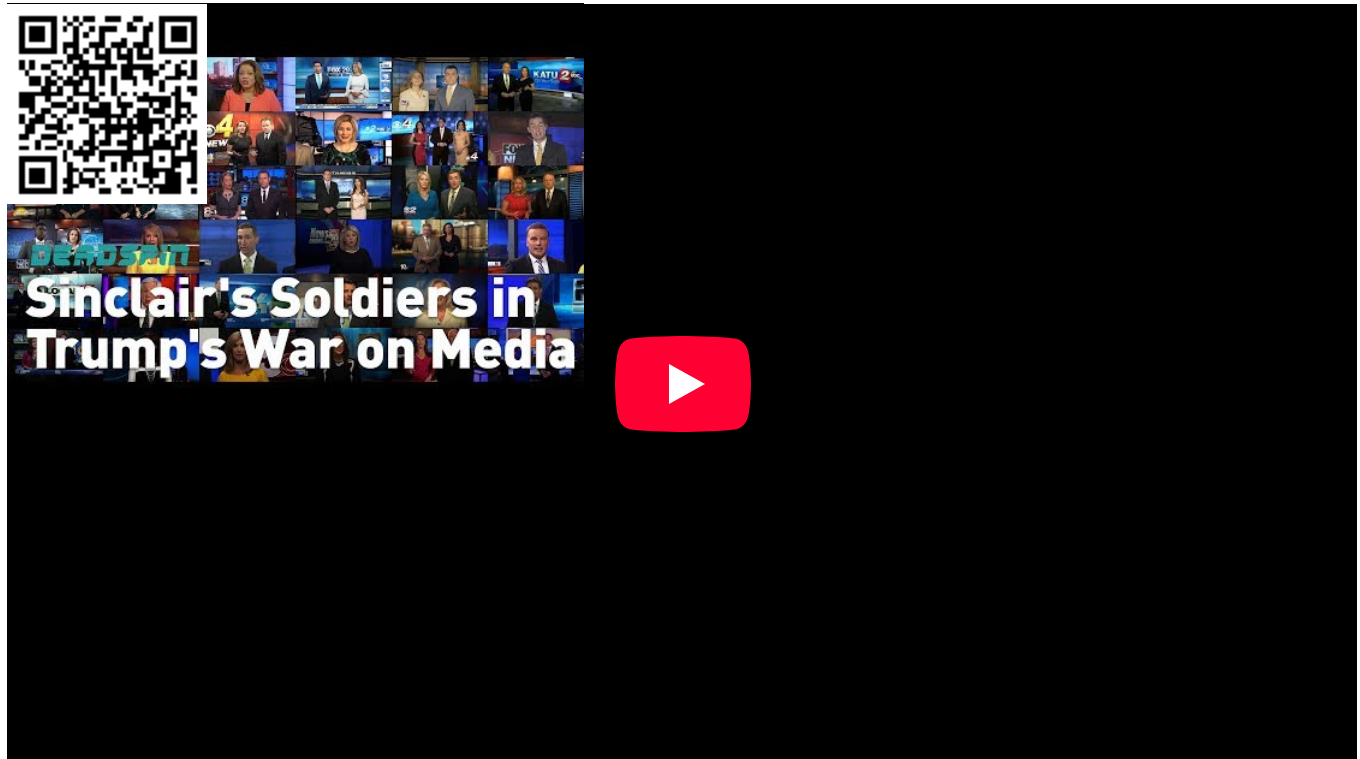


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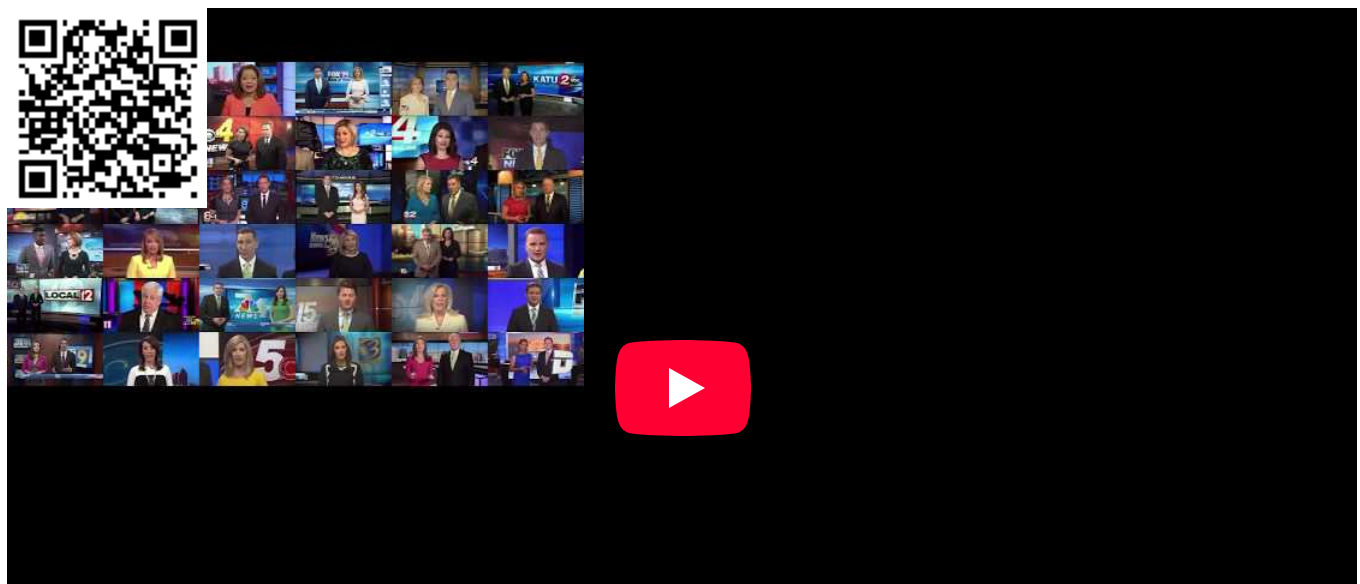
Learning Objectives

- Discuss the importance of evaluating sources and understanding biases
- Describe the components of the CRAAP analysis process

News media sources, such as a TV news report, must be carefully scrutinized. Here we refer to news media as major news networks, such as CNN or Fox News, local television news, and other televised news programs. These sources are unfortunately not above the tension and issues possible with less established sources. An April 2018 video criticizing Sinclair Broadcast Group highlights the dubious nature of our contemporary media landscape.



The following two videos discuss the fallout and tension:





Interestingly, the discussion has become deeply politicized. Whether the material presented is conservative or liberal is interesting, but our purpose here is to highlight how media is a contested space; it is just as difficult to get quality information here as anywhere else, and the information presented through media must be scrutinized like any other source.

Evaluation

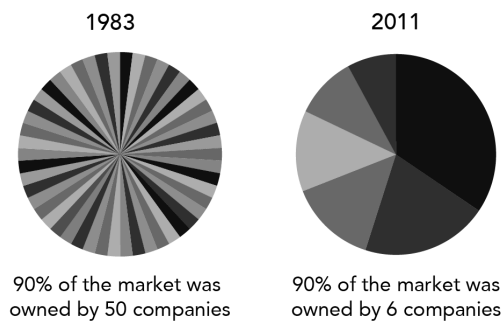
As with evaluating websites, evaluating other media sources with the CRAAP method is appropriate. There are, however, a few added questions specific to media:

Who owns the outlet?

The above example is about Sinclair Broadcasting Group. Take a look at WebpageFX's [infographic of ownership of key outlets](#). As you view the infographic, consider applying the CRAAP Analysis to WebpageFX. Is it a good source? Why or why not?

