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John King, a CNN news anchor, once stated, “I do not subscribe to the advocacy journalism school. It’s not who I am and not who CNN wants me to be.” It is because I agree with news anchor John King, in the position that advocacy must be subordinate to objectivity, that I feel compelled to **affirm** today’s resolution:

Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

According to [Merriam-Webster/Merriam-Webster/Merriam-Webster/Merriam-Webster](#), here are four definitions.

Democracy is defined as a government by the people, run by majority rule.

To Prioritize means to place something at a certain degree of importance.

Objectivity is the quality of being impartial.

Advocacy is the act of supporting a cause or public expressing support for someone or something.

According to the [Collins Dictionary](#), a **free press** is defined as a body of book publishers or members of the news media who are not restricted by the government censorship in political or ideological situations.

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The highest value within today’s round is **knowledge**, defined as understanding information about a subject(s) gained through study and is known by others according to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#).

Knowledge is most important in today’s round because knowledge allows one to sustain democracy and is crucial in the role of a free press within a democracy.

The best criterion for evaluating this resolution is **rationalism**, defined as the concept that actions or beliefs should be based on logic and knowledge only according to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#).

It best achieves my value of knowledge because **rationalism** measures knowledge by **sustaining the system of democracy**. So, through rationalism, we will nourish the knowledge needed to sustain democracy by prioritizing objectivity.

In affirming the resolution, I offer the following contentions:

Contention I: Objectivity reduces the misinformation from political adversaries and various forms of violence that stem from advocacy.

1] Fact-based journalism is the key to reverse misinformation warfare by the GOP.

Mcmanus 21 [Doyle Mcmanus, director of the journalism program at Georgetown University, 7-9-2021, "Trump's still waging a war on truth — and it's still bad for democracy," Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-07-11/trumps-still-waging-a-war-on-truth-and-its-still-bad-for-democracy/>]/ Kankee // crosini

Last month, as thousands of former President Trump's loyal supporters waited for him at a rally in Ohio, a chant rose from the crowd. "Trump won!" they roared. "Trump won!" The former president agreed. "We won the election twice," he said, "and it's possible we'll have to win it a third time." Eight months after he lost convincingly to President Biden, Trump and his followers are studiously maintaining an alternative reality — and having remarkable success keeping the fiction alive. Almost two-thirds of GOP voters told pollsters in one recent survey that they're still convinced the election was stolen — a number that hasn't changed much since November. This isn't a harmless exercise in political puffery; it deepens the polarization of American politics and weakens democracy. The charge that the election was stolen does n't merely flatter Trump; it's also an attempt to delegitimize Biden. It makes it politically dangerous for Republicans in Congress to collaborate with the administration — for why would anyone loyal to Trump negotiate with a usurper? The falsehood persists even though Republican officeholders have run investigations that debunk it. Last month, a GOP-led probe in Michigan found that the Trump camp's charges of voting irregularities there were nothing more than "blatherskite." Former Atty. Gen. William Barr, a Trump appointee, gave ABC News his pithy judgment of the president's charges: "It was all bull—." But many of the GOP faithful appear virtually immune to evidence. The fantasy hasn't stayed alive on its own; Trump has spent much of his time since leaving office stoking his claims and warning Republican politicians that he will torpedo their careers if they don't back him up. "If they don't, I have little doubt that they will be primaried and quickly run out of office," he said in a written statement last month. GOP politicians, fearful of Trump's wrath, either tiptoe around the fantasy or join in promoting it. Arizona legislators have been auditing election results for more than two months; last week one GOP leader called for yet another recount after the current audit is complete. Legislators in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, bowing to pressure from Trump, have said they are seeking audits or recounts as well. The Washington Post reported last week that hundreds of Republican candidates are campaigning on promises to loyally pursue Trump's claims. There's no mystery why Trump wants to keep his baseless narrative alive. The fiction transforms him from a loser to, if not a winner, at least a victim. It maintains his presumptive claim on his party's 2024 presidential nomination if he decides to seek it and gives him a cause around which he can raise money. The consequences go well beyond Trump's political future. As Jonathan Rauch of the Brookings Institution writes in his important new book, "The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth": "When compromise fails, ungovernability sets in." Rauch argues that one root of our current political crisis is an "epistemic war," a battle over whether such a thing as objective truth exists — or whether politicians should be free, as one Trump aide argued, to invent "alternative facts." "Epistemic warfare is now the modus operandi of the Republican Party," Rauch told me last week. "It's become a substitute for ideology or policy." He said he considers Trump "the greatest innovator in disinformation since the 1930s." (And yes, he means since Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin.) Rauch's title, "The Constitution of Knowledge," refers to his argument that Americans with differing beliefs need to agree on basic principles about truth, just as politicians with differing views adhere to the same Constitution. "People need not and cannot all agree that the same things are true, but a critical mass needs to ... support norms like freedom of expression, intellectual pluralism, commitment to learning and respect for factuality and truthfulness," he writes. Is there a way out of this crisis? There is, Rauch argues — but it's going to take time and effort from a lot of people. Media organizations have stopped mindlessly spreading Trump's most egregious lies, as some did in his first presidential campaign in 2016. Now they need to reinvest in fact-based journalism and in more and better fact-checking. Social media networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube still struggle to find workable rules to curb disinformation — but at least they've mostly recognized that spreading falsehoods is a bug, not a feature. And individual citizens need to join the battle by looking for better sources of information than their Facebook feeds and rewarding politicians who stand up for the truth.

