Participant: Yes. Numerous times. Well, the one that I can recall. And it was, it was taken down. It was a video of a school board meeting. There were guest speakers allowed to petition to be able to approach the board. And I guess a local doctor approached the board and he started rattling off all these facts about not wearing masks versus wearing masks. And I felt like he was trying to use his notoriety of being a doctor in the wrong way. In this instance, how could I fact check what he was saying, you know? It was his word against everybody else's.

Interviewer: Yes, that makes sense. So, can you share a time that you talked to a friend or family member about such content, and was the content on the news, social media platforms or advertisement?

Participant: Let me see. I can't remember if it was a friend or coworker or whatever. But recently I had read an article on Twitter. And you know, Twitter and articles have the short grabber headlines to get your attention. It read "Sister kills Sister and this charged with murder". And I was like, oh man, that's awful. So, I decided to read the article. Well, if I hadn't had read the entire article, I wouldn't have known that the victim was beating the sister. So, the sister that shot the other sister was being beaten, and that sister that had shot, who felt as if they were using self-defense had cerebral palsy. But nowhere in that headline did it say "sister kills in alleged self-defense from other sister". Just really irked me that people would just share that and say look how bad that is that a sister killed another sister. Well, if you look at the whole story, maybe it was justified, you know. And I'm not saying that that murder is ever justifiable. But there are always two sides to every story, and I feel like sometimes, especially with headlines that the media does portray it in one way or another. If I wouldn't have read the entire article, I wouldn't have known the whole context, you know?

Interviewer: Well, that's interesting.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: So, when I know that when I hear or see something on certain platforms and websites, I try to dig deeper to find out if it's true. What steps do you take to find out if something is actually factual, which goes back to what you were just saying.

Participant: Uhm, so usually like I'll read the entire article, and just to kind of see like, well, am I reading this for what it actually is trying to say. Then if there are other places that I can Fact Check, maybe sources toward the bottom of the page, you know, then I'll go and look those up. I'll try to see where the article came from, because that really says a lot. And if it's if it's scholarly or not. Uhm, and I'll be completely honest, though I'm not sure I believe anything at this point that's on the Internet just because even if the fact checks are legitimate? Or is it one that is engineered and artificially produced, you know. So, I feel like I network and ask people that I know are in such certain field. So, I'll call someone that I know is in a particular field and I'll say, "What do you think about this?". I usually don't use the Internet unless I have no one that I can call.

Interviewer: I have to agree with you, I don't think anything is factual on the Internet anymore.

Participant: Right, it's just what they want you to know.

Interviewer: OK, so as you already know, conspiracy theories or something that a group of individuals want you to believe, can you give me one example about your personal findings with conspiracy theories? And have you ever shared about one that you thought was originally true and then turned out to be false?

Participant: Well, there's a whole bunch of conspiracy theories. I'm kind of drawing a blank on any, other than the magic bullet and JFK. And that's the only thing I can come up with right off the top of my head.

Interviewer: I feel you completely.

Participant: And then I know that I have been caught being the stereotypical conspirator. I mean, it is human nature too. It's just what you know. And then when you find out that you have been basically misled your entire life, It's just eye opening. So, I know that there has been a time that I have done that. Other than that, I can't really come up with one off the top of my head.

Interviewer: Alright, let me ask you a few questions about search engines. Can you tell me a time when one of your search engines like Google, Yahoo, or even Safari gave you something that you thought, or they thought you were looking for because of one of your earlier searches?

Participant: Yes, and I swear I think our phones listen to us as well. Because I swear, I'll say something aloud and then something will pop up on an advertisement. But yes, I do believe that there have been times where there was something that I asked for that has shown up, that I have talked about. And I don't know if the search engines are

Ohio Participant 2 (White/Female/37), Interviewed on October 25, 2021

smart and they can put two things together. I wouldn't think that they would be able to, but maybe so. Maybe that's why, but it seems like yes, that I have gotten things that I wasn't looking for or that I felt like I didn't search for, but I said verbally and then suddenly, it's on my phone.

Interviewer: So, you do think that your search results, are somehow tailored to you?

Participant: Absolutely 100%.

Interviewer: I agree, and have you ever seen any of this discussed through any of the news channels that you watch?

Participant: Yes. I think they talk about the fake news. They talk about that all the time. I mean, whether they're trying to justify that, and say that they're not. Or you know, just bring it up in general.

