

The website of The Blaze, a conservative media network that has aired false and misleading claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Proceed with caution: This website fails to adhere to several basic journalistic standards.**

**Score: 54.5/100**

## Ownership and Financing

TheBlaze.com is owned by Blaze Media LLC, a privately held company registered in Delaware formed by the December 2018 merger of conservative media companies TheBlaze Inc. and CRTV.

Glenn Beck, who was a syndicated radio host at the time, initially founded The Blaze under the company name TheBlaze Inc. CRTV was founded by conservative commentator Mark Levin, who hosts a Fox News opinion program called Life, Liberty & Levin.

The company generates revenue through advertisements and subscription fees for its video content.



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)

## Content

TheBlaze.com primarily covers U.S. politics in articles, on a Blaze Radio network that is broadcast on the site, videos from commentators' shows on a network called BlazeTV, and podcast episodes from BlazeTV hosts. The site's About page describes Blaze Media as "news and entertainment for people who love America."

The Blaze's News section covers topics including congressional legislation and campaigns, the military and veterans, issues related to Christianity and religious freedom, and what TheBlaze.com describes as liberal media bias.

Its political coverage generally advances conservative views. Typical headlines include "Protesters burn Bibles and American flags in Portland," "AOC condemns Hawaii's statue of Catholic saint as example of 'white supremacist culture,'" and "Florida's largest police union unanimously endorses President Trump in emergency vote: 'We're being used like a punching bag, and we're tired of it.'"



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.](#)

Podcasts and radio programs hosted on the site feature shows by conservative media personalities Steven Crowder and Glenn Beck, who each have separate websites promoting their shows. Some podcasts are focused on religion, including “The Rabbi Daniel Lapin Podcast,” which is about the Bible and Jewish teachings, and “Relatable with Allie Beth Stuckey,” which “breaks down the latest in culture, news, theology & politics from a Christian, conservative perspective,” according to the website.

#### Credibility

TheBlaze.com has made inaccurate, unsubstantiated, and misleading claims in its articles and podcasts, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, a May 2020 article titled “Bill Gates offers a creepy response to COVID” claimed that Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates “wants to microchip humans who have had COVID-19.” The article said, “Never forget, Bill Gates told the world via Twitter that COVID-19 couldn’t spread from human to human contact. Now Gates wants to microchip humans who have had COVID-19.”

Crowder repeated the article’s claims in a video attached to the story, in which he also said that Gates “wanted to install...contact tracing dye in the children,” and said that the procedure would install a “tracking chip.”

Claims by The Blaze and Crowder that Gates “wants to microchip humans who have had COVID-19” misrepresented research funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A study conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers used a vaccine delivery device that involved an ink, which is invisible to the naked eye but detectable with an infrared device, that aimed to allow health providers in developing countries to more easily track a child’s vaccinations. However, the ink could not be used as a tracking device. The research, which was published in 2019 before the COVID-19 virus first emerged, was not related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Blaze's claim in the same article that Gates "told the world via Twitter that COVID-19 couldn't spread from human to human contact" is false. Gates did not make such a claim on Twitter. Crowder also made a similar claim about Gates in the video, while saying that the World Health Organization had also claimed that the virus could not spread from human to human contact.

The World Health Organization did tweet in January 2020, after first learning of the virus' emergence in China, that Chinese authorities had found "no clear evidence" of human-to-human transmission of the virus. The organization also said more research was needed at the time, and updated its public guidance within a week to say that human-to-human transmission of the virus had in fact been documented.

In several stories and videos published in July 2020 and August 2020, The Blaze advanced unsubstantiated claims that the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine is an effective treatment for COVID-19. The articles and videos reported claims about the drug's effectiveness by a group called America's Frontline Doctors, while omitting an abundance of scientific evidence and published research in 2020 that has shown the drug is not an effective treatment for COVID-19.

In an August 2020 video, which was attached to an article titled "Hydroxychloroquine is SAFER than Tylenol: America's most 'dangerous' doctors speak out," Texas doctor Stella Immanuel told Blaze TV's Elijah Schaffer that the drug can cure the virus. "Everybody said it's not a cure. If I have treated 350 patients and they are all well, what's that? A cure," Immanuel told Schaffer.

