Combating "fake news" through deepening our philosophical roots

Preston Salisbury
Mississippi State University, ps1245@msstate.edu

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I. Fake news and information literacy education

a. While the term “fake news” is relatively new, the concept of disinformation has existed a long time. While the internet has perhaps increased the visibility of “fake news,” disinformation exists in print as well as electronic, and sometimes from major publications as well as self-published.

b. Information literacy education, as generally practiced, has multiple weaknesses:
   i. It tends to be focused on tools and skills rather than educating students as to the nature of information itself (McDonough, 2015, 40-42).
   ii. It tends to focus almost exclusively on electronic disinformation, although disinformation also exists in print form.

1. When this is combined with the fact that libraries collect print disinformation, this oversight amounts to a substantial problem.
   
2. David Icke (noted anti-Semitism and conspiracy theorist), recently recommended by Alice Walker, has his books in hundreds of libraries. The majority are public libraries.
   
3. There is also not enough education on the tendency of algorithms to provide echo chambers or to promote disinformation and bigotry (Grady). People have high levels of confidence in the quality of search engines results without understanding how search engines work (Noble, 2018, 53).
   
4. People often think they are better at identifying fake news than they really are (Auaberry, 2018, 185).

5. Information literacy education is generally voluntary, especially in the public library.

b. In order to combat all forms of fake news, we need an understanding of what information is, and we need to consider carefully whether libraries are required to supply disinformation.

c. Given that “we are the product that Google sells to advertisers” (Noble, 2018, 162), does the library have a responsibility to warn users regarding privacy concerns before allowing internet access, and could this provide a gateway towards more comprehensive and inclusive information literacy education?