

New research shows how journalists are responding and adapting to “fake news” rhetoric | Nieman Journalism Lab

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“Fake news” is an unfortunate phrase. It is so casually invoked and widely deployed as to be almost devoid of meaning. And, most infamously, it has been weaponized by politicians (one former president in particular) as both a ready tool to dismiss inconvenient truths in the moment and also, more perniciously, to cast doubt on the legitimacy of journalism as a whole.

Yet, “fake news” captures for many people a defining set of features about our information environment: from declining trust in news media to concerns about the seemingly supercharged spread of misinformation on social media to the general unease with the level of fakery that seems to fight for our precious attention at every turn online. This creates a conundrum for journalists: Given how directly the “fake news” phenomenon and the discourse surrounding it challenges the authority behind producing “real” news, what are journalists to do? How should they respond and adapt?

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