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Fall 10-25-2021

### West Virginia Participant 12 (White/female/20), interviewed on October 25, 2021

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#### Recommended Citation

"West Virginia Participant 12 (White/female/20), interviewed on October 25, 2021" (2021). *0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy Project*. 6.

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# 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/](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/](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](mailto: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 12 (White/Female/20), interviewed on October 25, 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.

**Participant:** I was probably 10 years old when I first made my Facebook. Facebook was the first social media I ever had and was the only social media I had for years. Uhm, I seen all kinds of news pop up on my Facebook feed coming from different areas of sports, presidents, local news, and really, any kind of news.

**Interviewer:** OK, so on a normal day, how do you use the Internet?

**Participant:** I use it for school. Uhm, I use Blackboard. I'll use Google to look up a definition. Uhm, I use Facebook, I get on Instagram, and I use Tik Tok a lot.

**Interviewer:** So, with that being said, what type of websites do you visit?

**Participant:** Blackboard, my MU, and scholarly websites if I'm doing an article critique.

**Interviewer:** What did you search online for within the last week?

**Participant:** I had to search on YouTube a video for my history class. It was heroin in our hometown I had to watch that video on YouTube. And I had to search for definitions for a class. And then I had to search for pictures for a class.

**Interviewer:** What websites do you visit to pass time when you are bored? And what did those websites do and why do you visit those particular websites?

**Participant:** Facebook and Instagram. The most I visit are those websites because I have friends and family on there that I don't get to see on a daily basis or a weekly basis, and I can keep up with them by seeing the pictures that they post, the status that they post, and you can even message people on there just to really keep in touch with everyone.

**Interviewer:** Thinking about these questions, what do you think other people are doing? Both people you know and people you don't know? How do they pass time online?

**Participant:** I feel like they do the same as me, they want to keep in touch with their family and friends that they're not able to see on a daily or weekly basis. Uhm, meeting new people. Seeing the news from at home and away from like if you have family away, they can see and keep up with both news.

**Interviewer:** I would have to agree with that. I think that is very true. What types of devices do you have that you use to access the Internet like phones, tablets, laptops and which one do you use the most and which one do you use the least?

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**Participant:** I have an iPhone and Apple computer and an iPad. I use my phone the most for social aspects and I use my iPad the least.

**Interviewer:** What social media or forums like Twitter or Reddit do you use? Why and for what do you use them for? Please share any that you tried to avoid and your reasons for avoiding them.

**Participant:** Uhm, I use Twitter sometimes, but I also tried to avoid it a lot because I feel like Twitter is a lot of drama and people just wanting to say mean things on Twitter.

**Interviewer:** I would agree I don't like using Twitter much. Uhm, when thinking about people you likely disagree with, please describe which forums you think they would likely use and why.

**Participant:** I feel like those people would more than likely use Twitter because twitter is more of a place that people pretty much bash people. Instead of Facebook is more like the friendly side of things, and twitter is like people are always putting their open opinions on Twitter about people. Uh, about events happening in the world. Anything that's happening in my hometown. They think that they should put their open opinion on Twitter whether it's nice or mean.

**Interviewer:** Describe for me what you do when you want to find out something factual, like how do people around you also find out if something is factual?

**Participant:** Uh, I most likely use Google. I will look at search my question and I will look at different websites, not just go to one website and believe the first thing I read. I will go to different websites, read different people's opinions. I never believe or find factual things, on Wikipedia I might use that as like a background thing, just to kind of build on something, or to make more questions, but I like to look at scholarly websites. And I feel like people that I don't know that we're looking for stuff to know I feel like they would do the same thing. I don't just go to the first thing that they read and say, oh, this is how it is. I think people all people read more than one thing to figure out what they want to know.

**Interviewer:** I would definitely agree. Now this question I'm about to ask has multiple parts to it, so I'm going to split it up. That way it's not so long and you don't get like confused.

**Participant:** Ok.

**Interviewer:** 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, and what made you distrust its author or its purpose.

