

Chapter 5 Homework

Exercise 5-1

Instructions: Imagine that you're on the market for a new television, and you're looking for advice about what to buy. Identify which of the following persons or subjects is likely to be an **interested party** and which is not.

1) A flyer from a local store that sells televisions.

2) The Consumer Reports website.

3) A salesperson at a local electronics store.

4) The Sony website.

5) An article in a major newspaper about televisions, including some rankings of brands.

Further Instructions: Let's say that you've narrowed your search to two brands: LG and Panasonic. With this in mind, now identify which of the following persons or subjects is likely to be an interested party and which is not.

6) A friend who owns an LG.

7) A friend who used to own a Panasonic and now owns an LG.

8) A salesperson at a store that sells both Panasonic and LG.

Exercise 5-2

Instructions: Within each group of observers, who would be most and least **credible** regarding the situation or issue given?

Remember that credibility can be understood as a balance of bias and expertise. Some questions may involve subjectivity and have multiple answers.

1) Judging the relative performances of fighters in a heavyweight boxing match.

- a. The father of one of the fighters.
- b. A sportswriter for Sports Illustrated magazine.
- c. The coach of the American Olympic boxing team.
- d. The referee of the fight.
- e. A professor of physical education.

2) You are trying to decide whether you should buy a Mac computer or a Windows PC. You might consult...

- a. A friend who owns either a Mac or a Windows machine.
- b. A friend who now owns one of the machines but used to own the other.
- c. A dealer for either Mac or Windows computers.
- d. A computer column in a big-city newspaper.
- e. Reviews in computer magazines.

3) The Surgical Practices Committee of Grantville Hospital has documented an unusually high number of problems in connection with tonsillectomies performed by Dr. Choker. The committee is reviewing her surgical practices. Those present during a tonsillectomy are...

- a. Dr. Choker.
- b. The surgical proctor from the Surgical Practices Committee.
- c. An anesthesiologist.
- d. A nurse.
- e. A technician.

4) Issue: Is Crixivian an effective HIV/AIDS medication?

- a. Consumer Reports.
- b. Stadlander Drug Company (the company that makes Crixivian).
- c. The owner of your local health food store.
- d. The US Food and Drug Administration.
- e. Your local pharmacist.

5) Issue: Should possession of handguns be outlawed?

- a. A police chief.
- b. A representative of the National Rifle Association.
- c. A US Senator.
- d. The father of a murder victim.

6) Issue: What was the original intent of the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution, and does it include permission for every citizen to own handguns?

- a. A representative of the National Rifle Association.
- b. A justice of the Supreme Court of the US.
- c. A constitutional historian.
- d. A US Senator.
- e. The president of the US.

7) Issue: Is decreasing your intake of dietary fat and cholesterol likely to reduce the level of cholesterol in your blood?

- a. Time magazine.
- b. Runner's World magazine.
- c. Your physician.
- d. The National Institutes of Health.
- e. The New England Journal of Medicine.

Exercise 5-3

Instructions: Consider the following fictional biography of Anne St. Germain. On the basis of the information given in the biography, determine on which of the topics listed she would be most credible.

Biography: Anne St. Germaine teaches sociology at the University of Illinois and is the director of its Population Studies Center. She is a graduate of Harvard College, where she received a BA in 1975, and of Harvard University, which granted her a PhD in economics in 1978. She taught courses in demography as an assistant professor at UCLA until 1982; then she moved to the sociology department of the University of Nebraska, where she was associate professor and then professor. From 1987 through 1989, she served as the acting chief of the Population Trends and Structure Section of the United Nations Population Division. She joined the faculty at the University of Illinois in 1989. She has written books on patterns of world urbanization, the effects of cigarette smoking on international mortality, and demographic trends in India. She is president of the Population Association of America.

Topics:

- a. Whether the winters are worse in Illinois than Nebraska.
- b. The possible beneficial effects of requiring sociology courses for all students at the University of Illinois.
- c. The possible effects of nuclear war on global climate patterns.
- d. The incidence of poverty among various ethnic groups in the US.
- e. The effects of the melting of glaciers on global sea levels.
- f. The change in death rate for various age groups in all Third World countries between 1970 and 1990.
- g. The feasibility of a laser-based nuclear defense system.
- h. Voter participation among religious sects in India.

Exercise 5-4

Instructions: Given what you know about the claims given and the sources listed in the following passages, and given your general knowledge, determine whether you should accept, reject, or suspend judgment on the claims in the passages. You might, for example, suspend judgment due to ambiguity or insufficient documentation. If you don't know a publication, you can google it to get more information.

1) “Campbell soup is hot—and some are getting burned. Just one day after the behemoth of broth reported record profits, Campbell said it would lay off 650 US workers, including 175—or 11% of the workforce—at its headquarters in Camden, New Jersey.”

Source: Time Magazine.

2) “Frantic parents tell shocked TV audience: space aliens stole our son.”

Source: Weekly World News.

3) “The manufacturer of Sudafed 12-hour capsules issued a nationwide recall of the product on Sunday after two people in the state of Washington who had taken the medication died of cyanide poisoning and a third became seriously ill.”

Source: Los Angeles Times.

4) “In Canada, smoking in public places, trains, planes or even automobiles is now prohibited by law or by convention. The federal government has banned smoking in all its buildings.”

Source: Reuters.

5) “Cats that live indoors and use a litter box can live four to five years longer.”

Source: from an advertisement for Johnny Cat Litter.

6) “The collapse of WTC Building 7 represents one of the worst structural failures in modern history. The official story contends that fires weakened the structures, resulting in a gravitational collapse. The evidence, obvious to so many researchers but omitted from NIST’s Final Report, supports a very different conclusion—one that points squarely to explosive controlled demolition. If WTC 7 was intentionally brought down, then clearly it becomes a ‘smoking gun’ that must be investigated.”

Source: from this website:

<http://www1.ae911truth.org/home/344-building-7-implosion-the-smoking-gun-of-911.html>