

thefederalistpapers.org

A conservative political website that has published inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims, including about COVID-19 and the 2020 U.S. election.



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

Score: 34.5/100

Ownership and Financing

TheFederalistPapers.org is owned by Integrated Marketing Group Inc., based in Nevada, according to the site's director and founder, Steve Straub. Nevada business records list Straub as the company's president and director.

The site generates revenue from advertising.

Content

TheFederalistPapers.org says on its About page that it aims to "get people the power that knowledge gives to motivate them to push back at the erosion of our liberties and restore constitutionally limited small government." Its name is a reference to the Federalist Papers, a series of essays written by founding fathers Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison to advocate for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

The site primarily covers national politics. Articles generally praise Donald Trump and Republicans and criticize Democratic politicians and liberal news organizations.

Typical headlines include "Prominent Conservatives Abandon Twitter as Censorship Reaches New Heights," "Reagan's Foreboding Farewell Address Warning Appears to Be Coming True," "Liberals Triggered After Nationals Catcher Suzuki Dons MAGA Hat At White House Event," and "New Restaurant Sign Has Gun Control Supporters Up In Arms."

Straub told NewsGuard in June 2018 that TheFederalistPapers.org, which launched in 2011, "started long ago as a site dedicated to teaching American history but evolved over time into political commentary."



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.](#)

Straub said in 2018 that the site had “made the decision to focus exclusively on opinion.” Most articles are labeled as opinion, although others are labeled Video, Politics, Economy, Education, and U.S. News.

Credibility

TheFederalistPapers.org often summarizes or republishes excerpts of articles from news organizations such as ABC News, conservative websites like the Daily Caller, and right-leaning political commentators. The website’s stories sometimes rely entirely on social media posts.

The website regularly publishes unproven claims in stories that often criticize Democratic politicians.

For example, an October 2020 article titled “Nearly 60,000 Mail Ballots Unaccounted for in Trump-Heavy County in Critical Swing State of Pennsylvania” claimed that it was a “‘weird’ coincidence” that “over 60,000 mail-in ballots were never sent in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, a place that President Trump won in 2016 by over 30 points.” The article stated that “The ballots which were supposed to be sent out to voters last week, never arrived.”

Contrary to the article’s claim that the mail-in ballots in the western Pennsylvania county “never arrived,” county elections officials said that 58,000 ballots in Westmoreland County were sent out three days late. Officials attributed the delay to the contractors responsible for sending out the ballots, according to local TV station WPXI.

A December 2020 article titled “Michigan Recount Confirms Trump Won County That Went to Biden” highlighted unfounded accusations that the company Dominion Voting Systems, which manufactures voting software and hardware including voting machines, committed election fraud. TheFederalistPapers.org article said, “A Dec. 13 forensic audit by an independent group concluded that Dominion machines were ‘intentionally and purposefully designed with inherent errors to create systemic fraud and influence election results.’”

The article referred to a widely debunked report from the Allied Security Operations Group, a partisan firm run by a Republican congressional candidate with close ties to the Trump administration. According to FactCheck.org, the claim that Dominion's machines were designed to create fraud is untrue due to the fact that all the jurisdictions that used Dominion technology certified the vote totals. According to Dominion's website, "All Dominion systems are capable of producing paper records and are 100% auditable, with testing, reviews, audits, and recounts subject to oversight and verification by all political parties. All 2020 election audits and recounts using Dominion technology have validated the accuracy and reliability of results, confirming the integrity of election outcomes."

In several articles, TheFederalistPapers.org has cast doubt on the ability of face coverings to protect people against the spread of COVID-19, despite a large body of scientific evidence demonstrating that face masks are, in fact, effective.

For example, a December 2020 article titled "Joe Biden Wants To Make You Wear a Mask For 100 Days As His First Presidential Act" claimed that there are no peer-reviewed studies demonstrating the efficacy of masks. "The 'science' was concluded on masks' efficacy in the defense against Covid long before any peer review studies happened," TheFederalistPapers.org wrote. "Any current or future studies that come out against the mainstream view of masks are cast out. Multiple foreign countries and three-letter agencies decided this would be an effective way to control a large populous and the rest, they say, is history." The article did not provide evidence for its claim that any studies had been rejected or "cast out."

