Ruskin Didn’t Say It: Researching and Verifying Claims in Anonymous Chain E-Mails

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LUC October 2011

Delgado Community College and The U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Dedicated to the Memory of
John Ruskin,
Business Consultant(?)
Librarians -- and professionals in other fields – have frequently complained that Internet websites are often the source of unreliable information. This unreliability has been the source for books, journal articles, conference presentations, and countless personal conversations. In contrast, anonymous chain e-mails receive less attention from librarians and other researchers. Many well-meaning people receive and forward anonymous chain e-mails containing questionable information and outright falsehoods. This forwarding simply reinforces misinformation in the public's mind. I offer two examples of pre-Internet quotation hoaxes that persist in the public's mind. Lastly, I illustrate several fact-checking sources to assist librarians in their reference work with these types of questions.
What is an Anonymous Chain E-Mail?
A Working Definition with Some Characteristics

- An e-mail with no author listed.
- E-mail is forwarded repeatedly.
- E-mail makes claims on political, social, environmental, or commercial issues.
Anonymous Chain E-Mails

- Updated, online version of chain letters
- Often sent by well meaning friends and relatives
- Because the e-mail is anonymous, it is difficult to verify claims or contact the author for additional information.
Inspiration/Rationale for Today’s Presentation

- Receiving chain/viral e-mails from friends and relatives
- Curiosity about quotation repeatedly attributed to John Ruskin (8 February 1819 – 20 January 1900).
Informal Poll

- Who here today receives anonymous chain e-mails?
- Who sends them to you?
Initially, at least according to my own speculation, friends and relatives wanted to convince me about some political or social issue.

The expectation was that I would forward these e-mails to other people, because people needed “motivation” to act on a specific cause.
E-mails from friends and relatives

Later, after receiving e-mail responses from me with information debunking various claims, my friends and relatives sent me even more of these e-mails.

Perhaps, they wanted to challenge me, but I’d like to think that they enjoyed the debunking.
The first time I can remember receiving one of these urban legend/chain e-mails was about 2000. A well meaning aunt sent it. It discussed how “Madeline Murray O'Hare (sic) is attempting to get TV programs such as Touched by and Angel ... taken off the air.”
E-mails from friends and relatives

Two things to note about this e-mail:

- Madalyn Murray O'Hair’s name was misspelled as “Madeline Murray O'Hare.”
- In 1995, Madalyn Murray O'Hair and several other people had been kidnapped and murdered, but police did not find their bodies until 2001.
E-mails from friends and relatives;
Don’t Let Facts Get in the Way of Telling a Good Story!

- Madalyn Murray O'Hair was dead, but that didn’t stop her from allegedly trying to get a network TV show cancelled!
The Information in the E-Mail is Wrong or False – so What?

“The reason that inaccurate information is a problem is that people can often be misled by it. And the risks here are not just epistemic. People use the information that they have to make practical decisions.”

The Information in the E-Mail is Wrong or False – so What?

Inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, and/or completely false information can lead to bad decision making – sometimes with serious consequences.
Misinformation vs. Disinformation – Some Factors

- Both relate to false information
- Misinformation describes false information spread by people who don’t realize that the information is false.
- Disinformation describes false information, but the people are knowingly and willing spreading false information.
“There is hardly anything in the world that some man can not make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey.”
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

This quotation is often attributed to John Ruskin, who was a 19th century English art critic, art patron, draughtsman, watercolorist, a prominent social thinker, and philanthropist.
I first saw this quotation in different Baskin-Robbins ice cream shops.

Later, I saw it reproduced in various books and periodicals. Sometimes Ruskin was listed as the author of the quotation, and sometimes there was no one listed.

My concern here is not the truthfulness of the quotation – but the issue of proper attribution. – who actually said or wrote it first.
"john ruskin" "lawful prey" "sell a little"

About 380 results

Journal of American insurance
1937
... to the Treasurer of Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, in which John Ruskin, Esquire, late of Oxford, ... make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey. ... books.google.com

Designing a school library media center for the future
Rolf Erikson, Carolyn Russian Markuson - 2007 - 117 pages
... Documents The re is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse or sell a little cheaper, ... John Ruskin The words of John Ruskin, the art, architecture, and social critic, point to the importance of not ... books.google.com

Contemporary Marketing
Louis E. Boone, David L. Kurtz - 2009 - 784 pages
briefly speaking "There is scarcely anything in this world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the buyers who consider price only are this man's lawful prey." —John Ruskin (1819–1900) ENGLISH ART AND ... books.google.com

The dollarization discipline: how smart companies create customer ...
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

work. The solution for this was to revert to the practices followed in closing the crown of the arch in tunnel lining work; that is, to use rather dry concrete and ram it into place from the sides. Since the old arch was only 8 ft. wide no particular difficulty was experienced in accomplishing this.

The operation of trains during the course of the work was controlled by the placing of a 5-mile-per-hour slow order, amplified during the time the concrete work was in progress by an order requiring all trains to stop upon arriving at the site of the bridge and not to proceed until given a signal by the inspector or superintendent of construction.

It was first planned to provide forms and centers only for three of the arches with the idea that two of the sets could be used a second time on the two remaining arches. However, the season grew late before the forms could be released, so it was decided to supply additional formwork for the last two arches to avoid any delay in the concrete work. The last of the concrete was placed on December 24, at which time some of the formwork had already been removed, but forms for the last two arches

been made to span two ties, but it has been found that a simpler form requiring the use of only one tie could be produced that would fulfill all requirements as to strength and efficiency. The newer type saves the extra length of timber on one tie, there are no gears and the parts are few. The stand is fitted with sheet steel vanes and a cold rolled steel lamp staff. The crank is a drop forged eyebolt threaded to provide adjustment for the throw of any derail. When ordinary vanes are used the top of the lamp tip is about 20 in. above the tie. The connecting rod furnished has an adjustable screw jaw on each end and ½-in. turned pins; it is of a length to place the center of the lamp staff 3 ft. 6 in. from the gage side of the rail, but this may be varied to meet requirements.

