

The Quality of information 2: Rotten Information

1. Housekeeping
2. Search exercise
3. Rotten info (1)
 plagiarism, piracy, forgery & fraud
4. How Much Information (Peter Lyman)
5. Rotten info (2)
 pollution of pornography,
 racist speech, ...

Housekeeping

1. New students?
2. Blog
3. Search Assignment

Search Assignment

Imagine that you're a typical UC Berkeley sophomore and have just been assigned a paper on some plausible topic over which there is some division of opinion-- whether the relation of Vitamin C to cancer, simplification of the tax code, electronic voting, heterosexual spread of AIDS, Ebonics/Black English. pick whatever you like, so long as it's the kind of topic where people recognize the relevance of "authoritative" opinion, even if they disagree as to what it is or who is entitled to hold it.

(That is, don't pick the question of whether the intentional walk rule should be changed or whether hip-hop is a force for Good or Evil)

Like most of your classmates, the first thing you do is go to Google and enter a search query or two. You come up with a bunch of pages of varying degree of authority or reliability. Then be prepared answer the following questions:

Search Assignment

1. What makes for the impression of authoritativeness in a document found on the Web? Give specific examples of institutional cues, domain names, graphical and typographic cues, linguistic cues (right down to punctuation), cues in html code, and anything else that seems relevant.
2. How can the impression of authority be undermined? That is, what kinds of (actually) authoritative pages are likely to appear non-authoritative and vice-versa?
3. Which queries work best for finding authoritative information? Are there any general principles here? Does it help to look at pages that come up later, or to include non-relevant terms like "paint" or "Cleveland" that will effectively reduce the set to a more random sample? What happens if you include words like "authoritative," "official," or "debunk"?
4. How could the results be improved using multiple search engines? (For these purposes, one other will suffice.) E.g., what can you do using the proximity feature of AltaVista or some other feature that Google doesn't have?
5. Anything else we should be thinking about here?

ROTTEN INFORMATION

(1) Forgery, fraud, & Electoral Politics

ARF STATEMENT OF POINTS EARNED

PAGE 1 OF 1

LSCHPY 48

TD	PTS	VOL	COURSE	FROM DATE	TO DATE	TD	PTS	VOL	COURSE
29	2	004							
14	2	008							
06	2	006							
10	2	006							
08	2	004							
03	1	003							
10	1	003							
20	2	004							
24	1	003							

INACTIVE DUTY

Active Duty

9 days AD

32 day IAD

15 grat

56 points

Forgery & International Politics



Forgery & Electoral Politics

19/07/2004 09:51 12129751998

CBS NEWS

PAGE 01


111th Fighter Interceptor Squadron
P. O. Box 34567
Houston, Texas 77034

01 August 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Bush, George W. 1st Lt. 3244754FG
Suspension of Flight status

1. On this date I ordered that 1st Lt. Bush be suspended from flight status due to failure to perform to USAF/TexANG standards and failure to meet annual physical examination (flight) as ordered.
2. I conveyed my verbal orders to commander, 147th Ftr Intcrp Gp with request for orders for suspension and convening of a flight review board IAW AFM 35-13.
3. I recommended transfer of this officer to the 9921st Air Reserve Squadron in May and forwarded his AF Form 1288 to 147th Ftr Intcrp Gp headquarters. The transfer was not allowed. Officer has made no attempt to meet his training certification or flight physical. Officer expresses desire to transfer out of state including assignment to non-flying billets.
4. On recommendation of Harris, I also suggested that we fill this critical billet with a more seasoned pilot from the list of qualified Vietnam pilots that have rotated. Recommendations were received but not confirmed.


JERRY B. KILLIAN
Lt. Colonel

"The book trade had generated a culture of "counterfeits" ... The wits had powerful strategies at their disposal for challenging the worth of any printed book and the truth of any printed statement"

Adrian Johns, The Nature of the Book

"people in pyjamas"

Forgery & Electoral Politics

Quality and authenticity

**Memos on Bush Are Fake but Accurate,
Typist Says**

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

Published: September 15, 2004

Authenticity & Quality

'Game virus' bites mobile phones

A mobile phone "virus" inside a pirated copy of a game called Mosquitos is roaming file-sharing and software download sites, say security experts.



...

Confusion caused

But, confusingly, it has emerged that the Trojan was in fact not added by the group that pirated the game.

"When we first saw this we were confused ourselves," Mikko Hypponen head of anti-virus research at F-Secure told BBC News Online.

"We initially thought it was a game which had been hacked with a secret program that sent out text messages. But after analysing it, it seems to be an integral part of the game."

