The Media Manipulation Initiative: It is Helpful to Clearly Differentiate Between Fake News Intended to Be Satire from Hyper-Partisan News Sites

ABSTRACT

Most of us meet mass media almost every day. We search for information, accept and share them daily. In post-factual time, it is more difficult to focus on and choose from lot of available information, especially when there are various forms of fake news, which some of them are produced strategically and systemically. The *Media Manipulation Initiative* comes with research focused on the definition of fake news, categorization and strategies of intervention.

KEY WORDS

Alternative media. Fake news. Mainstream media. Media manipulation.

The research institute based in New York City called *Data & Society*, which is focused on social and cultural issues arising from data-centric and automated technologies, came up with the *Media Manipulation Initiative*.

In *The Media Manipulation Initiative* researchers are concerned with a phenomenon that is closely related to post-factual time, with fake news. They claim, that fake news has been the subject of newspaper headlines, the special topic of academic journals and the subject of arguing at both ends of the political spectrum since 2016. That is related to the presidential election in U.S. in November of the same year.

Caplan, Hanson and Donovan, authors of this research, based this report on a year of field-based research using stakeholder mapping, discourse and policy analysis, as well as ethnographic and qualitative research of industry groups working to solve issues associated with the phenomenon of fake news.

This report shows, that no single definition of fake news will suffice. Moreover, it attempts to identify different types of fake news. They explore two main uses of the phrase fake news. First of all, fake news as a critique of mainstream media, which is an extension of existing critiques of the media industry made by conservative leaders. And second, fake news as problematic content, which researchers consider as a position advocated by scholars and media-oriented civil society organizations that seek to differentiate fake news from real news and classify different types of fake news.

In the last case, there are three categories of identifying fake news. Firstly, is identifying fake news by intent. That contains two forms of fake news - misinformation and disinformation. While misinformation is spreading false information without intent, disinformation is intentional.

Classifying fake news by type is kind of problematic, considering troubles with sorting content into clear categories. These approaches rightly argue that moderators and censors must respond differently to different types of fake news. In the *Dead Reckoning: Navigating Content Moderation After "Fake News"* we find fake news typology by Mark Verstraete, Derek Bambauer, and Jane R. Bambauer (2017). That contains three types of fake news (hoaxes, propaganda, and trolling), which are intended to deceive, and two types (satire and humor), which are intended as cultural commentary. To establish clear categories of fake news is being complicated, by emerging information about the role of Russian propaganda. As researchers said, it is still helpful, however, to clearly differentiate between fake news, intended to be satire, from hyper-partisan news sites that may spread false content. Last but not least, there are features of fake news that needs to be identified.

The second part of the report includes strategies of intervention, which consists of four emerging strategies: trust and verification/fact-checking, demonetization, de-prioritization, and regulatory approaches.

Trust and verification often rely on defining fake news by intent and/or type. There are also three types of solutions: debunking and fact-checking, coalitions of trusted content brokers, and expanding content moderation programs and policies. Each of them provides a verification of the facts of stories, which may be questionable.

The main strategy for intervention in economic areas is the cutting off advertising, which online is often provided by automatic systems. These systems are based not on which outlet or news brand it will appear in, but of how many clicks or views it will receive.

The main thing in de-prioritizing is "marking" that content, which presents fake news and deprioritizing it from appearing it in news feed or recommendations. Also banning fake accounts, which spread such news. That includes identifying both fake news sources as well as accounts that work to amplify content on their network.
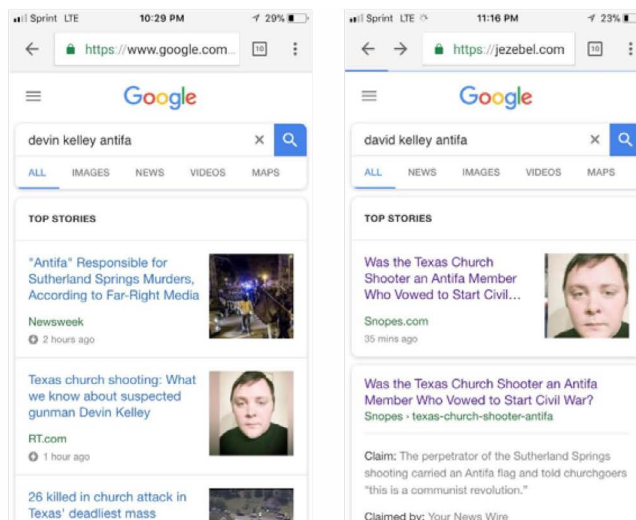
PICTURE 1: *Representative search results following Texas shooting*

Source: CAPLAN. R., HANSON. L., DONOVAN. J.: Dead Reckonin: Navigating Content Moderation After "Fake News". [online]. [2018-10-17]. Available at: <https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety_Dead_Reckoning_2018.pdf>.

Researchers also claim, that many of the disinformation efforts associated with fake news are tied to state-sponsored actions by the Russian government. They also say, that no definition of fake news can cover the enormous fissure in U.S. legal regimes pitting free speech values against invading international cyber-armies or domestic trolls.

The authors of the research acknowledge that market-based solutions cannot mitigate these threats. They think that governments around the world have to and some of them have already been taking steps to address fake news and hate speech online through legislation, hearings, or establishing centers dedicated to the problem of fake news.

Bibliography and sources

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The Promises, Challenges, and Futures of Media Literacy

ABSTRACT
Nowadays initiatives in the fields of media literacy such as youth participation, teacher training and curricular resources, parental support, policy initiatives, and evidence base construction - are very successful in growing the level of the critical thinking of the participants. However, there are still a few areas which need to be guided. Authors Monica Bulger and Patrick Davison make five recommendations for the development of the future of media literacy programming for educators, legislators, technologists, and philanthropists. On the other hand the report also warns against the contemporary treatment of media literacy as a panacea - in the way of how to deal with fake news.

KEY WORDS
Media Literacy. Media Messages. Fake News. Media Manipulation. Media Perspective.