Combatting Viral Deceptions
STORIES FROM THE FACT-CHECKING FRONT LINES
FactCheck.org – The Beginning

- Nonpartisan political fact-checking website
- Co-founded by Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Brooks Jackson in 2003
- Oldest, continuous political fact-checking website
- Established with a founding grant from Annenberg Foundation
- Our mission: Fact-check major U.S. political figures
FactCheck.org – Now

- Seven full-time staffers
- Undergraduate fellowship program
- SciCheck
- Facebook initiative
- Media partnerships
Viral deceptions are not new

Ask FactCheck debuted in 2007

Combat deceptions in emails

“Malicious Fabrication”

Nearly 500 Ask FactCheck items

Not Pelosi’s Windfall Tax

By Joe Miller

Posted on December 7, 2007

Q: Did Pelosi advocate taxing “windfall” stock profits at 100%?

A: No. A widely circulated e-mail quoting her is a fraud.

FULL QUESTION

Are these quotes attributed to Speaker Pelosi really hers? If so, how accurate are they?

You aren’t going to believe this.

Madam speaker Nancy Pelosi wants to put a Windfall Tax on all stock market profits (including Retirement fund, 401Ks and Mutual Funds)! Aias, it is true – all to help the 12 Million Illegal Immigrants and other unemployed minorities!

Boy, are we in trouble! This woman is frightening. Take special note of the last paragraph. Is she really this whacked out?
Did the Pope endorse Donald Trump?
Was Hillary Clinton forced to return $20,000 worth of furniture and art after leaving White House?
Did Hillary Clinton volunteer to defend a child rapist in 1975?
Trump meme: 1.5M pageviews (4th highest)
Clinton Foundation: 2.2M pageviews (top story)
Enter Facebook

- Announced December 2016
- Facebook users flag stories
- Facebook sent us list of flagged stories
- We send Facebook URLs to our stories
- Disputed labels
- No funding, at least initially
- Lack of transparency
Facebook 2.0

- Provided funding
- Changed labeling
- Expanded scope
- Agreed to independent outside study
What difference does it make?

- Fact-checking increases knowledge
- Partisan divide
- Criticism: “It’s like bringing a spoon to clear out a pig farm.”
- Stanford study: ‘Meaningful impact’
- Reduces Facebook impressions
- Forces (some) websites to correct bogus stories
Questions?