



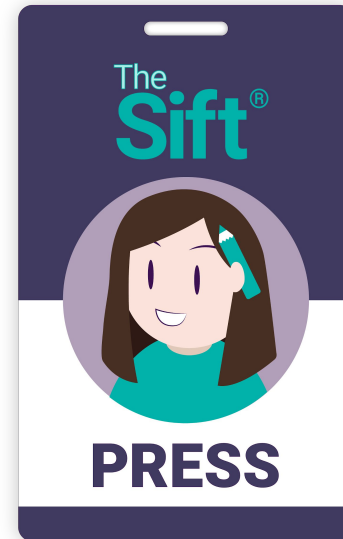
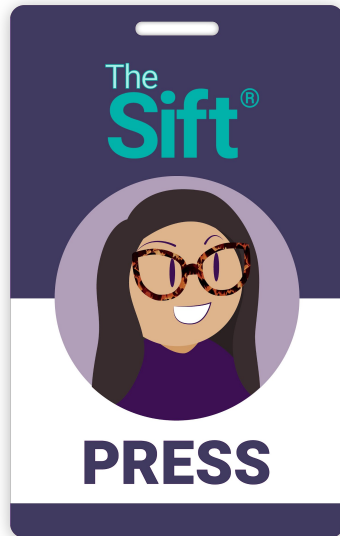
The Sift[®] News Goggles

Can you trust it? Dolly Parton in People magazine

Nov. 23, 2020

First things first

- Be sure to view these slides in presentation mode.
- Suzannah and Hannah, former reporters who work at NLP, are going to help you examine this source through journalists' eyes.



After [news broke](#) Nov. 16 that early data showed a vaccine from drugmaker Moderna was nearly 95% effective, fans of American singer-songwriter Dolly Parton praised her \$1 million donation to help fund COVID-19 vaccine research. Suppose you came across a People magazine story about the subject. Can you trust it? How do you know? Let's take a closer look. Grab your news goggles!



PEOPLE.COM > HE

Dolly Parton Modern Wanted

The country legend
money aided Mod

By Julie Mazziotta



Click [here](#) to read the full story.

Americans may have Dolly Parton to thank for their COVID-19 vaccine.

Back in April, the country legend donated \$1 million to Vanderbilt University Medical Center to create the Dolly Parton COVID-19 Research Fund, to help scientists search for a coronavirus vaccine. Parton donated the money then partially funded pharmaceutical company Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine research, currently a leading candidate in the search for a viable vaccine.



What's all this underlined text about?


After Moderna released data showing that its vaccine is 94.5 percent effective in preliminary trials — hugely encouraging news as the U.S. struggles with skyrocketing cases of COVID-19 — social media users noted that Moderna's data cited the Dolly Parton COVID-19 Research Fund as one of its supporters.

Let's explore on the next slide!




Americans may have Dolly Parton to thank for their COVID-19 vaccine.

Back in April, the country legend donated \$1 million to Vanderbilt University Medical Center to create the Dolly Parton COVID-19 Research Fund, to help scientists develop a vaccine.



The underlined words are hyperlinks. If you click on one of the underlined areas, it should take you to another webpage — either on the same website or another website — that provides related information about the words that are underlined.



Let's try one! So, if we click on the hyperlink that begins "the country legend," it takes us to a previous People story on Parton's donation back in April. News reports commonly link to previous related coverage. When I was a reporter, editors always encouraged us to include hyperlinks to add clarity, context and credibility to our reports. It's also part of being transparent; readers can click on hyperlinks to see firsthand where the information is coming from.

Americans may have Dolly Parton to thank for their COVID-19 vaccine.

Back in April, the country legend donated \$1 million to Vanderbilt University Medical Center to create the Dolly Parton COVID-19 Research Fund, to help scientists search for a cure or vaccine for the virus. That money then partially funded pharmaceutical company Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine research, currently a leading candidate in the search for a viable vaccine.



And if you click on the words, “partially funded,” you’ll be taken to another webpage — a research article by The New England Journal of Medicine, which identifies Parton as a supporter.

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D-19 Research Fund as one

Parton, 74, said Tuesday morning that she was told of the social media buzz and was pleased the money went towards a useful cause.

“I’m just happy that anything I do can help somebody else,” she said on *Today*. “When I donated the money to the COVID fund, I just wanted it to do good and evidently, it is!”



