



Yes

No

HOT TOPICS: NEWS, BLUES & HOW TO DEFUSE

Fairfax County Public Library



**George Mason University
School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution**



WHAT DO WE WANT?!

RESPECTFUL DISCOURSE.

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?!

NOW WOULD BE
AGREEABLE TO ME,
BUT I AM INTERESTED
IN YOUR OPINION.





Julie Shedd (S-CAR) & Christine Jones (FCPL) receiving the **Jack Wood Award for Town Gown Relations** for partnerships between GMU and the community

THE NEED

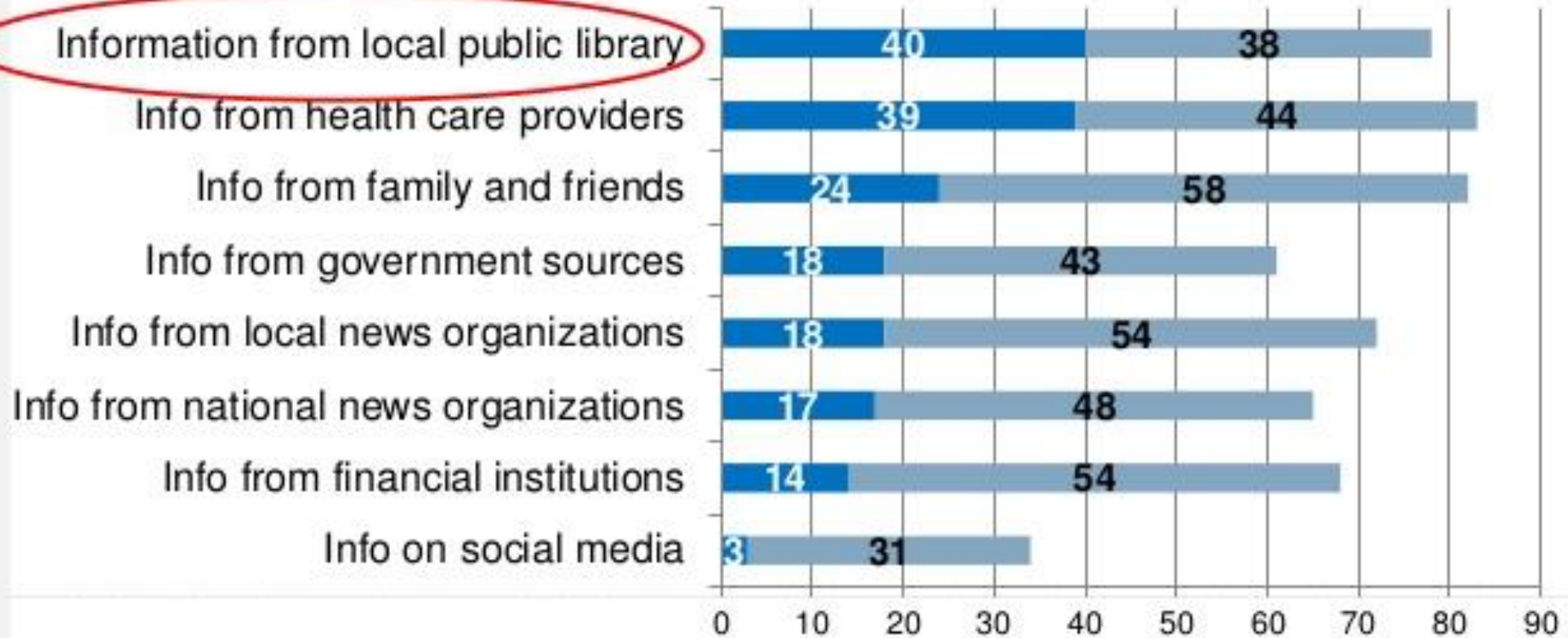
Facts are not enough

The Need

- **Lack of trust** in most institutions
- Deliberate attempts to spread **misinformation**
- Difficulty in determining **what is true/complete/unbiased** and what is not
- **Absence of oversight** on social media platforms
- Perceived **coarsening of public discourse** and violent response

