NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY
SINGAPORE

CC0002 Navigating the Digital World

Module 4: The World of Digital Misinformation

The Facts of "Fake News?"

Presented by Assoc Prof Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A Web of Lies

Falsehoods

"A statement is false if it is false or misleading, whether wholly or in part, and whether on its own or in the context in which it appears" (POFMA, 2019)

Misinformation

The inadvertent dissemination of false information (Wardle, 2017)

Disinformation

The intentional dissemination of false information (Wardle, 2017)

Fake news

A specific type of falsehood intentionally packaged to look like news to deceive others (Tandoc, 2021)

Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act 2019, Singapore Statutes Online, § 2. | Wardle, C. (2017). *Fake news. It's complicated.* Medium. https://medium.com/1st-draft/fake-news-its-complicated-d0f773766c79 | Tandoc, E. C., Thomas, R. J. & Bishop, L. (2021). What is (fake) news? Analyzing news values (and more) in fake stories. *Media and Communication, 9*(1), 110–119. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3331

One Term, Different Uses

What's common and different among these types of "fake news?"

- Political satire
- News parody
- Propaganda

- Advertising
- Manipulation
- Fabrication

Fake News as FAKE News

"A knowingly false headline and story is written and published on a website that is designed to look like a real news site, and is spread via social media." (Rochlin, 2017)
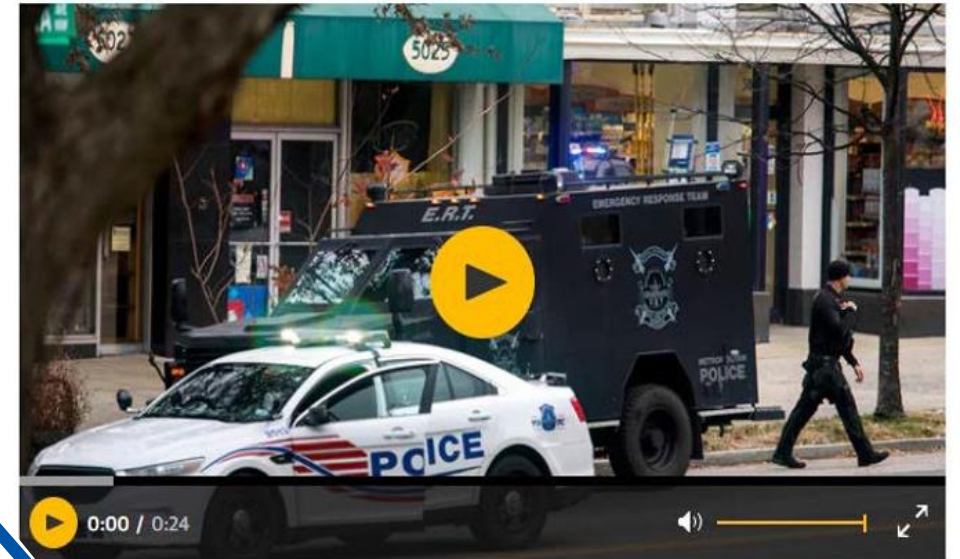
"News stories that were fabricated and promoted on social media in order to deceive the public for ideological and/or financial gain." (Pennycook et al., 2017)

"News articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers." (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017)

