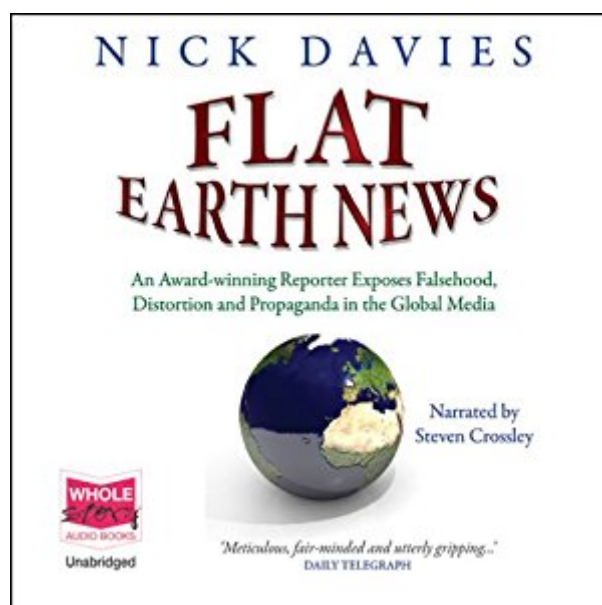


The book was found

Flat Earth News



Synopsis

When award-winning journalist Nick Davies decided to break Fleet Street's unwritten rule by investigating his own colleagues, he found that the business of reporting the truth had been slowly subverted by the mass production of ignorance. Working with a network of off-the-record sources, Davies uncovered the story of the prestigious "Sunday" newspaper which allowed the CIA and MI6 to plant fiction in its columns; the newsroom which routinely rejects stories about black people; the respected paper that hired a professional fraudster to set up a front company to entrap senior political figures; the newspapers which support law and order while paying cash bribes to bent detectives. Davies names and exposes the national stories which turn out to be pseudo events manufactured by the PR industry, and the global news stories which prove to be fiction generated by a new machinery of international propaganda. He shows the effect of this on a world where consumers believe a mass of stories which, in truth, are as false as the idea that the Earth is flat - from the millennium bug to the WMD in Iraq - tainting government policy, perverting popular belief. With the help of researchers from Cardiff University, who ran a ground-breaking analysis of our daily news, Davies found most reporters, most of the time, are not allowed to dig up stories or check their facts - a profession corrupted at the core.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Author and journalist Nick Davies has written one of the best exposés of the media. The book started when he saw that the government's lies about Iraqi WMD became widely accepted as true

because too many in his profession spread them uncritically. As he writes, journalism without checking is like a body without an immune system. Commercial forces are the main obstacle to truth-telling journalism. The owners cut costs by cutting staff and local news suppliers, by running cheap stories, choosing safe facts and ideas, avoiding upsetting the powerful, giving both sides of the story (unless it's the official story), giving the readers what they want to believe, and going with moral panics. He cites a Cardiff University study of four quality papers which found that 60% of their home news stories were wholly from wire agencies, mainly the Press Association, or PR material, 20% partially so, 8% from unknown sources, and just 12% generated by reporters. The Press Association reports only what is said, it has no time to check whether it is true. There are now more PR people, 47,800, than journalists, 45,000. News websites run by media firms recycle 50% of their stories from the two international wire agencies, Associated Press and Reuters; those run by internet firms recycle 85% of their stories from those two. On a typical day, Google News offered '14,000' stories - actually retelling just 24 events. The government has 1,500 press officers, issues 20,000 press releases a year, and also spends millions more of our money on PR firms. The Foreign Office spends £600 million a year on 'public diplomacy'. The CIA spent \$265 million on 'information operations' in 1978 alone, more than the world's three biggest news agencies together.

In this devastating book Nick Davies clinically buries 'the powers that be' of the 'free' press. Newspapers are now part of a pseudo-world of organized ignorance (fabricated stories, pseudo-events, propaganda, distortion, lies by systemic omission or falsehoods supported by 'independent experts'). It is a world created and manipulated by agitprop men, lobbyists, PR 'specialists' and intelligence agencies who serve commercial, political, ideological and 'moral' (e.g. anti-abortion) pressure groups. The decline of the honorable profession began when media corporations were taken over by 'pure money men' turning the primary purpose of newspapers into 'money making' by attracting advertisements. Costs were cut, provoking a global collapse of information-gathering and testing of raw facts. The average own news production fell to 12 % of the output with the rest being recycled stories supplied by other sources (AP, AFP, internet) and chosen by people in the service of powerful interests. Nick Davies calls it 'churnalism'. For the author, the honorable profession turned for its greater part into a corrupted and dishonest bunch of 'second-hand' newsmen who don't have the time or the ambition to tell the truth. But, there is a far darker side to this 'logic of commerce'. As E. Bernays states: 'the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible

government which is the true ruling power ... we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons ... who pull the wires which control the public mind.' There is a concerted strategy to manipulate global perception with the assistance of the mass media.

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