“There is hardly anything in the world that some men cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man’s lawful prey.”

The *Journal of Home Economics* attributes the quotation to Ruskin in a March 1930 issue (Vol. 22, p. 244).
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

have I made in the event of a serious illness, of a permanent disability, or even in the event of death? How would I meet the expenses incident thereto? How would I leave those dependent on me?

The answer is: “Ample Health and Accident and Life Insurance” in an amount in keeping with one’s circumstances, in old line companies after careful selection and upon advice of persons qualified to judge. Would not even the thought that this contingency had been met, tend to make one more happy, independent, active and efficient?

In the selection of policies do not let the rate of annual premiums influence your judgment.

“There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man’s lawful prey.”

—Ruskin.

The most important consideration in building up an estate is careful selection of securities. The individual seldom has the necessary experience to fully deal with his own investment problems. Get in touch with a well established bond house, a permanent institution whose methods are recognized by authorities as being the most conservative known to the banking science.

They will gladly assist you to simplify the complex problems of good securities.

Readiness with which it can be sold. Its probable stability or increase in market price.

The length of time it runs.

Of these five factors, the question of security behind the bond is, of course, of first importance. If there is any question as to the security, go no further. Leave the bond alone. If any bond shows a yield that is materially above the average, leave it alone unless you are in possession of all of the facts. It is a serious mistake to make the point of yield the vital issue.

In passing upon the remaining factors, the personal circumstances of the investor should be considered. Will he be placed in a position where quick convertibility is desired. Is he purchasing for a long-term investment?

Vacant Real Estate and common stock speculations should be avoided until such time as one has accumulated a reserve of First Class Bonds, and has an income which would warrant the hazard assumed in such ventures.

Do not be hurried in making investments. Never take a solicitor’s word for anything unless it is backed up by facts and figures conclusive and authentic. In all cases consult someone in a position to give you expert advice.

School Code.
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

Teaching AIDS. “A selected, classified, and annotated list of informational booklets, offered free or at small cost by manufacturing and sales organizations. Half a thousand items serviceable to teachers of industrial subjects, general science, and geography” by Homer J. Smith, associate professor of industrial education, University of Minnesota, has been published by the University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, and is on sale at 50 cents a copy.

Home Economics in Japanese. A commercial school in Kobe, Japan, has been granted permission to issue a Japanese translation of “The Woman Who Spends,” published in 1897 by Bertha June Richardson (now Mrs. Lucas). as a means.”

Ruskin and Modern Business. It is interesting to note that a familiar quotation from John Ruskin has been used several times lately in support of the argument that it is bad business to sell or to buy articles below the recognized standard. The quotation is: “There is scarcely anything in this world that man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper; and the buyers who consider price only are this man’s lawful prey.”

The Popularization of Science. Practical points and qualifications for the working over of scientific reports into popular articles are discussed with understanding and good sense in a paper which William A. Hamor and Lawrence W. Bass contribute to Science for December 27, 1929.
The journal Notes and Queries contains a query as to the Ruskin authorship (Vol. CLXVI, p. 406). Put in scan.
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH IN A. E. Housman’s “Last Poems.” In front of Housman’s “Last Poems” there appears the following English quotation from some French poet:

“We’ll to the woods no more.
The laurels all are cut off.”

The French original of it reads as follows:

“Nous ferons plus aux bois,
Les lauriers seront coupés.”

The name of the French poet and source wanted.

O. F. R.

2. There is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider only his man’s lawful prey. This has been attributed to Ruskin. Is this correct? If so, to which of Ruskin’s works does it belong?

Ferdy Clark.

Printers’ Ink also published an article with the quotation and attributed it to Ruskin (Vol. 140 – 22 September 1927, p. 187).
Who Can Trace This Quotation to Its Lair?

THE correct wording of this quotation is, we believe, "There is scarcely anything in this world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the buyers who con-
Did Ruskin Say It?

THE CHRONICLE PRESS
ORANGE, N. J.
Editor of PRINTERS' INK:

Is it possible for you to advise us of the name of the author of the following quotation, and also work from which this quotation was taken?

There is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey.

THE CHRONICLE PRESS.

ALTHOUGH diligent search of text and reference books fails to disclose this quotation and its author, we have heard it credited many times to John Ruskin. The statement as we know it reads:

There is scarcely anything in this world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the buyers who consider price only are this man's lawful prey.

Is there anyone in the PRINTERS' INK audience who can state exactly when, where and by whom this philosophy was made?—Ed. PRINTERS' INK.
Pseudo-John Ruskin Quotation

...
George P. Landow, a Professor of English and the History of Art, Brown University, questioned the Ruskin authorship on Victorian Web—a website devoted to British literature, history, and culture during the age of Queen Victoria.

A Ruskin Quotation?

George P. Landow, Professor of English and the History of Art, Brown University

The Victorian Web literature, history, & culture in the age of Victoria

"There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price alone are that person's lawful prey."

Several times a year I receive e-mail asking from which of Ruskin's works this sentence comes. Many people have encountered it, in part because Baskin-Robbins, the ice-cream company, displays it as a sort of motto or credo in its shops. From the first time I came upon it on the wall of a Baskin-Robbins in Chicago, Illinois, I felt puzzled because I could not recall having read it in Ruskin, and I think that I've read several times everything Ruskin published. Thinking I nonetheless may have missed the passage, I have gone looking for it in all the obvious places—those works in which Ruskin discusses and defines value: A Crown of Wild Olive, A Joy For Ever, Fort, and Unto This Last, possibly even The Stones of Venice and other places where he discusses workmanship. No luck.

When someone asked again about this passage in the fall of 1998, I took another look, gave up, and directed him to the Ruskin Centre at the University of Lancaster (UK), which houses the world's largest collection of Ruskiniana. Ruth Hutchison, who maintains their website, responded that "we have been asked many times about this quote, or similar versions of it, and have never been able to identify it as being by Ruskin. We suspect that it has been wrongly attributed to him in the past and found its way into a book of quotations or something like that." So there you have it.

