

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)

# Research for Real Life

**Zia Davidian (she/her)**  
Online Learning Librarian  
San Francisco State University  
CCLI 2026



# Agenda

---

1. Introduction and background
2. Condensed fact-checking workshop
3. Activity: brainstorm workshop ideas + sharing
4. Questions

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)

# Background

---

Student Success & Engagement Team at SFSU teaches lower-division instruction.

Searching & evaluating lesson plan uses the [ACT UP method](#) developed by Dawn Stahura at Salem State University Library.

Meta policy change coincided with the start of Trump's second term. How can I help students navigate the information landscape through a critical lens?

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)

# Workshop series so far

---

- Fact Checking
  - Presented twice. Good turnout both times due to collaboration with a campus office for student research, and a faculty member who brought her class (plus free lunch)
- Post-grad edition
  - Aimed at graduating students, this covered free and open resources that students could use after losing their library access.
  - Covered the Internet Archive, SciHub, public libraries, and more!
- Lesson learned: Collaborators are key!

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)

# Additional workshop ideas

---

- Tenant and housing research
- Family history / genealogy / oral history
- Job and career search
- Boycott or protest research
- Elected official research
- And more!

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)

# Research for Real Life

**Fact Checking**

## Plan for today

1. Why fact checking is important
2. A fact checking framework (ACT UP) plus tools and examples
3. Reflection

# Why fact checking is important

**Misinformation** - False information shared by people who are not aware that it is false. In fact, most times they post it with the intention to help.

**Disinformation** - False information created and shared to purposefully cause harm.

Regardless of intent, **both can cause harm**, so fact-checking can mitigate that.

Meta once “tried to curb the spread of false information and hate speech on Facebook and Instagram” ([NPR](#)), but in January of this year, they stopped. Which means we’re totally on our own now when it comes to identifying bad information on social media.

We all have a **social responsibility** to share information that is true.

**ACT UP**

---

A

Investigate the **author**

Who created this?

What is their background?

What else have they written?

Why did they write this?

Do they have any affiliations that could be a conflict of interest?

If you can't find information you trust about an author, will that affect how you use the resource?

---

## Tool: Lateral reading

Lateral reading is an evaluation technique where you move *laterally* away from a source to evaluate it.

For example: if you find a website that looks promising, instead of just evaluating the website itself, you need to search for the particular website and its claims elsewhere to verify. **Why? Because sh\*t websites are not going to tell you they are sh\*tty websites but other sites can and will.**

Once you find a source you like, open up another tab in your browser and search for the website's name, any authors, the organization that publishes the website, etc. You are looking to see if that person or entity has been flagged as fake news, misinformation, etc. You are also looking for any conflict of interest or bias.

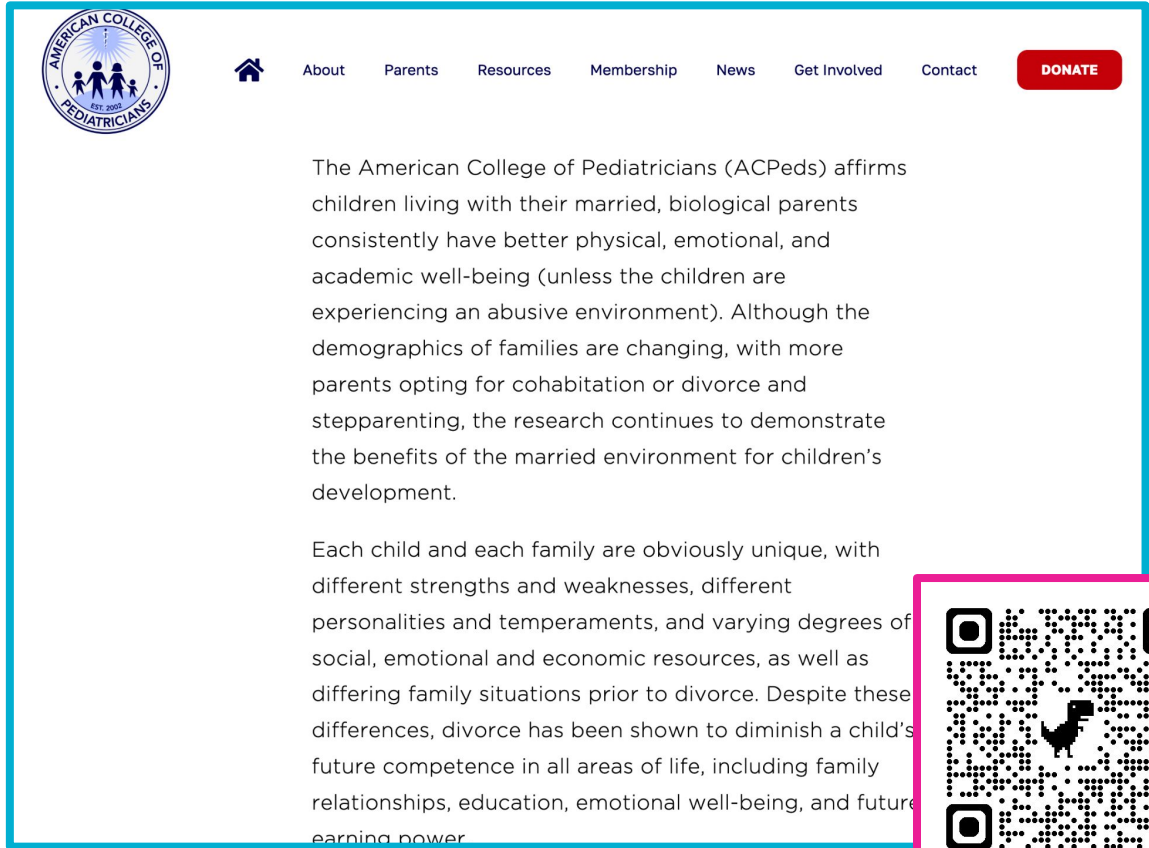
Your turn!

