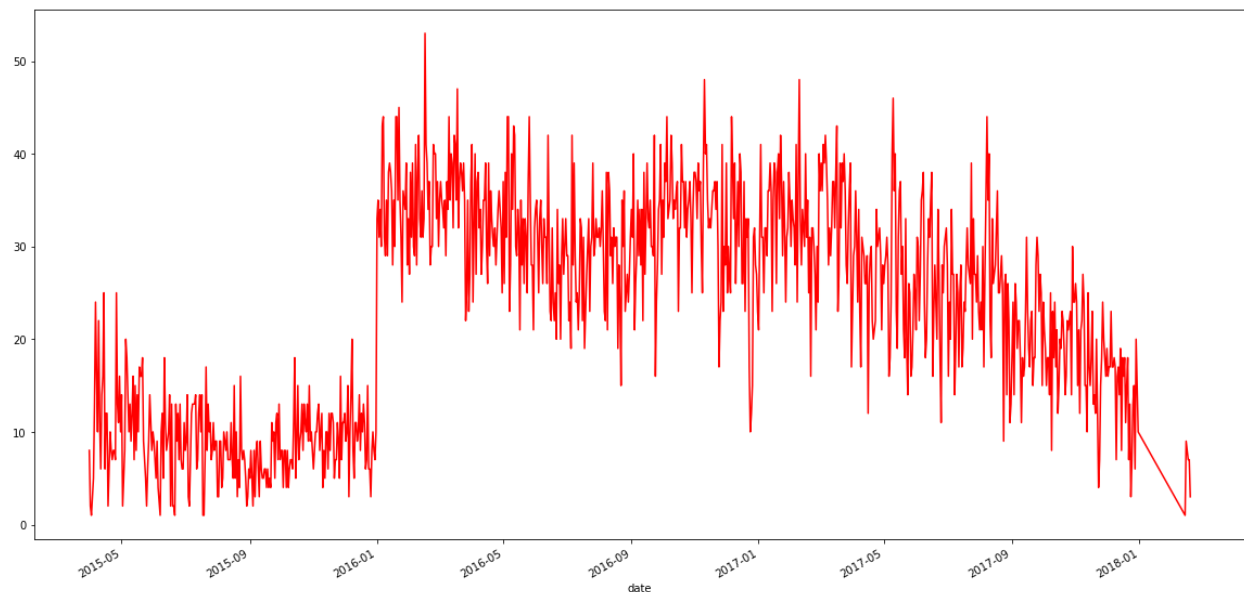


INFO 270 BS DETECTION REPORT

Summary

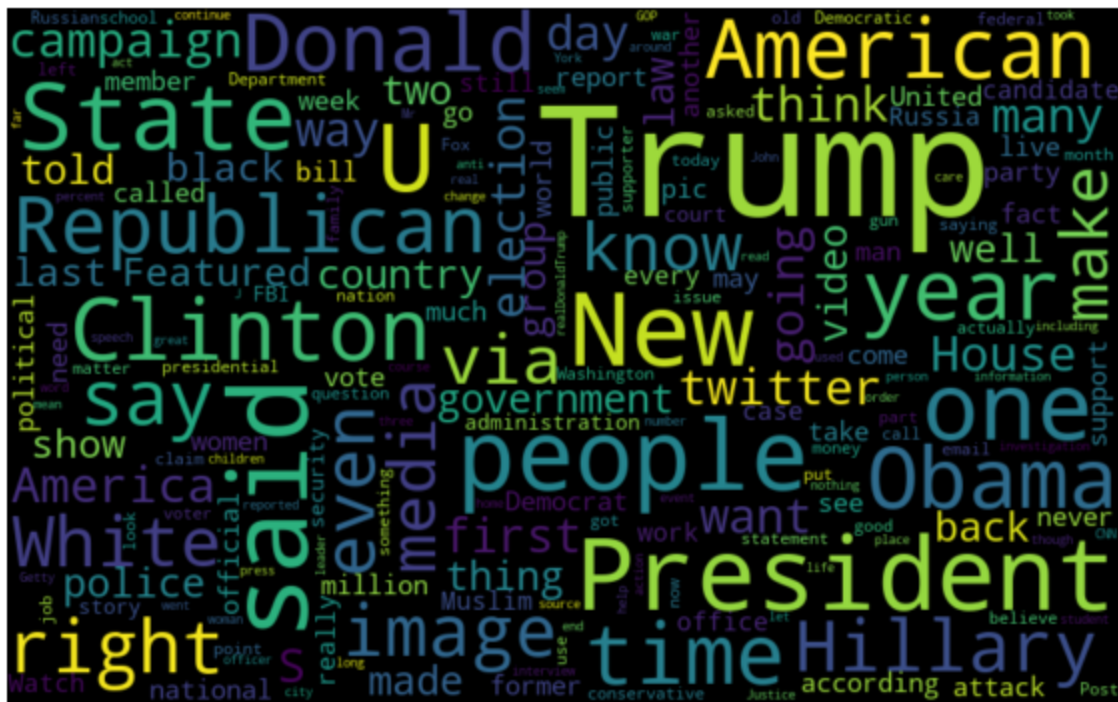
This dataset of fake news, gathered over 2015-2018, (<https://www.kaggle.com/clmentbisailon/fake-and-real-news-dataset>.) helped me conduct an analysis of the general trends and nature of fake news and polarisation in the United States over 2015-2018. A full detailed analysis with access to the data and code used to create the plots is available in the jupyter notebook at: <https://github.com/mukulpatnaik/info-270-bs-detection>.

This is the fake news count over time from 2015-2018:



A clear spike is evident in January 2017, when Donald Trump took the office of the president. Upon analysis, Trump has also been consistently the most popular word in all 45,000 news articles collected from 2015-2018. This shows the massive coverage and polarisation his presidency created.

This is a wordcloud of all the most frequently occurring words in the news corpus.



Questions:

1. Description of the fake news.

“Russiagate” - The theory that President Donald Trump’s campaign “conspired or coordinated” with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

The Justice Department says that special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation did not find evidence that President Donald Trump’s campaign “conspired or coordinated” with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election. (source: <https://www.snopes.com/ap/2019/03/24/doj-trump-campaign-did-not-coordinate-w-ith-russia-in-2016/>)

Mueller also investigated whether Trump obstructed justice but did not come to a definitive answer, Attorney General William Barr said in a letter to Congress summarizing Mueller's report. The special counsel "does not exonerate" Trump of obstructing justice, Barr said, and his report "sets out evidence on both sides of the question." After consulting with other Justice Department officials, Barr said he and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein determined the evidence "is not

sufficient to establish that the president committed an obstruction of justice offense.”

