

# Library Partnership Initiative



# WHO'S FEEDING YOU THE NEWS?

NewsGuard uses journalism to fight false news, misinformation, and disinformation. Our trained analysts, who are experienced journalists, research online news brands to help readers and viewers know which ones are trying to do legitimate journalism—and which are not.

## THE PROBLEM

Trust in all news publishers has fallen as more people get their news from social media and search. Purveyors of fake news abuse open digital platforms by appearing to readers and viewers as similar or identical to legitimate news publishers.

## THE SOLUTION

NewsGuard provides credible, independent ratings of online news outlets, rating and providing Nutrition Label write-ups on all the news and information websites among the 4,500 websites that account for 98% of online engagement in the U.S.

# NEWSGUARD: WHO ARE WE?

- STEVEN BRILL** Journalist and Author – and founder of Court TV, The American Lawyer Magazine, American Lawyer Media, Brill’s Content Magazine, and The Yale Journalism Initiative and co-founder of Press+
- GORDON CROVITZ** Journalist and Executive – Former publisher, editorial board member and opinion columnist for The Wall Street Journal, board member of Business Insider, editor or contributor to books published by the American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation, founder of Factiva and co-founder of Press+
- & CO.** Editors and reporters from a diverse range of backgrounds, including Reuters, the AP, the New York Times, the Poynter Institute, Newsweek, the Chicago Tribune, CBS, NPR, and C-SPAN.

# THE NEWSGUARD MISSION:

## **NewsGuard uses journalism to fight fake news.**

Our analysts, who are trained journalists, research online news brands to help the billions of people around the world who get their news online know which websites are trying to do legitimate journalism—and which aren't.

We provide citizens with an effective defense against purveyors of knowingly false information and propaganda.

We are the opposite of an algorithm: totally transparent about how we make decisions, about the backgrounds of the analysts behind each website review, and about the nine criteria we use in our reviews. And we do not report anything negative about any website without getting comment first from those responsible for that website.



When you see a newsfeed or do a search for news or information online, all you see is a **headline**. You don't know if the people behind the headline are credible publishers or a group with some hidden agenda.

