

Fact-checking resources

Extracts



From: [Master ADVANCED Digital Tools for Research](#) (author: Christine Gardiol) **available on AMAZON marketplaces**

What can researchers do to minimize the use of manipulated content? Here are some resources.

Fact-checkers

Fact-checkers are products or services that allow **verification of assertions** made in speech, print, or online content. Now essentially online, fact-checking is an old story. It was first set up by *The Time* magazine in the 1920s and was changed into a job carried out by a special group of staffers who made sure that everything the reporters collected was accurate. If this interests you, The Time has an interesting article on their first fact-checkersⁱ.

Here is how one of these current online tools works, **PolitiFact** at <https://www.politifact.com/>ⁱⁱ. It is the COVID-19 pandemic time; you have doubts about some articles and posts concerning the drug Ibuprofen. Open the search form (magnifying glass upper left) and input *covid AND ibuprofen*. Their search functions are not very sophisticated, unfortunately (alternatively use any general web search engine with the site:. command). PolitiFact returned (early 2025) more than 2205 fact-checks and 785 articles. Click on any of them and you can read a detailed discussion of the claims and sources, with some additional anecdotes; you can also see if more research is needed and other items that can help you judge whether each assertion is credible and reliable. One of their unique features is their « *Truth-o-Meter* », which rates each checked item, their worst assessment being « *Pants on fire* ». In their *About Us/Our Process*, PolitiFact offers an excellent guide for verifying information in a professional way.

Many fact-checkers work similarly to PolitiFact. They usually allow to submit items to be verified and, to review many of the facts they already checked. These tools most frequently verify political or viral claims but they may cover topics, such as entertainment (which is filled with fake news), technology, health, and so on. They deal with the popular themes of the time, elections, immigration, abortion, marijuana, LGBTQ, crime, war, Coronavirus, and so forth. Some sites provide information on national news only, while others regularly feature international news. Several of them are connected to the press and media. Sometimes they

require you to log in, sometimes they charge a small fee and some perform the service for the users. To make them more concrete, here is a brief presentation of some of them.

- **SNOPEs** <https://www.snopes.com/>: the oldest (1994). An independent publication owned by Snopes Media Group. US focus. « *The internet's definitive fact-checking resource... Snopes' fact-checking and original investigative reporting lights the way to evidence-based and contextualized analysis.* »
- **LEADSTORIES** <https://leadstories.com/>: Focused on “*trending content on the internet*”. Started in 2015. US focus, but available in various languages. Full-time fact-checking ever since the (US) primaries of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Since 2019, an active part of Facebook's partnership with third-party fact-checkers. Since 2020, LeadStories also provided fact-checking related advice and services to ByteDance, the company running TikTok (in the US, Europe, and Asia). They developed the [Trendolizer](#) search engine which curates news articles, then automatically indexes the source code. “*Nowadays we specifically hunt for trending stories, images, videos and posts that contain false information in order to fact check them as quickly as possible*” (mid July 2024).
- **FULL FACT** <https://fullfact.org/>: “*Full Facts fights bad information*”. UK registered charity. Independent. Impartial and Effective. “*Bad information ruins lives. We're a team of independent fact-checkers and campaigners who find, expose and counter the harm it does... Our principles are simple. Anyone making serious claims in public debate -fact-checkers included- should be prepared to : Get their facts right; Back up what they say in evidence; Correct their mistakes.*”
- **HOAXY2** <https://hoaxy.osome.iu.edu/>: “*A tool that visualizes the spread of information online using the X/Twitter and Bluesky APIs.*” Useful to see how a story develops over time. You can easily import data. Hoaxy is Copyright of the Trustees of Indiana University.

Fact-checker services/software/websites/apps have emerged and are blooming everywhere. “**Reporters' Lab**”ⁱⁱⁱ at <https://reporterslab.org/fact-checking/>, hosted at Duke University maintains a database of **fact-checking sites** worldwide. In March 2025, [they announced](#) 450 active outlets (and about 161 inactive ones) on all continents. If we use the Duke Reporters' lab figures, the increase between 2015 (64) and 2025 (450) is indicative of a worldwide uneasiness towards information disorders. Reporters' Lab also maintains [Fact-Check Insights](#), a comprehensive database with structured fact-checking data for tens of thousands of claims from politicians and social media posts that have been analyzed and rated by independent fact-checkers. A very rich resource to whoever wants to study fact-checking and online misinformation. Some other worthwhile resources to consider when debunking manipulated content are the following:

- **Factcheck.org** at <https://www.factcheck.org/>^{iv}. It is again a US non-profit organization, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It was launched in the US, in 1993, with the goal « *to monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases* ». It is “*one of several organizations working with Facebook to debunk misinformation shared on the social media network. We provide several resources for readers: a guide on how to flag suspicious stories on Facebook and a list of websites that have carried false or satirical articles, as well as a video and story on how to spot false stories*”. Early 2025^{vi}, to please the new US president,

Zuckerberg announced ending its fact-checking program for its Meta platforms (Facebook, Threads and Instagram), relying instead on the “community notes” from its users, following X.