If we've missed the Ruskinian source, or if anyone knows the author who did compose this pithy statement...
“... The budget should be balanced, that the Treasury should be refilled, that the public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of the generals should be tempered and controlled, that assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt, that the mobs should be forced to work and not depend on government for subsistence, and that prudence and frugality should be put into practice as soon as possible."
A bureaucrat is the most despicable of men, though he is needed as vultures are needed, but one hardly admires vultures whom bureaucrats so strangely resemble. I have yet to meet a bureaucrat who was not petty, dull, almost witless, crafty or stupid, an oppressor or a thief, a holder of little authority in which he delights, as a boy delights in possessing a vicious dog. Who can trust such creatures?
Pseudo-Cicero Quotation

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BCE – 43 BCE), was a Roman philosopher, statesman, political theorist, and Roman constitutionalist. He was also notable as an orator and prose stylist.
"Antonius heartily agreed with him [sc. Cicero] that the budget should be balanced, that the Treasury should be refilled, that the public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of the generals should be tempered and controlled, that assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt, that the mobs should be forced to work and not depend on government for subsistence, and that prudence and frugality should be put into practice as soon as possible."

Pseudo-Cicero Quotation


- Antonius heartily agreed with him [sc. Cicero] that the budget should be balanced, that the Treasury should be refilled, that the public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of the generals should be tempered and controlled, that assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt, that the mobs should be forced to work and not depend on government for subsistence, and that prudence and frugality should be put into practice as soon as possible.

Pseudo-Cicero Quotation
Pseudo-Cicero Quotation

From inside the book

"Antonius heartily" Search

1 page matching "Antonius heartily" in this book

Page 137

Antonius heartily agreed with Cicero that the budget should be balanced, the public debt reduced, assistance to foreign lands curtailed, and that the people should not depend on the government for their subsistence. But when Cicero produced facts and figures showing how all these things must be accomplished...
Janet Miriam Holland Taylor Caldwell (1900–1985) was an Anglo-American novelist. She was a prolific novelist who wrote under several pen names and under her own name.
False Attribution is Not New

- Plato, the Greek philosopher, authored various dialogues on different topics. Scholars are divided on the authorship of some of these dialogues.

- In 1962, Glenn R. Morrow published a translation of letters attributed to Plato. Morrow has a lengthy essay on the arguments for and against Plato’s authorship.
Some Other Urban Legends/Internet Misinformation

- Fred Rogers ("Mr Rogers’ Neighborhood") as Navy Seal, Sniper in Vietnam War, Marine Sharpshooter, etc.
- Jerry Mathers ("Leave it to Beaver") killed in Vietnam War.
So What Can We Do?

- Whenever we receive question on these chain e-mails, use established print sources.
- Electronic sources are available on the Internet to research chain e-mails, urban legends, and other suspicious claims.
According to the Snopes.com website:

“Welcome to snopes.com, the definitive Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation. Use the search box above to locate your item of interest, or click one of the icons below to browse the site by category.”
According to the Snopes.com website:

- Founded in 1995 by Barbara and David Mikkelson, a husband and wife team who live and work in the Los Angeles area
- Barbara Mikkelson is a Canadian citizen
- David Mikkelson is a U.S. citizen
Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Postcard Virus
1. Warning about a computer virus masquerading as a postcard from a friend or family member.

Debt Free America Act
2. Congressional bill proposes a 1% tax on debit card usage and/or banking transactions.

Egg Whites for Burns
3. Claim that the application of egg whites will prevent burns.

Here You Have / Just for You / Here It Is Virus
4. Information about the ‘Here You Have / Just for You / Here It Is’ computer virus.

*77 Cell Phone Notification
5. Advisory about contacting police by calling *77 (or *112 or *47) on a cell phone.

Dhimmitude
6. Discussion of whether various religious groups are exempt from requirements to obtain health insurance.

General Electric
7. G.E. is moving its x-ray division from Wisconsin to China.

New Pepsi Can
8. Claim states that a new Pepsi soda can design omits the words ‘under God’ from the Pledge of Allegiance.
The Parrot Served with Carrots

Claim: A loving son who gives his mother an expensive talking bird is horrified to discover she ate it for dinner.

Examples:

[Collected on the Internet, 2000]

Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother.

The first said, "I built a big house for our mother."

The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver."

The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You remember how mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well. So I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. He's one of a kind. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it."

Since then, the son sent out her letter of thanks:
Cache Point

Claim: The plastic strip embedded in U.S. bank notes enable the Feds to tell how much money you have on you.

FALSE

Examples:

[Collected on the Internet, 2003]
This past weekend, a friend visiting our house told us that the anti-counterfeiting strip put in newly printed paper money can be used to determine how much cash you are carrying. She said that the ever-present "they" at the airport have a machine that can determine how much cash you have on your person or in your luggage, and if you are carrying a sufficiently large amount of cash, you will be detained by the police and interrogated until you confess your guilt as a drug smuggler.

[Collected on the Internet, 2003]
I did not get this in an e-mail but my bank teller in Kirksville, MO told me
**Cut Onion Contamination**

**Claim:** Bacteria formed on cut onions and potatoes are responsible for more food poisoning than is spoiled mayonnaise.

**FALSE**
Some Fact Checking Sites

Straight Dope
Today's Question:
What's the scoop on the mysterious buried treasure at Oak Island?
A Straight Dope Classic by Cecil Adams

Recent Additions:
- Could WWII be started by a flock of geese showing up on radar?
  A Straight Dope Classic by Cecil Adams
- Is the government spraying stuff into the atmosphere to protect us?
  By Cecil Adams
- Is it healthy literally to “lick your wounds”?
  A Straight Dope Classic by Cecil Adams
- Are you being poisoned by your

Listen To This Week’s Podcast!
Listen Now

Threadspotting:
To infinity and beyond! For real?
BEST OF THE STRAIGHT DOPE MESSAGE BOARD:
Send your nominations for Threadspotting and weed Carl’s to TestBEDeddit.com. Do it today!
A-hunting we will go.
Submitted by Jasper!
Check out Bool, our forum for all things Halloween.
A room with a view CNSFWO
Are you being poisoned by your silver tooth fillings?

