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0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy
Project

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**Kentucky Participant 1 (White/Male/28), interviewed on October
23, 2022**

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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:	8/24/22
	Expires on:	9/15/23
	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/fake_news_information_lit/).

You will be asked a series of 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 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 (First Year Seminar) small group, the FYS graduate assistant and the professor. These people will use the recording to verify

Subject's Initials _____

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

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.

You will be given a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

SIGNATURES

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 _____

Kentucky Participant 1 (White/Male/28), interviewed on October 23rd, 2022

The participant agreed to the terms of consent.

Interviewer: Tell me 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 started using it about six or seven years ago, and I'd say news popped up immediately.

Interviewer: Okay, on a normal day, how do you use the Internet?

Participant: Mainly for sports, catching up on that kind of stuff. YouTube.

Interviewer: Okay, what types of websites do you visit?

Participant: NFL, ESPN, YouTube, Tik Tok, Twitter.

Interviewer: What did you search for online in the last week that you can remember?

Participant: Mainly sports stuff, fantasy, football, NFL, that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: What websites do you visit to pass the time when you are bored?

Participant: Probably ESPN and/or YouTube and Tik Tok.

Interviewer: Okay, thinking about these questions, what do you think other people are doing, both people you know and people you don't? How do you think other people pass time online?

Participant: I would say YouTube and other social media platforms.

Interviewer: Okay, what types of devices do you use to access the Internet?

Participant: My phone and TV.

Interviewer: Which do you use the most and the least?

Participant: I use my phone the most and probably TV the least.

Interviewer: Okay, what social media or forums do you use? So like Twitter, Reddit.

Participant: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit.

Interviewer: When, why, or for what do you use them?

Participant: Mainly to keep up with family and sports.

Interviewer: Do you have any that you try to avoid?

Participant: No, not really.

Interviewer: When thinking about people you likely disagree with, please describe which forms you think they likely use and why.

Participant: Probably Facebook. Just because I feel like a lot of misinformation is spread on there.

Interviewer: Could you describe for me what you do when you want to find out something factual?

Participant: I use Google and check multiple sources.

Interviewer: Okay and how do you think people around you find out something factual?

Participant: I'd say the same thing, check multiple sources.

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

Participant: There was a time that people said that Mike Tomlin, the coach of the Steelers, had said something that seemed very political and not something that he would say. I looked it up and the only outlet that was reporting it was the one that posted it on Facebook and nobody else was reporting it, and it ended up being false.

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me 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: I can't think of anything in particular.

Interviewer: Okay. Have you noticed any time that the search results seemed to be tailored to you or the ads were tailored to you?

Participant: Yes, all the time. If I look up something like clothes or a jersey or anything, it will definitely pop up as an ad on YouTube or Facebook for sure.

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

Participant: I'll usually just give them the bare minimum like first and last name.

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

Kentucky Participant 1 (White/Male/28), interviewed on October 23rd, 2022

Participant: I'm okay with it. I feel like all companies do that kind of stuff. So, it's kind of expected.

Interviewer: Have you heard others discussing this?

Participant: No, not really.

Interviewer: Okay, 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?

Participant: I would say the way it spreads is by people just trusting one source, like Facebook or Instagram, and thinking that it's factual. I'm not sure how exactly to avoid it other than checking other sources.

Interviewer: Okay. What do you think determines what is seen online or how things spread? Like how does it work and who does it benefit?

Participant: I would say most likely traffic, like viral things, how many clicks something gets and that kind of stuff, it benefits the companies that it's going for.

Interviewer: Okay. So, for this question it's wanting us to give you stories that you might have seen in the news and then describe what you've seen about it.

Participant: Okay.

Interviewer: What have you seen about the coronavirus?

Participant: A lot of torn information, one saying one thing, one saying the other.

Interviewer: Have you heard anything about the capital riot?

Participant: A little bit, but not a whole lot.

Interviewer: Okay, what about Black Lives Matter?

Participant: I've seen a little bit about it, but not a whole lot to really be educated about it.

Interviewer: What content do you usually post online? Like what type of content do you try to make visible for others to see, and what type of content do you try to hide from others?

Participant: I don't usually share, so I wouldn't say that I hide anything if I do share, it's mostly just sports related.

Interviewer: Can you remember a time when you were careful about what you chose to like

Kentucky Participant 1 (White/Male/28), interviewed on October 23rd, 2022

online because of how it might affect the visibility of others, people's contributions and content in your social media feed?

Participant: No, not that I can think of.

Interviewer: Tell me about a time when you tried to influence or change the content of what you were seeing on either YouTube or Google.

Participant: I don't know if I've ever have done that.

Interviewer: What about a time when you were unsatisfied with Internet search results, how do you adjust your searches to change the results?

Participant: I just tried to reword it in a different way.

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

Participant: I'm usually look at the reputation of the source and then checking multiple sources and see if they have the same story.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you tell me about a time when you have double checked information online?

Participant: Yeah, the Mike Tomlin situation was one.

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

Participant: Yes, my brother does that all the time with UFC.

Interviewer: Okay. How do you think the media should cover stories about fake news or disinformation? Should the media do more to teach people how to verify the credibility of the information given?

Participant: Yeah, definitely. I think the media should speak out more on what's being spread around and a lot of these false things that people see, and they think that it's a trustworthy news outlet, but it's not, it's just for clicks.

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

Participant: Basically, that it should be investigated more. We should try to make an effort to educate ourselves and do our own research rather than just trusting one source or one little post that we see.

Kentucky Participant 1 (White/Male/28), interviewed on October 23rd, 2022

Interviewer: Okay. Who do you think it targets? Like whom do you think it's vulnerable to?

Participant: I would say people that aren't interested in looking up and checking evidence.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think it's a real problem?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Please offer some examples of where you have seen fake news. Who are the people who published it? What were they trying to get from it, and what should be done about it?

Participant: I've seen it's mainly random people on Facebook more so than anything, and I think it's maybe educating people, more people taking more time to. Not just pick a side because they think that it sounds good and just actually look into it and see what it's all about.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Participant: I don't think so.

Interviewer: So now it's just some questions about you. So, what is today's date?

Participant: It is October 22nd.

Interviewer: What is your state of residence?

Participant: Kentucky.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Participant: 28.

Interviewer: What is your gender?

Participant: Male.

Interviewer: What is your race?

Participant: White.

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

Participant: High school.