"It's going to take all of society," Rauch said. That's daunting, but history offers grounds for hope, he added — again recalling the 1930s. "The reality-based community has withstood much worse."

2] Ending media objectivity requirements spawned the Alt-Right and reinvigorated white nationalism.

Cagliuso 21 [Dominique Cagliuso, writer with working on a Master in International Affairs with a concentration in Human Rights and a Specialization in UN Studies at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, 2021, "Age of the Alt-Right: New-Age Media and White Nationalism in Trump's America," International Social Science Review, <https://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1529&context=issr>]/Kankee // crosini

The New-Age of Media Since the turn of the millennium, both social and technological advancements have allowed the white supremacy movement to flourish. Through the use of the internet, they have been able to spread their ideology to millions. While the ideas and beliefs behind the Alt-Right movement are nothing new, the dissemination of their ideas through the internet is. A Senior Fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center, Mark Potok, stated that the data they were collecting led them to conclude that "the advent of social media and other more dispersed means of sharing information had created a shift in how extremists shared their ideologies and how they recruited, too."¹¹ The SPLC maintains that most white supremacists today are no longer members of official groups but rather operate over the internet. The origins of the far-right's internet use can be traced back to the creation of the platform Stormfront. This white supremacist platform was created in 1990 as a virtual bulletin board for the Senate campaign of David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the KKK. Eventually, the website went public in 1995 and became the stormfront.com that is still active today.¹² Due to the creation of stormfront.com, around several hundred white supremacists were turning to the internet by 2000.¹³ In 2004, Robert Futrell and Pete Simi attributed the white power movement's success to the newly developed "free spaces" on the internet. These "free spaces" were defined as "network intersections that link otherwise isolated activist networks through physical and virtual spaces."¹⁴ Futrell and Simi concluded that the use of cyberspace would massively affect the white power movement by creating a new and easier platform to find existing members and to seek out potential recruits. With the creation of new platforms and websites gaining traction, the traditional magazine American Renaissance converted their publishings to the internet. After a decade of shipping out the original magazine, in 2000, they added a virtual magazine for their readers. By 2012, they ceased all shipments of the magazine and transitioned entirely to an online presence. The editor of American Renaissance, Jared Taylor, wrote to their subscribers about the decision to go virtual: Dear Subscriber; We will be shifting our efforts from the monthly publication into what we expect to be the very best race-realist website on the internet... We have seen the costs of printing and mailing continue to rise while, at the same time, more and more people look to the internet for information. When we began publishing in November 1990, it was tough to get unorthodox information about race. The only way to find out about them was through luck, word of mouth, or diligent library research... There was only a meager network of racially conscious whites who rarely met each other. The internet has given rise to scores of racially conscious websites, and it has become easy to find like-minded people. ¹⁵ In the twentieth century, news organizations tried to present information in an