

SPOT THE SHARKS

Media Literate Strategies for Recognizing
Misinformation and Sharing Responsibly

Bob Britten
Teaching Associate Professor
Reed College of Media
West Virginia University

Live every week
like it's Shark Week





Ted Cruz ✓
@tedcruz



Holy crap.



Big Cat ✓ @BarstoolBigCat · Aug 20

Friend of mine out in LA just took this picture on the 405. And yes, all news and media outlets you have permission to use this. Wild



CAUGHT IN THE JAWS OF MISINFORMATION

- Aug. 20, 2023: Tropical Storm Hilary hits southern California
- U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz retweets this image
- Reality intervenes

Friend of mine out in LA just took this picture on the 405. And yes, all news and media outlets you have permission to use this. Wild



Readers added context they thought people might want to know

The photo originally appeared in 2011, after Hurricane Irene hit Puerto Rico. The hoax also made the rounds in 2015 after Texas was hit with heavy rains, in 2016 during Hurricane Matthew and again in 2017 after Hurricane Harvey

snopes.com/fact-check/sha...

Do you find this helpful?

Rate it

Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. [Find out more.](#)

5:18 PM · Aug 20, 2023 · 15.7M Views

1,948 Reposts 472 Quotes 43.7K Likes 824 Bookmarks

Here's the original.
Notice the reader
context flag (it's
not clear if this was
there at the time
Cruz retweeted it)

Holy crap.

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snopes.com/fact-check/sha...

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The photograph is a digital hoax. The image of the shark was lifted from a 2005 photograph of a kayaker being trailed by a great white shark and pasted into a photograph of a flooded street

snopes.com/fact-check/sha...

Do you find this helpful?

Rate it

Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. [Find out more.](#)

10:18 AM · Aug 21, 2023 · 4.9M Views

930 Reposts 912 Quotes 9,550 Likes 140 Bookmarks

It's (now) on Cruz'
retweet as well.



I'm told this is a joke.

In LA, you never know... 🧑

And everyone please stay safe from the storm or otherwise.

10:21 AM · Aug 21, 2023 · **2.5M** Views

41 Reposts 210 Quotes 1,203 Likes 18 Bookmarks

The aftermath: Cruz did not delete the original but did respond with an update, to which Big Cat responded in a retweet.



Wait who said it was a joke? It's a shark on a highway. It's real as real could be. Look I also have a shark in a mall. [#Hurricane](#) [#Real](#) [#PleaseCredit](#)



Replying to @tedcruz

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ALWAYS ASSUME THE SHARK PIC IS **FAKE!**



**WHAT COULD THE SENATOR HAVE
DONE DIFFERENTLY?**

Media Literacy can help!

WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

- ML should “[help people **understand**, **produce**, and **negotiate** meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words and sounds” (Aufderheide, 1993)
- To be Media Literate is to understand that all media messages are constructed **BY** someone and **FOR** someone (and that **YOU** are one of those someones)

BUT SERIOUSLY, WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Media literacy is the ability to **access, analyze, evaluate** and **create** media in a variety of forms (Hobbs, 2010)

Five Core Competencies:

- Access
- Analyze/Evaluate
- Create
- Reflect
- Act

TWO SPHERES OF MEDIA LIT

Two different (but complementary) areas of emphasis
(Hobbs, 2019)

- **Protectionist:** Keep yourself safe
- **Empowerment:** Become able to participate

Neither use of a technology nor critically assessing it alone
makes one fully literate!

MISINFORMATION VS. DISINFORMATION

We most commonly think of Media Literacy as dealing with one of two things:

- **Misinformation:** False or inaccurate information (getting the facts wrong)
- **Disinformation:** False information deliberate intended to mislead

ALWAYS ASSUME THE SHARK PIC IS FAKE!
(BUT WHY?)



Disinformers share the faked shark pic to deceive others



Misinformers shares the faked shark pic because they believe it's real
















SEE ANY DIFFERENCES?

CASE STUDY: POLITIFACT.COM

MENU 🔍

POLITIFACT
The Poynter Institute

All Fact-checks for West Virginia

 <p>Joe Manchin stated on August 26, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>West Virginia is poised to “receive \$25M for 160 orphaned well clean-up projects across the state.”</p>  <p>By Faithlyn Graham • November 10, 2022</p>	 <p>West Virginia Democratic Party stated on August 25, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“Carol Miller is a multi-millionaire worth over \$16 million.”</p>  <p>By Emily Oiler • October 27, 2022</p>	 <p>Citizens Against Government Waste stated on August 31, 2022 in a Facebook ad</p> <p>“More than half of the \$739 billion tax increase (in the Inflation Reduction Act) will go to wasteful Green New Deal programs like tree equity, ‘clean’ garbage trucks, and studying cow farts.”</p>  <p>By Jessica Riley • October 25, 2022</p>	 <p>Joe Manchin stated on August 28, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“WV families making less than \$400K & small businesses will NOT be targeted by the IRS.”</p>  <p>By Amanda Boring • October 18, 2022</p>
 <p>Joe Manchin stated on September 20, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“Over the past 5 years, natural gas costs have gone up over 200%” in the United States.</p> 	 <p>West Virginia Republican Party stated on August 23, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“Overdoses reached an all-time high in 2021.”</p> 	 <p>West Virginia Republican Party stated on August 23, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“More fentanyl has crossed the border in the last two months under Biden than in 2019 under Trump.”</p> 	 <p>Alex Mooney stated on August 29, 2022 in a tweet</p> <p>“There have now been 16 straight months of OVER 150,000 illegal border crossings.”</p> 

- Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking site
- Partnership with Reed College of Media at WVU since 2016
- Students identify claims by public officials or in public interest and check them out
- PF issues a ruling, ranging from “True” to “Pants on Fire”



Something bad just went down near Morgantown, WV

A Moderna shipment truck crashed, hazmat dispatched, airspace shut down and now apparently Emergency Response is claiming the Department of Defense took it over



timcast.com

EXCLUSIVE: Emergency Response Says Department of Defense Has T...
UPDATE: HHS said in a statement to Timcast that all of the vaccines are accounted for. Read the full update here.The West Virginia Center for...

11:45 AM · Aug 30, 2021

5.3K Reply Copy link

[Read 758 replies](#)

Did a truck carrying Moderna vaccine crash? And did the Pentagon handle the recovery?

IF YOUR TIME IS SHORT

- A truck carrying Moderna vaccines did crash near Morgantown, W.Va., on Aug. 27.
- Local emergency management agencies said that the airspace was not shut down and that the Defense Department never dispatched officials to the site of the crash. The cleanup was handled exclusively by local agencies, officials said.

[See the sources for this fact-check](#)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Did the U.S. military take over the site where a truck carrying coronavirus vaccines crashed in Morgantown, W.Va.? That's what a recent viral social media post said.



Our ruling

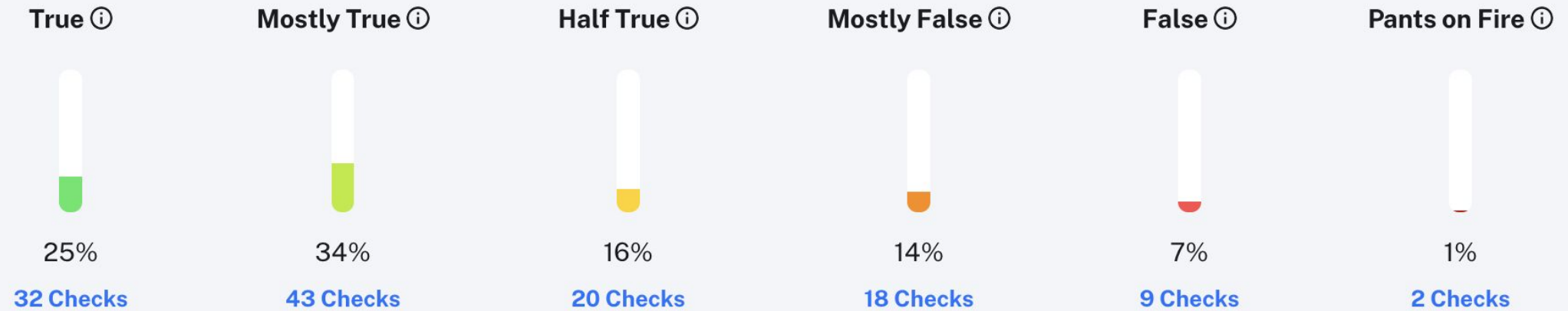
Social media posts said that "near Morgantown, WV, a Moderna shipment truck crashed, hazmat dispatched, airspace shut down and now apparently Emergency Response is claiming the Department of Defense took it over."