# OUR RATINGS



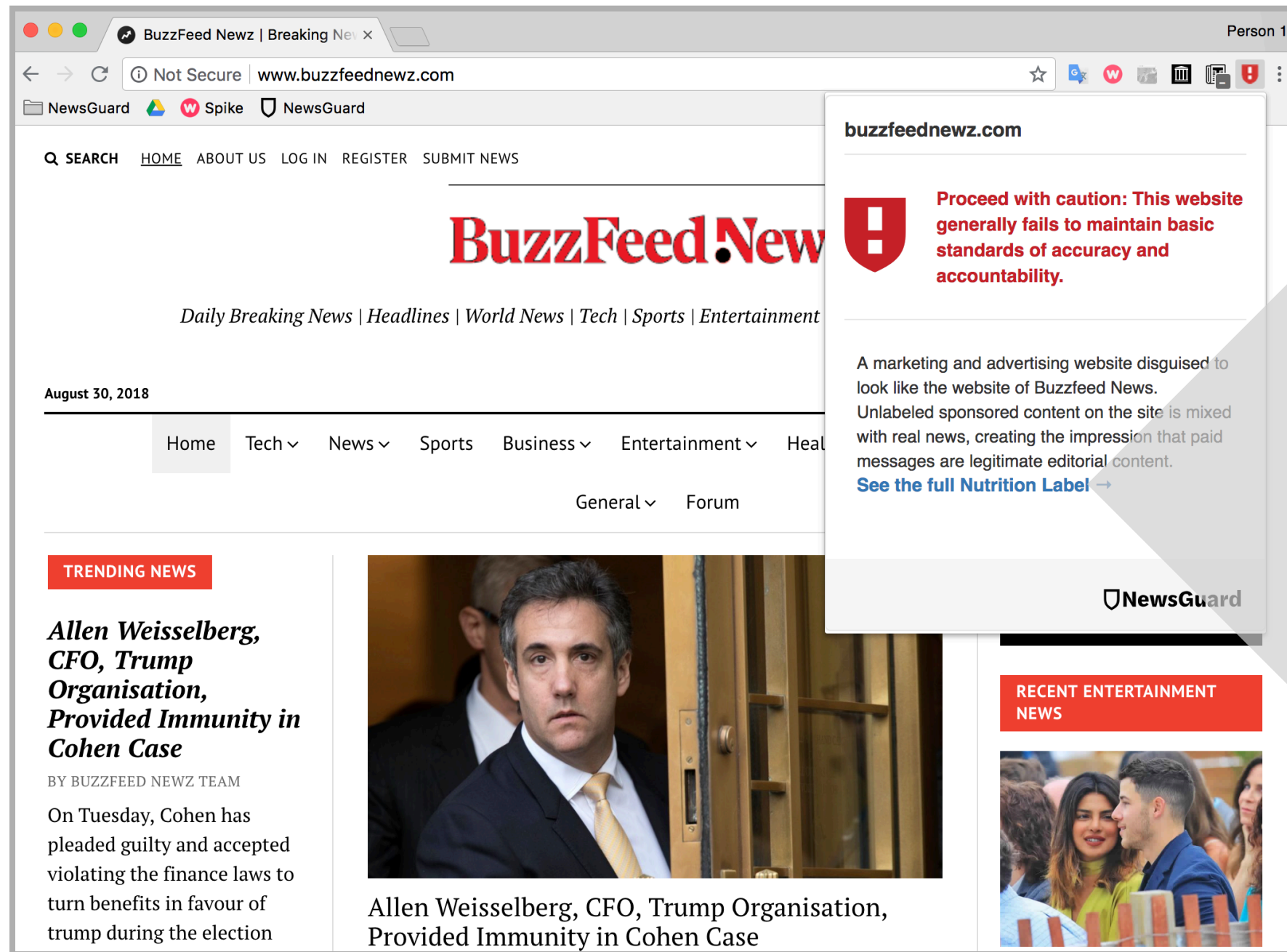
OR












|   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Doesn't repeatedly publish false content                              | ✗ |
| ✓ Gathers and presents information responsibly                          | ✗ |
| ✓ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors                                | ✗ |
| ✓ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly           | ✗ |
| ✓ Avoids deceptive headlines  | ✗ |
| ✓ Website discloses ownership and financing                             | ✗ |
| ✓ Clearly labels advertising  | ✗ |
| ✓ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest | ✗ |
| ✓ Provides information about content creators                           | ✗ |

- All sites are **green** until proven **red**.
- The 9 criteria are listed in order of their importance in determining a **red** rating.
- Not all sites rated **green** are equal.
- **Nutrition Labels** spell out each site's adherence to the 9 criteria that yielded that particular rating.

# NEWSGUARD CASE STUDY



-  **Proceed with caution: This website generally fails to maintain basic standards of accuracy and accountability.**
-  **Does not repeatedly publish false content**
-  **Gathers and presents information responsibly**
-  **Regularly corrects or clarifies errors**
-  **Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly**
-  **Avoids deceptive headlines**
-  **Website discloses ownership and financing**
-  **Clearly labels advertising**
-  **Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest**
-  **Provides information about content creators**

“A marketing and advertising website **disguised** to look like the website of BuzzFeed News. Unlabeled sponsored content on the site is mixed with real news, creating the impression that paid messages are legitimate editorial content.”



# NUTRITION LABEL

## buzzfeednewz.com

A marketing and advertising website disguised to look like the website of BuzzFeed News. Unlabeled sponsored content on the site is mixed with real news, creating the impression that paid messages are legitimate editorial content.

### Ownership and Financing

According to the ICANN domain registry, the site is owned by Erric Ravi, the founder of a digital marketing company based in India, although his ownership is not disclosed on the site. The website runs advertising and marketing content that is presented as news.

### Content

The site closely resembles BuzzFeedNews.com, imitating not only its name but also its logo and design. Advertising and marketing articles are presented alongside credible news stories, which are copied from news websites, in particular Vox.com, an American news and opinion website. The site's sections are typical of a legitimate news website, including Tech, Health, Politics, and Opinion. The home page features a "Trending News" feed and a "Recent Entertainment" section with links to articles from BuzzFeed Newz's Facebook and

### Sources

#### Ownership and Financing

<https://whois.icann.org/en/lookup?name=www.buzzfeednewz.com>  
<http://seoexpertnow.com/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/erdogan-capitalizes-on-trumps-effort-to-break-and-isolate-turkey/>

