

Part – 1

“In times of universal deceit, telling the truth will be
a revolutionary act.”
George Orwell

Facts, alternative facts, and fact checking in the world of post-truth

Tattle- Show and Tell

19 June 2020

Two words caught the imagination of Oxford Dictionary Post-Truth and Alt-Right, so much so that Oxford included it in its dictionary

What is Post Truth?

“Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

“And to say that we live in a post-truth era doesn't mean that truth doesn't matter anymore, or that no one cares about truth. It means that we live in an era where truth is at risk, where we're in danger of losing sight of what truth means. ...post-truth as the political subordination of reality.”

World Leaders –Alternative Facts and “Lies”

Trump offered a string of fresh falsehoods: that he had the biggest electoral victory since Reagan (he didn't); that the crowd at his inauguration was the largest in US history (photographic evidence belies this and Washington, DC, Metro records show subway ridership down that day); that his speech at the CIA resulted in a standing ovation (he never asked the officers to sit). In early February, He claimed that the US murder rate was at a forty-seven-year high (when in fact the Uniform Crime Report showed it to be at a near-historic low).

In one of the rallies ahead of the Gujarat polls, PM Modi insinuated that a conspiracy was afoot by suggesting that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former Vice-President Hamid Ansari and former Army chief General Deepak Kapoor had gathered at the residence of Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar at New Delhi on December 6 to meet the Pakistani High Commissioner. PM Modi's suggestion, implying a link between the meeting and the Gujarat election had kicked up a storm.

PM Modi while addressing a rally in Karnataka in October stated that it was his govt that had launched the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme. He added that the Govt had saved up to Rs,57,000 crore by eliminating middlemen and plugging leakages.

Alt Fact -The promise that the weekly cost of EU membership – allegedly, £350m – would be ploughed into the NHS was front and centre in the Vote Leave campaign. But the data was not correct

“To borrow a distinction often made by Trump's supporters, it was evidently a mistake to take the Leave campaign literally rather than seriously.”

Why are lies and alternative facts successful?

- **Motivated Reasoning**

Individuals engage in motivated reasoning as a way to avoid or lessen [cognitive dissonance](#), the mental discomfort people experience when confronted by contradictory information

- **Confirmation Bias**

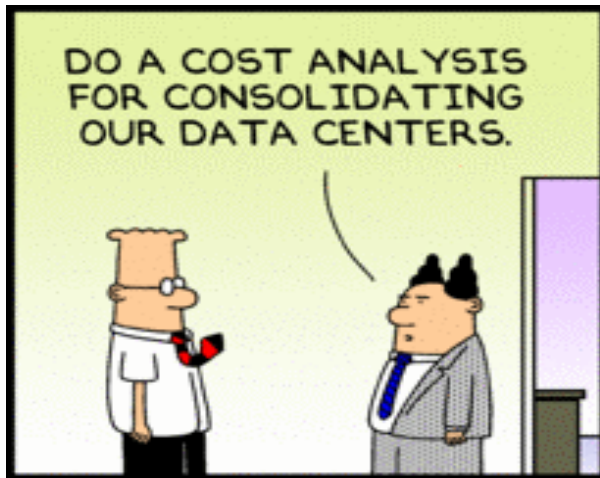
Impact how we gather information, but they also influence how we interpret and recall information

- **Salience**

Psychologists view salience detection as a key attentional mechanism enabling humans to focus their limited cognitive resources on a relevant subset of the available sensory data - fully all the information available to them, but overemphasize the information their minds focus on

- **Available Heuristic**

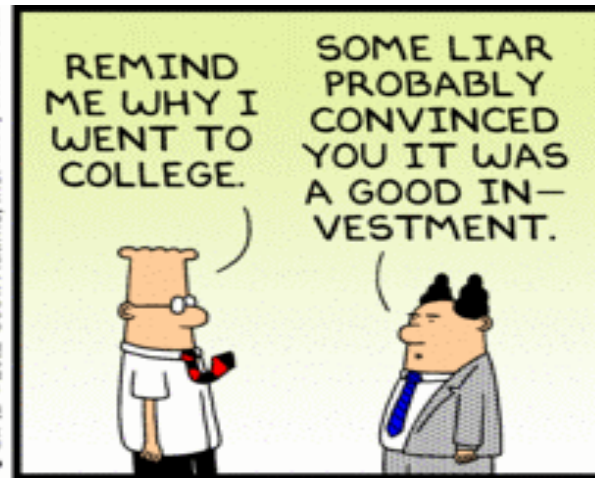
the probability of events by availability, i.e., by the ease with which relevant instances come to mind.



