

THE SBD TOOL KIT

Your Guide to the Fine Art of Baloney Detection!

Baloney Detection Do's

1. Where possible there must be independent confirmation of the "Facts"
2. Encourage substantive debate on the evidence by knowledgeable proponents of ALL points of view
3. Arguments from "Authorities" carry little weight
4. Spin more than one hypothesis
5. Try not to get overly attached to a hypothesis just because it's yours
6. Quantify
7. If there is a chain of argument, every link in the chain must work including the premise, not just most of them
8. Occam's Razor
9. Always ask whether the hypothesis can be, at least in principle, falsified. You must be able to check assertions out.

Baloney Detection Don'ts

1. Ad hominum attacks
2. Argument from authority
3. Argument from adverse consequences
4. Appeal to ignorance
5. Special pleading
6. Begging the question / Assuming the answer
7. Observational selection / Enumeration of favorable circumstances
8. Statistics of small numbers
9. Misunderstanding the nature of statistics
10. Inconsistency
11. Non Sequitur
12. Post hoc, ergo propter hoc
13. Meaningless questions
14. Excluded middle or false dichotomy
15. Short-Term vs. Long-term
16. Slippery Slope
17. Confusion of correlation and causation
18. Straw Man
19. Suppressed evidence or Half-truths
20. Weasel Words