- **Financial**

- **Ideological**

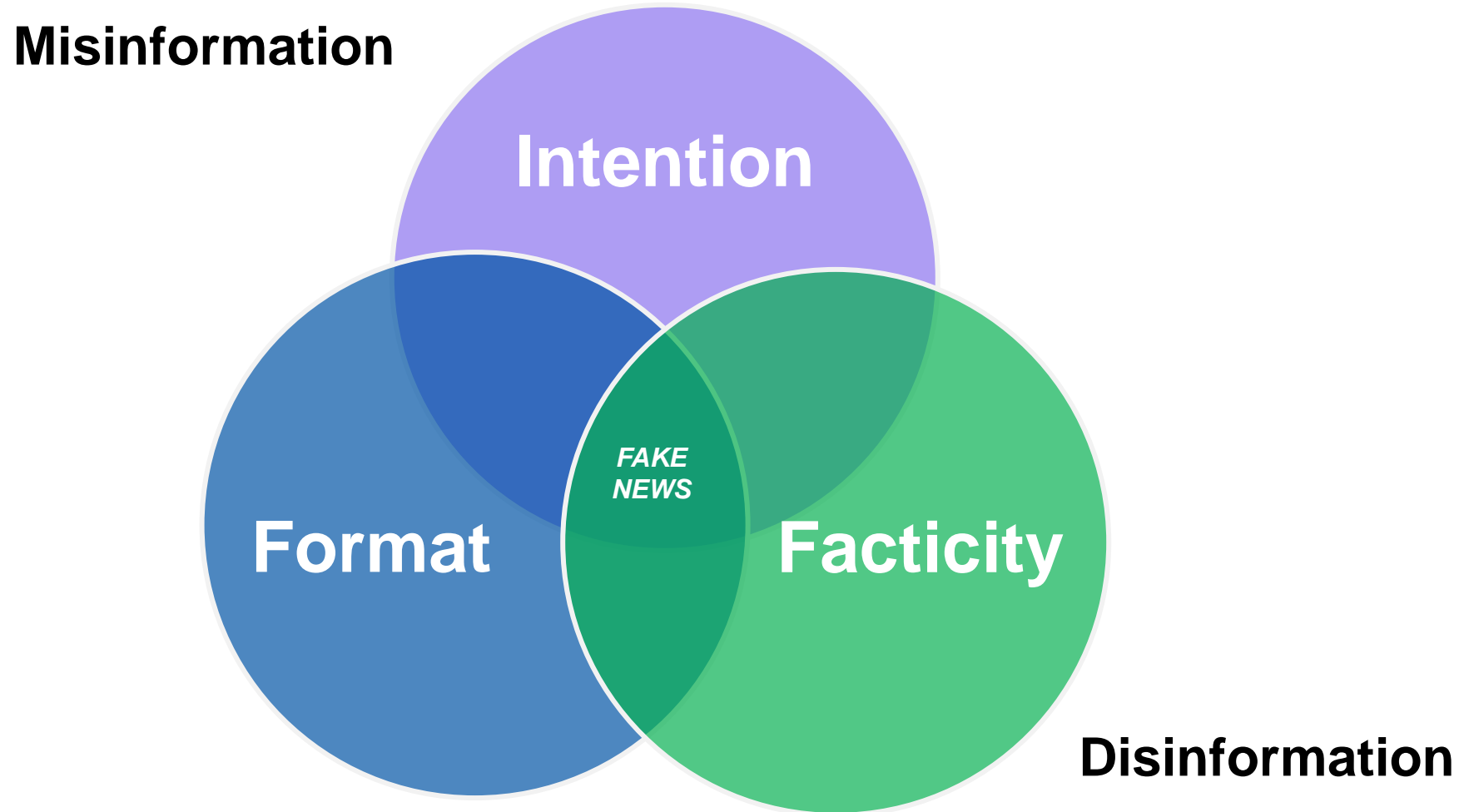Washington gunman motivated by fake news 'Pizzagate' conspiracy

Washington restaurant Comet Ping Pong was target of fake news reports it was operating a child abuse ring led by Hillary Clinton and an aide

0:00 / 0:24

Fake news pizzeria owner calls on conspiracists to stop

Rochlin, N. (2017). Fake news: belief in post-truth. *Library Hi Tech*, *35*(3), 386-392. https://doi.org/10.1108/LHT-03-2017-0062 | Pennycook, G., Cannon, T. D. & Rand, D. G. (2018). Prior exposure increases perceived accuracy of fake news. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *147*(12), 1865–1880. https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000465 | Allcott, H. & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *31*(2), 211–236. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211
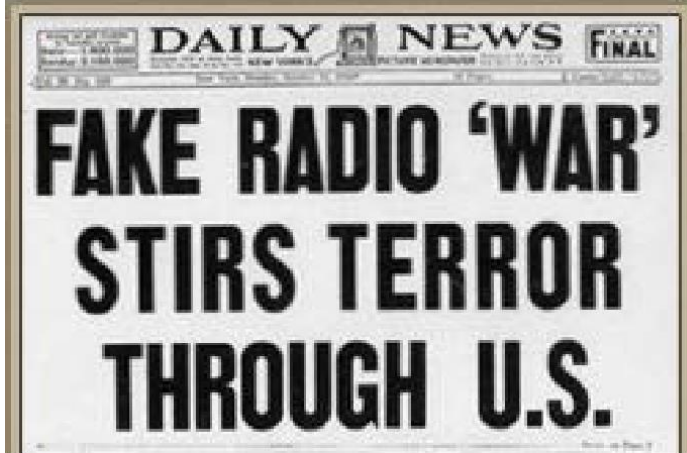
Fake News as FAKE News

Fake News is Old News

Why It Matters

This Week in Asia / Health & Environment

Coronavirus: saltwater spray infects 46 church-goers in South Korea

- The church in Gyeonggi Province sprayed salt water into the mouths of its followers out of a belief it would kill the virus
- The new cases have fuelled the South Korean government's efforts to clamp down on possible clusters, as cases rise to 8,236
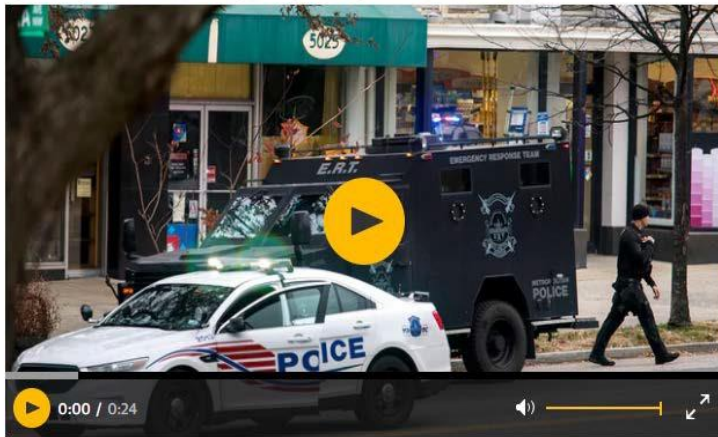
Park Chan-kyong
Published: 6:30pm, 16 Mar, 2020

Why you can trust SCMP

Washington gunman motivated by fake news 'Pizzagate' conspiracy

Washington restaurant Comet Ping Pong was target of fake news reports it was operating a child abuse ring led by Hillary Clinton and an aide

▶ 0:00 / 0:24

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

NYC Poison Control Sees Uptick In Calls After Trump's Disinfectant Comments

April 25, 2020 · 7:13 PM ET

JASON SLOTKIN

WhatsApp rumours have led to 30 deaths in India. Who's next?

