



FACT-FINDING IN A FLOOD

Skills for Sorting Truth From Trash

In this age of information overload, we're all buried in an avalanche of commentary, social media, news, and noise. Telling fact from fiction is essential for all of us, for making sound personal decisions and understanding what's going on in our world.

However, because so much misinformation is out there, this can be tough to do. So, in recognition of Debunking Day on March 11, here are some suggestions for discerning the truth.

Stay in your lane.

The growth of DIY videos and blogs has led many of us to assume we can apply DIY strategies to everything, from fixing leaky plumbing to writing novels. Unfortunately, many people believe they can be DIY lawyers, too. If your neighbor tried a legal strategy that worked, it will work for you, right? Not necessarily. The reasons your neighbor needed that legal document may be entirely different from the reasons you need one. While it makes sense to avoid spending money on an attorney if possible, many of the DIY legal strategies I see risk wasting people's time.

For example, many business owners believe they can represent their own businesses in court, but this is a myth. I've served as counsel in many lawsuits, where a business owner on the other side of the case was trying to serve as their company's lawyer. A business owner can represent themselves in court if they're named as a defendant, but a business that's been sued needs its own lawyer. In these situations, it usually falls to the judge to send the business owner back to square one to find an attorney.



Spot the spin.

If you ask someone where they got their information, the answer you get these days is often, "I saw it online." Knowing more than that about your sources is essential. Finding something "online" encompasses a sprawling ecosystem of well over 200 million active websites. In that digital jungle, you're likely to encounter wildly different views of the same incident. To derive actual facts, explore the source. Where is this information coming from? Does the source have firsthand knowledge? Is there some kind of spin on the account? There are many different agendas behind the information we see online.

A more reliable strategy is to make a habit of vetting and citing your sources in specific terms, such as saying, "I read it in this morning's Wall Street Journal, in an article by so-and-so."

Aim the question.

Millions of artificial intelligence (AI) novices are turning to this technology for answers of all kinds. Unfortunately, many also fail to understand what they're getting. The value of the output you receive depends on the quality of your input. If you don't ask AI the right question, you'll get wrong or useless results.

Clients often bring me what they say is a will, but it is missing key provisions because the client didn't prompt AI to respond to all the essential issues. In other cases, business clients bring me operating agreements that should be at least 8-10 pages long to cover all the bases, but extend for only 2-3. Again, the client wasn't able to prompt AI with a complete outline.

Asking AI specific, detailed questions will get you the accurate, relevant answers you want. If you want AI to find precedent-setting court rulings, for example, you need to guard against its tendency to make up the answer it thinks you want. Instead, ask it for a specific citation and a link to the text of the ruling.

As high-tech information sources continue to proliferate, I hope you'll find helpful ways to tell fact from fiction. The more we learn about digital information sources, the better-equipped we'll be to discern the truth. And that, in my view, can only make our lives better.

- Andrew M. Ayers



DIGITAL DANGERS

AI'S HIDDEN RISKS TO CONSUMERS

If you've been to an airport lately, you likely have posed for a facial recognition camera before entering your security checkpoint. This technology is just one example of how artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to not only identify who we are, but also learn more about us than we might realize.

In some cases, this reality is not a great thing.

Sure, being tracked online by AI may be considered beneficial by consumers who don't mind receiving alerts on new purchasing opportunities based on their past shopping habits. However, society's growing dependency on this level of technology is problematic when it leads to innocent people being incarcerated on false charges. Here's a look at some of the growing risks surrounding the use of AI ... and what you can do to better protect your privacy and rights from the prying eyes of emerging technology.

Amazon's Data Defect Debacle

Although AI is seemingly everywhere these days, its use in the corporate world has existed for some time ... and has created considerable gaffes along the way.

Amazon learned about machine learning's potential missteps the hard way. As far back as 2015, the company discovered that its AI-generated tools for screening resumes were biased against female job candidates. The system, designed to assign a rating from one to five stars to each applicant, gave lower scores to women who had applied for technical positions. The reason? The system had been trained to review and recommend candidates based on trends identified in resumes submitted to the company over the past 10 years, a period when men dominated the majority of positions.

Instead of advancing future AI technology, Amazon stumbled back into America's cultural past, creating a PR nightmare and



raising serious questions about the potential long-term harm AI could cause in efforts to promote gender equality.

AI's Misadventures in Faulty Arrests

Facial recognition technology may be all the rage at airports, but the same can't be said for its use at police stations. According to research conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Asian and African Americans are up to twice as likely to be misidentified by facial recognition as Caucasians. This discrepancy has real-world consequences, including the 2023 arrest of a pregnant woman in Detroit who was charged with carjacking after AI technology mistook her for someone else. When faulty tech threatens a person's liberty, it's clear that AI's road to perfection still has plenty of potholes.

Consumers' Best Practices for Data Privacy

Naturally, everyday consumers may also find themselves in sticky situations as a result of AI's still-imperfect processes. Banking giant JPMorgan Chase offers the following suggestions to help better protect your personal information from AI-driven data tracking:

- Utilize a separate, dedicated email address when engaging with AI chatbots, and avoid using the same email associated with your banking or social media.
- Log off after every AI chat session to help ensure the system is not tracking your subsequent online usage.
- Use only generative AI platforms available through the Google and Apple App stores and other reputable sources.

