

# The correction rarely travels as far as the *error*

*One mechanism of institutional communication — why a quietly appended correction does not undo a widely-shared original claim, and how to find it.*

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## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

### ***How This Guide Works***

This is part of **Incognati Civics**, applying the field-guide format to the way institutions communicate — press releases, official statements, guidance documents, corrections, embargoes — the packaging between a record and the public, examined the same way regardless of which institution or which side it favors. Each specimen goes deep on one mechanism, with primary documents, regulations, and nonpartisan scholarship listed in full on the references page.

#### INCOGNATI CIVICS — INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

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# The Buried Correction

## Emendatio Sepulta

**Governing precedent / case** Correction and update practice   **Status** Recurring after any viral claim

OBSERVED SPECIMEN

PRESS RELEASES, ARTICLES, OFFICIAL POSTS

*An institution issues a striking claim; it spreads. Later, a correction or “update” is appended — often at the bottom, in smaller type, days after the original reached its audience. The **reach of the correction** is a fraction of the reach of the error, and the corrected version may keep the original headline. Standards bodies call for corrections to be prominent and to travel with the claim; in practice, the retraction is quiet, and many who saw the first version never see the second.*

### THE HOOK

The corrected page looks authoritative and current, hiding that its central claim was walked back.

### THE MECHANISM

Corrections are typically appended rather than propagated: they are not re-shared with the original's audience, so the error outruns its fix.

**Field mark:** when you meet a striking claim, check the page for a correction or update note — and remember the people who shared the original almost never saw the fix.

See the full references page for complete citations.

## References

every source checkable at the link provided; DOIs given where the source has one

REFERENCE · STANDARDS

The Trust Project / journalism standards on prominent, dated corrections.

<https://thetrustproject.org/>

*Standards calling for corrections to be labeled, dated, and given comparable prominence to the error.*

REFERENCE · POYNTER

Poynter Institute, guidance on corrections and their limited reach.

<https://www.poynter.org/>

*Nonpartisan journalism institute documentation on correction practice and the ‘continued influence’ of retracted claims.*

## ***Reading a Corrected Claim: A Gut Check***

*four questions before an old claim you remember is still the current truth*

- 1 Scan for a note**  
Look at the top and bottom for ‘correction’ or ‘updated.’
  - 2 Check the date**  
A late edit means the original circulated uncorrected first.
  - 3 Compare the headline**  
A corrected body can still carry the wrong headline.
  - 4 Assume asymmetry**  
The fix reaches far fewer people than the error did.
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INCOGNATI CIVICS

### ***The Series Continues***

This is Specimen No. 4 of the Institutional Communications section within Incognati Civics. The full queue of twelve specimens is listed on the cover. This section joins Elections, Federal Laws, and Official Data Reporting within Civics, with local government planned beyond it. The Incognati Atlas catalogs the underlying patterns across all of it.

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