PHOTO: Reuters

Your daily good stuff -
AsiaOne stories delivered
straight to your inbox

by KUNAL PUROHIT
SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST | Feb 26, 2019

Burned to death because of a rumour on WhatsApp

By Marcos Martínez
BBC Monitoring

🕑 12 November 2018

'Hundreds dead' because of Covid-19 misinformation

By Alistair Coleman
BBC Monitoring

Which One is a Real News Story?

New York: Chinese immigrant sold hot dogs made with
real dog meat

Xi Ping Chow, a 57-year-old Chinese immigrant, has been arrested by the NYPD this
week after authorities were informed that the man was making his own hot dogs...

Bali dogs brutally killed, meat sold to unsuspecting
tourists, investigation reveals

Australian tourists are unwittingly eating dog meat in Bali, according to evidence
provided to the ABC's 7.30 program.

SGDAILY.SG

Which One is a Real News Story?

New York: Chinese immigrant sold hot dogs made with real dog meat

Xi Ping Chow, a 57-year-old Chinese immigrant, has been arrested by the NYPD this week after authorities were informed that the man was making his own hot dogs...

- Is this factual?

- What is the intention behind this post?
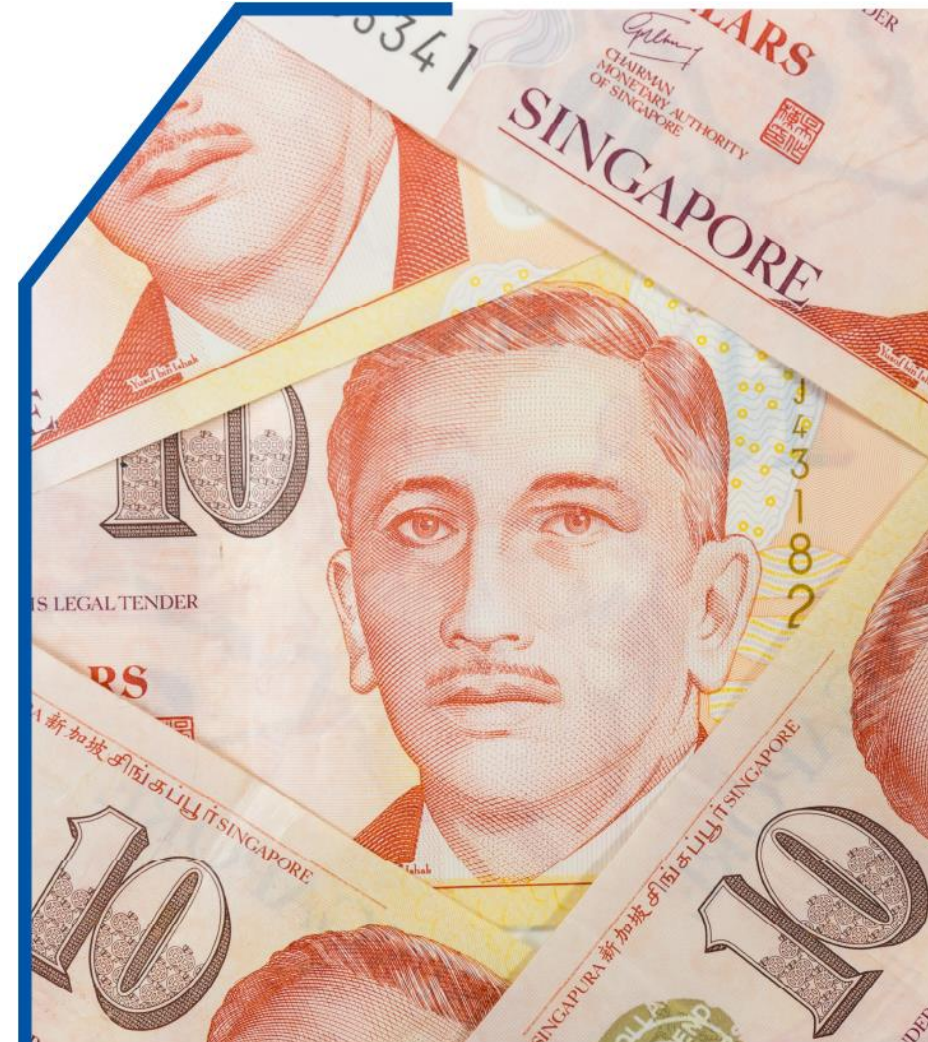
- Does it look like real news?

Motivations for Fake News

- **Financial**
  - Attracting clicks
  - Advertising revenues

- **Ideological**
  - Personal agenda
  - Weapons of mass misinformation

What Makes People Vulnerable?

- **Sender**
  - Credible or familiar?
  - Trustworthy or similar?
  - Proximate or distal?