#### Content

<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/theonespy-review-most-demanding-android-spy-software/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/boost-your-business-income-with-online-marketing-services-rapidly-custom-website-design-services-india/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/lifeasy-offers-premium-quality-ac-services-in-ghaziabad/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/there-used-to-become-a-baseball-skills-competition-using-the-home-run-derby-plus-it-should-exist-again/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/monsanto-was-just-ordered-to-pay-289-million-to-a-man-who-says-its-weed-killer-caused-his-cancer/>  
<https://www.vox.com/2018/8/11/17678062/seatac-stolen-plane-alaska-airlines-crash-what-we-know>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/order-the-best-flowers-for-the-occasional-purpose/>

#### Credibility

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/erdogan-capitalizes-on-trumps-effort-to-break-and-isolate-turkey/2018/08/19/3f6154ba-a17e-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.e20d05d0aeeed](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/erdogan-capitalizes-on-trumps-effort-to-break-and-isolate-turkey/2018/08/19/3f6154ba-a17e-11e8-a3dd-2a1991f075d5_story.html?utm_term=.e20d05d0aeeed)  
<https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/8/16/17683028/aretha-franklin-obituary>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/erdogan-capitalizes-on-trumps-effort-to-break-and-isolate-turkey/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/aretha-franklin-the-legendary-queen-of-soul-is-dead-at-76/>

#### Transparency

<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/about-us/#>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/erdogan-capitalizes-on-trumps-effort-to-break-and-isolate-turkey/>  
<http://www.buzzfeednewz.com/the-truth-about-how-men-behave-when-youre-a-female-solo-traveler/>  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sex-as-a-woman-travelling-solo\\_us\\_5b056f25e4b0784cd2b046d4](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sex-as-a-woman-travelling-solo_us_5b056f25e4b0784cd2b046d4)

#### History

<https://whois.icann.org/en/lookup?name=www.buzzfeednewz.com>

that resembles news content. For example, the "Trending News" feed begins, "TheOneSpy is the best spy software and over the years the brand has won its multiple states of the art products." Another article, "Boost Your Business Income with Online Marketing Services India," promotes Lifeasy Design Services India.

For example, "Lifeasy Offers Premium Quality AC Services" is an air conditioning company in India. The article is nonsensical -- perhaps an indication they are not serious -- such as a story in the Sports section titled "Baseball Skills Competition Using The Home Run Derby." Another article in the General section is titled "Order The Best Flowers For The Occasional Purpose."

BuzzFeedNewz.com, writing in its August 19, 2018, article, "We just want to give it up for the enterprising solo traveler," promotes registered buzzfeednewz.com and



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**Avoids deceptive headlines**