A truck carrying Moderna vaccines did crash near Morgantown, and a local hazmat crew was called to clean up debris.

However, local emergency management agencies said that the airspace was not shut down and that the Defense Department never dispatched officials to the site of the crash. It was handled exclusively by local agencies, officials said.

We rate the statement Half True.

Scorecard



- Out of 124 checked claims, **only 24%** were some level of “false”
- **Only 1.6%** were “Pants on Fire”
- Focusing on the worst and most malicious examples can lead to overlooking more common and everyday ones



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WHY “HALF TRUE” MATTERS

- There's truth in the original claim – it was a bad spill!
- The poster, Tim Pool, is a local podcaster who was reporting what he claims to have heard
 - *We'd call that Misinformation*
- When news is hot, there can be a desire to believe it's even bigger than it is

UNDERSTANDING PERSUASIVE APPEALS

Or: Let's ask the Greeks

WHAT'S ARISTOTLE HAVE TO SAY?

ETHOS

**Character or
authority**

Celebrities,
uniforms,
professionals

LOGOS

**Logic, facts &
figures**

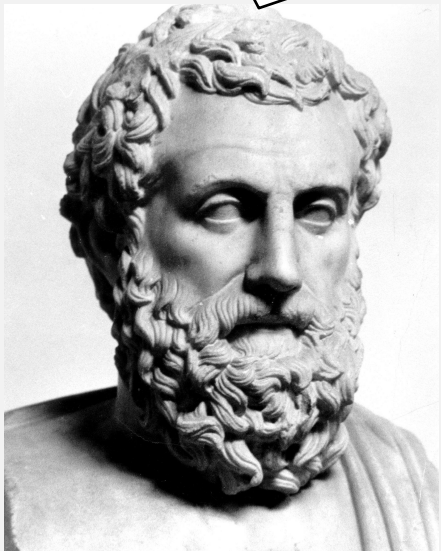
Facts,
percentages,
lots of words,
charts

PATHOS

**Emotional
appeals**

Fear, desire,
empathy,
hunger, humor

*If you WANT to believe
it, check it out!*



Point 1: These are three standard tools of persuasion

Point 2: They are also signifiers, and “a sign is anything that can be used to lie” (Eco)

ETHOS: SOURCE CREDIBILITY



TRUST ME, I'M A DOCTOR



- Bob Britten, Ph.D.
(U. of Missouri, 2008)
- That means I can put “Doctor” in front of my name
- It does not mean you want me operating on you

TRUST ME, I'M A DOCTOR



“Even though residents of Shanksville had been maintaining and archiving memorial artifacts from the Flight 93 crash for years,” said Dr. Britten, “they would describe their work as less ‘real’ than that of an official (meaning government constructed) memorial.”

- I research media and collective memory
- Verifiable: You can find ample evidence of this

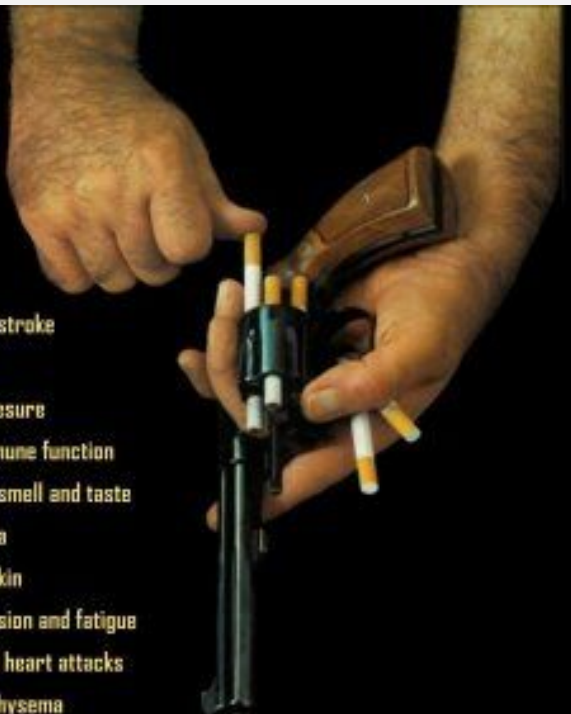
TRUST ME, I'M (NOT THAT KIND OF) A DOCTOR



“Based on my observations, the coronavirus is likely to fade away like other epidemics,” said Dr. Britten. “It’s just not something we have to worry about anymore.”

- I am not a virologist or epidemiologist
- The quote doesn’t claim I am, *but* the “Dr.” – and the fact that I’m quoted as an expert – essentially does that work

LOGOS: LOGICAL ARGUMENT



- major cause of stroke
- very addictive
- raises blood pressure
- suppresses immune function
- dulls senses of smell and taste
- reduces stamina
- wrinkles your skin
- leads to depression and fatigue
- may cause fatal heart attacks
- may cause emphysema
- may cause gum disease
- may cause cancer

Smoking Kills

...so why bother starting?

You could save 15%.

More than auto insurance.

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- Motorcycle
- Renters Insurance
- Home Owners Insurance
- RV Insurance
- Flood Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Umbrella Insurance
- Commercial Insurance
- Mobile Home Insurance
- ATV Insurance

