

# Information Literacy and Lateral Reading

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# FACT

Falsifiable

True vs. False

Can be measured

Reproducible



# OPINION

Unfalsifiable

Cannot be measured

Value judgment

Right vs. Wrong



# BIAS

Related to opinion

Preference

Sometimes unfair

Poor inferences



# DISINFORMATION

Related to facts

Factually inaccurate

Misrepresentation

Lie



## Disinformation

- ◎ Journal *Science*—“The spread of true and false news online”
- ◎ 2006 to 2017
- ◎ 200,000 individual news stories on Twitter
- ◎ Found that disinformation spreads faster and to more people than real information



*Propaganda takes away your  
ability to perceive reality*

*MashaGessen "Why the Russian Influence Campaign Remains So Hard to Understand." The New Yorker, 18  
December 2018.*



*In an everchanging, incomprehensible world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and that nothing was true..Mass propaganda discovered that its audience was ready at all times to believe the worst, no matter how absurd, and did not particularly object to being deceived because it held every statement to be a lie anyhow*

*Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism." 1951.*





## What's the point of disinformation?

- ◎ Takes away our ability to distinguish true from false information.
- ◎ Easy to control people who don't know how to separate truth from lies.
- ◎ Confusion-> apathy-> disengagement





## How is bias different from disinformation?

- ◎ Everyone has opinions, but our opinions do not necessarily lead us to lie.
- ◎ Be aware of our own biases and the biases of information producers.
- ◎ Double-blind peer-review helps mitigate the effects of bias.



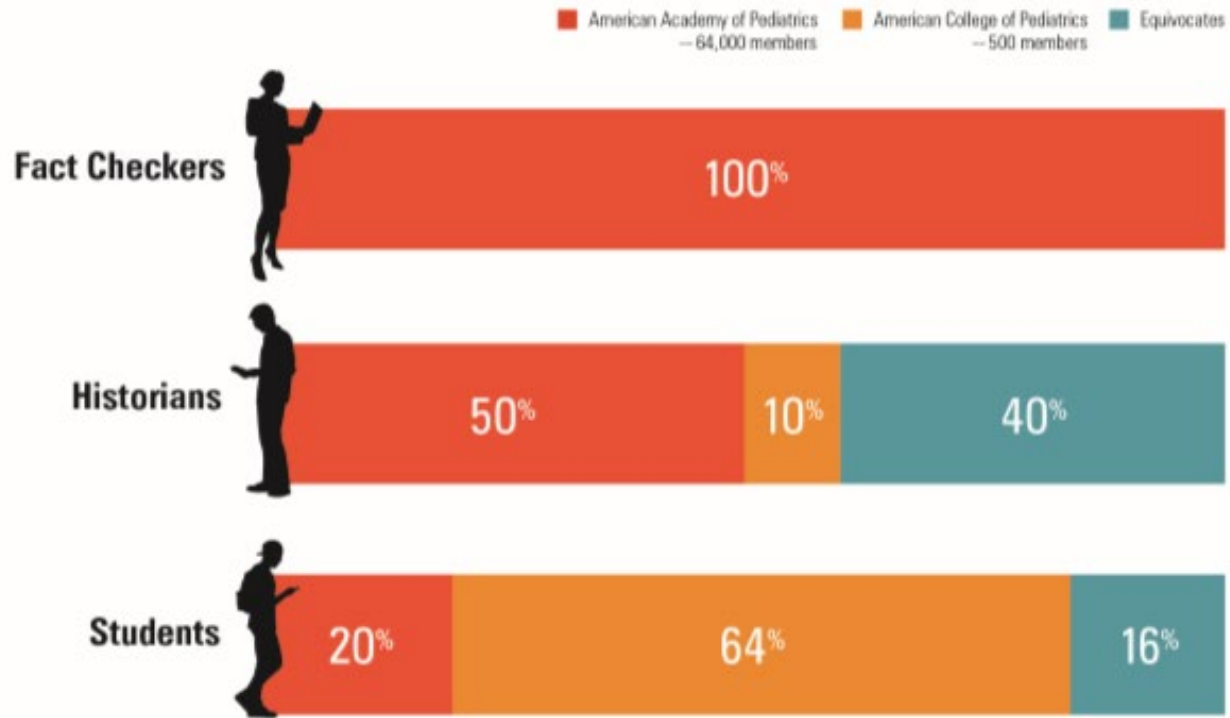
How are biased information and disinformation similar?

- ◎ Both biased information and disinformation rely on your ignorance.
- ◎ You do not know everything.
- ◎ The only effective way to deal with bias and disinformation is to educate yourself.

## Lateral Reading

- ◎ Stanford Study
- ◎ American Academy of Pediatrics vs. the American College of Pediatricians
- ◎ The former is a professional organization, the latter is a cloaked hate group
- ◎ Three subject groups- Stanford University undergraduates, PhD Historians, professional fact checkers

# Stanford Study Results



## Lateral Reading vs. Vertical Reading

### **Vertical Readers**

Stay on the page

Read closely

How does the website look?

Is information easy to find?

Citations?

.org address?

