

How the Public Identifies Truth and Fact Online

...and a glimpse into mobile

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Questions to answer:

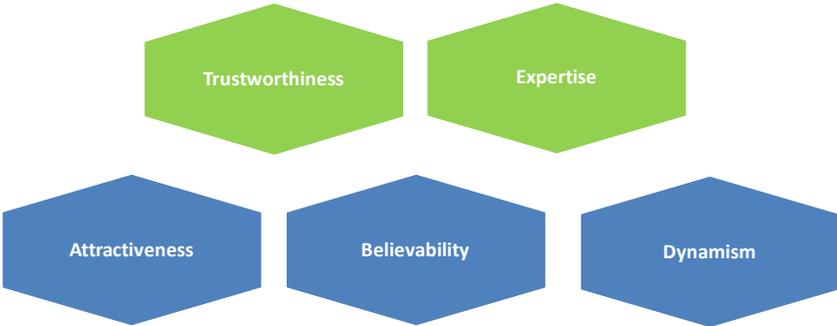
- “ What causes people to believe (or not believe) what they find online?
- “ How does the public identify truth or factual information online?
- “ How do users evaluate credibility of sources?

The primary source of influence....



credibility

Research has found the following elements relate to credibility



Trustworthiness

Expertise

Attractiveness

Believability

Dynamism

Fogg's four types of credibility

Presumed
credibility

Based on assumptions

Reputed
credibility

Based on third-party endorsement

Surface
credibility

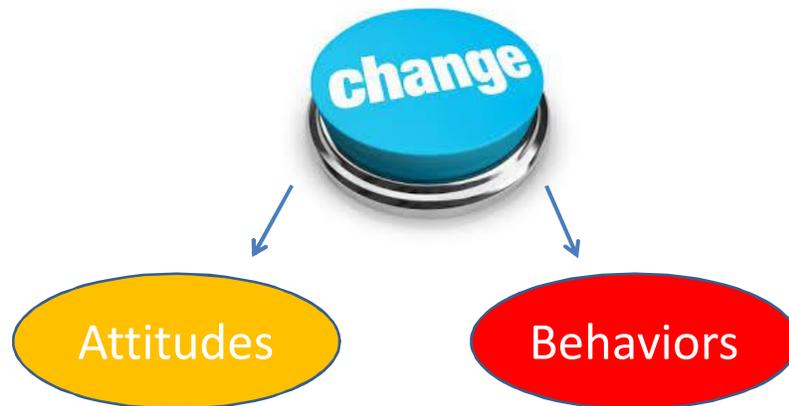
Based on simple inspection

Earned
credibility

Based on past experience

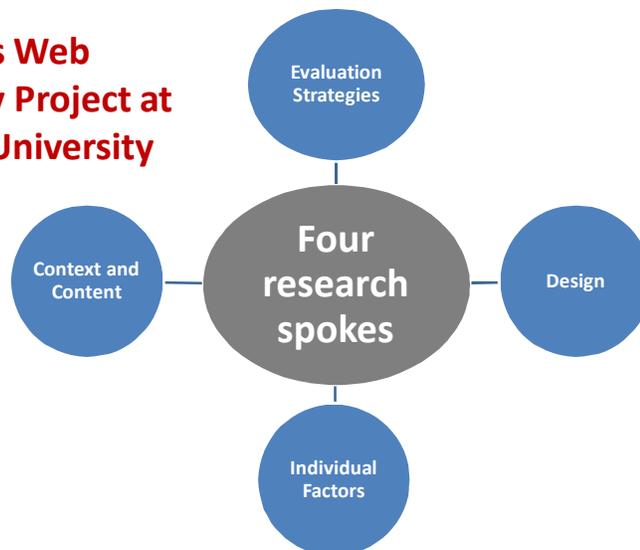
Source: Fogg, Stanford Web Credibility Research Project

