

Content Confusion: Climate Communication and the Path Forward

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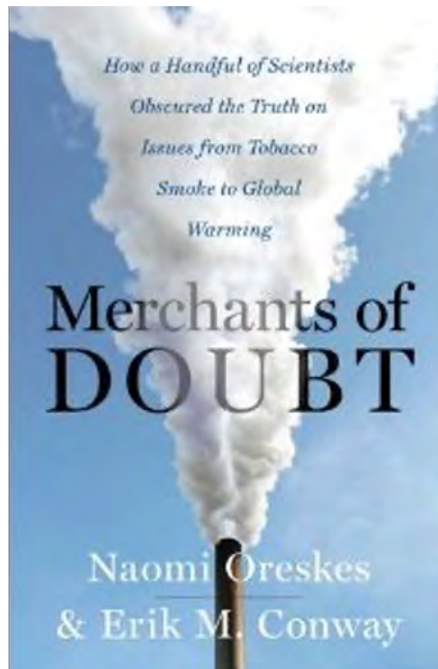
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History of Disinformation from Corporate Actors



ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LETTERS

LETTER • OPEN ACCESS

Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications (1977–2014)

Geoffrey Supran² and Naomi Oreskes

Published 23 August 2017 • © 2017 The Author(s). Published by IOP Publishing Ltd

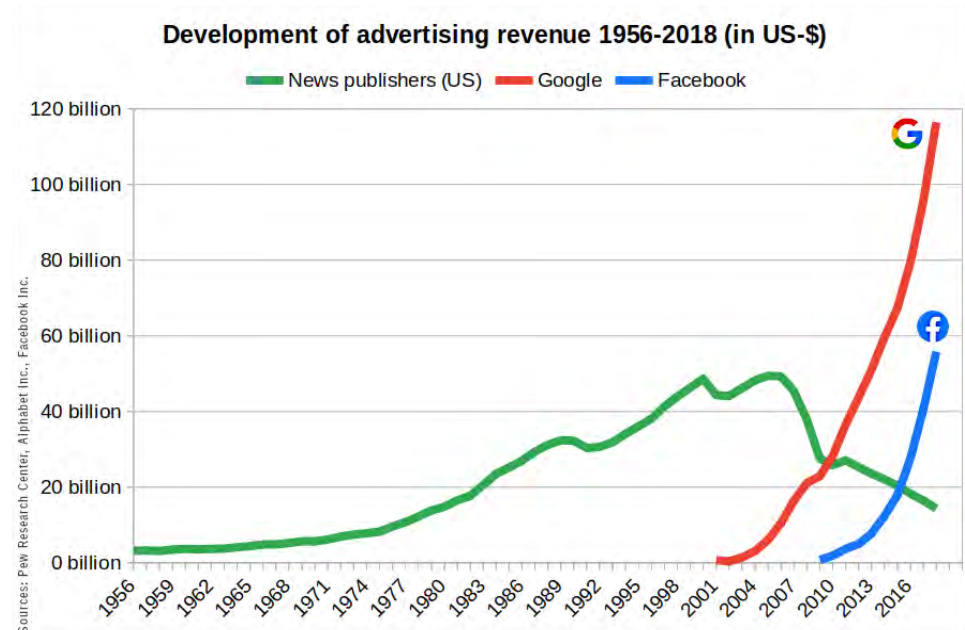
[Environmental Research Letters](#), Volume 12, Number 8

Citation Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes 2017 *Environ. Res. Lett.* 12 084019

 Article PDF

US Journalism Context: Tsunami of Crises

- Emergence of digital media
- Loss of ad \$s in journalism
- Emergence of ad blockers

