



Neill Fitzpatrick

Assistant Professor – MacEwan University
Faculty of Fine Arts & Communication

Courses:

Online Journalism

Investigative Journalism

Online Communications

News Reporting



Neill Fitzpatrick – Journalist

30+ years experience

ITV News / Global Edmonton

Executive Producer – Global National

Executive Producer – CBC Edmonton



“The Future of (Fake) News”

Media Manipulation 2.0

The Impact of Social Media on

News, Competition, and Accuracy



Fake News: Not new!

- Kings/rulers fed false information
- “The Post”: Vietnam War propaganda
- Nixon, Johnson, other presidents involved



Journalism Under Siege

- Manipulation of the media is common
- Social media enables citizen “journalists”
- Fake news is prevalent and viral



Journalism Under Siege

- Competition increases pressure on journalists
- Accuracy of news under renewed scrutiny
- Public trust of journalists in question



The Impact of Social Media

Changed how
journalists
find/report the
news



Transformed how
consumers find
their news



Allows the
powerful to
influence/set the
agenda



The Trump Factor

- - Heavy use of Twitter
- - Bypasses the media
- - Buzzword: “Fake news”
- - Changing news cycle



@realDonaldTrump

- November, 2016: 13 million followers
- January 20, 2016: 21 million followers
- April, 2017: 28 million followers
- March, 2018: 48 million followers

TwitterCounter



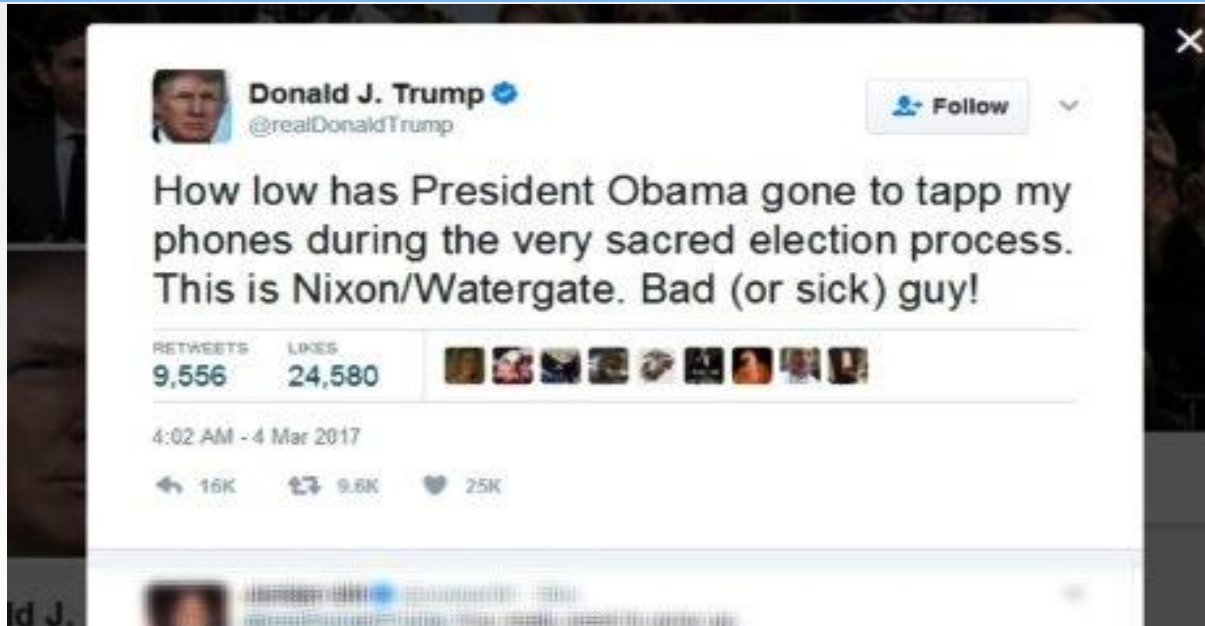
“A Taxonomy of Trump Tweets”

Part 1:

“Preemptive Framing”

“The first to frame an idea”

Lakoff, 2016





“A Taxonomy of Trump Tweets”

- Part 2: Diversion

“...divert attention from real issues” (arming teachers)

- Part 3: Deflection

“...attack the messenger” (fake news)

- Part 4: The Trial Balloon

“...test the public’s appetite...” (nuclear expansion tweet)



Surge in Fake News Stories

Pope Francis Shocks World,
Endorses Donald Trump for
President, Releases Statement

TOPICS: Pope Francis Endorses Donald Trump





Surge in Fake News Stories

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Confusing Times





Facebook: The new news source

- 2012: 49% of Americans utilized social media for news
- 2016: 62% of Americans found news on social media
- 2017: 67% use social media, Facebook = 45%
- 55% are 50 years old, or older

Pew Research Center



Facebook creates “echo chambers”

- Facebook users seek other, aligning views
- These aligning views create “echo chambers”
- User’s views/beliefs echo to others and back

El-Bermawy, 2016



“Echo chamber” time increasing

- 2014: 40 minutes a day
- 2016: 50 minutes a day
- More time than reading, exercise, social events
- Nearly as much time as eating, drinking

Stewart, 2016



Public trust in mainstream media

- Dropped to “all time low” in 2016
- Factors: social media, fake news, echo chambers

Gallup, 2016



Fake news defined:

- The Economist: “post-truth politics”
- “A reliance on assertions that “feel true” but have no basis in fact”

The Economist, 2016



Fake news defined:

- PolitiFact: "Fake news is made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word."

