

“Satire or Real News?” - Documentation

Description and Intended Experience

A game that displays a headline to the user and asks them to decide whether they think that it's from a satirical publication (The Onion), or from a real news source (CNN, Al Jazeera, Fox News, etc.). The program tallies the score after ten rounds and provides the user with a GIF that corresponds with their performance in the game.

The game is intended to have a minimalistic user interface and feature soft colors that allow for a pleasing experience. The aim is not to make the user think too hard when playing the game.

Motivation to creating the Web App

As an avid user of Reddit, I follow both r/theonion and r/nottheonion.

- ❑ r/theonion is a subreddit that allows for the sharing of articles from The Onion, which is a satirical news organization.
- ❑ r/nottheonion, in my opinion, is even better than satire. This is the subreddit's description:

“For true stories that are so mind-blowingly ridiculous that you could have sworn they were from The Onion.”

As r/nottheonion is a curation of ridiculous-but-true news articles, it can often be mistaken for satire. That's why I decided to create a mashup which makes people think about what really differentiates a satirical headline from a non-satirical headline. Ultimately, I like to think that I'm making a commentary about the state of news in a society where the absurd has become the norm.

Design Decisions

- ❑ When the user enters the website, they see a single button that says “Take The Quiz!”. With this opening frame, I intended to make the experience as inviting as possible and guide the user through the steps of the game.
- ❑ After initial user testing, I noticed that many people did not know when or how the game ended. To help avoid this confusion, I added a small bar that shows the stage of the game the user is currently at.
- ❑ At the end of the game, I created a “results” page where the user can see their score, and if they want to, see more detailed results on the sources of all the news headlines from the game. The user also sees a gif from GIPHY that correlates with how well they performed in the game.
- ❑ I also sustained a color code throughout the game. I chose red to signify headlines from The Onion and Green for real news articles.

Problems

Structural

Many headlines from The Onion do not have a hint of satire to them. For example, a recent headline is “Top candidates for 2018 Nobel Prize”. In articles like this one, the comic aspect is in the article itself, not the headline. When these types of headlines showed up in the game, users were confused because they could be used for both real news and satirical articles.

Error (Bug)

If the user chooses to see the full results, they can click on one of the headlines to visit the original article. However, the headlines would sometimes only link to the article when the mouse pointer was in a small area of the headline.

Borrowed sources

Color - Palette

<https://tailwindcss.com/docs/colors/>

Fonts

Google Fonts - Cabin

Shuffle Array

Function I used to shuffle articles from r/theonion and r/nottheonion.

- ❏ <https://stackoverflow.com/questions/2450954/how-to-randomize-shuffle-a-javascript-array>

```
function shuffleArray(array) {  
  for (var i = array.length - 1; i > 0; i--) {  
    var j = Math.floor(Math.random() * (i + 1));  
    var temp = array[i];  
    array[i] = array[j];  
    array[j] = temp;  
  }  
}
```

I also borrowed many, many more small ideas and suggestions throughout my time working on the project (mostly from stack overflow) that would make a list too long to have in this documentation!

Major Challenges

As this was my first ever project in web development, I faced many difficulties with syntax and getting to know html, css and js in general. Often I would get stuck on a small feature (e.g. how to link to an article, or hide a button) that would take a long time to solve, only for me to realize it was a straightforward fix all along. Although this was frustrating, it really helped me gain as much knowledge as I could.

Possible Next Steps

If I do continue with my work on this project, I want to create a results page that's more visually pleasing (maybe some graphics) or create new game dynamics where the user can see their high score or challenge another user to the game.