Jacob Soll’s article, “The Long and Brutal History of Fake News,” illustrates the historical relationality between “real” news and “fake” news. He argues that “Fake news is not a new phenomenon. It was been around since news became a concept 500 years ago with the invention of print.” He supports this with numerous examples detailing the pervasiveness of fake news. Many of his examples demonstrate the sensationalized, dangerous, and violent repercussions such false news can produce. Whether it be Catholics spreading rumors (in the courtroom even) to attain a conviction that appeared, falsely, to be motivated by anti-Catholicism to the Jewish blood-libels that extended for centuries and led to pogroms and lasting cultural sentiments that supplied some of the prejudiced assumptions that led to the Holocaust. Even the illustrious Founding Fathers were guilty of supplying and disseminating fake news to justify and garner support for wars. Soll concludes his analysis of fake news that not only is it fake, but more importantly, “it is also potentially deadly” while also claiming that fake news is not going anywhere. Rather, the more critical issue is how to better combat it moving forward.

What is the solution to this new tidal wave of fake news? There is no shortage of solutions but how should we decide upon a course of action to turn the tide while still making news and information as democratic as possible? The first thing to do is acknowledge that a problem *does* exist. As Soll demonstrates in his article, fake news is nothing new. So why such a fuss? The most recent election has is crucial in understanding the overwhelming flood of fake news as almost universally pundits, researchers, news sources, and just about everyone else has identified fake news as a problem. Social media, neo-capitalizatoin processes of the internet, and increasingly partisanship have all been blamed. But if, as Soll argues, fake news is nothing new and is here to stay, then education and critical thinking seems to be the best response as a few different perspectives are suggesting.

The problem, according to Amanda Taub (“The Real Story about Fake News Is Partisanship”), is “uncontrolled partisanship” as echoed by former President Barack Obama. She argues that the slant and bias found in these fake news stories “is so strong that it acts as a kind of partisan prism for facts, refracting a different reality to Republicans and to Democrats.” The problem, here, alludes to the increasing echo-chambers of TV news, Facebook’s algorithms for indivudal user content, and an almost segregation of ideals. With increasing partisanship, she extends partisnapship to sinister and exclusionary process such as racism and sexism. No longer, for Taub and the professor used in her evidence, is fake news simply debatable. Instead, fake news is the point of which debate springs. News is fake now only when it disagrees with preconceived notions or right or wrong, good or bad, libtard or conservative deplorable. Instead of reserving fake news for facts, fake news now discounts even analysis and differing opinions. The convergence of extreme partisanship with opinions being fake news has made for a dangerous environment in which “this growing national divide will be a feedback loop in which the public’s bias encourages extremism among politcians, undermining public faith in government institutions and their ability to function” (Taub).

The problem of fake news is not new; however, fake nws in the last few years has taken a more dangerous and insidious turn. While Soll and Taub give context for the problem, and, it must be said, are pessimistic about solutions, others do present some solutions. Brooke Donald provides some analysis and interpretation of Standford’s recent research on student ability to detect fake news. Donald claims that “[t]he authors worry that democracy is threatened by the ease at which disinformation about civic issues is allowed to spread and flourish.” The article demonstrates students at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels all struggle to identify fake news. The research judged each set of students differently, according to what would be commonsense (so to speak) benchmarks for each educational grouping. The research and the article work together to argue for a need for schools to do a better job at increasing digital literacy in the general population because fake news is probably her to stay,

Along the lines of student ability to decipher “real” and “fake” news, Jonathan Lai’s article, “Fake News? Bias? How Colleges Teach Students not to Be Duped,” illustrates some ways in which some institutions are preparing to battle the fake news endemic. Lai provides a very useful phrase for discussing fake news that aligns with the previous discussion in this paper: “hyperpartisan opinion posing as fact.” Much of his article supports and extends the widespread problem of fake news and even notes the aforementioned Stanford study. In answer to the problem, the overarching claim in the article and supported by rsearchers, professors, and teachers suggests that “the core skill being taught remains the same: critical thought.” The article complicates teaching fake news in the classroom by noting the speed in which technology continues to evolve and how popularities of platforms change quickly. Instead, the solution is to be aware of the problem and teach students and each to apply the same critical thinking to news, news context, websites, etc. as we do with literature, art, and science.