**Participant:** Um I came across a thing on Facebook. It's actually not been too long ago

about religions and what different religions do and saying that one religion is the only way to get to heaven and the other religions is not.

**Interviewer:** And can you share a time when you talk to your friend or family about that such content?

**Participant:** Yes, me and my mom had a conversation about it and, uh, we Google different religions and read about different religions. And then we also looked at the Bible that we have for the church, that we go to and based it off of what other religions Bible set and just compared the words to them and how. The things that they do compared to the things that we do in our church.

**Interviewer:** And tell me about a time where you saw this content being discussed on the news. Doesn't matter if it's like local or like worldwide.

**Participant:** I feel like it's a pretty hot topic on the news, especially for like worldwide because here where we are from, we have a completely different religion from say across the seas, so they'll be talking about what's going on across seas and how they're handling it, and the activities that they do. The holidays that they um celebrate with their religion, comparing them to the holidays that we celebrate with our religion and how we celebrate them.

**Interviewer:** If there are social media sites that you think are untrustworthy, and what makes them untrustworthy to you.

**Participant:** The ones that I find most untrustworthy, are the ones that any person is able to get on there and add their opinion, I find it that whenever people are able to do that, they are not putting facts on there they're actually just putting the answer that they want put out in the world or they want the people to think is the correct way to do something. It's just more of opinion-based website instead of a more facts-based website.

**Interviewer:** Tell me about a time your experience finding conspiracy theories.

**Participant:** We actually just study one time in one of my classes and we had to Google different conspiracy theories and talk about them. And how, if we believed that they actually happened, or if it didn't happen or if they were gonna happen.

**Interviewer:** If applicable, please describe a time when you shared content that you thought was true, but later learned that it was not true.

**Participant:** Uh I did a presentation on Colorado, and I had to put all kinds of facts talking about the state of Colorado. And I learned that not everything that I said about Colorado was completely factual, so I actually went back and read and figured it out on my own because of the questions that were asked after my presentation.

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**Interviewer:** Interesting. If applicable, please describe a time when you shared things that you knew were not true.

**Participant:** I shared things that weren't true um just to get in assignment done or just get that grade completed. Or really, just make my paper or my presentation juicier, and to be more fulfilling.

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

**Participant:** Um if the question is simple or similar to what you have in the beginning of both of your sentences, Google has already put a question out there based on my first question. So, that could lead up to my next question or if you scroll down a little bit on Google once you put your question in, you have those like four or five extra questions that Google might ask that you would want to know so that you can click on it, find information on that question too.

**Interviewer:** Describe a time when you notice that search results seemed somehow tailored to you. If anywhere where on the news have you seen this discussed?

**Participant:** Um I feel like sometimes that I would talk about something, or I would say an item and then they would pop up. I have seen and heard this and discussed that it has happened to other people that they would, for instance, say they wanted a pair of Crocs. And then they would get on their Google and they were typing something but Crocs would come in there somehow or they would get on their Facebook and Crocs would pop up. And that has happened to me personally.

**Interviewer:** How do you decide what personal information you will provide to social media companies like YouTube or Google?

**Participant:** I personally don't put a lot of personal information and social websites like Google and Facebook and different things. I will put my name and I put my school email but for my birthday I'd lie about my birthday 'cause I don't want my birthday out there and I never put my phone number on their 'cause I don't want anyone and everyone to be able to access my phone number and know what it is. I really just put the basics.

**Interviewer:** I do the same as well. Tell me the ways you try to protect your personal information online.

**Participant:** I have all my online apps private so that when I post something on my online things only my friends are able to see it or you have to send me a request to make me accept your friend request be able to see my things. Not just everyone can click on my profile and see everything that I say or everything that I do. You have to be my friend to be able to see my stuff.

**Interviewer:** What do you think others do around you?

**Participant:** I feel like some people are the same way as me and they have their things private just because they don't want people that they don't know looking at their stuff. But then again, I feel like there's more people that have everything on public then they do private. I think there's more people out there that just want everyone to see what they're doing and everyone to see what they're saying and the pictures that they're posting.