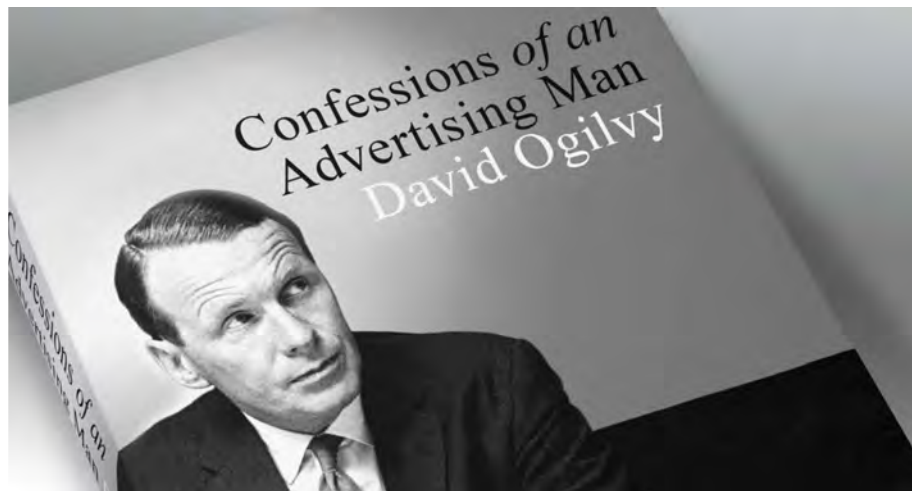


What is “native advertising”?

The use of “textual, pictorial, and/or audiovisual material that supports the aims of an advertiser (and is paid for by the advertiser) while it mimics the format and editorial style of the publisher that carries it” (Couldry and Turow 2014, 1716).



“There is no need for advertisements to look like advertisements. If you make them look like editorial pages, you will attract about 50 per cent more readers. You might think that the public would resent this trick, but there is no evidence to suggest that they do.”





Cooling the Planet

One contributor to climate change is also essential to modern society. This is the story of the search for a sustainable alternative.

SCROLL



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Cooling the Planet



This is the first installment in a three-part reported series on the global effort to introduce more sustainable refrigerants. Click here to read [Part I: The Battle of the Titans](#) and [Part II: The Future of Cool](#).

Chiemeka Ikegwuonu comes from a family of farmers. In the fertile lands of southeast Nigeria, he and his children raise poultry, breed cattle, and grow fruits and vegetables.

But despite productive farms and harvests, most people in the region scramble to feed their families.

"Farmers lose 50 percent of their harvest due to spoilage," says Ikegwuonu. "There's no reliable electricity to keep food cool in storage at local markets."

And while food is spoiling in the south, families are starving to death in the north. The UN has said that a potential famine in the region could prove to be the worst humanitarian crisis in 70 years, with more than eight million people at risk. The country's current infrastructure and technological capabilities aren't sufficient to link the two regions together.

The urgency of the issue pushed Ikegwuonu to look for a solution. In 2015, he launched Cold Hubs, which develops solar-powered refrigeration storage units. Today, there are 50 such units in southern Nigeria, and he hopes to have 100 by 2018, and 15,000 in the following decade.

The units have extended the shelf life of produce from two to 21 days,





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CAN YOU SPOT SPONSORED CONTENT? PROF. MICHELLE AMAZEEN'S STUDY REVEALS FEW OF US CAN






In today's ever-shifting online media landscape, "native advertising"—sponsored content that is integrated into a publication without being readily recognizable as promotional—has become increasingly commonplace across digital

news platforms. The question then arises: How do individuals perceive native advertisements and are they able to differentiate them from non-promotional editorial content?




Amazeen, M. A., & Wojdyski, B. W. (2020). The effects of disclosure format on native advertising recognition and audience perceptions of legacy and online news publishers. *Journalism*, 21(12), 1965-1984. doi.org/10.1177/1464884918754829






Disappearing Disclosures

 **Michelle Amazeen**
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Journalism Studies



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjos20>

Sharing Native Advertising on Twitter: Content Analyses Examining Disclosure Practices and Their Inoculating Influence

Michelle A. Amazeen & Chris J. Vargo

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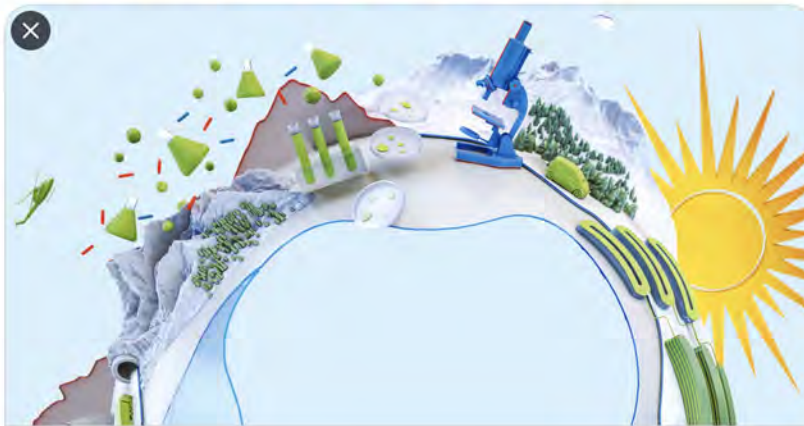
Proper Disclosure



Everyone ▾

PAID POST by ExxonMobil — The Future of Energy? It May Come From Where You Least Expect

<https://www.nytimes.com/paidpost/exxonmobil/the-future-of-energy-it-may-come-from-where-you-least-expect.html?smid=tw-share>



nytimes.com

PAID POST by ExxonMobil — The Future of Energy? It May Come F...