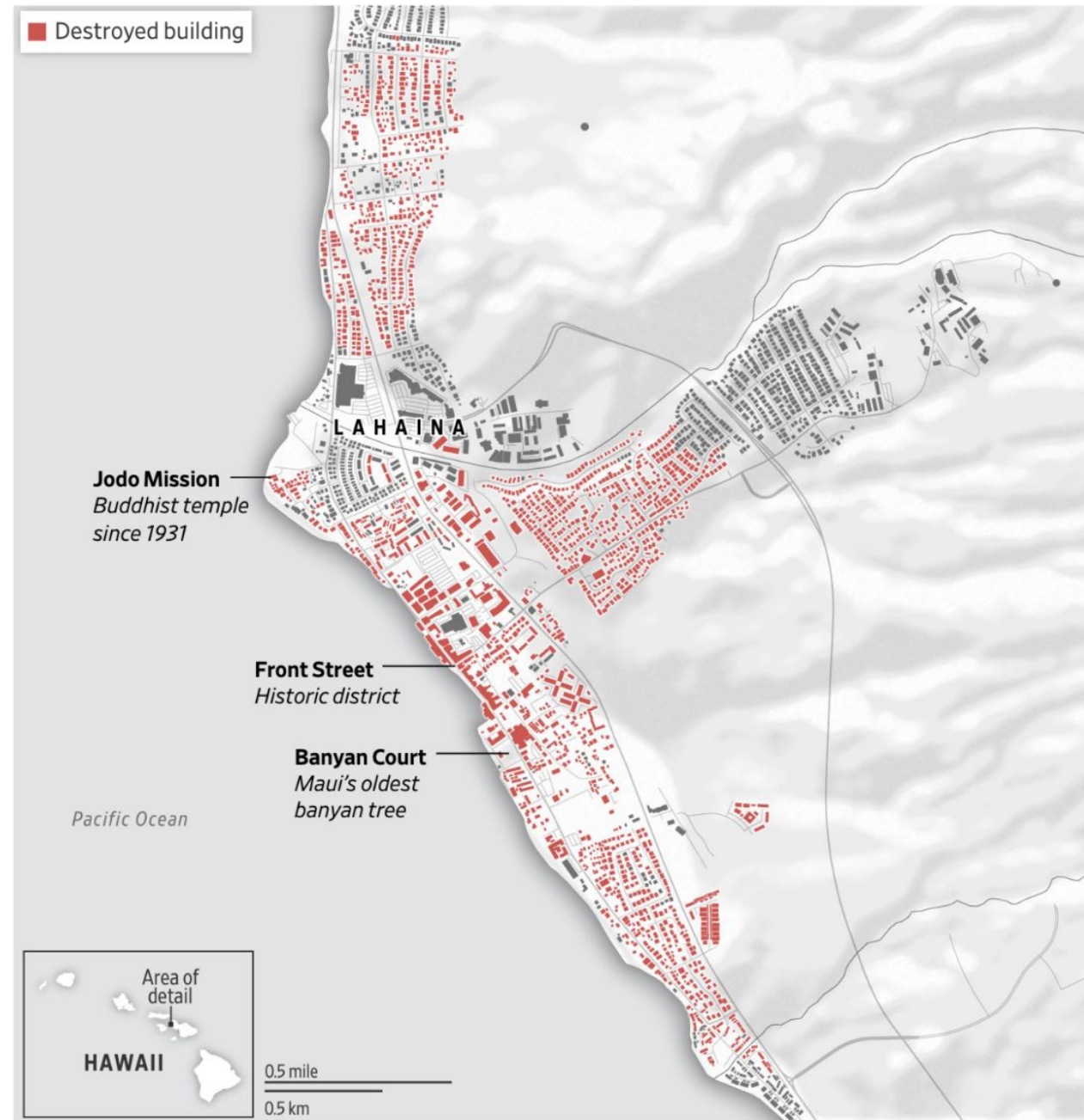
www.geico.com

GEICO

A common place for
Logos-based arguments is
in information graphics,
which are based on data

Map of Lahaina Buildings Destroyed in Wildfire

Wall Street Journal
(Aug. 11, 2023)



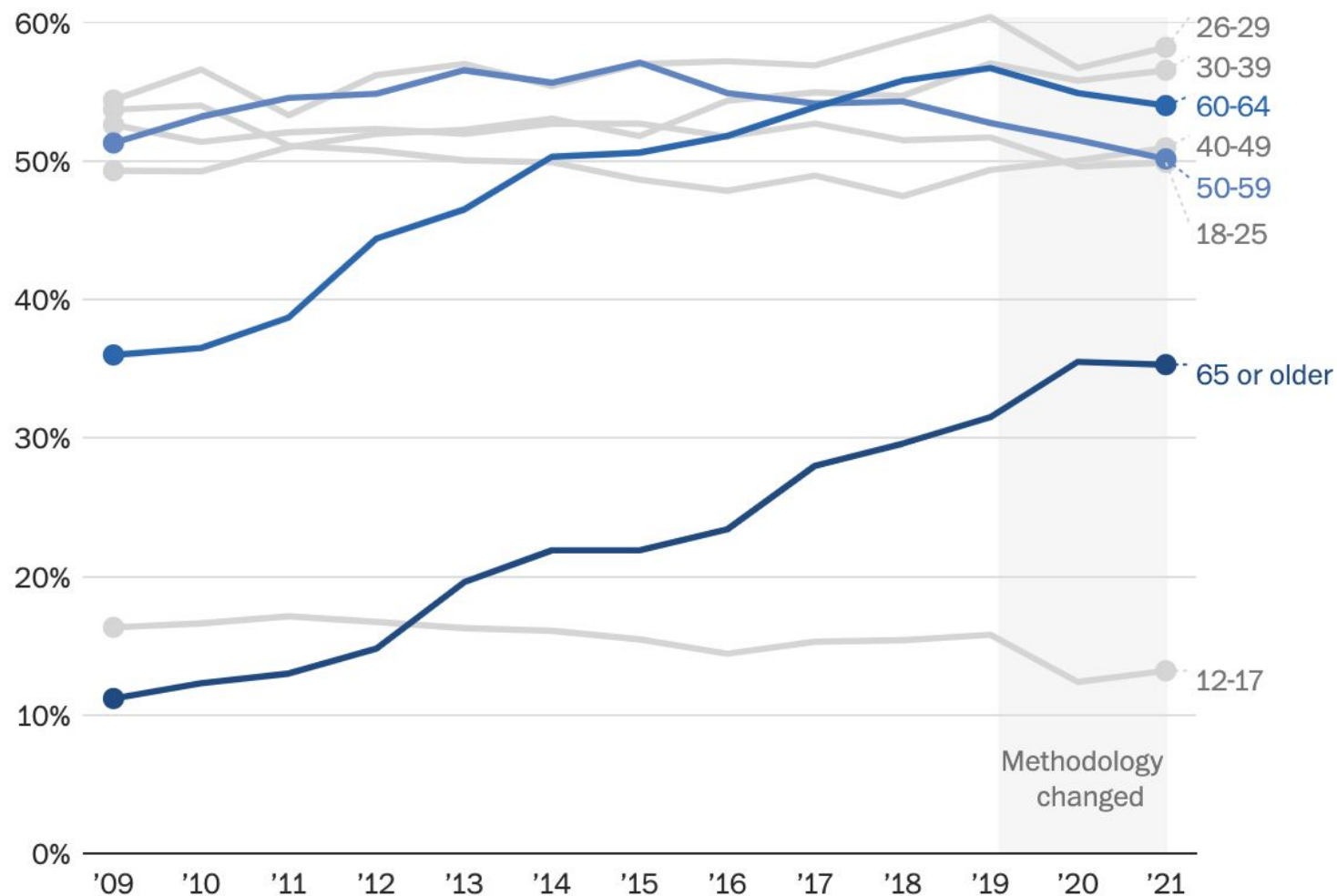
Note: Based on analysis of satellite images released Thursday.
Sources: Maxar Technologies, Planet Labs (satellite images); OpenStreetMap (building footprints)
Jake Steinberg/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“Who’s most likely to
smoke weed, and is it
NPR listeners?”

Washington Post
(July 14, 2023)

