

# A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age: Scientific Habits of Mind

By David J. Helfand


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We live in the Information Age, with billions of bytes of data just two swipes away. Yet how much of this is mis- or even disinformation? A lot of it is, and your search engine can't tell the difference. As a result, an avalanche of misinformation threatens to overwhelm the discourse we so desperately need to address complex social problems such as climate change, the food and water crises, biodiversity collapse, and emerging threats to public health. This book provides an inoculation against the misinformation epidemic by cultivating scientific habits of mind. Anyone can do it?indeed, everyone must do it if our species is to survive on this crowded and finite planet.

This survival guide supplies an essential set of apps for the prefrontal cortex while making science both accessible and entertaining. It will dissolve your fear of numbers, demystify graphs, and elucidate the key concepts of probability, all while celebrating the precise use of language and logic. David Helfand, one of our nation's leading astronomers and science educators, has taught scientific habits of mind to generations in the classroom, where he continues to wage a provocative battle against sloppy thinking and the encroachment of misinformation.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age* is a no-holds-barred paean to the scientific mode of thinking. Helfand's wide-ranging, interdisciplinary, humorously cynical intellect comes through at every turn.

(J. Craig Wheeler, University of Texas at Austin)

*A Survival Guide for the Misinformation Age* is an impassioned plea for science literacy. Given the state of the world today, in which scientifically underinformed voters elect scientifically illiterate politicians, David Helfand has written the right book at the right time with the right message. Read it now. The future of our civilization may depend on it.

(Neil deGrasse Tyson, astrophysicist, American Museum of Natural History)

David Helfand's *Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age* gives readers a chance to spend time with one of this country's clearest and best critical thinkers. Helfand channels Steven Pinker's ability to dissect language with John Alan Paulos's ability to explain numbers with Richard Dawkins' ability to explain our existence (to obtain food, to avoid being food, and to reproduce) with George Carlin's ability to make us laugh. Using personal anecdotes (he's a Red Sox fan), Helfand teaches us how to think through questions as diverse as why the moon doesn't make us lunatics to why it only takes twenty-three people to have a 50:50 chance that two will have the same birthday. A real pleasure.

(Paul Offit, University of Pennsylvania)

Important and timely.

(*Library Journal*)

Helfand's work is an admirable response to a long-standing problem of sloppy thinking.

(*Publishers Weekly*)

Helfand is a man brimming with incredible insights on the universe.

(*Dave's Universe*)

A must-read for anyone presuming to call themselves a scientist and a should-read for anyone just trying to make sense of the overwhelming volume of data and real and concocted 'proofs' of nearly everything that spews forth from the Internet on demand. This book provides a road map for teaching students how to both celebrate science and how to view their primary source of information with skepticism and caution. Every

science teacher should read this book.

(John Ziegler *NSTA Recommends*)

For those with an arts and humanities background, this book offers many valuable lessons.... For everyone else it provides a vital antidote to the ills of misinformation by teaching systematic and rigorous scientific reasoning.

(Marina Gerner *Times Literary Supplement*)

Highly recommended.

(*CHOICE*)

How I wish everyone would read, appreciate, and follow [David J. Helfand's] guidance.

(*Physics Today*)

From the Inside Flap

We live in the Information Age, with billions of bytes of data just two swipes away. Yet how much of this is mis- or even dis-information? A lot of it is, and your search engine can't tell the difference. As a result, an avalanche of misinformation threatens to overwhelm the discourse we so desperately need to address complex social problems such as climate change, the food and water crises, biodiversity collapse, and emerging threats to public health. This book provides an inoculation against the misinformation epidemic by cultivating scientific habits of mind. Anyone can do it--indeed, everyone must do it if our species is to long survive on this crowded and finite planet.

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From the Back Cover

**David J. Helfand** is the former chair of the Department of Astronomy at Columbia University where he has served on the faculty for nearly four decades. He has also been a visiting scientist at the Danish Space Research Institute and the Sackler Distinguished Visiting Astronomer at Cambridge University. He was a founding tutor and served as president and vice chancellor at Quest University Canada; he recently completed a term as president of the American Astronomical Society. He has published commentary in *Nature*, *Physics Today*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*, among other publications.

## Users Review

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**Vance Malik:**

Do you one among people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this aren't like that. This A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age: Scientific Habits of Mind book is readable through you who hate the straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer regarding A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age: Scientific Habits of Mind content conveys prospect easily to understand by most people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different available as it. So , do you nevertheless thinking A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age: Scientific Habits of Mind is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

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**Emily Higginbotham:**

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day long to reading a guide. The book A Survival Guide to the Misinformation Age: Scientific Habits of Mind it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book provides high quality.

**Edward Reed:**

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