Interviewer: Yeah, I agree. So, when I first signed up for different social media platforms, I had to go through a series of questions about my own personal information. These questions included name, phone number, email and birthday. So, when you were signing up for your own social media platforms, what personal information did you provide to these platforms and what did you try to protect?

Participant: Well, believe it or not, I gave them everything cause when I gave my phone number and my email. My phone number isn't published nor is my email on my Facebook account or any of my other accounts, I think. It's not published, but I put them there because it's there for my account recovery. But I guess even though I'm protecting it from other people, being able to view it from my page, those in Facebook can see my information

Interviewer: So, do you think others around you try to protect their personal information online, and have you ever heard or talked to family or friends or coworkers about protecting personal information in their identity?

Participant: Yes, I think everyone is a little too lax in what they share online and I'll be honest, I'm the same way. I mean, I've had my identity stolen. Like my debit card, four times. I know it's because I buy things online, so I know that I probably share way too much. I talked about it quite often with my parents, mainly my dad. He's the Internet guy, but you know where he's older, he's even more susceptible to scams or things of that nature. So yes, I talk about Internet safety with him a lot.

Interviewer: Great. So many people find themselves scrolling through different platforms to pass time. Not many people think about the customization of their

searches. Have you ever realized or responded to something that you have seen on one of your platforms?

Participant: What do you mean?

Interviewer: So, say that something pops up on your account. Similar to what you were saying earlier. You say something verbally and it isn't even like 10 hours later you get an ad for the same exact thing.

Participant: OK. Yeah, I'm going to say nine times out of ten I would be like, "whoa what's this?", But then there's probably that one out of ten times that I was just caught off guard and was like, "oh cool, what's this?", and then I realized you know, so yes, I would say that I still even though I'm fairly cautious. I would say that it probably has caught me a couple of times.

Interviewer: OK, well since you have realized this such thing, have you heard any of your friends, coworkers or family discussed the same content? Or like they've experienced the same type of thing, like they thought it was legitimate, and then they clicked on it and realized, oh, this is not.

Participant: Yes, I've had friends and family that have had similar experiences.

Interviewer: OK, great so as you probably already know, false information is written or verbal information that is simply not true. I'm sure you hear all kinds of false information while at work or talking with family and friends. With that being said, if you were trying to explain to friends and coworkers or family about false information and how it is spread and how to avoid it, what exactly would you say and would you supply examples of what kind of or what is false information?

Participant: I'd probably bring up the story that I've already talked about, of the whole headline versus if you actually read the entire article. I feel like our society is so fast paced that all you have time to do is just read the headline. But if you stopped to take the time to read the entire article, you'd get a completely different viewpoint of what is being said in that article or in that headline. You know, do I think that the media is spreading misinformation because of their shortened headlines? No, I think. Well maybe a little, but I also think that it is up to the reader to be a responsible reader, and more importantly, a responsible sharer of that information. You know, I feel like a lot of people will share something based upon the headline, but if you read the article, it doesn't even remotely mention what the headline is saying, you know? Or there's more to the story than what the headline is saying. Just like with that murder and the sister you know, if you would have read the article once, you'd understand maybe that person really isn't just a heartless woman, you know, so that's probably what I would say. So, you need to fact check or take the time to read the entire article before you just share it

Ohio Participant 2 (White/Female/37), Interviewed on October 25, 2021

automatically. You know if you want to say that to yourself. let's just say that I just automatically shared it and called that woman a horrible woman. Well, and then someone called me out on it. And then they just re-shared it. Well, that woman, is now someone you know, looked down upon when maybe it wasn't even her fault. And it was in self-defense.

Interviewer: Yeah, I understand headlines can be really misleading.

Participant: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So, what do you think determines what you've seen online, or how things are spread and how do you think it works and who benefits from it?

Participant: Well, so I know it has to do with money. I feel like it has to do with advertising. So just like when someone on my phone listens to me, and hears me say something about looking for pumpkins, and then it shows me some pumpkin ads later. You know, if someone is paying for those ads to pop up onto my screen. So, I do feel like that everything can be bought really, you know. Information can be put out there very easily, and so if you have enough money then you know your ad is going to be pushed to the top. I do feel like that capitalism can sometimes be the root of all evil.

Interviewer: I agree. So, who do you think makes the online system? And do you think that they control the information online and in our apps?

Participant: I don't know if there is one person or one entity. I've never really thought about who the person in control may be. But maybe it's not so much one or two people, instead being the people who have the money who are in control. You know like Gates and you know all the other rich people, like Zuckerberg. That's what it is, is that it's those who have money can. I've never really thought about it like that, but I would say that it probably does have to do with money and power.