### **Lateral Readers**

Don't stay on the page

Open new browser tabs

Verify by consulting a variety of sources

## Lateral reading tips

- ◎ When you find information from an unfamiliar source, verify it by searching for certain key components
  - Publication
  - Funding Organization
  - Author
  - Content
- ◎ Find 35 new sources that discuss your original source. Familiar, trusted sources are best.
- ◎ Wikipedia is fine as ONE of your 53 sources.
- ◎ No information is information itself.



## Two Questions to Guide Lateral Reading

◎ Who's behind the information?

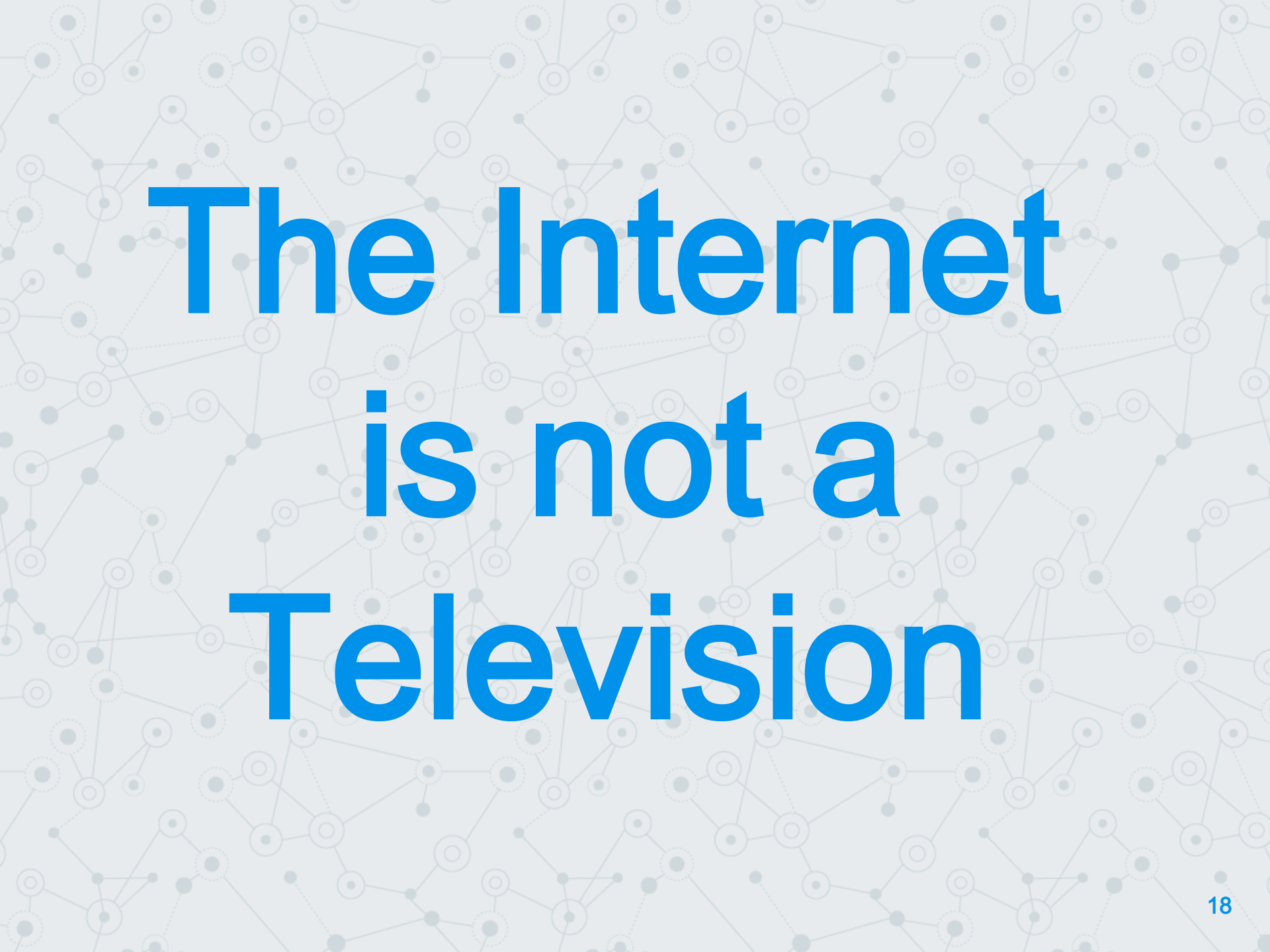
◎ What do other sources say?






## Lateral Reading Demonstration

- © <http://minimumwage.com/>
- © <https://www.oann.com/china-says-u-s-tiktok-wechat-bans-break-wto-rules/>
- © <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/559/460/>

The background of the slide is a light gray network diagram. It consists of numerous small circles, some solid and some hollow, connected by thin lines. The connections form a complex, interconnected web, representing a network structure. The text is centered over this background.

# The Internet is not a Television

The background of the slide is a light gray network of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a molecular or data network. The nodes are represented by small circles, some solid and some hollow, connected by thin lines. The overall pattern is dense and covers the entire slide area.