Aging in America is becoming a chronic condition

Of each age group, the share who have ever used marijuana

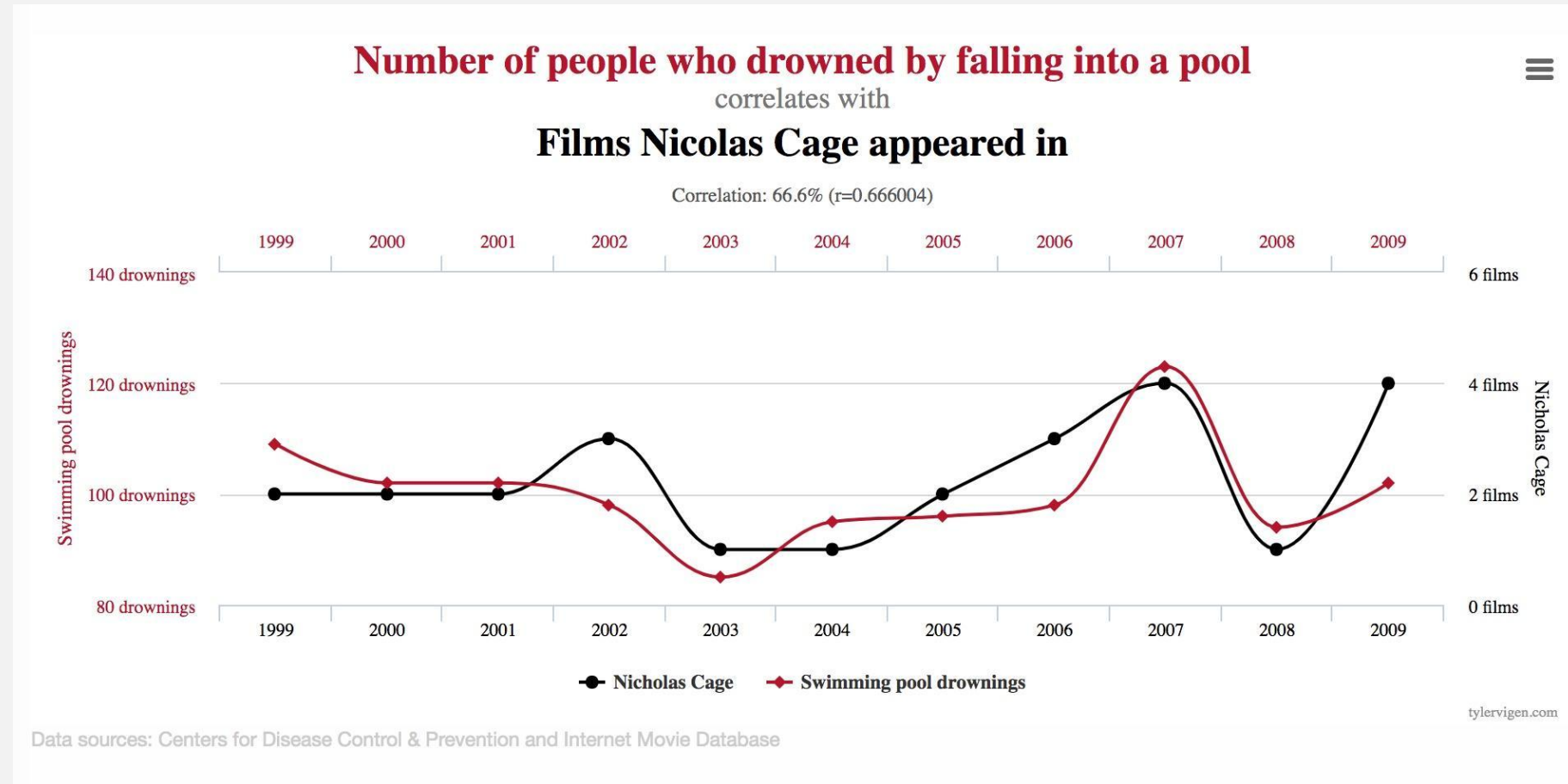


Note: Estimates from 2020 and 2021 are not comparable to each other, or to prior years, due to changes in methodology caused by the covid-19 pandemic. For consistency and clutter reduction, some age groups were combined using simple averages.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

DEPARTMENT OF DATA / THE WASHINGTON POST

Remember that
CORRELATION
(two things aligning)
does not equal
CAUSATION
(one thing leading to
the other)

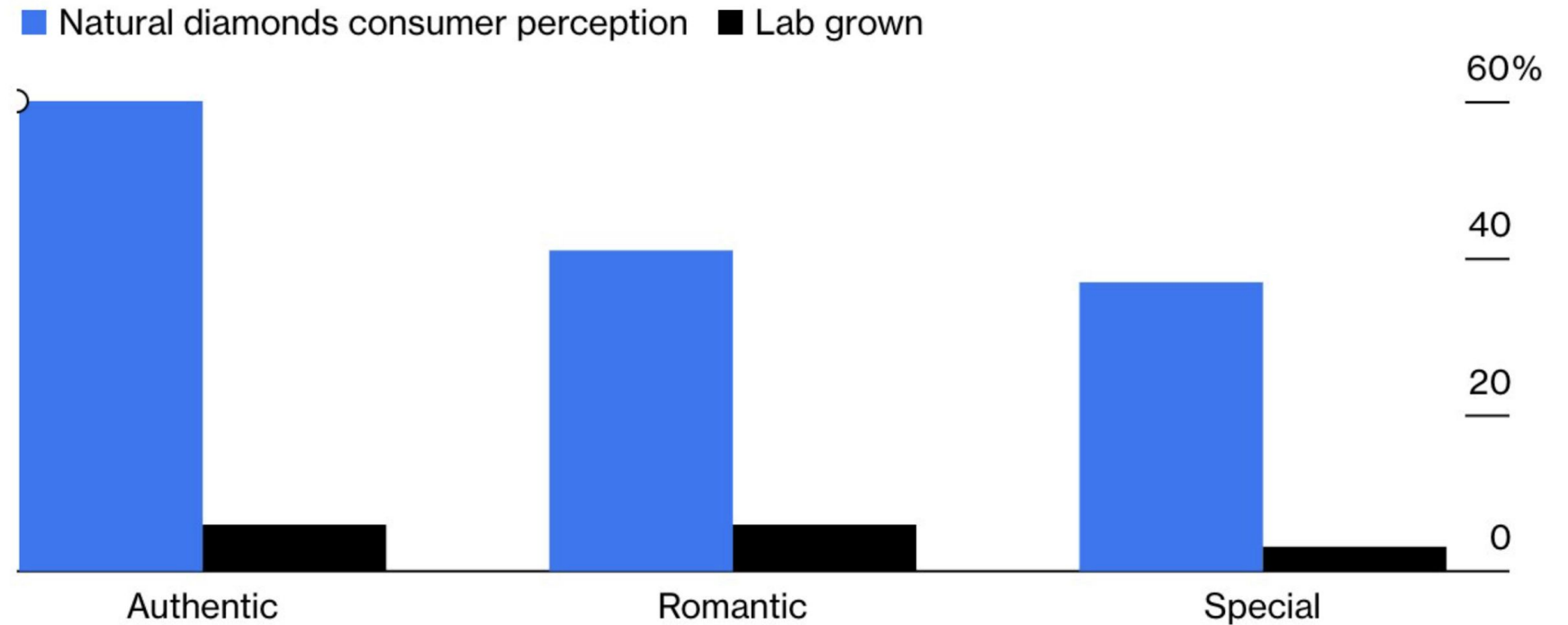


<https://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations>

Assuming the
reported numbers
are accurate,
what's problematic
about this chart?

Saying I Don't

Synthetic diamonds are struggling to generate the same emotions as natural stones

