

NEW REALITY



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| Night Owl Session

| FAKE NEWS AND DOES MEDIA STILL NEED EDITORS?

Presidential elections in the United States brought the fake news phenomenon, the analysis of the changed rules of the political game and the role of the media to the attention of the mainstream media. The fake news phenomenon cannot be considered as something surprisingly new as it's not a new concept. What it is new, however, is the level and the scope of the phenomenon. It's also hard to distinguish between profit-based, opportunistic and state-sponsored creation of fake news. What we would like to explore are inclinations of people and the public to seek for news that confirm their already established beliefs and desires of people and the public to establish an alternative reality in which they will feel comfortable. It's also important to note that in addition to fake news the public is increasingly faced with cases of media hacking – exploitation of the social networks and web search engines to set or (re)define the course of the story or political context.

The consequence of fake news and media hacking phenomenon are visible in public disbelief for media messages, and diminished public confidence vis-a-vis traditional media outlets and corporations; in contrast to increasing trust when it comes to public figures and their on-line statements. The perception of an established or a fictional reality has more virtual credibility as it seems that the news/information comes directly from the source, is focused directly on us, the readers, and is not being filtered by editorial politics of traditional media outlets. Biggest providers of social networks, news aggregators and web search engines (Facebook, Google) are trying to minimize the presence of fake news on their portals by devoting more attention to algorithms and artificial intelligence, which substitute the classical role of editors who are unable to follow the flood of fresh on-line messages. Until we find an effective way to detect and to defend from the manipulated versions of the same content, the truth will – contrary to public interest- continued to be tailor-made for/by every user, every company, and every government.

The World Wide Web as a primary socialization factor of approximately 46% of the world's population is becoming the main creator of the social-political context of the today's world. Social interactions are reduced to "like", "share", "comment" buttons. Computational algorithms of the search engine that provide us on-click results are becoming key sources of information. Did Hillary Clinton really finance Daesh? The established alternative reality of the web that we created ourselves actually puts the real picture under a question mark.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who decides which news are credible and which are not? Is the editorial policy of a media outlet still relevant? Can editors be effectively and credibly replaced by algorithms?
- Do the relationships between general dissemination of news and the credibility of news reveal the changes in societies and the perception of societal reality?
- The immediate impact of fake news can reveal the state of mind in specific societies/states and has internal political effects. Can we also speak about the foreign policy effect, especially in the context of hybrid threats and interstate relationships?
- What are the direct and indirect consequences of fake news on everyday life (of a voter)?