An American's Digital Guide To

KICKING ONLINE BIGOTRY THROUGH MEDIA LITERACY

WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS

You're scrolling through your newsfeed and see that a friend has shared a meme joking about "terrorist Muslims." Or maybe you were forwarded a thread with something about Sikhs that seems really offensive. Or you're scrolling through Twitter and see a tweet about Arabs, South Asians or another minority community in the U.S., but you don't know if it's true. We've all been there.

Most of us have encountered false or misleading social media messages about minority faiths, ethnicities or racial groups and at times, it's hard to know how to feel or respond. As the methods through which we share and absorb information expand across social media platforms, media literacy has become a critical skill for anyone who wants to separate the truth from fake news and false claims.

67%
of adults get their news from social media (Pew Research Center)

75%
of the time, fake news headlines fool American adults (Ipsos Public Affairs)

Media institutions like the New York Times and Facebook are working on integrating fact-checking systems to prevent the spread of harmful fake news, but as users, we can take steps to improve our own media literacy skills, especially to challenge online bigotry.

In many cases, xenophobia and anti-Muslim rhetoric stem from a misunderstanding of Muslims and other similarly impacted communities. These misunderstandings build from misrepresentations in the media, and false, exaggerated narratives stimulated through social media platforms. Due to the recent rise in hate crimes targeting Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim including Sikh, Arab, Black and South Asian Americans, this digital, clickable guide focuses specifically on examples from these communities, but is really for anyone seeking to grow their media literacy skills to challenge online bigotry. Use it, share it, and tell us about how you live out these ideals.

Pew Research Center: News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2017
Ipsos/BuzzFeed News: Most Americans Who See Fake News Believe It, New Survey Says

XENOPHOBIA AND ANTI-MUSLIM RHETORIC STEM FROM A MISUNDERSTANDING OF MUSLIMS AND OTHER SIMILARLY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

IDENTIFYING ONLINE BIGOTRY
Know, Interrogate, Check, and Kick (KICK)!

Know the stereotypes

It's good to be aware of the stereotypes and misconceptions that already proliferate hate and bigotry toward Muslims and other communities America. This includes generalizations and labels claiming that "all Muslims" are "terrorist," "misogynistic," or "un-American." Knowing that these misconceptions exist helps us to look more critically at bigoted messages and information we come across online. Confirmation bias is human. It's easy to search for information that supports our own truth. That's why it's helpful to know the difference between stereotypes and facts.

1. WATCH THIS NEWSEUMED VIDEO ON CONFIRMATION BIAS

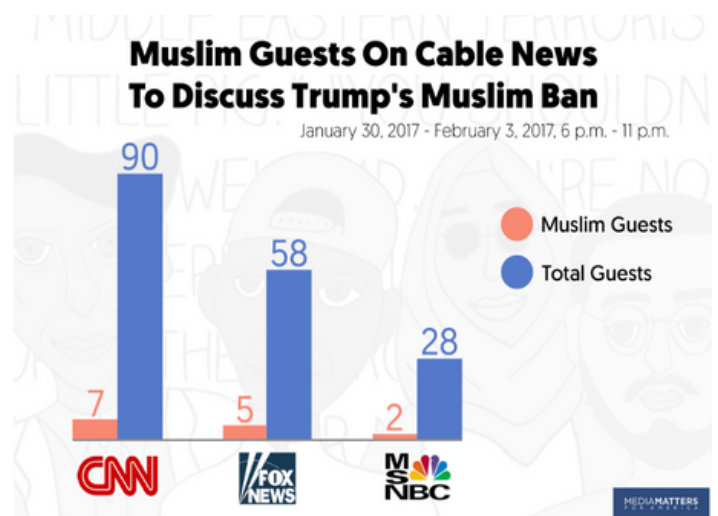**2. UNDERSTAND THESE FAQS ABOUT AMERICAN MUSLIMS**

3. HAVE YOU HEARD THESE 10 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MUSLIMS?

Interrogate the speakers and authors

When reading or hearing about Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, or Arabs, look into the person sharing the information. Are they a scholar or academic? A member of the community? Do they have valid credentials? One way to make sure your information is sound is by getting it from different kinds of credible sources.

Sites like Muslim Girl and Secret Life of Muslims feature credible voices of Muslim Americans who are actively challenging anti-Muslim bigotry. ReThink Media runs a speakers bureau of credible community voices to help journalists identify interviewees. There are over three million Muslims in the U.S. and lots of ways to hear credible stories directly from them.
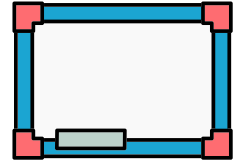

Muslim Guests On Cable News To Discuss Trump's Muslim Ban

January 30, 2017 - February 3, 2017, 6 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Muslim Guests
Total Guests

CNN — 90 / 7
FOX NEWS — 58 / 5
MSNBC — 28 / 2

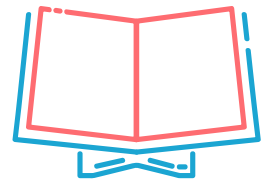# IDENTIFYING ONLINE BIGOTRY

Check the sources
What kind of sources does the author of the information use to support her information? Reliable sources involve university journals, respected research institutions, Muslim communities themselves, and scholars of Islam. Anti-Muslim rhetoric and false information may reference scriptures and religious texts about the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad that are partially quoted and taken out of context. These may include numbers to quotes, verses, and chapters that don't exist in the Qur'an and other scriptures or include incorrect translations and misquotations. Make sure any of the primary sources you come across are authentic and accurate, and be weary of shady interpretations.