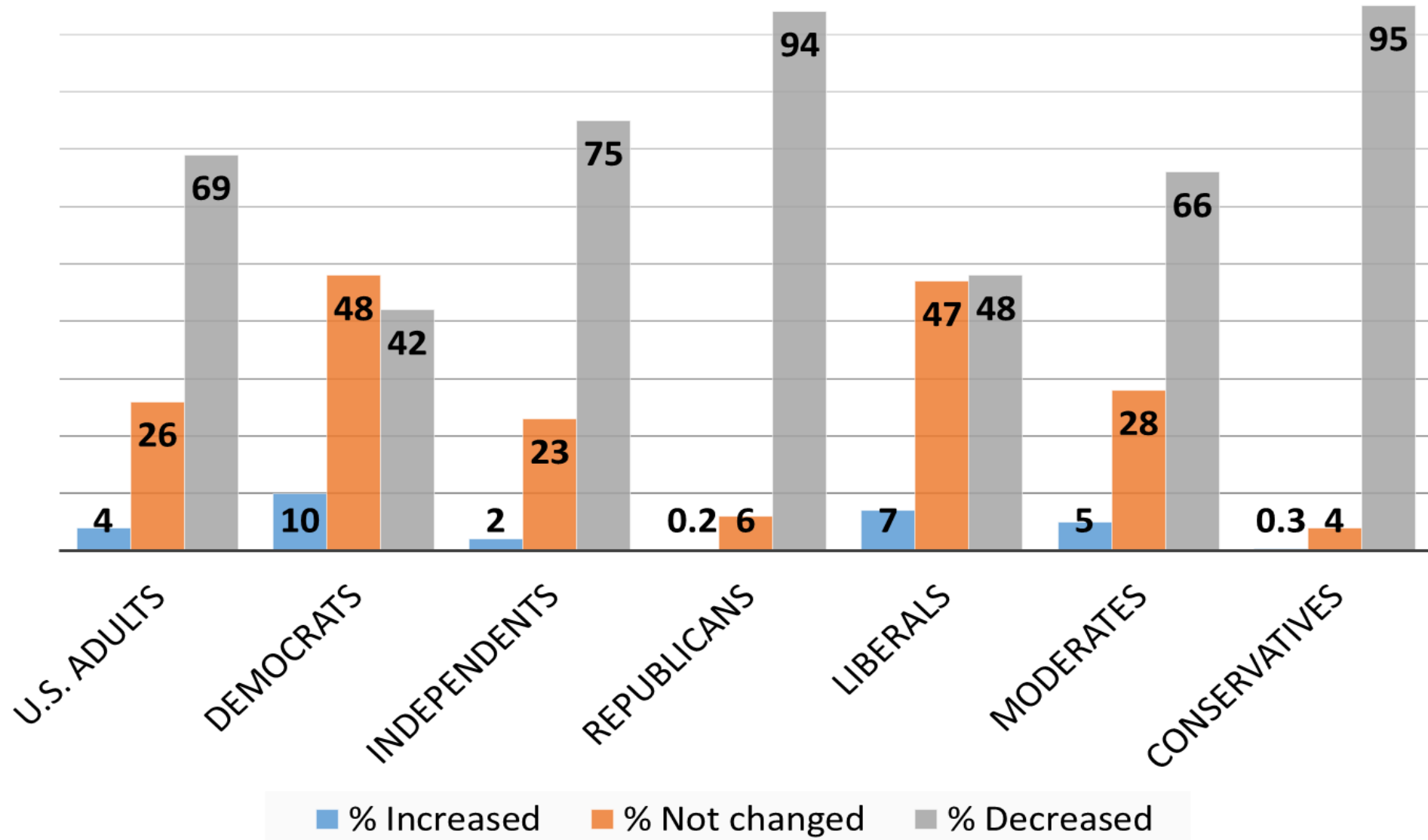
People's trust in various sources of information

■ a lot ■ some



Reported Change in News Media Trust Over Past Decade

In the past 10 years, has your trust in the news media --



Knight Foundation
"Indicators of News
Media Trust,"
September 2018

SIX REASONS **to think critically about news**

- **Disinformation**
- **Propaganda**
- **Hoax**
- **Parody or satire**
- **Errors in journalism**
- **Partisanship**

Goals

Media literacy skills

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and ACT using all forms of communication.

Civil discourse/Basic dialogue skills

Civil discourse is exchanging views in a way that is respectful to oneself and the other party.

