
Fake News, A Digital Epidemic

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27/01/2026



The Challenge of Fake News in the Digital Age

The phenomenon of fake news is one of the great challenges of this digital era, marked by data overload, multiple communication leaders, and segmented audiences who either accept information or, guided by interests or ignorance, do not question it and instead reproduce it, thereby giving life to the big seasonal hoax.

What is it about? What does this trendy concept, almost always referred to by its English term *fake news*, entail? These are not journalistic errors; they are fabricated pieces of information designed to deliberately deceive, manipulate public opinion, and secure benefits—whether economic, political, or social of any kind. There is an important aspect called the attention economy, which involves generating traffic by combining sensationalist headlines and online advertising. It is not accidental; it is calculated and, evidently, very effective.

Malicious Intent and the Role of AI

What cannot be denied is the malicious nature of fake news, disguised with an appearance of truthfulness, and now, with the rise of artificial intelligence, even visual support is fabricated. It is a tool exploited for propaganda and political polarization, to create discord, discredit opponents, and influence electoral processes. Pay close attention, be critical of what you consume, and you will see these intentions, not camouflaged but exposed in a grotesque manner—though beware! The most intelligent producers craft statements with special care, meticulously assembled to be believable.

Mimicking Media Formats and Exploiting Emotions

Fake news feeds on media formats, imitating them and often achieving effective products with thoughtful and catchy headlines, professional use of logos and images. Furthermore, they already know how to move people by touching on high-demand topics that address strong emotions such as fear, indignation, or hope. A well-positioned result often goes viral quickly.

How Fake News Spreads Like an Avalanche

Above all, social media possesses an infallible characteristic for this: they are massive. And from their structure,

they are designed to offer personalized content. Social media algorithms prioritize posts based on various factors, and beyond the recipient's interests, one can also pay to maximize visibility and inundate.

That is one side. Then, many people tend to trust and share information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs without verifying its truthfulness. Sometimes they like what they receive due to a certain complacency; sometimes they simply trust the sender. But misinformation is always harmful, and once installed in popular thought, it is quite difficult to dismantle.

A Symptom of a Digital Ecosystem

In reality, it is not new; it has always existed. But currently, this boom in fake news is a symptom of a digital ecosystem that rewards virality over quality. It doesn't matter if it is based on truth; only reactions and reaching more people count. It is an interesting business to study, and we see it daily—many individuals live off it. The purposes are multiple, but the worst of all is the one driven by state actors and interest groups that use it as a weapon of influence fueled by hatred and nothing good—a macabre mechanism of radical ideology.

Living in a World of Half-Truths

In the age of hyperconnectivity, we live in a world of half-truths. News circulates at great speed thanks to the power of the click. And when it seems we are better informed because we have free access to almost everything, what actually happens is that it has never been so difficult to distinguish the true from the unreal, because it is no longer about simple misleading ideas presented for whatever purpose we already know; behind it lies a sophisticated machinery of manipulation that shakes geopolitics and the foundations of coexistence.

Reinforcing Bubbles and Exploiting Platform Design

These fabricated narratives create bubbles that reinforce the vision and confirm the prejudices of the target segment. It is not just malicious fun with the use of technical skill; the result is chaos, and social media is the perfect accomplice. The configuration of digital platforms maximizes engagement, powering the vicious circle we talk about today because, by studying the user, they show them what they want to see in a personalized manner, and this amplifies biases.

The Strategy of Appealing to Emotions

Appealing to emotions is a precise strategy; it is the fuel of virality. The bad news, and the redundancy is valid, is that currently anyone can create content, even anonymously. Furthermore, an insidious aspect is that they often use elements of real popular knowledge or that are easily demonstrable, and this makes the false appear intermixed. Thus, it can be a half-lie, a truth taken out of context—for example, using real images to describe an invented event or citing credible personalities, claiming they declared such a matter when they did not—and since it concerns a real person, it generates trust.

The Need for Media Literacy and Structural Change

We do not believe fake news will cease to exist because it requires media education, critical thinking, and a great deal of individual responsibility to share verified content on platforms that are fundamentally skewed and would need to change their structures, offering transparency in how their algorithms function. However, we live in a fractured world with elusive truths that two or three try to cover up undisguisedly and conveniently, while a large group believes and repeats them without question. And each time this happens, the barrier of misinformation grows stronger.

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