**Interviewer:** What have you heard about protecting your identity or personal information on the news or heard from your family and friend's discussions?

**Participant:** I have heard that it is very important that one little piece of information someone could take, like a hacker. Someone can take one little piece of information of yours and be able to log into all your accounts, no matter they can go from your Facebook account to your bank, to your bank account and completely just take everything and change the passwords.

**Interviewer:** How have you responded to how the Internet companies try to customize or control what you see on their platforms like in Google searches?

**Participant:** If they're controlling something that I'm trying to see because they're not giving me the direct answer that I need on Google, I will Scroll down and look at the other questions possible. But then, if those aren't there either, I will try rewording my question into Google to see if I can find the answer that I'm looking for. I would just go to a different search engine like Bing or something like that. Then maybe they'll have the answer.

**Interviewer:** Uhm, what have you heard other people discuss about this?

**Participant:** I've heard that other people have this same problem and they have also reworded their question into Google to get the answer that they want. You can break it into like a smaller question or just completely reword it into a way that makes the question completely different, but you can read in between the lines or read a whole website about it and find your answer.

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

**Participant:** I would say to them that they need to watch what websites they are on. Make sure you look at your URL at the top because a lot of times you can tell you if you're on a fake website or not. Like make sure it's like an ".edu" website.... I mean, ".org." Just look at your URLs. Look at your wording and how things are worded. And look for a website that you personally are able to type an answer to a question on. And I

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would tell them to avoid this by not using Wikipedia and making sure that they're on scholarly websites and making sure to backtrack what they're reading.

**Interviewer:** What do you think determines what you see online or how things are spread? How does it work? Who benefits from it, and who do you think made this system? What do you think? Controls information online or in our apps?

**Participant:** I think that what we see on the Internet is what the world wants us to see, and I think a lot of things are monitored. By the owners or by the people that are above us after they watch it closely and what is being posted if they do not want it to be on there, they will take it off themselves and they will report it. Uhm, what was the last ending of that question?

**Interviewer:** It was, what do you think controls information online or in our apps?

**Participant:** So, like I said in the beginning, I think the world really controls it and the people that are above everyone. And I think they just... filter is the word you could say... filter the words in the news that is out to put out what they don't want to be put out and told will keep top secret. But what they want the world to know will be let out into the news to be told.

**Interviewer:** Now this is another 4–5-part question. So, I'm going to read it like in different parts.

**Participant:** Ok.

**Interviewer:** The Internet is full of stories that divided people about things like coronavirus, the capital riots stopped the steal, Antifa, Black Lives Matter, climate change, QAnon, and political parties. If you were to decide what you would like, schools or the news to talk about what controls the Internet and what a scene.

**Participant:** Um I feel like right now COVID is the big thing that is all over the news covered is controlling our schools not only just our colleges but our elementary, middle schools, and high schools. It's controlling workplaces. It's controlling our grocery stores. It's controlling everything and I feel that the Internet you're being told what they want you to know you have to do for, for instance, with the vaccine. Some places are making it a mandate to get a vaccine, and if you don't get it back vaccine, you have to be tested so often whether it's weekly, whether it's every two weeks, or whether it's random if you're not vaccinated, you are being picked apart because you're not vaccinated of your choice and I feel like that is a big control thing because they want you to get the vaccine. So, they're gonna do anything in their power to push you to get that vaccine, and to take it.

**Interviewer:** I totally understand and agree with where you're coming from. If you happen to see stories about “Stop the Steal” and the capital riot, what do you make of why protesters were there? Why do you think some were dressed in costumes like

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hunters or trappers? Uhm, or with animal pelts on them and with Norris tattoos or as Roman soldiers. Uhm, or like Cowboys for Trump like those kinds of groups. What does this mean for stories about voter fraud and voting rights? Where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

**Participant:** I feel like this is a way that people are getting their point across that they're standing up for what they think is right and what they think is wrong or what they think is right. Some things with the riot could have been handled differently. But, I think they were standing their ground and taking up for their country and how they believe that this is wrong, so this should be done this way you're not the way that they were handling it. And I feel like they were really calling out saying that voter fraud happened. I feel like that was a really a main topic of the capital riot.

