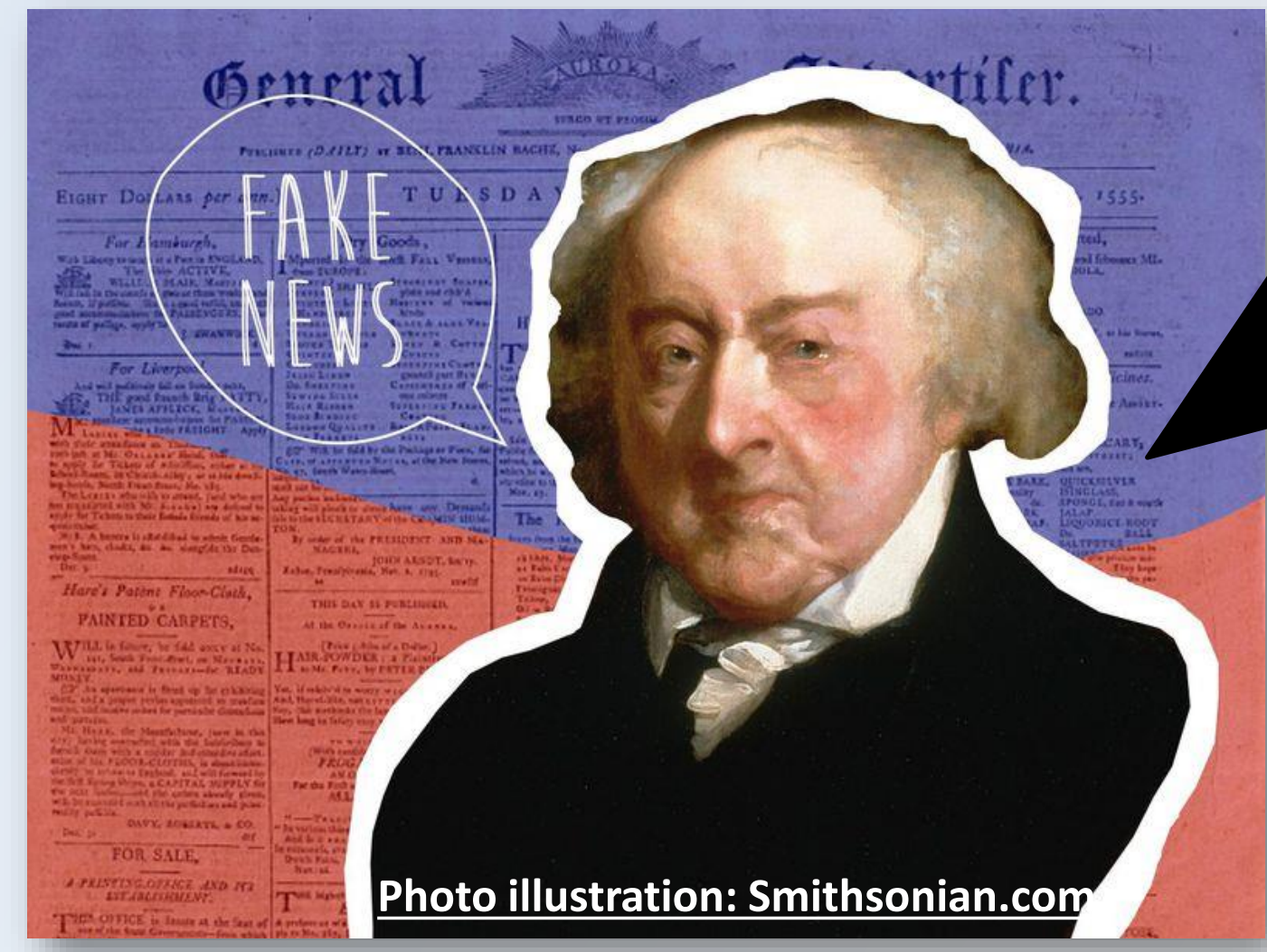


It's As Old As Our Country



"There has been more new error propagated by the press in the last ten years than in an hundred years before 1798."
-- President John Adams

Concerns of Fake News



What's Different Now?

