

off-guardian.org

A website founded by people who have been banned from The Guardian's comment section. The site regularly publishes false information on topics including COVID-19, vaccinations, and 9/11.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 20/100

Ownership and Financing

OffGuardian.org does not disclose its ownership, but states on its Facebook page that it was founded by three people who say they were banned from The Guardian's "Comment is Free" online comment section. In a July 2020 email to NewsGuard, one of the site's editors, identifying herself as Catte Black, said that she owns OffGuardian.

The site names Black and another individual, Kit Knightly, as its editors. Asked by NewsGuard whether these names were pseudonyms, Black told NewsGuard only that "We all agreed at outset to use the names under which we commented [on The Guardian's site.]" A follow-up email asking whether Black's and Knightly's commenter names were also their real names went unanswered.

The outlet states on its Facebook page that "Our small group is dispersed globally, with representatives from North America, Britain, and Southern and Eastern Europe." Facebook's data for the page indicates that it is run by three accounts in the UK.

Off-Guardian.org does not run advertisements. The site states that it is supported by small donations, which it solicits via PayPal, Patreon, and Bitcoin payment.

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ 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)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

Content

OffGuardian publishes commentary on global politics, with a focus on the UK and the U.S. The site states on its Facebook page that "We share the comment & the facts you no longer find in the [mainstream media.]" In its Submission Guidelines, the site states that its "major focus is media criticism and analysis, but we will consider submissions on a wide range of subjects, geopolitical, historical and cultural."

Coverage on the site is skeptical of establishment political and media figures, and articles frequently attribute events to various conspiracies. For example, the site has argued that lockdowns aiming to stem the spread of COVID-19 are a front designed to facilitate a government power-grab and claimed without evidence that the revelation that the Russian government had offered bounties to Afghan militants for killing U.S. troops was orchestrated by the CIA to prolong U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.

Content sections include Media Watch, Politics & Geopolitics, Brave New World (a section focused on alleged censorship and surveillance), and Arts & Culture. A section called Outside the Overton Window includes stories that the site says are meant to assure that "subjects we're all encouraged to ignore or dismiss as 'conspiracy theories'... be fairly heard." (The name Overton Window refers to broadly acceptable public discourse.)

The front page of OffGuardian links to dedicated pages with coverage of a single story, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, and the 2018 poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal.

In a nod to the site's origins, OffGuardian.org publishes a regular feature titled "This Week in The Guardian," which includes critiques of Guardian articles. For example, one article argued that a Guardian story claiming that Britain might have fared better during the coronavirus pandemic had more of its leaders been women said that The Guardian was guilty of "crass generalisation" and "casual sexism."

Credibility

Articles on Off-Guardian.org draw from a range of sources, from reputable sites such as the BBC to sites that NewsGuard has found to be unreliable, such as MintPressNews.com and MiddleEastMonitor.com.

The site itself routinely publishes false information. For example, a July 2020 article, titled "No one has died from the coronavirus," cited a Bulgarian doctor claiming

that no deaths had been conclusively attributed to the COVID-19 virus and that no antibodies specific to the virus had been found.

Both claims are false. Governments around the world have collectively attributed hundreds of thousands of deaths to COVID-19, and numerous studies have identified antibodies associated with the virus. “Several published studies report the discovery of antibodies that bind specifically to SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of COVID-19, as well as antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 in people who had been previously infected,” fact-checking site Health Feedback reported in July 2020.

Asked about this article, site editor Black told NewsGuard in an email that “We were not made aware of this 'fact check' until recently. Since the article was not written by an OffG editor we have invited and are awaiting a reply from the authors who have expressed their wish to respond to the alleged 'fact check'. Plus, as the article is citing the opinion of a third party — the distinguished Bulgarian doctor — we can't 'correct' his opinion for him.”

