## Proposal 1

Facebook relies on an algorithm as well as individual users’ reports to identify content that is potentially "fake news." Once the content has been identified, it is sent to third party fact-checkers for verification. If the content is verified as fake news, it is publicly flagged with a warning that the content is disputed by fact-checkers.

## Proposal 2

However, a designer at Facebook believes that there needs to be a different approach to content regulation. Their proposal is that content deemed problematic by third-party fact-checkers should be prevented from being shared on the platform altogether.

# Questions

1. Which form of content regulation, Proposal 1 or Proposal 2, do you feel is better? Why?

Fake News is not just clever programming. It is a very real problem that exists in society and social media in everyday life. Proposal 1 should be promoted, I feel, because it is an expression of freedom of speech and democracy. It is perpetuated by trend-setters, go-getters and unprecedented broadcasting; it is inspirational, light-hearted and fun. Proposal 2, against, says that Fake News is second-hand information and popularist, and potentially at worst dangerous if misused or falling into the wrong hands. It is claimed that Fake News is perpetuated to boost sales: it is “avant-garde hysteria” without really recognizing the avant-garde argument of forwarding thinking or getting ahead with news, ideas and a more progressive society. The perpetuators of Proposal 2 say that it could be dangerous if people act on the information. If the public are warned that the ideas are in some way false, the argument is that they are going to read the article anyway especially if it is easily accessible to them. Some worry that in sighting rumors is leading to a cult following, harming, time wasting and misleading society; it is indicative of hype, fads and fashions, persuasive buying or boycotting products. Proposal 1 says that Fake News is there for interest, entertainment, and standing up for what you believe is right. Although opinion, on the other hand is oppression.

Proposal 1 says that if you put your epistemic reputation and your credibility at risk by posting something held to be Fake News, you are much more likely not to post it. People read Fake News. There is too much information for our minds to keep track of. By sharing information that might be false or misleading, even if it is only a retweet, it is deceiving the public. We need to establish stable testimonial norms. It should be an offence to post Fake News but not an offence to read it. Censorship could be even more dangerous to the public wellbeing.

Proposal 2 suggests a society where misinformation “snowballs” when Fake News is shared again and again. It is there for financial gain and everyone wants a share in the proceeds. It draws in the public with lies and propaganda: sensationalist, popularist rubbish and can potentially fall into the wrong hands. Can you imagine if statistics were falsified? It may be permissible to “drum up support” for teams, tennis stars and movies; maybe a previously unknown popstar, film star or media icon. This is what sells newspapers. However Fake News manipulates attitudes and public opinion. It is used to sell a product, especially a scam. Fake News is often met with public outrage; so not everyone wants to be mislead. Although people make money from Fake News, the facts are more important than that: people refuse to be silenced.

Proposal 1 seems to be the best in my belief because it is not propaganda and not alternative News, it is something quite different. Remember the spaghetti being harvested off trees on TV, or in more recent times, the goats climbing the trees? These images have stayed with the viewers for all time, so in some way it may enrich the public. There may be points of interest and you may like to read the story anyway, because you like the title. Facebook should give a colored dot (green: not much, yellow: sometimes and red: a lot) to flag and keep track the perpetuators of Fake News; in fact they have been calculating the epistemic reliability of their users since December 2016.

Fake News is unreliable and is presented via testimony. If it is from a reliable and trusted source, or if you have read something else by the same writer, you are more likely to be taken in, but then, of course, it could be true. The testifier makes an assertion and there is a relationship between the testifier and testimony. The testifier can be held accountable if he gets it wrong, but it is important, I feel, to promote a more tolerant society. It pays to be open-minded and if doubtful you can always look for more information. This action increases

information (and information networks), promotes mental wellbeing and broadens your perspective of life. Not only does it increase awareness but it heightens perception and furthers education.

The worry is that Fake News is always deceiving at least some of its audience. To counteract this we look at the possibility of lying by omission. Is it not better to be allowed to make up your own mind? Would we not also prefer to read news of events in the real world? However there is a strong relationship between fake news and social media. Proposal 2 claims that Fake News is spread by email chains, posters on streetlamps, newspapers, TV and magazines; that the good stuff might actually be overlooked? It is time wasting, exhausting, irritating and makes many people angry. They are insulted, offended, humiliated, made a fool of for believing, upset, inundated and confused. This is NOT how we treat the public. This is why we require norms for blocking the acceptance of suspect cases. We should be able to know the identity of the testifier or features of his/her current motivation. Otherwise, it is too difficult to disprove, access the truth, or even identify the truth. Isn’t one article as good as any other article? Yet though believable, is it permissible to pull the wool over the eyes of an unsuspecting user, or society as a whole? It is argued, and it is my own belief, that here is communicated important information. We can never be taken in by important truths. So Fake News is ridiculous, and rubbish, a fabrication, but some people may actually like the suspense. The errors are easy to spot. All throughout history, and in making history, there is second hand information and often unreliable eye witness accounts, a distortion of the truth to suit popular opinion, so why aren’t modern day accounts the same? Sometimes it is only the power of bias. Notions of paranoia, group hysteria, and Conspiracy theory are dispelled. A great amount of force can be drummed up through a harmless enough retweet - a poorly thought out misjudgment in many cases and no intention to deceive: they claim that they are not the perpetrator but merely passing along the information.

People like to look for excitement in their lives. People also like to gossip and believe what they want to believe. There might be popular support for the movement. They like articles that make you think. “Knowledge is power”, “dare to be different”, are expressions for the modern day world. Also making things up like predictions are exacerbated by reliable sources such as “Tommorows’ World”. Theories are held as being accurate until disproven. We assume these to be correct. They influence our attitudes and behaviour. They might be useful as in the weather reports. They are not merely points for debate if controversial, they make you think. Educated users should be able to discern the truth, should be able to spot the difference. The author may be making a point. We can broaden our horizons and expand our knowledge base. It makes sense to find out what is out there. The widely accepted ideas may be only the substance of a Cannon, not a flavor of what is going on in other people’s lives.

Some people would argue that it is merely a matter of backing the right horse. We accept Fake News through association and familiarity, in the first. There may be only intermittent truths, in the second. We may know or not know the source, and there may be acknowledgements. We can freely decide what account to believe and we will be judged by history.

Fake News makes claims of how we should live together when they say that such-and-such happened or so-and-so said something. There is a period of discussion. Many may miss important news or emails trawling though unwanted emails. They may be dismissive of the truth if they have been taken in before. Some Fake News may be important in shaping our everyday lives.

In Proposal 1 we look for a degree of confidence. Although some articles may be exaggerated or a distortion of the truth, some articles can be perfectly good when edited or an amendment is added. Characterological evidence can easily biased through selective reporting. Dog bites man, no story. Man bites dog, story. The danger of selective reporting is the lack of evidence, and the story can improve with telling. We look at healthy skepticism balanced with credibility excess. We should be allowed social media sharing, and gain friends. Together we can judge opinions and build reputations. Proposal 2 hints that users will “take your word for it”: that they will accept ANY testimony. (Remember that Fake News is transmitted through testimony and benefit.) Proposal 1 highlights that our newsfeed is cooked up based on our chosen areas of interest, so there should be no information that is not in some way relevant.

To sum up, Fake News only ever aims to promote awareness and users do not have to accept the information, as they please. Acceptance is through repetition and perpetuation, and users are less likely to share unverified stories. The Facebook flagging system is disputed; Proposal 1 is the best because of persistence of memory and acceptance of the truth.