Fake News and the Three Myths of Information

--by Gavin Ferriby, University Librarian

Recent headlines (post-election) about “fake news” have highlighted a fundamental issue about critical thinking and information literacy in the age of social media and clickbait. One of the most fundamental myths or assumptions about content on the Internet (social media, blogs, websites of all kinds) is that the information tends to be correct.

The technological medium can lend an air of authenticity or truthfulness to highly questionable claims. From “truthfulness” to “truthiness” (Stephen Colbert’s satire on dubious claims that sound truthful) to “post-truth” (where facts simply become irrelevant to opinion) is a development perilous to the kind of civil dialogue and honest search for truth that a University claims. It is time to think long and hard about whether our claims are warranted by our practices.

The Library has undertaken a Strategic Directions Initiative to listen, think, and plan for the future with our stakeholders—students, faculty, alumni and alumnæ, administrators and staff, and members of wider communities. A supposed “post-truth” era makes such an initiative more timely than ever, because libraries have contributed to social discourse and represented reliable standards of information since the earliest days of the Republic.

The Library’s project has underscored the challenges librarians face to communicate effectively how libraries are changing. We find and use metaphors to help bridge the gap between the libraries of nostalgia (“when I was a kid . . . ”) and the libraries of today and tomorrow. The gap between the familiar past and the unfamiliar present has fostered three myths about libraries and their roles.

Myth #1: Information is free. It’s all there on Google, so why spend so much money? It all depends on what you want to find. Libraries have advocated for free and just access to knowledge, but are more and more pressed to ensure that access comes at no cost to those who benefit from it. Publishers and providers have built high profit margins into subscriptions. Licenses have fixed durations, so payments continue annually instead of the older model of one-time payment and minor costs for continued use.

Myth #2: Information is available to everyone everywhere. Rapid advances in technology, digitization, and connectivity leave many to conclude that this myth is true. Few realize that most academic publications have quarantines, periods when those who don’t pay can’t read. Licenses require that libraries limit who may obtain access to library materials. Millions of books likely will never be digitized because they are caught in copyright limbo (“orphaned works”). If your public or academic library can’t pay for access, a great deal of information is off-limits.

Myth #3: Online searches return the same results to everyone. On the contrary, filters employ data from previous searches to tailor results presented to individual searchers. I have seen adjacent workstations exhibit differing results from the same search query to the same search.
engine at the same time, because previous users of that public workstation had searched for differing materials. Search engines remember, “if you like this, you’ll like that” — great for online shopping, but limiting knowledge and viewpoints when doing research. This could make users intellectually lazy since it’s easier never to question the results of a search, rather than to ask, “What didn’t I get?”

These three myths (information is free, equally available to everyone, uniformly distributed, and complete) are the foundation of the development of fake news, clickbait stories, and “post-truth” assertions that anything at all can be the case. The information ecosystem is much richer, and also susceptible to manipulation. The educational and cultural role libraries can play in the effort to maintain fundamental honesty and credibility becomes more crucial than ever.

The Library is thinking about our strategic directions because we want to strengthen our users’ intellectuality agility and engagement. We have optimized our expenditures to ensure access to authoritative information, and built a Digital Commons to strengthen our connections to scholarship. Our efficiencies extend our reach and lower the cost of higher education to students who otherwise would have to pay for access document by document. These individual costs would be significantly more expensive than the library’s negotiated access and economies of scale. In so doing we can attract and retain creative scholars and engaged students, and extend the University’s mission of insisting that accuracy, factuality, and well-grounded argument matters in an age marked by free-floating anger and convenience “truthiness.”

Expert Gallery is a new resource from BePress, the support vendor of Digital Commons, designed to promote the University through the rich expertise of its faculty and researchers. The Expert Gallery is ready to meet the campus-wide need to connect experts with opportunities. It can have several important uses as the University interacts with the world outside:

- Marketing and Communications/ Media Relations offices regularly field requests from the media for experts in newsworthy topics.
- The Office of Sponsored Programs matches researchers with funding opportunities and can showcase the results of their grant-funded projects.
- Prospective graduate students need to know who is working in their area of interest.
- Researchers both on and off campus are constantly looking for interdisciplinary partnerships but don’t always know where their research interests overlap.
- Businesses in the area want to collaborate with researchers on innovative products.

The Expert Gallery integrates seamlessly with Digital Commons and leverages the University’s expertise evidenced in Selected Works, individual pages on faculty interests and research.