September 5, 1986

Dear Cecil:

My neighbor has been advised by her holistic dentist that she needs to have her silver alloy fillings replaced with gold ones. The dentist claims that the mercury in her fillings is leaching out and poisoning her. This sounds like bullsh*t to me, but now I'm beginning to wonder. Should I worry? Is mercury carving dikes in my brain?

— M.M., Pasadena, California

Cecil replies:

Hard to say. On the one hand, looking strictly at the facts, I'd say the only leaching your neighbor has to worry about is her "holistic dentist" leaching bucks out of her wallet. On the other hand, they say mercury causes severe
In medicine, what's the difference between an "ectomy," an "ostomy," and an "otomy?"

December 19, 1986

Dear Cecil:

In medicine, what's the difference between an "ectomy," an "ostomy," and an "otomy?" My wife believes they mean "hack it off," "bite it off," and "pinch it till it drops off."

— J.W., Chicago

Cecil replies:

Very funny, J.W., and actually not all that far off the mark. Turning to Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, which for an old dwee like me is a constant garden of delight, we learn the following:

- An "ectomy" is the cutting out of something, as in "tonsillecтомy." In other words, "shucking it off." This may account for lingering male...
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic’s Dictionary
### Fluoridation of Water

The fluoridation of water supplies to municipalities in the U.S. is done to prevent tooth decay. There is little debate over the effectiveness of fluoridation to fight cavities. By 1950, enough scientific evidence existed to make the case that fluoridation at 1.0 ppm reduced children’s cavities by 50%. In 1950, the United States Public Health Service recommended that communities without naturally occurring fluoride add it to their public water supplies at a concentration of 1.0 ppm. Despite the fact that doing...
fluoridation of water

The fluoridation of water supplies to municipalities in the U.S. is done to prevent tooth decay. There is little debate over the effectiveness of fluoridation to fight cavities. By 1950, enough scientific evidence existed to make the case that fluoridation at 1.0 ppm reduced children’s cavities by 50%. In 1950, the United States Public Health Service recommended that communities without naturally occurring fluoride add it to their public water supplies at a concentration of 1.0 ppm. Despite the fact that doing so would mean a reduction in business for those dentists who filled the cavities of youngsters, the American Dental Association supported the policy.

The safety of fluoridation has been challenged many times. In the small amounts that people are likely to be exposed to from public drinking water, the main health concern that has not been exaggerated and distorted over the years is the fear of dental fluorosis. (The staining and pitting of teeth from too much fluoride does not affect adults, so concerns about fluorosis focus on the amount of fluoride children are likely to be exposed to.) In January 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposed to change its recommended limit for fluoride to 0.7 mg/L, replacing the current recommended range of 0.7 to 1.2 mg/L. (Parts per million, ppm, and milligrams per liter, mg/L, are nearly equivalent. E.g., 1.2 mg/L = 1.201370764 ppm.) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency simultaneously announced that it will take a fresh look at the maximum allowable level, currently set at 4 mg/L, for fluoride that occurs naturally in drinking water.
See also 9/11 conspiracy, AIDS denial movement, the anti-vaccination movement, climate change deniers, contrarian, electroensitives, manufactroversy, and pseudosymmetry. I also addressed fluoridation studies in a Newsletter. Fluoride water "causes cancer". Boys at risk from bone tumours, shock research reveals.

further reading


Some Fact Checking Sites

TruthorFiction.com
Top Trending eRumors on TruthOrFiction.Com:

- ABC on-air policy about wearing American flags-Truth!
- Congress Passed a Bill That Proposes a 1% Tax On All Financial Institution Transaction- Fiction!
- Bill Cosby's Commentary Says That He is 76 and Tired- Incorrect Author!
- Congressional Reform Act of 2011- Fiction!
- Daisy the dog that saved nearly 1,000 people on 9/11- Fiction!
- Facebook to Obama Members Monthly Fees- Fiction!
- Florida is Requiring Drug Testing of Welfare Recipients-Truth!
- General Electric is Moving X-Ray Division to China- Truth!
- George Washington Statue Covered to Prevent Martin Luther King Celebrates From Being Offended- Fiction!
- Health Care Bill Establishes Pammmute, Which Exempts Mosque From Participating- Fiction!
- Hillary Clinton's Aids Has Family Ties To Muslim Brotherhood- Unproven & Developing!
- If You Sell Your House After 2012 Expect to Pay a 3.8% Sales Tax - Mostly Truth!
- Iraq status honoring American soldiers- Truth!
- Medicare Premiums Predicted to Increase While Congress is Getting Pay Raises Truth & Fiction!
- Barack Obama Explains Why He didn't Follow Protocol During the National Anthem- Fiction!
- Obama is Overplaying the Economy to Destroy Capitalism in the U.S.- Commentary!
- Opinion Piece Called “We Noticed” about President Obama by Sherry Hackett- Incorrect Authorship!
- President's Campaign Bus Was Made in Canada at a Cost of $110,000- Truth & Fiction!
- President's Dog, Bo, and Handler Fly Alone in a Separate Plane to Maine- Fiction!
- President Obama Enacted the Dream Act by Executive Order- Fiction!
- Questions About Barack Obama's Status as a “Natural Born Citizen”- Fiction!
- Questions about President Obama Long Form Birth Certificate- Fiction!
- Postage Stamps Commemorate Two Muslim Holidays- Truth & Fiction!
- Target stores won't donate to Vietnam vet projects- Fiction!

AutoTrader.com
Congressional Reform Act of 2011 - Fiction!