A June 2020 article, “COVID19 PCR Tests are Scientifically Meaningless,” reported that polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, which test for the presence of the new coronavirus by amplifying segments of the virus’ DNA, “are meaningless as a diagnostic tool to determine an alleged infection.” However, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states in a fact sheet concerning the PCR test that “If you have a positive test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19,” fact-checking site PolitiFact noted.

Asked about this article, Black said that “You don't refute a claim of fact by simply citing the CDC saying the opposite. That's just differing opinions. The inaccuracy of the PCR test is widely acknowledged.”

The site has also repeatedly published claims that vaccines are dangerous. A July 2020 article, titled “WATCH: Just A Little Prick Part 1,” consisted of a long video monologue delivered by author and former doctor

Vernon Coleman. In the video, Coleman suggested that Bill Gates is pushing vaccination as a way to depopulate and control the world.

Similarly, an August 2019 article, titled “Can the Progressive / ‘Conspiracy’ Divide be Bridged?,” stated that “In the case of vaccines, there is actually no scientific consensus that they are safe — only a state-media consensus, emanating from groups like the CDC, which act as sales agents for Big Pharma.”

Vaccines are generally safe and effective, according to multiple studies. The British National Health Service states on its website that vaccinations “prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year,” have eradicated or almost eradicated smallpox, polio and tetanus, and have reduced the prevalence of diseases including measles and diphtheria “by up to 99.9% since their vaccines were introduced.” The U.S. CDC states on its website that “serious adverse events from vaccines are rare.”

Asked about these articles, Black stated that “We have never claimed editorially that all vaccines are dangerous. We are absolutely not anti-vaccination per se. We share varieties of informed opinions, not all of which reflect our own views, and we will often share opposing opinions on controversial topics.”

Black also took issue with the notion that a scientific consensus favours the efficacy of vaccines, stating that “‘Scientific consensus’ is not a fact, it’s a collective opinion. And it may be proved wrong in time as it has in the past. There are always other equally informed opinions that say different. Are you implying we must censor certain informed fact-based opinions in order to get your approval?”

The site has also published false information on non-medical topics. For example, a September 2019 article, “Why 9/11 matters in 2019,” described the media and public as “brainwashed” for failing to adequately question “9/11 itself” and “The official explanation... that Moslem terrorists somehow confounded all the usual security procedures and ‘attacked America’ because

they 'hated our freedoms'." In making its case, OffGuardian stated that "A new scientific study [had found] fires did not bring down WTC7."

The report that OffGuardian cited in making this claim was not peer-reviewed, and was funded by Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth, a group that has promoted a theory that the collapse of 7 World Trade Center was the result of a controlled demolition. The notion of a "controlled demolition" was directly refuted by, among other investigations, the exhaustive 2008 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) World Trade Center Investigation, which determined that the building was "brought down primarily by uncontrolled fires" and did so in a "progressive collapse."

Black, who authored the article in question, stated that "NIST's studies have been critiqued and found to be inadequate by many highly qualified professionals (engineers, physicists, chemists, architects), who have a) pointed out the data suggestive of controlled demolition that NIST failed to examine, and b) put forward ongoing questions — for example about the symmetry of collapse at free fall acceleration — that NIST has failed to answer. This is an ongoing debate between scientists. There has been no refutation of any of the lines of evidence put forward that argue against collapse by fire. Therefore an article pointing this possibility is NOT factually inaccurate, even if it is controversial."

Because OffGuardian has published multiple inaccurate, misleading, or unsubstantiated reports, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false information, does not gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid deceptive headlines.

Because the site does not purport to publish straight news, NewsGuard has determined that OffGuardian.org does not handle the difference between news and opinion irresponsibly.

OffGuardian does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard found only one correction published in February 2020. Moreover, the site has not corrected the

false and debunked articles noted above. Therefore, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not have an effective corrections policy.