- **Message**
  - Format
  - Plausibility

- **Channel**
  - Trusted or depended on?
  - Closed or open?
  - Feedback

- **Receiver**
  - Confirmation bias
  - Motivations
  - Corrections

- **Context**
  - Information overload
  - Instability

Who is the Actual Source of This Message?

- Original source

- Immediate source

- Invisible source

- Trusted source

- Disregarded source

COVID-19 FACT CHECKS

FALSE: 'Required' COVID-19 home medical kit

JUL 29, 2020 9:24 PM PHT
RAPPLER.COM

FALSE

The World Health Organization says it 'does not recommend self-medication with any medicines...as a prevention or cure for COVID-19'

Focus on the Message Characteristics
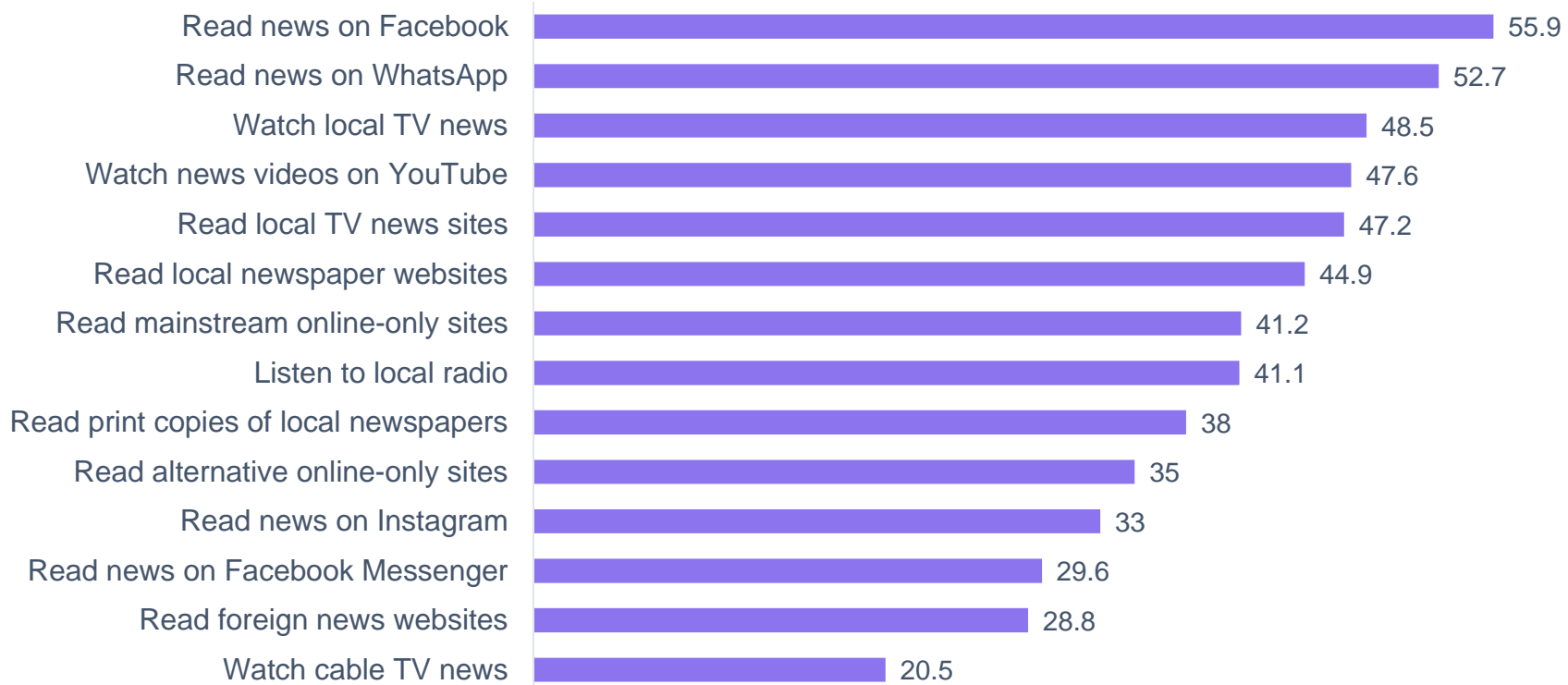
> **Forwarded**
>
> SERIOUS EXCELLENT ADVICE by Japanese doctors treating COVID-19 cases. Everyone should ensure your mouth & throat is moist, never DRY. Take a few sips of water every 15 mins at least. WHY? Even if the virus gets into your mouth...drinking water or other liquids will WASH them down through your oesophagus and into the stomach. Once there in tummy...your stomach ACID will kill all the virus. If you don't drink enough water more regularly...the virus can enter your windpipes and into the LUNGS. That's very dangerous. Pl remind everyone about this !
>
> 07:51

- Plausible?

- Mentions experts?

- Conversational tone?

- Stirs emotion?

- Asks you to forward?