Multiple randomized clinical trials have found that hydroxychloroquine failed to provide benefits to COVID-19 patients. In June 2020, U. K. researchers ended the use of hydroxychloroquine in a large trial that had involved 4,600 patients. "We have concluded that there is no beneficial effect of hydroxychloroquine in patients hospitalised with COVID-19," researchers Martin Landray and Peter Horby, who conducted the RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy) trial, said in a statement.

Another trial, involving 400 patients, conducted at the University of Minnesota, and published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, found that hydroxychloroquine did not decrease the severity of COVID-19 symptoms over 14 days any better than a placebo in patients who were not hospitalized.

After Schaffer's video interviewing the doctors was posted on the network's YouTube channel, YouTube banned the video for "inappropriate content," according to an August 2020 note attached to the Blaze story. The editor's note continued, "YouTube has agreed to re-air this episode with the following disclaimer: Some medical opinions in this show do not follow WHO, CDC, and local health official recommendations for treating COVID-19. Any and all statements should be taken with precaution. Viewer discretion is advised." However, the note did not address any specific unsubstantiated claims in the video about hydroxychloroquine.

The site has published misleading information about climate change. For example, an October 2018 article headlined "New UN climate change report says just 12 years till life on earth hits point of no return — again" said that "Scientists concluded that there is no proof that global warming is caused by humans, and no proof that global warming will cause catastrophic issues for Earth."

In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations' October 2018 report said, "Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C."

The report also listed several ramifications resulting from global temperature increases. "Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C," the panel's report said. The report also listed risks including the exposure of 37 percent of Earth's population to "severe heatwaves" at least once every five years; "thousands of billions of USD annually" in damages from coastal flooding, which

could affect at least 136 port cities with populations greater than 1 million; and “reductions in projected food availability.”

The Blaze article referenced a 2017 study published in the scientific journal *Nature* to back its claim. The study analyzed how natural ecosystems responded to increases in carbon emissions that resulted from the industrial revolution, showing that increases in photosynthesis “correlate with the increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide due to fossil fuel burning,” according to the summary.

However, one of the study’s lead authors, Joe Berry of the Carnegie Institution for Science, also noted in the summary that observers should not interpret the study as a dismissal of problems caused by climate change.

Berry said, “It may be tempting to interpret these results as evidence that Earth’s dynamics are responding in a way that will naturally stabilize CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and climate. But the real message is that the increase in photosynthesis has not been large enough to compensate for the burning of fossil fuels.”

A January 2020 story about bushfires in Australia, headlined “Australia is on fire’ because of ‘climate change,’ said the left. Turns out it was two dozen arsonists,” reported on more than 180 recent arrests in New South Wales for bushfire-related offenses, including 24 for arson, over the past two months. The Blaze article said, “the news may come as a surprise” because “many on the left have insisted that man-made climate change was most certainly the cause of the Australian bushfire crisis.”

Despite the arson arrests cited above, officials across the country issued statements disputing the claim that arson was the primary cause of the devastating wildfires that burned for months in New South Wales and Victoria. A Victoria Police spokeswoman told *The Guardian*, “There is currently no intelligence to indicate that the fires in East Gippsland and the North East have been caused by arson or any other suspicious behaviour.” In New South Wales, *The Guardian* noted that “a Rural Fire Service spokesman told Sky News on

Wednesday that the majority of the larger fires in the state were caused by lightning, and that arson was a relatively small source of ignition.”

Because TheBlaze.com has frequently published inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present information responsibly.

TheBlaze.com has separate news and opinion sections, with opinion articles labeled as “op-eds” or “commentary.” However, stories labeled “news” often contain opinion without being described as such.

For example, an August 2020 article labeled “news,” titled “Media cover for Joe Biden over racial comments, hold 'virtual blackout' of latest controversy,” said that “the mainstream media is again covering for presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden” by not airing footage of a recent interview he did at a virtual conference hosted by the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

An August 2020 news article titled “AG William Barr spots small pro-police gathering while on road, asks his FBI detail to make 'quick U-turn' — and he gets out to thank folks,” described a crowd’s friendly reception to U.S. Attorney General William Barr, following contentious testimony before the House Judiciary Committee.

