



WHY MISINFORMATION IN THE MEDIA IS A PROBLEM

By: Jazlyn Smith



INTRO

- About 38% of Americans get their news from social media, and another 57% get their news from traditional TV services.
- These platforms and services are filled with information coming from various sources.
- There is a problem with misinformation and the spread of it.
- The general population is in a war against misinformation that of which can be dangerous, and is a threat to the safety and wellbeing of the population, as well as compromising the trust the population has with the media.



Majority say fake news has left Americans confused about basic facts

% of U.S. adults who say completely made-up news has caused ___ about the basic facts of current events



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 1-4, 2016.

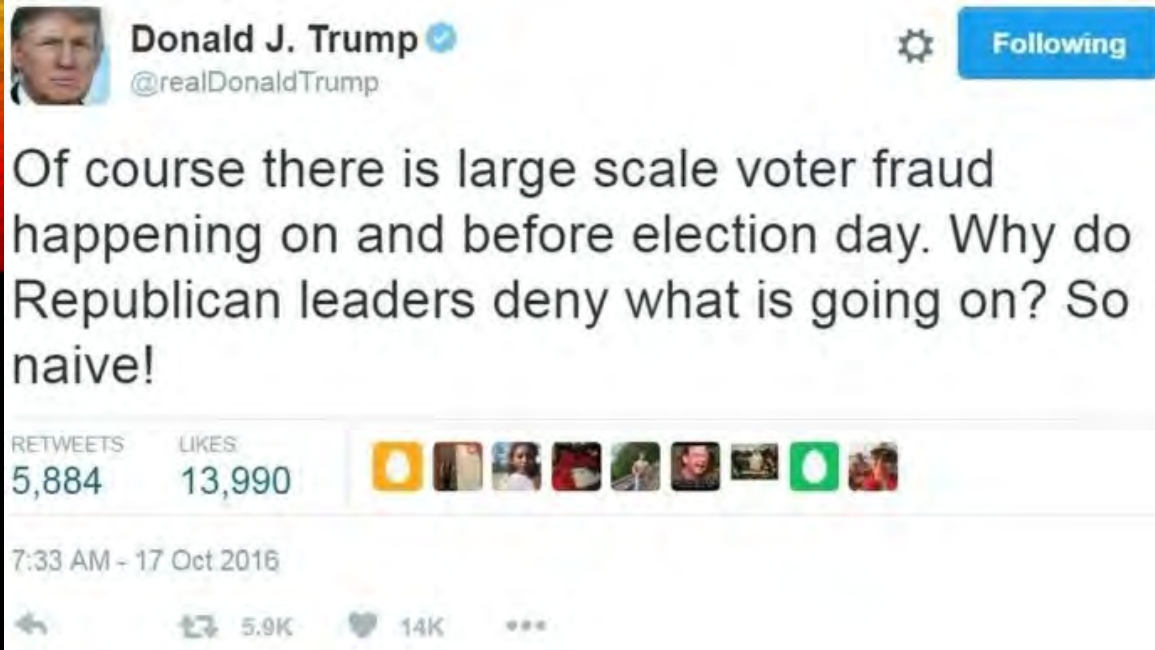
"Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

HOW OFTEN DO WE ENCOUNTER MISINFORMATION?

- A study conducted by Pew Research reported that more than half of U.S adults claim they encounter misinformation on a daily basis" (Anspach and Taylor 3).
- Misinformation comes in many forms, some subtly. An example being a news source leaving out details to mislead their audience.
- Researchers found that, "the consumer of digital misinformation is often exploited by having her pattern recognition instinct used against her" (Fritts and Cabrera 1).
- Misleading and using primal instincts and against their viewers is lessening the trust the people have with the media (Television news and Social media news).

<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/>



WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

- Usually to push an agenda or berate an opposing side.
- A good example of how misinformation is used to one's benefit. The misinformation during the 2016 presidential election heavily influenced voters, possibly changing the outcome.
- Almost all news sources in the media are biased in some way due to commentators and funding, which makes it hard to find accurate information that is not being conformed to a specific side.



DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS:

Just harmless fun—or sorcery?

By GUS THOMSON
Staff Writer

In a move that has
angered some parents
in the area, the role-

A POPULAR PASTIME

Who plays Dungeons and Dragons?

have \$65 you can spring for the hand-

where players help each
other to their goals —
they're not usually
fighting against each
other," he says. "It's a

FORMS OF MISINFORMATION AND ITS PREVALENCE

- Conspiracies are a common form of misinformation.
- Conspiracy theories such as the satanic panic, Jewish people being reptilians that lived underground, and the more recently formed Q-Anon (Bohman and Lopez 2).
- There is a market for misinformation and a lot of it is spread purposefully.





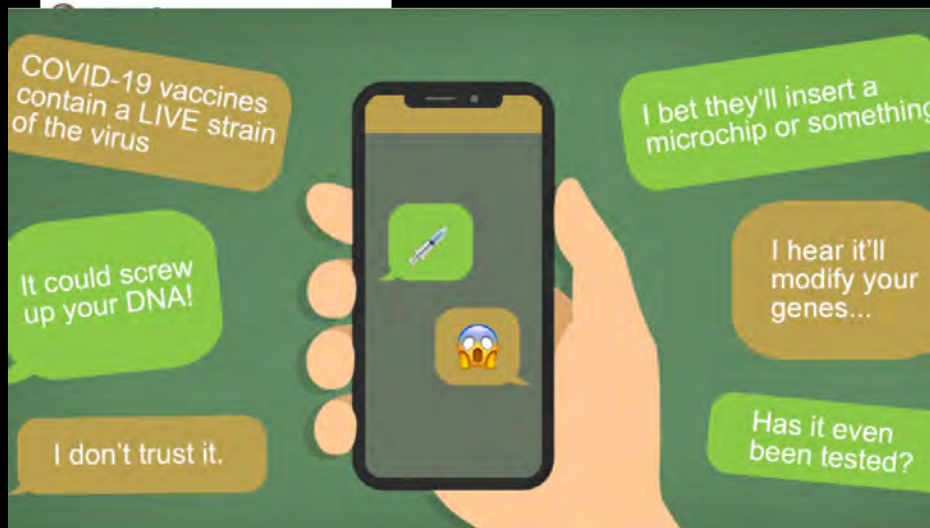
SOCIAL MEDIA POSES A BIG THREAT WITH MISINFORMATION

- Social media is exposing people to misinformation due to algorithms.
- There is a division among groups of people in the internet. People are likely to stay in circles with like-minded people causing them to become close-minded to opposing views.
- Staying in the same circle makes a person more susceptible to spreading and believing in misinformation.
- People often take comments from posts such as articles and take them for fact.



MISINFORMATION CAN BE DANGEROUS AND HARMFUL

- “In a 2013 report on global risks, the world economic forum named the viral spread of baseless or false information as one of the most dangerous social trends of the age on an equal footing with terrorism” (Quattrociochi 2).
- If left unaddressed it can have devastating consequences.
- An example would be the medical misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 epidemic.
- When people are lied to it is hard to reverse the damage and causing a phenomenon called the “Backfire effect”





IT IS A THREAT TO THE FREE-WORLD

- “The belief in conspiracy theories is harmful to democracy because it hampers rational political discussion and the decision-making process” (Sangwon and Lee 14).
- Can cause voters to become misinformed.
- “These movements have inspired hate crimes and mass shootings in the past, such as attacks on the Jewish communities or the more recent events like storm the capital ‘rally’” (Bohan and Lopez 2).
- It is a threat to marginalized communities, and the general public.

EL PASO, TEXAS VICTIMS



HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

CONCLUSION

- Misinformation causes numerous issues when left unaddressed.
- Many people everyday become victims to misinformation.
- News sources and government officials need to be held accountable for the spread of misinformation, and help solve the problem that is being faced.
- It is a difficult problem to solve, but is one that cannot go ignored.

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