Asked about its corrections policy, Black told NewsGuard that “we will always initiate factual correction if apprised of inaccuracy. Fortunately it is rarely necessary and I can't even recall the last time we were contacted for correction. Bearing in mind 'factually inaccurate' is not a synonym for 'counter to officially maintained narratives'.”

Transparency

OffGuardian.org does not disclose its ownership.

The Site Info section ostensibly identifies the outlet's editors and administrators, and invites readers seeking “to contact a specific editor or author” to email a general contact address. However, it appears likely that the editors — identified as Kit Knightly and Catte Black — are using pseudonyms — which does not meet NewsGuard's standard for identifying editorial leaders. The site has declined to comment on whether the names are real and the Facebook and Twitter profiles for the site's two editors do not contain any biographical information or identifying photographs.

Articles typically name the author, but biographical or contact information is rarely provided. This does not meet NewsGuard's standard for providing information about content creators.

Black did not respond to NewsGuard's questions about the site's lack of disclosure regarding its ownership, editorial leadership, and content creators.

The site does not run advertisements.

History

OffGuardian was founded in February 2015. The site states on its Facebook page that Off-Guardian.org was not its original web address; the first website “suffered an act of internal sabotage” in April 2015, and was closed down, it says. The OffGuardian founders did not identify the party responsible, but speculated on the

Facebook page that it could have been “an act of a mentally unstable person or of a US government agent.”

Knightly, one of the co-founders, is identified in a biography on news site Tlaxcala-Int.org as an “aspiring novelist, accidental journalist, co-editor of OffGuardian. The Guardian banned him from commenting. Twice.”

Written by: [Bron Maher](#)

Edited by: [Eric Effron](#), [Richard Sambrook](#)

Send feedback to NewsGuard:[Click Here](#)

Sources

Ownership and
Financing

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200710123216/https://off-guardian.org/>

<https://off-guardian.org/support-us/>

https://www.facebook.com/pg/offguardian/about/?ref=page_internal

[https://twitter.com/kit_knightly?](https://twitter.com/kit_knightly?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)

[ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/kit_knightly?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)

http://www.tlaxcala-int.org/biographie.asp?ref_aut=6447&lg_pp=en

https://twitter.com/catte_black?lang=en

Shares a PayPal Hosted Button ID:

<https://baumannjoelnachshon.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.sott.net/>

<https://www.thelibertybeacon.com/>

vaskaxtumir

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150427173747/http://off-guardian.org/>

<https://off-guardian.org/vaska/>

<https://profile.theguardian.com/user/id/10385967?page=1>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200515032244/https://off-guardian.org/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200516044404/https://off-guardian.org/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150912154759/http://off-guardian.org/>(Knightly previously identified as cjcleach; two other editors identified)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150912211112/http://off-guardian.org/author/cjcleach/>
[https://twitter.com/cjc1812\(Knightly?\)](https://twitter.com/cjc1812(Knightly?))

Content

<https://off-guardian.org/submissions/>
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/02/23/this-week-in-the-guardian-1/>
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/cia-info-war-succeeds-afghanistan-occupation-forced-to-continue/>
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/05/judge-orders-destruction-of-epstein-evidence/>
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/what-is-the-real-purpose-of-the-lockdowns/>
This Week in The Guardian
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/06/07/this-week-in-the-guardian-8/>
<http://archive.is/V1xJc>
<http://web.archive.org/web/20200607122043/https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/06/its-psychologically-easier-how-anti-vaxxers-capitalised-on-coronavirus-fears-to-spread-misinformation>
<http://web.archive.org/web/20200604200353/https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/22/coronavirus-me-call-shots-women-cautious-government>

