

Appendix A: The four fact checkers

In this study, we examine four fact checkers: Snopes, PolitiFact, Logically, and the Australian Associated Press FactCheck (AAP). Our selection of fact checkers was guided by several criteria: 1) they should primarily focus on fact-checking in a similar domain (e.g., U.S. related stories); 2) their fact-checking rating structure should be comparable to enable meaningful comparisons; 3) the fact-checking article should contain a summary of the fact-checked claim; and 4) they should conduct fact-checking on a regular basis. Based on these criteria, we selected Snopes and PolitiFact as the two primary fact checkers. Additionally, to investigate the potential differences across countries, we included the AAP as a non-U.S.-based fact checker. Lastly, we included Logically, a fact checker that claimed to use advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) to combat misinformation, unlike human-based analysis done by the other three fact checkers.

One of the notable fact checkers is *Snopes*,¹ which specializes in fact-checking and debunking rumors, myths, and misinformation that circulates on the internet. Founded in 1994, the organization’s team of researchers and writers investigate a wide range of topics, including politics, health, science, and entertainment. Snopes is known for its detailed and comprehensive investigations, which often include multiple sources and references to back up their findings. Their website has been referenced by numerous media outlets and is widely recognized as one of the most reliable sources for fact-checking on the internet.

PolitiFact is another organization that specializes in fact-checking and evaluating the accuracy of claims made by politicians and public figures in the United States.² Founded in 2007, PolitiFact uses a “Truth-O-Meter” system to rate the accuracy of statements, with ratings ranging from *True* to *Pants on Fire* for claims that are completely false.

Unlike these two fact checkers that primarily depend on human fact-checking, *Logically*, founded in 2017, employs a blend of human expertise and artificial intelligence (AI) technology to analyze and verify information on a variety of topics in a variety of regions such as the United States, the U.K., and India.³ To compare Logically with other U.S.-based fact checkers, we used only fact-checking articles labeled as U.S.-related from the entire dataset.

Finally, as a fact checker that is not U.S.-based, we selected the *AAP*, which provides a concise summary of the claim being fact-checked and employs a rating system similar to that of the other three fact checkers.⁴

In the realm of authorship, most fact-checking articles from the four fact checkers typically list a single author, notwithstanding the collaborative nature of the fact-checking process, as elucidated on their respective websites. This process often involves team efforts in selecting the topic, conducting fact-finding research, and writing the final article. For our study, we designated the main author named in each fact-checking article as the primary contributor. However, in instances where multiple authors were enumerated, we recognized all listed as primary contributors to the given fact-checking article.

Each fact checker had a different starting point. Snopes had 15,463 fact-checking articles from February 26, 1996, to August 31, 2022, while PolitiFact had 21,262 fact-checking articles from May 2, 2007, to August 31, 2022. The AAP had 843 fact-checking articles from December 6, 2018, to August 31, 2022,

¹ See, <https://www.snopes.com/>

² See, <https://www.politifact.com/>

³ See, <https://www.logically.ai/fact-check>

⁴ See, <https://www.aap.com.au/factcheck/>

and Logically, the most recent addition, had 4,365 articles from May 17, 2019, to August 31, 2022. Logically includes fact-checking articles related to the United States, U.K., and India. However, to directly compare Logically with other U.S.-based fact checkers, we only selected fact-checking articles labeled as U.S.-related from the entire dataset and analyzed this subset of fact-checking articles. Furthermore, to ensure a fair comparison, we selected a common comparison period across the four fact checkers. After collecting all fact-checking articles from each fact checkers, we identified the latest starting date of fact-checking articles among all fact checkers. Since the first fact-checking article of Logically was published on May 17, 2019, we selected that date as the starting point for the comparison period. Given that all four fact checkers were active during our study period, we set the ending point of the comparison period as August 31, 2022.

We reassessed the comparison period for investigating the consistency of fact-check ratings across matching claims. Given the similar volumes of fact-checking articles from Snopes and PolitiFact, compared to the significantly fewer articles from AAP and Logically, our analysis focused on matching claims between Snopes and PolitiFact. We redefined the comparison period to include matching claims published from January 1, 2016, through August 31, 2022, during which Snopes and PolitiFact published 11,639 and 10,710 fact-checking articles, respectively. It's worth noting that for rating level comparison, we retained the original rating system (e.g., *False*, *Mostly False*, *Mixture*, *Mostly True*, *True*, etc.), whereas, for veracity level comparison, we consolidated *False* and *Mostly False* as *Fake*, and *True* and *Mostly True* as *Real*.