How scientists are tapping algae and plant waste to fuel a sustainable energy future.

Jeopardizing Editorial Independence

International Journal of Communication 15(2021), 5186–5207

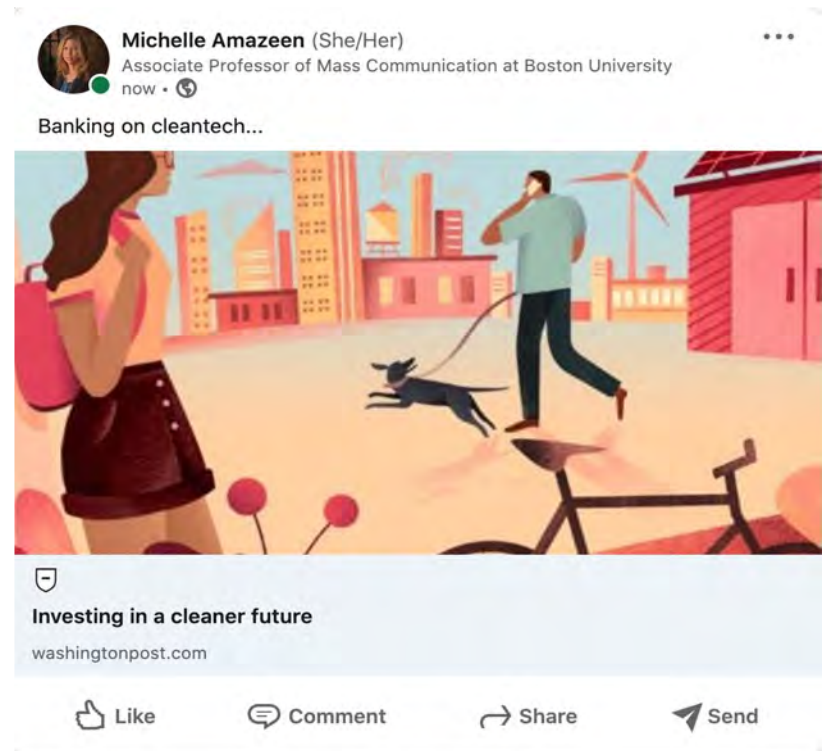
1932-8036/20210005

Agenda-Cutting Versus Agenda-Building: Does Sponsored Content Influence Corporate News Coverage in U.S. Media?

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University of Colorado Boulder, USA

MICHELLE A. AMAZEEN
Boston University, USA

Sponsored content articles ($N = 2,711$) from 27 major U.S. corporations were analyzed across five years in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. The degree to which sponsored content predicted significant changes in corporate news coverage was investigated for elite media and U.S. online media. Corporate-sponsored content appeared to mildly suppress coverage of that corporation in online news. This effect, known as agenda cutting, happened both inside elite media and across the media landscape. Conversely, agenda building, or instances where sponsored content resulted in more media coverage, was very rare. We suggest that "content studios," the departments of news media organizations that create sponsored content, may be exhibiting an agenda-setting effect more akin to traditional advertising departments, which have been known to suppress critical coverage of corporations that pay for ads.



A screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top left is a circular profile picture of Michelle Amazeen. To her right is her name "Michelle Amazeen (She/Her)" and her title "Associate Professor of Mass Communication at Boston University" with "now" and a location pin icon. Below this is the text "Banking on cleantech...". The main image is an illustration of a woman in a pink top and dark skirt walking a dog on a leash, with a man in a green shirt talking on a phone in the background. The scene is set in a city with buildings and a wind turbine. Below the image is a light blue box containing a shield icon, the text "Investing in a cleaner future", and the URL "washingtonpost.com". At the bottom are icons for "Like", "Comment", "Share", and "Send".