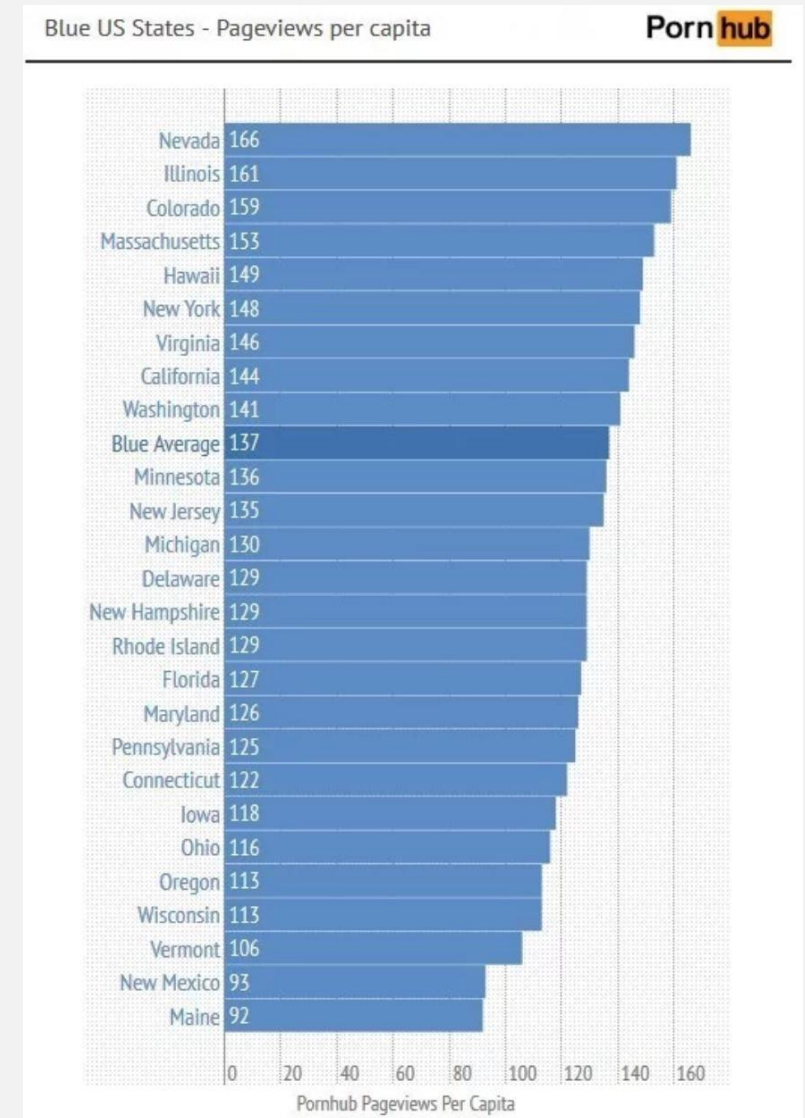
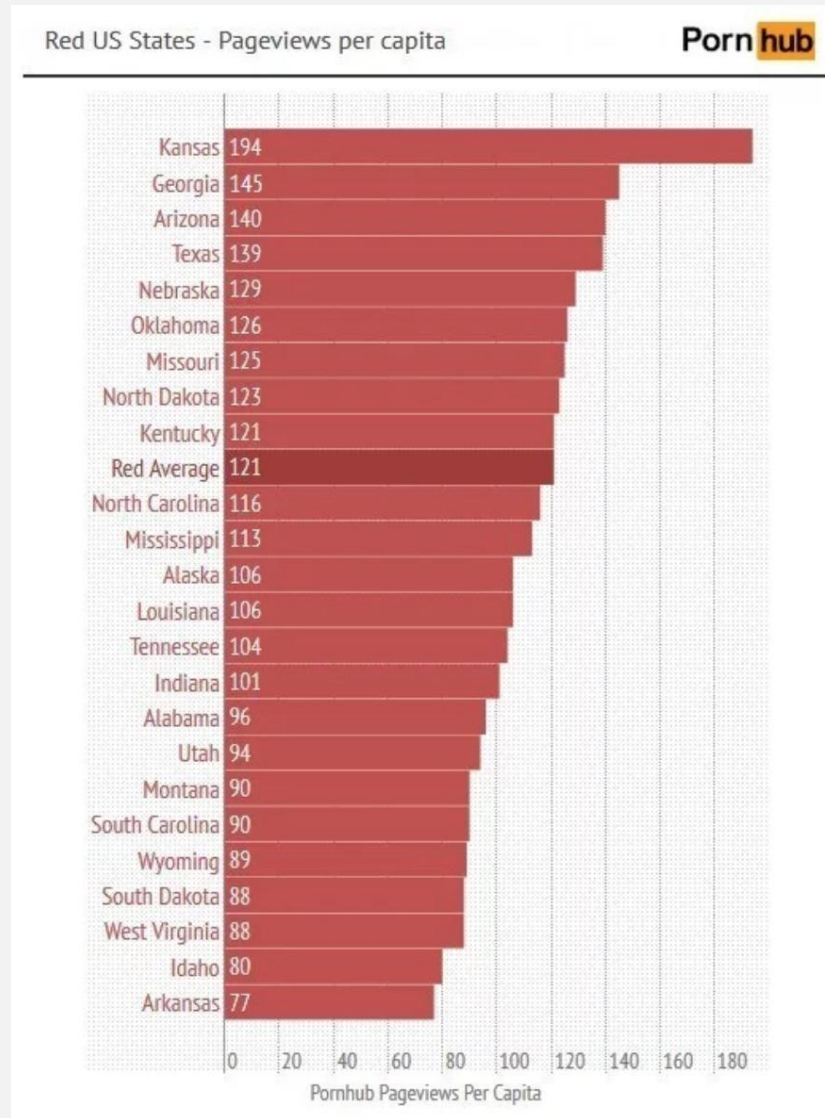


Source: De Beers

From Bloomberg News

What's compelling
about these charts
about pornography
consumption
between Red and
Blue states?

(Red/Blue based on
2012 presidential
election votes)



Non-geocoded data
defaults to the
geographic center of
the U.S., which is...



This provides us a segue to the third persuasive appeal...

PATHOS: EMOTIONAL APPEAL



Once again: If you're **WANTING** it to be true, that's your best warning sign for checking things out - not because it's probably false, but because you're **FEELING** instead of **THINKING!**



Ted Cruz ✓
@tedcruz



Holy crap.



Big Cat ✓ @BarstoolBigCat · Aug 20

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Yeah, Hurricane Shark lives in Pathos.

START BUILDING YOUR TOOLBOX

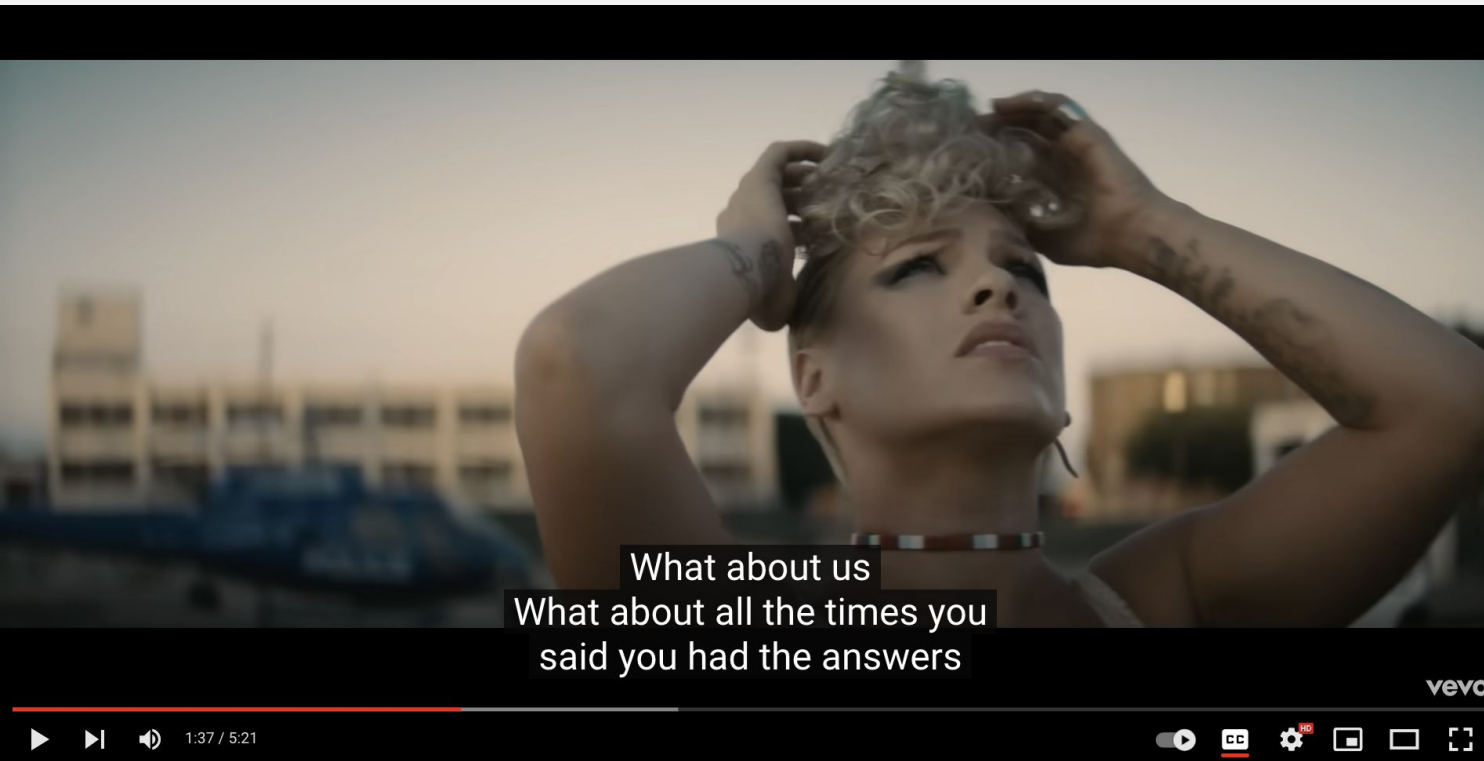
START BUILDING YOUR TOOLBOX



- **Fact-checking sites** (typically news oriented): PolitiFact.com, FactCheck.org, OpenSecrets.org, TruthOrFiction.com, Washington Post's Fact Checker
- **General debunking resources:** Snopes.com, Hoax-slayer.com
- **Visual tools:** Google Reverse Image Search, TinEye.com

