

Traps to Watch for When Using Google News

Google News provides a much higher quality set of news sources than general search, but not everything in Google News is trustworthy. Google News still indexes [conspiracy sites such as World Net Daily](#), for instance. Additionally, when foreign newspapers report American stories (or when American papers report foreign stories) special care should be taken: cultural notions sometimes don't transfer, and foreign press often misunderstand hoax sites as true American news, as in this case where an Indian newspaper repeats a hoax debunked by Snopes months ago:



Was a Morgue Employee Cremated by Mistake While Taking a Nap?

snopes.com - Mar 3, 2017

An **employee** of the Jefferson County **morgue** died this morning, after being accidentally **cremated** by one of his coworkers. According to the Beaumont Police Department, 48-year old Henri Paul Johnson decided to **take a nap** on a stretcher after working for sixteen hours straight. **While** he was **sleeping**, another **employee** ...



Negligence caused death of coworker in crematory

The Siasat Daily - 12 hours ago

... of the Macomb County **morgue** accidentally **cremated** one of his coworkers after he mistook him for a dead victim corpse **while** he was **sleeping**. ... She said the coworker who had committed the **accident** was a new **employee** and had forgotten to check the toe tags before **taking** the body for **cremation**.

(Pictured: An Indian paper picks up a debunked story about a person cremated by mistake, and it shows up in Google News)

Users also have to be careful of opinion columns on traditional news sites. There are many reliable reporting sources that have opinion pages with little to no verification process in place. Here's an example of that issue:



trump populism republican tax plan



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Living With the Republican Tax Plan

New York Times - Dec 6, 2017

After watching Trumpian **populism** overwhelm the dikes of ideology during the last primary campaign, **Republican** lawmakers could have learned something from the experience, and made the discontented working class voters who put Donald **Trump** in the White House the major beneficiaries of their **tax** ...



MSNBC



New York Mag...



TPM



Financial Tribu...



The Daily Bant...



Washington P...



Right and Left React to the Republican Tax Plan

New York Times - Dec 5, 2017

He suggests that Democrats running in 2020 campaign focus on exposing Mr. **Trump's** false **populism** and advocating for increased social spending. "Reporters are inevitably going to ask them how they **plan** to pay for it," he writes. "**Republicans** have given them an easy answer: Repeal the **Trump tax** cuts ...

(Pictured: A Google News result page with two New York Times items about the Republican tax plan)

There's two *New York Times* items here, but they are completely different in type, and for all intents and purposes from two different sources. The first one is an opinion column, and the second is a straight news item. In Google they look exactly the same. If you're used to this stuff, you can get a good idea from the tone of the snippet which is which, but if you're new to this you probably have to click through.

Opinion | OP-ED COLUMNIST

Living With the Republican Tax Plan



Ross Douthat

DEC. 6, 2017

First, let me vent. The Republican tax reform, now extremely likely become law pending certain events next week in Alabama, represe

(Pictured: An opinion column about the tax plan. It is labelled opinion at the top of the article, even though it was not marked as opinion in Google News.)

A good traditional news source — such as the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Washington Post*— will make clear which items are opinion and which are reporting. Many non-traditional sources will not (one benefit of using traditional sources for verification is the hard line they draw between editorial and news reporting).

All of these caveats might sound a bit distressing, but even with these caveats, using Google News to check news claims is going to filter out 95% of the junk. For many verification tasks it's the best first move.