**Interviewer:** If you happen to hear about the QAnon movement, what do you make of how they talk about themselves and what others say about them? Why do you think we hear so many conflicting stories? Where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

**Participant:** I think we hear so many conflicting stories because so many people have different opinions. Not everyone is going to be on the same page and agree with everything that someone has to say. There's always gonna be one or more people that aren't gonna agree with you or disagree, or they might not completely disagree but disagree with parts of the things that they say and what was any of that question. I'm sorry.

**Interviewer:** Uhm, where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

**Participant:** I learned this on the news 'cause you can see one side of the story on the news. But then, you also could see another side of the story from the Internet, and it means to me that it shows that not everyone is the same that different people believe in a different way and have different opinions on different topics and how things should have been handled and different things like that.

**Interviewer:** If you happen to be following the story on the coronavirus, what sense do you make of the different information out there about whether people should get vaccinated or wear masks?

**Participant:** I feel like it's pushed one way or another. I feel like if you are vaccinated or you believe in getting vaccinated, those people are going to push you and try to encourage you with anything that they can to say, hey, this is good for you like you need this. And then you also got those people that don't want the vaccination because they don't trust it. So they're trying to say hey you need to do your research. You need to look up what's in this vaccine, what your side effects will be. You shouldn't be getting that.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think we hear so many conflicting stories and what do you think causes different opinions?

**Participant:** I think the Internet has a lot to do with the different opinions and people. What they read they instantly believed, and if it's a person, a celebrity that they read it from, they already are looking up to that person. So, they're going to go along with their opinion and agree with what they have to say about a topic. Or you can also look watch the news and. What they say just because it's WSAZ or the news people are going to believe it because it's coming from the news and it's on TV.

**Interviewer:** Uh, where did you learn this and what does that mean to you?

**Participant:** Learned this by just watching the news and reading different headlines that will pop up on my phone as like a notification or something like that. It means to me that paying attention to your surroundings and reading headlines and watching the news about what's happening in the world and in your hometown is important.

**Interviewer:** If you happen to be following the coverage on the House, Select Committee to investigate the capital riot. What sense do you make of how Republicans and Democrats disagree over the scope and purpose of the committee?

**Participant:** They are completely disagreeing. One side will say they want it this way and then the other side is saying they want it this way, but they can't come to an agreement on it, they're saying well. This was ok to do, but then your other side is saying no, this is not ok to do.

**Interviewer:** Where did you learn this and what does that mean to you?

**Participant:** I'm also learning this just by watching the news too. Uhm, watching the news and listening to them talk about the headlines and showing different clips of what is going on. It means what it means to me is. That I know what's going on above me like I know what's going on in the world outside of my little town.

**Interviewer:** If you happen to see stories about Black Lives Matter protest and Antifa, what do you make of the protests after George Floyd was killed?

**Participant:** I feel like it has completely got out of hand that all of us matter. Uhm I feel like it has really just skyrocketed since the time that George Ford has been killed and anything and everything or is being taken in offence or taken in the wrong way. People are saying mean things that shouldn't be, and I feel like that the world and the people that we are around need to look at the big picture.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think some buildings were burned or other property was destroyed?

**Participant:** I feel like it was done out of anger and to try to prove a point.

**Interviewer:** Why did protesters denounced the police?

**Participant:** I think it was more of a like “Hey, this is who it is. Uhm, this is who did this. We need to go against this guy. We're not going to like this guy anymore. And this guy needs to have charges pressed against him.”

**Interviewer:** Where did you learn this and what does it mean to you?

**Participant:** I also learned this um on my phone on social media. Just by reading different topics and doing my own research on it. And it means to me that again everyone has their own opinion and no matter what you say, it's not gonna matter. No matter what we as people say it's not going to matter. It's going to matter what the ones above us say and what the ones above us want to do.