4. TAKE THIS ONLINE COURSE ON "ISLAM THROUGH ITS SCRIPTURES"

5. CHECK OUT THESE PRIMARY SOURCES ON QUR'AN AND HADITH

6. READ THESE FIVE MISQUOTATIONS ABOUT THE QUR'AN

Kick exaggerations and generalizations to the curb
The fast pace of media can result in reporting and messages that may exaggerate or generalize about different communities. Recognize that the actions of a few do not represent an entire group. Any statements that begin with "All Muslims…" or "All Arabs…" or "All…" any other community are most likely false generalizations.

7. WATCH THIS TEDTALK ON THE BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF MUSLIM LIFE

PEW - MUSLIMS IN AMERICA: IMMIGRANTS AND THOSE BORN IN U.S. SEE LIFE DIFFERENTLY IN MANY WAYS

CHALLENGING ONLINE BIGOTRY

A. Have a conversation

The best way to understand the truth about Muslims is to have an actual conversation. More often than not, people are delighted to answer questions about their values, identities, and communities. If you don't know a Muslim personally, here are some ways to get started:

1. INVITE A MUSLIM SPEAKER TO DISCUSS THEIR PERSPECTIVES WITH YOUR COMMUNITY. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

ING   ISB - ATLANTA   ISB - ARIZONA

2. CHAT WITH SOMEONE IN YOUR OWN FAITH COMMUNITY ABOUT THEIR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS THROUGH CAMPAIGNS LIKE SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.

3. VISIT A MOSQUE OR ISLAMIC CENTER. TAKE THE FIRST STEP BY CHATTING WITH MUSLIMS IN THEIR PLACES OF WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY.

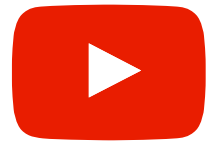4. OR YOU COULD VISIT A THIRD SPACE OR NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION WHERE MUSLIMS GATHER.

B. Respond with education and kindness

In the face of hateful rhetoric and misconceptions, speak up, challenge the bigotry and be proactive with your media literacy skills. One way to do this is through kindness and education.

THIS TEENAGER USED TWITTER TO DISPEL A FALSE CLAIM THAT HER FATHER FORCED HER TO WEAR A HEADSCARF.

THIS SIKH AMERICAN STUDENT RESPONDED TO CYBER BULLYING WITH AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH.

THIS SIKH AMERICAN CARTOONIST RESPONDED TO HATEFUL COMMENTS ON A FACEBOOK VIDEO BY SHARING HIS STORY AND USING HIS ART TO EDUCATE OTHERS.

THIS MUSLIM SCHOLAR HOSTED AN AMA (ASK ME ANYTHING SESSION) ON REDDIT ON MUSLIM WOMEN'S DAY.

THESE RUTGERS STUDENTS RUN A "MEET A MUSLIM" SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN AND INVITE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ASK QUESTIONS IN A JUDGEMENT-FREE WAY.

CHALLENGING ONLINE BIGOTRY

C. Educate yourself

So you know about confirmation bias and are pretty good at spotting online bigotry. One way to build on this is by learning more about Muslims and other communities while strengthening your media literacy chops.

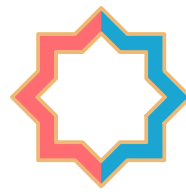**5. CHECK OUT A BRIDGE INITIATIVE FACT SHEET ON ISLAM AND MUSLIMS**

6. READ THIS MUSLIM ADVOCATES REPORT ON "ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY ONLINE & HOW TO TAKE ACTION"

7. UNDERSTAND HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS AND FALSE INFORMATION

8. WATCH AND DISCUSS "AMERICAN MUSLIMS: FACTS VS. FICTION"

9. LEARN THE BASICS ON ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN AMERICA

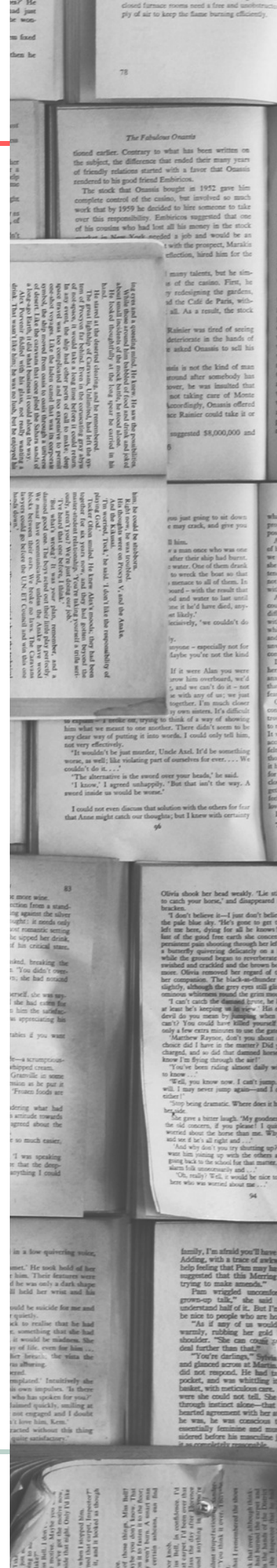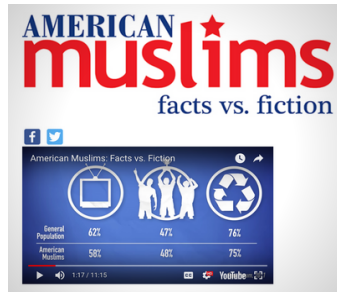**10. WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, LEARN ABOUT OTHER FAITH GROUPS, LIKE SIKH AMERICANS**

11. CONNECT WITH A LOCAL MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

WANT TO DO MORE?

EMAIL US AT
ADMIN@AMERICAINDIVISIBLE.ORG