politicalite.com

A website providing conservative-leaning news and commentary about British and American politics. The site’s headlines are often misleading.

Ownership and Financing

Politicalite.com is owned by Jordan Kendall, the website’s founder and editor-in-chief, through the privately held company News Worldwide Limited. On the site, Kendall describes himself as “a working-class media graduate” from “a forgotten working-class former mill town in the North West England."

The site generates revenue from advertising and reader donations.

Content

Politicalite covers British, European, and American politics “in a provocative and easy to understand tabloid style”, according to the site’s About page. The site features dedicated sections for COVID-19, Brexit, Tories, Labour, Media, USA, and Entertainment.

The site writes extensively about Brexit in a positive manner and is critical of prominent Labour politicians. Typical stories have included “BULLDOG BORIS: ‘I’d Rather Collapse Talks Than Follow EU Rules’”; “BREXIT REVEALED: UK Food Supply At FULL CAPACITY Thanks To ‘No Deal’ Brexit Planning;” and “LOONY LISA: Labour MP exploits Coronavirus Pandemic to call for DELAY to Brexit.”

On its About page, Politicalite states that it supports “America’s vote for President Trump.” The site reports on U.S. President Donald Trump in a favorable way, echoing his claims on issues such as the threat from the “deep state” and the alleged media bias against him. Articles in the Media section often take aim at the BBC and other mainstream news organizations.

This website generally maintains basic standards of credibility and transparency—with significant exceptions.

Score: 67.5/100

- Does not repeatedly publish false content (22 points)
- Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- Reveals who’s in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Critera are listed in order of importance. More information.
The Exclusives section has featured stories by “yellow vest” activist James Goddard and by Anne Marie Waters, a far-right politician who founded For Britain, an anti-Islamist party. The section also includes articles about other influential right-wing figures, such as far-right activist and UKIP adviser Tommy Robinson. Politicalite also covers entertainment.

Credibility

Politicalite.com conducts some original reporting, although most articles typically are based on reporting from other outlets, including The Guardian, The Times, and The Daily Express. Articles generally are fact-based. However, NewsGuard’s review in May 2020 found one article making false claims about COVID-19.

The March 2020 article, titled “LIKE A NAZI WEAPON’ Two Scientists Claim COVID-19 escaped from Chinese Laboratory”, quoted extensively from a video showing two men discussing the possible origins of the virus. In the video, one of the men stated: “If you add it all up the probability it [COVID-19] is like .0001% chance that all of these things could have been zoonotic [passed from animals to humans]. You can see the big ‘copy and paste.’” According to the Politicalite article accompanying the video, “This means that the virus to a layman was genetically engineered to be boosted (gain of function) to affect more of the population.” (At the end of the story, Politicalite included the following note: “DISCLAIMER: Politicalite and its advertisers do not endorse the scientists or views expressed in this article, we report on claims surrounding COVID-19.”)

The claim that the 2020 coronavirus was man-made in a lab has been refuted by numerous studies and experts. A March 2020 study published in the journal Nature Medicine concluded that the virus “is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” An earlier study, published in February 2020 in the journal Nature, found that the COVID-19 virus is “96% percent identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.” Both the World Health organization
and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention have stated that the virus was passed from
animals to humans.

Moreover, the video discussion cited in the article did
not take place between two “scientists” — the
participants were Francis Boyle, who teaches at the
University of Illinois College of Law, and Paul Cottrell,
who holds a PhD in finance and was studying for his
master’s degree in biology at the Harvard Extension
School.

Asked to comment on this story, Politicalite’s owner,
Jordan Kendall, told NewsGuard in an email: “It’s a
story also reported in the Daily Mail, Fox News, The
Sun and others — we reported it first and we’re
accused of fake news, now the White House is
investigating the Lab theory.”

Kendall added, “We put disclaimers on some articles,
including the Coronavirus lab claims — because in an
age of disinformation we don’t want to be seen as
‘spreading fake news’ especially amid the Coronavirus
pandemic. But I still think that more solid theories
should be free to be discussed in public discourse. On
my first day studying Media at University, I was taught
by my lecturer to ‘Question Everything,’ and it’s
something I do over and over again in life and my
media career.”

NewsGuard’s earlier review of the site, conducted in
April 2019, found numerous examples of misleading
content. However, because NewsGuard’s new review
found that the site’s content is generally accurate,
NewsGuard has determined that the site now does not
fail to meet the standard for gathering and presenting
information responsibly.

Commenting on the site’s editorial practices, Kendall
told NewsGuard: “We made mistakes in the past, partly
to do with social media bubbles - but, you have to keep
learning in life. I’m proud of what the site has now
become, it's more professional and less extreme. We hope to improve the rating given our editorial changes and the important stories that we break.”

