

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the difference between a news outlet and a news Source.
2. Use the "I.M.V.A.I.N." criteria to evaluate sources in news stories.
3. Justify reasons for differential ratings of sources' credibility based on IMVAIN analysis.
4. Use specific examples to illustrate the difference between a source who asserts and one who verifies.
5. Use a three-part test to judge the reliability of anonymous sources.

These skills relate to course outcomes 1 & 2



Says Who?

Critical Evaluation of people interviewed for News Reports



How Journalists Pursue the Truth
Hierarchy of Evidence: Wreck Scene

Direct Evidence:

- Driver of Car
- Eyewitnesses
- Breathalyzer Report
- Driving Records
- Accident Reports for the Road



Indirect Evidence:

- Campus Police
- University Officials
- Lawyer for Driver
- Friends and Relatives of Victims
- Family of Driver
- Students on Campus

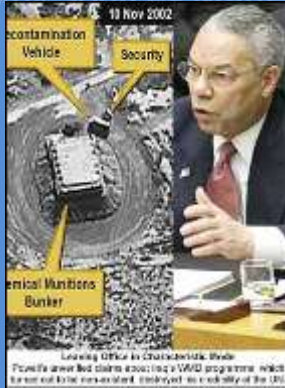
Why Sources Matter

THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE
THREATS AND RESPONSES: INTELLIGENCE; Defectors Bolster U.S. Case Against Iraq, Officials Say
 By JUDITH MILLER
 Published: January 24, 2003

THREATS AND RESPONSES: GERM WEAPONS
C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie to Soviet Smallpox

By JUDITH MILLER
 CIA investigates informant's accusation that Iraq obtained particular, more potent strain of smallpox from Russian scientists

Why Sources Matter



Why Sources Matter



U.S. Invades Iraq to Capture WMD

Why Critical Thinking About Sources Matters



The New York Times

"The problematic articles varied in authorship and subject matter, but many shared a common feature. They depended at least in part on information from a circle of Iraqi informants, defectors and exiles bent on 'regime change' in Iraq, people whose credibility has come under increasing public debate in recent weeks."

Editor's Note

Why Sources Matter



The Most Famous Unnamed Source in History

Smart Questions to Ask Yourself:

- ✓ Who is this person?
- ✓ How would he or she know?
- ✓ Does anyone support that version?
- ✓ Does this person just give you an opinion?
- ✓ Does this person have a reason to mislead you?

(Don't copy these. Wait for the mnemonic device)

Are You Ready To Sign The Jay-Z Petition?



Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources Are **Better Than** Self-Interested Sources

Multiple Sources Are **Better Than** Single Sources

Sources Who **Verify** Are **Better Than** Sources Who Assert

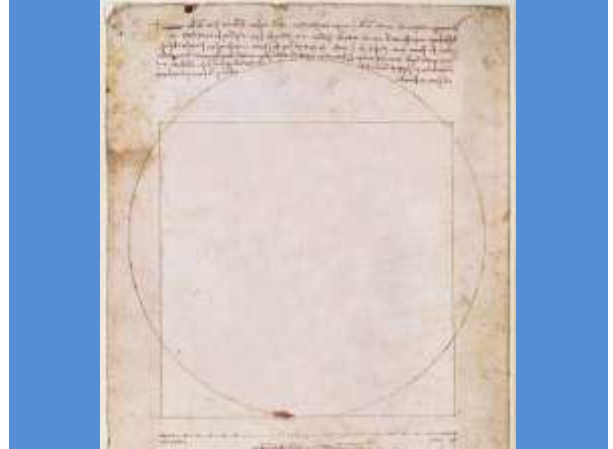
Authoritative/**Informed** Sources Are **Better Than** Uninformed Sources

Named Sources Are **Better Than** Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: **I'M VAIN**)

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources
Are **Better** Than
Self-Interested Sources



Newsday

Brentwood man Marcos Alonso Zea pleads not guilty to terror charges



Mother:

"It's a lie," his mother, Sandra Zea, a native of Guatemala, said in Spanish. "He has a good heart."

"This is unjust, what they are doing," she said. "This boy is not involved in anything. He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs. He's a very healthy boy."

Disruptions: How the F.A.A., Finally, Caught Up to an Always-On Society

A Self-Interested Source



Paul Misener, vice president for global public policy at Amazon

Mr. Misener said that going into the committee he knew it wasn't a matter of science. "Several years ago, we filled up a commercial airplanes (Republic Airlines) with Kindles and turned them all on," he said. "Something like 150 Kindles; the plane didn't experience any problems."