The MarketLine Advantage interactive research tool provides access to company, industry, country, and financial data for every major marketplace in the world. It includes company SWOT analyses for both public and private companies, company overviews, industry profiles with Porter’s Five Forces analyses, case studies, financial deals, country reports with PESTLE/PEST analyses, future prospects and risk analysis, news and a statistics database covering over half a million data points for 215 countries and 46 political and geographic groupings.

Profiling all major companies, industries and geographies, MarketLine is one of the most prolific publishers of business information today. MarketLine’s content is produced by an internal team of analysts, drawing on primary and secondary research and prepared under an established methodology that’s been tried and tested over ten years. With stringent checks and controls to capture and validate the accuracy of its data, researchers can be confident in MarketLine to deliver quality data quickly.
open access

access week in october with displays, information in the fall packets for faculty, and the featured resource, digital commons.

open access week is organized by sparc, the scholarly public and academic resources coalition that works to "enable the open sharing of research outputs and educational materials in order to democratize access to knowledge, accelerate discovery, and increase the return on our investment in research and education."

international open access week is "an opportunity for advocates to engage their communities to teach them about the benefits of open access, share what they've learned with colleagues, and help inspire wider participation in making open the new norm in research." (from its website)

the library is proud to take its part with creating and sustaining digital commons and selected works, as well as the open educational resource initiative in cooperation with the office of digital learning.

news from the digitalcommons@shu

--by beverly lysobey, digital commons librarian

some recent work by sacred heart university faculty available full text in digital commons@shu

see digital commons@shu and the selectedworks gallery of shu faculty for more http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu

lorenz, k.m. historical trends and emerging issues in teacher education programs in the united states, 2016. available at http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/ced_fac/241/ (karl lorenz, isabelle farrington college of education)

taylor, d.g. (2016, july). "(don't you) wish you were here?": narcissism, envy and sharing of travel photos through social media: an extended abstract. paper presented at the nineteenth academy of marketing science world marketing congress, paris, france. available at http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/wcob_fac/417/ (david taylor, jack welch college of business)


conard, m.a. & marsh, r.f. (2016) self-efficacy matters more than interruptions in a sequential multitasking experiment. psicológica, 37(1), 15-34. available at http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/psych_fac/96/ (maureen conard, psychology department & robert marsh, jack welch college of business)

mcallister, r.l. (2016). poor, pitiful monsters from homer to borges. journal of literature and art studies, 6(8), 901-904. doi:10.17265/2159-5836/2016.08.004 available at http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/eng_fac/95/ (robin mcallister, english department)


brain teasers

1) what has four legs and a back, but can't walk?
2) what five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
3) who is this: 1d2r3a4c5u6l7a8?

answers on page 10

we are on the web!!!
www.library.sacredheart.edu
Featured Resources in Fall, 2016
--by Gavin Ferriby, University Librarian

The library featured a number of resources for student research on its website and social media sites during Fall Semester. Some of these resources are long familiar: Ebsco Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and Greenfile.

Others, however, are new or less well known:

- **LearnTechLib**, formally known as EdITLib, is a research database sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). This is not a database just for the discipline of Education as it provides resources for all researchers, teachers, faculty, and students who are interested in learning about technologies as a learning method. In addition to being able to search for peer-reviewed articles and publications, the site offers information on a large number of international conferences, mostly related to education or technology in education fields.

- **Browzine** helps readers and researchers stay current in their field of study using Browzine to read scholarly journals in an easy to use and visually pleasing interface. Users can create a virtual newsstand for scholarly journals that can be viewed and synced on an iMac, PC, tablet, or any mobile device with Browzine’s iOS or Android app.

- **MarketLine Advantage** interactive research tool provides access to company, industry, country and financial data for every major marketplace in the world. (See accompanying article)

- EBSCO’s **Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full Text** contains records and full-text selected from the most important sources related to criminal justice and criminology, making this database an essential resource for students and scholars researching these fields.

- **literati by Credo Reference** is an ideal place to start a new paper or project. Literati is an online service that combines reliable, citable content with the library’s resources and helps users to do faster, more effective research. It is a great way to discover new ideas, subjects, and resources.

- **First Year Seminar Research Workshops**

As part of the Library’s continuing efforts to supplement and support the instruction of first-year students, Zach Claybaugh met with First Year Seminar Instructors in September to outline what kinds of resources the library can offer to them and their students. Subsequently he led five research workshops for the students, from October to December.