unbiased and objective way. Bias was meant to be avoided at all costs, and facts were supposed to be highly proven with evidence. In 1949, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) enacted the Fairness Doctrine with the purpose of enforcing strict rules on broadcast media. The doctrine required any entity functioning under a broadcasting license needed to present unbiased news and cover all sides of an issue. Under these rules, the media was rewarded by presenting truthful, unbiased, and fair reports. Everything changed, though, when the Fairness Doctrine was repealed in 1987.¹⁶ The new media era began with the founding of FOX News in October 1996.¹⁷ The network purpose was to showcase solely Republican and Conservative ideas and news. This creation of biased news networks quickly led to the "narrowcasting" seen today: where producers of news seek to gain readers for profit rather than share credible and unbiased news. They seek to reinforce the readers' already existing viewpoints rather than inform them of all sides. The new media also rewards the speed of news rather than accuracy. It is seen as more important to be the first to report on a topic whether or not the content is yet proven as true or false. ¹⁸ The rise of the internet created a new medium for political discourse and gave birth to the Alt-Right movement. As it became more challenging for those with a racial bias to openly voice their opinions without persecution, the internet opened an entirely new platform for supremacists to express their ideology without social reproach. The Alt-Right success can be attributed to the internet's lack of "opportunity costs—the energy, money, and psychological energy it takes to meet people, establish connections, and mobilize actions among groups of people."¹⁹ By anonymously joining a movement for free by merely owning an internet-accessible device, the Alt-Right became the new haven for white nationalists. An expansive network of right-wing platforms has been created during this new digital era. A few of the most successful far-right websites that the Alt-Right frequent are Breitbart, Infowars, 4chan, American Renaissance, and Occidental Dissent. Social media sites such as Twitter, Reddit, and Facebook have also played vital roles in the movement's growth—although there have been increased monitoring of hate groups on these sites in the past few years. Andrew Anglin created The Daily Stormer in 2013, one of the most well-known Alt-Right sites.

It focuses on the sense of victimhood and marginalization that the Alt-Right strongly believes they are the subject of.²⁰ Another significant Alt-Right player, Alex Jones's Infowars, is known as the conspiracymongering site at the center of many Alt-Right ideologies and conspiracy theories.²¹ Infowars is used to “fuel right-wing paranoia and propaganda.”²² Infowars truly emphasizes the concept of the “false flag,” used as a claim that anything potentially damaging to conservative values must simply be false. It is the concept that anything that has gone wrong, whether it be a scandal, a mass shooting, or an economic crisis, must be the fault of liberal policies or a plot by liberal players to undermine the conservatives.²³ Without a doubt, the most prominent way that the AltRight represents themselves in our society today is through the internet. The Ideology of the Alt-Right

Impacts/Solvency

Value] Democracy can be protected by limiting the disinformation that spreads as a result of advocacy.

Criterion] Rationalism is only more possible when we consider an objective perspective to sustain democracy.

Resolution] Prioritizing objectivity means less conflict, upholding democracy.

Contention II: Disinformation is only more common and dangerous without prioritizing objectivity.

1] Disinformation and inaccuracy are increasing.