**Interviewer:** I totally agree with that. Uh, but it's really about what other people who are in charge and have money want to do. Uhm, what content do you post online? What type of content do you try to make visible for others to see? And what do you try to hide from people saying?

**Participant:** I'm mostly just posting what I do and like my life of the main events that I do. Whether it's my first day of school. What I do on the weekends. UM, my friends. And what I don't post or what I try to hide from posting is my opinion on things I don't like to put myself out there with my opinion. Just so that I don't stir a pot that doesn't need to be stirred, just kind of keep my opinion to myself and my close friends.

**Interviewer:** 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 and content in your social media feed like on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik T.O.K. ?

**Participant:** Uhm, yeah, so especially on Tik T.O.K. because I feel like it's a big thing. People were constantly making different videos about different topics and about their opinions. And you have to watch what you like because you're not wanting to upset someone else that sees you like that topic, but they don't agree with it. So, then they're gonna be mad at you. So, you gotta be careful of what you do so you don't upset family members or friends.

**Interviewer:** Please tell me about a time when you tried to influence or change the content of what you see on YouTube, Google, Facebook, Instagram Twitter, Tik T.O.K any websites like that.

**Participant:** I'm going to use Tik Tok as my thing again. Because like I said in the previous question, there's always opinions on Tik T.O.K... Different opinions from different people and my opinions, right? In your opinion, it is wrong. And, uh, backing up for a few questions, it goes along with the religious thing. I've seen a lot of religious

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different Tik T.O.K.s on there. And like I said earlier, paper, like if you don't have this religion, you're not going to heaven. Do the one way or no way. They and other people are like you can just believe that he exists or there's no God or something like that. So, then I've tried reaching out and saying hey there is a God like you need to like look into this you need to do research. You need to read the Bible and different things like that.

**Interviewer:** When are you unsatisfied with Internet searches? UM, their result and how do you adjust your search to change the result?

**Participant:** I'm unsatisfied whenever you look up a broad topic, such as like the riots so you can just look up the riots, but then only the bad stuff pops up. You were only looking your only reading about the bad comments or the bad things that happened at the riot not anything good like you didn't see anything about the people that were just there to support and being calm you didn't see the people that or just peacefully doing it. You're always just seeing on one side of the story, and you have to change your question in the search bar to find other parts of the story and other parts of people's opinions.

**Interviewer:** How do you decide if an online source of information is reliable or credible?

**Participant:** Uh, I like to look at the URLs and I also like to look at the bottom of the article. See when it was published, who was it published by and then I will do my research of what that person does. Where that person stands. In their daily life and how much background knowledge that person has on a topic that I've looked up and they're talking about just so I know that I am getting the true facts that I need.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me about a time when you double checked information online to verify if it was credible?

**Participant:** Uhm, yes. I have taken a website and I have actually asked different people. I've asked the professor how they think at this website, if it's credible. Uhm I've done my research on the website itself of how much what people think of what people are saying about the website. The reviews on the website and different things like that.

**Interviewer:** What made you suspicious of that website?

**Participant:** The way that the sentences are structured, there was a lot of grammatical errors in that. There was spelling errors. There is missing commas, things that a credible website wouldn't have that a credible website is. Where a person knows what they're talking about, they're not just trying to ramble something down, they double check it, but this website didn't have that, and it was more of a like a person talking to me.

**Interviewer:** What steps did you take to see if the information in this website was correct?

**Participant:** I went to other websites and read about this certain topic and also took bits and pieces out of that article and also put it in the Google search bar to see what other websites said about it and seeing if it matched with what that website said too.

**Interviewer:** What did your findings make you feel about that website?

**Participant:** My findings when we feel that not all of it was correct. Some of it this person knew what they were talking about, and they were telling you facts, but the other parts. It was not that factual. It was the truth was stretched. It had truth in it and it had facts in it, but they also added on extra things that didn't need to be there or didn't belong there.

**Interviewer:** Please tell me about a time that your friends or family distrusted a website or information on a website. Did they double check that information from a different source to verify if it was credible?

