Reaching the fact-resistant audience

ACES Conference 2018
Chicago
What is the American Press Institute?

- Born in 1941
- Reorganized in 2013
- Think tank
- Non-profit, non-partisan
- We tackle challenges in media.
# 4 related areas of focus

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<th>Understanding your audience</th>
<th>Growing subscribers</th>
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<td>Reader Revenue Working Group</td>
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<td>Analytics + surveys</td>
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<th>Advancing cultural change</th>
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<td>Knight-Temple II</td>
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Scientists have discovered a powerful new strain of fact-resistant humans who are threatening life on Earth.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NASA EO/REX/FEATURES VIA AP
fact-resistant adj. Less likely to accept reason, real-life examples or data, especially when they don’t align with one's current opinions or values.
WHERE'S THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE?
What’s behind fact-resistance?

- Fear & discomfort
- Lack of exposure to facts/too much exposure to fakery
- The partisan divide
58% say it’s harder rather than easier to be informed today due to the plethora of information and news sources available. (Knight Foundation)

46% of U.S. adults say they hold firm beliefs that won’t change. (Knight Foundation)

Four in 10 Republicans consider accurate news stories that cast a politician or political group in a negative light to always be “fake news.” (Knight Foundation)

Republicans have a far less favorable view of political fact-checking than Democrats do. (API study)
Views on accuracy of news organizations, by party

% saying media “get the facts straight”

DEMOCRATS

1999: 40%
2001: 23%
2017: 62%

REPUBLICANS

1999: 23%
2001: 14%
2017: 14%

All Adults

1999: 40%
2001: 40%
2017: 40%

Source: GALLUP
Perceptions of whether economy is getting better or worse by political party

**DEMOCRATS**

- **Pre-election**: Nov 1-7
- **Post-election**: Nov 9-13

**REPUBLICANS**

- **Pre-election**: Nov 1-7
- **Post-election**: Nov 9-13

Source: Gallup Daily Tracking
What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of President Trump?
Panel Discussion

Journalism on the Frontlines: Covering the Trump Administration

September 13, 2017 | 7:30 p.m.
WVU Mountainlair Ballrooms

Event Co-sponsored by the Reed College of Media and the Ogden Newspapers Seminar Series

festival.wvu.edu
LOTSA TIPS for reaching resistant groups

1 - Partisanship
2 - Viral misinformation
3 - Humans
DEALING WITH HIGH PARTISANS
TIP: Know what your partisan audience is reading/wants to read
DEMOCRATS
more likely to read:
● Social issues
● Environment, natural disasters
● Science and technology

REPUBLICANS
more likely to read:
● Traffic & weather
● Business, economy
● Crime, public safety
TIP: Don’t cover the elected like an election.
TIP: Attack issues, not people.
TIP: Consider your sources.
“POLARIZING” BRANDS

1. Chic-Fil-A
2. MTV
3. Comedy Central
4. NBA
5. Bass Pro Shops
6. Exxon Mobile
7. Koch Industries
8. Papa John’s
9. Starbucks
10. Cabela’s
11. Halliburton
12. HBO
13. NASCAR
DEALING WITH VIRAL MISINFORMATION
TIP: Study the tactics of fakers.

For example:
Make your own memes!

I just read that last year 4,213,257 people got married.

I don't want to start any trouble, but shouldn't that be an even number?
MORE TIPS

● Fight fake memes with fact memes.
● Be where the fakers are.
● Make sure facts are faster than fakes during breaking news.
● Build your own bot.
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

— George Bernard Shaw
TIP: Tell a story.
From Business Insider’s “Undividing America” series
TIP: WORK WITH COMBATANTS
TIP: Remember that people want to be right.
TIP: Emphasize solutions.
TIP: Add a positive point or two.
TIP: Don’t pretend that emotion doesn’t exist.
TIP: Aim for the middle.
TIP: Be transparent.

Show your work.
Hold events.
Identify your reporters.
Post your policies.
Improve labeling.
Translate your terminology.
And finally....

Don’t make mistakes.
QUESTIONS?

Jane Elizabeth
jane.elizabeth@pressinstitute.org
@janeeliz
1. Based on comments and social media posts, it appears your readers (erroneously) believe a proposed gun law will outlaw hunting rifles in the state. List three things you and/or a reporter could do to promote the facts here.

3. People in your region are divided over a wind turbine “farm” being built near a popular state park. There’s plenty of misinformation on both sides. List five tips for reporting, writing and editing this story.

2. The staff in your newsroom consists mostly of reporters under 30 years old and/or people brand new to the region. Your (older) audience has made comments about your staff’s “inexperience” and abilities. How do you try to put their minds at ease?

4. Choose your own experience!
RESOURCES

Factfulness Rules of Thumb
American Views: Trust, Media and Democracy. Knight Foundation
Americans’ growing partisan divide. Pew Research Center
Quiz-building tool, UT-Austin
Quinnipiac poll, December 2017
“LOL something matters” - Slate
Sign up here for our weekly accountability newsletter. Sign up here for our daily media newsletter.