

Digital literacy is associated with more discerning accuracy judgments but not sharing intentions | HKS Misinformation Review

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It has been widely argued that social media users with low digital literacy—who lack fluency with basic technological concepts related to the internet—are more likely to fall for online misinformation, but surprisingly little research has examined this association empirically. In a large survey experiment involving true and false news posts about politics and COVID-19, we found that digital literacy is indeed an important predictor of the ability to tell truth from falsehood when judging headline accuracy. However, digital literacy is not a robust predictor of users' intentions to share true versus false headlines. This observation resonates with recent observations of a substantial disconnect between accuracy judgments and sharing intentions. Furthermore, our results suggest that lack of digital literacy may be useful for identifying people with inaccurate beliefs, but not for identifying those who are more likely to spread misinformation online.

[...]

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