
Social Networks and the New World of Lies

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Last Tuesday, Kristinn Hrafnsson —Wikileaks' editor in chief— stated before a group of foreign press correspondents that the case of Julian Assange, incarcerated in UK and claimed by the U.S., is part of a conspiracy against press freedom.

It is not an isolated case —pointed out the Icelander journalist before adding that the recent attacks on media in California, U.S., the searches carried out by the Federal Police at the headquarters of ABC network in Sydney, Australia, and the incarceration of Swedish journalist Olin Bin, in Ecuador, are also part of a global strategy to stamp out investigative journalism.

Even more disturbing, nonetheless, is the fact that more important than press “freedom” or investigative journalism, the truth itself seems really in danger of vanishing. While the truth is incarcerated in the role of Julian Assange, lies are unleashed and multiplied like never before in the media and social networks.

At the same time Hrafnsson offered his statement in London, an international survey carried out that day and released in Canada showed that 86% of people have taken for granted at least one fake news they have read in social networks.

According to the 82% of people consulted in the Ipsos survey for the Canadian analysis group Center for International Governance Innovation, the platforms of social networks were regarded as the main responsible for the dissemination of fake news. The 77% of users had pointed at Facebook as the main source of fake news while 62% chose Twitter.

The problem is truly alarming if we take into account that there is an increasingly high number of people using social networks as information source. In the words of communication connoisseurs, beyond the technological progresses, the rising number of users in social networks has to do with the discredit of traditional media in recent years. However, is there any credibility in social networks after the results of this survey went public?

To make things worse, it was released a fake video in *Instagram* with the one and only Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook. In the video, manipulated by artificial intelligence, Zuckerberg stands there saying, while describing his own personality: "Imagine this for a second: a man, with a total control of data stolen from millions and millions of people, all their secrets, their lives, their futures."

The fake video shows Zuckerberg bragging about his dominance. The video was created by Israel's emerging company *Canny AI*, and artists Bill Posters and Daniel Howe, allegedly for an artistic project called *Spectrum*, which was screened at the British International Documentary Festival Sheffield Doc/Fest.

It is shocking that *Instagram*—which belongs to *Facebook*—will not block the video. Therefore, it will be added to a series of other manipulated videos, known as "deepfake" due to the use of artificial intelligence with extremely realistic results.

The most popular of this sort of "masterpieces" falsifying reality, which Facebook denies to block by the way, is the ridiculously false video released one month ago where the Speaker of the House of Representative of the U.S., Nancy Pelosi, was talking as if she were drunk.

The video involving Pelosi was released to the world in a tweet posted by the U.S. President Donald Trump. And now that we are referring to lies and Trump, the president of the nation of "press freedom," the first champion against fake news, recently called for a mass boycott from Americans against AT&T, one of the greatest telecom giants of the country, to force them to make "huge changes" within CNN network, owned by that company. According to Trump, CNN is so unfair with such bad, fake news! When the world watches CNN, it gets a false picture of USA."

And it was not a fake tweet, as it was Pelosi's video. This tweet came out of the brain of the U.S. President who has turned the foreign policy of his nation into an anthology of lies and vulgar threats against those countries resilient to the Empire dominance. The same Trump who attacked the media for what he called "a fraudulent and highly inaccurate coverage of Iran," stated immediately thereafter in another tweet that such reports had a positive impact since "Iran does not know what to do now, which is a good thing after all."

In this new world, those who dare to denounce a crime, as in Assange's case, are condemned by those who committed such crime. The goal will be always to achieve nobody knows what to think, not to mention when the information is true or false; and that is the only truth.

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