These workshops were designed to assist students with conducting more effective research for the Seminar courses and beyond. The workshops focused first upon the research process and database searching. Later workshops focused on Citation Management (an introduction to EasyBib), and how to search two popular databases, Ebsco’s Academic Search Premier, and JSTOR. Greater familiarity with these databases and citation management tools can set up the students for greater success through their time at Sacred Heart University and beyond.

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**Second Year Running Library Trivia Contest**

--by Renata Cioffi, Director of Library Information and Budget

In October 2015 the Ryan Matura Library started a weekly trivia contest. Since then its has become a hit with many students, faculty, staff, and sometimes guests participating in trying to win a prize. The rules of the contest is that there will be a new question every Monday, written on a dry erase board in the inner foyer of the library. Located near the board is a box for participants to insert their answers. Every Friday a ballot will be selected randomly from the box; the first ballot

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This past fall the Library again with SHU Print Shop cosponsored a mini golf event. The mini golf ran during Welcome Week, September 1–2. This event was put together by the Library Marketing Committee due to the overwhelming success it had in the fall of 2015. Having a mini golf event in the Library has been rewarding to both the staff and students. The students have benefitted by having a location where it does not tend to have out of the box events and it is usually viewed as a traditional place to visit when you want to study. Giving the students the opportunity to view the library in a more relaxed atmosphere has helped in bringing in a more diverse group of students who would otherwise not be visiting. This annual event has also helped the staff in building different relationships with the students. The students view the librarians and the staff in a more approachable way especially when they see them competing in the event also. The event has become a great success and it will be an ongoing annual event during Welcome Week.

This past fall there were over 200 players who completed at least some portion of the 18 holes, which were set up through the first and second floors. Play culminated with a championship series with prizes. There were four winners: Gradyn Higgins, Theodore Mack, Dr. Joshua Shuart, and Alexander Lauber. Here are some pictures of the event and winners.

The library is already planning next year’s version, improving the layout, and dates.

Second Year Running Library Trivia Contest

drawn with the correct answer will earn a lucky participant a prize and recognition through a campus wide email. A Grand Prize will be given at the end of the semester when all the weekly prize winning ballots are entered in a final drawing.

Our first trivia question was: It’s the only city whose teams won the Super Bowl & Stanley Cup in the same calendar year. Do you know the answer? Stop by the library every week to try and guess the answer and for a chance to win.

Here is a list of some of our past winners from last year: Trista Leo, Caroline Barry, Daniel Graw, Jeff Stoddard, Simone Kelly, Connor Games, Gaurav Deshpande, Derek Crossman, Steve Frappier, Rebecca Grizzle, Jonathan Grzeszczyk, Michaela Lachance, Christina Mogelnick, Jessica Brideau, Patrick Devir, Justin Layer, Treg Chabot, Shaun Sullivan, James OHare
New Book Display

NEW BOOKS: Check out the changing display of new books on the first floor of the Library. Also browse list is on library website http://library.sacredheart.edu/ under New Arrivals.

Welcome Graduate Student Library Assistants

In August and September the Library welcomed several new graduate student library assistants who have taken greater responsibilities for services during Fall Semester. The regular full-time and part-time staff welcomed Arianne Brust, Shannon Hickey, Jamie O’Donoghue, Taiesha Powell, and Haleigh Varieur. In addition, three former undergraduate student library assistants returned as graduates: Sean Ferguson, Nicole Hentnick, and Courtney Machamer. These graduate student library assistants supplement regular staff in the evenings and on weekends, and have offered significant assistance to library users when a reference librarian is unavailable or working with another person. Sean Ferguson’s work with the University Yearbooks on Digital Commons, and other work there, will be a lasting contribution to our digital service and resources. All of these graduate students form a significant addition to our library services and staff. Welcome!

Staff Changes: Farewell and Welcome

This Fall the Library said farewell to two long-time team members: Wenling Ma, and Ron Fontaine.

Wenling moved on to a new position as Director of Information Technology Support for the Boston Water and Sewer Commission in November. Wenling served the Library since 2006 first as Digital Media Associate, and since May 2015 as Manager of Library Information Technology. Wenling is also an alumna of Sacred Heart with an M.S. in Computer Science and M.B.A. from the Jack Welch College of Business.

Ron Fontaine was promoted by the Bridgeport Public Library to Acting Librarian, Department Head of Research and Reference in December, and consequently resigned his position at the University Library. Ron has served BPL for many years, while also serving the University Library as part-time Evening and Weekend Reference Librarian since 2004. Ron was previously a full-time reference librarian for us in the 1980s, so he has a deep history here. The Library staff wishes all the best both for Wenling and for Ron.

