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AP[®] Research Academic Paper

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP® Research Academic Paper 2022 Scoring Guidelines

The Response...				
Score of 1 Report on Existing Knowledge	Score of 2 Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method	Score of 3 Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding	Score of 4 Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding	Score of 5 Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base
Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry.	Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning.	Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method AND overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.
Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.
Describes a search and report process.	Describes a nonreplicable research method OR provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.
Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning OR insufficient evidence.	Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning AND sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified.	Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice.
Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Generally communicates the student’s ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Competently communicates the student’s ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Enhances the communication of the student’s ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors.
Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few errors or inconsistencies.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.

Academic Paper

Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
- Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach to answering their question, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding while acknowledging its limitations and discussing implications;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence generated by their research;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Should Falsehoods Stay Protected Under the First Amendment?

INTRODUCTION

There is a significant problem with the way false information is dealt with in social media. Despite the laws forbidding the spreading or creation of false information, news outlets and random sources ignore many of these laws and post them on the web, stirring up social bias and public threats. This problem is evident throughout the internet. The problem has negatively impacted social media and the internet, because of the amount of misinformation found everywhere. This problem has also negatively impacted serious real-world problems such as debates. Because there has been so much misinformation about real-world topics, no one can find serious information about a specific person, place, thing, or event without being somewhat lied to. One possible cause of this problem might be the fact that the law only gives a fine of one dollar and only applies to falsehoods that pose a severe threat. Another possible cause is the fact that the public is more divided than ever. This poses the question, should falsehoods stay protected under the first amendment? Falsehoods should not be protected under the first amendment, because they pose a constant threat to the public and media. laws against falsehoods should be more enforced.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Constant Threat

Falsehoods should not be protected under the first amendment, because they pose a constant threat to the public and media. According to the Cambridge dictionary, a falsehood is “A lie or statement that is not correct”. Many of the falsehoods that can be found on the internet are not mistakes. Many people find that by creating or posting

falsehoods, they can cause political unrest and other problems, sometimes to reach a certain goal or even for fun. According to the False Information Act, The law makes it a civil wrong to circulate or publish false information. It applies not only to newspapers and television stations but also to social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Although the law is supposed to punish those who post and spread false information, the law enforces a fine of only one dollar, as well as an order to cease and desist. This not only violates the first amendment, but it also violates the people's right to accurate information. By creating false information, it leads the public to believe certain things that may not be true, leading them further in the wrong direction. Users on social media like to argue on whether their opinions are correct or not, which is usually normal, but the reason why this has become such a massive problem is that people are arguing against each other because of false information. By people reading so much false information, arguments between people become more and more toxic and overall dangerous. This can lead to a serious uprising of groups of people who believe in the same kind of information. One possible reason why people become so toxic over certain kinds of information is that they feel as though the information they have been told is correct, rather than taking in the information and acknowledging it. When people don't double-check their information, they are prone to all kinds of misinformation that can lead to an overall bad reputation on social media. It has also been found that people will believe in whatever information coincides with what they believe in, which makes it a much bigger challenge to educate people on things such as being careful about what you believe on the internet or even just giving normal news can be considered against someone's beliefs. And this does not just relate to certain people. Almost everyone who

looks at a certain kind of information either disregards it as false information or completely viable and accurate information. This has become part of the bigger problem, as this makes changing the public's mind about certain information much harder because most of these people will end up not listening to the information being told. They will only listen to the information that coincides with the information they agree on and not the information proved to be true. This could eventually lead to chaos depending on the severity of the situation and the spread or created information. This is why false information can be such a threat to society. It is because when information such as this is created, it is almost impossible to tell if the information is true or false. Most people would rather not go through the work of fact-checking their information, and instead take the incorrect information. Given the fact that false information poses a threat to society, it is clear as to why this violates the first amendment. It violates the people's right to accurate information, which is necessary if people are to be civilized and know what is going on in the world without having bias separating people. If the law were to be enforced, then less false information would be spread throughout the internet. With less false information on the web, people would be much more united than separated, as in today's society. There would not be as many political outrages or as many problems in between people. The only problem law enforcement faces when countering false information is finding out who was the original creator of this information.

