

Hackathon 13-14 July 2019

Team: Sahana Cidambi, Stephen Merry, Duttatrey Srivastava, Giorgia Vattiato

Project proposal

Introduction

Fake news is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional news media (print and broadcast) or online social media. The false information is often caused by reporters paying sources for stories, an unethical practice called checkbook journalism. Digital news has brought back and increased the usage of fake news, or yellow journalism. The news is then often reverberated as misinformation in social media but occasionally finds its way to the mainstream media as well.

For non-specialists, including children and older people, spotting the difference between fake news and real news is a near impossible task. One of the ways to know the difference between the two is to check if the article in question is referencing some actual, published research articles or not. Our aim is to protect the future generation from the perils of Fake news. Rather than completely denying their beliefs, our aim is to gently nudge them towards credible news sources that might help shape their opinion about the factual accuracy of the information presented.

Methods

We will put together a (curated, open-source) browser plug-in and web page that ranks webpages and online articles on reliance on academic research findings. Some relevant criteria we consider in putting together our ranking system: number of citations to academic papers, rhetoric(?? Potential language model and key phrases??).

Plug-in should get you to actual webpage which is our article repository for that particular phrase/question

We will start by looking at articles with citations and list all the different types of citations used on the web (e.g. [Smith et al.], the word "reference", ...). Then we will make a word search on sample articles to look for citations,

Our approach is three pronged: we intend to maintain a webpage that delivers layman friendly articles to provide evidence on factual correctness of news articles for the masses. Secondly, the plug in interface is used to develop a friendly face for the general user. Finally. The back-end user-curated open source repository could be supported by academics and academic institutions worldwide.

Scope

We plan to deliver at least a prototype of the website component (prong 1). We will attempt the plug-in and back-end with more money and time.