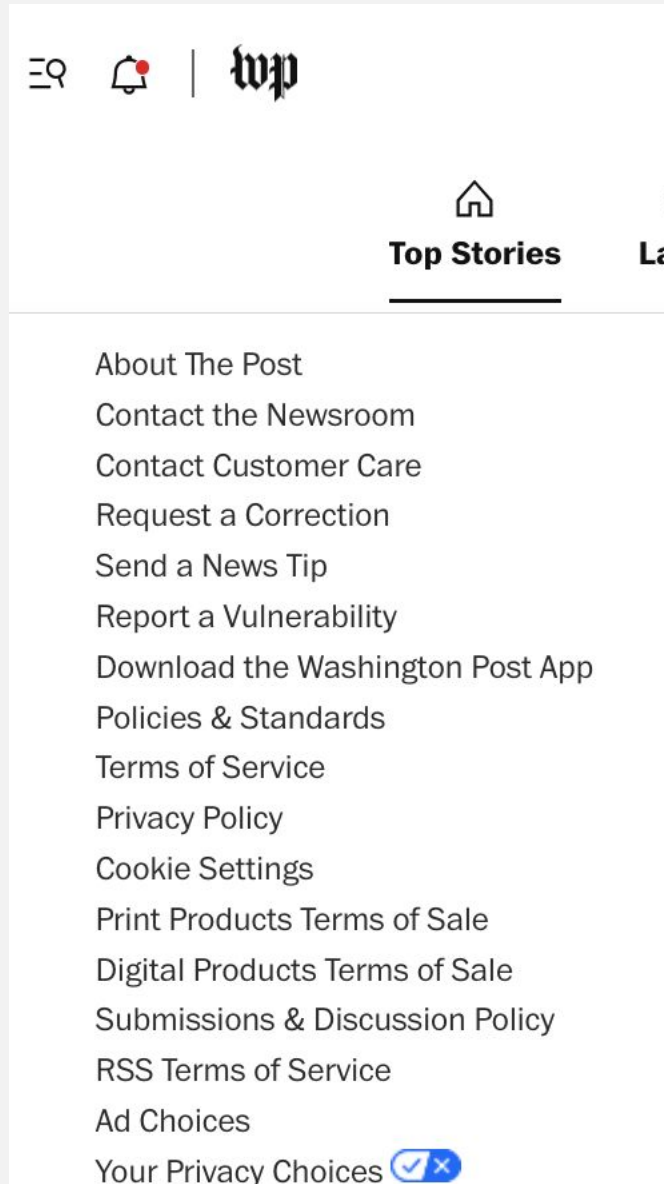
None are perfect – just like an actual toolbox! Find what you need in situation, and use them together!

TOOL: “ABOUT US” PAGES AND PROFILES



- Every site should have an About Us page
- For social media, that's their Profile page
 - Is there one?
 - Is a name attached?
 - Can you contact them?
 - Who does it say pays their bills?

On the Washington Post, scroll ALL the way down and click “About the Post”



Leadership of The Washington Post newsroom

Sally Buzbee
Executive Editor
sally.buzbee@washpost.com

Krissah Thompson
Managing Editor
krissah.thompson@washpost.com

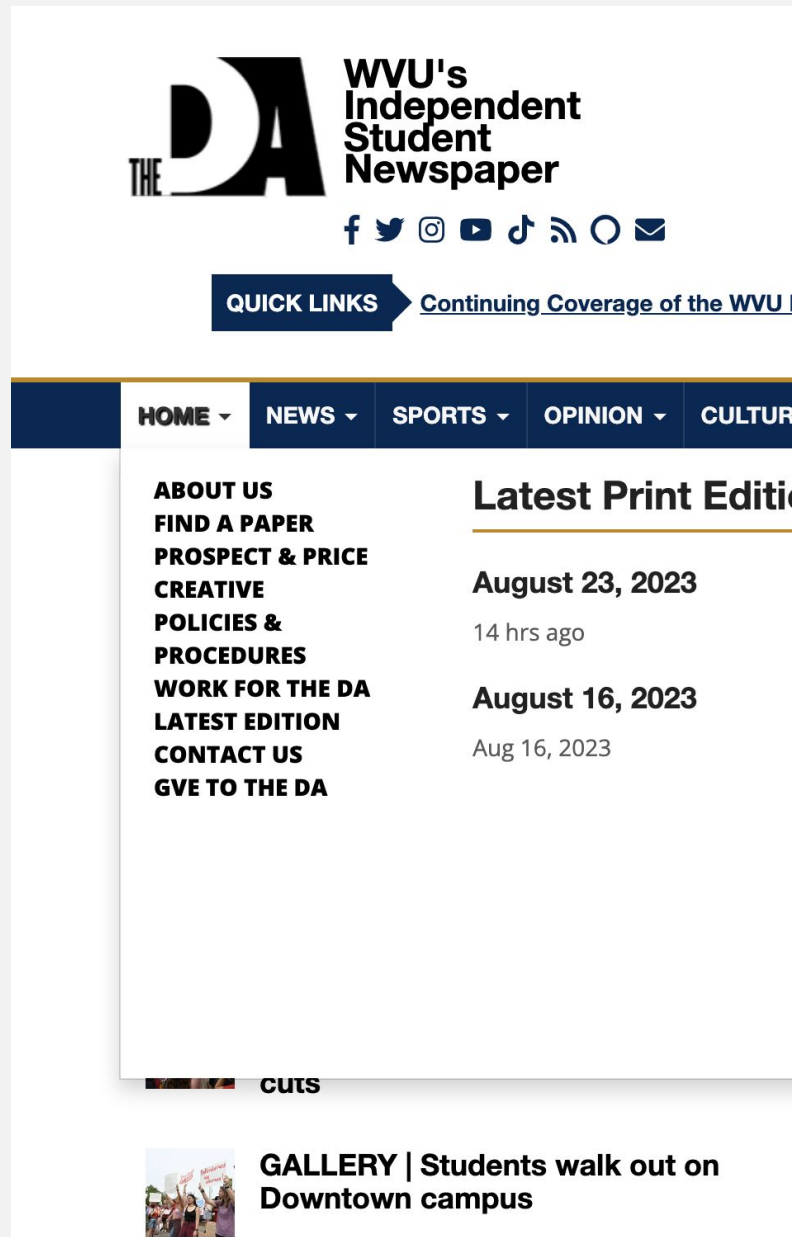
Justin Bank
Managing Editor
justin.bank@washpost.com

Barbara Vobejda
Managing Editor
barbara.vobejda@washpost.com

Monica Norton
Deputy Managing Editor
monica.norton@washpost.com

You then have to click on newsroom leadership (opinion and management have separate pages)

On WVU's student newspaper, click "HOME" at the top and select "About Us"



2023-24 Editorial Staff

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Managing Editor

Sabrina Siegan sas0088@mix.wvu.edu | sas0088@mix.wvu.edu

Digital Content Editor

Katelyn Aluise | kma00016@mix.wvu.edu

Executive News Editor

Lauren Taylor | let00010@mix.wvu.edu

Assistant News Editor

Savannah Jones | skj00003@mix.wvu.edu

After that, click "Meet the Editorial Staff"

Are parody sites like The Onion mis- or disinformation?



