

# Understanding and Supporting Web Literacy Skills in the Social Web

**Claire Beyette '19, Adrianna Tan '19**

Computer Science and English w CW / Computer Science

# Fake News & Elections

all tech considered  
TECH, CULTURE AND CONNECTION

PRIVACY & SECURITY

How Russian Twitter Bots Pumped Out Fake News During The 2016 Election

4:17

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GABE O'CONNOR AVIE SCHNEIDER

## *Fake News, Fake Ukrainians: How a Group of Russians Tilted a Dutch Vote*

By ANDREW



Reliable Sources

Think

Profit

Newtube

Entertainment

Facebook targets 30,000 fake accounts in France

by Ivana Kottasová @CNNMoney

April 21, 2017: 3:23 AM ET

Recommend 5.3K

# How Russia hacked the French election

TECHNOLOGY

## *Fake News in U.S. Election? Elsewhere, That's Nothing New*

Candidates have pro-

# Fake News & Elections

Magazine

## The city getting rich from fake news

By Emma Jane Kirby  
BBC News

🕒 5 December 2016 | Magazine



-Veles, Macedonia

-“Digital Gold Rush”

THE INDUSTRY

## We Tracked Down A Fake-News Creator In The Suburbs. Here's What We Learned

November 23, 2016 · 3:31 PM ET  
Heard on All Things Considered

-Denver, Colorado

-“FBI Agent Suspected In  
Hillary Email Leaks Found Dead  
In Apparent Murder-Suicide.”

-\$10,000 - 30,000/month

# A Brief look at BuzzFeed News

**“CNN article just tell you what happened. BuzzFeed articles tell you why stuff happened.”**

## **BuzzFeed**NEWS

**Why The Police Shot Civilians At The Empire State Building Today**

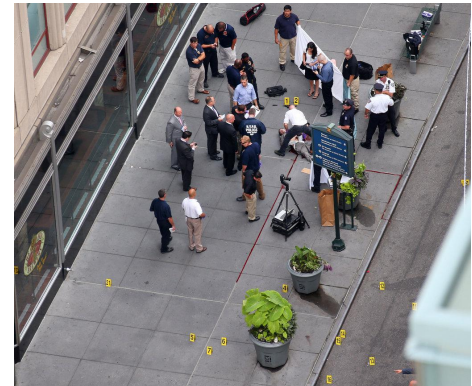
Aug. 24, 2012, at 8:56 p.m.



## *The New York Times*

***Decision by 2 Officers to Open Fire in Busy Midtown Leaves Bystanders Wounded***

AUG. 25, 2012



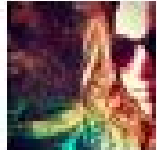
# Trustworthiness of BuzzFeed

“Buzzfeed employs statisticians.”