Summary of the eRumor:
This is an email that contains a list of ideas "to fix congress" and tells the reader to forward it to 20 people in their address books. Among these ideas are setting term limits, changing government pension plans, mandating congressional participation in Social Security, stopping congressional pay raises and making elected officials accountable for their actions.

The Truth:
The "Congressional Reform Act of 2011" is not a real bill in Congress but it is a passionate plea for change on behalf of concerned citizens hoping to get the word out across the World Wide Web.

We do not know who wrote this email other than a concerned citizen who wanted to change Congress. This call for citizen action first appeared on the Internet shortly after the 112th Congress was sworn in on January 5, 2011. Days later it began moving through the World Wide Web like wildfire.

The writer of the email is apparently passionate about his recommendation but failed to give any directions as to where all these forwarded emails could be sent to do any good.

We found some of the claims from the list to be inaccurate:

Congressional representatives are exempt from paying into Social Security - Fiction!
Elected representatives are not exempt from paying into Social Security. We have findings posted in a related eRumor. Click for findings.

Congressional representatives are above the law. Fiction!
Congressional representatives are not above the law. Here are some recent examples of those who have been caught, tried and convicted:

In early January 2010 former GOP Congressman Tom Delay was sentenced to 3 years in prison after being found guilty for his participation in a scheme to illegally funnel corporate money to Texas candidates in 2002.

James A. Traficant, an Ohio Democrat, was expelled from Congress after being found guilty of bribery and racketeering. Traficant served 7 years behind bars in a Minnesota prison and was released in 2009.

Congressional representatives are exempt from Health Care policies - Fiction!
Representatives are not exempt from the healthcare reform law.
Some Fact Checking Sites

HoaxBusters.org
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary

Hoax Busters

The BIG LIST of Internet Hoaxes

Hello, it's Tuesday, October 11. Thank you for visiting Hoax Busters.

Smuck in a frame? Click here to get out. | Add us to your favorites. | Tell a friend.

NOTICE: The U.S. Department of Energy hoax site (hoaxbusters.ciac.org) has permanently shut down. Our site is not, and never was, associated with CIAC, or any government agency. To those of you visiting us for the first time, welcome. To assist you in navigating our site, please read the HELP file.

Support tornado and flood relief efforts. Donate now. + American Red Cross

Hoax Busters was featured on the NBC TODAY show.

Your IP is 194.38.63.146
You are running Windows Vista and using Mozilla/Netscape 8!
Welcome to Hoax Busters!

dasnscot.com

First time visitor? Need help with the BIG LIST?
CLICK FOR HELP

These are HOAXES - they are simply not true! No big company is going to give you a GIFT CERTIFICATE (giveaway hoaxes), spamming your friends and...
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic’s Dictionary
Merriam-Webster definition of HOAX:

Pronunciation: 'hōiks
Etymology: probably contraction of hocus
Synonym: dupe

1. to trick into believing or accepting as genuine something false and often preposterous (emphasis added)
2. an act intended to trick or dupe
3. something accepted or established by fraud or fabrication

The Internet community has endured a wave of e-mail hoaxes and pranks, exploiting users' unfamiliarity with how the Internet, and computer systems in general, work. With the phenomenal growth and popularity of the Internet, more and more new users are "getting online" and becoming targets for pranksters. "Ancient" myths, like the Neiman Marcus cookie story, are just waiting for a critical mass of people who have not been exposed, so that they can go streaming across the net again. There is no technical solution to this problem. Even when users become experienced enough to be able to tell a silly message when they see one, anyone can sometimes get suckered. It seems that all users of the Internet will have to put up with a certain amount of nonsense.

These e-mail hoaxes are every bit as insidious as any other e-mail virus, but not as destructive. They do their damage by slowing down ISP mail servers, clogging up users' mail boxes, and wasting the readers' time. They act like other computer viruses, only they use people as the method for infection (social engineering). Users of the Internet must learn to be skeptical, and think carefully before spreading a message to anyone. There are some simple things that can be done to avoid being a carrier for these hoaxes.

If you get a message that seems like it should be shared with lots of people, DON'T SEND IT unless either you know that the message is true, you can authenticate the identity of the sender, or you know the sender personally, and know that they would have written the message. The more urgent it sounds, the more skeptical you should be.

If you really want to send it, ALWAYS CHECK WITH THE ORIGINATOR before forwarding it! This is the best way to tell a hoax or a prank. Just reply to the first sender, and ask them if it is true. If they can't tell you, then don't send it! Most pranks and hoaxes have forged headers and signatures, and when you try and verify the validity of the message, you will find that the address is not valid. Even if the originator is the prankster, and tells you to go ahead, at least they can be caught and dealt with. If this seems like too much of a bother, then it is not that important and you should not send it.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary

Anti-virus programs, spyware scanners, and firewalls are essential items to have, and use, for protecting your computer from attack. We have compiled some of our favorites, which you can see HERE.
Frequently Asked Questions

These are questions sent to Hoax Busters that, by their very nature, require a more detailed explanation than is found on the BIG LIST. Click on the question to see the answer.

Q: 10000 or AAAAAA@aaa foils e-mail worms
Q: #77, #77, #777, #112 to call police
Q: 809 area code scam
Q: 90# phone scam (#90)
Q: ABC News reporters can't wear American flag lapel pins
Q: Arabs celebrate after 9/11
Q: Artist starves dog to death
Q: Automobile air conditioner
Q: Barack Obama is a closet Muslim - and other stupid stories from the '08 campaign
Q: Barack Obama opens fried chicken franchise in China
Q: Boycott gasoline
Q: Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act
Q: Brutus the dog wins Congressional Medal of Honor
Q: Cell phone electrocution
Q: Cell phones & telemarketers
Q: Christian websites shut down
Q: Christmas card for "A Recovering American Soldier"
Q: "Clear" button at gas pump prevents fraud
Q: Crazy ORB
Some Fact Checking Sites

Hoax-Slayer.com
Hoax-Slayer is dedicated to debunking email hoaxes, thwarting Internet scammers, combating spam, and educating web users about email and Internet security issues. Hoax-Slayer allows Internet users to check the veracity of common email hoaxes and aims to counteract criminal activity by publishing information about common types of Internet scams. Hoax-Slayer also includes anti-spam tips, computer and email security information, articles about true email forwards, and much more. New articles are added to the Hoax-Slayer website every week.
Iraq and The Wrath of the Eagle Koran Verse Hoax

Summary:
Email chain letter claims that a verse in the Koran predicts the US invasion of Iraq (Full commentary below).

