

Online Communication: Division, Mistrust, and Polarization

The 7 Forms of Misinformation:



Satire or parody: No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool.



Misleading content: Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual.



Imposter content: When genuine sources are impersonated.



Fabricated content: New content that is 100% false, made to deceive and do harm.



False connection: When headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content.

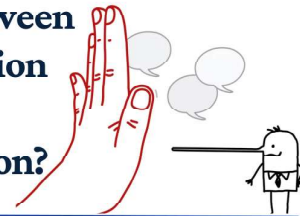


False context: When genuine content is shared with false contextual information.



Manipulated content: When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive.

What is the difference between misinformation and disinformation?



| Term | Misinformation | Disinformation |
|---------------|--|---|
| Definition | False information shared by a source intending to inform, unaware of inaccuracy or fallacy | False information shared by a source to deceive, aware of the faulty information being spread |
| Info Accuracy | Inaccurate | Inaccurate |
| Source Intent | To inform | To deceive |

The Danger of A World Wide Web

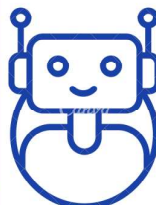


- Information can cross the globe in **moments**
- **Everyone** is connected
- There are **Billions** of internet users
 - Ultimately, the World Wide Web has a world-wide impact

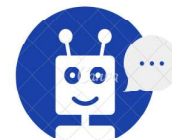


GROUP: ED, GRIFFIN, JAKE, JIMMY, RILEY

The Magnitude of Incoming Information Online



While online, the sheer amount of information being communicated has drastically increased, in both volume and format, which complicates interpretation by audiences. Moreover, the efficiency of misinformation spread has been quickened by the presence of botnets, or fake accounts



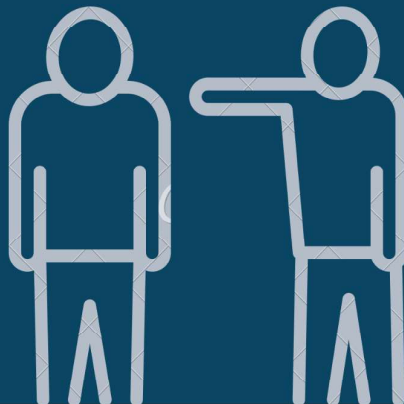
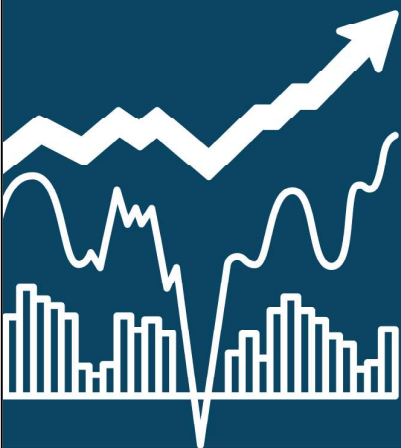
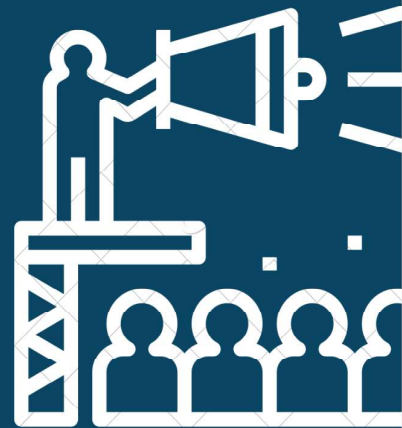
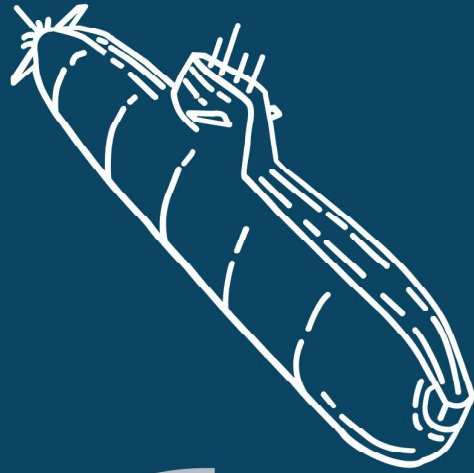
FAMOUS INSTANCES OF FAKE NEWS