“Amid the toxic national climate of brazen left-wing mobs physically attacking police and other law enforcement officials night after night, Barr noticed something recently that warmed his heart,” the article said. The article referred to Barr’s testimony as “the headline-grabbing affair last week in which Barr took on a hostile group of Democrats from the House Judiciary Committee who did their best to frustrate the attorney general and failed miserably.”

Because The Blaze publishes opinionated language in articles labeled as news, NewsGuard has concluded that The Blaze does not handle the difference between

news and opinion responsibly.

The Blaze’s managing editor, Leon Wolf, did not respond in August 2020 to two NewsGuard emails seeking comment on the website’s content cited above, and its unlabeled opinion.

Asked about the website’s handling of opinion content in February 2019, Wolf said in an email to NewsGuard, “The tone of our coverage will certainly be different from what you would expect to find at Slate or MSNBC or Huffington Post. Sometimes we will have some editorial commentary in our copy or headlines. I do not think it is worse or more egregious than many other sites....” Wolf added that the site would start categorizing its commentary pieces as “Op-Eds” with more consistency.

The Blaze regularly publishes corrections, which appear as notes at the bottom or top of stories. But The Blaze has also not corrected false or unsubstantiated claims at times, such as in the content cited above. However, because the site has a history of publishing corrections and has amended other inaccurate content on the site, NewsGuard has determined that The Blaze does not fail to meet NewsGuard’s standard for regularly issuing corrections.

Although NewsGuard found some misleading headlines on TheBlaze.com, such as on the stories about COVID-19, the majority of headlines do not repeat false information and accurately represent articles.

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Transparency

TheBlaze.com only discloses its ownership by Blaze Media LLC in a small copyright box at the bottom of the site, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standards for disclosing ownership in a user-friendly manner.

A Staff link on the bottom of the site directs to the site’s Masthead. The page identifies the website’s editors and staff writers, including managing editor Leon Wolf, and provides their email addresses.

Most articles contain the name of the writer, usually linking to a page with the author’s photo, contact information, a short biography, and other stories.

Articles that contain video clips from BlazeTV are attributed only to BlazeTV staff. However, because the majority of content is attributed to authors and provides information about them, NewsGuard has determined that the website meets NewsGuard's standard for providing information about content creators.

Advertisements on TheBlaze.com are not clearly labeled. The site publishes sponsored articles in a section that is labeled only as "Around the Web" and that displays the logo for Revcontent, an advertising platform. If a user clicks on the Revcontent logo, a message appears stating that the content "is paid for by the advertiser or content provider whose link you click on." However, this disclosure does not appear on the sponsored articles themselves. Because, in NewsGuard's view, many readers would not think to click on the Revcontent logo before accessing the paid articles, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not meet NewsGuard's standard for clearly labeling advertising.

Previously, The Blaze had changed the labeling of a similar advertorial section from "Worth a Look" to "Sponsored content" after a discussion with NewsGuard. However, the website has since stopped using that label.

Wolf, the site's managing editor, did not respond to two August 2020 emails from NewsGuard inquiring about the site's lack of ownership information and its labeling of advertisements.

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## History

Glenn Beck launched TheBlaze.com in 2010. In a blog post published upon the site's launch, Beck explained that he created the site after feeling "exasperation" when he read or watched mainstream news. "Too many times, we see mainstream media outlets distorting facts to fit rigid agendas," Beck wrote at the time, and said the site will "pursue truth."

He had previously worked as a commentator for Fox News. According to his biography on GlennBeck.com, Beck started in radio as a Top 40 DJ and moved to talk radio in 2001, "after a series of life-changing events."

Beck's radio show, The Glenn Beck Program, became nationally syndicated in 2004 and is aired on more than 400 radio stations in the U.S.

In December 2018, The Blaze merged with CRTV, forming Blaze Media.

*Editor's Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on August 20, 2020, with a review of newer content on the site. Upon further review, NewsGuard has determined that TheBlaze.com no longer meets NewsGuard's standard for gathering and presenting information responsibly or for clearly labeling advertising. The criteria checklist was adjusted accordingly. This label's initial review was updated in 2019, and its rating was changed, to reflect NewsGuard's determination that the website regularly corrects errors, avoids the use of deceptive headlines, and provides information about content creators.*

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

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## Content

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