

10 Journalism Brands Where You Find Real Facts Rather Than Alternative Facts

By Paul Glader FEB 1, 2017

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Where do we most often find real truth, real facts in a new era of Internet hoaxes, fake news stories and new political administrations that tout their own "alternative facts"?

Many citizens appear confused and worried. News stories from the [BBC](#) and the [New York Times](#) and [Money](#) magazine are reporting (with proof) that dystopian novels such as *1984* by George Orwell and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley are seeing a noticeable boost in sales. After [Meryl Streep's anti-Trump and pro-journalism speech](#) at the Golden Globe awards in January, donations picked up to the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#). Subscriptions to the *New York Times* and other newspapers have picked up dramatically since Donald Trump was elected president according to the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) and other sources.

Meanwhile, I've been hearing from several well-educated friends, who are wondering if their own reading habits are leading them toward facts or fiction. "Hey man. Got a question for you on this 'fake news' thing," wrote one friend from my high school years. "What's your advice and do you have an opinion on where to find some form of truth in our media today?"

One key question for any publication is this: If a reporter gets facts in a story wrong, will the news outlet investigate a complaint and publish a correction? Does the publication have its own code of ethics? Or does it subscribe to and endorse the [Society of Professional Journalist's code of ethics](#)? And if a reporter or editor seriously violates ethical codes - such as being a blatant or serial plagiarizer, fabulist or exaggerator - will they be fired at a given news outlet? While some may criticize mainstream media outlets for a variety of sins, top outlets such as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *NBC News* and the *New Republic* have fired journalists for such ethics violations. That is remarkable in a world where some celebrities, politicians and other realms of media (other than news... such as Hollywood films "based on a true story") can spread falsehood with impunity.

Another friend writes, "Trump's attacks on the free media has me spooked and I want to support the media somehow. At the same time, I am aware of my liberal bias and would welcome a different point of view as long as it isn't 'alternative facts.' Any suggestions for good publications to subscribe to? I already have subscriptions to the [*Washington*] *Post*, [*New York*] *Times* and [*Wall Street*] *Journal*."

I am heartened by questions like these. A major shift in political and cultural life in our country means it is a good time for people to improve their own reading and learning habits. [The Poynter Institute](#) - an enlightened non-profit in St. Petersburg, Fla., that has an ownership role in the *Tampa Bay Times* and provides research, training and educational resources on journalism - provides many excellent online modules to help citizens improve their news media literacy.

In the post-post truth age (that is, an age where one has to work hard to be media literate and find the truthful sources of information), citizens should support local and regional publications that hew to ethical journalism standards and cover local government entities. In my corner of Long Island, that means I read (and sometimes write for) the [Great Neck News](#) and the chain of local newspapers to which it belongs. This year, I also plan to subscribe to [Newsday](#), which is the largest paper that covers Long Island. I would urge citizens to subscribe to their local newspapers as well. This action helps these organizations employ journalists who attend city hall meetings, school board meetings and police precincts to report on how your tax-dollars are being spent, how your constitutional rights are being safeguarded, and to serve as watch dogs on how well your elected officials are serving you.

Realizing that millions more people are scratching their heads, wondering what to read and where to spend their subscription dollars, here are my top 10 large journalistic brands where I believe you can most often find real, reported facts:

1. *The New York Times*

This is the most influential newspaper in the U.S. in my view. Its editorial page and some of its news coverage take a left-leaning, progressive view of the world. But the *NYT* also hews to ethical standards of reporting and the classic [elements of journalism](#) in America. That's what helps the *NYT* remain, arguably, the agenda-setting news organization in America. It is a leader in business, politics and culture coverage. *

2. *The Wall Street Journal*

The largest circulation newspaper in the U.S., the *WSJ* made its bones as a business newspaper and pioneered newtypes of feature writing in American

journalism (for example, its quirky middle-column feature called the "Ahed" and longer form, in-depth reports called "leders"). As the company was purchased by Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch in 2007, the *WSJ* pivoted to cover more general news in addition to business news. The *WSJ* is still brand X among daily business publications in the world. Its editorial page is a bastion of American free-market conservatism, using the motto, "free markets, free people." With former Republican speechwriters and strategists such as Karl Rove, Peggy Noonan and Bill McGurn writing columns, the *WSJ* editorial page is often a must-read for Republicans in Washington. And left-leaning readers should not dismiss the *WSJ* edit page just because they may disagree with its positions. It has won several Pulitzer Prizes for editorials and columns that feature a clear thesis, backed up by thorough fact-based reporting and bold arguments. *

