

THE MINING Journal

Information consumers beware

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To the Journal editor:

No one likes to be deceived, duped or played. Why then would you rely on online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Gab, MeWe, Rumble, or Parler for news and information?

There are many established, trusted, accountable news and information providers and organizations such as AP News, Reuters, Wall Street Journal, NPR News, BBC News, Christian Science Monitor, The Economist, CDC, NASA and NOAA to name just a few.

When you don't hear or read information that supports your position, and you go looking for affirmation elsewhere, it can be considered a form of confirmation bias. Easily consumed radio and web-streamed entertainment often fills this need, such as InfoWars (politically far-right) or the Palmer Report (politically far-left).

To aid in sifting through fake news, conspiracy theories, misinformation and spin, there are a few reliable guides you can use. The website, adfontesmedia.com, provides a tool in determining your news source's reliability and bias. It even has an interactive Media Bias Chart in which you can type in your source to see where it stands. A similar guide, mediabiasfactcheck.com, provides a vetted list of around 500 least-biased agencies whose reporting is factual and sourced.

The News Literacy Project (newslit.org) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on providing programs and resources for educators and the public to assist in identifying credible information and reliable sources, and in learning how to be a savvy, engaged consumer of news and information. The site offers tools, tips, quizzes, e-learning, a podcast, and an app you can download.

For the more serious, think-tanks are a great source of information and research. In their 2020 Index Report, Think Tank and Civil Societies Program, the University of Pennsylvania ranked The Brookings Institute (brookings.edu) number one, of the world's 6,500 think tanks. Rankings consider the degree of nonpartisanship and the quality of the evidence-based research and analysis produced.

Of the 2,203 think tanks in the U.S., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was #3, the Urban Institute was #4, Rand Corporation #9, Cato Institute #13, PEW Research Center #41, and The Mackinac Center for Public Policy was listed at #83.

In your search for credible information and informed analysis, keep in mind that on Jan. 8, 1789, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to Richard Price. He stated, "*Wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government.*" (www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/60.html).