## Investigate the author

Take a look at this article from the American College of Pediatricians:

- Who is behind the information?
- What do other sources say?

Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)



The screenshot shows the website of the American College of Pediatricians (ACPed). The header includes the organization's logo, a home icon, and navigation links for About, Parents, Resources, Membership, News, Get Involved, and Contact. A red "DONATE" button is also present. The main content area features a paragraph discussing the benefits of a married environment for children's development, followed by another paragraph discussing the impact of divorce on children's future competence. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

<https://acpeds.org/marriage-divorce-and-family-relations/>

C

Consider **currency**

Pay attention to dates. When was the source created, posted, updated, shared, etc?

How does it fit into the timeline?

If the source doesn't have a date, think about whether that matters.

---

## Tool: Reverse image search

[TinEye](#) — the original reverse image search engine. Also available as a browser extension. Paste, drag, or upload an image to their site

[Google Image Search](#) (aka Google Lens)

Your turn!

## Consider the currency

This image was shared widely on Twitter by users claiming it was a march to end Covid-19.

- What event is this photo from?
- When was it taken?



T

Test it for **truth**

How accurate and reliable is this source?

Can you verify any of the claims using other sources?

Just because a site is reputable, that doesn't mean it cannot also contain sh\*tty research, misinformation, or false claims.

---

## Tool: Claim tracing

This technique helps us evaluate the source and confirm the information we are finding.

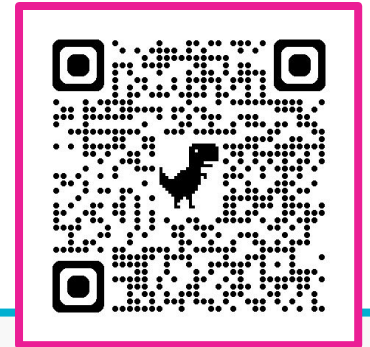
1. Start with a source.
2. Within the source, identify a claim.
3. Identify the source of the claim. That might be a hyperlink or it might be stated in the sentence.
4. Scope out the source, and try to find the basis for the claim.
5. **Ask yourself:** How do they compare? What do you think of the source of the claim?

Your turn!

## Test it for truth

Hank Green has established some credibility as a popular science educator, but what are your thoughts on the sources he points to?

What does that source actually say beyond the snippet in this screenshot?



**hankgreen1**  
Hank Green · 7-24

Follow

#stitch with @Dalton Smiley #askhank

🔊 original sound - Hank Green

U

Is it **unbiased**?

**Information is never neutral.**

Consider the positionality of the authors. How do their identities relate to the topic and how are those identities represented?

Who funded this? (#ad?)

What is your viewpoint on the topic? Are you selecting resources that confirm your own biases?

---

Your turn!


## Where's the bias?

Do you believe this infographic? Do you want to believe it? Why or why not?

What is the positionality of the creator?

Does her positionality influence the content?  
How?

Average Press Coverage  
Of A Terrorist Attack



NON-MUSLIM PERPETRATOR  
= 15 HEADLINES

MUSLIM PERPETRATOR  
= 105 HEADLINES

monachalabi • Follow


monachalabi Terrorist attacks committed by Muslim extremists receive 357% more US press coverage than those committed by non-Muslims. And yes, detonating booby traps in civilian areas that kill children and leave a whole population scared of using their electrical devices meets the definition of terrorism. But I've seen the adjective "impressive" and "success" appear in press coverage to describe the latest Israeli attacks against Lebanon (not opinion pieces, news reports). Reverse the victims and attackers and the adjective would have been "barbaric".

Source: Kearns et al, University of Alabama, 2018

Note: T

32,864 likes  
September 18, 2023

Log in to like or



P

Check for **privilege!**

**We don't know who or what the algorithm is privileging!**

Who might benefit from your engagement with this post or article? Who might be harmed by it?

Are there any other voices you'd want to hear on the topic?

Does everyone have access to the source you found?

---

# Other tools

- [Snopes](#)
- [Politifact](#)
- [factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org)
- [Knowyourmeme](#)
- **Your emotions** – exaggerated or fake stories are often written to shock you. Pay attention to your emotions and where those feelings might be coming from (consider your biases!)
  - Ask yourself: How does this make me feel and how do my emotions influence my interpretation of this?

