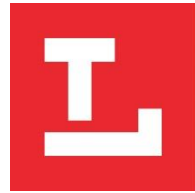# NewsGuard
Featured Library Partner:

TOLEDO
LUCAS COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Q&A with Andy Lechlak, Digital Strategist at the library

Toledo Lucas County Public Library has been using NewsGuard's free browser extension on public and staff computers at all 20 of its branch locations since November 2018. The library is also incorporating NewsGuard into information literacy and news literacy programs.

Why did you decide to use NewsGuard?
Libraries are a connector of people to information. We try to provide the best and most accurate information. NewsGuard helps us, at a glance, to see if the source is credible. It was a natural extension after focusing on web literacy for two years.

What was the installation process like? Did you face any barriers?
Very easy. We set up virtual images of a working public and staff desktop environment. We had staff test the functionality of NewsGuard, ensure they could disable the extension if a customer wanted, and really try out the experience.

What has the staff response been?
Very Positive. For the last two years, we have been doing training and programs on Web Literacy: reading, writing, and participating on the web. Media Literacy is a natural next step in digital citizenship.

What has the patron response been?
The first 7-10 days were met with some negative feedback. The feedback was a mixture of misunderstanding the purpose of NewsGuard and wanting to be heard. After interviews with the local paper and local news stations, we were able to get ahead of any more issues by explaining why we were doing this. We reached out to NewsGuard during this time on how other communities responded. They had solid advice on educating the community.

We had received phone calls, emails, and social media replies about NewsGuard and how it was a form of censoring. We made sure people knew it was not censoring and explained the Library is a connector of people to information, and that we want to make sure that information is accurate and good in quality.

How has the increase in reliance on search engines and social media platforms, like Google and Facebook, impacted the role of public libraries?
Sharing of news, and fake news, is becoming more common on social media platforms. It's much easier to click "share" on articles or retweet them, rather than digging in to see the actual source. A lot of media outlets even have sponsored ads on them so that a story might look like it is coming from a high-quality source but is actually an ad placement.

What other tools or strategies do you use to teach news literacy?
During our web literacy training, we showed how, using Mozilla X-Ray Goggles, you can alter websites like the New York Times or Wall Street Journal to have fake headlines, images, and text. We also extended it to show how to hack a social media post.

Separately, we used Lightbeam, a Firefox add-on that enables you to see the first- and third-party sites you interact with on the Web. Using interactive visualizations, Lightbeam shows you the relationships between these third parties and the sites you visit. We used Lightbeam to show how airlines can specifically track you and how the prices around airlines may increase if they see a lot of activity from either you or multiple people in your area.

Would you recommend NewsGuard to another library? Why or why not?
Definitely – it's one more tool to help with education on web and news literacy.