Channels Where Information Flows

How often do you:

Channel	Value
Read news on Facebook	55.9
Read news on WhatsApp	52.7
Watch local TV news	48.5
Watch news videos on YouTube	47.6
Read local TV news sites	47.2
Read local newspaper websites	44.9
Read mainstream online-only sites	41.2
Listen to local radio	41.1
Read print copies of local newspapers	38
Read alternative online-only sites	35
Read news on Instagram	33
Read news on Facebook Messenger	29.6
Read foreign news websites	28.8
Watch cable TV news	20.5

Survey of 1,000 Singapore residents (December 2019)

Channels Where Information Flows

This Analysis Shows How Viral Fake Election News Stories Outperformed Real News On Facebook

A BuzzFeed News analysis found that top fake election news stories generated more total engagement on Facebook than top election stories from 19 major news outlets combined.
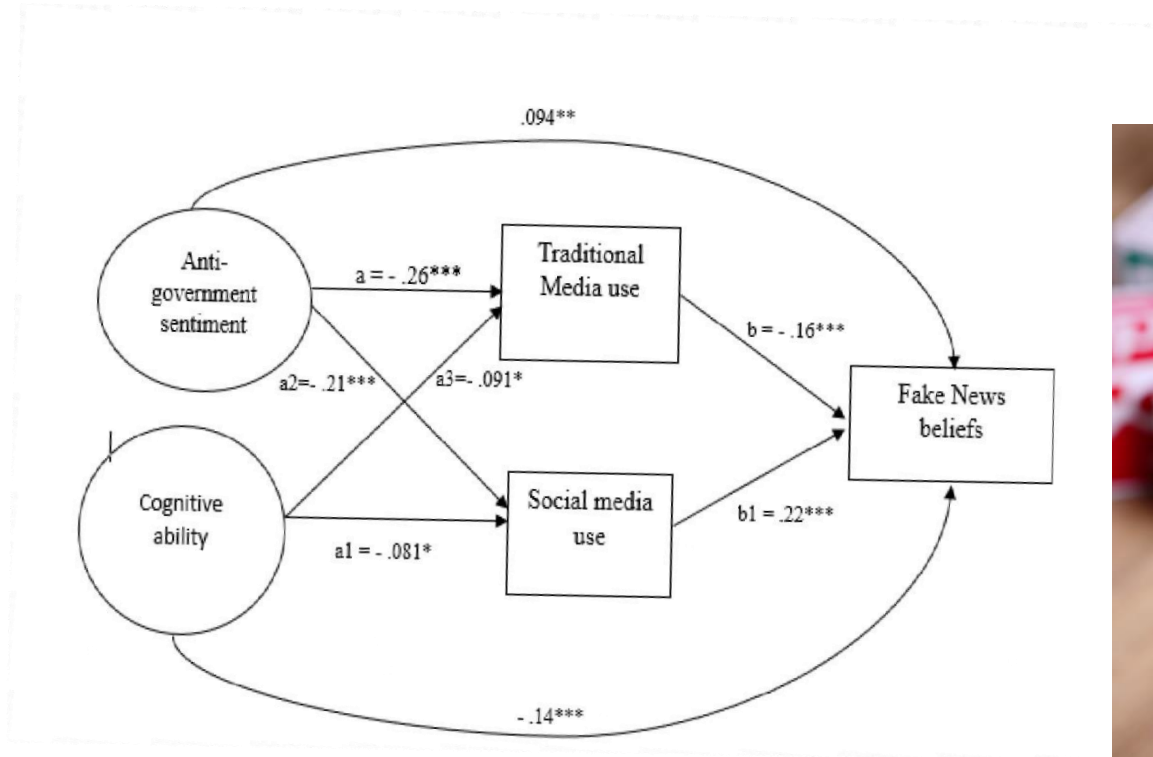
Craig Silverman
BuzzFeed Founding Editor, Canada

Posted on November 16, 2016, at 5:15 p.m. ET

Tweet Share Copy

- Popularity cues

- Reliance

- Lack of gatekeeping

- Information overload

The Impact of Using Social Media for News

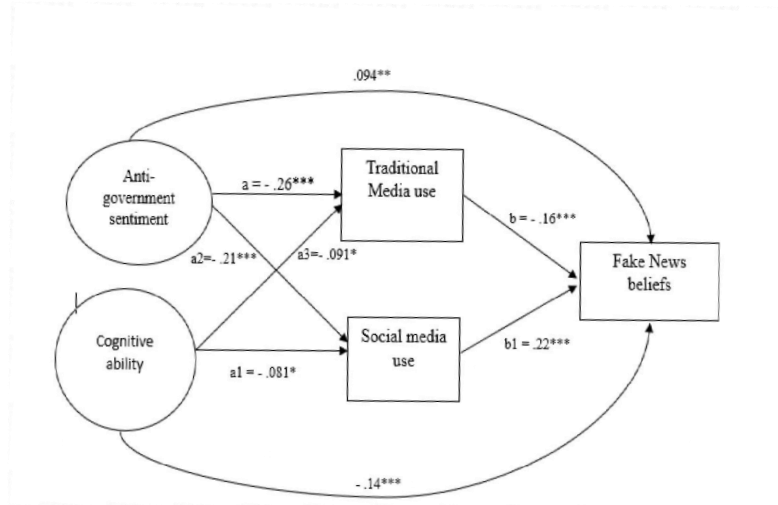*Survey of 1,000 Singapore residents (December 2019)*

