

Misinformation and Disinformation



Internet Society
Liberia Chapter



Foldestine Paye

President

Liberia Information Technology Student Union

foldestinepaye@isoc.org

OUTLINE

- Definition
- Disinformation: The Undetectable Weapon Breaking Society Apart
- What Information are Considered Disinformation?
- Misinformation: What is it?
- Measuring Misinformation Related Information
- How Get Information Today
- What Information are Considered Misinformation?
- Types of Misinformation
- How to Stop Misinformation
- References and Additional Reading



What is Mis and Disinformation

Misinformation/ Disinformation is made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word.“

Disinformation: The Undetectable Weapon Breaking Society Apart

- Disinformation is information that is deliberately created to deceive people, which is different from “misleading information.”
 - *false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth*
 - *disinformation is distributed with the specific purpose of misleading the public. The false information is meant to impact society by swaying the opinions of the members of the audience.*
- The strategic use of disinformation can be traced back to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, where it was known as *dezinformatsiya*. It is generally accepted that the Soviet Union pioneered the deliberate use of false information as a weapon of influence in the 1920s.



Disinformation: The Undetectable Weapon Breaking Society Apart

- Disinformation has remained relatively obscure for decades and was used mainly by military or intelligence professionals, not the general public, until the 1950s.
- Disinformation was first used in the 1950s, referring to Cold War disinformation campaigns by rivalry powers.
 - in recent years, the disinformation has become especially associated with the spread of "fake news" on social media as a strategy of negative political campaigning.
 - social media has exacerbated the impact of disinformation campaigns with many fake news.
 -  The government used *disinformation* to gain support for the policy

What Information are Considered Disinformation?

- Malicious content such as hoaxes, spearphishing and computational propaganda. Its main effects raise fear and suspicion among the general population.
- A campaign, plan, or agenda that may take advantage of well-established facts while tweaking details, omitting context, blending falsehoods, or distorting circumstances.
- Reconfigured existing information on social media for content that was wholly fabricated, combining both accurate and inaccurate information
- Fabricated content - false content
- Manipulated content - distortion of genuine information or imagery, for example a headline that is made more sensationalist, often popularized by 'clickbait'



What Information are Considered Disinformation?

- Imposter content - impersonation of genuine sources, for example by using the branding of an established news agency.
- Misleading content - misleading use of information, for example by presenting comment as fact.
- False context of connection - factually accurate content that is shared with false contextual information, for example when a headline of an article does not reflect the content.



Misinformation: What is it?

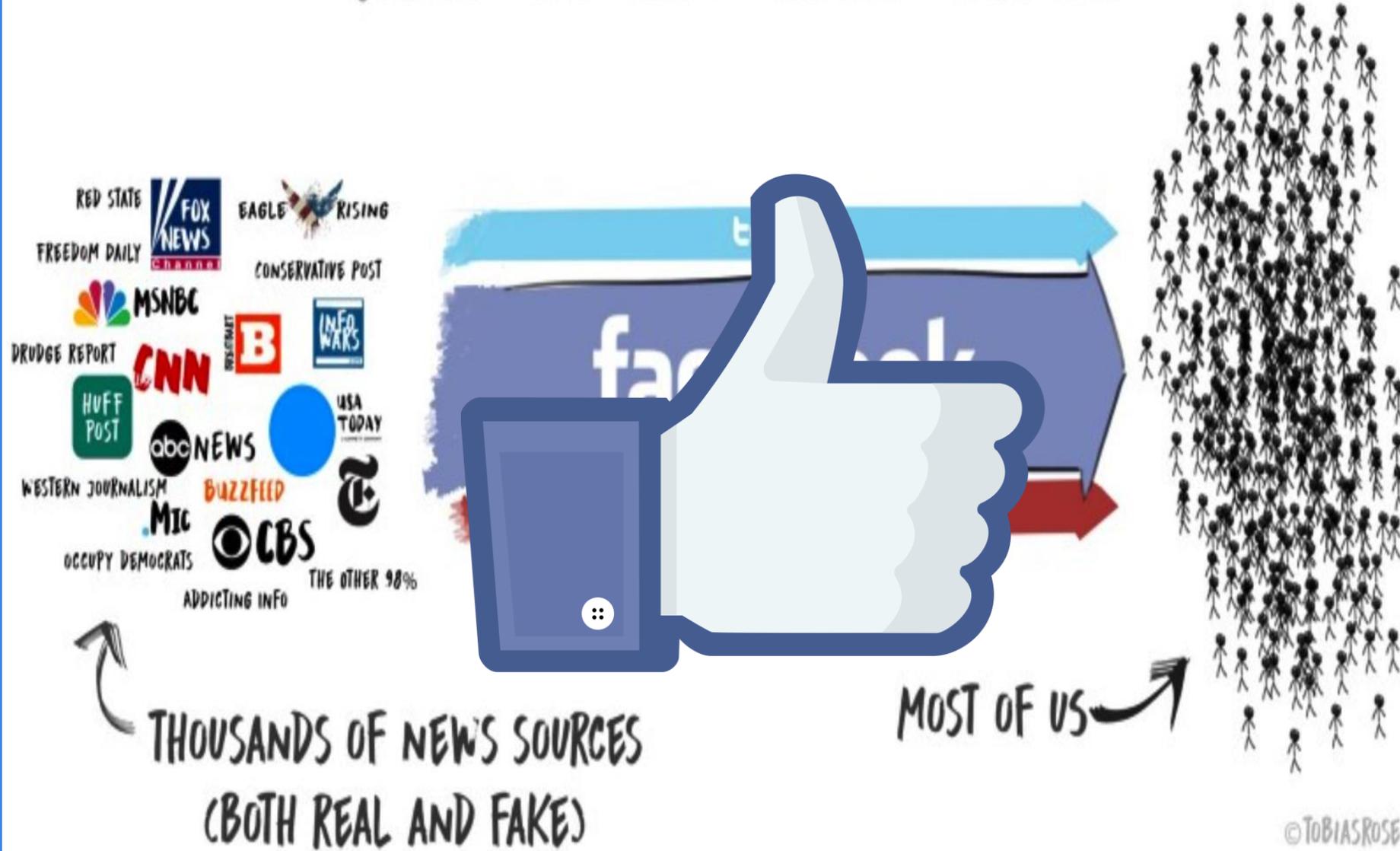
- Misinformation is false or inaccurate information
 - Someone can spread misinformation innocently by saying or writing things that are untrue while believing them to be true
 - Information conveyed as credible but later amended can affect people's memory and reasoning after retraction
 - Misinformation differs from concepts like rumors because misinformation it is inaccurate information that has previously been disproved
- As noted by research, the factors that lead to recognizing misinformation is the amount of education a person has and the information literacy they have. This means if a person has more knowledge in the subject being investigated, or are familiar with the process of how the information is researched and presented, then they are more likely to identify misinformation.