Spreading and Credibility

Another major problem with falsehoods is that with the ever-growing amount of people using social media, falsehoods are becoming increasingly more credible, and they spread much faster than real information. A professor at the MIT Sloan School of

Management states, “falsehood diffuses significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth, in all categories of information, and many cases by an order of magnitude”. This study was conducted on Twitter, and they found that the false information that they created spread faster than the actual, true information that they also posted. It was also found that the information was not carried around by bots whatsoever. It was spread by regular Twitter users who believed in false information more than their true information. False information is more than 70% more likely to spread or be retweeted than true information. This is because people usually read the information that other people post on their social media, trust that the information posted is correct and unaltered in any way, and repost it for others to see. With people not questioning the credibility of the information they find on social media, this problem becomes more and more common as time goes on. If the problem is not addressed soon, then major problems such as civil unrest and political discourse could arise. With the use of technology growing rapidly, and more and more people begin to use social media, the problem is becoming harder and harder to address. Because almost everyone has a social media of some kind, it makes it incredibly difficult to do many different things. For instance, trying to correct someone’s false information becomes much harder to do if 80,000 people reposted the same false information. False information causes outrage among the media, finding the original creator of the false information becomes nearly impossible to find, because of the number of people who spread it across the internet. People who post false information then go unpunished, making the law almost impossible to enforce. Another problem that would arise is that the false information is almost irreversible. If multiple sources were to attempt to claim the false information as false, it

would take much longer to spread across the internet than the false information, making it nearly impossible to change. Once false information gets spread, there's almost no way it can be reversed. This causes many more problems for people throughout social media, as it can damage both social relationships and political relationships.

Social Relationships

Falsehoods have been known to not only affect social relationships but political ones as well. False information about a certain politician can be very misleading, especially when it's on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat. As stated by an MSU study, nearly six in ten people regularly use social media for news. This is becoming more and more of a problem, due to the fact that false information is found in much larger quantities on social media platforms than on the news. This is because the news is a much more credible and reliable source than social media. The reason why the news is more credible is that they get their information firsthand, unlike social media, where people spread the same information around everywhere, and end up changing it or altering it to the point where the information has become false or unreliable. It is better to receive information that is retrieved firsthand than it is to receive information that has come from many different places and sources. As important political dates come around, like presidential elections, for example, people on the internet begin to post and spread more biased and sometimes even false information about candidates. This going around of rumors and misinformation causes political unrest throughout social media, creating an even bigger problem for the government, as this splits apart political parties and creates hate amongst them. And with the spreading of firsthand information, from the official news source to thousands of random people on social media, it becomes almost

impossible to tell what information is accurate or not. And information having to do with politics is most likely to be altered by someone who does not support that politician. People would rather read information and take it as true or false, rather than fact check it themselves to see if the information they see is true or false. This is also because people are more likely to listen to information that agrees with their political views, rather than listen to opposing sides or actual real news. This has become more of a problem in recent years because people have become severely more ignorant to information than in previous years. The situation of falsehoods has become so severe, that the government has gone as far as censorship of harmful information. Because the government cannot track who created the false information, the least they can do is censor the most harmful information that they can find. This in itself, however, can also be considered unconstitutional.

METHOD

The method of this essay was a certain direct observation of how the public handles false or misinformation. The specific approach that I used for writing this paper was to explore the reasons why people react the way they do when they run into misinformation on social media. The observational study was best suited for my topic because it proved to be very difficult to conduct an actual online experiment, as the amount of time it takes to spread any amount of information depends on how many followers you have and how believable the information is. The most reasonable method is to observe and explore. The types of data that I will be collecting will be a mixed approach of quantitative sources, as well as qualitative sources. These will mostly be my observation notes that I will be taking for my topic. The specific types of data that I will be collecting include percentages, numbered data, and research articles explaining the

