

Documentaries *and How to Make Sense of Them*

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Ever watched a documentary about an individual, corporation, event or a group of people and thought to yourself, “Wow, that was cool!”? But as time goes by, do you start to realise that, perhaps, the people or other entities showcased in the documentaries are not what they are portrayed as?

If you do start having doubts, fret not, because it is a completely normal thing to doubt the information presented.

Documentaries can be either very informative and accurate, like the many nature documentaries of Sir David Attenborough, or simply shallow but entertaining or downright false and non-consumable, like the many past and present The History Channel documentaries in general. No one wants to watch a documentary named “Hunting Hitler” that tries to pass off a picture of The Three Stooges’ Moe Howards as a “post-war photograph of Hitler still being alive”.

Now, despite the existence of bias in some documentaries, there are several aspects of those contents that do include legitimate information. Unless you are checking out a documentary purely for the purpose of entertainment, you will need to skim that layer of sweet and creamy information off of the gunk of bias. But how do you do it?

Cross-checking References

As painful as references are to include in your assignments or theses, they exist for a proper purpose. The information you



present cannot be trusted with simply you said it. It needs support from trusted and accepted publications and researches to prop up the theory you present.

Just like that, checking the references of a documentary, the individuals or papers the documentaries refer to, should be a clue.

Try to steer clear of documentaries that refer

to people who are not experts, or experts who’ve been discredited in their fields.

Tone

Try to check the tone of the documentary when the documentary speaks of a particular subject in question. Is the narrator avoiding pointing out any faults of the subject in question? Is the narrator criticising

the subjects over superficial matters?

If you avoid the bias of the tone, and try to check out the information that seems to have at least some semblance of truth under the surface, you can save yourself from misconceptions. Also, try steering clear of preachy documentaries. If a documentary has an agenda, it’s likely that it’ll cut some corners in terms of informational integrity.

Title

If the title of the documentary goes something like “The Hunt for Atlantis”, do not bother wasting your time on them at all. Odds are that you will find nothing good to skim off of them at all.

“Documentaries” with titles like these tend to have a host that leads a “search” for vague entities that ultimately lead to nowhere. And networks that air these shows only use them to milk this criterium of “documentaries”.

Speculation

Documentaries on organisations and such other subjects can make educated speculations of what is to become of the subject at hand. However, speculations should not be the focal point of a documentary. Unless given enough reasoning as to why an event will take place as spoken of, try to avoid indulging too deeply in the speculation.

The thing to remember with documentaries is that it’s risky to take whatever information is served at face value. Questioning what’s being said is an important part of learning, and it’s as important in documentaries as it is in classrooms.

LinkedIn: THE PLACE TO BE PROFESSIONAL

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With over 300 million active users per month, LinkedIn is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. It’s a place where people from different countries and professions are able to talk about their professional interests, look for potential employers or employees, and expand their businesses. As you can tell from the way people use LinkedIn, it’s not like any other social media platform.

That being said, there are people who often fail to understand the importance of LinkedIn, and why it’s important to maintain a proper and professional outlook on the platform. Hence, to help them out, here are a few (usual) social media practices to avoid on LinkedIn.

Posting unnecessary pictures: Your selfies, or pictures of your cat are best suited on your Instagram feed, not on LinkedIn. None of your connections expect you to post pictures of yourself with filters and emojis. If you do feel like posting a picture every once in a while, you can opt for something that has a professional touch to it. It could be a picture of you giving a presentation, or attending a seminar or conference. Anything that’s a bit too casual should be kept as far away from LinkedIn as possible.

Getting too political: LinkedIn is not the place where you should be stirring up, or participating in debates on different political, religious, or social top-

ics. There’s Twitter for that. Unless you’re somehow able to connect these conversations to your work, or talk about how certain elements in those fields are having an impact on your professional life, you’d be better off avoiding these conversations completely.

Sharing memes: Although everyone appreciates a good meme, it’s highly unlikely that your connections expect to see memes on their LinkedIn news feed. LinkedIn is the last place you’d visit in search for some good memes. It’s not that the platform doesn’t allow people to share them, but the act itself comes off as unprofessional to many users. Imagine being connected to your potential employer, and instead of talking about things relevant to your field or area of interest, you decide to unleash the meme-lord within you and start posting memes. What does your future employer think of you now? They’ll probably have a good laugh. But when it comes to shortlisting people for a job interview or any other work related purpose, you can rest assured that you won’t be making the cut, simply because your actions seemed unprofessional to them.

Many of you might think that pulling off such a “professional” outlook on LinkedIn is nothing but being pretentious, and you’d probably be right. You see, one can rarely stay or act professional 24/7. It’s only when we need to, that we act that way. And act that way we should, on LinkedIn.

