



Crash Course Navigating Digital Information Preview

Crash Course: Navigating Digital Information

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=L4aNmdL3Hr0>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/L4aNmdL3Hr0>

Hi, my name is John Green... In a few weeks we will begin a 10-episode series on Navigating Digital Information, which probably sounds boring.

We thought it about calling something else--Crash Course Saving the Internet from Itself, Crash Course Oh My God This Virtual Place Is On Fire, Crash Course Maybe We Should Go Back to Trusting Experts, et cetera. But we ended up calling it Crash Course Navigating Digital Information because that is what we are actually going to try to learn how to do together.

And I say together because I am not particularly good at navigating digital information. Like a lot of you, I've read entire stories online before even looking at the name of the website I'm on. My brain has to an extent been hacked by large corporations that are able to monetize my attention, and they hold my attention in part by showing me information that outrages and astonishes me, that scratches some itch so deep down in my consciousness that I can't even quite identify it.

I find myself scrolling into the infinite, refreshing to see what is newer than the news that broke ten minutes ago, passively ingesting all kinds of information without pausing to consider the quality of that information or how it is shaping my understanding of the universe and my place in that universe. And as we let that happen, as we allow ourselves to fall into the vast endlessness of passive scrolling, we allow the information we ingest, and the algorithms feeding us that information, to shape who we are as people--to shape how we think, what we value, whom we trust, and what we do. Much attention has rightly been paid to the ways that misinformation and disinformation are shaping our political and social discourse, but they are also shaping us--as individuals and as communities.

Getting better at evaluating information means becoming a better citizen of the communities where you live; it also means become a better informed and more engaged person. I love the Internet. As a child in the early 1990s, I felt isolated and struggled socially, and the Internet helped me feel less alone and better connected to nerdy, weird people who were like me.

It has made us a closer species and given voice to people who otherwise would not have been heard. I am not here to attack the Internet. I'm also not here to celebrate one ideology's misinformation over another's.

Everyone is susceptible to being misled online, and anyone who believes themselves to be somehow immune to misinformation is, in fact, especially susceptible to it. Instead, I want to share with you proven methods for evaluating the quality of information you encounter online, and for becoming a more active consumer of information. You may be wondering, how is this different from your crash course in Media Literacy.

Well, in some ways that was more of an academic introduction and this is more of a practical one. This is vocational school for being online Internet is different for each of us--and never more so than in this era of endlessly personalized and customized information flow. So I don't know if we're going to figure out how to fix the Internet in the next ten weeks, but each of us can improve our approach to information on the Internet.

To do this, Crash Course is working with MediaWise, a project from the Poynter Institute designed to help students evaluate the accuracy of digital information. Mediawise--and so indirectly this series--is funded by Google, which owns YouTube. Google also loaned Crash Course its initial funding way back in 2011, although we eventually paid them back.

I'm saying all of this, and will say it again during the series, because it's important to understand where funding comes from when evaluating the accuracy of digital information, including when you're evaluating the accuracy of digital information about evaluating the accuracy of digital information. It's evaluating the accuracy of digital information all the way down. The curriculum itself we'll be using was developed by the Stanford History Education Group, based around research on civic online reasoning they began in 2015.

With their help, we're going to learn how to interact with the Internet the way professional fact-checkers do, and along the way maybe also come to understand some of what's wrong with the way our information feeds are working, and how we can tack against the prevailing winds of misinformation. Thanks for watching; I'll see you in a few weeks.