- [The International Fact-Checking Network](#) : the IFCN is a unit of the Poynter Institute dedicated to bringing together fact-checkers worldwide. Poynter is committed to promoting excellence in fact-checking. Here is a good source for obtaining a **fact-checking framework** (its code of principles is hosted on the Poynter website, which offers training, ethics, and quite a few resources on media literacy; Politifact mentioned earlier is now owned by Poynter).
- As **journalists'** core ingredient is information, they are obvious resources to consider. See for example, the *Verification Handbook, or Disinformation And Media Manipulation* published by the European Journalism Centre^{vii}. Check as well the (US) Society of Professional Journalists Toolbox^{viii}. Press articles are increasingly mentioning that their assertions have been fact-checked, making the phenomenon more visible educating the public as well. Since 2007, The Washington Post has its [Fact-Checker](#) that “truth-squad the statements of political figures regarding issues of great importance, be they national, international or local.”
- **University libraries**^{ix}, such as the ones of the University of San Francisco or of the Eastern Washington University, can also be excellent resources.
- For more, websearch *fact checking* or *fake news detect* or *debunk*.

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- i Fabry, M. (2017). *Here's How the First Fact-Checkers Were Able to Do Their Jobs Before the Internet*. Time.com. 24 August 2017. Available at: [The History of Fact Checking Jobs in News Journalism | TIME](#) [Viewed 20 April 2025]
- ii Politifact (www.politifact.com) was launched in 2007 by the Tampa Bay Times, a Florida newspaper. In 2018, its ownership was transferred to the Poynter Institute, a newspaper's parent company and nonprofit school for journalists. “*Fact-checking journalism is the heart of PolitiFact. Our core principles are independence, transparency, fairness, thorough reporting and clear writing. The reason we publish is to give citizens the information they need to govern themselves in a democracy*”. See: <https://www.politifact.com/videos/how-politifact-selects-facts-check/> and <https://www.politifact.com/article/2018/feb/12/principles-truth-o-meter-politifact-methodology-i/> [Viewed 25 March 2025]
- iii Duke Reporters' Lab. *About the Lab*. Available at: <https://reporterslab.org/about-the-lab/> [Viewed 25 March 2025].
- iv Factcheck.org mission (2024): « We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit “consumer advocate” for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. We monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases. Our goal is to apply the best practices of both journalism and scholarship, and to increase

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- public knowledge and understanding. ». Available at:
<https://www.factcheck.org/about/our-mission/> [Viewed 20 July 2024]
- v FactCheck.org (2024) at <https://www.factcheck.org/spindetectors/about/> and at <https://www.factcheck.org/fake-news/> [Viewed 20 July 2024]
- vi For further details, websearch *facebook fact checking* with any recent time option *january 2025*. Or check the NY Times article on 7 January 2025, available at : [Meta Says It Will End Its Fact-Checking Program on Social Media Posts - The New York Times](#) [Viewed 25 March 2025]
- vii European Journalism Centre (2020). *Verification Handbook. For Disinformation And Media Manipulation*. datajournalism.com. 2020. Available at : <https://datajournalism.com/read/handbook/verification-3> .
The European Journalism Centre is available at <https://ejc.net/> [Viewed 20 July 2024]
- viii Society of Professional Journalists Toolbox (2024). Available at:
<https://www.journaliststoolbox.org/> [Viewed 20 July 2024]
- ix University of San Francisco, Gleeson Library Geschke Center (2024). *Fake News*. library.usfca.edu. 24 September 2024. [Resources - Fake News - Gleeson Library at University of San Francisco \(usfca.edu\)](#) and Eastern Washington University Libraries (2024). *Research Guides*. ewu.edu. 26 September 2024. [Useful Websites for Journalists - Journalism - Research Guides at Eastern Washington University \(ewu.edu\)](#) [Viewed 20 October 2024]