32 BCE: Octavian led a fake news smear campaign to discredit Antony in a propaganda war, in order to assume power in Rome

1898: Following the mysterious explosion of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, bold claims by the press across the US urged the Spanish American War

1803: A hoax letter claiming peace between Britain and France delivered to the mayor of London prematurely skyrocketed stocks before war

2016: A debunked conspiracy theory that went viral during the presidential election, claiming that various political figures were running a child sex ring and human trafficking circle through a pizzeria



The Dangers of the Web



Identity online can be anonymous, limiting perceived responsibility and changing behavior, which threatens authenticity of real people, not only bots

The Algorithm

In multiple platforms online, algorithms are set in place propagating the formation of segregated communities, which nurtures belief polarization over time. While online, people are able to join groups that most fit who they see themselves as, but then their identity may be further shaped and partitioned through platform design features, providing personalized information that pertains to one's activity. As they progress, communities become increasingly isolated from alternative views, and the community mantra becomes doctrine to members.

- Public deliberation vanishes; the collective becomes more disconnected each day

With communities of categorical identities, an open forum online vanishes from existence. Moreover more presence is given to material that more people interact with, and on average more charged and emotionally salient information is engaged with, filtering content. Many platforms also have limited informational exchange, which further decreases discussion and interaction.



Epistemic Bubbles are structures which have inadequate informational coverage through omission. They arise because of one of humanity's strongest social inclinations: we choose to be friends with individuals who share our treasured beliefs.



Echo Chambers are voluntarily created and cultivated as an enclosed media space that both magnifies messages within and insulates them from rebuttal. It creates a community with significant disparity in trust between members and non-members through epistemic discrediting. Members of the out-group are denied as truth-tellers.

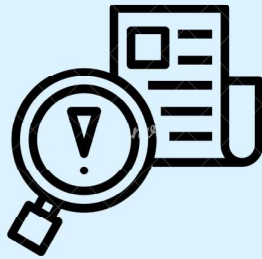
These issues pose threats to corporations as well, at risk of fake news that certain communities will just believe without question, causing economic concerns

How to educate towards epistemic freedom in a post-truth era

Detection and Reduction

Expert creation of computational techniques to limit misinformation spread

Example: identifying key words within texts to identify fake news and then develop algorithms against it



Limit Usage of Heuristics

Confirmation bias may cement false beliefs or limit expansion of knowledge as readers stop seeking information counter to already held beliefs, confining themselves to only part of a topic.

Illusory Truth Effect strengthens assumed validity of any information just because it has been seen repeatedly, so people believe it to be true.

Illusion of Explanatory Depth occurs when people assume they understand a topic more deeply than they really do, and this false understanding can be influenced by a source's appearance

Making Students Curators

Through direct and indirect education on Statistical Relational Learning, students may be able to research, vet, and piece together information from various online sources in a holistic manner. This technique prevents echo chamber susceptibility, implementing social psychology strategies to expose students to their own mistakes while disseminating information

Check the source, check the author

Is the information coming from a reputable website/source? Is the author a reputable informant or journalist? Not only the source, check the supporting sources! Where are they coming from?

Still in doubt? Ask an expert.

Eg: Snopes.com

http://



Developing Intellectual Virtues

1. Open mindedness
2. Intellectual Courage
3. Skepticism
4. Intellectual Humility

Humility as a cardinal virtue, promoting awareness of one's intellectual limitations as well as owning them and trying to overcome them



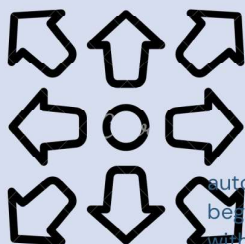
Escaping the Echo Chamber

Two primary ways become evident, one vastly easier:

1. Be raised outside the grasp of echo chambers. Have parents that educate epistemic agency and freedom.
2. A social epistemic reboot. Similar to Descartes' dream for intellectual

Exposure beyond the bubble

Once an epistemic bubble is acknowledged, it is not difficult to shatter. Merely broadening one's circle to let in filtered or ignored information will help. In other words, maintain a diverse informational network as much as possible



autonomy, one must temporarily suspend all beliefs, and then begin again socially, embracing all of the surrounding sources, without the vice of background beliefs cultivated from youth, enabling rediscovery and proper reconfiguration of epistemic freedom, outside the chamber.