**Higher social media news use =
Higher likelihood to believe in fake news**

Tandoc, E. C., Lee, J., Chew, M., Tan, F. X. & Goh, Z. H. (2021). Falling for fake news: the role of political bias and cognitive ability. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *31*(4), 237-253. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01292986.2021.1941149

Characteristics of the Audience

Survey of 1,000 Singapore residents (December 2019)
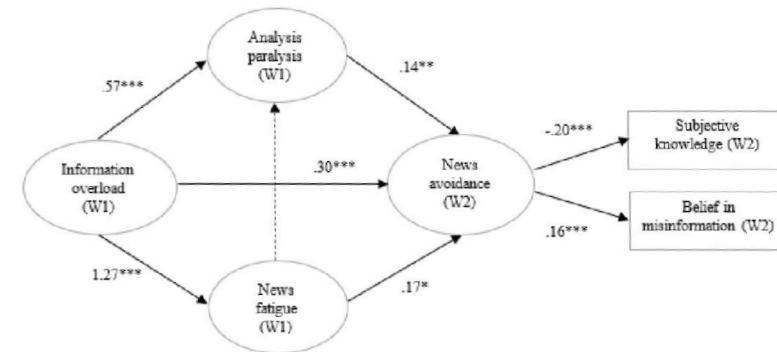
Note. Displayed values are standardized coefficients. Controlled for age, gender, education, income, ethnicity, news avoidance at Wave 1 and subjective knowledge at Wave 1. * denotes $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.
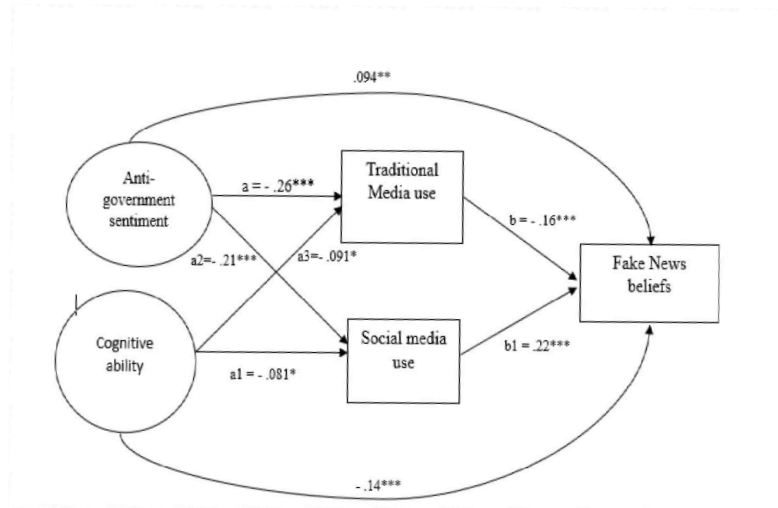
Two-wave panel survey: 767 Singapore residents (March 2020); 540 Singapore residents (April 2020)

Those who actively avoid news about COVID-19 are more likely to believe in misinformation.

- **Information behaviour**
- **News avoidance**

Tandoc, E. C., Lee, J., Chew, M., Tan, F. X. & Goh, Z. H. (2021). Falling for fake news: the role of political bias and cognitive ability. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *31*(4), 237-253. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01292986.2021.1941149 |
Tandoc, E. C. (2020, October 2). *Avoiding real news, believing in fake news?* [Video]. Vimeo/APAC Trusted Media Summit 2020. https://vimeo.com/480625778

Characteristics of the Audience

Survey of 1,000 Singapore residents (December 2019)