Amadeus Travena
Behold the booking (r)evolution. Anytime, anywhere travel booking!
www.amadeus.com

Status:
False

Example: (Submitted September 2006)
Read all of this one, it is interesting!! Read down to the very bottom highlighted in green. IT GAVE ME GOOSEBUMPS!!! you don't want to miss this! ("_*")

VERY INTERESTING-
1. The Garden of Eden was in Iraq.
2. Mesopotamia, which is now Iraq, was the cradle of civilization!
Some Fact Checking Sites

Wikipedia.org
You're invited to Wikipedia Loves Libraries, a program of events at libraries and archives across North America around October 2011.

List of common misconceptions

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This incomplete list is not intended to be exhaustive.

This is a list of current, widely held, false ideas and beliefs about notable topics which have been reported by reliable sources from around the world. Each has been discussed in published literature, as has its topic area (such as glass, and the misconception that glass is viscous) and the facts concerning it.

Contents

1 History
   1.1 Ancient to early modern history
   1.2 Modern history
2 Legislation and crime
3 Food and cooking
4 Words and phrases
5 Science
   5.1 Astronomy
   5.2 Biology
   5.2.1 Evolution
   5.3 Chemistry
6 Human body and health
   5.4.1 Senses
   5.4.2 Skin and hair
   5.4.3 Nutrition, food, and drink
Some Fact Checking Sites
Political Fact Checking

Modern history

- Napoleon I (Napoleon Bonaparte) (pictured) was not particularly short and did not have a Napoleon complex. After his death in 1821, the French emperor’s height was recorded as 5 feet 2 inches in French foot. This corresponds to 5 feet 8.5 inches in modern International foot, or 1.688 meters. Some believe that he was nicknamed le Petit Caporal (The Little Corporal) as a term of affection.

- According to Time magazine, there is a common misconception among Americans that Abraham Lincoln freed the American slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863. Most slaves were not immediately freed as a direct result of the Proclamation as it only applied to the parts of rebelling states not under Union control; those rebelling states did not recognize the power of the federal government to make such a decree. The Proclamation did not cover the 800,000 slaves in the Union’s slave-holding border states of Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, or Delaware. As the regions in the South that were under Confederate control ignored the Proclamation, slave ownership persisted until Union troops captured further Southern territory. It was only with the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 that slavery was officially abolished in all of the United States. Thirty-six of the United States recognize June 19 as a holiday, Juneteenth, celebrating the anniversary of the day the abolition of slavery was announced in Texas in 1865.

- The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 was not caused by Mrs. O’Leary’s cow kicking over a lantern. A newspaper reporter made it up because he thought it would make colorful copy.

- Italian dictator Benito Mussolini did not “make the trains run on time”. Much of the repair work had been performed before Mussolini and the Fascists came to power in 1922. Accounts from the era also suggest that the Italian railways’ legendary adherence to timetables was more myth than reality.

- During and after World War II, there were persistent reports that scrap steel from the demolition of New York’s Sixth Avenue El was sold to Japan, and was used to make ammunition that killed American soldiers. But the contract for sale of the scrap metal prohibited export to any country, and the contract was strictly enforced.

- During the German Invasion of Poland in 1939, there is no evidence of Polish Cavalry mounting a brave but futile charge against German tanks using lances and sabres. This seems to have its origins in German propaganda efforts following the Charge at Krojany in which a Polish cavalry brigade surprised German infantry in the open and charged with sabres until driven off by armoured cars. While Polish cavalry still carried the sabre for such opportunities, they were trained to fight as highly mobile, dismounted infantry and issued with light anti-tank weapons.

- During World War II, King Christian X of Denmark did not thwart Nazi attempts to identify Jews by wearing a yellow star himself. Jews in Denmark were never forced to wear the Star of David.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Political Fact Checking
Some Fact Checking Sites

FactCheck.org
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary

FactCheck.org
A Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center

Clearing the Air on Perry’s Record
We find his claims about cleaning up pollution to be exaggerated.

THE WIRE
Idaho Newspaper's Inspired Effort
October 11

FEATURED ARTICLES
Clearing the Air on Perry’s Record
We find his claims about cleaning up pollution to be exaggerated.

ASK FACTCHECK
Q: Did Obama order the military to drop the words “on behalf of the president of the United States” when presenting the flag to the next of kin at funerals?
A: A chain email that makes that claim is wrong. Spokespersons for the Defense Department and the armed forces say that no change was ordered.

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Ask FactCheck

Change in Military Funeral Protocol?
Posted on Monday, October 10, 2011

Q: Did Obama order the military to drop the words “on behalf of the president of the United States” when presenting the flag to the next of kin at funerals?

A: A chain email that makes that claim is wrong. Spokespersons for the Defense Department and the armed forces say that no change was ordered.

Read the full question and answer

Cherry-picking on Regulation
Posted on Thursday, September 22, 2011
Some Fact Checking Sites
Skeptic's Dictionary

FactCheck Mailbag, Week of Sept. 27-Oct. 3

Posted on October 4, 2011

This week, readers sent us comments about the special election for governor in West Virginia and a suggestion for a new FactCheck.org feature.

In the FactCheck Mailbag, we feature some of the e-mail we receive. Readers can send comments to editor@factcheck.org. Letters may be edited for length.

A Thank You From West Virginia

Thank you, thank you, thank you for this article ["West Virginia Race Goes to the Dogs," Sept. 26].

