

INSTILLING BEST PRACTICES FOR COMBATING FAKE INFORMATION IN CYBER SPACES: A CYBER LITERACY PERSPECTIVE.

SanthoshT*

DrThiyagu K**

Abstract

When information was scarce and not so readily accessible we find information in books, in newspapers, and on the news. But in the cyber age, everyone can find any information they need and the cyber space made this process more easier .Due to the user friendly feature of certain cyberspace platforms people create information easily and shares it. Most of the platforms don't have proper evaluating process .Since there is no evaluation for newly created and shared information the responsibility of validating the information falls to the reader. Thus in this world where information is abundant and easy to create and share, finding information is not a challenge. The challenge is in finding good information. Hence everyone must learn how to determine information that we are accessing is reputable. Fighting against fake information focuses on applying critical thinking skills in digital environments it also helps people to avoid information overload.This paper discusses about fake information on cyber spaces and what precautions that to be taken while consuming information on cyber spaces.

Keywords:

Cyber Spaces;
Proliferation;
Aesthetic Analysis;
Hoax News;
Self bias;
Media Literacy.

***Junior ResaerchFellow,Department of Education, Central University of Kerala,Kasargod, Kerala**

****Assistant Professor Department of Edcation,Central University of Kerala,Kasargod,Kerala.**

1. Introduction

The one of the major challenges facing cyber space today include a disintegration of privacy protections and the unabated spread of fake information. The overwhelming amount of information that floods over us each day makes it difficult to sort out reliable from fabricated information. This challenges have created the demand for a new kind of literacy—a literacy that empowers information consumers to determine whether information is reliable and then act on it.

Absence of Media literacy and fake information

Media literacy is important because it is the basis for being an informed and critical thinker in a world where technology and media are ubiquitous, helping to immunize people against undue persuasion and false information.

Media literacy is the ability to think critically about the information you consume and create. It includes the ability to distinguish fact from opinion, and to understand how media can sometimes be used to persuade people. A healthy civil society can exist only if the public is well-informed. If people can be easily led to believe rumors or gossip, the consequences can be dangerous.

Fake information.

Fake information is an inaccurate, sometimes sensationalistic report that is created to gain attention, mislead, deceive or damage a reputation. Fake news is created with the intent to manipulate someone or something. Fake news can spread quickly when it provides disinformation that is aligned with the audience's point of view because such content is not likely to be questioned or discounted.

“Fake information is information deliberately fabricated and published with the intention to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts.”

Much of the discourse on ‘fake information’ conflates three notions [2].

- Mis-information
- Disinformation
- Mal-information.

But it's important to distinguish messages that are true from those that are false, and messages that are created, produced or distributed by "agents" who intend to do harm from those that are not:

- Dis-information. Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country.
- Mis-information. Information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm.
- Mal-information. Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country.

Sources of fake information.

There are many sources of fake information. This can be brought into two major head. Modern and conventional sources. Conventional sources include newspapers and other printed materials. Modern sources include cyberspaces. In this social media platform occupies a major place in proliferation fake information. It is becoming the dominant source of information for significant parts of our societies. There are numerous positive aspects for these media. No one can deny that social media strengthen free speech in general, allow greater and quicker flows of ideas across societies, and add to the quality of life. Yet at the same time, social media may sometimes negatively impact the public debate. This lead to persuasion and formation of new attitude for people who engage in cyber spaces.

Reasons for proliferation of fake information:

- A growing decline in values especially trusting others.
- User friendly cyber platforms.
- Lower attention spans of the people.
- Tendency of appeal towards others emotions.
- Proliferation of cyber platforms.
- Creation of propaganda.
- Persuading others to make action.
- Money making.
- Entertainment.

Forms of fake information

Cyber space has made it easy for a wide range of actors to create fake news, in a variety of formats –

- Text
- Photos
- Videos
- info graphs
- Memes
- Bots
- Gifs

Why people consume fake information as it is:

People consume fake information as it is because of its novelty, surprise and emotional ingredients despite of these features there is an another reason that prompt people to consume fake news as it is may be due to the biases.