Concerns with Native Advertising

1. Deceives audiences
2. Disappearing disclosures
3. Harms journalistic integrity
 - Tarnishing real journalism
 - Contradicting reporting
 - Suppressing future reporting
 - Creating competing “news” agenda



How Climate Disinformation Spreads: Native Advertising

Boston University Climate Disinformation Initiative

Research Theme | How native advertising is employed for corporate communications campaigns

Research goal: To extend related research to focus on the discussion of climate issues in native advertising, especially to identify how corporations engaged in native advertising are using the medium to affect public attitudes toward climate

On the issue of climate change, the evidence is clear that mainstream politicians¹ and [large corporations](#)² have been major spreaders of disinformation. To further understand how climate lies spread, the Boston University Climate Disinformation Initiative focuses on [native advertising](#)³ to complement its emphases on social media.

Native advertising is a format of advertising that mimics that of news articles; native ads typically run under the logo of the news organization and often share stylistic elements such as font, as well as writing style, with news articles. Native ads are a growing part of the advertising business, and in fact many news organizations today have internal

[Climate Disinformation Initiative](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Reddit](#)

[Native Advertising](#)

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- Washington Post
- New York Post
- Daily Mail
- CNBC
- BBC
- USA Today
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- Forbes
- Business Insider
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- US News & World Report
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U.S. REFINERS CLEAN UP TRADE AS THEIR OWN EXPORTS SOAR

U.S. refineries have made the investments needed to produce the cleanest shipping fuels in history, fuels that will power cleaner global trade.



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And the U.S. upstream oil industry is well positioned for IMO 2020 as well. Much of the increase in U.S. crude oil production is low in sulfur and ideal for making lower-sulfur fuels, and America is exporting more crude today than ever before.

In addition to restarting the coker at its Chalmette refinery to produce more **clean fuels**, PBF has agreed to supply shipping giant Maersk with low-sulfur marine fuel produced at PBF's recently acquired former asphalt refinery in New Jersey on the Delaware River south of Philadelphia. Like restarting the coker at Chalmette, the agreement with Maersk repurposes idled assets to supply **clean fuels**.



BP will produce IMO compliant fuels and sees the coming cap on sulfur fundamentally shifting global marine fuel use.


anufacturers

U.S. refineries have made the investments needed to **produce the cleanest shipping fuels in history**, fuels that will power cleaner global trade.



Hydrogen: Another Chapter in ExxonMobil's Lower-Emissions Ambitions

New world-scale blue hydrogen facility plans to fuel operations and reduce emissions.



Blue hydrogen is a low-carbon fuel produced from natural gas in combination with [carbon capture and storage](#) (CCS). This clean-burning fuel produces zero CO₂ when combusted, meaning it can play a vital role in a lower-emission future.



Hydrogen: Another Chapter in ExxonMobil's Lower-Emissions Ambitions

New world-scale blue hydrogen facility plans to fuel operations and reduce emissions.



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Touted as clean, 'blue' hydrogen may be worse than gas or coal

By Blaine Friedlander

August 12, 2021



“Blue” hydrogen – an energy source that involves a process for making hydrogen by using methane in natural gas – is being lauded by many as a clean, green energy to help reduce global warming. But Cornell and Stanford University researchers believe it may harm the climate more than burning fossil fuel.

The carbon footprint to create blue hydrogen is more than 20% greater than using either natural gas or coal directly for heat, or about 60% greater than using diesel oil for heat, according to new research published Aug. 12 in Energy Science & Engineering.

“Most of the hydrogen in the U.S. and Europe comes from natural gas, using

The Future of Energy? It May Come From Where You Least Expect

How scientists are tapping algae and plant waste to fuel a sustainable energy future.



loudy days don't come often to Calipatria, Calif. This

Attorney General's Office Lawsuit Against ExxonMobil

[Read the Amended Complaint](#)

[Read the full press release here.](#)

On October 24, 2019, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey sued Exxon Mobil Corporation (Exxon), the world's largest publicly traded oil and gas company, for deceptive advertising to Massachusetts consumers and for misleading Massachusetts investors about the risks to Exxon's business posed by fossil fuel-driven climate change—including systemic financial risk. The [amended complaint](#), filed in Suffolk Superior Court on June 5, 2020, alleges that Exxon has repeatedly violated the state's consumer and investor protection law and related regulations. Specifically, the amended complaint alleges that Exxon systematically and intentionally has misled Massachusetts investors about material climate-driven risks to its business and has deceived consumers about the central role its fossil fuel products play in causing climate change. The amended complaint alleges that Exxon's violations have taken the form of both significant factual misstatements and the failure to make disclosures to investors and consumers that would have been material to decisions by Massachusetts investors to purchase, sell, retain, and price ExxonMobil securities and by Massachusetts consumers to