# **Change information habits**

The background of the slide is a light blue network of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a molecular or social network structure. The nodes are represented by small circles, some solid and some hollow, connected by thin lines.

**Skepticism**  
**Awareness**  
**Trust**

# Ulowa Libraries curates information for you from trustworthy sources

**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES**

Search the UI Libraries web pages   Go to INFOHAWK+

RESOURCES SERVICES MY LIBRARY ABOUT HELP LOCATIONS & HOURS CONTACT

**SEARCH**

INFOHAWK+

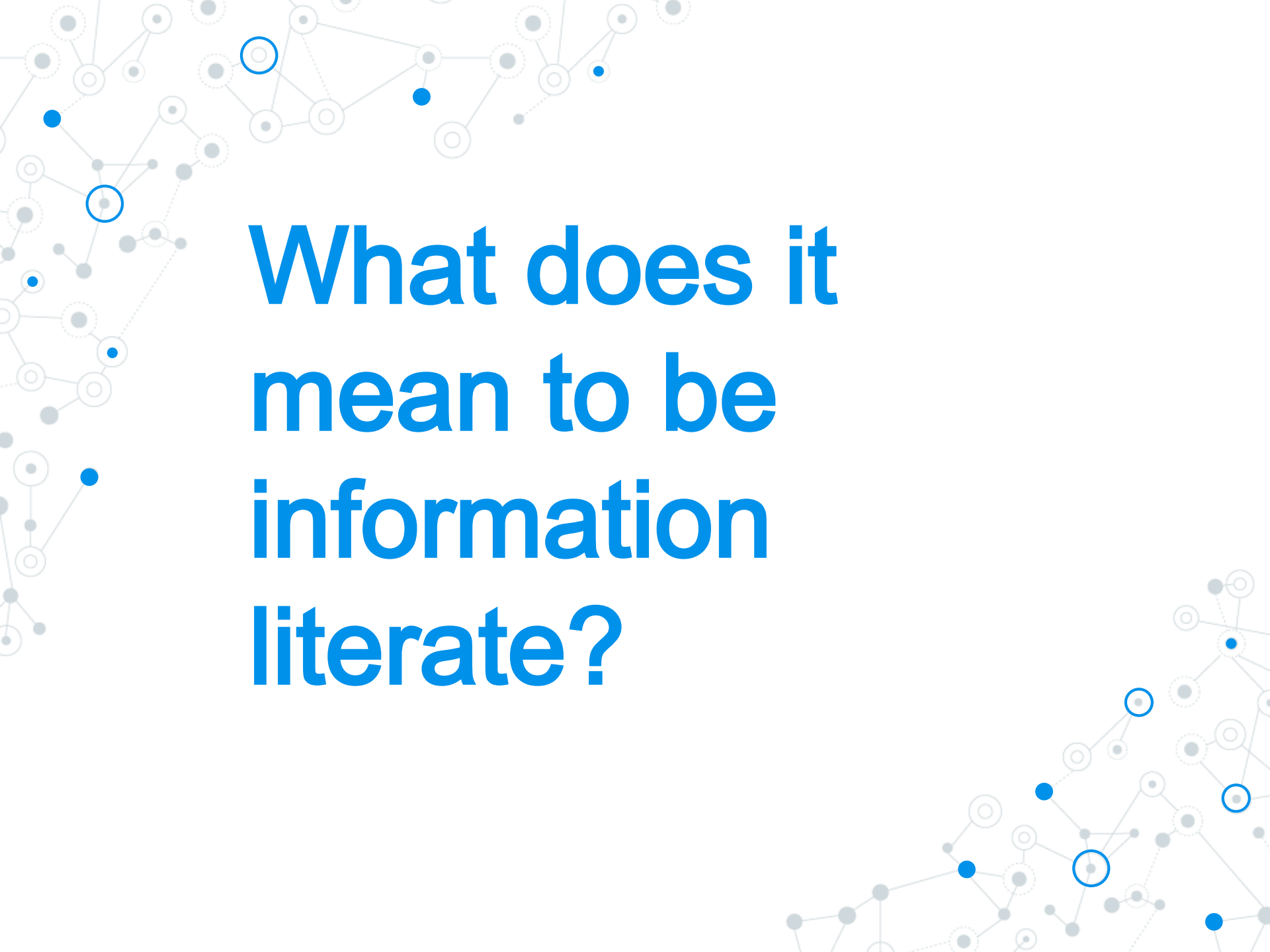
Focus OFF  Advanced search  Help

**ASK US**  
Contact a librarian

**RESOURCES**

Contact a Librarian	Guides	Databases	My Library	Campus Locations	Find Media
Course Reserves	Special Collections	Iowa Digital Library	Iowa Research Online	E-Journals	WorldCat

lib.uiowa.edu

A decorative graphic consisting of a network of nodes and connections. The nodes are represented by circles of varying sizes and colors (gray, blue, and white with a blue outline). They are interconnected by thin lines, forming a complex web-like structure. The graphic is positioned in the corners of the slide, with a larger concentration on the left side and a smaller one on the bottom right.

**What does it  
mean to be  
information  
literate?**



# Questions?

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