- Social media allows **more participants and contributors**
- Social media **increases accessibility of fake news**
- Social media and partisan media **accelerate decision-making based on "gut reactions"**

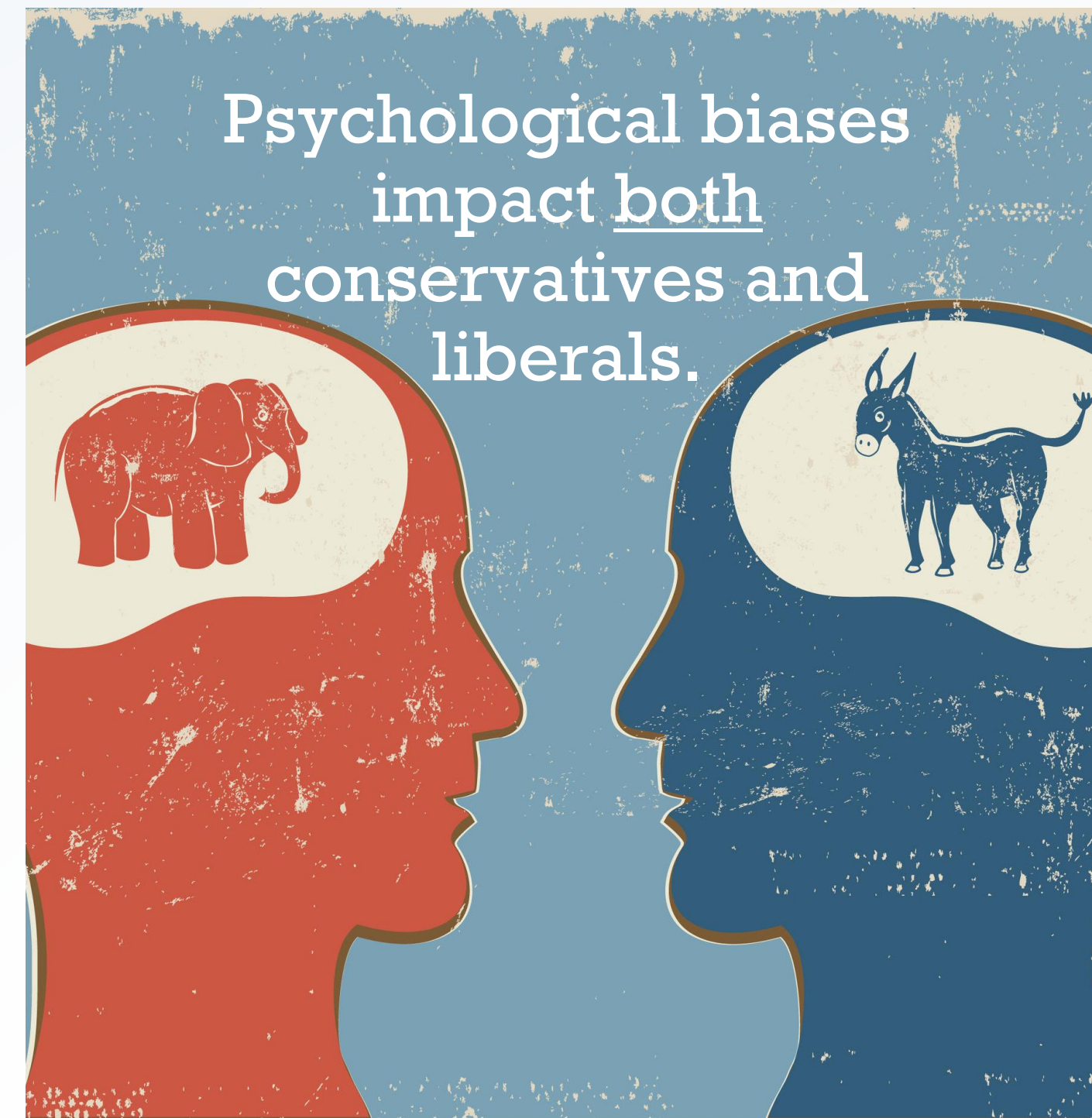


Beyond Fake News: Partisan News!