multitude of effects that false information has on the media. The data that I will be excluded from my research includes surveys including political standpoints and other politically tied information that can be referred to as biased or incorrect based on the political standpoint of the viewer. This kind of information is very easy to come by and cannot be referred to as right or wrong because they are solely opinions. This type of data is the best data to support my approach because it will help me find the best and most accurate information regarding my research topic. It will help me achieve my purpose by helping me find the solution to my topic. The exact steps that I will take in my research to gather this data will be to first find information regarding my topic using keywords. Next, I will gather data based on my initial research in order to find detailed information about things that will help me further advance my research paper. In the process of writing my paper, I will use as much information as I can to support my claims and my statement. The tools I will use to take these steps to gather this data include using scholarly sources that will help me find much more accurate and credible information as compared to just using google and bing to find sources. The steps I will be taking to make sure these tools yield accurate, worthwhile, and reliable data is by researching the authors to make sure they are credible, as well as checking the source from which the information comes from. I am storing and organizing my data on google drive, as well as my google classroom. Storing and organizing data in this way will aid me in my analysis of the information because it will be easy and accessible to find. I plan on analyzing and interpreting this data when I need it for future projects and papers. analyzing and interpreting the data in this way will yield reliable and justified conclusions by helping me reach a justifiable conclusion based on the research that I previously did.

RESULTS

According to the False Information Act, The law makes it a civil wrong to circulate or publish false information. It applies not only to newspapers and television stations but also to social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Although the law is supposed to punish those who post and spread false information, the law enforces a fine of only one dollar, as well as an order to cease and desist. This not only violates the first amendment, but it also violates the people's right to accurate information.

With the ever-growing amount of people using social media, falsehoods are becoming increasingly more credible, and they spread much faster than real information. According to a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, "falsehood diffuses significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth, in all categories of information, and many cases by an order of magnitude". This study was done on Twitter, and they found that the false information that they created spread faster than the actual, true information that they also posted. It was also found that the information was not carried around by bots whatsoever. It was spread by regular Twitter users who believed in false information more than their true information. False information is more than 70% more likely to spread or be retweeted than true information. This is because people usually read the information that other people post on their social media, trust that the information posted is correct and unaltered in any way, and repost it for others to see. With people not questioning the credibility of the information they find on social media, this problem becomes more and more common as time goes on. False information about a certain politician can be very misleading, especially when it's on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat. According to an MSU study, nearly six in ten people regularly use social media for news. This is

becoming more and more of a problem, due to the fact that false information is found in much larger quantities on social media platforms than on the news. This is because the news is a much more credible and reliable source than social media. The reason why the news is more credible is that they get their information firsthand, unlike social media, where people spread the same information around everywhere, and end up changing it or altering it to the point where the information has become false or unreliable.

DISCUSSION

False information has made a tremendous impact in the last couple of years. As shown by the results of my research study, false information is a tremendous problem that must be dealt with, and fast, because every day, the amount of false information that is found on the internet expands with little to almost no means of stopping at any rate. If the creation of falsehoods on the internet continues without giving any means of punishment to those who create these falsehoods, people may never have a reliable source to get information from. Social media fact-checkers are also adding to the problem. Many of these social media fact-checkers do censor or flag false information. However, many of these fact-checking bots have also been known to show bias towards different opinions. In recent events following the presidential elections in the U.S, many people found that these fact-checking bots flagged more republican propaganda than democratic propaganda. There have been many reasons given as to why the fact-checking bots did this during the elections, but in reality,, it shows that these fact-checking bots cannot be used and depended on for stopping the spread of false information. What needs to be done is that greater action needs to take place to truly stop the spread of falsehoods. As helpful as these boots seem, they have caused thousands of people to spread outbreaks of hatred throughout the internet. These bots cannot be blamed for getting confused between

right and wrong, because it can sometimes be nearly impossible to even tell if false information is real or fake. Over the years, people who spread falsehoods have gotten better at it, and sometimes these falsehoods can even be unnoticeable without extensive research. As stated in my research, false information is more than 70% more likely to spread or be retweeted than true information. It is a problem that even has social media fact-checkers confused with right and wrong information. It truly depends on the information being shared on the internet. Many of these bots cannot browse the internet for answers to check if a statement is true or false. And one can only hope for a solution that can save the internet from liars such as those who create falsehoods to cause havoc on the world.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The research paper had some limitations when it came down to the writing processes, as well as the research process of this paper. During the research process, I was able to find a very significant amount of papers regarding my research topic. However, there were some topics that I could not find much information about. For example, I was more than able to find information regarding falsehoods and how they affect social life and politics. However, when finding how falsehoods could be useful or even beneficial, I was not met with the same amount of abundance of information as my other topic. There was enough to write a research paper, but the fact that there were not as many sources for one side of the argument and more for the other side of the argument became a flaw for the research paper. When finding my sources I made sure that all of my sources were from credible sources and credible authors. With this, I excluded many sources from my papers, including graphs, charts, and papers that had an excessive amount of bias in them. This part of my research paper proved to be the most challenging

