

A Partial List of Skepticism Triggers

WRITER'S INTENT

- Pitch an idea?
- Build a Case?
- Incite action?
- Change opinion?
- Engage
- Entertain or Amuse
- Disgust
- Cast doubt
- Open inquiry or discourage it.
- Divert attention (Bull-shift)

CHARACTERIZATION

- Stereotyping
- Epithets, smack talk (lowlife, retard)
- Personal Attack (crooked, loser, failed)
- Slurs, Sneers, demeaning language
- Honorifics, cloaking (famous, notorious)

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

- Outrage
- Pity
- Hate
- Fear
- Pathos
- ... other appeals to mood.

SUSPICIOUS SIGNS AND CUES

- Absolutes (always, never)
- Dismissive tone
- Anonymous author or source
- Misapplied authority (actor's medical advice)
- Sensational claim
- Too good or too bad to be true
- Money motive (shock jocks, click bait)
- Obvious lack of balance (partisan)
- Failure to raise obvious negatives
- Errors (grammar, spelling, word usage)

HIDDEN OR VEILED ASSERTION

- Innuendo
- Amplification of a trivial detail
- Extrapolation of unrelated attributes (wealth, beauty, fame, power, personality, etc.)
- Sarcasm, satire, ridicule

MISSING CONSIDERATIONS

- Over simplification
- Lack of exceptions
- Ignored or denied facts
- Sophist argument (Conspiracy)
- Patternicity (perceiving something in random noise)
- Attributing cause to correlation
- Not investigating correlation for cause

HYPOTHETICAL EVIDENCE

- Tropes and Clichés
- Memes
- Metaphors
- Similes
- Anecdotes
- Conspiracies

MENDACITY (willful deceptions)

- Falsehoods and lies
- Out of context
- Fabricated context (spin, framing)
- Misleading graphics & Altered photos
- "Borrowed" authority or status (flag, props, clothes, setting)

NON-ACCOUNTABILITY & DIRTY TRICKS

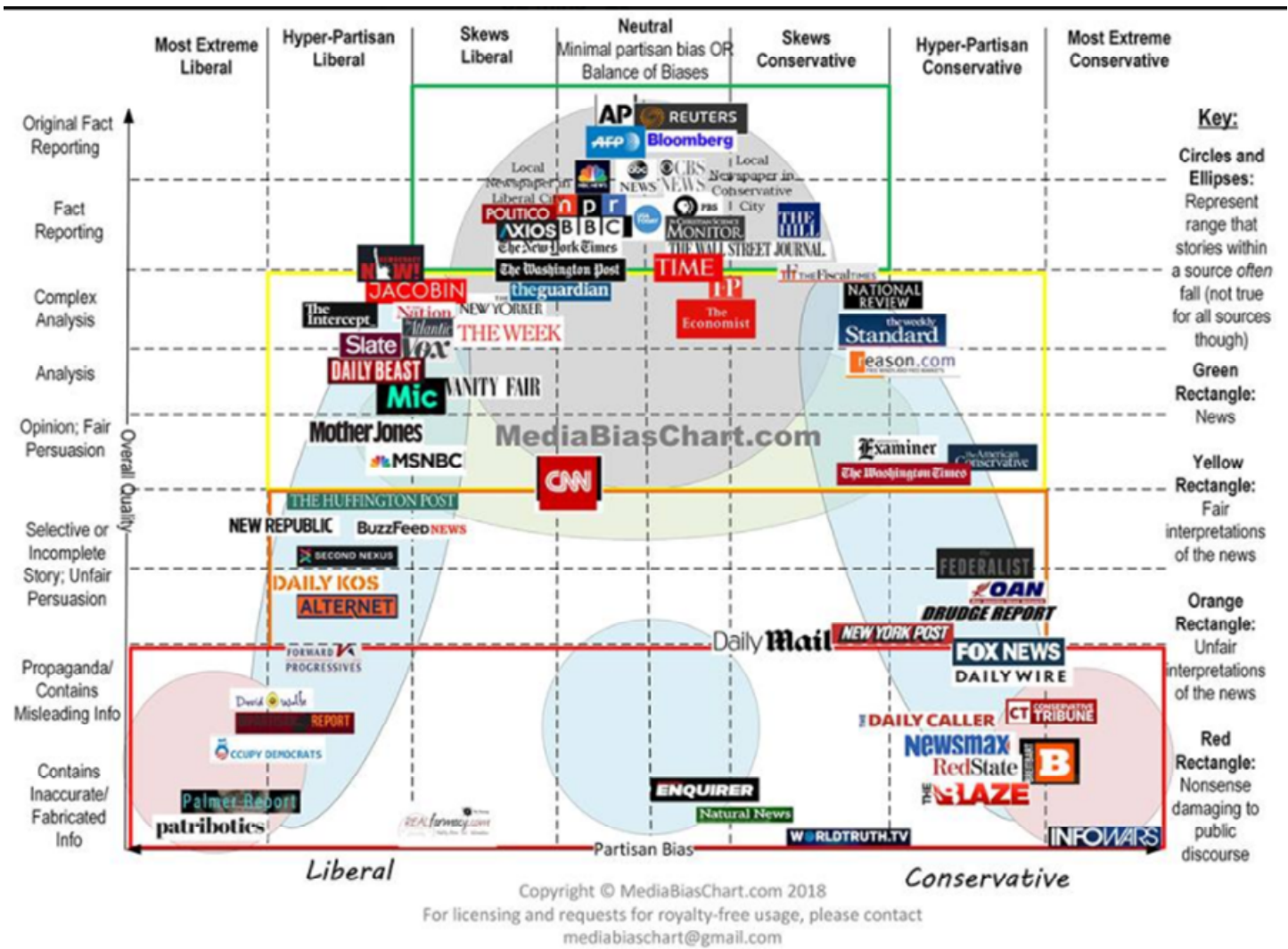
- Lack of peer review
- Timing to prevent rebuttal
- Asymmetrical media (viral email)
- Shell organizations
- Astroturfing (Phony grass-roots organizations)
- Dark Money (Anonymous funding source)

Skepticism is not cynicism. Cynics see no hope and promote despair.

Skeptics ask good questions and are open to authentic information. Be curious, hopeful, visionary, and know when to be skeptical. Have faith.

Source Bias

(used by permission of MediaBiasChart)



Kinds of News Reporting

- **Objective Report** – *who, what, where, when?*
- **Analysis** – *why?, interprets fact patterns and circumstances*
- **Opinion** – *someone's position, a stand*
- **Rant** – *passionate opinion, emotional appeal*
- **Advocacy** – *presents a case to sway perception (fair or unfair)*
- **Propaganda** – *manipulates perception, deludes, distracts*