Facticity

- Accurate
- Mixed
- Inaccurate
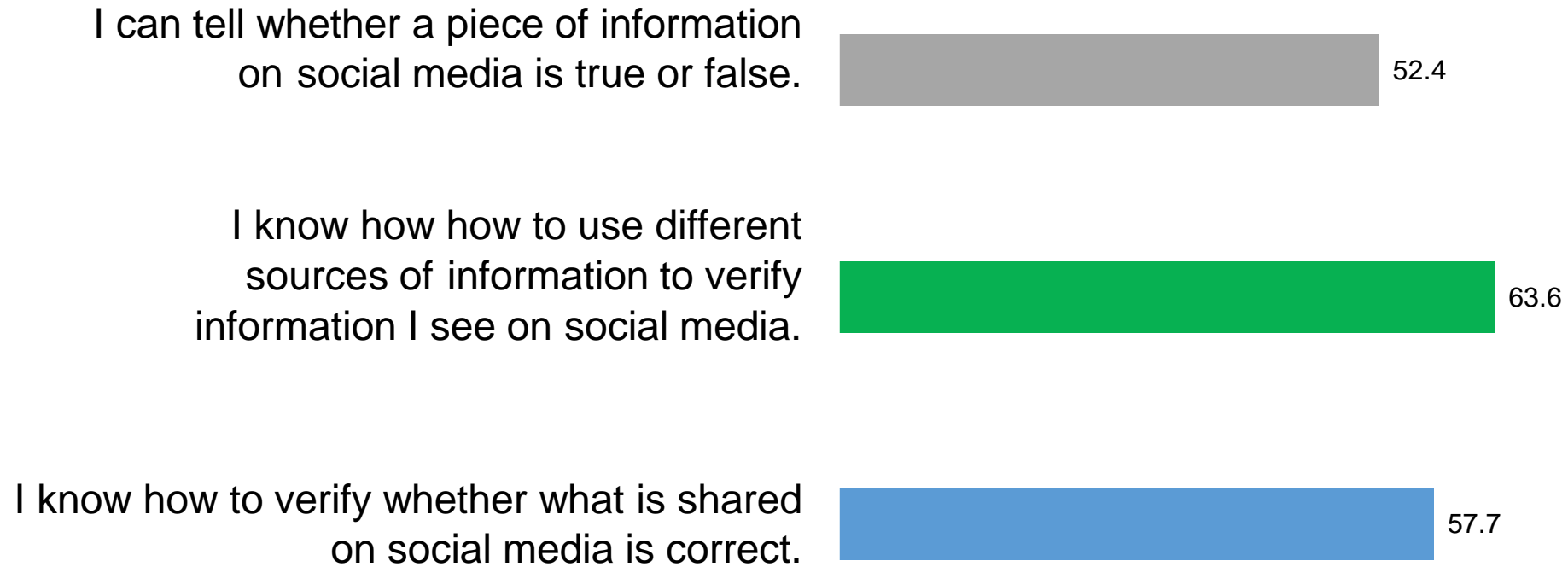- Cannot Verify
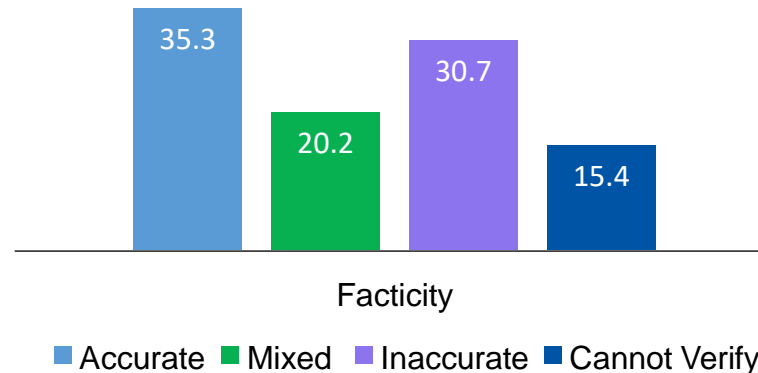
- Analysed 228 messages forwarded on WhatsApp, February-June 2020
- Collected from a WhatsApp group with more than 300 members

- **Confirmation bias**
- **Motivations for sharing**

Tandoc, E. C., Lee, J., Chew, M., Tan, F. X. & Goh, Z. H. (2021). Falling for fake news: the role of political bias and cognitive ability. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *31*(4), 237-253. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01292986.2021.1941149 | Tandoc, E. C. & Mak, W. W. (2020, April 27).
Commentary: Forwarding a WhatsApp message on COVID-19 news? How to make sure you don't spread misinformation. *Channel News Asia*. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/covid-19-coronavirus-forwarding-whatsapp-message-fake-news-12670016

High Confidence, Low Actual Capability

Scientists have confirmed that the COVID-19 originated from a biowarfare lab. — 25.3

Fruits from the US being sold at reduced prices in Asia have been maliciously contaminated with the coronavirus. — 18.6

