

An aerial photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The building's iconic dome is prominent in the upper center. In the foreground, a massive crowd of people is gathered on the grounds, filling the lower half of the frame. The image has a slightly desaturated, historical feel.

SCIENCE+ MEDIA MUSEUM

FAKE NEWS

THE LIES BEHIND THE TRUTH

Truth, lies and the pursuit of a good story have always influenced the news. Since the US presidential election in November 2016, 'fake news' has become a buzz phrase. But it's far from a 21st-century phenomenon: propaganda, doctored images and unverified statistics can be found throughout the history of human communications.

The *Fake News* exhibition is an investigation of how and why these stories are created – and how new technologies are changing the ways information is spread across the globe. Themes are explored through footage ranging from the *Titanic* to contemporary politics, and using images and facsimiles from our historic media collection.

This exhibition is offered as a Blueprint Pack containing all the designs, research and additional assets to allow you to create a unique exhibition customised to your location and audience. The exhibition is available immediately and requires no special insurance, expensive shipping or environmental controls.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Independent adults, students and older school groups

SIZE AND FORMAT

Completely flexible, depending on your space and needs – the display at the National Science and Media Museum covered approximately 150m²/1,600sqft

HIRE PERIOD

No minimum hire period

FEATURES

- 8 stories with selected image and facsimile files
- Audiovisual footage list with contacts and sources
- Design assets, including title treatments and text panels
- Event and merchandise suggestions

CONTACT

touring.exhibitions@sciencemuseum.ac.uk
sciencemuseum.org.uk/touringexhibitions

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Going viral

What happens when a story gets out of control? The Cottingley fairies are still considered among the biggest public hoaxes: in 1917 two girls took what they claimed were photographs of real fairies, only admitting the truth in a letter 60 years later.

Making 'fake news' for profit

Many of us are drawn to scandalous or unusual news, or stories that fit with what we want to believe. This section explores the profit motive for fake news to attract users, from outrageous newspaper headlines to social media 'click farms'.

Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story!

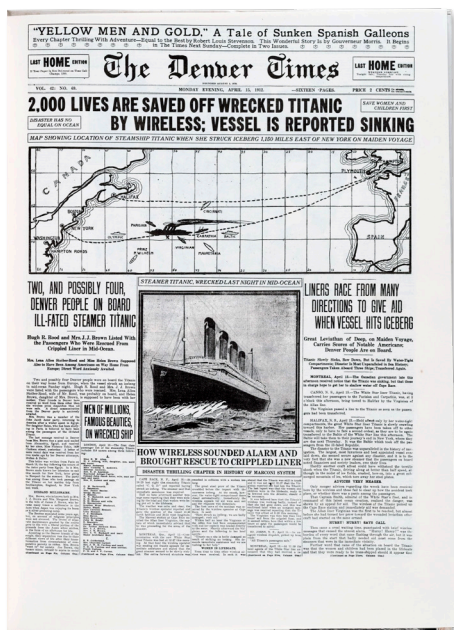
What's the difference between news with a particular bias and 'fake news'? Visitors compare original photographs with altered newspaper images, and examine footage from the Queen's speech to the UK parliament alongside contrasting news reports of the opposition leader's behaviour at this event.

Fake news as a political tool

Fake news stories, and the idea that news can sometimes be false, can be used to influence politics. Conflicting reports on crowd size at the inauguration of President Trump in the USA invite visitors to consider whether they have enough information to reach a judgment.

A case of mistaken reporting?

Today, traditional media sources face increasing pressure to cover breaking news stories. Articles reporting the 'rescue of all passengers' from *Titanic* in 1912 show that the difficulty of distinguishing rumour from fact when a story first breaks is nothing new.



Front image: US National Park Service
Above image: Oliver Denton/University of Bradford