AI may be a fascinating new chapter in our technical evolution, but it's not without causes for concern. Whether you're ordering shoes online or checking your savings account, forewarned is forearmed when it comes to guarding your identity ... and even your freedom.

“When faulty tech threatens a person's liberty, it's clear that AI's road to perfection still has plenty of potholes.”



TAKE A **BREAK**



ST. PATRICK'S DAY SHAMROCK SWIRL PIE

Ingredients

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup mint chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup green food coloring, for vibrant color
- 1 premade chocolate pie crust
- 1/2 cup chocolate syrup, for drizzling

Directions

1. In a mixing bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form.
2. In a separate bowl, beat softened cream cheese until smooth.
3. Add powdered sugar and vanilla to cream cheese, mixing until well combined. Then, gently fold whipped heavy cream into the mixture.
4. Divide mixture into two bowls. In one bowl, add mint chocolate chips and green food coloring.
5. Layer mixtures into chocolate pie crust, alternating between mint mixture and the plain mixture.
6. Drizzle chocolate syrup over top.
7. Cover with cling wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours to set. Slice and serve chilled.

Inspired by MixUpRecipes.com

FROM COOKIE JARS TO CAR KEYS

Building Responsibility in Kids and Teens

If you've ever walked into your kitchen to discover your child's mouth covered in chocolate while they insist they *didn't* dip into the cookie jar before dinner, you know the importance of teaching little ones about being honest and taking responsibility for their actions. Here are a few tips for incorporating age-appropriate lessons on accountability into a child's daily routine.

Pathways to Responsible Preschoolers

When teaching children the value of personal accountability, selecting tasks that match their abilities and level of understanding is essential. For children ages 3–6, this could mean having them take responsibility for setting the table (with supervision as needed to ensure safety with utensils and glassware), feeding their pets, or putting away their toys neatly after they finish playing with them.

If they struggle or fail to fulfill a particular responsibility, use it as an opportunity for growth, rather than a reason to ground them. For example, if they forget to feed their dog or cat, show them their pet's signs of hunger ... and remind your child of how sad, tired, and cranky they would feel if *they* were hungry and had to wait a long time to eat. If they forget to pick up their LEGOs, remind them of how much it hurt the last time they stepped on a piece when they weren't wearing shoes. Above all, be sure to maintain a positive atmosphere and praise them whenever they complete a task (especially when they do it without being asked!) or put in their best effort to do so.



Guidance for Goal-Driven Teens

If your child has passed the age of picking up building blocks, you can help them manage and fulfill their pre-adult responsibilities. Encourage them to budget their spending money (especially once they start working for the first time), take an active role in maintaining their vehicle, and coordinate their own schedules for after-school or social activities.

While it's always wise to be available to help if or when they run out of gas or sleep through their alarm, giving them space to be more independent (and occasionally make mistakes) will go a long way in teaching them the real-world rewards and consequences of how they handle their responsibilities.

By giving children room to learn, try, and even stumble, we help them build the confidence and character they'll carry into adulthood. With steady guidance and age-appropriate responsibilities, accountability becomes a lifelong habit.



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BUMPER BETRAYAL INSIDE UBER'S RACKETEERING RESPONSE

It's a devious enough scam to make Tony Soprano blush.

Imagine orchestrating a series of intentional automobile collisions with the sole purpose of suing Uber for the recovery of car repair costs and medical expenses. This outrageous scenario is at the heart of the ride-share company's 97-page lawsuit against a Florida attorney who it claims paid people to crash into each other to instigate fraudulent suits and attempt to rake in millions.

Filed in Miami last June, Uber's suit alleges that personal injury attorney Andy Loynaz, co-founder of the firm Law Group of South Florida, compensated drivers to stage accidents and later claim they were using the Uber app at the time. According to the complaint, these bogus bang-ups occurred near Hialeah, Florida, in 2023 and 2024, with Loynaz submitting \$1 million insurance claims for each one and later suing Uber and its insurance carrier in four separate cases. Additionally, he allegedly coaxed representatives from Miami's River Medical Center, area auto body shops, and other medical clinics to falsely claim the accident had caused injuries and property damage requiring care and repairs.

Uber, which claims to have already spent millions defending itself against Loynaz's suits, is suing the attorney under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. If he loses the suit, Loynaz may be subject to treble damages and attorneys' fees.

Interestingly, the case of the potentially crooked lawyer and his band of allegedly corrupt cronies is far from the only litigation of its kind. Earlier in 2025, Uber filed a suit in New York, alleging that another group of lawyers, medical providers, and clinics was carrying out a similar scheme in the Empire State.

No matter how successful Uber's battle against this level of fraud may be, the amount of allegedly criminal conniving taking place in Florida and New York is enough to make the most hardened mobster raise an eyebrow ... and perhaps demand a cut.