Journalists would say that this quote was “picked up” — or, taken from reporting by another source. By citing *Today*, People is being clear and transparent about where this quote came from — Parton’s interview on the *Today* show. When I reported at Reuters, I often picked up quotes (and other information) like this to include in stories. Picking up information from another standards-based news organization is a fast way to get pertinent information to readers.

But perhaps you want to see for yourself that Parton actually said this. How would you go about fact-checking this quote?





I Googled some basic keywords. Here's what popped up.

The second one looks promising because it has the word "video," so I'm hoping this is a recording of the interview. Let's click it.



dolly parton today show vaccine



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About 22,700,000 results (0.41 seconds)

www.today.com › health › dolly-parton-helping-fund-c... ▾

[Dolly Parton on helping fund the coronavirus vaccine: I just ...](#)

3 days ago — **Dolly Parton** visits **TODAY** and opens up about donating \$1 million toward a promising coronavirus **vaccine**.

www.today.com › video › do... parton-talks-coronavir... ▾

[Dolly Parton talks coronavirus vaccine donation - Today Show](#)

3 days ago — The **Dolly Parton** Research Fund has donated money to find a coronavirus **vaccine**.
"I'm just happy that anything I do can help somebody else," ...





Nice. This is it! If I watch this [short clip](#), I can check Parton's exact quote. Looks like the People report is accurate. But I think it would have been even better to link to the *Today* video in the actual report.



TODAY

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HOLIDAY PLAZA



Image of the [video](#) is hyperlinked.



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exciting advancements towards research of the coronavirus for a cure,” the singer shared on Instagram.

“I am making a donation of \$1 million to Vanderbilt towards that research,” she continued, urging others out there who “can afford it” to make donations as well.



Here’s another example of a hyperlink that helps journalists “show their work,” so to speak. We can click on it and see the quoted Instagram post for ourselves.

In reports involving celebrities, searching social media is a quick way for journalists to find statements or information from relevant sources. Let’s make sure that Parton actually posted this on Instagram by following the [hyperlink](#).






This looks right! The quote matches what People reported. Also, this little blue checkmark means that this is Parton's verified Instagram account. That means we can be confident that this is really her and not an imposter.

My longtime friend Dr. Naji Abumrad, who's been involved in research at Vanderbilt for many years, informed me that they were making some exciting advancements towards research of the coronavirus for a cure. I am making a donation of \$1 million to Vanderbilt towards that research and to encourage people that can afford it to make donations.

Keep the faith,





The last grafs (journalism-speak for “paragraphs”) of the People story include perspective from Moderna. The story links to a [statement](#) by Moderna’s CEO that is posted on an external site.

Moderna said Monday that the promising vaccine trial data represents a “pivotal moment.” The trial included 30,000 participants, with half getting the vaccine and the other given a placebo, a shot with no vaccine. The participants were instructed to live their lives as usual, and 90 of those with the placebo contracted COVID-19 during that time, 11 of which were severe cases. Of the vaccine group, just five got COVID-19, and none of their cases were severe.

That data showed a 94.5 percent effectiveness for the vaccine.

“This positive interim analysis from our Phase 3 study has given us the first clinical validation that our vaccine can prevent COVID-19 disease, including severe disease.” Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel [said in a statement](#).

Moderna’s results come exactly one week after Pfizer said that the early results from [their COVID-19 vaccine trials showed 90 percent effectiveness](#). Both vaccines will need more data before the companies can apply for emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration, but Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said that these early results are [“quite impressive.”](#)

News Goggles: Next steps

Discuss: What makes a news source credible? When are hyperlinks important or useful to include? How can you fact-check information in a report that has been “picked up” from another news organization? Are celebrity news magazines like People more or less reliable than news organizations like The New York Times? Considering the audience and purpose of each, which source do you trust more and why?

Idea: Ask students to read an online article from a standards-based news organization on a topic of their choosing, paying special attention to any hyperlinks in the text. Direct them to take notes on which details and phrases incorporate links, where each hyperlink leads and how its inclusion impacts the news report. (Does it add context? Lead to sources? Jump to previous coverage? Offer evidence or support?)

Resources: [“Practicing Quality Journalism”](#) (NLP’s Checkology® virtual classroom).

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This exercise originated in the Nov. 23, 2020, issue of The Sift® newsletter from the News Literacy Project. You can read archives of the newsletter and subscribe [here](#).



Thank you!



A future founded on facts



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