The Current State of Fake News

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What IS Fake News?

- 2017 Word of the Year by American Dialect Society
- 23% of Americans say it’s the most annoying phrase (Marist poll)
- Melissa Zimdars’ Categories:
  1. Totally Fake
  2. Misleading and potentially unreliable
  3. Those with “click-baity” headlines
  4. Satire/comedy

Fake news IS NOT new

- Term—first used in the 1890’s (Merriam Webster)
- Yellow journalism

Impact of Technology

Online Impact

- Pew
  - About 90% of Americans get at least some of their news online
  - 40-45% of Americans “often” get their news on a mobile device, like a phone or tablet
  - Mobile devices are increasingly the preferred way to get news, even by those over age 60
- Cathy O’Neill: Weapons of Math Destruction
- Ryan Holiday: Trust Me, I’m Lying (Confessions of a Media Manipulator)
Intersection of News and Entertainment

Bias and Polarization

- Pew
  - All-time high in polarization, even more so than Vietnam War (since Civil War)
  - Expected accuracy of news according to political party
- Check out:
  - Robb Willer’s TED Talk: *How to Have Better Political Conversations*
  - *Willful Blindness: Why We Ignore the Obvious at our Peril* by Margaret Heffernan
- Mediabiasfactcheck.com
- Allsides.com

What Does the Future Hold?

What To Do?

- Circle of Influence
- Remember cyclical nature of things
- Increase media literacy efforts, especially for children
- Be ruthless in holding yourself accountable