

Information Policy/Technology Events in the News

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Introduction

With the 2024 United States Election on the horizon as well as many other elections internationally, the idea of election interference comes to the forefront. Also, with how much Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been in the news lately, people have begun to question the impact AI will have on upcoming elections. AI is the first tool many people consult for seeking information such as the case with Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT.

Misinformation

The Bloomberg news reached out to Bill Gates for a quote and received the following, “People are using models as their search engine and it’s kicking out garbage. It’s kicking out falsehoods. That’s concerning.” (Mufarech, 2024). Bill is referring to LLMs like ChatGPT having the ability to misinform its users through providing false information. According to the Bloomberg article, the AI Democracy Projects brought together AI experts that built a software system to test the LLMs with questions voters may ask related to the election (Mufarech, 2024). The study investigated 130 responses for bias, inaccuracy, incompleteness, and harm with all of the models performing poorly (Mufarech, 2024). “The results found that just over half of the answers given by all of the models were inaccurate and 40% were harmful.” (Mufarech, 2024). The high rate of inaccurate or potentially harmful results provided by LLMs suggests it will play a role in misinforming potential voters.

Disinformation

Disinformation is the act of purposefully misinforming a person. Disinformation is a concern when it comes to elections, as it can be leveraged as a weapon to sway the outcome. “With so many elections around the world in 2024, the stakes have never been higher. While disinformation has been a challenge for voters and candidates for years, it has been turbocharged by the rise of generative AI tools that can create convincing fake images, text and audio.” (Mufarech, 2024). The Bloomberg article makes a solid point when it refers to AI’s abilities and the potential effects they may have on elections. AI has the ability to produce believable text such as the case with ChatGPT, images such as the case with Dall-e, videos such as the case with Sora, and audio. Deepfake technology allows for voice cloning and face swapping which in combination can provide convincing content that can be manipulated by the creator. This technology can be used to impersonate a rival political candidate or spread misinformation about them.

What Can Be Done

Policy should be implemented to address the potential issues of AI use regarding elections. I personally believe AI should not be allowed to be used to impact the outcome of elections. According to the Bloomberg article, Bill Gates gave some advice regarding what can be done, “If you want the truth about the election, don’t go to an AI chatbot. Go to the local election website.”(). Encouraging voters to seek information on local election websites instead of using AI chatbots would help alleviate the potential spread of misinformation regarding elections. I also encourage readers to question the

political content they receive during the election cycle, due to the ability of AI to generate fake images, voices, text, or even video.

Conclusion

Elections have the potential to change the power dynamics and politics of a country. This power attracts the attention of those who interfere. People who interfere now will have access to tools that can generate believable media, and they can easily, cheaply, and quickly distribute disinformation over the internet in order to sway elections in their favor. As time moves forward, voters ought to be aware of the evolving tools used to interfere in their elections such as AI.

References

Mufarech, A. (2024, February 27). *AI Chatbots Not Ready for Election Prime Time, Study Shows*. Bloomberg.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-27/ai-chatbots-not-ready-for-election-prime-time-study-shows?leadSource=uverify%20wall>