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Class: T08

Topic: Fake News is a Genuine Problem

Good morning everyone, my name is Kelven, and I will be talking about fake news.

Imagine seeing this on the news, “Singapore has run out of Covid-19 vaccines. Plans for Phase 3 delayed”. Imagine, just imagine, the amount of unease and tension created from that. We would all be worried.

Fake news started way back when we shared news mouth-to-mouth. It later evolved and spread into newspaper and into controversial websites which is what we see today. According to the Cambridge dictionary, fake news is defined as “false stories that appear to be news” that “spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Today, fake news can take on many forms, like misinformation and conspiracies, and is often used to create drama or crticise someone.

In May of 2020, US President Donald Trump said that he has been taking an anti-malaria drug called hydroxychloroquine (hydroxy) as a Covid-19 preventive measure. He promotes the use of hydroxy and said, “A lot of good things have come out”. Hydroxy was not approved by the FDA, and a study showed that it placed Covid-19 patients at greater risks of developing heart problems (Berkeley Lovelace Jr., 2020).

In October of 2019, Singapore passed the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Misinformation Act (POFMA). Under POFMA, the government decides whether a piece of falsehood should be corrected or taken down (Yuen-C, 2019). Singaporeans feared that POFMA would curb free speech, as it is the government that decides what is considered as “false information”.

When Covid-19 struck Singapore, POFMA was activated. It acted swiftly and had reduced the amount of fake news that reached Singaporeans. This also reduced panic and security problems in Singapore (Mahmud, 2020).

Fake news can affect anyone from any age group, and that is why it is important for everyone to know how to identify fake news. So how can you protect yourself and others from fake news?

To start, take a CRAAP.

CRAAP stands for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. (Central Michigan University, 2021).

Let’s go back to the example about Trump. Currency, when was it published? It was published in May last year. Relevance, is the information important? Yes, any information related to Covid-19 is important. Authority, who is the author? It was written by CNBC. Not only do they have a website, but they also have a YouTube channel. Accuracy, where did Trump get his information? There was no evidence that hydroxy provided substantial benefits. And purpose, what was the Trump’s purpose? He was promoting the use of hydroxy with no scientific evidence to back up. From here, we can see that Trump had personal bias

In conclusion, if we stay up to date on national or global issues, be skeptical of what we read, and practice scrutiny, you can protect yourself and your loved ones from fake news.

Thank you for listening.

# Bibliography

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