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Biofuels

Big oil firms touted algae as climate solution. Now all have pulled funding

Insiders aren't surprised as ExxonMobil, the last remaining proponent of green algae biofuel, ends research

Amy Westervelt

@amywestervelt

Fri 17 Mar 2023 13:32 EDT



Some strains of algae produce large amount of lipids which can be turned into fuel relatively easily. Photograph: Michael Macor/AP

One by one, big oil firms have touted their investments in algae biofuels as the future of low-carbon transportation – and one by

Advertisement



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Planea Ahora para el Verano: Es el mejor momento para reservar una escapada solada a NJ

New Jersey Travel & To...



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Experimental Study on Effects of Native Advertising and Their Corrections

1m · 🔒

ICYMI: ExxonMobil is actually becoming an environmentally friendly company! It's working to decrease its overall carbon footprint, and is an innovator in the development of alternative fossil fuels such as fuel from algae and farm waste.



NYTIMES.COM
PAID POST by ExxonMobil – The Future of Energy? It May Come from Where You Least Expect it

Like Comment

Write a comment...

3m · 🔒

ICYMI: Natural gas is a clean, affordable and abundant energy option that reduces carbon emissions just like wind and solar. Using gas appliances like stoves, furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces and other appliances alongside other energy sources reduces the strain on the fragile electrical grid. Unlike electric appliances, natural gas appliances can work even during power outages.



NYTIMES.COM
Can Natural Gas be the Key to Lowering Emissions?

1 comment

Like Comment

Hmm, are you sure this is a real news story? It sounds like an ad. In fact, [FactCheck.org](#) flagged this article for misleading content because Exxon is advertising natural gas as a "clean" source of energy when it is in fact a fossil fuel and does contribute to emissions.

Like Reply 1m

Sponsorship of climate journalism

GIZMODO

Big Oil Uses Newsletter Ads to Spread Misinformation Ahead of Big Oil Misinformation Hearing

Fossil fuel companies are sponsoring some of the Beltway's most-read newsletters in an attempt to win influence in Washington, DC.

By **Molly Taft and Emily Atkin** Published October 27, 2021 | [Comments \(11\)](#) | [Alerts](#)



In the month leading up to the hearing, from October 1 to October 22:

- 63% of Punchbowl newsletters, or 30 out of 48, were sponsored by fossil fuel interests.
- 100% of POLITICO's Morning Energy newsletters, or 15 out of 15, were sponsored by fossil fuel interests.
- 62% of Axios Generate newsletters, or 10 out of 16, were sponsored by fossil fuel interests.



HEATED

In the month leading up to the hearing from October 1 to October 22:

Still, Politico and Axios each defended the practice of running the ads, despite concerns they may be misinforming millions about the climate crisis.

“It is not up to us to decide what is factually accurate or what is not factually accurate,” Politico executive vice president Cally Stolbach Baute told HEATED. “We frankly respect our readers enough to be fully transparent with them on our advertising and encourage them to evaluate our journalism on its merit and its accuracy.”

fuel interests.

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- Culture
- Lifestyle
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Business Economics Banking Money Markets Project Syndicate B2B Retail

Daily Telegraph

This article is more than 8 years old

Telegraph's Peter Osborne resigns, saying HSBC coverage a 'fraud on readers'

Ex-chief political commentator launches blistering attack on paper, saying it put bank's interests before readers to save ad contract

Read Peter Osborne's blog in full

John Plunkett and Ben Quinn

Wed 18 Feb 2015 02:54 EST



Peter Osborne launched a scathing attack on the Telegraph, saying the distinction between advertising and editorial had collapsed. Photograph: Sean Smith

The Daily Telegraph's chief political commentator has resigned and launched a blistering attack on the paper's management and owners over its lack of coverage of the HSBC tax story, which he described as a "fraud on its readers".

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The secrets of 'Black Ops' advertising. Who is paying for our news?

"I think the public would resent knowing they are being tricked. So best not to always tell them."



[James Cusick](#)

[Crina Boros](#)

8 February 2018

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Content Confusion Remedies

1. Content Production:

- Require standardization of disclosures.
- Require watermarking.
- Require searchable ad library.

2. Content Distribution:

- Monitor conduct.
- Monitor/enforce policy compliance.

3. Content Consumption:

- Media literacy education/training.