

Really? Is that a fact? Hey, just checking

based on an article by **Rem Rieder**



- 1 It's one of the more encouraging developments in journalism in recent years. The advent of the fact-checking movement, in which reporters rigorously analyze and evaluate the assertions and advertisements of politicians, is nothing but healthy for democracy. Farewell to the totally unlamented he-said, she-said approach, in which politico A says X, politico B says Y, and the story leaves it at that – and leaves the reader or viewer completely confused. Instead, the fact-checkers, utilizing painstaking research rather than partisan spin, figure out who's telling the truth and who isn't.
- 2 The movement was fueled largely by the launch of FactCheck.org, an initiative of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center, in 2003, and PolitiFact, by the *Tampa Bay Times* in 2007. But the spirit of fact-checking has seeped deeply into American journalism, as other news organizations weigh in at critical junctures. A watershed moment came last August, when Wisconsin Representative Paul Ryan's error-riddled speech at the Republican National Convention was rapidly discredited, even by right-wing broadcaster Fox News.
- 3 Neil Brown, editor of the *Tampa Bay Times*, sounds downright evangelical when he talks about the work of PolitiFact in particular and fact-checking in general. "If politicians know a fact-checker is out there, they are going to be more careful to be accurate," he says. "There's power in disclosure." Besides playing an important civic role, Brown says PolitiFact "is profoundly popular with readers. It's one of the big drivers of Web traffic." Brooks Jackson of FactCheck.org sees in fact-checking an important new role for traditional media. In the Internet era, "Everybody is flooded with bogus information." News outlets can serve as "adjudicators, honest brokers, referees."
- 4 While fact-checking has certainly gained traction, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, sees trouble on the horizon. Critics will often say that various arbiters sometimes are looking into things that aren't really "facts." Jamieson says it's important to take these responses seriously. Often, the pieces are about inferences or exaggerations.
- 5 She also worries that her colleagues in the fact-checking game at PolitiFact have opened the field up to another area of criticism. PolitiFact, after laying out the evidence, uses its Truth-O-Meter to judge the assertions it investigates, assigning them to categories ranging from "true" to "mostly false" to "pants on fire." Critics sometimes say those

determinations are subjective, and Jamieson thinks they may have a point. (FactCheck.org doesn't have a similar shorthand for telegraphing its findings.) She says such characterizations, while attention-getting, often don't do justice to the careful journalism on which they are based.

6 One of the depressing aspects of last year's election was that some politicians continued to spread bad information, even after it had been widely discredited. They figured that if they repeated the nonsense loudly and frequently enough, they would 29 the fact-checkers.

7 But that's no reason to be discouraged. All the fact-checkers can do is lay out the truth. The rest is up to the 30.

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Tekst 7 Really? Is that a fact? Hey, just checking

- 1p 25 What does the author say about fact-checking in paragraph 1?
- A It helps experts to develop more effective political campaigns.
 - B It improves the transparency of the political debate.
 - C It is a powerful method that can be used to influence elections.
 - D It stimulates politicians to check each other's speeches carefully.
- 1p 26 What does the example of Paul Ryan (paragraph 2) make clear about fact-checking?
- A It has been accepted by media with different political preferences.
 - B It has the potential of intensifying existing political disagreements.
 - C It is a delicate practice best left to academically trained professionals.
 - D It is especially successful when implemented at a regional level.
- 1p 27 Who are the 'various arbiters' mentioned in paragraph 4?
- A investigative journalists
 - B officially appointed judges
 - C selected representatives
 - D trained spokespersons
 - E trustworthy politicians
- 1p 28 What view of the 'Truth-O-Meter' does Kathleen Hall Jamieson express in paragraph 5?
- The way it presents research results is
- A catchy but oversimplified.
 - B creative but irrelevant.
 - C interesting but ambiguous.
 - D sophisticated but prejudiced.
- 1p 29 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?
- A drown out
 - B scare off
 - C wake up
 - D win over
- 1p 30 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 7?
- A authorities
 - B critics
 - C experts
 - D media
 - E voters

Bronvermelding

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