3. *The Washington Post*

The newspaper that [brought down President Richard Nixon with its reporting on the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s](#) maintains its intellectually robust tradition under the new ownership of Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos. The *Post* has, for decades, been part of the big three national papers - a peer of the *NYT* and *WSJ* - in terms of winning Pulitzer Prizes, hiring the best and brightest reporters and producing big scoops. Of the big three, the *Post* is arguably the most forward-thinking right now in [trying new digital strategies that have boosted readership](#). And with Bezos' backing, the *Post* [is on a hiring binge](#) for talented reporters while the *NYT* and *WSJ* have been pruning their reporting staffs in recent months. Most people think the *Post* editorial page leans left but [is often regarded as more center left](#) than the *NYT*. *

4. BBC

The BBC is the global standard bearer for excellence in broadcast radio and TV journalism. If only U.S. cable news outlets could follow BBC's recipe. And while PBS produces some great entertainment, documentary and news programs, its news programs have often seemed to lack the creative energy of the BBC. While NPR produces some fantastic journalism, a bulk of its news coverage seem to come from re-reporting news from the *New York Times* and the *Associated Press*. And the [American public perceives NPR](#) to be more left-leaning than the BBC.

5. *The Economist*

Another British export, the *Economist* magazine is staffed with excellent economists and journalists who produce a tightly-edited, factually rigorous account of what's happening in the world each week. One oddity is that the *Economist* doesn't publish bylines of their writers so you never know who exactly wrote a given piece.

6. *The New Yorker*

This American treasure publishes sophisticated narrative non-fiction pieces from top writers and reporters each week in a print magazine and, increasingly, on other platforms. The *New Yorker* is smartly expanding its audience on the web, offering to the masses content that used to be open only to its print subscribers. The magazine itself runs a piece of fiction each week (identifies it as such). The long-form non-fiction reports on politics, culture, business and other topics often take months to report, write and fact check. The result is deep reporting and analysis each week that is hard to find elsewhere. And the narrative structures and techniques the writers use make for enjoyable reading. Similar to the *Times*, the *New Yorker* presents a progressive view of the world. Conservative readers should recognize that but not let it detract from them enjoying some of the best reporting and writing happening in the world. *

7. Wire Services: [The Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg News](#)

You can't exactly "subscribe" to these wire services. But you can trust reports from these organizations to be factual. They provide a backbone of news and information flows about politics and the economy. And their member organizations that surface their reports benefit from this reporting. You can follow these organizations on social media and can also follow certain reporters for these organizations who report on topics of interest to you. These wire services also do have web sites and mobile apps you can use to stay abreast the news. *

8. *Foreign Affairs*

This bi-monthly magazine is published by the [Council on Foreign Relations](#). It's a serious magazine for people who want intelligence on global affairs. The magazine and its many digital platforms benefits from submissions, dialogue, differing views and analysis from the many top minds on international relations.

9. *The Atlantic*

This is another national treasure, a monthly magazine that presents a view of the nation and world from Washington D.C. It is informed by many top journalists who write long-form features and also write some analysis. The *Atlantic* web site sometimes hews to clickable headlines. But the magazine and its parent company also subscribe to American journalism principles of fact-based reporting.

10. *Politico*

Founded by reporters who left the *Washington Post* in 2006, *Politico* has built itself into a crucial player in politics reporting in the U.S. (and with expansions to

Europe). It does publish some products in print, but *Politico* is easily accessible on the Internet and mobile devices. Keep an eye on [Axios](#), a news startup launched this year by two founders of *Politico*.

* Disclosures: Earlier in my career, I interned at the *Associated Press* and the *Washington Post*. I worked as a staff writer at the *Wall Street Journal* between 2001-2011. I have also published free-lance articles in the *Post*, the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* (website) as well as some of the publications listed in the runner up lists.

Runners Up:

- National Public Radio
- *TIME* magazine
- The Christian Science Monitor
- *The Los Angeles Times* (and many other regional, metropolitan daily newspapers)
- *USA Today*
- CNN
- NBC News
- CBS News
- ABC News

Business News Sources:

- *FORBES* magazine
- *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* magazine
- *Fortune* magazine
- *The Financial Times* newspaper

Sources of reporting and opinion from the right of the political spectrum:

- *National Review*

- *The Weekly Standard*

Sources of reporting and opinion from the left of the political spectrum:

- *The New Republic*

- *The Nation*

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2017/02/01/10-journalism-brands-where-you-will-find-real-facts-rather-than-alternative-facts/#1bfb489e9b5>