HOW WE DID IT

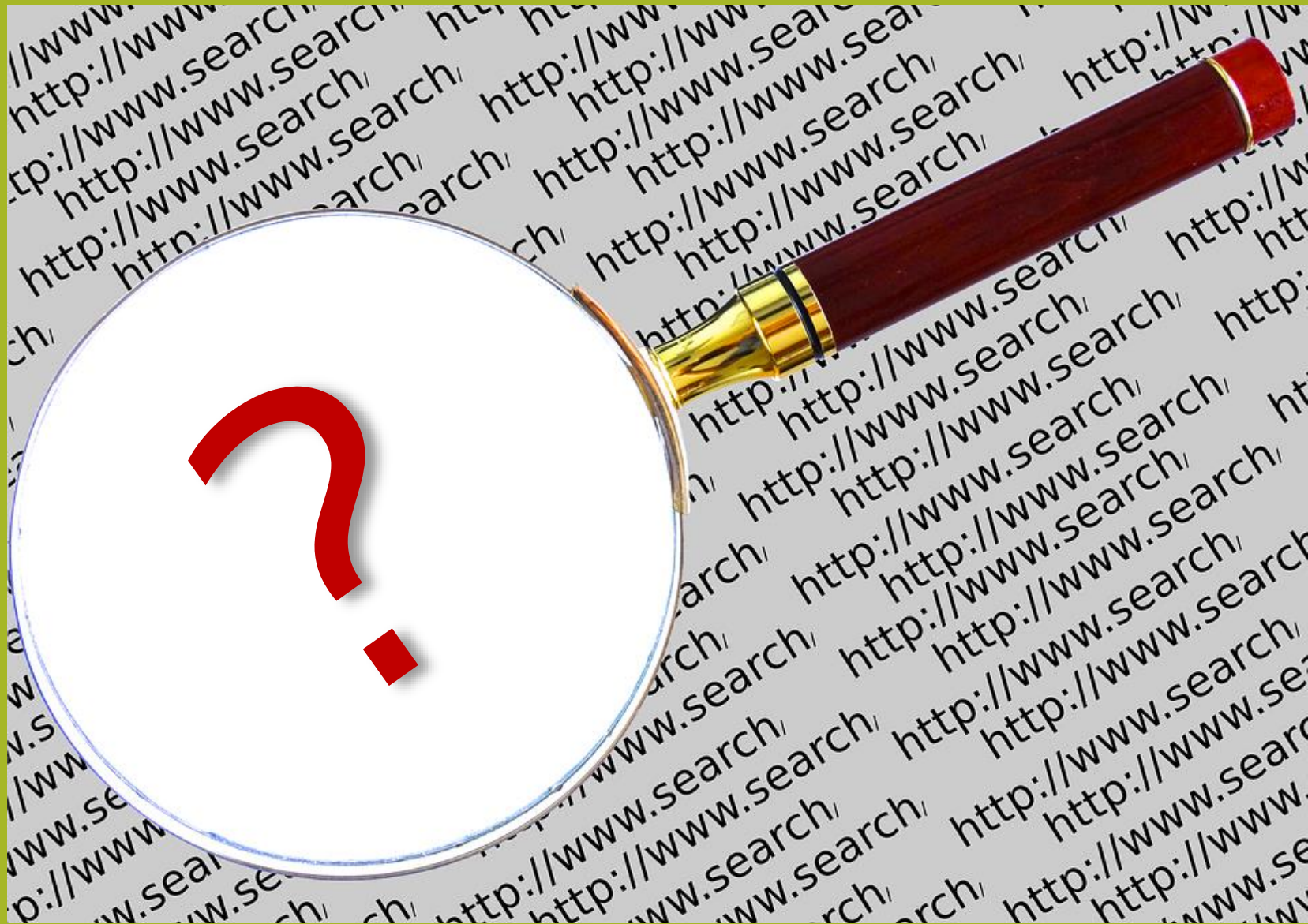
Format

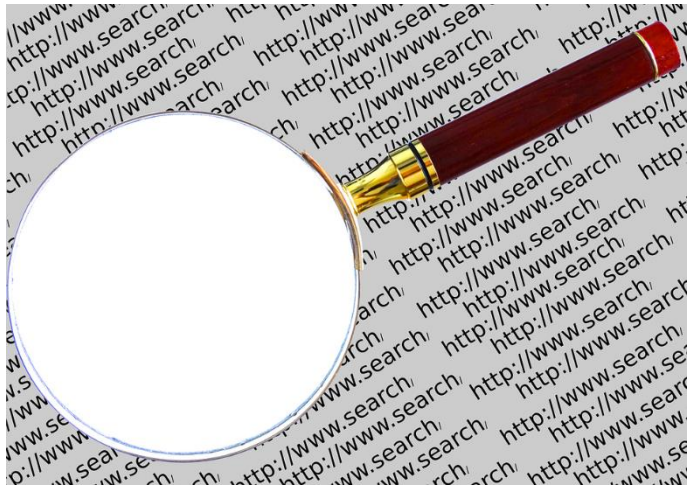
Current Series Format

- Five session series, with each session moving to a different library branch in the county
- First full set of five delivered July-December 2017
- Second set of five delivered January-May 2018
- Each session includes one concrete **media literacy** skill, one **civil discourse** skill and a **dialogue on a topic of the day**

Five Sessions

Media Literacy Skill	Dialogue Skill
Effective Web Searching	Effective Listening
Evaluating Sources	Collaborative Communication
Fact Checking	Effective Speaking
Social Media	Dealing with Emotions
International News	Cross-Cultural Communication





Effective Web Searching

- **Search algorithms**
- **Profit**
- **Alternative search engines**
- **Tips to improve searches**



Abbas Mushtaq, 2012



Evaluating sources

- Finding an agenda
- SMELL test
- Evaluating the source as a group, walking through features of the article





Fact Checking

- Further evaluation
- Fact checking sites
- Checking images





“We are not the arbiters of truth,” said Nick Pickles, Twitter’s head of public policy for the United Kingdom, during testimony before British lawmakers in Washington.

