Fake News Definition and Detection by Titcomb and Carson Article Review

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According to the article 'Fake News: What Exactly It Is and How to Spot It,' written by James Titcomb and James Carson, which appeared in The Telegraph on 22nd February 2018, fake news seems to be a threat to democracy. Fake news emerged during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. According to the article, fake news stories tend to inform readers about a particular current event but contain no truth.

Why Fake News Spreads Through Social Media

They usually have tantalizing headlines, therefore attracting more readers and a lot of sharing on the social media platform (Shapiro, 54). In 2016, fake news concentrated more on politics, but you will surely find fake news on almost every other topic. It is usually very easy to publish some information and share it on social media. Therefore, fake news quickly goes viral and can readily be accepted as truth (Bradley, 35). Fake news is commonly used in politics to give people a particular opinion towards or against a specific candidate. Besides, it is very hard to differentiate between real and fake news. Therefore, people cannot trust the information they read online. This is because fake news looks and sounds like real stories. Secondly, people also like reading stories that are based on the beliefs they hold, therefore making fake news popular. Social media plays a huge role in the spread of fake news. If a story is shared by a friend, one can easily believe in it even without verifying it. On the other hand, if a story goes viral, it is likely to sound legitimate. However, big technology companies like Google and Facebook have come up with various ways to identify and mark fake news even before it goes viral. People also need to check the facts before they can share a story on social media. Fake news is widely used by politicians to lure people to vote for them, and the excuse given is that they have freedom of speech. It is also a common phrase among journalists, academics, and policymakers. The question, however, lies in the motives behind creating fake news. People create fake news for social, psychological, political, and financial reasons. Social media has made it difficult for human beings to live private lives. Social media platforms have been put in place so that we can always assess others and continuously assess ourselves. Sometimes, we fall victim to these public performances when it comes to dating, shopping, dining, and traveling. The same forces have hugely affected the way we perceive information. Before social media came into being, only our friends and relatives knew what was going on in our lives. However, nowadays, people can understand what we are doing and what we like just by checking our social media pages. The fact that people share misleading information with us signals that we also agree with them, and if we don't, it is essential for us to pay attention to it (James 20). Many people have come up with various ways to solve the issue of fake news. The primary focus concerning counterfeit news is being paid to the transmission model

instead of the emotional and social drivers that happen to shape the relationship between people and information.

Conflict Theory and Competing Social Interests

The issue of fake news can be considered a macro social issue. This is because it is focused on the social trends, patterns, and structure of fake news. Also, the conflict perspective can be utilized to understand the topic. The conflict theory states that in a capitalist economy, people in the upper class own all the means of production while those in the lower class are highly exploited. This leads to a conflict of interest between the two classes of people. This is because people in the lower class want to rise and get to the upper class. At the same time, those in the upper class want to continue holding their positions. According to Marx and Engels, in a capitalist society, there must be conflicts because of the structural differences. This theory states that people in the community have different interests based on their social positions. This difference leads to different views on some critical social issues in society. Therefore, fake news can be thought to emerge from conflicts of interest between different people in society (James 44). Various people in society want to rise to power, while others are struggling to maintain their positions. Fake news arises in society due to various conflicts between people who have different interests. Therefore, conflict theory fits best in explaining this problem in society. One of the strengths of this theory is that the conflict that arises out of these differences leads to positive social changes. On the other hand, it states that those who have power have much more control than the rest of society.

Combating Misinformation in a Democracy

However, the information provided by this article calls for further research to be carried out on how to combat misinformation and fake news. This is because fake news and misinformation usually cause a lot of problems in democratic systems. There have also been growing debates on how to solve this issue without affecting the benefits brought about by digital media (Bradley, 35). For there to be an open democratic system in a country, fake news and misinformation must be avoided. There should be professional journalism in societies to regain the public trust that news has lost. Technology companies should come up with tools to identify fake news; financial incentives should be reduced for those who earn from fake news, and educational institutions should educate people on how to identify fake news (Shapiro, 42). The government, political candidates, and political actors have paid people to create false information to lure people to have a particular opinion in their favor. Therefore, our literature review should focus more on the tweets made by the two U.S. presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, during the 2016 presidential campaigns.

Works Cited

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