

Snopes

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Snopes

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- *It has also been seen as a source for validating and debunking urban legends and similar stories in American popular culture.*

Snopes /snoʊps/, formerly known as the Urban Legends Reference Pages, claims to be one of the first online fact-checking websites. It has been described as a "well-regarded source for sorting out myths and rumors" on the Internet. It has also been seen as a source for validating and debunking urban legends and similar stories in American popular culture.

History

- *In 2002, the site had become known well enough that a television pilot called Snopes: Urban Legends was completed with American actor Jim Davidson as host.*
- *In 1994, David and Barbara Mikkelsen created an urban folklore web site that would become Snopes.com.*
- *Snopes was an early online encyclopedia focused on urban legends, that mainly presented search results of user discussions.*

In 1994, David and Barbara Mikkelsen created an urban folklore web site that would become Snopes.com. Snopes was an early online encyclopedia focused on urban legends, that mainly presented search results of user discussions. The site grew to encompass a wide range of subjects and became a resource to which Internet users began submitting pictures and stories of questionable veracity. According to the Mikkelsons, Snopes predated the search engine concept where people could go to check facts by searches. David Mikkelsen had originally adopted the username "Snopes" (the name of a family of often unpleasant people in the works of William Faulkner) as a username in the Usenet newsgroup alt.folklore.urban.

In 2002, the site had become known well enough that a television pilot called Snopes: Urban Legends was completed with American actor Jim Davidson as host. However, it did not air on major networks.

By mid-2014, Barbara had not written for Snopes "in several years" and David was forced to hire users from Snopes.com's message board to assist him in running the site. The Mikkelsons divorced around that time. Christopher Richmond and Drew Schoentrup became part owners in July of 2016 with the purchase of Barbara Mikkelson's share by the internet media management company Proper Media.

On March 9, 2017, David Mikkelson terminated the brokering agreement with Proper Media, which is also the company that provides Snopes with web development, hosting, and advertising support. This prompted Proper Media to stop remitting advertising revenue and to file a lawsuit in May. In late June, Bardav—the company founded by David and Barbara Mikkelson in 2003 to own and operate snopes.com—started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to continue operations. They raised \$500,000 in 24 hours. Later, in August, a judge ordered Proper Media to disburse advertising revenues to Bardav while the case was pending.

In early 2019, Snopes announced that it had acquired the website OnTheIssues.org, and is "hard at work modernizing its extensive archives". OnTheIssues is a website that seeks to "present all the relevant evidence, assess how strongly each piece supports or opposes a position, and summarize it with an average" in order to "provide voters with reliable information on candidates' policy positions".

Main site

- *Snopes aims to debunk or confirm widely spread urban legends.*
- *Mikkelson has stressed the reference portion of the name Urban Legends Reference Pages, indicating that their intention is not merely to dismiss or confirm misconceptions and rumors but to provide evidence for such debunkings and confirmation as well.*

Snopes aims to debunk or confirm widely spread urban legends. The site has been referenced by news media and other sites, including CNN, MSNBC, Fortune, Forbes, and The New York Times. By March 2009, the site had more than 6 million visitors per month. Mikkelson runs the website out of his home in Tacoma, Washington.

Mikkelson has stressed the reference portion of the name Urban Legends Reference Pages, indicating that their intention is not merely to dismiss or confirm misconceptions and rumors but to provide evidence for such debunkings and confirmation as well. Where appropriate, pages are generally marked "undetermined" or "unverifiable" when there is not enough evidence to either support or disprove a given claim.

Lost legends

- *The name was chosen for its acronym, T.R.O.L.L., a reference to the early 1990s definition of the word troll, meaning an Internet prank, of which David Mikkelsen was a prominent practitioner.*
- *In an attempt to demonstrate the perils of over-reliance on the Internet as authority, Snopes assembled a series of fabricated urban folklore tales that it terms "The Repository of Lost Legends".*

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Accuracy

- *Mikkelsen has said that the site receives more complaints of liberal bias than conservative bias, but added that the same debunking standards are applied to all political urban legends.*
- *Jan Harold Brunvand, a folklorist who has written a number of books on urban legends and modern folklore, considered the site so comprehensive that in 2004 he decided not to launch one of his own to similarly discuss the accuracy of various legends and rumors.*

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In 2012, FactCheck.org reviewed a sample of Snopes' responses to political rumors regarding George W. Bush, Sarah Palin, and Barack Obama, and found them to be free from bias in all cases. In 2012, The Florida Times-Union reported that About.com's urban legends researcher found a "consistent effort to provide even-handed analyses" and that Snopes' cited sources and numerous reputable analyses of its content confirm its accuracy. Mikkelsen has said that the site receives more complaints of liberal bias than conservative bias, but added that the same debunking standards are applied to all political urban legends.

Funding

- *Some critics of Snopes have made the unfounded claim that the site is funded in part by billionaire philanthropist George Soros.*
- *On February 1, 2019, Snopes announced that it had ended its fact-checking partnership with Facebook.*
- *In response, Snopes said in 2016 that the entirety of its revenue was derived from advertising.*

Some critics of Snopes have made the unfounded claim that the site is funded in part by billionaire philanthropist George Soros. In response, Snopes said in 2016 that the entirety of its revenue was derived from advertising. However, in 2016, it also received an award of \$75,000 from the James Randi Educational Foundation, an organization formed to debunk paranormal claims. In 2017, it raised approximately \$700,000 from a crowd-sourced GoFundMe effort and received \$100,000 from Facebook as a part of a fact-checking partnership.

On February 1, 2019, Snopes announced that it had ended its fact-checking partnership with Facebook. Snopes did not rule out the possibility of working with Facebook in the future but said it needed to "determine with certainty that our efforts to aid any particular platform are a net positive for our online community, publication and staff." Snopes added that the loss of revenue from the partnership meant the company would "have less money to invest in our publication — and we will need to adapt to make up for it."

Traffic and users

- *As of April 2017[update], Snopes.com's Alexa rating was 1,794.*
- *In 2017, the site attracted 20 million unique visitors in one month.*

As of December 2017, Snopes.com's Web traffic rank in the world stood at 3,798 with approximately 72% originating from the U.S. with web traffic declining from previous months. As of April 2017[update], Snopes.com's Alexa rating was 1,794. Approximately 80% of its visitors originate from within the United States. In 2017, the site attracted 20 million unique visitors in one month.

See also

- *FactCheck.org – A website that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics*

TruthOrFiction.com

FactCheck.org – A website that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics

The Straight Dope

The Skeptic's Dictionary – Collection of skeptical essays by Robert Todd Carroll

Mythbusters – Australian-American science entertainment television program

List of common misconceptions – Wikimedia list article

References

External links

- *Official website*

Official website