[Subscribe](#)



"We are not the arbiters of truth," said Nick Pickles, Twitter's head of public policy for the United Kingdom, during testimony before British lawmakers in Washington.

Social Media

- Agendas
- Algorithms
- Profit
- Interference





International news

- Free press
- Motive & Propaganda
- Acknowledging and Understanding cultural context
- Finding international news sources



CUNY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**NEWS INTEGRITY
INITIATIVE**



#JournalismTrustInitiative

HOW WE DID IT

Examples of Dialogues



HOW TO DEFUSE THE “BLUES”

Collaborative Communication & You

What you say & do can make or break a conversation

It is essential that you have the tools to manage, and not damage, the tone of the conversation.



Effective Listening

- What are my **intentions**?
- Am I allowing for some **silence**?
- Am I being **respectful**?



Trouble in Listening: Verbal Blockers*

Advising

Judging

Reassuring/
Minimizing

Analyzing/
Diagnosing

Questioning

*Mennonite Conciliation Service Handbook, pg. 131.

Collaborative Communication Skills

- Paraphrasing
- Communicating Openness
- Agreement Stating
- Asking Open Questions



Collaborative Communication Skills

Basic
Strategies

Probing
Questions

Clarifying
Questions

Justifying
Questions

Consequential
Questions

Effective Speaking

- What are **their reasons**?
- Why am **I trying to say**?
- Am I being **respectful**?



Effective Speaking: Framing Messages

I-Messages

Preference
Statements

Purpose
Stating

Dealing with Emotions

- The “**What Happened**” Conversation
 - Exploring each others’ stories, impact and contribution
- The **Feelings** Conversation
 - Unexpressed feelings can “leak in”, make it difficult to listen, and have a toll on relationships.
- The **Identity** Conversation
 - Am I competent? Am I a good person? Am I worthy of love?

Moving to a learning conversation

“What
Happened”

Feelings

Identity

Cross-Cultural Communication

- Am I **listening** carefully?
- Am I **stereotyping**?
- Am I being **respectful**?



Navigating Language Gaps

- **Don't overthink it.**
 - They're nervous, too.
 - Respect is key.
 - Be genuine.
- **Don't rush to "fix" their speech.**
 - Wait for them to ask for help.
 - Be patient.

The Yogurt Dilemma



RECEPTION

Participation

- Average group size: 18
- Predominantly older, white,
 - Professor- class requirements
- Skewed liberal (as does Fairfax County)
- Participants were engaged and seemed comfortable interacting

OOPS!



Natural News.com
Natural Health, Natural Living, Natural News

The logo features a green globe with a recycling symbol. The background of the banner shows a wooden surface with various fruits and vegetables.

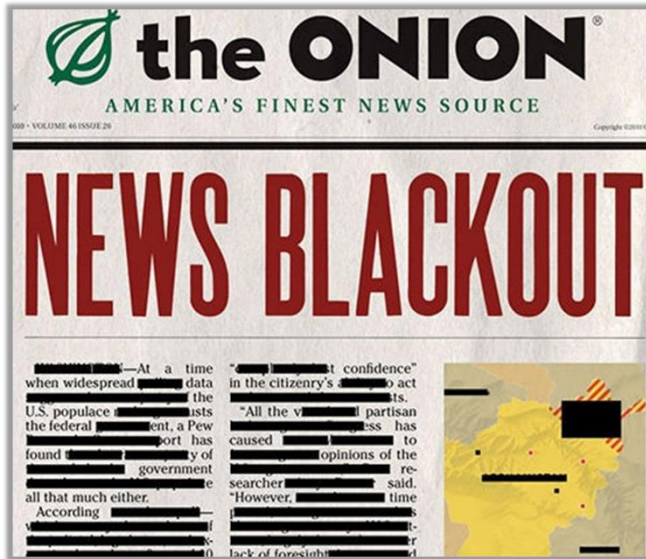
FUTURE

Future Developments

Working on other presentation formats

- Tightening it to two sessions
- Developing curriculum for a youth version
- Packaging the program so it can be used by other organizations
- Developing curriculum to teach facilitation skills to FCPL librarians

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS



THANK YOU!

J.J. Dickinson

Samantha Borders-Shoemaker

Sarah Souther