Weilin **Chen**, researcher in communication at Tsinghua University, and Yun **Qu**, communication researcher at Nanjing Normal University, **2021**

"Journalistic Professionalism and Objectivity in the Age of Digital Media: A Case Study of the United States," Journal of Innovation and Social Science Research ,

https://web.archive.org/web/20211001183450id_/http://jissr.net/api/static/2021-8-9_31 (accessed 2/8/22) // crosini

With the change of media technology and the further reduction of the cost of news production, there are many information producers or we-publishers in the digital era who are not professionally educated in journalism and do not understand the professional code of the journalism industry, resulting in the production of content filled with contradictory, false and emotional information, which often triggers class antagonism and uneasiness among netizens. Under the pressure of new media, traditional media have also begun to gradually transform to gain the competitiveness of newspapers by means of integrating media. In this process of transformation, many media are obsessed with speed and even publish yellow journalism in order to capture the audience's attention, resulting in the loss of professionalism and objectivity in journalism. From the perspective of the history and recent development of American journalism, **there are three main problems of journalistic professionalism and objectivity: the rise of neoconservatism, the tendency of news media to take sides and the battle for attention due to the audience fragmentation in digital media.**

2] Fake news causes violence and subtly shifts perceptions.

Knowledge@Wharton, November 3, **2020**

"How Misinformation Hurts Democracy," Wharton Business School,

<https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/rothschild-project-ratio/> (accessed 2/9/22) // crosini

Fake news certainly has an impact on consumers, sometimes with dangerous consequences, such as the debunked Pizzagate conspiracy theory that led a North Carolina man to fire shots inside a Washington, D.C., pizzeria he believed

was part of a child sex-slave ring. But the misinformation that mainstream media spreads is powerful in more subtle ways, such as quoting President Trump saying that voter fraud among mail-in ballots is widespread although there is no evidence of fraud. "This is a much more prevalent form of misinformation," he said.

3] Disinformation causes violence and tech platforms can't solve it.

Daniel Funke and Susan Benkelman, journalists at American Press Institute, 2019

"Misinformation is inciting violence around the world. And tech platforms don't seem to have a plan to stop it," Poynter,

<https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/misinformation-is-inciting-violence-around-the-world-and-tech-platforms-dont-have-a-plan-to-stop-it/> (accessed 2/9/22) // crosini

But elsewhere, child kidnapping rumors on social media continue to incite violence around the world. In August, a vigilante mob of more than 100 people burned two men alive in a small town in the central Mexican state of Puebla, the BBC reported. The murder came after a false rumor spread on WhatsApp claiming "a plague of child kidnappers" had entered the country with the goal of harvesting the organs of children. In India, dozens of people have been killed in public lynch mobs following the spread of rumors on WhatsApp. BuzzFeed News reported in September that, in nearly all those attacks, child kidnapping rumors were the catalyst. Despite the spread of this kind of misinformation-related violence worldwide, social media platforms have taken no major public actions to try and stem it. WhatsApp has taken piecemeal steps to try and limit the virality of misinformation on the platform, while Facebook has mostly deferred responsibility to its fact-checking partners.

Impacts/Solvency

Value] Greater quantities of disinformation mean that those exposed to various news outlets will obtain false knowledge. The knowledge the aff case strives to utilize is of and for good; accurate knowledge is a result of genuine information, which is why we ought to prioritize objectivity.

Criterion] The concept of rationalism cannot be fully realized without accurate knowledge.

Resolution] The incorrigible violence from the rapid spread of disinformation will only break down a democracy, which must be prevented.

Contention III: Democracy must be upheld.

1] Politicization of news strips the ability of journalism to defend democracy and undermines oversight of the government.

Weilin Chen, researcher in communication at Tsinghua University, and Yun Qu, communication researcher at Nanjing Normal University, 2021

"Journalistic Professionalism and Objectivity in the Age of Digital Media: A Case Study of the United States," Journal of Innovation and Social Science Research ,

https://web.archive.org/web/20211001183450id_/http://jissr.net/api/static/2021-8-9_31 (accessed 2/8/22) // crosini

In the past, the idealized journalism in the United States was carried out under the framework of liberalism, with the First Amendment to the American Constitution explicitly guaranteeing the freedom of the press and reinforcing the

media as the “fourth power” of oversight in addition to the government. But in fact, the emergence of neoconservatism has turned the press into a tool of partisan political attack. The privately owned and commercial advertising-dependent British and American journalism has gradually become a political product of a particular class. In this advertiser-funded profit-making news business model, many media have begun to abandon the norm of objectivity and neutrality in order to survive, such as the U.S. Fox News and CNN began to turn to entertainment-oriented news for the sake of gaining [gain] attention.