Interviewer: Wealth changes people, that's for sure.

Participant: Yep.

Interviewer: The Internet is full of stories that divide people all over the world. Some of these topics include the coronavirus, the capital riot stopped, the steel Black Lives, matter of climate change, and political parties. If you had the final decision, how would you like schools and or the news to talk about these topics and would you want the schools and news to talk about what controls the Internet and how it is seen about these topics?

Participant: I mean, to be fair, you should show both sides to every story. This is a

hard question. I mean, the more information, the better. But then how do you put it all online? It's like with COVID and the vaccinations. So, say that someone in my life is a scientist. That person helped make the vaccines, even if she tried to explain to me the teeniest little bit of information, I would get so lost. You know cause I'm like, can you help me explain to someone who is afraid of the vaccine, in layman's terms. She's been doing this for like 8 years and she went to college to further her education and then has been rising through her ranks in her field. But then there are people out there saying, well, vaccines aren't safe because of this. Well, but she's the scientist, and so do we believe the doctor, the nurse, or the scientist, you know. But then can you interview all three of those people? Yes, but they all three, have a different opinions, but they're all three very intelligent people. They all went through schooling, but who do you believe you know? So, I don't really know that there is a true answer to the question that you just asked me. Such as, Instead of it being a democratic show or a Republican show, can we just have a (neutral) show, not colored in any lens but where people are (neutral)? I don't know. That's a very philosophical question.

Interviewer: Yes. That question was hard for me to answer personally too, so you the only one. OK, so we have a few more questions.

Participant: Yes. OK.

Interviewer: So, when you're thinking about your own personal social media accounts, what type of content do you post and make visible to others online for them to see? And then what type of content do you try to hide from others online?

Participant: I used to post a lot more frequently but then I was called out by another colleague on something that I had posted. So, I try not to post anything that is going to be misconstrued or seen from a different light. I've been noticing that I haven't been posting much of anything because I feel like everything can be viewed from two different ways. Basically, the only things I share online now are motivational memes and suicide awareness. I guess I do hide more of my personal life from the Internet now, whereas I used to be a little bit more open with pictures and you know, checking in places and things. I mean not like crazy but I used to do it more frequently and I probably haven't done it in about a year now.

Interviewer: Great, thanks so still regarding your own personal social media accounts and platforms. Can you tell me a time that you were being careful about what you choose to like a React online? This is because of how it might affect the content that shows up on your social media feeds.

Participant: I don't know that I have not clicked on something based upon the content that it shows me. Usually, I don't like or do some form of content because of how it

might be construed in the community or at work, but usually it's not based upon the content that I would receive.

Interviewer: Great. So, I can remember a time when I was scrolling through Instagram, exploring and it noticed the type of content that I was interested in. I then noticed that my own personal Instagram feed started to show that content. After realizing this, I can remember trying to influence my account by liking, searching and commenting on preferable content. Can you tell me a time where you tried to influence or change the content that you saw on social media, YouTube or Google? And what exactly did you do to change your content?

Participant: It seems like I see the same people on my newsfeed frequently. So, sometimes they mix it up. I'll search for people that I want to start seeing again. It seems like that works, so that's really the only time that I can recall doing that. If I want to be more aware of whatever is going on in life, then I'll Google them or search for them on Facebook. But that's the only time that I've ever tried to manipulate my feed.

Interviewer: OK, so let's say that you decided to look something up on the Internet because you were unsure of something, but the information you received was unsatisfactory. So how did you adjust your searches to possibly change the search results that you got?

Participant: I usually use the advanced settings. You know if it's something in particular. I search for a lot of pictures, posters and whatever, along with things I need to use for work. So, then I'll use the advanced search. But then I'll use a search engine; you know if I'm searching for an article or something like that then I'll just reword it or word it differently. Usually based upon what information I get back. Sometimes when you search up something and then two or three different options come up, where it's like it could be this or it could be this or it could be this one. Well then, I'll click on one of those or find a phrase that's more suitable in that article and then research it that way.

Interviewer: Great so can you tell me a time that when you double checked the information online to verify if it was credible? Before you double check the information, what made you suspicious? What steps did you take to see if the information was correct and what did your findings make you feel about the website?

Participant: Usually if I find something not credible, then usually I will Google it to see what other articles are saying. And then I'll talk with other people and then, based upon what my research finds out, maybe I'll gather more information on it. That will sometimes change our mind about a particular site like, I shouldn't trust that one anymore.

