

Mimi McNulty

Mid-Term Exam

10/15/20

### **Fake News Solution Report**

Fake news is a global epidemic that is a threat to democracy, journalism, and economics. (Dhir, Salo, Singh, Talwar, Virk 1) Recent developments in global digitation allow mass media users to create fake news with emotional pull for a profit. Social media, television broadcasts, and advertisements are main sources of fake news. Advancements in technology have allowed content creators, advertisers, and journalists to create their own content and share it with the rest of the world. (Gershon, 221) Anyone can make content online which can lead to fake news. Fake news is dangerous and can lead to global confusion when information is not clear about events happening around the world. Fake news can induce fear among the public causing people to believe it and act on it. (Dhir, Salo, Singh, Talwar, Virk 1)

#### **Fake News**

Fake news is news content that is created and shared with the intention to deliberately persuade consumers to accept false beliefs that are shared to forward specific agendas. (Dhir, Salo, Singh, Talwar, Virk 1) The types of fake news:

**False Connection:** Headlines, visuals, and/or captions that do not support the content it is correlated with. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

**Example:** Online CNBC News article titled, *Trump says there's no question the coronavirus will go away.* (Higgins-Dunn, 1) The article explains why the headline is false and the science behind the coronavirus. (Higgins Dunn, 1) This makes the headline misleading.

**False Context:** Genuine content shared with false contextual information. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

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**Example:** “Coronavirus Today” article headline states sunlight will cure the coronavirus. The article contains medical jargon stating sunlight’s effects on a drop of the virus. (Carlson, Hawbaker, Reiter, 1) The headline and article don’t match up on the same level.

**Manipulated Content:** Genuine content, information, and/or imagery manipulated to deceive others. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

**Example:** Altered video of Donald Trump not coughing after being diagnosed with the coronavirus. (Bump, 1) This misleads viewers to think that the coronavirus is not as serious as it is.

**Misleading Content:** Content created to mislead and frame issues and individuals. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

**Example:** Map shared by The Sun before the coronavirus was researched showing how the virus spreads. (Coronavirus: How a misleading, 1) The map was misleading because information was



not yet available about the virus.  
misleading, 1)

(Coronavirus: How a

**Imposter Content:** Genuine sources that are impersonated by another source. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

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**Example:** Phishers sent out emails claiming to be the World Health Organization sharing false information about the coronavirus to gather online user’s personal information. (Zorz, 1)

**Fabricated Content:** 100% false content designed to deceive or harm others. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

**Example:** Trish Regan’s tweet about her FOX News broadcast claiming that the coronavirus was an impeachment stunt. (Regan, 1) This tweet was created after scientists had confirmed the



virus’s legitimacy.

(Regan, 1)

**Satire/Parody:** Content containing the potential to fool others with no intention to cause harm. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

**Example:** James Corden’s ‘Maybe I’m Immune’ song based off Donald Trump’s statements about his coronavirus diagnosis. This song was written for *The Late Late Show with James Corden* and was meant for entertainment purposes. (Moreau, 1)

## Background/Causes

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Fake news is created to manipulate and deceive publics. The media is often influenced by media giants who are seeking profit. Business owners and advertisers frame content and jeopardize their credibility to make money by feeding false information to consumers. (Hanson, 65) The information is then shared through media, entering a wide network of people who also share information. News outlets who create fake news are likely to use emotional tie-ins to motivate users to click on their content. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

Digitalization has affected the way the world receives news and how governments are involved with shared media. Governments move too slowly to keep up with the digital economy causing tech companies to skip over them when making decisions about content sharing. (Tercek, 196) News sharing outlets are no help. Because of digitalization and the 24-hour news cycle, quality journalistic resources have been spread thin and there is not enough time for fact checking. (Gershon, 221) (Bakir, McStay, 1) News sources must hold themselves accountable to produce credible information. (Glader, 1) There is a fight for credibility from news sources and governments for political and economic gain. (Dhir, Salo, Singh, Talwar, Virk 1)

### **Solutions**

In order to get shared information under control in the media, we must put trust in news organizations who have the necessary resources to defend their work and have the backing of an organization who values ethical news reporting (Gershon, 221) and apply the Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics, (SPJ Code of Ethics, 1) the American Press Institute's Elements of Journalism, (The elements of journalism, 1) and the Associated Press News Values and Principles (News Values and Principles, 1) to their work. Early detection of fake news is

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important and developing social bots to detect it is the key to finding fake news. (Ding, Guo, Liang, Yao, Yu, 26) Developing software to create social fingerprints will be useful for screening user credibility. Practicing responsible privacy when gathering personal information about users without applying behavioral advertising for profit will be important. (Bakir, McStay, 1) Finally, removing affective content and correcting it while also letting consumers know when information has been changed is crucial. (Bakir, McStay, 1)

### **Innovative Ideas**

**International Board of Digitalization:** A board staffed by credible personnel from all over the world in the media and technology industries to watch over credibility practices of news media on a global scale. They will follow set guidelines from different ethics policies pertaining to journalism to decide what counts as journalism and detect fake news.

**Online News Verification Program:** An online program that uses social bots and follows the International Board of Digitalization's guidelines that online content creators can submit their creations to be verified as credible. This program will also verify users and platforms as credible. The site will also offer education of how to detect fake news, produce credible content, protect yourself from media giants.

### **Conclusion**

With responsible privacy practices and clear understanding about what information is credible, the fake news epidemic will be over in no time. (Bakir, McStay, 1) Ethical digital sharing education about fake news and how it circulates will help media consumers on a

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global scale. Credibility is the key to the success of any global company, public figure, or content creator. (Ding, Guo, Liang, Yao, Yu, 26) The global economy will flourish from the practice of correcting fake news and ending the spread of fake news.

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