**Joe Flood**

BuzzFeed Contributor



**Jina Moore**

BuzzFeed News Reporter



**Daniela Cadena**

BuzzFeed Staff

## Here's Why Facebook's Trending Algorithm Keeps Promoting Fake News

posted on Oct. 26, 2016, at 6:20 p.m



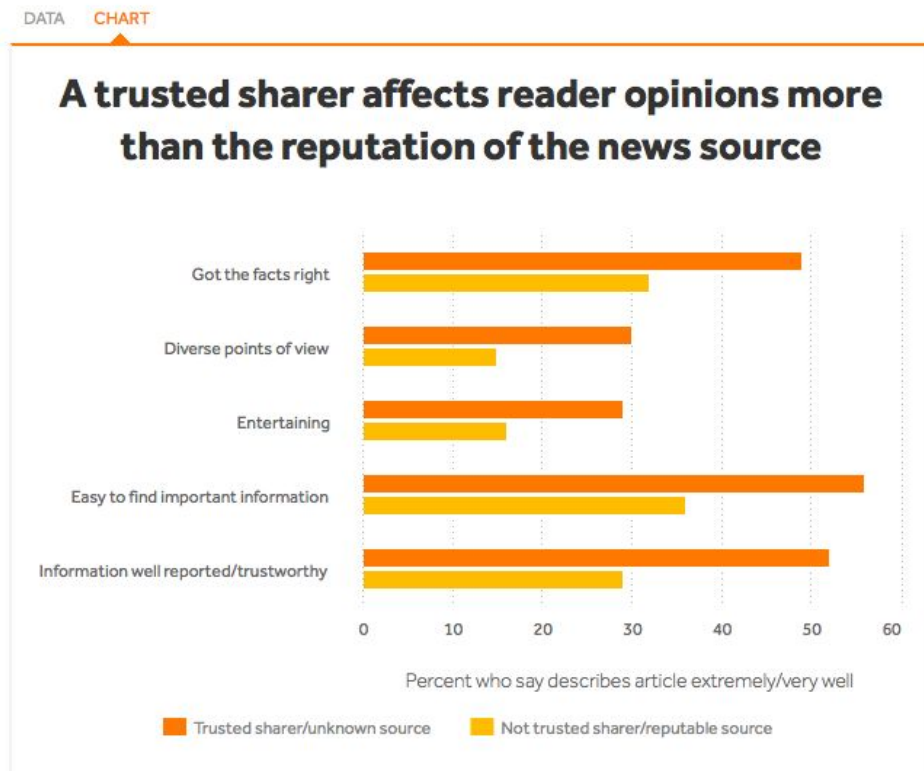
**Craig Silverman**

BuzzFeed News Media Editor

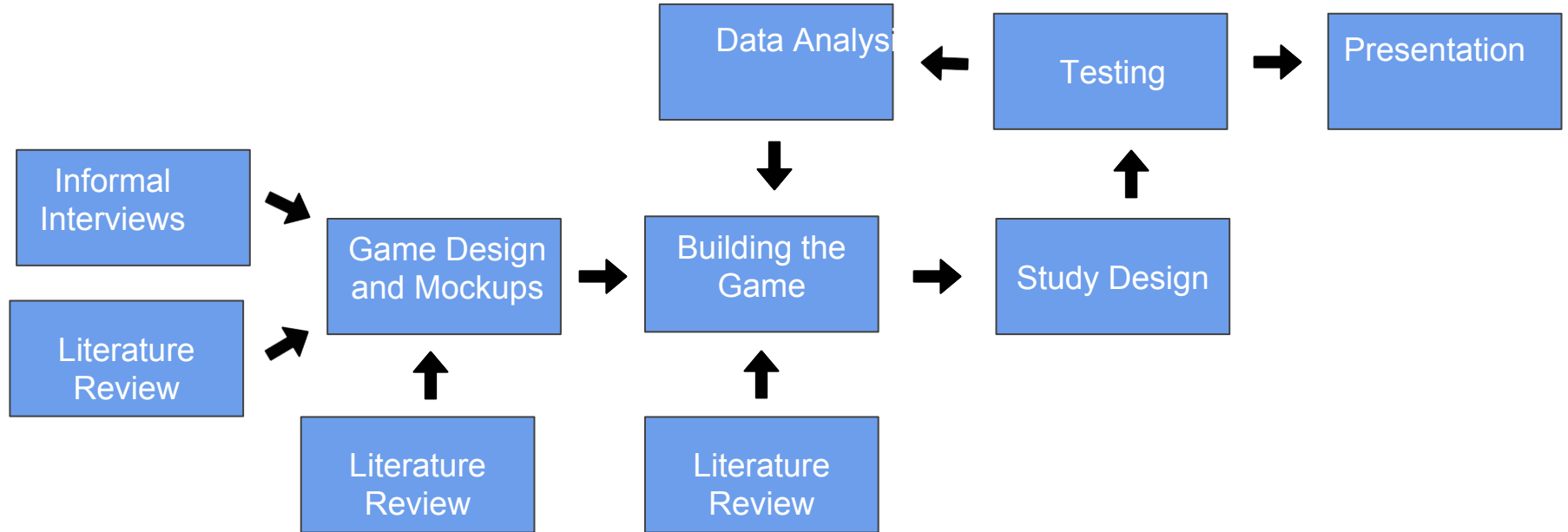
“Buzzfeed often copies other people's content ... any other article I looked up would probably say similar things”