POLITICS

Republican Presidential Candidates Undergo Mandatory Genital Checks Ahead Of First Debate

MILWAUKEE—Lining up in the hallway dressed in hospital gowns, Republican presidential candidates underwent mandatory genital checks ahead of their first debate Wednesday. “Please state your name, date of birth, and gender,” said the Republican...

POLITICS

Best Strategies From Ron DeSantis’ Leaked Debate Memo



BREAKING NEWS

Silicon Valley Investors Tout Man Who Shows Up To Steal One Of Your Bones As New Tech Innovation

SAN FRANCISCO—Saying the breakthrough had tremendous disruptive potential, a group of Silicon Valley investors on Tuesday touted a man who shows up to steal one of your bones as a bold new tech innovation. “We’re backing this tech because we believe...

BREAKING NEWS

Nation’s Older Sister’s Friends Announce Plan To Split Single Cigarette Among 9 Of Them

WHEATON, IL—Adjusting their white eyeliner and iridescent lip gloss before approaching the podium, the nation’s older sister’s friends officially unveiled plans Wednesday to split a single cigarette among nine of them. “We’re going to sneak out...

POLITICS

Trump Supporters Explain Why They Doxxed Grand Jurors

After former President Donald Trump was indicted by a Georgia grand jury, his supporters found and published the names and addresses of the jury’s members. *The Onion* asked Trump supporters why they posted the jurors’ personal information online, and...



ONION UNIVERSITY

Things To Never Say To Your Freshman-Year Roommate



LOCAL

Annoying Parent Spends Whole Eulogy Yammering On About Kid



BREAKING NEWS

Study: Living Happy Life Strongly Correlated To Thinking About Property Values All The Time

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What if I want to sue *The Onion*?

Please do not do that. The First Amendment protects satire as a form of free speech and expression. *The Onion* uses invented names in all of its stories, except in cases where public figures are being satirized. Any other use of real names is accidental and coincidental. *The Onion* is not intended for readers under 18 years of age.

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ONION UNIVERSITY

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LOCAL

Annoying Parent Spends Whole Eulogy Yammering On About Kid



BREAKING NEWS

Study: Living Happy Life Strongly Correlated To Thinking About Property Values All The Time

We may earn a commission from links on this page.

POLITICS

Congress Threatens To Leave D.C. Unless New Capitol Is Built

Published May 29, 2002



WASHINGTON, DC—Calling the current U.S. Capitol "inadequate and obsolete," Congress will relocate to Charlotte or Memphis if its demands for a new, state-of-the-art facility are not met, leaders announced Monday.

REUTERS

CULTURE JUN 7, 2002 7:00 AM

China Paper Bites on Onion Gag

According to China's most popular newspaper, the U.S. Congress is threatening to move out of Washington unless it gets a new building. Too bad the *Beijing Evening News* fell for a spoof from the *Onion*.

***That doesn't mean people
(or governments) can't use it to
spread misinformation!***

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES



- Just click the profile!
- What's their profile image?
- When did they create the account?
- How often do they post?
- What do they post ABOUT?



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@BarstoolBigCat

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1,948 Reposts **472** Quotes **43.7K** Likes **824** Bookmarks



Follow

Big Cat ✓

@BarstoolBigCat

Dan Katz. Chicago [@barstoolsports](#). Email - chicagotips@barstoolsports. [@PardonMyTake](#) podcast w/ [@PFTCommenter](#). Gambling problem, call 1-800-GAMBLER.

[StellaBlueCoffee.com](#) Joined March 2010

4,048 Following **1.6M** Followers



Followed by Ja'Barr Chase, america's lounge singer, and 16 others you follow

Dan Katz, writer for Barstool Sports

Regularly posts jokes and satire

Responses were clearly in on the joke



Nick Hicks @PER4ORM · Aug 20

Friend of mine just snapped this in his backyard koi fish pond in the OC. Praying hard for them.



29 63 4,641 598.8K



Timmer @TimShay17 · Aug 20

A friend of mine took this pic in a mall in Irvine. Wild times



58 89 3,854 494.8K



Big Cat @BarstoolBigCat

Wait who said it was a joke? It's a shark on a highway. It's real as real could be. Look I also have a shark in a mall. #Hurricane #Real #PleaseCredit



Ted Cruz @tedcruz · 21h

Replying to @tedcruz

I'm told this is a joke.

In LA, you never know... 🧑

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COMMON RED FLAGS

- What can you tell about this profile?
- When was the account created?
- Do they post about non-political subjects?
- Are the posts ALL polarizing (us vs. them)?
- How's the spelling and grammar?
- Bonus points: Could you image search the profile pic?

It's time to play...

TROLL OR LEGIT?



Chloe Evans

@ChloeEva12

Student

Atlanta

Joined June 2014

196 Following 54 Followers

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes

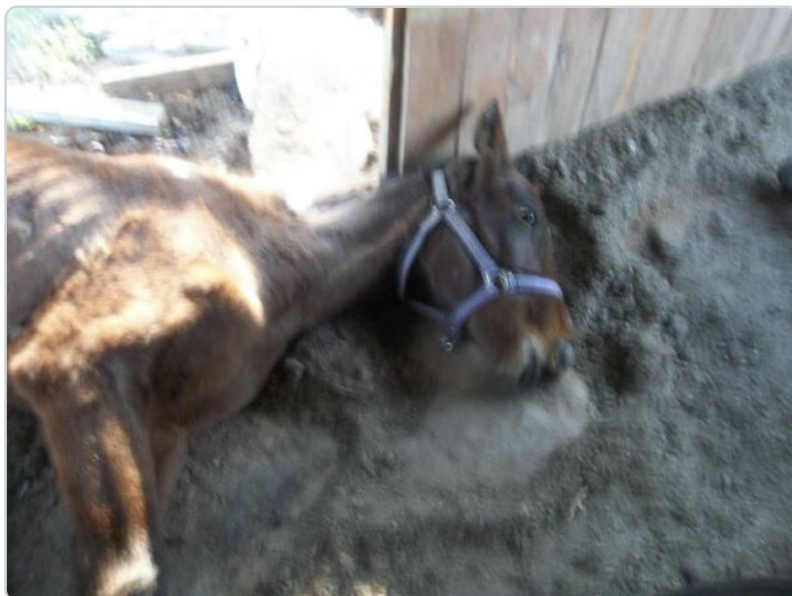


Chloe Evans

@ChloeEva12



This is all going to hell. [#DeadHorse](#)



Sep 11, 2014



Chloe Evans

@ChloeEva12



But who's responsible? Obama? [#DeadHorse](#)
[#ChemicalAccidentLouisiana](#)

EDITION: INTERNATIONAL | U.S. | MÉXICO | ARABIC

TV: CNNi | CNN en Español

Set edition preference

Home Video World U.S. Africa Asia Europe Latin America Middle East Business World Sp

September 11, 2014 – Updated 1310 GMT (2110 HKT) Edited by Peter Wilkinson in London

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Scenes from the field • Pistorius verdict • ISIS threat • Apple Watch • Scotland vote •

Obamacare: 'We will degrade, ultimately destroy' ISIS

"Difficult speech" for Barack Obama: President announces U.S. airstrikes will hit targets in war-ravaged Syria as well as Iraq. FULL STORY

- Obama's address, as it happened
- Watch the full address
- Obama: 'ISIL is not Islamic'

ISIS ADDRESS ANALYZED

Plant Explosion in Centerville Caused Panic

The plant explosion at Columbian Chemicals Company, Centerville, LA, caused the wave of panic among the residents of the nearest towns.