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Motivated Reasoning ↑

Confirmation Bias ↓



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Current Ecosystem to challenge Facts, Alternative Facts and Lies

- IFCN- International Fact-Checking Network
- Fact Checking Website- Altnews, Boom, Vishvas News
- Washington Post Lies Tracker
- Research videos and journals
- Individuals challenging or demanding accountability

The roadblocks to fact-checking ecosystem

- Alternative facts are highly persuasive;

After the Nazis established their rule, radio propaganda incited anti-Semitic acts and denunciations of Jews to authorities by ordinary citizens. The effect of anti-Semitic propaganda varied depending on the listeners' predispositions toward the message. Nazi radio was most effective in places where anti-Semitism was historically high and had a negative effect in places with historically low anti-Semitism.

- Fact checking improves factual knowledge of voters or the audience for that fact

Seasonal influenza is responsible for thousands of deaths and billions of dollars of medical costs per year in the United States, but influenza vaccination coverage remains substantially below public health targets. One possible obstacle to greater immunization rates is the false belief that it is possible to contract the flu from the flu vaccine

- Fact checking does not affect policy conclusions or support or decision making for the candidate or piece of information;

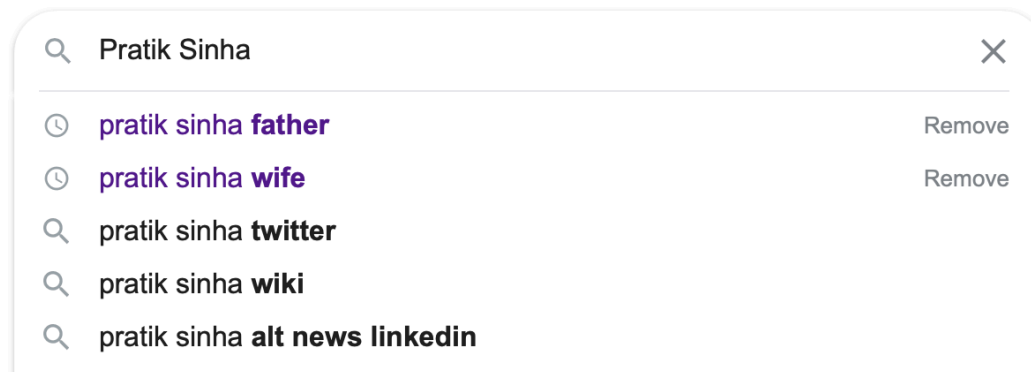
The correction also significantly *reduced* intent to vaccinate among respondents with high levels of concern about vaccine side effects – a response that was not observed among those with low levels of concern

- Exposure to facts alone does not decrease support for the candidate, even though voters update their knowledge

The exposure to facts alone may have two effects that go in the opposite directions: on the one hand, facts increase the salience of the immigration issue

People seldom Agree on Facts but they also seldom agree on the Fact Checkers credibility. That is usually they find confirmation bias and motivated reasoning for Fact checkers individual identity too and thus maligning fact checkers is usually used as a tool by perpetrators of misinformation which is commonly called Doxxing

An example of how Doxxing usually finds foothold



What could we do while debunking?

- Avoid Binaries
- Not just facts but alternative narratives-Remember to give something else also to think about, for example when people are told that Hindu Muslim fake news, give space to Sufism's detail
- Profile “Trolls” , “Bhakts”. These are Nebulous terms . People with posterior beliefs, are also victims of Fake news.

Signal Boosting or Amplification??
Are we Creating their world view??

(At a Certain Point You Have to Realize That You're Promoting Them)

Tackling Amplification on an Online Archive

Date:02-06-2020

Sources:<https://858.ma/list/title>

<https://syrianarchive.org/en>

<https://yemeniarchive.org/en>

<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net>

<https://occupyarchive.org>

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graph TD; Archive --> Collection; Archive --> Experience; Archive --> Goal
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Archive

Collection

- Was there selection in collecting criteria?
- What was the way it was collected?
- What are we archiving?
- What is the method of archiving?
- Why we chose this method
 - how can we navigate this collection
 - Additional resources or links
 - what qualifies as fake news

Experience

- Experience with website
- Experience with archive
- Experience with one individual piece

Goal

- Are we just facilitating discovery of information within a collection of content sourced from various places?
- Takeaways
 - What do we want them to remember
 - What do we want them to do
 - What do we want to change

Collection/Archive

[Reference these links](#)

