

The Spread Of Fake News Through Social Media And The Internet

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Fake news in the 21st century is one of the major issues that have raised concern among governments, intermediaries, and even end users of information. Fake news is a series of deliberately created stories that are incorrect and that are spread to promote or favour some specific individual's interests (Balmas 440). With the development of the digital world, fake news has found a perfect platform in **social media and the internet** to spread the news. This is because there is more access to massive audiences on social media platforms than any other news outlet. In addition to that, the news is spread fast, thus reaching as many people as possible before it is discovered it is a created story. Therefore, this paper will discuss the spread of fake news **through social media** and the internet and the impact that the information may have on end users.

The greatest enemy of economic development is the digital fake news that leads to the spread of unreliable information. Regardless of the fact that most fake stories on the internet and social media platforms revolve around politics, we cannot ignore the fact that the information does have an impact on society and the economy at large. For instance, fake news is the main factor responsible for the polarizations witnessed in our societies. This is witnessed more during political events. One example of such was during the gubernatorial elections in Jakarta, where more than 1000 reports regarding the elections were confirmed as fake. One specific story regarding the election was about the candidate from the opposition that said that in case he lost the elections the country was to fall into a Muslim revolution (Allcott, and Matthew 234). This fake news exacerbated the tension that was in the society and pulled the nation's cultures even further apart.

In addition to polarization, fake news leads to the destruction of relations between different countries. For instance, one of Qatar's news agencies was hacked and its tweeter account was used to spread fake news in May 2017. The comments published alleged that the Emir criticized the United States Foreign policy. Even if the news company acted swiftly in labelling the news fake, it did not prevent the international community from severing diplomatic ties with the country.

On another level, the development of the internet and social media has increased the obsession society has with the celebrity concept that it has never before. Social media platforms are dominated by celebrity scandals and tabloids on a daily basis. But regardless of the fact that the stories regarding celebrities can be seen to be fake, a lot of people cannot be able to differentiate between fake stories and real stories (Nielsen and Kim 480). Cruel fake tweets go viral on a daily basis and this not only affects the esteem of the person in question but also affects his or her family or even fun. Sometimes, such news destroys a person's career completely. And to make matters worse, people tend to believe fake news than they believe the correct and true stories. This has led to increased

racial discrimination in our societies, harassment, damage to reputations, and even intimidation. For instance, the recent hoax news regarding a jewellery store in the United States claiming that real diamonds were being replaced by fake ones by the store, thus selling fake ones to their customers. This hoax led to the fall of the shop's stock in the market by 3.7%, thus causing irreversible damage to the reputation of the business (Marchi 250).

The dawn of digital media was a breakthrough in many aspects of the society we are living in today. For instance, communication in the 21st century. People can share information while thousands of miles apart, and such information could take days in the old days. This has helped incorporate developments as companies are able to monitor the international market every minute, thus making the most viable decisions that lead to the development of the economy. In addition to that, digital media led to the development of social media platforms that have led to rapid globalization and the development of digital markets (Balmas 440). Companies don't have to spend millions of money designing and organizing campaigns for the advertisement of their products and services. Instead, marketing is done online in the 21st century. This has helped society have a variety to choose from and also helped companies market their products with ease (Berthon et al. 268). Digital media has also helped in political developments as people are able to track all the advancements in the political arena, thus making informed decisions.

However, with the existence of fake news on social media, the benefits are almost suppressed as most people are not able to differentiate real stories from fake news. Therefore, governments should come up with policies that are aimed at controlling the digital media and the social media platforms that are responsible for the spread of fake news. This will ensure that society receives the exact stories that are not engineered to suit the interests of some specific politicians or influential personalities in society. In addition to that, gaining control of social media platforms will mean an improvement in world peace as countries and societies will co-exist with each other without any tension.

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