Figure 1 shows the consolidation of media ownership in the United States over a 30 year span. With consolidation of outlets, the plurality of available media and variation in beliefs and political stances represented has diminished.

Over the last 30 years, the ownership of media in America has grown incredibly consolidated



Source: <http://www.frugaldad.com/media-consolidation-infographic>

Figure 1. Media consolidation from 1983 to 2011

In plural democracies like the US and other Western nations, this is certainly a concern. To what extent do the media play a role in homogenizing American life? To what extent should we be concerned this affects our freedom and ability to live and exist with others with whom we might disagree, yet arguably should respect?

How long has the media outlet been around?

While not a perfect test of quality by any means, consider how something like *60 Minutes*, the news magazine from CBS, has been on the air for over 40 years. Would this make it more or less reputable than, for example, a newer YouTube news channel, e.g., [The Young Turks](#) or [The Rubin Report](#).

In the above discussion, we noted how quickly the use of media becomes politicized. Consider the use of mass media sources carefully given this potential problem. A good technique would be to simply address what you (as the researcher) think the bias might be. As we've discussed elsewhere, it's not as simple as saying all bias is bad, but rather, bias is something we all encounter and have, and it is reasonable and useful to address bias head-on. The researcher should tell the reader what their biases are; the researcher should tell the reader what they think a given source's biases are as well. The onus is on the reader always to think critically on the material presented.

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