Measuring Misinformation Related Information

- It can be very difficult to undo the effects of misinformation once individuals believe it to be true and fact checking can even backfire.
- Attempting to correct the wrongly held belief is difficult because the misinformation may suit someone's motivational or cognitive reasons.
- It is necessary to correct the misinformation by not only refuting it, but also by providing accurate information that can also function in the mental model.
- Misinformation on social media spreads quickly in comparison to traditional media because of the lack of regulation and examination required before posting.
- Journalists today are criticized for helping to spread false information on these social platforms, they should be playing a role in curbing the spread of misinformation on social media through debunking and denying false rumors.

HOW WE GET NEWS TODAY:



What Information are Considered Misinformation?

- False rumors, or insults and pranks.
- News parody or satirical work can become misinformation if it is taken as serious by the unwary and spread as if it were true.
- Satire and parody - presenting humorous but false stories as if they are true. Although not usually categorized as fake news, this may unintentionally fool readers.
- Journalists often exclude details that would introduce complications or unresolved issues. This causes some facts to be exaggerated and others to be diminished.
- Reconfigured existing information on social media for content that was wholly fabricated combining both accurate and inaccurate information

Different Types of Misinformation

Mimic Websites - fake news websites that mimic the look of trusted news sources in order to fool readers into thinking a story is real - Sources: abcnews.go.co and abcnews.go.com

Satire - fake and ironic news stories that are intended to be funny or entertaining. Examples: The Onion, The Borowitz Report - Source: onion.com

Misleading News - news stories that report quotes, images, statistics out of context, some of these stories can be old stories that are re-reported with a new misleading headline - Source: snopes.com

Clickbait - news that is promoted with dramatic or misleading headlines that do not reflect the content of the actual story - Source: buzzfeed.com



HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.



References and Additional Reading

Resources to Help Identify Misinformation

<https://shawneesu.libguides.com/c.php?g=651556&p=4570694>

Big Data in Complex and Social Networks. 2016-12-01. [doi:10.1201/9781315396705](https://doi.org/10.1201/9781315396705). ISBN 9781315396705.

["A short guide to the history of 'fake news' and disinformation"](#). International Center for Journalists. [Archived](#) from the original on 2019-02-25. Retrieved 2020-06-24.

Chen, Xinran; Sin, Sei-Ching Joanna; Theng, Yin-Leng; Lee, Chei Sian (September 2015).

"Why Students Share Misinformation on Social Media: Motivation, Gender, and Study-level Differences". *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. **41** (5): 583–592. [doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2015.07.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2015.07.003).

Libicki, Martin (2007). [Conquest in Cyberspace: National Security and Information Warfare](#).

 New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. [51–55](#). ISBN [978-0521871600](#).

Q/A

Get involved.

THANK YOU

Visit us at
www.internetsociety.org
Follow us
@internetsociety

Galerie Jean-Malbuisson 15,
CH-1204 Geneva,
Switzerland.
+41 22 807 1444

1775 Wiehle Avenue,
Suite 201, Reston, VA
20190-5108 USA.
+1 703 439 2120