# Background Literature

- Media Institute Press Insight Project, December 2016
- Trust of a post depended more on personal knowledge of the poster more than knowledge of source



# Project Timeline



# Game Design



# Goals

- To create a game that encourages users to evaluate the source and compositions of their news-feeds
- To further evaluate the ways in which a user perceives a post's credibility based on their perception of the poster.



# Game Design - Overview

**Chrome Extension: Users identify the poster of a shared link on Facebook.**

- Visual design of extension
- Implementation of game
- How the game works



# Game Design - Design Layout

Adrianna Tan

News Feed

Messenger

SHORTCUTS

Wellesley Transportat... 4

Free & For Sale 20+

Jobs & Internships 20+

Wellesley College Cla... 8

Wellesley Community

See More...

EXPLORE

24 Events 20+

Pages

Groups 2

On This Day

Saved

See More...

CREATE

Ad · Page · Group · Event · Fundraiser

Like Comment


Write a comment...

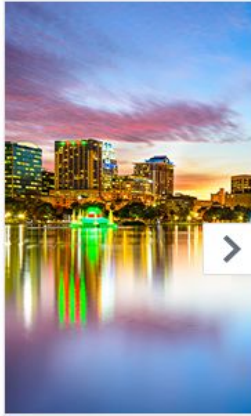
Sarah Smith-Tripp and Karina Dunford like Expedia.

Expedia

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Still thinking about where to travel to this year? Check out these great deals on Expedia and unlock new adventures.





Cheap Flights from Boston to Los Angeles

Cheap Flights from Boston to

from


2 hrs · Friends

4 · Like · React · Comment · Share · Tag Photo · Full Story · Save · More

Eve Liu, Safia Williams and Anna Wilson like Saks Fifth Avenue.

Saks Fifth Avenue

Time to shimmy the night away in dresses that are poised to party.




Public

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Gizmodo

Yay, an insect larvae that likes to eat our trash.



This Caterpillar Can Eat Plastic Shopping Bags

gizmodo.com

35 mins · Public

244 · Like · React · 13 Comments · Share · Full Story · Save · More

Privacy · Terms · Advertising · Ad Choices · Cookies · More ·  
Facebook © 2017

## facebook vs mbasic

# Game Design - Implementation of Game

Who Is This? shared a link.



**Chew On This For Earth Day: How Our Diets Impact The Planet**  
npr.org

18 hrs · Public

[Like](#) · [React](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · [Full Story](#) · [Save](#) · [More](#)

Question 1

☐ Brianna Busch ☐ Laura Cassetty ☐ Lisa Yang Fredericks ☐ David Wang ☐ Christian  
Cavello

Submit

Reveal Correct Answer

[See More Stories](#)

# Game Design - Implementation of Game

mbasic.facebook.com says:  
Correct! Time spent: 12 seconds

OK

Impact The Planet

18 hrs · Public  
Like · React · Comment · Share · Full Story · Save · More

Question 1

☐ Brianna Busch ☒ Laura Cassetty ☐ Lisa Yang Fredericks ☐ David Wang ☐ Christian Cavello

Submit


Reveal Correct Answer

See More Stories

# Game Design - Multiple Choice vs. Open Choice

Write a comment... [Comment](#)

**Who Is This?** shared a link.



**Chew On This For Earth Day: How Our Diets Impact The Planet**  
npr.org

18 hrs · Public  
[Like](#) · [React](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · [Full Story](#) · [Save](#) · [More](#)

Question 1

Guess:

[Submit](#) [Reveal Correct Answer](#)

[See More Stories](#)

# Game Design - Multiple Choice vs. Open Choice

Yesterday at  
[Like](#) · [React](#) ·

**mbasic.facebook.com says:**

Incorrect! Time spent: 9 seconds

OK

Who is This?