**Participant:** Um yes, they double checked it on several different websites to make sure it was credible, and if it wasn't credible. Uhm, they just forgot about that website completely and moved onto the credible website.

**Interviewer:** How do you think the media should cover stories about fake news or disinformation? What should the media do to teach people how to verify the credible information?

**Participant:** I think the media should be able to tell you that it this is fake news. This is not a credible story this is not a credible website and I feel like they should talk about the steps that a person needs to go through to do there. Correct research and to be able to know how, how to find things that are facts and how to pick out the things that are the added pieces or the pieces that are just a personal opinion.

**Interviewer:** The term fake news seems to be everywhere right now and tell me your thoughts about what it is, where it's at, who fake news targets, and who is more vulnerable to fake news.

**Participant:** I feel like there could be fake news on any topic that's going on in the world, but I feel like the elderly people in our society today or more vulnerable. To fake news because they're the ones who see what's on the Internet. They're automatically going to believe that it's the truth. They are not doing uh, they don't know how to properly do their research. They don't properly know how to look up. They don't have to probably reword. The different sentences into Google to find out the right answer. So, I feel that fake news is used a lot to make the elderly believe that it is true.

**Interviewer:** What does fake news mean for our democracy today?

**West Virginia Participant 12 (White/Female/20), interviewed on October 25, 2021**

**Participant:** Uhm, I think it means really just what you wanna think it means. I think it's a lot of what people want to hear and not what people what people need to hear. I think it's more of a cushioned way of telling you something has happened.

**Interviewer:** Is fake news a real problem?

**Participant:** I think it is a real problem because you are getting people to think about the fake news is true and that especially like I said in the earlier question, your elderly people are suffering from your fake news.

**Interviewer:** What are the politics of it all?

**Participant:** The politics of it all is I think it's, uh whether you agree with your Democrats or Republicans. I think whoever is saying the fake news, which whenever they are is decide that they're going to lean towards and tell you, and I feel like it's also a lot of your opinion-based thing of how someone feels.

**Interviewer:** Uhm, what new laws or constitutional amendments might we need for the Internet age?

**Participant:** I think there needs to be an age limit on how old you can be to read a certain thing on the Internet, or you need to be a certain age to make a Facebook. I think there are a lot of it has to do with maturity level because you're gonna get your young 8- to 10-year-olds and they're gonna get a Facebook and they're gonna read fake news. And they're like the elderly, they don't know how to reword. A question or they don't know how to do their research to find out if this is credible or not, so they're automatically believing the fake news, and then they're going to go on and talk about it at school or to their grandparents because they think it's true.

**Interviewer:** That is a very good point, and please offer some examples of where you have seen fake news, who are the people who publish it? What are they trying to get from it, and what should be done about it.

**Participant:** And I think a lot of your fake news is on Facebook and the people who are publishing it are the people who want you to believe that it's fake news so uhm for an example uh, you could use an event happened in the town or whatever, but then they haven't could have happened, but they're adding also adding extra detail to that fake news to make it sound like it's worse than what it is and I think what they're trying to get from it is attention. All they want is attention. And the wanting attention and like the carrying of people to share it and get more likes and what should be done about it, I think it needs to be monitored more and not everyone should be able to share things on news websites or be able to put your opinion on the Internet as in like on Google, I think it should be published as facts, not personal opinion.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else you would like to share?

**West Virginia Participant 12 (White/Female/20), interviewed on October 25, 2021**

**Participant:** No there is not.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so can you tell me what today's date is?

**Participant:** October 25th, 2021

**Interviewer:** Your state of residence.

**Participant:** West Virginia.

**Interviewer:** Your age.

**Participant:** 20

**Interviewer:** Your gender.

**Participant:** Female

**Interviewer:** Your race.

**Participant:** White

**Interviewer:** And your highest level of education completed.

**Participant:** High school.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for your time and your cooperation.

**Interviewer:** And I will be ending this meeting now.

**Participant:** Ok, thank you.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.