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Don't Be Fooled: A Citizen's Guide to News and Information in the Digital Age

John H. McManus Ph.D.

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As professional journalism recedes and anything goes on cable, talk radio and the Web, it's becoming much more difficult to know what to trust. This guide will equip you to become an information detective. With simple, easy-to-remember rules of thumb, you can build your own BS (Bald Sophistry) meter to spot unreliable information conveyed by any source through any medium from face-to-face to FaceBook, Fox to NPR, and NY Times to Drudge. Learning to filter the digital deluge has become a necessary life skill because the value of reliable information -- particularly news -- has never been greater. News describes change, and technology is accelerating waves of change through every part of society -- politics, transportation, manufacturing, retail, privacy and personal health, even liberty, from how we learn to how much we earn. What hasn't changed, however, is the power conveyed by knowledge and the danger to self and society caused by ignorance and misinformation. Don't be fooled. CONTENTS A Confession of Bias 1. The Age of Transformative Information Paradoxes 2. Truth vs. Truthiness 3. Where Bias Comes From 4. The Covert Bias of Institutions 5. Setting Realistic Standards for Judging News and Information 6. The SMELL Test 7. Detecting Bias in Images 8. The Spinmeister's Art: Tricks of the Misinformation Trade 9. Online Tools for Sniffing Out Bias, Including Our Own

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