What Happened to the Internet?

I guess I should've expected it.

I had a naïve assumption that the internet meant the release of information permanently. That everything – good, bad, true, false – would make its way online, and therefore be forever findable.

I never thought everything would be easy to find or equally treated (which would be a horrible experience), but assumed it would be *there*. I assumed controversial things would have findable info from all sides. I assumed things done or said wouldn't disappear or become altered with no record of what they used to be.

Those assumptions were wrong.

It's been shocking how quickly this seemed to happen, or at least how quickly I began to take notice.

Google searches are not good anymore. And they're getting worse. Google's goal of "a single result" is one of the worst ideas I can imagine. And they seem to be moving towards it with fewer and fewer meaty results, more flimflam, lots of sanitized "officially sanctioned" fluff, and a whole lot of weird bot created content in between.

Wikipedia was never perfect, but it seems worse than ever. But now, even the internet archival services are scrubbing things. History is literally being erased.

I don't know if there's any solution except to change our comfy assumptions about the availability of information. The internet seems to be creeping toward a much noisier version of *Pravda*. At least wholly owned state propaganda papers were known as such and discounted accordingly.

We're caught off guard because the level of fakery and bullshit on the internet happened quickly, and the quantity of info out there can make you feel like everything's represented. But scratch the surface and those assumptions fall apart.

New approaches, tools, and mindsets are needed to wade through the internet today. And new offline info sources are needed as well.