Interviewer: OK, so regarding that, can you think of a time where you were talking to

Ohio Participant 2 (White/Female/37), Interviewed on October 25, 2021

your friends, family or coworkers and they mentioned a dish trusting a website or the information from a website? Did they double-check the information and try to see if it was credible?

Participant: I'm going to say that they would normally, or that they would drop it and then not re-share it. You know what I mean? because there's been times where it's like, oh, I don't really believe that and I just don't fact check it. Then I don't share it. I don't say anything so either they consult someone else, or they just don't share it.

Interviewer: OK, so do you think the media should cover stories about fake news or disinformation and should they do more to teach people about how to verify that the credibility of information that there's that they get to see?

Participant: Absolutely. I really think the news media needs to be more responsible and teach people more. I understand that it's about journalism, and I've got to protect my sources and things like that. But how can we Fact Check and how can we check your sources if we don't know what your sources are? Like, how can we trust you? And so, right now we don't trust the media. I mean, years ago you used to be able to trust the media, and maybe we still can. But because of things that have happened in the world, now we feel like we can't. It's kind of like with me. People automatically assume that I'm good at my job and I'm glad that they do. But not everyone is good at their job, so you know you do run into that where you're like, Oh OK, and can I really trust this person? It's another tough situation, but I do believe that the media could do more to at least teach people how to Fact Check them or teach people how to do a little bit more of their own research. For instance, I know that there is something in suicide awareness, that the media should never post on how someone completed suicide. Whether by gun or by hanging. Because it can glorify it and cause other people to want to complete suicide that way. I believe that it is irresponsible when they do that. So, I do think that there are certain things that the media could do better with.

Interviewer: Great and I just wanted to tell you, you're great at your job, so don't think differently.

Participant: Thank you.

Interviewer: The term fake news seems to be everywhere right now. What are your thoughts about it? What is it and where is it out and who does? Fake news target?

Participant: Oh Lord, another loaded question. So yes, I think fake news does exist. I do not believe that they are setting out to give us some information that is incorrect or not factual. I really don't believe that. I believe that they are just doing their job. They're just trying to impart information. I do think though, that sometimes they get put between a rock and a hard place just like other people do in their jobs. You know, we all do, and

so sometimes they have to report on things that they don't want to report on. So, I do believe that it probably would be hard for some of them to leave. There's objections at home. I mean after all we are all human. I don't believe that for the most part they're doing it on purpose. But I do believe that it is everywhere. And it's not necessarily that it's news, it's just that it's people's opinions, and people are trying to call it news. It's almost like fake news, it's just a fad that we're going through. And that's just what we call it. Did you get what I mean?

Interviewer: I did. So, do you think that those are certain type of people who are vulnerable to fake news? And what do you think it means for democracy?

Participant: Yes, I do believe that. No, I don't want this to sound very harsh or anything. I do believe that people who are uneducated who don't have the mental faculties to be able to do that research to read the entire article, to understand the entire article. Yeah, I mean there are all these websites out there. I mean, anyone can make a website. There are free websites you know, and there are free of this and you know. And then people share it. It's just people believe what they want to believe, you know. And then they share it and then it just becomes this wildfire. But I do believe that it does hit the uneducated population heavily. No, I don't want this to turn into a political debate either. And I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but I feel like sometimes we follow people that may be good business people but aren't good moral people.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: OK so I have just two or I just have two questions off for you.

Participant: OK. This is a very tough research project I believe. I'm curious as to what you hope to achieve with this research, because I don't know that this problem could ever be fixed without just breaking the entire Internet and general. Uhm, because you can only lead a horse to water, you can't force it to drink, you know. I don't know that we would ever be able to fix this Stitch Fix the problems that are out there really, you know, because they're always that tier of people or that that group of people that doesn't want to listen. I think there's people out there that just want to make the world a hectic and stir up problems.

Participant: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: OK, so lastly, what is the date?

Participant: October 25th, 2021

Ohio Participant 2 (White/Female/37), Interviewed on October 25, 2021

Interviewer: Your state of residence.

Participant: Ohio.

Interviewer: Your age.

Participant: 37

Interviewer: Your gender.

Participant: Female

Interviewer: Your race.

Participant: White

Interviewer: And your highest level of education completed.

Participant: Master's degree.

Interviewer: Alright, great, that concludes our interview.

Participant: OK.