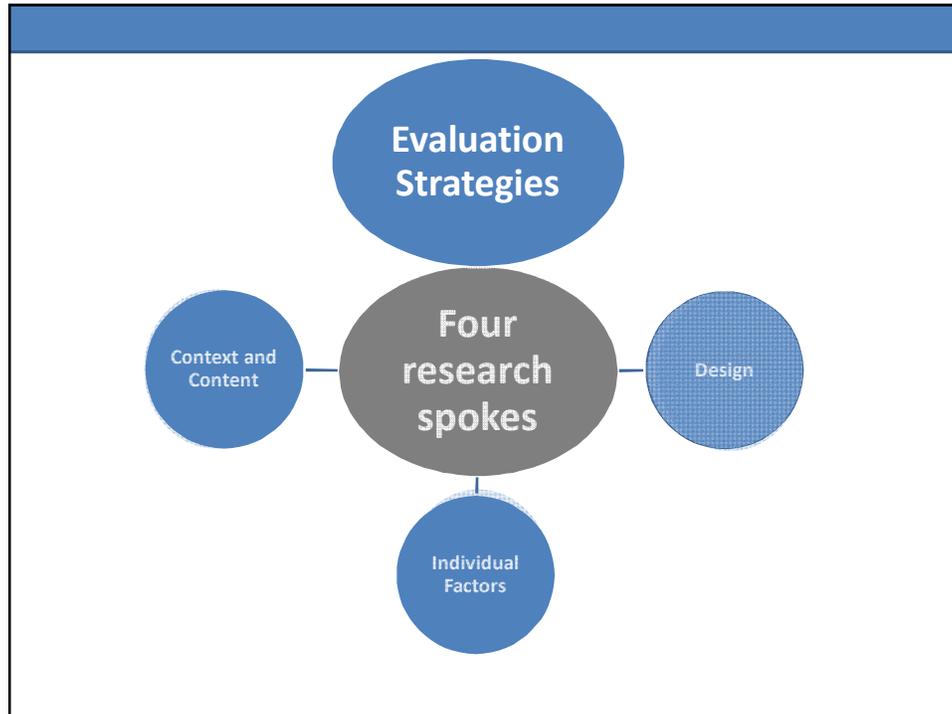
If you are credible, then you can



Four areas of research have been used to determine how people evaluate the perception of truthful or factual information online

**B.J. Fogg's Web
Credibility Project at
Stanford University**





Evaluation

- “ What do people take into account when deciding what to believe?
- “ How and when do they attempt to support what they find online?
- “ How does their past experiences and assumptions affect their decision-making?

Source: Fogg, Stanford Web Credibility Research Project

Fogg's Prominence-Interpretation Theory

Two things must occur:

User notices something
(Prominence)

User makes a judgment
(Interpretation)

These two conditions impact how people assess credibility online

Five Factors That Affect Prominence

User notices something
(Prominence)

User makes a judgment
(Interpretation)

1. Involvement of the user (e.g., motivations)
2. Topic (e.g., news, entertainment)
3. Task of the user (e.g., information-seeking)
4. Experience of subject matter
5. Individual differences (e.g., learning style, etc.)

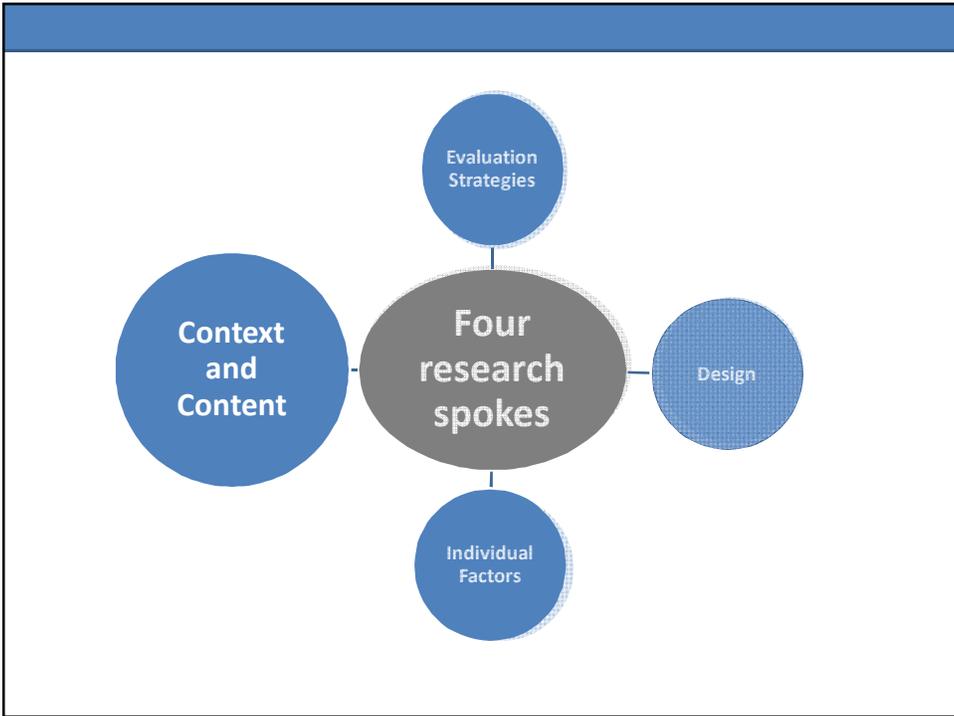
Source: Fogg, Stanford Web Credibility Research Project