- Not necessarily fake news
- Sometimes a type of **misleading information**
- **Facts Are Often Manipulated**
- Kernels of truth present, but...
- Leave out key facts
- Dramatize facts
- Use information out-of-context
- **Denigrate credibility of sources that do not align with partisan identity**

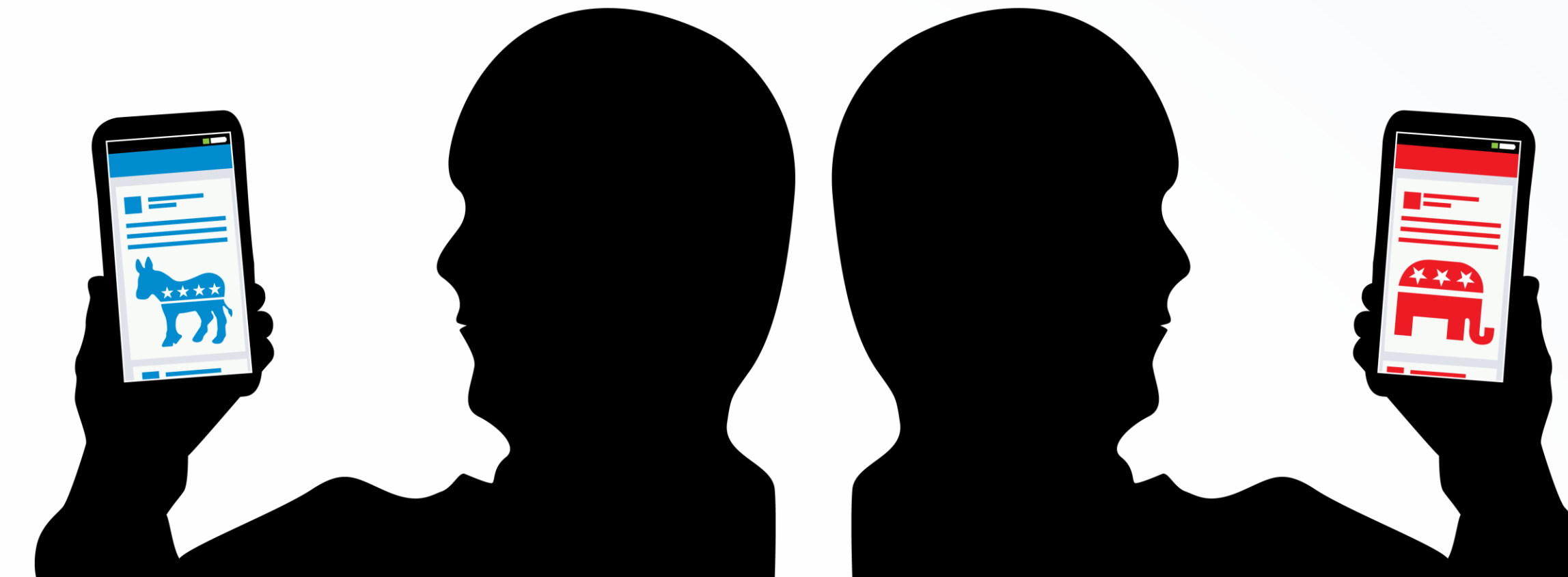
Fake News Defined: False or Misleading Information *Designed to be Spread*



Psychological biases impact **both** conservatives and liberals.

Selective Exposure

- We *favor* exposure to news that confirms our pre-existing views while avoiding contradictory news.
- Increases vulnerability of falling for fake news



The Psychology of Fake News

Why Do We Fall For It?

Social Networks Are Social, For Better or For Worse



- We let our guard down.
- We trust our friends, even when the "source" is not truly that friend → problem of **layered sources**.
- We let our emotions get in our way of critical evaluation of information.

And also highly approved by partisan news and every other social media platform.

Emotional Contagion

- **Anger** is linked with sharing fake news.
- Angry people put their trust in information that makes their political side look good.



