Misinformation Assignment 1: Operation Message

For this assignment, you will describe an information operation and create and article & supporting evidence. You make work alone or in a pair; pair work is held to a higher standard.

The information operation

Find an example of a real information operation. Any real campaign is fine; use the inspiration ideas from Exercise 2 if you like. Then, using the AMI model, decide who is the agent; consider what kind of media and what kind of message they might use; and try to work out the angle of the message based on this. For example, campaigns that seek to cause harm will use different tactics to those that don't intend to cause harm; official bodies will use different channels to individuals. Think about the goal of the misinformation operation and how that can be achieved - who is the target? What will they listen to? Is the content going to try to affect emotions, or push facts? The AMI model should help you both (a) describe the operation, and (b) define a piece of information that could be part of the campaign.

The message

Decide on a kind of message: a news report, a blog post, a conversation transcript, or something else. Gather text in this style and use it to fine-tune GPT-2. Then, generate text automatically using e.g. GPT-2. Give the model some "seed" text (you can run it in interactive mode, for this) and keep extracting text until you get a suitable story. This is the text part of the message.

GPT-2 notebook:
 https://colab.research.google.com/github/ak9250/gpt-2-colab/blob/master/GPT_2.ipynb

Additionally, you should provide some supporting evidence for the message. A video is good; perhaps an image would work, or a fake social media post. Choose what is most suitable and argue for this in your report. You can use a Deepfake for this. It might make sense to be reading a quote that was auto-generated in the text article. Think about who should be speaking in the video - an authority figure? Someone at a news desk? A witness? Someone who was the target of an event? Justify your choice in your report.

Deepfake guide:
 https://leondz.github.io/iu-misinfo/dfl

The analysis

Here, you should reflect and write about the message. Who is likely to be fooled by this? What special knowledge is required to detect it? How much effort does it take to check the claim? Who is likely to make that effort? How professional is the result? How important is that? Include all these points in your report.

Assignment hand-in

Essay
Description of what you did and why. It should be written as an essay, and be 500-1000 words. This should show how well you understand the misinformation ecosystem and how information behaves in it. Rely on the material in the lectures and cite relevant papers.

Message
Include the fake message that you finally produced, as well as a link to the video (a link to a private or public youtube video on your account is fine).

When?
The end of September 6, on Moodle.