Murder verdict: How the judge will decide

Pistorius: Triumph and tragedy mark life

Meet woman deciding Oscar Pistorius' fate

Sep 11, 2014



Chloe Evans
@ChloeEva12



Bravery is the capacity to behave properly even when scared half to death. -
Omar N. Bradley [#quote](#) [#true](#)

Sep 10, 2014



Chloe Evans
@ChloeEva12



[#SomethingYouDidntKnowAboutMe](#): I use to be a model

Sep 4, 2014



Chloe Evans
@ChloeEva12



Don't ask what meaning of life is. You define it. [#quote](#) [#true](#)

Sep 4, 2014



Chloe Evans
@ChloeEva12



Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless
laughter could be said to remedy anything. [#Kurt_Vonnegut](#)

Sep 4, 2014



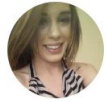
[◀ BACK](#)

Correct.



Chloe was a Russian-made troll account. Hundreds of Twitter accounts like Chloe were active throughout 2014 and 2015. These trolls were an early, highly automated effort by the Internet Research Agency (IRA), based in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Unfortunately, the agency has gotten much, much better at its job. Read our [full analysis](#) to get a more in-depth look at this profile before you continue.

Example and analysis courtesy <https://spotthetroll.org/>

[◀ BACK](#) FULL ANALYSIS:

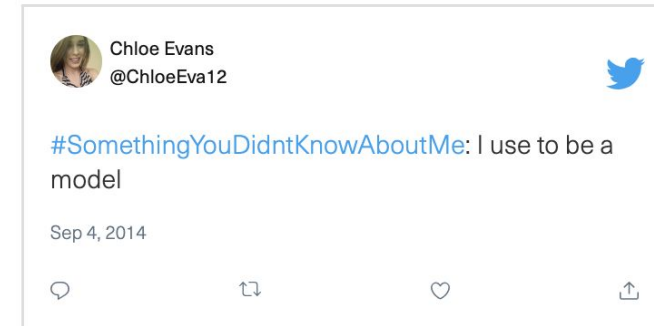
Chloe Evans: Fear Monger

Hundreds of Russian Twitter accounts like Chloe were active throughout 2014 and 2015. They were identified by Twitter in 2017 as originating from the Internet Research Agency (IRA) in Saint Petersburg. These were an early, highly automated effort by the IRA. Unfortunately, the agency has gotten much, much better at its job.

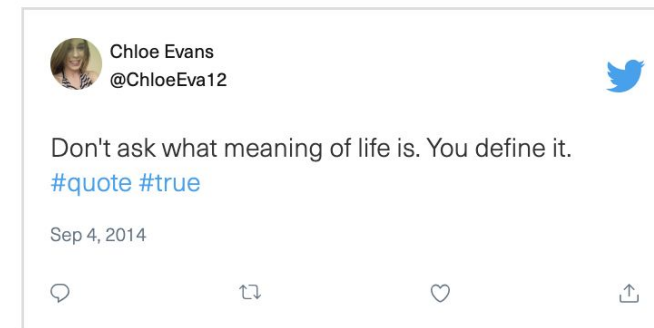
Early IRA accounts like Chloe pushed hoax events that never happened. These included an Ebola outbreak in Atlanta, Georgia; Salmonella-infected Thanksgiving turkeys sold in Upstate New York Walgreens; and, as in the case of Chloe, a chemical explosion killing horses in Centerville, Louisiana.



These accounts used stolen images and doctored graphics to persuade users that the world is a dangerous place. Much like Chloe, they typically used profile images of attractive young women. This is a common tactic of internet charlatans; trolls and bots sell disinformation in the same way advertisers sell their products. Trolls practice marketing, not spycraft.



It's important to note troll accounts are typically run by real humans. These early Russian hoax accounts, however, spent much (but not all) of their life automated by a computer program. Social media accounts run by a computer are called bots. As demonstrated by Chloe, these particular accounts were programmed to post famous quotes and song lyrics in an attempt to appear human and gain followers.



Fortunately, these early efforts by the Internet Research Agency were not effective, and few people took these hoaxes seriously.

TOOL: GOOGLE REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH



Search by image

- Save an image or its URL
- Go to images.google.com
- Click the camera icon in the search bar
- Paste an image URL or upload an image
- See what turns up!



All

Images

Maps

Shopping

More

Settings

Tools

About 22,600,000 results (1.77 seconds)

Image size:
259 × 194Find other sizes of this image:
[All sizes](#) - [Medium](#) - [Large](#)Best guess for this image: ***shark in the street***

A Shark in the Street, and Other Hurricane Harvey Misinformation You ...

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/28/us/politics/shark-hurricane-harvey-rumors.html>

Aug 28, 2017 - Social media posts about a **shark**, President Obama and bogus emergency contact information offer lessons in how fake news spread.

Shark Swims in Houston Streets? - Snopes.com

<https://www.snopes.com/photos/animals/puertorico.asp> ▼

A repurposed and fake photograph does not show a **shark** swimming down a Daytona Beach **street** during Hurricane Matthew.

Visually similar images





Jason Michael

@Jeggit

Follow



Believe it or not, this is a shark on the freeway in Houston, Texas. [#HurricaneHarvy](#)



3:00 AM - 28 Aug 2017

5,403 Retweets 5,438 Likes



TOOL: SNOPE (AND OTHER FACT-CHECKING RESOURCES)

Fact Check > Fauxtography

Shark Swims in Houston Streets?

A repurposed and fake photograph does not show a shark swimming down a Houston street after Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey flooded the city.



- Snopes.com probably has already covered it
 - “Houston Shark photo” gives you [this](#).
- It’s also tagged to the “[Fauxtography](#)” category
- Develop go-to resources (but always maintain your skepticism!)

Claim:

A photograph shows a shark swimming down a highway after a hurricane.

Rating:



False

[About this rating](#)

Since then the same image has been recirculated several times over, typically localized to some big city in the United States that has just experienced a hurricane or other weather event producing heavy rains and floods. Its most recent iterations assigned it to Houston after heavy rains pounded portions of Texas over Memorial Day weekend in 2015, Daytona Beach after Hurricane Matthew approached Florida in October 2016, and Houston again in August 2017 after Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey caused massive flooding throughout the city.

Then and now, the photograph is a digital hoax. The image of the shark was lifted from a 2005 photograph of a **kayaker** being trailed by a great white shark and pasted into a photograph of a flooded street:



Featured Story



Biden Did Not Fall Asleep While Meeting with Maui Fire Victims, C-SPAN Video Confirms

A close-up shot broadcast by C-SPAN showed that President Biden's eyes were open, despite a popular social media post that pushed this false rumor.

Written by: *Jordan Liles*

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Written by: *Jordan Liles*

Aug 22, 2023

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Written by: *Alex Kasprak*



Video Does Not Show Dodger Stadium Flooded After Tropical Storm Hilary

Written by: *Jordan Liles*

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There's No Evidence Ivana Trump Was Cremated

Written by: *Jordan Liles*

Sep 20, 2022

Bonus points: The frequent use of “did” and “did not” in headlines for more significant stories is another mark in Snopes’ favor (no teasing of the reveal)

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

DEVELOP YOUR SENSE OF SMELL

- Emotional appeals: The more you WANT to believe it, the more you need to check it out!
- Rely on tools and good habits
 - Check the profile, about page, source, etc.
 - Search the fact checking sites (Snopes, Politifact)
 - Google Reverse Image Search
- Remember: The shark pic is ALWAYS fake!

ANIMALS

Is Florida's hurricane shark real? The video is, at least.



By Andrew Jeong

Updated October 3, 2022 at 10:59 p.m. EDT | Published October 1, 2022 at 12:49 a.m. EDT



...except when it's real.

THANK YOU!