These ridiculous accusations and distortions are driving me crazy. I may turn off the TV for the next six weeks because of all this idiocy. Why aren't these pols describing how they can improve the state instead of tearing down their opponent?

If the millions that have been spent on these defamatory ads were invested in economic development incentives or workforce preparation programs, this state would be taking another baby step toward recovery.

https://medley04.iisc.upenn.edu/giving/ps/Fact.doc?FactStart=simpleForm&programs=ANS&funde=602014
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary

FactCheck.org
A Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center

Home • Don't get spun by Internet rumors

Viral Spiral

Don't get spun by Internet rumors

Just because you read it on somebody's blog or in an email from a friend or relative doesn't mean it's true. It's probably not, as we advised in our special report “Is this chain e-mail true?” back on March 18, 2008. On this page we feature a list of the false or misleading viral rumors we've asked about most often, and a brief summary of the facts. But click on the links to read the full articles. There is a lot more detail in each answer.

Did Obama order the military to drop the words “on behalf of the president of the United States” when presenting the flag to the next of kin at funerals?

A chain email that makes that claim is wrong. Spokespersons for the Defense Department and the armed forces say that no change was ordered.

Oct. 10, 2011

Was President Obama's tour bus made in Canada?
An American Crossroads TV ad claims Obama's position on taxes is "different" than it was in 2009. It isn't. The conservative group began airing a new TV ad in St. Louis on Oct. 3 in advance of the president's fundraising trip to Missouri. The ad, titled "Don't," urges Obama not ...

More >>

Haley Barbour's 'Amnesia'

October 4

Haley Barbour accused a fellow governor of "amnesia," claiming he was forgetting "the fact that Obama had the biggest Democratic majorities in Congress since Lyndon Johnson." But it was actually Republican Barbour who was having a memory lapse. He forgot about the Democrats' massive victories following Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal. ....

More >>

West Virginia's Bitter End

October 3

Democrats and Republicans alike are misleading voters to the bitter end in West Virginia's special election for governor. A Republican TV ad says Acting Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin "voted to raise taxes on job creators." But the "job creators" supported the measure in question, which shored up the state's unemployment ...

More >>

She's No 'Buffett's Secretary'

October 3

A liberal group's TV spot features a working mother who says she's like "Warren Buffett's secretary" and pays ... and their well-financed surrogates are engaged ...

More >>

Fanciful 'Facts' At Fox News Debate

We find the fiction from the Republican candidates' debate in Orlando.

September 23

Nine Republican presidential candidates debated for two hours in Orlando, Fla., and they served up more exaggerations and falsehoods — about Obama, each other, and even Thomas Jefferson. Perry claimed Romney supports Obama's Race to the Top education initiative. In fact ...

More >>

CNN/Tea Party Debate

GOP presidential hopefuls exchange false, misleading claims in Florida forum.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Politifact.com
Wednesday, October 12th, 2011

Fact-checking the Dartmouth GOP debate

The Republican presidential candidates debated Tuesday night at Dartmouth College.

More from PolitiFact:
- Some new broken promises on the Obama meter
- Checking claims from Occupy Wall Street
- President: Palin? Not this time
- $16 muffins -- or incomplete invoices?

The Latest from PolitiFact

A scorecard separating fact from fiction

Says he "came to the Republican Party

At the Dartmouth debate, the Republican candidates were asked to react to videos, including one featuring Ronald Reagan.
Chain e-mail's file:

Chain e-mails circulate on the Internet, usually anonymously, making a variety of political claims.

Our Chain e-mail feeds:
- A feed of statements by Chain e-mail
- A feed of stories mentioning Chain e-mail

Chain e-mail's statements by ruling:
Click on the ruling to see all of Chain e-mail's statements for that ruling.
- True: 4
- Mostly True: 5
- Half True: 6
- Mostly False: 9
- False: 29
- Pants on Fire: 52

Recent statements involving Chain e-mail:

"Florida is the first state requiring drug testing to receive welfare!"

How to contact us:
We want to hear your suggestions and comments.
For tips or comments on our Obameter and our GOP-Pledge-O-Meter promise databases, please e-mail the Obameter. If you are commenting on a specific promise, please include the wording of the promise.

For comments about our Truth-O-Meter or Flip-O-Meter items, please e-mail the Truth-O-Meter.
Some Fact Checking Sites

**Skeptic's Dictionary**

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**Statements we say are Full Flop**

- **On whether he would vote for the budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis.**
  - Scott Brown
  - Clear-eyed about budget kabuki, but still switched from yes to no in 10 days

- **On supporting the budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan**
  - Newt Gingrich
  - The meter turns full circle

- **On whether the federal debt limit should be raised**
  - Barack Obama
  - Now it's must pass, then it was leadership failure

- **On whether the United States should intervene in Libya.**
  - Newt Gingrich
  - Facebook explanation doesn't qualify for

- **On the president unilaterally authorizing a**

---

**How to contact us:**

We want to hear your suggestions and comments. For tips or comments on our Obameter and our GDP-Pledge-O-Meter promise databases, please e-mail the Obameter. If you are commenting on a specific promise, please include the wording of the promise.

For comments about our Truth-O-Meter or Flip-O-Meter items, please e-mail the Truth-O-Meter. We're especially interested in seeing any chain e-mails you receive that you would like us to check out. If you send us a comment, we'll assume you don't mind us publishing it unless you tell us otherwise.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary
Wednesday, October 12th, 2011

Are you now or have you ever been?

Provocative labels—socialist, for instance—fly these days like “liberal” used to be tossed around. In Texas, Ted Cruz recently said David Dewhurst’s camp called Cruz a Communist.