The company that made the original legitimate Mosquito game, Ojom, said it had installed the program itself in earlier versions of the title after concerns over piracy.

Dictionaries, encyclopaedias, Amazon

Kazaa

Plagiarism & politics

Joseph Biden & Neil Kinnock, 1988

Plagiarism & scholarship

Doris Kearns Goodwin

Stephen Ambrose

Rotten information, scholarship, & journalism

Jason Blair

Stephen Glass

Janet Cooke

Michael Bellesiles

Authority, Institutions, & Information

My undergrad major was in computer engineering, so I have a feeling that if Paul and Geoff assigned such a reading, I probably wouldn't catch it. -- Yardi

Plagiarism and the Universality of Information

"Plagiarism is perennial ... 'the wrongful appropriation, or purloining, and publication of one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas ... of another"

Perennial plagiarism

Martial and "plagiary"

"Ricks ... believes that Martial is protesting against the theft of his work, and he translates plagiarius as "the abductor of the child or slave of another". If this gloss were accurate, Ricks would have good grounds for his interpretation of Martial's metaphor, but in fact the primary meaning of plagiarius is "one who illegally slaves another". The word carries the sense of the improper subjugation of a person who is properly free, and thus the epigram actually means the opposite of what Ricks says it means. The "Plagiary" is not criticised for stealing Martial's work, but for asserting ownership over a published piece of literature, thus illegitimately "enslaving" what rightfully belongs to the public domain. The epigram does not condemn what we know as "plagiarism" but implicitly sanctions it." David Hawkes

Allusion and plagiarism

32: Hearing 'Come my Celia', did the Renaissance reader condemn Jonson for plagiarizing Catullus? or did he on the contrary, admire a particularly witty adaptation of the art of the past to the designs of the present?'
The latter for sure.

23: only if jesting Kincaid were to stay for an answer

33: not waiving, but waving

34: "His honour rooted in dishonour stood"

35: once more unto this breach

Information and Institutions

I was particularly stricken by the discussion of transparency in class last week. If I remember correctly we spoke briefly about trusting sports scores but at times completely dismissing information based on its source
--Catherine

Information and Institutions

Meno: But in what way, Socrates, will you search for a thing of which you are entirely ignorant? For by what mark which may discover it will you look for it when you know none of the marks that distinguish it? Or, if you should not fail of meeting with it, how will you discern it, when met with, to be the very thing you was in search of, and knew nothing of?

Socrates: ... it is impossible for a man to seek either for that which he knows or for that of which he is ignorant. For no man would seek to know what he knows, because he has knowledge of it already, and has no need of seeking what he has. Nor could any man seek for what he is ignorant of, because he would not know what he is seeking for.

Institutions & the (in)stability of information

Arrow [1973]: 144: the educational system has become, partly inadvertently, an industry which sells signals for individuals to emit to the world. . . .

Hesse [in Mallon] "deep anxiety over the loss of fixed cultural forms"

Etzioni, ebay was once a "community but now an urban jungle"

Institutional dilemmas

1: invisibility: "Ars celare artem"



Institutional dilemmas

2: Gatekeeping predicaments

(a) imitation

Donations of Constantine, Isadore's Decretals

Forgery & the 18th century

Johnson & Dodd

Adam Smith: "the natural punishment ... is not death, but some sort of ignominy such as the pillory. ... Forgery is ... punished capitally, and nobody complains that this is too severe"

a. A well-known strong dark-red wine of Portugal, having a sweet and slightly astringent taste. Also called *Oporto (wine)*, †*Port O Port wine*, †*Porto*, and PORT-WINE. Hence, a drink of port; a glass used for port.

Formerly also called *red port*, as opposed to *white port*, a white wine of Portugal (now little imported).

1691 LUTTRELL *Brief Rel.* (1857) II. 314 English ships that went to Bourdeaux and took in wine, and after sailed to port O Porto, and then came home, pretending it to be port. **1693** *Bacchanalian Sessions* 21 But we've the best Red Port—What's that you call Red Port?—a Wine Sir comes from Portugal. **c1717** PRIOR *Epitaph* 29

Institutional dilemmas

2: Gatekeeping predicaments

(b) corruption

Loewenstein on Wise and Forman
bibliographic authority

Institutional dilemmas

2: Gatekeeping predicaments

(c) reaction

print "piracy"

John Wolfe and the Stationers' Company

Bibles [Tyndale's, King James's, Luther's]

Halley & Flamsteed

Dickens, American Notes for General Circulation

"In a reply to a question from the Bench, the Solicitor for the Bank

observed, that this kind of notes circulated the more extensively, in those parts of the world where they were stolen or forged. Old Bailey Report

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