

How to be a human lie detector of fake news | CNN

By David Robson

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In an essay on political lying in the early 18th century, the writer Jonathan Swift noted that “Falsehood flies and the truth comes limping after it.” You have to hire a train to pull the truth, explained English pastor Charles Spurgeon in the 19th century, while a lie is “light as a feather ... a breath will carry it.”

Clearly, humans have always been susceptible to mistruths. And social networks simply provide another way to propel falsehoods.

MIT researchers recently studied more than 10 years’ worth of data on the most shared stories on Facebook. Their study covered conspiracy theories about the Boston bombings, misleading reports on natural disasters, unfounded business rumors and incorrect scientific claims. There is an [inundation of false medical advice](#) online, for example, that encourages people to avoid life-saving treatments such as vaccines and promotes unproven therapies. ([Gwyneth Paltrow’s Goop](#) is just one example.)

[...]

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