<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/learn/guide?>

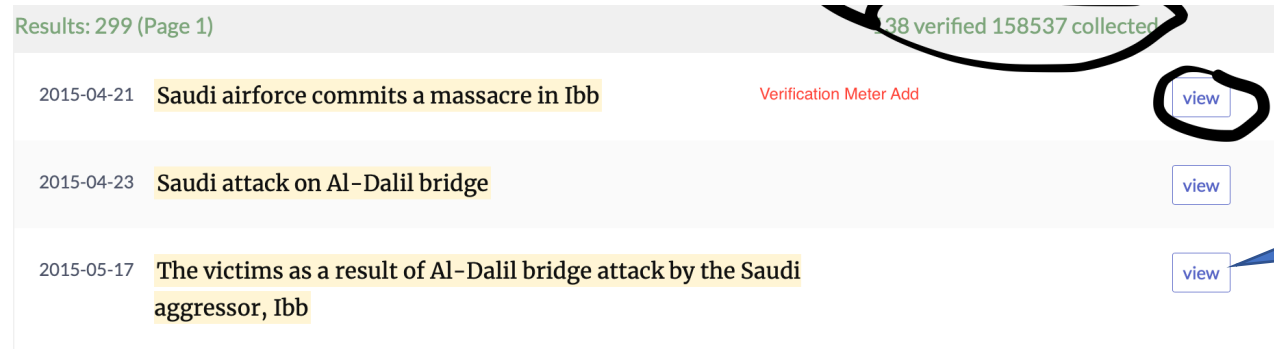
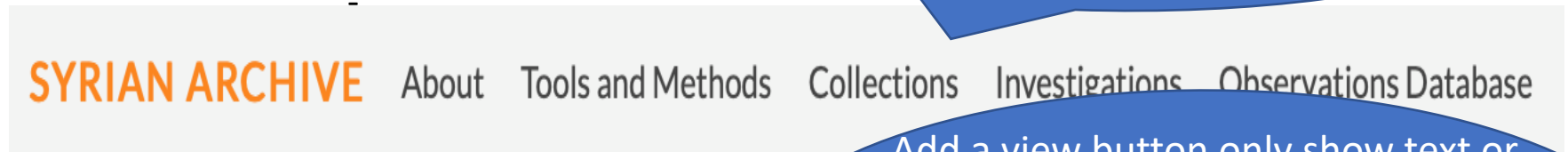
<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/learn/raceandethnicity>

- Create a user guide of how to navigate the online archive (In that user guide we can mention at least our stand on amplification and how this content should not be used but can be used). This can include how is the archival material organized, what is the meta data, what are the tags, how differently we can view the collection – chronologically, region wise, tags wise, mention that each content can be listed under various categories because just like real world one content doesn't concern with just one aspect thus we will use tags rather than broad based categories.
- Create a guide which addresses few question
 - Like are you new to fact checking and fake news?
 - Do you want to know more about history of fake news, rumour,
 - do you want to be our ally?
 - Are you interested in politics of fake news or activism with fake news or impact of fake news?
 - Are you tired of hearing fake news is only from one side
- Live chat bot in case of any Query? Or at least a link with every content to email the organization in case anyone has questions
- On the first page itself mentioning the way archive was formed and created
- Additional places or websites to go to
- Create separate Userflows for people coming to websites- one for researcher, one for "Ruhi mausi-common social media user" et al

Experience

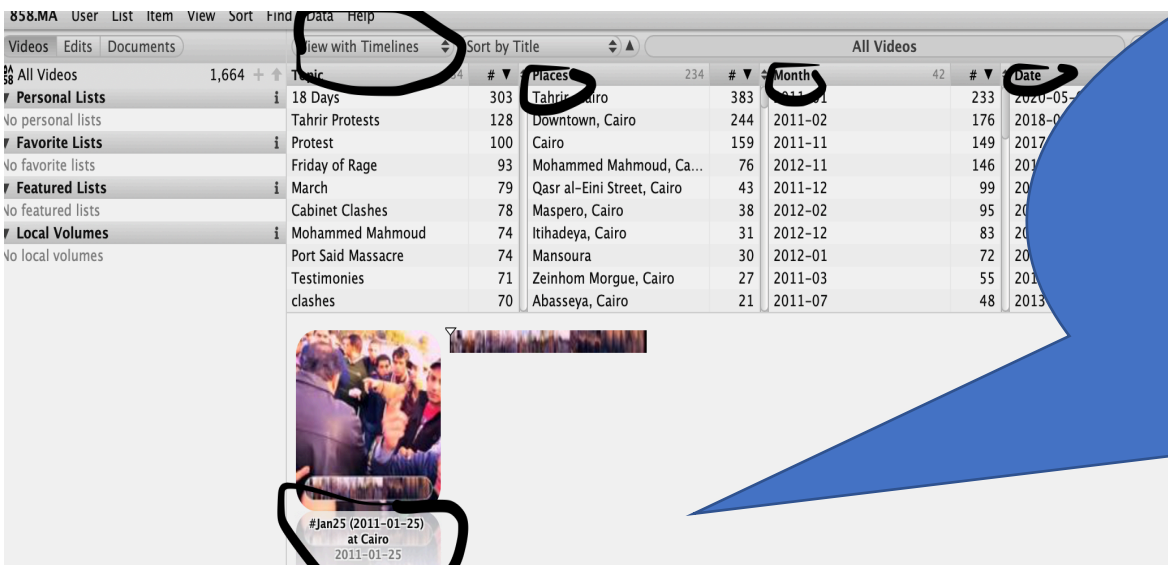
[Reference these links](#)