Nevertheless, NewsGuard found that Politicalite still regularly publishes misleading headlines.

For example, as noted above, the headline “LIKE A NAZI WEAPON' Two Scientists Claim COVID-19 escaped from Chinese Laboratory” did not reflect the story, as the “scientists” were in fact a law professor and a biology student who had completed a pre-med program.

An April 2020 story, headlined “EXCLUSIVE: Sir Starmers SECRET Tax Dodging Donors Exposed,” named several wealthy contributors to Keir Starmers, the leader of the Labour Party. However, the article did not include any information about the donors’ alleged “tax dodging”.

A March 2020 story, headlined “BROWN PAPER ENVELOPE: Ex-PM Gordon Brown ‘Let RAPE GANGS Roam Free In Return For Saudi OIL MONEY,'” relied on an unnamed “City of London finance source” to claim that former Prime Minister Gordon Brown accepted Saudi money on the condition that “Muslims in Britain must be free to do anything they like.” However, the headline notwithstanding, the article backtracked on the claim, noting that “there is no way of verifying the claim that Brown cut a deal ‘to let Muslims do what ever they wanted’ as no one will go on record.”

Because the site regularly publishes headlines that do not reflect the content of the articles, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not avoid deceptive headlines.

Asked about the site’s approach to headlines, Kendall told NewsGuard in 2019, “We do try to make our headlines eye-catching, often using jokes, puns and humour - this is never done in a malicious way - it's simply the working-class Northern way.” In May 2020, Kendall declined further comment.
The site’s About page provides a description of Politicalite’s political orientation and editorial mission. The site states that it supports “Britain’s vote for Brexit and America’s vote for President Trump.” According to the About page, “We describe our political views as ‘populist’, give fair coverage to all politicians from all parties, the truth comes first no matter our political affiliation.” The site includes the word “comment” in headlines to denote opinion articles.

However, many stories presented as news include opinion.

For example, an April 2020 article in the Labour section said of Labour MP Bell Riberio-Addy: “When she isn’t complaining about the supposed evils of the British Empire, she’s moaning about how ‘racist’ it apparently is to complain about the coronavirus being a ‘Chinese virus' (yes, really).”

Another April 2020 story about Labour leader Keir Starmer stated, “Establishment stooge Kier Starmer helped Britain’s most vile celebrity peadophile evade justice.”

A March 2020 article in the USA section concerning U.S. Senator Mitt Romney stated: “TRAITOROUS Republican senator Mitt Romney felt the wrath of U.S. President Donald Trump last night after the senator voted with the Democrats in an attempt to impeach President Trump.”

Because Politicalite often publishes unlabeled opinion content in news sections, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Asked about the site’s handling of opinion, Kendall told NewsGuard in May 2020: “On the mixing of opinion and news - we do tag ‘Opinion’ and ‘Comment' often. Sometimes writers like to add in opinions and jokes. I'm sure the reader can tell the difference between opinions and facts.” Kendall added, “Also, unlike many other outlets - we clearly state our political views and who we
support in our about page. We're a Conservative supporting outlet, and our readers know where we stand."

Politicalite.com features a dedicated corrections page, which lists the site's corrections and clarifications, including an explanation of the error.

**Transparency**

The Corporate page discloses Politicalite's ownership by News Worldwide Ltd.

While the About page identifies Politicalite's editor as Jordan James, business records show that a Jordan Kendall is the registered owner of the website. (Kendall's full name is Jordan James Kendall, according to a driver's license Kendall shared with NewsGuard). Because Kendall does not use his real surname to identify himself on the site, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not reveal who is in charge.

Kendall declined to comment on the record regarding his use of a pseudonym.

Articles include the names of authors, but the site generally does not provide any biographical or contact information for them. In addition, because many articles are written by the pseudonymous James, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not provide adequate information about his content creators.

Kendall provided NewsGuard with links to information about Politicalite's content creators, but did not respond to an inquiry about the lack of information about them.

Advertising is distinguishable from original content.

**History**

Kendall founded Politicalite in 2017. He told NewsGuard that he started the site “to report unreported news to the forgotten people of Britain, a place that has a huge problem with the under-reporting of the lower classes."
Editor's Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on May 12, 2020, to reflect that Politicalite.com now regularly makes corrections and meets the standard for gathering and presenting news responsibly, but does not reveal who is in charge or provide information about its content creators. The criteria checklist has been adjusted accordingly.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: Click Here

Sources

Ownership and Financing

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Content

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Labelled comment
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