PolitiFact, 2016



Sharing Fake News

- 1/4 of American adults:
admitted to sharing fake news stories online
- Some “inadvertently” shared fake news
- Some “knowingly” shared fake news

Pew Research Center, Barthel, Mitchell, & Holcomb, 2016



The Impact on Communication

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network.

Websites and applications used for social networking.





Theory: “Belief Perseverance”

- many people hold on to new beliefs
“even if they are informed that the initial information on which those beliefs were based was incorrect”

Green & Donahue, 2011



Theory: “Belief Perseverance”

- strengthens if the individuals have
“integrated those beliefs into their knowledge”

Green & Donahue, 2011



Theory: “Truth Bias”

- An inherent trust that, by and large, people are honest and will tell the truth...
- We tend to believe because of the implied “social contract” that dictates honesty...

McCornack & Parks, 1986



Theory: “Agenda Setting”

- 1974: The mass media can set the public agenda because “...we judge as important what the media judge as important” ...

McCombs & Shaw, 1974



Post-Truth “Agenda Setters”

- 2018: Social media allows politicians, celebrities, athletes, and other “influencers” to bypass the media and set the agenda or, at least, increase the significance and visibility of certain issues over others



The Power of “Influencers”



Kylie Jenner

“sooo does anyone else not open Snapchat anymore? Or is it just me... ugh this is so sad.”



The Power of “Influencers”



- Snapchat shares drop 7.2%
- \$1.3 billion impact (est.)
- Kylie “the tipping point”
- 128 Million followers



The Power of “Influencers”





Emma Gonzalez



- 18 years old
- Survivor of Florida school shooting
- Joined Twitter Feb. 18
- Now 1.1 million followers



Emma's Nemesis



"We've had enough of the lies, the sanctimony, the arrogance, the hatred, the pettiness, the fake news. We are done with your agenda to undermine voters' will and individual liberty in America."

Dana Loesch
NRATV



Theory: “Cultivation”

- Gerbner: Television is “society’s storyteller” that can “cultivate” public perception and beliefs...
- TV: “...a coherent picture of what exists...”
- “mainstreaming”: “...a convergence of attitudes on issues of personal morality...”
- Gerbner, 1976



“Cultivation” Now

- Social media is the new “societal storyteller” ...
- Facebook creates the “commonality”
- Social media accelerates “cultivation” and “mainstreaming”



Journalism: Survival or Revival?





Seeking the Truth

- NY Times online subscriptions increasing
- 3.5 million paid subscriptions by Dec. 2017
- More than double since 2015
- “The Trump Bump”



Targeting Fake News

- Media organizations confirming/refuting
- Competitors collaborating



Targeting Fake News: Norway

- Public broadcaster joins online news sources
- NRK, VG, Dagbladet forms new team
- Operating as separate non-profit entity



Targeting Fake News: France

- Dozens of news agencies form “CrossCheck”
- Competing journalists share information
- Researched stories labeled “true” or “false”



Targeting Fake News: Ukraine

- StopFake.org created in 2014
- To “refute disinformation and propaganda”
- Researching stories beyond Ukraine
- “Truth autopsies” in Syria, Turkey, Austria



Finding Facts: A Global Effort

- April 2: International Fact-Checking Day
- Goal: raise awareness globally
- Goal: “enlist the public in the fight”



Teach the Children

- Stanford study of high school/college students
- A “dismaying inability” to identify false facts
- Train youth to read “like fact checkers”



Teach the Children

- Multi-language school lesson plan created
- Teach teens to “navigate the ocean of...lies”
- OECD lobbying for initiatives in schools



Look for the Clues...

- Unusual URLs or site names (ending with ".co")
- Words in all caps, grammatical errors
- Headlines with bold claims but no sources
- Sensational images (women in bikinis are popular)
- Check "About Us" to find out who's behind the site



Take a Deep Breath...

- Search for other versions/sources *before* sharing
- Other credible news outlets reporting the same news?
- Check your emotions! Fake news strives for reactions
- If it makes you angry or smug, it could be a sign
- Be choosy about who you follow



The Next Steps...

- Better education for all: journalists, teachers, politicians, the public
- Share the expertise
- Journalists must go back to the basics
- New research needed



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fitzpatrickn2@macewan.ca