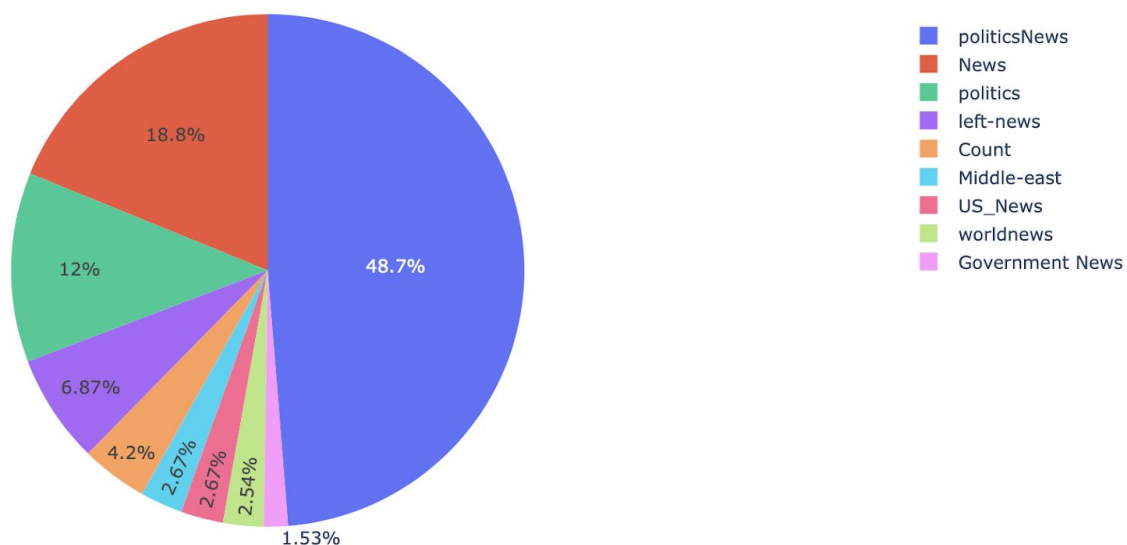
This is obviously a very polarising subject that ought to cause much conflict and many fake news articles will be written about it. I used this dataset of fake news, gathered over 2015-2018, being used is from (<https://www.kaggle.com/clmentbisailon/fake-and-real-news-dataset>.)

Every article, tweet, post or any news source has been categorised as fake or true. It also includes the text, date, and subject of the article for further analysis. I searched using keywords “trump”, “russia”, “collusion”, “corruption”, “russiagate”, and “investigation” to filter the entire dataset for stories only about “Russiagate”.

These are the results of my analysis:

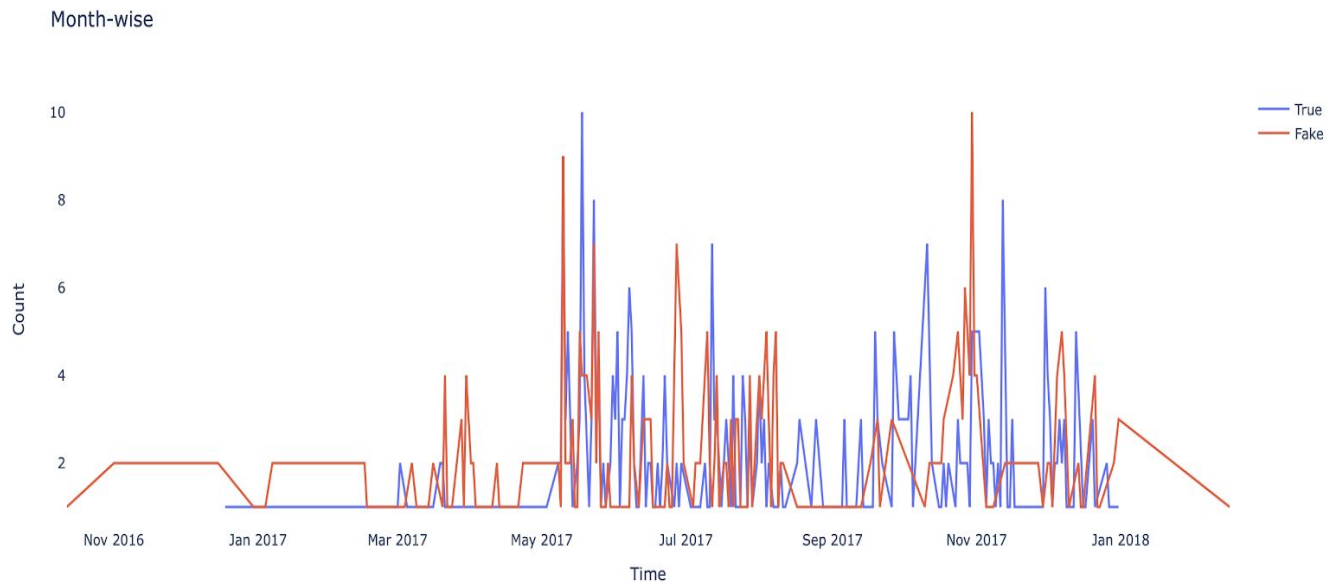
Number of articles per subject

The data is separated into a few different categories and this is the distribution of “Russiagate” news in these categories.