The Latest from PolitiFact Texas

A scorecard separating fact from fiction

Lt. Gov David Dewhurst wasn’t asking a state senator about his partisan lean here. But Ted Cruz says Dewhurst’s camp called him a Communist.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Washington Post Fact Checker
The Fact Checker
The Truth Behind The Rhetoric by Glenn Kessler

Posted at 08:29 PM ET, 10/11/2011

Fact Checking the Post-Bloomberg debate
By Glenn Kessler

That was certainly a fascinating debate Tuesday night sponsored by The Washington Post and Bloomberg. We posted 13 fact checks during the debate, assisted by Post reporters Josh Hicks and Lori Montgomery, and as is our practice will possibly delve more deeply in some issues in the coming days.
Rick Perry’s new ad about Mitt Romney and ‘RomneyCare’

By Josh Hicks

Posted at 08:00 AM ET, 10/11/2011

“RomneyCare cost $8 billion.”

“RomneyCare killed 18,000 jobs.”

-- Text from an ad about Mitt Romney’s healthcare law, sponsored by the Rick Perry campaign, October 10, 2011
Some Fact Checking Sites

Bama Fact Check
Bama Fact Check aims to provide readers with regular investigations into the statements of state and local politicians and public figures. The statements of highest priority will be the policy ideas of political figures rather than their negative campaign advertisements or off-the-cuff remarks. Staff members hope to continue this endeavor throughout the general election and indefinitely. The project's goal rests on a fundamental tenet of journalism and democracy: to provide society with the information it needs to be free and self-governing.

Each political statement researched by Bama Fact Check will receive a “Truth Rating” from a group of staff members. The ratings will range from five, meaning the statement is completely true, to zero, meaning the statement is void of any truth whatsoever.

Will the immigration bill cost the state millions in tax revenue?
A critic of HB56 says that in a world without illegal immigrants, the state would lose $130 million in tax revenue. As with other numbers on illegal immigration, that $130 million figure contains some guesswork.

Is the immigration law boosting the state's economy?
In a guest newspaper column, Sen. Del Marsh, R-Aniston, said HB56 is already improving Alabama's economic outlook. But it's far too early to know for sure.

Do you have a claim that you would like checked into? Click here to request a fact check.
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary

Alabama's economic outlook. But it's far too early to know for sure.

4 days ago | 2 Comments

Did the Legislature increase the court system's costs $66.3 million over 10 years?

Truth Rating: 3 out of 5

In her resignation speech, Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb criticized the Legislature for handing down unfunded mandates to the court system. The court system is clearly struggling, but Cobb's number misses the mark.

3 months ago | 7 Comments

Investigative reporting award for Bama Fact Check

The fact-checking site earned first place in investigative reporting in the Alabama Associated Press Managing Editors Awards.

3 months ago | 4 Comments

Alabama near bottom in alcohol sales, near top in alcohol revenues?

Truth Rating: 4 out of 5

The state's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board says the state makes more money, per capita, off drinkers than most other states—even though Alabamians drink less alcohol, on average, than their neighbors.

4 months ago | 8 Comments
Some Fact Checking Sites

Project Vote Smart
Every candidate and elected official from President to local government can be easily and instantly accessed through the:

- Vote Smart's Website: www.votesmart.org

or

- Voter's Research Hotline: 1-888-VOTE-SMART (1-888-868-3762)

Voting Records -- Compare what your representatives said during the campaign with how they actually voted on the record.

Biographical & Contact Information -- From their previous professions, education, families, organizational membership to their latest e-mail address, we gather it all.

Issue Positions (Political Courage Test) -- We test thousands of candidates for President, Congress, Governor and State Legislature with our Political Courage Test. The test accurately measures a candidate's willingness to provide voters with their positions on the issues they will most likely face if elected to represent you.

Interest Group Ratings -- Over 150 competing special interest groups, from conservative to liberal, evaluate your representatives. Look at what they say.

Public Statements -- The Project constantly collects speeches and public comments of the president, governors, and congressional representatives. Just type in a word, say, 'immigration' and all public utterances containing the word 'immigration' will appear. Compare what they said while campaigning in California a few years ago to what they are saying now in New Hampshire.

Campaign Finances -- How much money did your representatives raise and from whom? Just follow the money and then follow the votes.
Every candidate and elected official from President to local government can be easily and instantly accessed through the:

- Vote Smart's Website: www.votesmart.org

  or

  Voter’s Research Hotline: 1-888-VOTE-SMART (1-888-868-3752)

**Voting Records** — Compare what your representatives said during the campaign with how they actually voted on the record.

**Biographical & Contact Information** — From their previous professions, education, families, organizational membership to their latest e-mail address, we gather it all.

**Issue Positions (Political Courage Test)** — We test thousands of candidates for President, Congress, Governor and State Legislature with our Political Courage Test. The test accurately measures a candidate’s willingness to provide voters with their positions on the issues they will most likely face if elected to represent you.

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**Judicial Branch** — Nominated, appointed, and elected judges and justices, we collect everything that is available on all of them.
Candidates for Louisiana State Offices

Candidates for Statewide Offices:
For Governor
- David Blanchard
  No Party Affiliation
- Leonard Bollingham
  No Party Affiliation
- Ron R. Ceasar
  No Party Affiliation
- Cary J. Deaton
  Democratic
- Tara Hollis
  Democratic
- Bobby A. Jindal
  Republican
- Bob R. Lang Jr.
  No Party Affiliation
- Scott Lewis
  Libertarian
- Niky Bird Papazoglakis
  Democratic
- Tvo Roberts
  Democratic

Candidates for State Legislature:
- Senate
- House of Representatives
Some Fact Checking Sites

Media Matters for America
Fox's 1,000-Day Obama "Report Card" Mimics Republican Document

Fox's "Straight News" Anchor Baier Pushes GOP Talking Points On Supposed Need For Regulation Moratorium ... Fox Passes Off GOP Press Release As Its Own Research -- Typo And All ... Fox Later Apologized -- For The Typo ... Fox Ruthefully Adopts GOP Talking Points On Obama's Budget Speech -- Page A10!
Some Fact Checking Sites

NewsBusters
Some Fact Checking Sites

Skeptic's Dictionary
Questions?
For More Information

stephen_pomes@yahoo.com
Thanks!