Claim Consistency



- If a claim is consistent with other things you know:
- You find that claim easier to understand, Which makes the claim seem more truthful,
- And discourages counterarguing and critical thinking

Importance of Coherence and Explanatory Power



- "Occam's Razor"
- We stick with *plausible and simple*, even if evidence suggests otherwise.
- Not an evidence-based decision-making strategy.

Repeat It Repeat It Repeat It Believe It



...Especially when it comes from people in our social networks
...And people who we know and trust.

Motivated Reasoning

- ✓ Do you care about an issue?
 - ✓ Is the issue part of your identity?
- Then Beware!
- ✓ You're more prone to emotional reactions to information.
 - ✓ It impairs your thinking.
 - ✓ It makes you vulnerable to fake and misleading news.

The Irony of "Intelligence"

50% of Americans agreed with the statement: **"I trust my gut to tell me what's true and what's not."**

- Asking people to "think carefully" is ineffective in combatting psychological biases.

The people who:

- Are better equipped to counter-argue
- Possess higher science literacy (knowledge)
- Have the strongest reasoning skills

...**Tend to be more biased** in their interpretation of new information

Simple “Checklist” Strategies

1. Look at the domain name: “.com.co” are often fake.
2. Have you heard of the website before?
3. Does the website have a clear partisan slant?
4. Does headline or story try to evoke outrage, fear, or hate?
5. Triple check the story with mainstream news sources
6. Look for author attribution and author credibility/qualification statements
7. Check the “about us” tab and contact information
8. Check for mention of adherence to ethical standards of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) or a place to report inaccurate information
9. Check [Snopes](#) for the story, [FactCheck](#), or [PoliticFact](#)
10. When you Google something, LOOK AT WHERE IT'S COMING from

Beyond The Checklist...

Slow Down For Critical (And Uncomfortable) Reflection

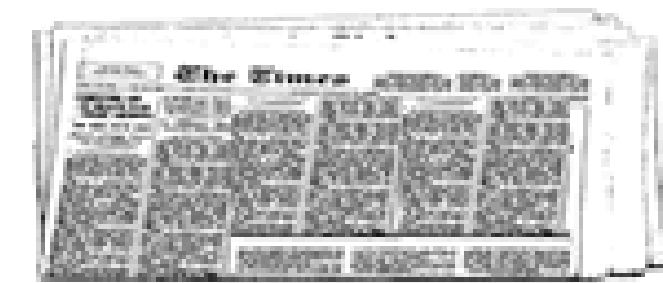


Become Critical Of Your Partisan Glasses

- Partisans who are highly involved in an issue see neutral news coverage of that issue as bias against their side.

- This perception is dependent on the reach of the news media outlet, with larger media outlets being perceived as more bias compared to smaller media outlets.