True vs Fake russiagate news count over time

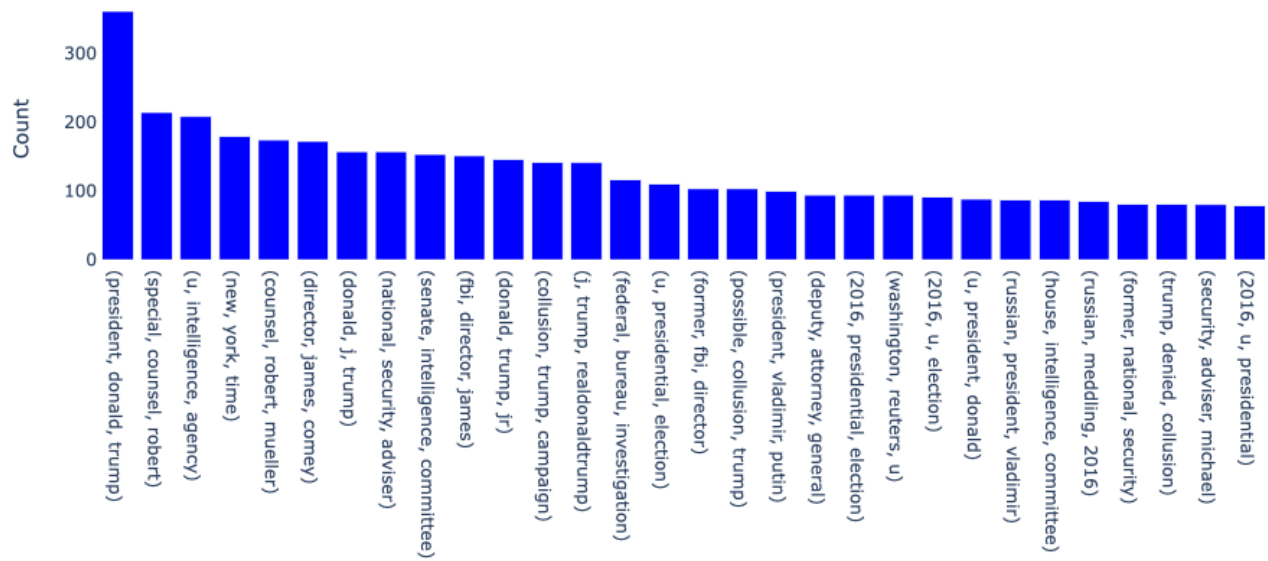
This is the visualisation of the progression of the number of russia articles over time. An interactive version of this plot is available in the jupyter notebook.