A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that wearing face masks can prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. For example, a July 2020 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association tracked infection rates among nearly 10,000 employees at Mass General Brigham Hospital before and after a mask mandate. The study concluded

that “universal masking at MGB was associated with a significantly lower rate of SARS-CoV-2 positive among health workers.”

The primary method of transmission of the COVID-19 virus is through respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A June 2020 fact-checking article by USA Today reported that while it is true that the COVID-19 virus’ particles are approximately 0.1 microns in size — and therefore difficult to block — those particles are attached to larger droplets, which can be blocked by wearing face masks.

The Federalist Papers has also published unsubstantiated claims suggesting “collusion” by several U.S. Democrats with Ukraine. A September 2019 article titled “Documents Leak Showing Crimes, Collusion In Ukraine With Hillary, Biden, Soros, Report,” claimed that “a gigantic cache of documents” implicated Biden, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and liberal billionaire philanthropist George Soros in “purported criminal activity and collusion” in the Ukraine.

The Federalist Papers article’s writer does not explain what the documents say or name the crimes allegedly committed by Biden, Clinton, Soros, and others. The article later acknowledges, “we have not had a chance to independently verify these documents,” which it said were obtained by John Solomon, a Fox News contributor who previously worked at The Hill.

A September 26, 2019, opinion article written by Solomon, which appeared in TheHill.com on the same day as TheFederalistPapers.org’s article, cited memos of meetings with Ukrainian officials and U.S. representatives of Ukrainian natural gas firm, Burisma Holdings, that Solomon said “conflict with Biden’s narrative” that the former vice president pushed for the firing of a Ukrainian prosecutor because the prosecutor was not doing enough to fight corruption. The article, however, did not specifically implicate the former vice president in crimes, and said nothing about Clinton or Soros.

Documents posted by Solomon on the document-sharing site Scribd, which were linked in the Federalist Papers' article, also do not appear to incriminate Clinton or Soros. In an appearance on Fox News commentator Sean Hannity's show on Sept. 26, 2019, Solomon spoke about his article's claims about former vice president Biden, but also did not make any claims about Clinton or Soros.

In the headline and first paragraphs of a July 2019 story, "Now Former FBI Director Comey Has Ties To Epstein Case," the Federalist Papers made the misleading claim that James Comey, the former FBI director, had a previously unreported relationship with the late disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted sex offender who committed suicide in August 2019 while jailed on sex trafficking charges involving teenage girls. The article, which began, "The swamp gets swampier," described James Comey's connection to Epstein: "The newest link to be uncovered is tied to former FBI Director James Comey."

The story goes on to report that James Comey's daughter, Maurene Comey, was one of the prosecutors involved in filing sex trafficking charges against Epstein. However, James Comey has no known relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, as the Federalist Papers' article implies. Nor, obviously, is Maureen Comey's "relationship" to Epstein "swampy."

In a December 2019 article, "Democrats Silent After Gang of 8 Hospitalizes Trump Supporter In Vicious Attack," The Federalist Papers' article falsely asserted that a group of black teenagers attacked a white 14-year-old teen because he was a supporter of President Trump. The article, which was based on tweets from an unverified Twitter account, @AmericanDiaries, by someone who claimed to be the boy's mother, described the "gang assault by eight black kids against one white kid who wore a hat in support of President Donald Trump. The 14-year-old young man was assaulted by the gang because he had previously worn a hat that supported the president. A hat he was not wearing that day."

The November 2019 attack on a teenager in Hamilton County, Florida, did result in five arrests, according to the county sheriff's office. However, the fight had nothing to do with President Trump, or the fact that the boy had previously worn a hat supporting the president, according to Hamilton County School District Superintendent Rex Mitchell.

In a December 2019 statement following the tweets posted by @AmericanDiaries, Mitchell said, "There was no evidence found during the investigation that indicated the student was wearing any of this apparel at the time of the altercation or that his wearing of such apparel on a prior occasion motivated the incident. The incident began with a verbal altercation between two students that escalated when additional students became involved."