The Library will also welcome Urszula ("Ula") Lechtenberg in early January as Instructional Design Librarian. More about her work will follow in the Spring Library Newsletter. Welcome, Ula!
The University Library hosts a small collection of books oriented towards “popular” reading (meaning: things you don’t have to read for class or teaching). These books are leased from a library vendor so that they can be exchanged easily with minimal processing costs.

Here are some titles:

**What The Night Knows: A Novel** by Dean Koontz

**I Know Who You Are And I Saw What You Did: Social Networks**

**And The Death of Privacy** by Lori Andrews

**Doctor Sleep** by Stephen King

**The Quest** by Nelson DeMille

**The Cursed** by Heather Graham

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**Staff Book Review**

--by Chelsea Stone, Digital Projects & Resource Management Librarian

**The American Fantasy Novel**

I was recently introduced to the idea of the American fantasy novel. That is, a book that blends the genres of Americana and fantasy. A book that brings the magic of mythology, legend, folklore and imagination to the United States of America, instead of medieval Europe or an entirely new world. There are two authors that made a conscious decision to pursue such a genre; Neil Gaiman in *American Gods* (soon to be a television show on Starz) and Orson Scott Card in the *Tales Alvin Maker* series (#1-6). Both are splendid and original. One is the frontier and folk magic. One is the future and the magic of belief.

Neil Gaiman has written many notable works of fantasy, including novels, short fiction and graphic novels. *American Gods* takes place in the 20th century as American being inundated and seduced by media, fame, technology, drugs, etc. Like the vices, the places are real enough; the states remain true and fictional towns or cities are based on Gaiman’s own observations of places in the United States. The premise of the novel is that gods and mythological creatures are real, brought to the United States by the beliefs of immigrant populations from diverse cultures, around the world throughout history. Their power has begun to wane as people’s belief in the old ways diminishes and their attention turns to the previously mentioned modern vices. And thus begins the battle over human belief between the old gods and the new gods. The old gods come from the breadth of mythology. Odin and Loki from Norse traditions. Thoth and Anubis from Ancient Egypt. Anansi from African folklore. Czernobog and the Zorya Sisters from Slavic lore. The New Gods include the “Technical boy,” god of the internet/computers and “Media,” goddess of television. While the old gods struggle for survival, the new gods are content to let them die out of existence. Our main non-god character, Shadow, is an ex-convict and seeming interloper in this war of immortals. Shadow must adjust to his freedom, as well as to this new world where magic and myth are very real. Here the magic is ancient and juxtaposed to a modern America that no longer has a need for the old world.

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Below is a list of books the library staff have recently read. Each book has 1 to 5 star rating based on how they enjoyed the book.

**Gavin Ferriby:**
- Meaning In Life, and Why It Matters, by Susan Wolf ★★★★★
- Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World, by Cal Newport ★★★★★
- When Breath Becomes Air, by Paul Kalinithi ★★★★★

**Chelsea Stone:**
- An Illuminated Life: Belle da Costa Greene’s Journey From Prejudice to Privilege by Heidi Ardizzone ★★★★★
- Princess of Dublin by Edward Rutherfurd ★★★
- Ahab’s Wife by Sena Jeter Naslund ★★★
- Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman ★★★★

**Dan Fitzroy:**
- The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome’s Deadliest Enemy by Adrienne Mayor ★★★★
- Venus in Copper: A Marcus Didius Falco Mystery by Lindsey Davis ★★★★
- All Roads Lead to Murder: A Case from the Notebooks of Pliny the Younger by Albert A. Bell Jr. ★★★★

**Beverly Lysobey:**
- Seaworthy: a swordboat captain returns to the sea by Linda Greenlaw ★★★★
- Commonwealth: a novel by Ann Patchett ★★★★★
- Small Great Things: a novel by Jodi Picoult ★★★★★
Bibliotech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of the Internet
This is not a book for librarians, but for everyone else. Palfrey makes a strong, counter-intuitive case that libraries matter more than ever, not despite the volume and complexity of information, technologies, and sources available today, but precisely because of them. Digital culture has made libraries more important, not less. The author’s claim directly contradicts the culturally ascendant narrative that such a “legacy” institution is merely a ripe occasion for “innovative disruption.” The affluent can get what they want from Amazon, anyway, so who cares? As Head of School of Phillips Academy, Andover, and formerly a professor of law at Harvard, Palfrey intentionally reaches beyond the affluent to ask how society can work for everyone, not just those at the top.