April 22 at 4:51pm · Public

[Like](#) · [React](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#) · [Full Story](#) · [Save](#) · [Report](#)

Question 1

Guess:

Submit

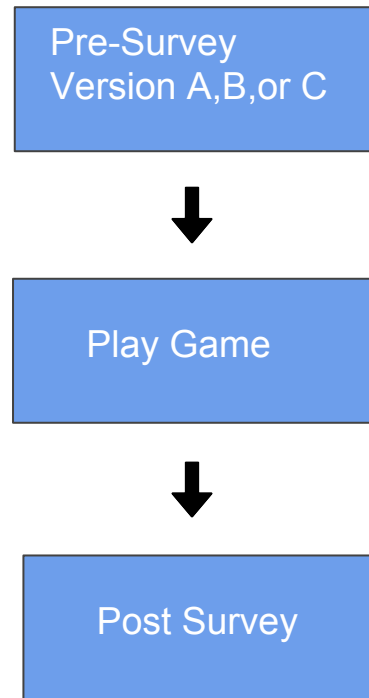
Reveal Correct Answer

# Study Design



# Study Design

- 20 college age women
- 3 versions of survey
  - A: does not explicitly prime subjects
  - B: asks subjects to think about their friends posting behaviors
  - C: Asks about friends posting behaviors as well as source credibility
  -



# Results- Friend Identification Success

- 101 friend identification questions
- Average of 1.5 guess (Median of 1 guess)
- Perhaps slightly worse at identifying Political posts (average: 2.1 Median:2) than other posts but we need more data to be certain.
- Priming seems to correlate with more accurate guessing behavior



# Results- Post Credibility

- Average 5.59 Trustworthiness before revealing poster identity
- Average 5.9 Trustworthiness after revealing poster identity
- 18/101 Users changed their opinions after seeing poster identity
- 15 of those increased favorably
- 5.77 trustworthiness before
- 7.34 trustworthiness after
- Average interval: 1.6



# Pre Survey Results

How often do you take steps to assess the credibility of a Facebook post and what strategies do you use?

- Almost never because I assume that they are not valid
- I would say I only pay attention to one post that seems particular interesting to me, and if the information relates to current national or world news I would glance at the author, but not really read too deeply into how the language or grammar is structured. I rarely assess credibility.
- Not very often. I only check the credibility of a Facebook post if it's from a friend I don't know well. I look at who made the Facebook post and use google if I think the post is not credible.
- I will often see what other news outlets are writing about the same topic by searching it on good news. Also doing my own research if I feel that motivated.
- Most of the time I just scroll past but if it's a topic I'm interested in I'll stop and click on the link.
- I always look at the source.

# Post Survey Responses

## Made identifying a post more difficult:

- If the post referenced generic/large news events
- If the Post's content was difficult to identify
- If the post had no indicators of political affiliation, religion, or associated group of any sort
- Not having a close relationship with the poster

## Made identifying a post easier:

- Location-specific posts
- Knowledge of whose posts appear frequently on news feed
- If the post clearly referenced a political affiliation, religion, or associated group.
- Having a close relationship with the poster

# Moving Forward

## Statistical Analysis

- Larger sample size
- Qualitative to Quantitative

## Visual Design

- User Experience/Interaction

## Broadening the scope of our game

- Ask for trustworthiness of posts in game
- Access political leanings



# Thank You's and Recognition

We would like to thank the other members of DAV Lab: Anne Schwartz, Clara Sorensen, Khonzoda Umarova, Ethan Chiu, and our advisor Eni Mustafaraj as well as the 20 Wellesley students that participated in our study. We would also like to thank the Sophomore Early Research Program which enabled us to do this research.