Factors Affecting Interpretation

User notices something (Prominence) → User makes a judgment (Interpretation)

1. Assumptions in one's mind (i.e., culture)
2. Skill/knowledge (e.g., news, entertainment)
3. Context (e.g., environment)

Source: Fogg, Stanford Web Credibility Research Project



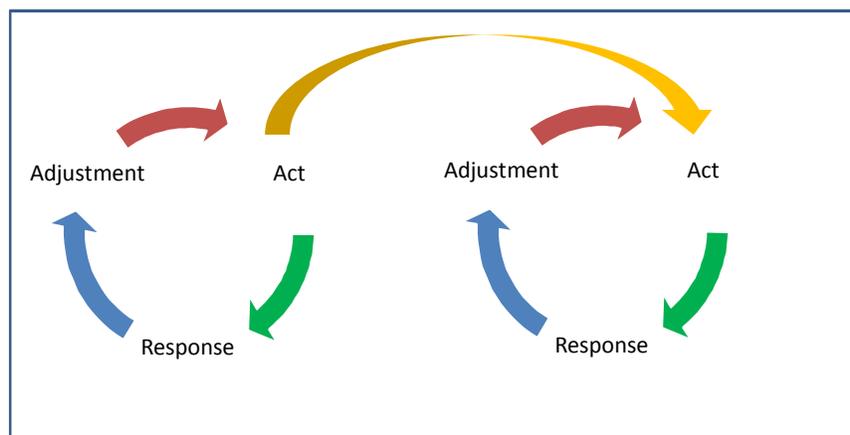
Context and Content

- “ Is the information seeker motivated to find credible information?
- “ How important is the information to the individual?
- “ Are time and resources available for evaluating the information?
- “ What is the content domain of the information (health, news, etc.)?

Source: Fogg, Stanford Web Credibility Research Project

Weick's Information Organization

For Reducing Equivocality



Double-Interact Loop

Based on what we've seen, what factors do people take in to consideration when deciding if something is truthful or factual?

How people evaluate information:

Accuracy: Can it be verified offline?

Authority: What are the qualifications?

Objectivity: How biased is the author?

Currency: How up-to-date is the information?

Coverage: How comprehensive is the information?

Source: Metzger, M. (2007). Making sense of credibility on the web: Models for evaluating online information and recommendations for future research, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*

And of course....



Stanford Guidelines for Building Site Credibility

1. Make it easy to verify accuracy
2. Show a real organization behind the site
3. Highlight expertise
4. Make contact info accessible
5. Make your site easy to use and useful
6. Use restraint with promotional content

Mobile Technologies:

How does what we've learned translate to mobile?

Mobile

- “ The “one size fits all” approach does not work
- “ Current technology fails to take into account various stakeholders
- “ Most mobile-ready sites are targeted toward customer service



An analysis of the mobile readiness and dialogic principles on *Fortune* 500 mobile websites

Tina McCorkindale & Meredith Morgoch

Public Relations Review, 2013

Why is this important?

- “ Nearly half of all U.S. adults have a mobile connection to the Internet¹
- “ 17% of cell phone users do most of their online browsing on their phone²

1 – Mitchell, Rosenstiel, Santhanam, & Christian, 2012, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism
2 – Smith, 2012, Pew Internet and American Life Project

Findings

- “ Only 24% had mobile-ready websites
- “ Of the sites that had a video, 26% did not work
- “ Non-mobile sites were more likely to cater to a wide variety of stakeholders; they rated better in terms of media access, dialogic loop, ease of interface, and conservation of visitors
- “ But, non-mobile websites were frustrating!

Findings

- “ Mobile-ready websites typically had limited information and targeted consumers
- “ Mobile offerings must be simple, usable, and credible

*.....We have a long way to go!
More research to come...*

Questions?

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