

Disinformation and Its Effects in the Past and Present

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Abstract:

Journalism either from news outlets or social media isn't always honest. Disinformation as well as misinformation creates division in American society. Disinformation has been used to justify terrible acts such as genocide, the seizure of land, controlling people, and dehumanizing others. This has been seen time and time again throughout history. Ordinary people are able to commit cruel acts onto others, justifying the atrocities they commit by dehumanizing others through the use of propaganda, hate speech, false information, or scapegoating. Today, technology has accelerated the speed at which disinformation is able to spread and it is extremely difficult to limit the speed at which it spreads. By looking back in history, this paper connects the past to today in order to identify and prevent disinformation from creating disunity and chaos in society today compared to the past. This paper will not only talk about what social media companies can do in order to prevent users from seeing disinformation, but also what users can do in order to identify and not be tricked by false information. This paper argues why disinformation has to be stopped by listing its effects from the past and how technology can amplify the speed at which it spreads. It lies on the responsibility of the people, journalists, and social media in controlling the spread of disinformation and being able to identify what is true or not.

Keywords: disinformation; fake news; journalism; social media; technology