Because TheFederalistPapers.org has published inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims in stories and headlines, including about voting in the 2020 U.S. elections and about COVID-19, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present information responsibly and does not avoid the use of deceptive headlines.

In response to NewsGuard's questions in 2018 about the site's content, Straub told NewsGuard in an email, "We strive for accuracy in everything we do and each story usually goes through 2-3 people just to double check each story meets our standards." He added that the site's headlines often reflect "our opinion of the event being discussed so I guess the accuracy can be debated depending on your political point of view." Straub did not respond to a January 2021 email from NewsGuard inquiring about the 2020 articles cited above.

While most articles published on the site are labeled as opinion, TheFederalistPapers.org regularly includes unlabeled opinion in stories labeled as news, which is why NewsGuard has determined that it does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

For example, a January 2021 article that is republished from The Western Journal, headlined “New Polls Deliver Bad News for Trump-Hating Media, Huge Numbers of Republicans Sticking with Trump,” the author described results of polls that show Republicans and Democrats were divided about the U.S. presidential election results. “This isn’t working out like the left would like,” the article said. “After days of relentless attacks by an unholy alliance of the establishment media, Democrats in Congress and the titans of Big Tech in the wake of last week’s violence in the nation’s Capitol, American voters appear just as deadlocked about President Donald Trump as they were before the Nov. 3 election.” The article was labeled as U.S. News.

A December 2019 news article included a quote from President Trump, who said, “If you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate, and so that our Country can get back to business.” The author of the article wrote, “We agree with the President. Democrats should bring it on, so the President can defend himself and the country can put this nightmare behind it.”

Another December 2019 article, also labeled as U.S. News, featured editorial cartoons with the headline “Four Cartoons Show How Bias In FBI Was Ignored In IG Report,” The article said, “The Russia investigation was a witch hunt from start to finish and the more the Inspector general’s report is read the more apparent it becomes.”

Following an exchange of emails with NewsGuard, Straub declined to answer NewsGuard’s questions in 2019 about the site’s handling of news and opinion.

The site does not list a corrections policy, although all articles include a link at the bottom for readers to submit corrections. However, NewsGuard could not find corrections on the site and the site has not corrected numerous false stories that remain online.

Straub told NewsGuard in 2018 that the site deletes posts that were found to be incorrect, and that the site notifies its followers of the error on its Facebook page, a practice that he says “has increased the trust our core

audience has of our content.” Straub did not answer NewsGuard’s questions in 2019 about the site’s corrections policy.

Transparency

The site’s owner, Integrated Marketing Group Inc., is not identified on the website.

Straub told NewsGuard in 2018 that the site does not list its ownership information because “the left, via Antifa and others, have opted for violence and / or character and livelihood assassination and target those who think differently and oppose them. We do not make it easy for those who wish to do us harm to find us and we’ll keep it that way. It in NO WAY impacts what we do, or make us ‘fake news’ in any way.”

Advertising and sponsored articles are distinguishable from editorial content.

TheFederalistPapers.org does not centrally list its editorial staff or leadership. Straub is identified in his biography only as someone who “helps run one of the largest conservative opinion and analysis sites in the country,” a presumed reference to TheFederalistPapers.org. The biography only appears in stories that carry Straub’s byline.

Straub did not answer NewsGuard’s questions in 2019 about the site’s lack of disclosure of editorial leadership.

Articles are generally attributed to authors, and link to a page containing the author’s biography and an archive of previous work, as well as a contact form to reach the writer.

History

The site’s domain was registered in 2011. When it first launched, TheFederalistPapers.org urged readers to “join us as we discuss the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the Anti-Federalist Papers and the Philosophy of our Nation’s Founders.”

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on Jan. 13, 2021. This label was previously updated on Jan. 15, 2020, and at that time, its rating was changed to reflect NewsGuard’s determination that the website does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for gathering and

presenting information responsibly, but does meet NewsGuard's standard for clearly labeling advertising and providing information about content creators.

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

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Ownership and
Financing

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