

Digital Literacy Resource

Mind over Chatter

Indiana University Kokomo

<https://expand.iu.edu/browse/moc/courses/mind-over-chatter>

Gone are the days of sending students off to the library for an afternoon in the stacks; today's students grapple with an array of toxic information environments, ranging from "fake news" and filter bubbles to deep fakes and cheap fakes, algorithmic manipulation, information overabundance, weaponized context, manipulated media, and mis-, dis-, and malinformation of every flavor. We know that problematic information has been a problem since humans have had access to alphabetic literacy and the written word, but the speed of modern networks and the ubiquity of mobile devices add a degree of complexity to these age-old problems that our brains and attention spans are, frankly, ill-equipped to handle.

Mind over Chatter: Skills for Navigating the Post-Truth Era aims to address this problem. A series of five interactive, Canvas-based learning modules, *Mind over Chatter* begins with the critical assumption that information literacy training won't help if students don't want to know the truth—or if they are already convinced that the headlines and stories that come across their newsfeeds are truthful and accurate. Grounded in cognitive psychology and reflective pedagogy, the *Mind over Chatter* digital intervention is freely available for immediate download and importation into Canvas or another learning management system. MoC provides students with a set of essential digital skills and habits, including a basic working knowledge of how to navigate the web effectively and activities that foreground how cognitive biases render us susceptible to today's complex forms of problematic information and information disorder. Practical and self-contained, the following modules may be completed in order or as stand-alone activities:

1. **Framing Effects.** This module introduces students to the elements of messaging, persuasion, and rhetoric that shape our understandings of the world.
2. **Paradox of Authority.** This module explains the relationship between knowledge and trust of authorities, and how that can both help and hinder our comprehension of reality.
3. **Mere Exposure Effect.** This module presents a psychological phenomenon that influences what we believe and how committed we become to certain beliefs.
4. **Confirmation Bias.** This module engages students in an interactive activity meant to reveal how our brains form rapid understandings of things and then work to preserve those understandings in the face of both confirming and disconfirming evidence.
5. **Mindfulness, Media, and Misinformation.** This module helps students understand how mindfulness, reflection, and simple web-based search techniques can help them guard against skewed, incomplete, misleading, improperly framed, or inaccurate beliefs.

Developers of *Mind over Chatter*:

- **Paul Cook** is Professor of English at Indiana University Kokomo. His current research includes digital literacy, misinformation studies, and the future of the university in the postdigital era. He is writing a book entitled *The University in Postdigital Culture: Lies, Literacy, and Language* (Peter Lang, 2024).
- **Mark Canada**, former journalist, is the co-author of the textbook *Introduction to Information Literacy for Students* (Wiley, 2017) and is a frequent presenter on information literacy, "fake news," and the media. He is the Chancellor at Indiana University Kokomo.
- **Christina Downey's** primary focus is on improving student success and reducing equity gaps in student performance in higher education. She currently serves as Dean of University College and Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education at IUPUI.
- **Polly Boruff-Jones** serves as Dean of University Libraries at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

Questions? Feedback? Want to schedule a talk or workshop? Reach out to Paul Cook at paulcook@iu.edu.

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