2] Media echo chambers threaten democracy – only a fairness doctrine ensures fact-based and common-ground discussions.

Friedland 21 [Julian Friedland, Assistant Professor of Corporate Social Responsibility in the School of Business at Metropolitan State University of Denver, 03-15-2021, “A Fairness Doctrine for the Twenty-First Century,” AREO, <https://philarchive.org/archive/FRIAFD/Kankee//crosini>

Michael Goldhaber, who popularized the term the attention economy, said of the us Capitol insurrection: “It felt like an expression of a world in which everyone is desperately seeking their own audience and fracturing reality in the process. I only see that accelerating.” If we don’t do something about this, American democracy may not survive. For when there is no longer any common ground of evidence and reason, history shows that misinformation will eventually overwhelm public discourse and authoritarianism can take over. That is precisely what dictators across the world gleefully anticipate will happen in the US. Historically, such an outcome was prevented by the existence of public spaces in which people with differing viewpoints could confront each other. Radio became a national conversation platform, as the public and the Federal Communications Commission recognized the need to protect the airwaves from unrelenting political bias. Given that there were only so many spots on the radio dial, regulators reasoned that the space should be treated as a limited public resource, free from dishonest and misleading content. They therefore required stations to fairly represent opposing views: any station broadcasting one-sided opinions had to allow reply time for other perspectives. The fairness doctrine—which later also encompassed television—was in place from the 1940s up until 1987, when the FCC repealed it on the grounds that modern media technology provides for a potentially unlimited number of voices, so “the electronic press should have the same First Amendment guarantees enjoyed by print media.” As it stands, however, no court has ever deemed the fairness doctrine unconstitutional in letter or in spirit. That’s probably because the doctrine worked so well for so long and because judges feared the effects of new media technologies on public discourse. They were right to do so. Our present technology tailors news to each individual, according to increasingly sophisticated algorithms designed to predict engagement. The preselected material is often maximally provocative or sensational, which compels us to like, comment or share it among our affinity groups. Each of us manoeuvres for attention and recognition by a specific audience with shared identities, inclinations and allegiances. Naturally, what tends to emerge is self-arming groupthink. The upshot is that we now live in a cacophonous reality, which undermines the possibility of coherent national conversations based on common sets of recognized facts. The Biden administration could combat this by establishing a digital fairness doctrine for the twenty-first century. This would not mean setting up a government agency as the arbiter of truth. The purpose of such a doctrine is simply to preserve the possibility of a functioning national discourse on critical issues of public interest. It would not run afoul of First Amendment free speech guarantees, given that it would do nothing to block speech itself. In fact, it would expand and enrich national conversations, by preventing echo chambers prone to systematic bias. Any digital media platform employing targeting algorithms and with an audience of 1 million or more could be required to provide opposing viewpoints on a consistent basis: at least for the 10% most viewed news or opinion stories. Tax incentives could be provided for those who go above and beyond this. Top ranked stories would have to include prominent tabs marked opposing view or disputed claims. Disputed claims tabs would lead to a reputable third-party factchecking service and opposing view tabs would lead to an honest counterinterview, if available.

Impacts/Solvency

Value] Knowledge leads to and sustains a democracy. Without it, a democracy no longer becomes a democracy because its processes become distorted. Objective information will improve one's knowledge to contribute to a democracy.

Criterion] A democracy is the main form of government that uses rationalism. Upholding democracy, therefore, means upholding rationalism.

Resolution] Without a democracy, the resolution cannot exist.

Therefore, judge, I urge an affirmative ballot.

[Optional]

I have shown you that **objectivity reduces misinformation from political adversaries, disinformation is only more common with advocacy, and objectivity is what protects a democracy**For these reasons, we can clearly conclude that knowledge should be protected and we must affirm the resolution, Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.