Put it all  
together!

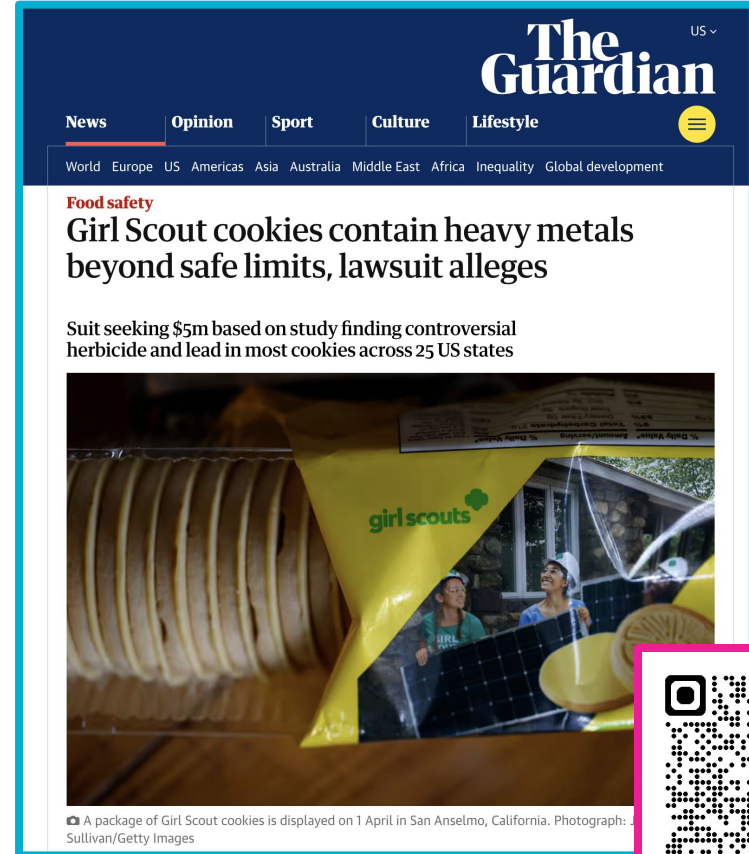
## What do you think about THIS?

What do you know about The Guardian?

What can you find out about:

- the lawsuit?
- the study performed to determine the heavy metal content?
- the groups behind it all?

How do your feelings about Girl Scout cookies affect your thoughts about this news?



The image shows a screenshot of a news article from The Guardian. The page has a dark blue header with the Guardian logo and navigation tabs for News, Opinion, Sport, Culture, and Lifestyle. Below the header is a secondary navigation bar with links for World, Europe, US, Americas, Asia, Australia, Middle East, Africa, Inequality, and Global development. The main article is titled "Girl Scout cookies contain heavy metals beyond safe limits, lawsuit alleges" under the "Food safety" category. The sub-headline reads "Suit seeking \$5m based on study finding controversial herbicide and lead in most cookies across 25 US states". The main image shows a close-up of a yellow Girl Scout cookie package with the "girlscouts" logo, and in the background, two Girl Scouts in uniforms are visible. A QR code is overlaid on the bottom right of the article image.

US ~

The Guardian


News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

World Europe US Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Global development

Food safety

### Girl Scout cookies contain heavy metals beyond safe limits, lawsuit alleges

Suit seeking \$5m based on study finding controversial herbicide and lead in most cookies across 25 US states



A package of Girl Scout cookies is displayed on 1 April in San Anselmo, California. Photograph: J. Sullivan/Getty Images



# Reflection questions

What surprised you most about today's session?

What is something you'll take away from this workshop?

# Limitations

---

- Some examples need updating
- I've tried to avoid acknowledging AI as much as possible
- Difficulty finding a good example for Unbiased
- Lots of room for improvement!

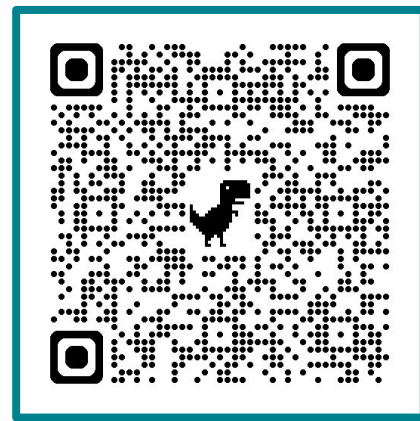
# Activity

---

Brainstorm a workshop idea!

- Information literacy skill or ACRL frame
- Real life relevance
- Campus or community partner
- Learning outcomes

Work together in [RRL brainstorming](#) (Google Doc) OR on paper (Melanie and I will pass out!)



Slides: [tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife) | Doc: QR code

# Thank you!

Be in touch :)

Zia Davidian (she/her)

zdavidian@sfsu.edu



[tinyurl.com/researchforreallife](https://tinyurl.com/researchforreallife)