The Fight Over Fracking



Self-Interested Sources:

Shale Coalition:

"Every square inch of the Commonwealth is benefiting from this generational opportunity," the coalition said in a statement. "It would be irresponsible and ill-advised to advance massive new energy taxes that would strike an unnecessary blow to one of our economy's most important, thriving and promising sectors."

Pennsylvania Governor's Campaign Manager:

"Hundreds of millions of dollars have been reinvested in local communities and Pennsylvanians are able to buy cheaper energy, which allows them to spend more on other priorities," said Mike Befley, Corbett's campaign manager.

MarcellusProtest.org Environmental Organization :

The shale oil and gas boom generates tangible social costs that undermine the quality of life in rural communities. Communities and states must take these real costs into account when they consider approving commercial new oil and gas fracking.

Independent Sources

"I think the story being told by both sides is not accurate.

...People who say it's really wonderful, people who say it's really bad; in reality it's between the two."

Tim Kelsey is a professor at Penn State University who's been analyzing the economics of the state's gas boom. He says the story of shale gas and Pennsylvania's economy is nuanced.

BUT A Self-Interested Source Can Be A Reliable Source



The New York Times

Veterans Wait for Benefits as Claims Pile Up

Each appointment and lost document has added weeks to the processing, now in its 15th month. So have skeptical department examiners, who have requested additional information on whether Mr. Selsky's heart palpitations and vision loss are related to his multiple sclerosis. "This should be a slam dunk," Ms. Selsky said. "He keeps getting worse, and they keep fighting and fighting and fighting with us. The stress is unbelievable."

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Multiple Sources
Are **Better** Than a
Single Source

Evaluate The Sources



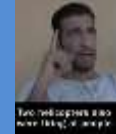
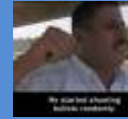
COOPER200mIL.WMV

Reconstructing the Blackwater Incident in Nusoor Square



Blackwater.wmv

In Pursuit of Truth Blackwater shooting



Judging the Reliability of Sources

Sources Who **Verify**
Are **Better** Than
Sources Who **Assert**

Verifying or Asserting?

The Washington Post

Tunisians worry about loss of freedoms gained under the Arab Spring

By Elizabeth Bryant | Religion News Service, Published: October 31 | Updated: Monday, October 31, 12:22 AM

"I have no figures, I have no scientific studies," said Khadija Cherif, Tunis-based secretary-general of the International Federation of Human Rights. "But the assessment I make daily is that the vast majority of women are veiling because of pressure from their family or neighborhood or political manipulation."

Verifying or Asserting?

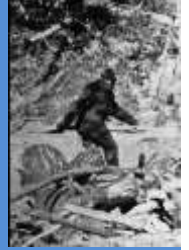
"Some of the Neanderthals, however, may have survived to this day in some mountainous wooded habitats that are more or less off limits to their arch foes. No clothing on them, no tools in hands and no fire in the household. Only round-the-clock watchfulness for a Homo sapiens around."



Igor Burtsev, head of the International Center of Hominology in Moscow -- which investigates so-called snowmen

Verifying or Asserting?

"This is a species that hasn't been recorded for 40,000 years. Now, we know one of these was walking around ten years ago... If one were to go back, there would be others still there."



Professor Bryan Sykes, a geneticist from the University of Oxford, found a 100 per cent match with a sample from an ancient polar bear jawbone

Verifying or Asserting?

Breast Milk Donated or Sold Online Is Often Tainted, Study Says

A source who asserts...

"If you get milk from an unscreened sharer, you put your child at risk," she said. "I hate to say this to an informal sharer, because they are trying to do good. But they are playing a game of Russian roulette."

...and also verifies with information

"Most staph and strep are harmless at normal levels," Dr. Katm said. "But some of the levels we found were very high." Nine percent of the milk-sharing samples contained dangerous levels of staph, and a handful had unusually high strep levels. Salmonella "doesn't belong in milk at all," she said.

A Corollary to Last Week's Lesson:



Just like we ask:
"Did the Reporter
Open the Freezer?"

You can also ask"
"Did the Source
Open the Freezer?"

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Authoritative/Informed Sources
Are **Better** Than
Un-informed Sources

Vaccines are Dangerous? Sez Who?



VaccineBachman.wmv

Authoritative vs. Un-informed Sources

Madison lab solves mystery of Arkansas bird die-off
Blunt-force trauma from flying into homes, cars cited as cause

By Lee Bergquist of the Journal Sentinel
Jan. 6, 2014 | 19 | 242 COMMENTS

The mystery of the deaths of thousands of blackbirds in Arkansas this month has been solved.

