The Foghorn – A Game About Fake News

A Master’s Degree Project Proposal

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2018

# Abstract

This document intends to propose the creation of a digital game based on the spread of fake news by placing the player in a role of a prospective media owner who uses several forms of media to push his agenda and enrich himself. A key system for the game would be scraping real headlines from a variety of sources using Node.JS in order to analyze them using sentiment analysis carried out by the Watson artificial intelligence, and utilize them as headlines that can be used as game pieces. The game will utilize research carried out in the field of the spread of fake news, as well as inform players as to its spread and means to control and arrest its spread.

# Motivation

The spread of fake news has been a highly topical subject today, which has had a significant impact on the events in society today all over the world. This outreach of propaganda, whether motivated by state actors or other groups, has resulted in highly significant world events in the West over the last three years, such as the vote for Great Britain to leave the European Union, the election and popularity of United States President Donald Trump, and the rise of highly autocratic politics. However, it is hardly a new phenomenon unique to the last few years, especially outside the West in more developing countries with powerful groups outside establishment sources and a perception of being far more reliable than the ‘compromised’ mainstream.

While a good portion of the epidemic has been attributed, especially in the United States, to actively motivated work from state actors as a form of information warfare in order to influence policy, it is undeniable that a significant portion of propaganda spread is due to people agreeing with the implications, if not necessarily the exact false fact, that is being spread. Having seen several friends and acquaintances believe falsehoods due to the news playing into culturally established narratives, I am not sure that the

I am interested in expressing research into this field into video game form, and therefore would like to create a digital game, potentially in HTML5 in order to better integrate the Node elements of importing the real-life headlines from a variety of real-life news outlets with differing levels of bias. I believe and hope that players experiencing the game will be able to see how fake news spreads across all media and how it may be inhibited.

# Previous Work

Most of the work in the field of the analysis of fake news has been either technical – understanding the spread of fake news through new mass media such as Twitter – or sociological – understanding the nature of fake news and how it influences the people it targets to achieve its ideological aims. Sobieraj and Berry have spoken about how the spread of outrage across all forms of media in the United States, such as television, talk radio, newspaper editorial columns, and political blogs, has been a significant measure of the success of these media in the form of viewership and clicks, which seems to correlate with the generally accepted idea that ‘outrage sells’.

Robin

# Timetable

# References and Future Readings

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