



On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, and What Can Be Done

By Cass R. Sunstein

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Many of us are being misled. Claiming to know dark secrets about public officials, hidden causes of the current economic situation, and nefarious plans and plots, those who spread rumors know precisely what they are doing. And in the era of social media and the Internet, they know a lot about how to manipulate the mechanics of false rumors--social cascades, group polarization, and biased assimilation. They also know that the presumed correctives--publishing balanced information, issuing corrections, and trusting the marketplace of ideas--do not always work. All of us are vulnerable.

In *On Rumors*, Cass Sunstein uses examples from the real world and from behavioral studies to explain why certain rumors spread like wildfire, what their consequences are, and what we can do to avoid being misled. In a new afterword, he revisits his arguments in light of his time working in the Obama administration.

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Editorial Review

Review

"With clear examples and lucid arguments, *On Rumors* couldn't come at a better time in the country's increasingly divisive--and deceptive--public discourse."--**Seed**

"In revealing how easily and blindly we accept rumors, Sunstein's book is likely to make readers think twice before believing or repeating the next bit of gossip that comes through the grapevine."--**Sarah Halzack, Washington Post**

"Raises fundamental questions about the troublingly ambiguous impact of social media on the marketplace of democratic ideas."--**Michael Ignatieff, Foreign Affairs**

"Full of insights into the dynamics of information flow and why mud sticks in some places and not others."--**Michael Bond, Guardian**

From the Back Cover

"It often seems that rumors are the one element that can travel faster than the speed of light. In *On Rumors*, Cass Sunstein helps us understand their incredible appeal, their power, and their dangers. A fun-tastic book."--**Dan Ariely, James B. Duke Professor of Behavioral Economics, Duke University, and author of Predictably Irrational**

About the Author

Cass R. Sunstein is the Robert Walmsley University Professor at Harvard University. His previous books include *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton), *Infotopia*, and *Simpler*. He is also the author, with Richard Thaler, of *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*.

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