Data collected through SafeEntry is being sold to companies. — 22.3

A newly announced COVID-19 vaccine uses mRNA technology that will alter human DNA. — 24.6
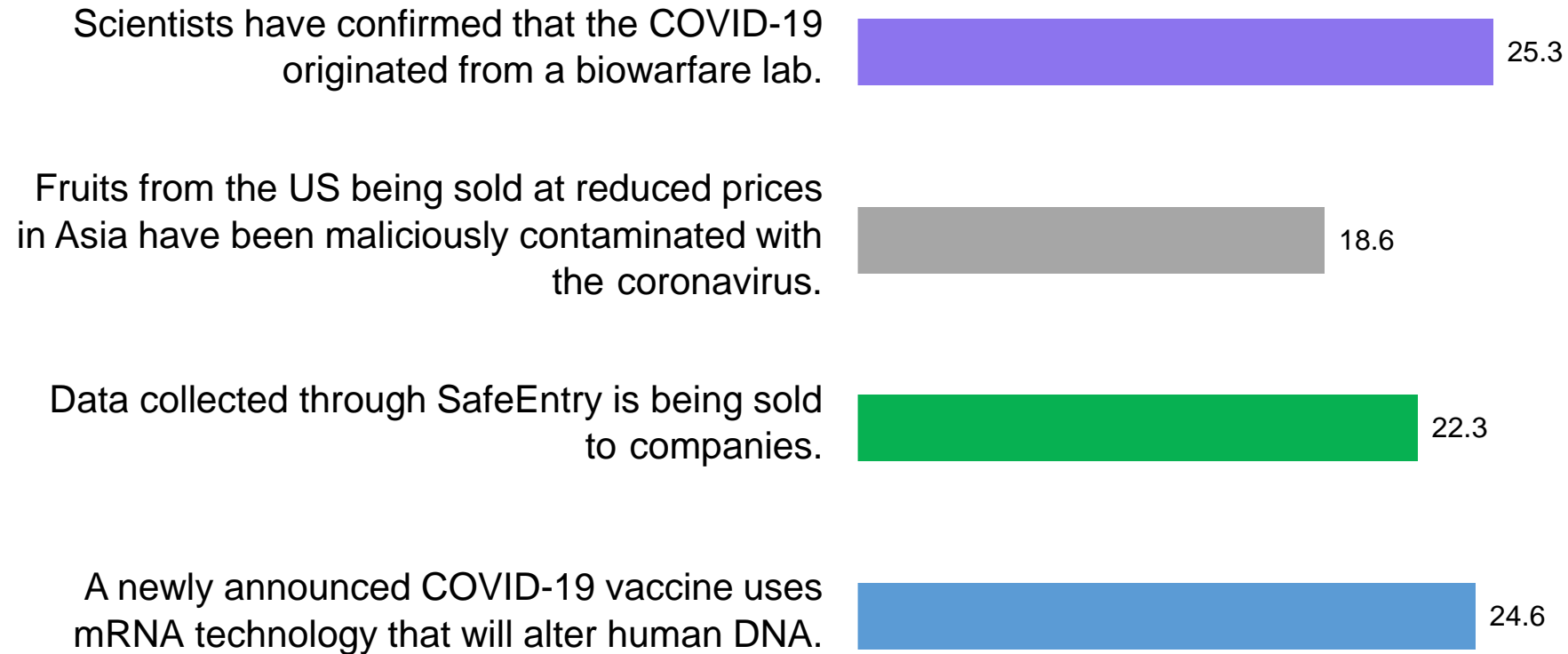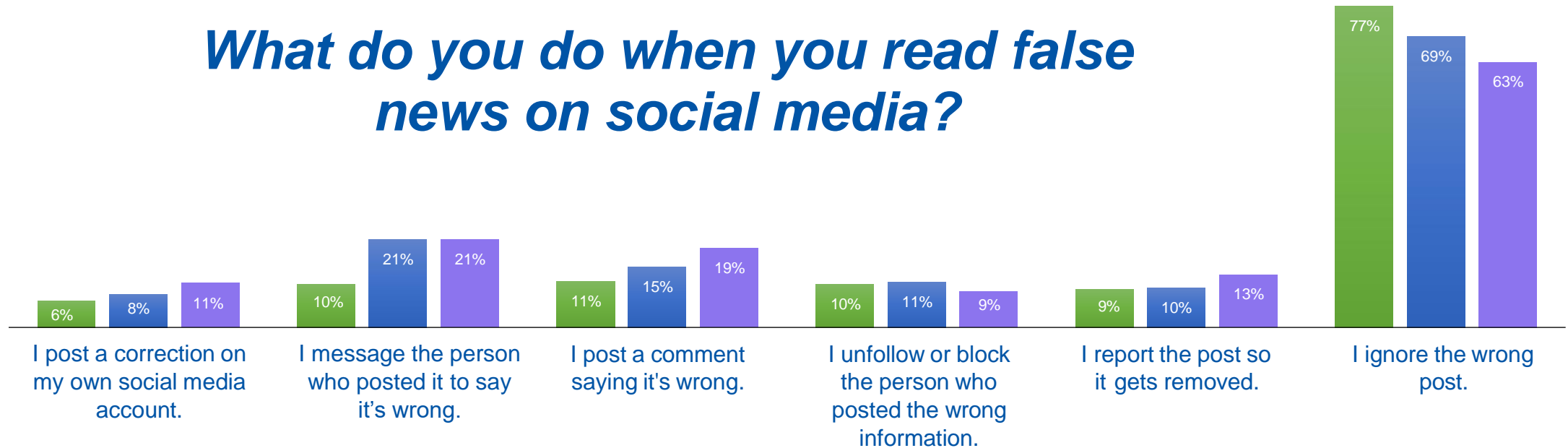
Survey of 1,600 Singapore residents (December 2020)

The survey is part of a research project funded by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) examining the problem of deliberate online falsehoods in Singapore.

Informational Apathy?

What do you do when you read false news on social media?

	I post a correction on my own social media account.	I message the person who posted it to say it's wrong.	I post a comment saying it's wrong.	I unfollow or block the person who posted the wrong information.	I report the post so it gets removed.	I ignore the wrong post.
	6%	10%	11%	10%	9%	77%
	8%	21%	15%	11%	10%	69%
	11%	21%	19%	9%	13%	63%

Survey of 461 Singaporeans in three waves (December 2016, 2017, 2018); Project: Diffusion of News in the Age of PPIDs

Tandoc, E. C., Lim, D. & Ling, R. (2019). Diffusion of disinformation: How social media users respond to fake news and why. *Journalism*, *21*(3), https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1464884919868325

Informational Apathy

- Issue relevance

- Interpersonal relationships

- Personal efficacy

"If let's say it is those not very important kind of stuff maybe I will just let it… just ignore it in a way."

"I feel like, to tell someone 'oh, the news that you shared is fake,' it might be a bit strong and offensive at first… They might get offended, so it's better to just leave it..."

"They cannot even think properly or talk rationally so just don't waste your time or don't bother explaining or you know, reasoning with them."

ROOF OF PUNGGOL WATERWAY TERRACES COLLAPSE

So, what should we do?
Next Week: Fighting Fake News

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