They died of blunt-force trauma, according to the [Madison Public Health Center](#) in Madison. Samples of the blackbirds - and other blackbirds from a separate mass die-off about the same time in Louisiana - were brought to the little-known laboratory on Madison's west side for necropsies.

"They died of impact force to their bodies," said Gurt Knight, chief of disease investigations at the center.

He said the birds clearly showed signs of bruising.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission said tests for evidence of pesticides poisoning were negative.

Associated Press
Dead birds lie on the ground after

Informed vs. Uninformed

Egypt's Military Expands Power, Raising Alarms



"We will keep the power until we have a president," Maj. Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy said. The military had pledged in formal communiqués last March to hold the presidential election by September. But the generals now say that will come only after the election of a Parliament, the formation of a constitutional assembly and the ratification of a new constitution – a process that could stretch into 2013 or longer.



Judging the Reliability of Sources

Named Sources
Are **Better** Than
Unnamed Sources

Named Sources vs. Unnamed Sources

New York Proposes Links to State Transit Stations



"Moving the costs of these facilities to future budgets is no way to give priority upon them in those budgets," Gavin Kearney, director of the environmental justice program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, wrote in a memo to the City Council, which is holding budget hearings. "And

A city official with knowledge of the budget process, speaking on condition of anonymity, pointed out that not all proposals make it into the final capital plan.

"It is very possible these cuts will be reversed," said the official, who said he spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of budget negotiations.

Evaluating Anonymous Sources

Transparency
Characterization
Corroboration (evidence/sources)

Transparency



Thousands displaced as Syrian authorities demolish Hama neighborhood

By Amir Atwood, CNN
 Updated 9:22 AM EST, Mon October 1, 2011

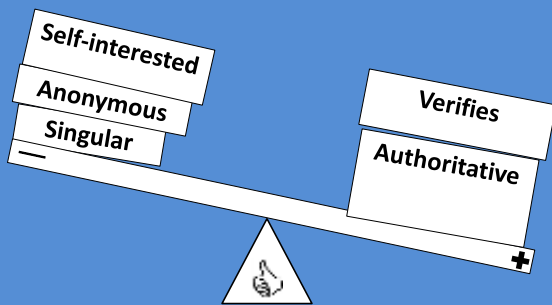


"Most of the residents have left their homes. The majority of them went to neighboring areas in the province. Some are still sleeping in the streets, and only a few of them remain in their homes," Abdallah said.

Another resident reached by phone Sunday said she's been living on the street, along with her two kids, for five days after her husband was detained by authorities and her home was burned. She did not want to be named for safety reasons.

Characterization

"Two Western intelligence experts, who worked for major government spy agencies, said that they believed that the Chinese government had managed to drain the contents of the four laptops that Mr. Snowden said he brought to Hong Kong, and that he said were with him during his stay at a Hong Kong hotel."



Weighing Sources

How Would You Weigh This Source?



The New York Times

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Weigh These Sources

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Weighing Sources: Are You Ready to Sign a Petition to Jay-Z?

The two Barneys customers, Trayon Christian and Kayla Phillips, said this week they were detained by police after making expensive purchases.

Christian sued Barneys, saying he was accused of fraud after using his debit card to buy a \$349 Ferragamo belt in April. Phillips filed a notice of claim saying she would sue after she was stopped by detectives outside the store when she bought a \$2,500 Celine handbag in February.

“Barneys New York has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination and we stand by our long history in support of all human rights,” the luxury retailer said in a statement.

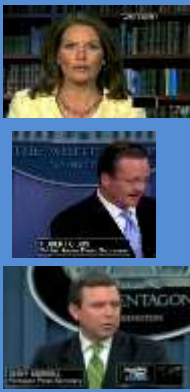
“I move and speak based on facts and not emotion,” the statement said. “I haven’t made any comments because I am waiting on facts and the outcome of a meeting between community leaders and Barneys. Why am I being demonized, denounced and thrown on the cover of a newspaper for not speaking immediately?” he said, referring to local newspaper headlines.

After Weighing These Sources, What Can You Conclude


CampDeath.wmv



Sources



Outlets



Judging the Reliability of Sources


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- Multiple Sources Are Better Than Single Sources
- Sources Who Verify Are Better Than Sources Who Assert
- Authoritative/Informed Sources Are Better Than Uninformed Sources
- Named Sources Are Better Than Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: I'M VAIN)

Key Lesson:

Evaluate Sources
Evaluate Sources
Evaluate Sources

Reminder: Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Next Lecture



Print it.

Read it.

Bring it