Several years ago, I came across a meme claiming that if you want an answer on a forum, the most effective strategy is not to ask a question, but rather to post a deliberately false statement so that others will rush to correct you. This humorous observation, sometimes referred to as "Cunningham's Law," suggests that false assertions may provoke stronger engagement than genuine questions.

In this short study, I aim to test whether this claim holds true on Reddit. Specifically, I will compare the conversational dynamics of posts phrased as questions with those of posts that contain false or misleading statements. By examining the number of repply, I seek to determine whether posing a question or making an incorrect assertion is more likely to spark a response.

The first step of this project is to collect the necessary data. I wrote a Python script that scans 20 subreddits known for posts that are either questions or obviously false statements, and collects the URLs of 2,000 topics—100 from each subreddit and save them into a pickle.

https://github.com/mathyisraeli/network_science_blog/blob/main/collect_url.py

The second step is to collect the first post of each topic listed in the pickle and check whether it is a question or a commonly considered false statement or neither.