Hostile Media Effect



Become Critical Of Your Emotional or “Gut” Reactions



Fake News Defined: False or Misleading Information *Designed to be Spread*

Become Critical Of Your Partisan News Consumption

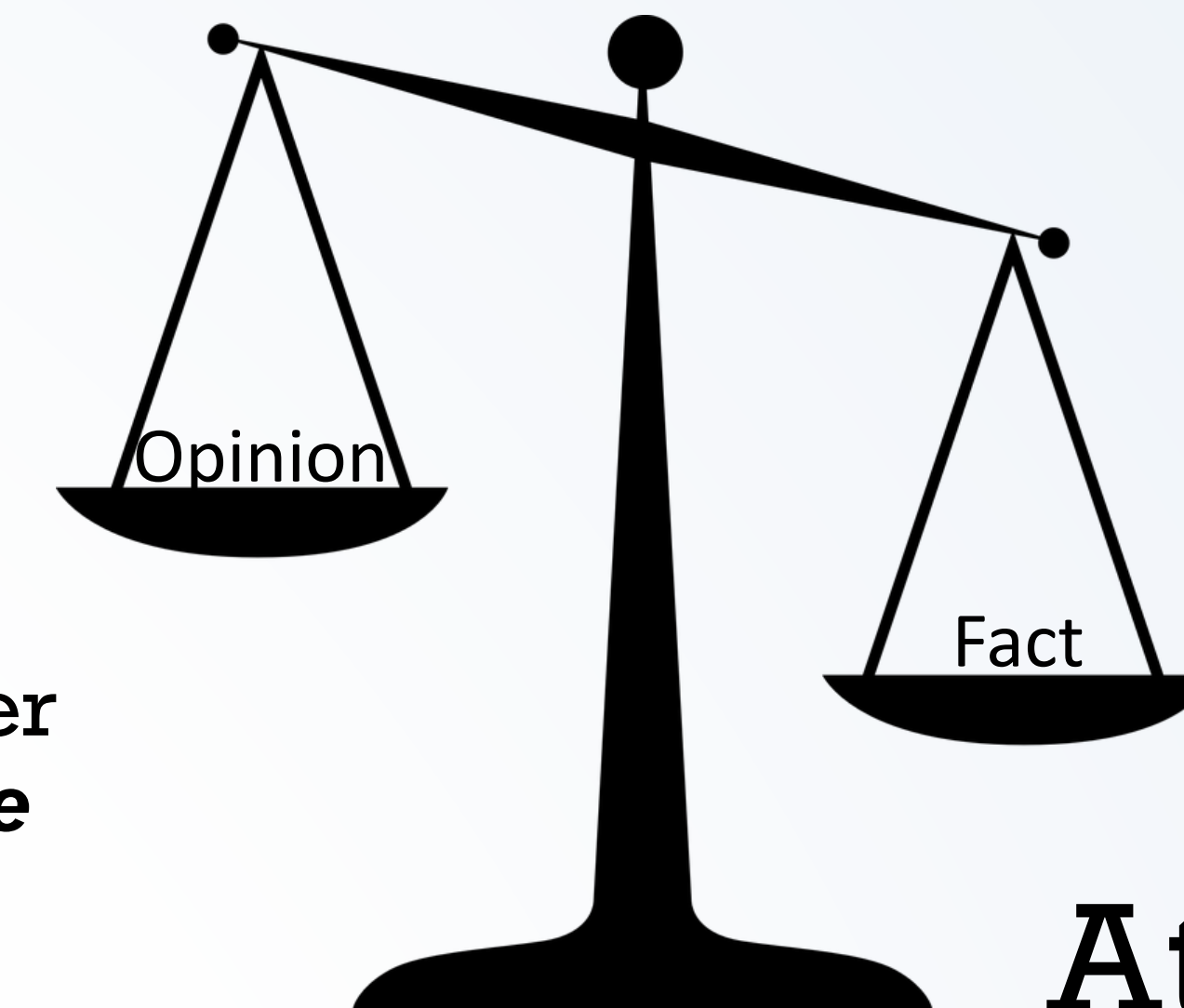
Mix up your news diet and who you talk politics with