because it took the most time to do. To find ten or more sources for each side of my argument, and then check the background of every author of the source was very time-consuming. However, I was able to find all the sources I needed. When I began the research paper, I was feeling very confident about my ability to write the paper on falsehoods regarding the first amendment. The topic was of great interest to me at the time because it is a growing problem not just in the United States or even North America. This is a problem that regards the entire world and everyone who uses social media or the internet to inform themselves about what is going on in the world around them. Falsehoods have always been a global threat and that always interested me. During the process of writing the research report, my view on the topic did change. At first, I believed that falsehoods could be at least somewhat beneficial. However, now that I have concluded my research I have concluded that falsehoods should not be protected under the first amendment and that falsehoods are rarely ever beneficial to society. When my peers reviewed my research paper, I was shocked to find many grammatical errors in my papers, along with much confusion on the topic. With this advice, I began fixing my research paper to make it as pristine and clear as possible.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Falsehoods should not be protected under the first amendment, and should instead be punishable if considered too harmful. Falsehoods that are considered harmful for example, include movements such as the anti-vaccine movement. This movement, like many others, purposely spread hurtful misinformation to cause harm. They claim that vaccines cause things such as autism and other diseases to make the public fear vaccines, which were created specifically to stop the spread of what would be deadly viruses. The Flat Earth society is another movement that has a similar goal.

Instead of wanting to cause harm, this movement wants people to question basic science, which can be just as harmful to society. Although blocking such movements would be considered a violation of the first amendment to freedom of speech, such movements can be very harmful to society, especially if they grow to a large enough size. Falsehoods also affect social relationships between people, which can lead to being very damaging to society, as it can lead to unnecessary violence and or hate between groups of people, or even communities. Not much can be done about falsehoods other than to discourage people from creating falsehoods because of the amount of information that gets put online every single day. After analyzing both sides of the argument on whether or not falsehoods should be considered free speech and if they should be protected as free speech, I have come to the conclusion that falsehoods should not be considered free speech, and should not be protected under the first amendment. Freedom of speech is for people to have different opinions and a free reign of thought. But if those thoughts are made only to cause confusion, harm, and hate then they should not be fully protected. Falsehoods are not only damaging to social relationships, political relationships, and the general media, but they pose the greatest threat to society as a whole.

Word count: 4101

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Academic Paper

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Sample: 1

Score: 1

This paper earns a score of 1. The topic of inquiry, presented on page 1, “should falsehoods stay protected under the first amendment?” is overly broad. This topic then shifts, as evidenced on page 6, when the researcher states that they will “explore why people react the way they do when they run into misinformation on social media.” Both topics of inquiry are generated from the researcher’s perspective, as there are no in-text citations. The majority of evidence that might provide an exigence for investigation is unsupported by sources. Much of the evidence is the result of conjecture on the researcher’s part.

The presence of a method can be found on pages 6-8 and is described by the student as an observational study using quantitative and qualitative sources in which the researcher will collect and use “percentages, numbered data, and research articles.” However, this method is not *used* in generating results. The results presented are not the student’s ideas, nor are they student generated. This is necessary to achieve a score of a 2, as described in the overarching description of a paper that earns the score of 2: “Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method.” Because they do not *use* the method stated, the paper only reports on existing knowledge. There are missing citations throughout the paper, and the bibliography is not properly formatted.

This paper does not earn a score of 0 because the paper attempts a report on existing knowledge.

This paper does not earn a score of 2 because the topic of inquiry remains broad throughout the paper without narrowing, and the method described on pages 6-9 is not utilized. And as stated above, the use of qualitative and quantitative data described in the methods is not present in the paper.