The Realm of Truth

The Realm of Enlightenment Truth is robust and has strong defences. It is protected by ancient and profound principles and activities, but they can drift or sink in the Ocean of Untruth and be drowned by corrupt purposes, if there are not active safeguards and vigilant citizens. The extent of the tow-hold in the Realm of Truth, and the fall into Bullshit* and Untruth, varies from country to country; in some, the tow-hold in the Realm of Truth is tenuous or non-existent.

**2 + 2 = 5** Two plus two makes five – or any number you please

The future of evidence in a post-truth age of alternative facts

This poster analyses some of the principal threats to the world of facts and evidence; examines the cognitive, psychological and social factors that make us vulnerable, and offers tentative directions for the campaign to restore the public credibility of the Realm of Truth.

The way forward in education and communication

The rational and information-deficit models are ineffective for many, maybe most human interactions. We should pursue these approaches:

- Openness, transparency, accountability, evidence, economy, clarity, and simplicity.
- Encourage critical thinking, calculating view, and support for specific views, scientific and statistical.
- Recognition of individual and tribal identities: communication that does not challenge worldview or identity.
- Provide liked and trusted messengers; promote authenticity, openness and humility
- Novel, agile methods of communicating in a fast-changing environment.

We should avoid these practices:

- Relying on stories, anecdotes, pictures, graphics, and emotional appeal; develop narratives; dramatise.
- Address the unproven; co-opt allies and champions.
- Fill the gaps in disputed narratives (untruth is preferred to incompelteness).
- Focus on facts; assert true consensus, avoid bandwagon effects.
- Encourage skepticism, critical thinking; educate in scientific method, statistics and causality.

...indefensibility to how things really are..."

This was Prussian philosopher Henry Frankfort’s definition of bullshit, in his original essay (1942), On Bullshit, later an influential book with the same title (2005).

...bullshit is a greater enemy of the truth than lies are."

(Frankfurt) Here, we employ the term to include every form of communication that disregards evidence and the truth as far as it is known, or that is dissociated from it, namely or intentionally. The term excludes lying. It includes fake news, junk science, alternative facts, spin, disinformation, propaganda, and much more. (See references for examples of academic treatment and research.)

Our vulnerability: social, psychological, behavioural effects on cognition

- Demandez de rire, reaction System 1 impression
- Poverty influence in dual task, association, method, disso, and social aspect, challenging over trust
- Charactres and ambiguity leading to dissonance, disinformation, disengagement
- Exposure to views of evidence and lack of evidence through organization and disinformation
- Manipulation is system is the same as the context

Real and present danger

Enlightenment values and rational discourse are losing traction as fantasy and emotion seize the public mind. We are called to resist, and to rebuild the structures in which the pursuit of rationality and truth can flourish.

Select references

- http://callingbullshit.org/syllabus.html#Ecology