<https://858.ma/timelines/title>



Shouldn't overwhelm – basic, simple, intuitive, use headlines like collections, observations, investigation

Add a view button only show text or tags first, this will discourage some people from actually entering things they don't like, picture are inviting. You can add a verification meter and tags instead of a headline itself




You can choose to display collection

- As timelines with just pictures and their date of acquisition
- You can also show them as grid where you put tags, data of acquisition and verification meter
- You can show them on a map as clusters which be hard but may be you can show as a pictogram where how many from Whatsapp, how many from Sharechat, how many from fact checking websites etc

858.MA User List Item View Sort Find Data Help not signed in

Videos Edits Documents View with Timelines Sort by Title All Videos Find: All

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|---------|-------|------------|-----|-------------|-------|---|----------|-----|-----|
| 1,664 + ↑ | Topic | # ▼ | Places | 234 | # ▼ | Month | 42 | # ▼ | Date | 441 ▼ | # | Keywords | 323 | # ▼ |
| ▼ Personal Lists | 18 Days | 303 | Tahrir, Cairo | 383 | 2011-01 | 233 | 2020-05-08 | 1 | helicopter | 41 | | | | |
| ▼ No personal lists | Tahrir Protests | 128 | Downtown, Cairo | 244 | 2011-02 | 176 | 2018-03-06 | 1 | blur | 30 | | | | |
| ▼ Favorite Lists | Protest | 100 | Cairo | 159 | 2011-11 | 149 | 2017 | 2 | camera | 28 | | | | |
| ▼ No favorite lists | Friday of Rage | 93 | Mohammed Mahmoud, Ca... | 76 | 2012-11 | 146 | 2014-06-21 | 1 | chants | 24 | | | | |
| ▼ Featured Lists | March | 79 | Qasr al-Eini Street, Cairo | 43 | 2011-12 | 99 | 2014-06-14 | 1 | tear gas | 19 | | | | |
| ▼ No featured lists | Cabinet Clashes | 78 | Maspero, Cairo | 38 | 2012-02 | 95 | 2014-03-12 | 1 | riot police | 16 | | | | |
| ▼ Local Volumes | Mohammed Mahmoud | 74 | Itihadeya, Cairo | 31 | 2012-12 | 83 | 2014-01-05 | 1 | abstraction | 14 | | | | |
| ▼ No local volumes | Port Said Massacre | 74 | Mansoura | 30 | 2012-01 | 72 | 2013-12-19 | 1 | screens | 12 | | | | |
| | Testimonies | 71 | Zeinhom Morgue, Cairo | 27 | 2011-03 | 55 | 2013-12-16 | 2 | martyrs | 8 | | | | |
| | clashes | 70 | Abassey, Cairo | 21 | 2011-07 | 48 | 2013-12-14 | 1 | | 7 | | | | |



#Jan25 (2011-01-25)
at Cairo
2011-01-25

The categories they have used are places, month, keywords , very generic topic – for example in case of anti CAA protests or delhi protests- we can use the word demonstration or we can Also one of the tag could be of article 19 from constitution then only someone who genuinely knows that and wants to harm will use it

Goal

Are we just facilitating discovery of information within a collection of content sourced from various places?

Takeaways

- what do we want them to remember
- What do we want them to do
- What do we want to change

- If our goal is just facilitation of search then we should use timelines, map clusters, tags, pictogram to show just information but our goal is more
- Remember that this piece of image was verified, not verified or partially verified – so that with their political biases they incrementally remember
 - That a lot of information circulated isn't verified
 - Which platform its least verified onWe want them to ask questions or seek more
How can we lead to that- add like an email or chat link with the content for them to ask questions to us
- Add a link with semi verified and unverified news – which has a blog of how to check sources or ask questions to one who has forwarded