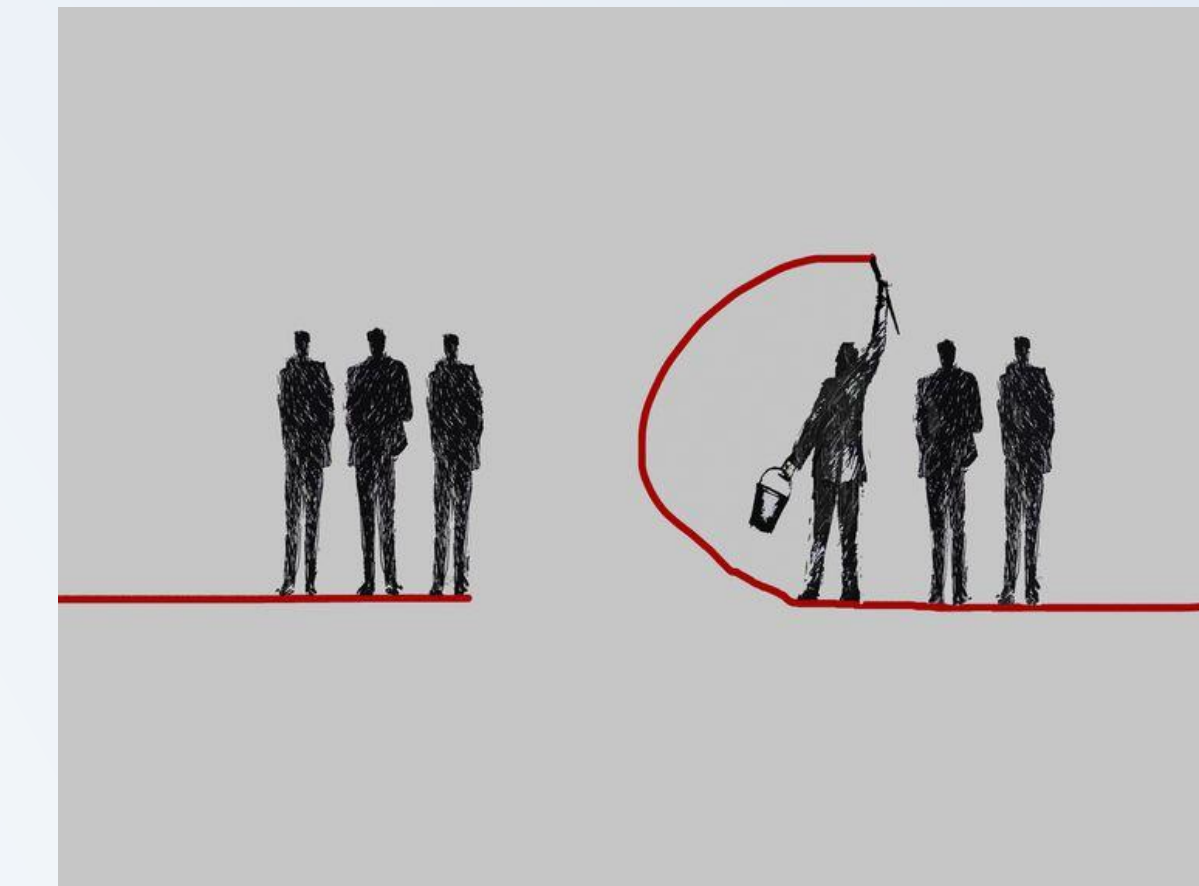
Beware of the news host

- **Partisans** who consume information from a like-minded news pundits will **estimate more factual content**.

- Because they have higher levels of **perceived source credibility**



Social Forces & Trust: Become Aware Of In-group and Out-group Biases



Attribution Of Blame

For in-group members: We blame individuals for their wrongdoing and misdeeds.

For out-group members: We blame the entire group and assume the entire group is responsible for wrongdoing and misdeeds.



Call Out Fake, False, and Misleading News

- Outrage, fear, or hate is often at the core
- Fact-check the person with reputable websites.
- Be very cognizant of your language
- Make statements that allow us to “**save face**”
- “It’s harder to identify misleading news because they make it so believable.”
- “They’re trying to trick us and divide us, and I don’t want that to happen.”
- “Our partisan glasses are hard to take off; I get it. But, let’s get beyond outrage and try to understand one another.”
- “This message seems to be promoting hate and playing us against each other’s worst fears. Let’s not play that game.”
- “Let’s talk about trust. Why do you trust this message and this source? Can I show you more credible and less partisan sources to trust?”

Poster by Kristen Landreville, Ph.D., klandrev@uwyo.edu

Publicly Available Sources:
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<https://theconversation.com/should-we-worry-that-half-of-americans-trust-their-gut-to-tell-them-whats-true-84289>
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The Psychology of Fake News

What Can We Do About It?

Your Responsibility

Before you share...

Recognize that you’re in a public space.

You have a civic responsibility to fact-check your postings.



Advice For Cross-Cutting Political Talk

1. Self-Reflection
2. Listening and Perspective-taking
3. Identify Shared Values
4. Increase Information Diversity
5. Beware of Partisan Media
6. Hold Strong Political Views While Also Being Deliberative and Empathetic
7. Emotions are OK, But Recognize Their Power
8. It Takes Time: Practice, Practice, Practice