Credibility

<https://off-guardian.org/submissions/>
Typical sources
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/08/has-turkey-colonized-libya/> (mostly unsourced, one link to Middle East Monitor)
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/07/second-wave-not-even-close/> (CDC, academia, The Spectator, ProPublica, blog, Reason, Twitter)
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/07/second-wave-not-even-close/> (verywellmind.com, The Telegraph, Spiked, Mail on Sunday, the BBC, The Marr Show, The Gray Zone, i news, New Statesman, The Mirror)
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/06/notorious-fourth-independence-day-in-the-land-of-the-captive-the-home-of-the-cowed/> (NYT, The Lancet, Fortune, CNBC, National Geographic)
<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/what-is-the-real-purpose-of-the-lockdowns/> (studies, YouTube, podcasts, WHO, sourceless assertions)

Wrong about COVID-19 on multiple fronts

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/what-is-the-real-purpose-of-the-lockdowns/>

<http://archive.is/1la3O>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/02/no-one-has-died-from-the-coronavirus-president-of-the-bulgarian-pathology-association/>

<http://archive.is/5TKdc>

<https://healthfeedback.org/claimreview/people-have-died-from-the-coronavirus-contrary-to-article-claiming-to-report-pathologists-revelations-on-covid-19/>

<https://leadstories.com/hoax-alert/2020/07/fact-check-doctors-claim-that-no-one-has-died-from-the-coronavirus-is-not-true.html>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/06/27/covid19-pcr-tests-are-scientifically-meaningless/>

<http://archive.vn/CMAgi>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200705202306/https://off-guardian.org/2020/06/27/covid19-pcr-tests-are-scientifically-meaningless/>

<https://uncoverdc.com/2020/04/07/was-the-covid-19-test-meant-to-detect-a-virus/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-pcr/fact-check-inventor-of-method-used-to-test-for-covid-19-didnt-say-it-cant-be-used-in-virus-detection-idUSKBN24420X>

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/jul/07/blog-posting/covid-19-tests-are-not-scientifically-meaningless/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Factsheet-for-Patients-2019-nCoV.pdf>

Vaccines

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/05/10/covid19-the-big-pharma-players-behind-uk-government-lockdown/>

<http://archive.is/yYGSN>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/08/watch-just-a-little-prick-part-1/>

<http://archive.is/l2yks>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVa8maJb5JU&feature=emb_title

<https://off-guardian.org/2019/08/05/can-the-progressive-conspiracy-divide-be-bridged/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/patientsafety/features/vaccine-safety.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/why-vaccination-is-safe-and-important/>

5G

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/02/20/telecom-jackboot-a-5g-kick-to-the-groin/>

<http://archive.is/CtRbW>

9/11

<https://off-guardian.org/2019/09/11/why-9-11-matters-in-2019/>

<http://archive.is/RnQp0>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7485331.stm>

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/a6384/debunking-911-myths-world-trade-center/>

Corrections

<https://off-guardian.org/2019/02/28/owen-jones-unpersons-chris-williamson/>

Transparency

<https://off-guardian.org/contact/>

<http://archive.is/IJPf6>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/08/important-temporary-contact-info/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200710123216/https://off-guardian.org/>

Byline, no further information

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/08/has-turkey-colonized-libya/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/cia-info-war-succeeds-afghanistan-occupation-forced-to-continue/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/07/second-wave-not-even-close/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/06/notorious-fourth-independence-day-in-the-land-of-the-captive-the-home-of-the-cowed/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/11/what-does-diversity-and-inclusion-mean-to-you/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/11/us-govt-stealing-a-significant-part-of-its-own-aid-to-afghanistan/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/cia-info-war-succeeds-afghanistan-occupation-forced-to-continue/>

Byline, further information

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/09/leicester-lockdown-mystery/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/07/second-wave-not-even-close/>

<https://off-guardian.org/2020/07/10/what-is-the-real-purpose-of-the-lockdowns/>

History

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200710123216/https://off-guardian.org/>
https://www.facebook.com/pg/offguardian/about/?ref=page_internal
<https://web.archive.org/web/20190509134555/https://off-guardian.org/about/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150427173747/http://off-guardian.org/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150427173801/http://off-guardian.org/about-2/>