

## Pink Slime: Novel Methods of Assessing LLMs Media Literacy

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### Project Summary

At the beginning of this project, we sought a means to quantitatively assess student's media literacy in a landscape of increasingly AI-generated content, as well as the insidious usage of "Pink Slime" sites, which mimic that of real, local news outlets.

While our approach changed a number of times, we eventually ended up employing a novel method of analysis to determine ChatGPT's capabilities in terms of assessing the veracity of local news sources, with a total sample size analyzing over 1900 individual websites. We believe that these findings are deeply important to college students, who are increasingly reliant on AI tools for sourcing.

We have compiled our findings into a rudimentary but highly suggestive research paper, which we continue to expand and eventually submit to research journals. Our research has revealed that ChatGPT is broadly more skeptical of pink-slime sources than it is of real sources. Despite this, ChatGPT is generally unwilling to totally write-off pink slime sources and still rates them as a 7/10 on trustworthiness on average. We conclude that the results are promising, and we plan to continue our experimentation and data collection with a variety of models and prompts in the hopes of finding a better way to use AI tools to assess source quality.

### Impact

While we have not yet publicized our findings, we believe that this research is capable of aiding in the development of a contemporary media literacy curriculum that engages with the reality of AI-tool usage in an academic context. We believe that the current media-literacy landscape is far from adequate, and we hope that this project opens the door for conversations about ways that AI-tools can be used to address present gaps in media literacy. Anecdotally, we've found that sharing our research in conversations with our peers has led them to improve the rigor in which they use automated tools to review both their academic work and research.

While we were not able to accomplish our original goal of physically surveying students across California news deserts, we believe that our final product works towards similar objectives. From the outset, our goal has been to assess and improve the state of

media literacy in a post-AI landscape. To this end, we believe that the final form of our project was actually more informative and engaging than a simple snapshot of media literacy.

We believe that the greatest success of our project was our methodology. While our results were somewhat frustrating, we plan to employ this methodology with a number of other LLMs and a more elaborate set of queries. We plan to continue working on this paper until we believe that it is fit for peer-review, and then we will send it off for publication. We hope to eventually build tools such as browser extensions or even full websites that are tailor fit to help students and academics assess the quality of their sources.