10.6: Stop that Rumor

As we discussed earlier, the Internet has made possible the rapid and broad dissemination of both good information and bad. Luckily, there are resources to help identify, and background, some of the hoaxes and rumors so rampantly spread on the web. One of the best is Snopes where they diligently identify and background a vast array of Internet-generated misinformation.

After the exposure of individuals and organizations generating enormous amounts of false and misleading information during the 2016 presidential campaign, major news organizations and social media organizations pledged to work harder to ferret out such material. Facebook and Google both developed filters that helped bring legitimate information to the top of their news feed and search algorithms and to tag or identify information from sources known to peddle false stories and claims. News organizations and academic institutions beefed up their fact-checking operations and began openly calling out individuals and organizations that were poisoning the information environment with falsehoods and wild assertions. Educators scrambled to develop media literacy tools to help the average news consumer sort through the sludge. One group of educators even developed a game to help players discern real news from fake news.

Get to know these kinds of sources and use them regularly to avoid being taken in by bad information or perpetuating it by sending it along to others.

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