**Website discloses ownership and financing**



**Clearly labels advertising**



**Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest**

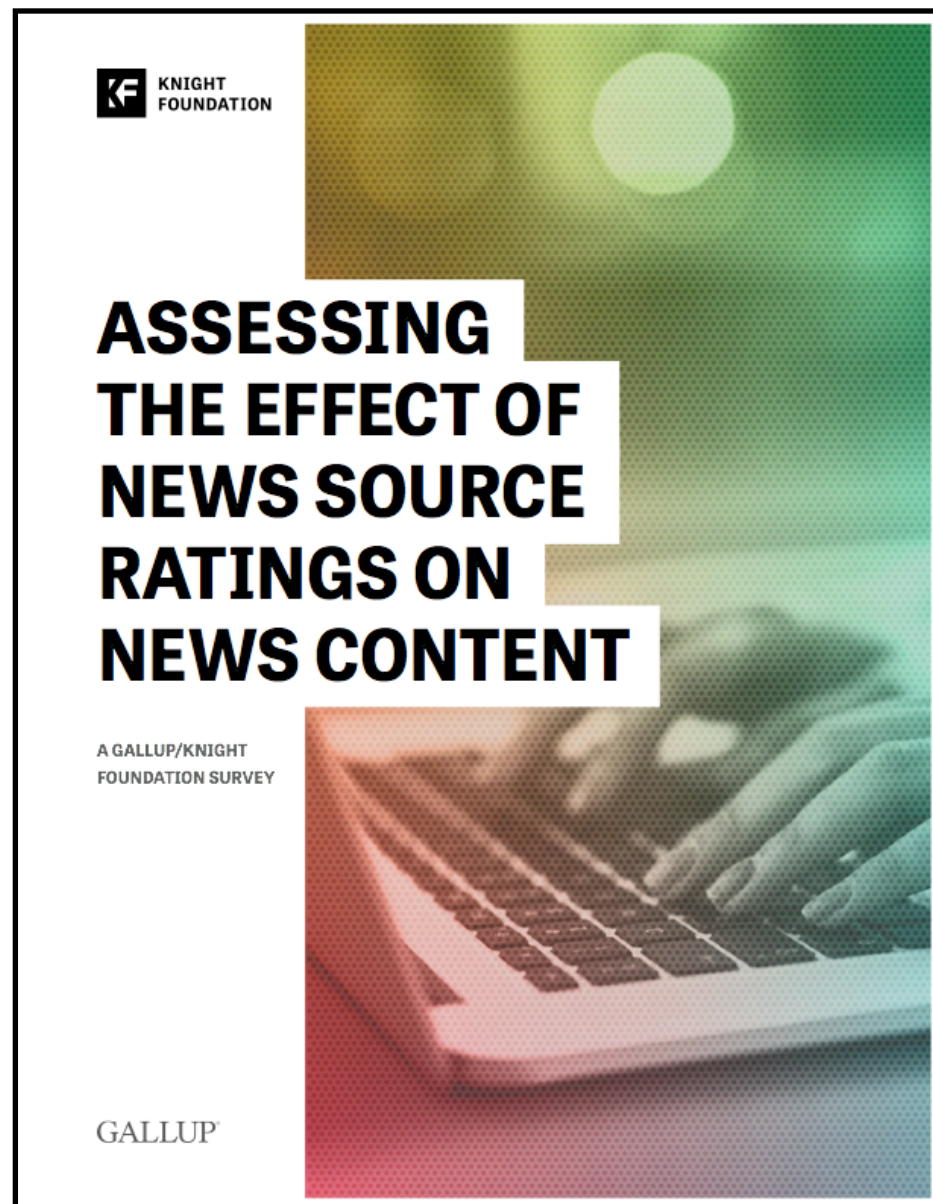


**Provides information about content creators**

*Criteria are listed in order of importance.*

*More information.*

# GALLUP/KNIGHT FOUNDATION SURVEY



The June 2018 survey was modeled on NewsGuard's **green/red** ratings and Nutrition Labels

**The news source rating tool worked as intended.** Perceived accuracy increased for news headlines from a **green** source and decreased for **red** sources. Participants were less likely to read, like or share stories from **red** sources. Ratings were effective across the political spectrum.

# REVENUE MODEL

- NewsGuard will license its ratings and Nutrition Labels to search and social media platforms, including Facebook, Google, YouTube, and Twitter.
- We are also licensing our White List of legitimate news sites to advertisers, which will cut off revenues to fake news sites.

Microsoft sponsored NewsGuard as part of its Defending Democracy Project: “The objective is not to preclude access to any news content – an approach that would conflict with our nation’s free speech principles – but rather **to empower readers** with additional information on the source and reliability of that content as they consume and/or share it.”



## HOW LIBRARIES CAN HELP

**Join** libraries around the country by providing NewsGuard's browser extension on the computers used by your patrons.

**Distribute** our handout explaining NewsGuard's value to patrons.

**Teach:** Make use of NewsGuard in your news literacy programs.

**Recommend** NewsGuard to other libraries.

**Give feedback** from librarians and patrons.



# YOUR LIBRARY AND NEWSGUARD ARE GIVING YOU A BROWSER EXTENSION SO THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE READING

- A transparent **alternative to censorship**: NewsGuard helps patrons research content intelligently and understand who's feeding them news.
- NewsGuard observes the First Commandment of journalism: always try to get comment before saying something negative. **Algorithms don't call for comment.**
- We **don't collect any personal information** about you or push any advertising at you.

**NEWSGUARD IS SIMPLY DOING WHAT  
LIBRARIES HAVE BEEN DOING FOR  
HUNDREDS OF YEARS:**

**GUIDING PEOPLE THROUGH VAST  
COLLECTIONS OF MATERIAL SO THAT  
THEY HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT  
THEY ARE READING.**

# QUESTIONS?

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**NewsGuard extension on**  
**Chrome: [bit.ly/2mMUEKj](https://bit.ly/2mMUEKj)**  
**Microsoft Edge: [bit.ly/2N0ASX6](https://bit.ly/2N0ASX6)**