The rise of digital culture has been accompanied by the rise of cultural and economic divisions and tensions. Previously dismissed, such divisions have led (surely at least in part) to recent political and social polarities. The divisions and tensions of American (and world-wide) society have deep roots in growing, unequal access to information and cultural discourse (and many of things, to be sure). Providing this access is the fundamental mission of libraries, and Palfrey embraces it heartily. Libraries provide safe spaces, access to information, face-to-face and digital networks, and a sense of connectedness and connectivity. This social life of information and cultural discourse is of little interest to marketplace capitalism unless it can be monetized (such as Amazon), and such conversion changes the conversation: who can speak, what can be said, and who can afford to hear it.

Libraries have not had an easy time of it, nevertheless. Rapid changes in information technology have not been easy for them to anticipate and implement, in part because they are very expensive, and in part because libraries have to live in a both-and world: both digital and analogue, both print and networked. A decade or so ago it was fashionable to claim that universities, libraries, and bookstores would simply disappear. Even groups of librarians like the Taiga Forum of 2006 produced statements that “within five years . . . all information discovery will begin at Google.” All? — in 2016 even Google does not claim so much. (Next time you require serious medical consultation, instruct your physician or nurse to restrict information searches to Google . . .) Living in the both-and world, libraries recognize that people seek and use information in many different ways, and that facile generalizations about “digital natives” are as often false as true.

Many who work outside libraries have a nostalgic view of them, and remember them as adventurous places of discovery: building a sense of self-direction, mastery, and purpose whether as a child or a student. Libraries still do that, but the means have changed. No longer the only information game in town, libraries have recalled their fundamental purpose of providing access: “free to all” (Boston Public Library), with meaningful contact that allows everyone to use the resources and services. By serving their communities, libraries return to their beginnings: to guaranteeing that responsive democratic government and culture will in fact be open to all. Lest anyone suppose that the library of a private university catering to the upper middle class does not need to bother with such a mission, one may recall that a great deal of tuition funding is in fact dependent upon government guarantees. No university, and no library, is an island: the fundamental purposes of public and academic libraries are the same: access, instruction, the care for our common home.

Lesson Plan: An Agenda for Change in American Higher Education

Lesson Plan draws together many studies, insights, and themes in the continuing conversation to address significant problems in American higher education. Bowen and McPherson, each past presidents (Princeton, Macalester) state clearly that many so-called crises (well-aired in the media, especially in this election season) are exaggerated or simply false. On the other hand, many real problems—high dropout rate, inefficient staffing, insufficient teaching skills, and the outsized role of university athletics—have received far too little attention and nuanced conversation.

The authors identify these genuine challenges and propose some bold and sensible ideas for re-negotiating the essential features that have both made American higher education great, and contribute to its shortcomings. Affordability is a major concern, and contributes to students dropping out, taking too long to graduate, and trying inadvisable work/study loads. Racial, ethnic, and socio-economic minorities fare poorly, which reinforces social and economic divisions both within and after college. Not completing college leaves former students with heavy debt loads and insufficient incomes. Changes in national financial aid policies away from merit and towards matching needs, increasing respect for teaching, improving the working lives of adjunct faculty, and greatly improving instruction in basic mathematics by combining adaptive technologies and face-to-face learning would go a long way to addressing real challenges of affordability, retention, completion, and effectiveness.

Bowen’s and McPherson’s devotion to strengthening academic leadership,
Staff Book Review

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encouraging responsible risk-taking, and reigning in the corrosive effects too much money in collegiate athletics may risk alienating academic leaders, athletic directors, and sports fans. Only when universities are both allowed real independence to place academics first and athletics second can the real challenges facing higher education be addressed.

Anyone in higher education should read this: faculty, adjunct faculty, librarians, graduate students, and administrators especially. Every university has a stake in the important challenges and their positive or negative outcomes. As SHU moves towards another process of identifying strategic directions and plans, this short, readable book can provide a great deal of clear-headed corrective thinking.

William Bowen, late beloved President of Princeton University, died in October in his home in Princeton. He pressed Princeton and other elite universities to give preference to poor and minority students. He was a fierce defender of the First Amendment’s guarantee of freedom of speech, particularly on college campuses. This book is a fitting coda to a lifetime of service.