

Why fact-checking should matter more in journalism

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By Tina Jian, MSc student at LSE

Fact-checkers do not understand hyperbole. And a lot of politicians, especially Donald Trump, use hyperbole to make a larger point. A lot of what fact checkers do is to fact check the minutiae of the hyperbole' and leave the bigger point out of it.

Washington Times Editor Kelly Riddell, 2016

In his recent talk at the LSE, journalism professor Richard Sambrook shared his critical understanding of how the news presents information and 'truth'.

Referring to current hot topics 'Brexit' and 'American presidential campaign', he analysed several existing problems in journalism and suggested some practical solutions.

During the EU



referendum, he argued that the media coverage placed emphasis on individual political voices, illustrating this with the graffitied image of Donald Trump kissing Boris Johnson and the example of an online survey on 'who has the craziest hair between Donald Trump and Boris Johnson?'

Sambrook pointed out that only 1 in 5 statistical claims during the EU referendum were challenged. Citing from The New York Times' he said: "It is Journalism's job to be true to the readers and viewers, and true to the facts, in away that will stand up to history's judgment."

To conclude his talk, Richard suggested three aspects he thinks could provide some solutions to the problem of 'post-truth' media: political, social and journalistic. The way to raise the cost of lying for politicians is to strengthen fact-checking; socially, improving media literacy and tackling the echo-chamber. Last but not least, evidence-based news reporting and a wider source base are two essential principles that all journalists should obey.

By Tina Jiang

Listen to the talk:

Audio Player

http://media.rawvoice.com/lse_mediaandcommunications/richmedia.lse.ac.uk/mediaandcommunications/20161011_fairnessBalanceRichardSambrook_mediaAgendaTalks2016.mp3

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