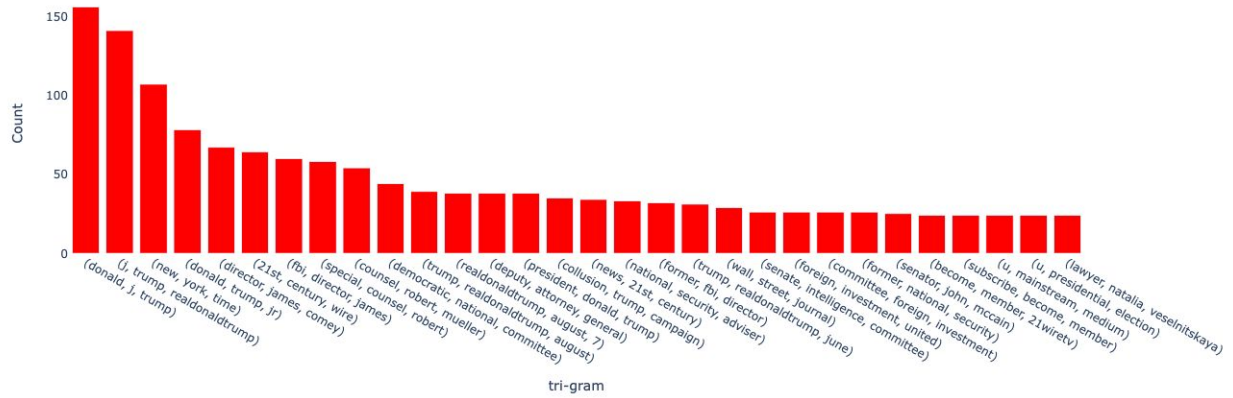
Trigram analysis

In the fields of computational linguistics and probability, an n-gram is a contiguous sequence of n items from a given sample of text or speech. Trigrams are a special case of the n-gram, where n is 3. They are often used in natural language processing for performing statistical analysis of texts. This will provide an idea of the most common themes, phrases, sources and ideas presented in the news corpus.

Top 30 trigrams from Russiagate News



Top 30 tri-grams from Russiagate Fake News



tri-gram	Count
()	320
(u, intelligence, counsel)	190
(special, counsel, robert)	160
(senate, intelligence, agency)	130
(national, security, adviser)	125
(counsel, intelligence, robert)	120
(federal, security, committee)	110
(collusion, bureau, mueller)	110
(director, trump, campaign)	105
(possible, james, comey)	100
(washington, collusion, trump)	95
(fbi, director, james)	90
(2016, u, election)	85
(u, president, james)	85
(u, president, election)	85
(trump, denied, donald)	85
(2016, presidential, election)	80
(russian, meddling, 2016)	75
(new, york, time)	75
(former, president, election)	70
(house, intelligence, vladimir)	70
(donald, trump, jr)	70
(intelligence, u, presidential)	70
(2016, security, adviser)	65
(adviser, michael, rlynn)	65
(trump, campaign, concluded)	65
(respond, request, comment)	65

The hard quantifiable data of my analysis ends in late 2018 but upon doing further research that this issue is still in the news today with new variations arising. Just a simple google search will return countless results from just this month.

About 116,000 results (0.24 seconds)

 Yahoo News

Trump hands the media the next Russiagate

Here is the next Russiagate. If Trump is eventually declared the winner, the coup narrative will dominate the headlines for the entirety of his ...

3 weeks ago



 The Atlantic

Russiagate Was Not a Hoax

Russiagate Was Not a Hoax. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence confirmed what the Mueller report could not. August 19, 2020.

Aug 19, 2020



 NTD

Twitter 'Indefinitely' Suspends Account of 'The Plot Against the ...

Is Twitter trying to silence us because they can't stand that a documentary exposing Russiagate as a giant hoax is the number 1 documentary in ...

1 day ago




 Williston Daily Herald

Russiagate dead-enders try for comeback I Columnists

The Trump-Russia investigation effectively ended on July 24, 2019, the day special counsel Robert Mueller testified on Capitol Hill. Mueller's ...

Sep 11, 2020



 Jacobin magazine

Stories for the End of the World

From the mutant animals of Chernobyl and Marie Antoinette's perverted orgies, to QAnon and Russiagate, conspiracy theories flourish in times ...

3 hours ago



3. Why has it been so difficult to debunk? Why did it spread so far?

There could be many reasons that this is such a difficult topic to debunk. As I have shown above, Trump is probably the most polarising president ever and is constantly dominating the 24 hour news cycle. This extremely controversial report of collusion that was at one point the center for an impeachment attempt and an eerie example of power undermining democracy. I believe this story will stay in the zeitgeist for many years to come with many interesting developments. The ad based revenue system certainly would contribute to something as polarising as this turning into fake news, as it would generate as many clicks due to controversy and rather fact. The mainstream media definitely exploited this. According to some sources, since the Trump presidency, media ratings and revenue have increased by billions of dollars.