Implicit bias: implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit bias is grounded in a basic human tendency to divide the social world into groups.

Confirmation bias: is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses. We don't perceive circumstances objectively. We pick out those bits of data that make us feel good because they confirm our preconceived notion of how things are supposed to be

Types of fake news in cyber spaces

Fake/Hoax News

These are the news that is fabricated with the intention of misleading or confusing readers.

Misleading News

News stories that reports quotes images statistic out of context. Some of these stories can be old stories that are re reported with new misleading headlines.

Satire

These are fake and ironic news stories that are intended to be funny or entertaining.

Mimic websites

Fake news websites that mimic the look of trusted news in order to fool readers into thinking a story is real.

Alternative /Alternate facts

A different interpretation of facts usually derived from a misinterpretation of reports or by focusing only on a subset of the available information.

Click bait

News that are promoted with dramatic or misleading headlines that do not reflect the content of the actual story.

Some frame works of combating Fake information.

Claire Wardle (2017) clearly points that to understand the current information ecosystem, we need to break down three elements:

1. The different types of content that are being created and shared
2. The motivations of those who create this content
3. The ways this content is being disseminated.

Furthermore the following four kinds of analysis make people to validate the fake information[11].

- Analysis of Title/Domain
- Analysis of writing Style
- Aesthetic analysis
- Analysis of media

Title/Domain Analysis.

It is the analysis of websites. Some websites may appear with slight variations just like 'com.co'. It's a sign of fake websites

Analysis of writing style

It is the analysis of writing analysis. Stylistic practice and hyperbolic word choices are often used to create emotional responses have a look on to that.

Aesthetic Analysis.

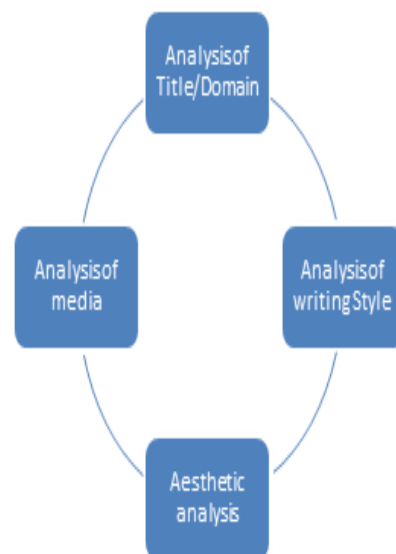
Questionable information utilizes very bad design. Usually this means screens are cluttered with text and heavy-handed photo shopping or born digital images.

Media Analysis.

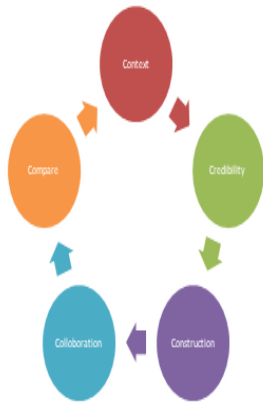
Look up the platforms of where information is spreading. User friendly platforms like social media spreads fake information quickly.

Another frame work for combating fake information is applying 5Cs approach [7].

- **Context**
- **Credibility**
- **Construction**



- **Corroboration**
- **Compare**



- Context** - Look the context of the fake information when it was written.
- Credibility** - Check the credibility of the source.
- Construction** - Identify the biases and distinguish between the facts and opinions.
- Corroboration** - Corroborate the information with other authentic sources.
- Compare** - Compare with other sources.

Combating fake Educational Resources

Check before you share.

The first and most important precautions that you need to take is to take the extra few seconds to look over the source, or go read the article in full to make sure the title accurately reflects the content and that the site is reputable.

Pay attention to the domain and URL

Established news organizations usually own their domains and they have a standard look that you are probably familiar with. Sites with such endings like .com.co should make you raise your eyebrows and tip you off that you need to dig around more to see if they can be trusted. This is true even when the site looks professional and has semi-recognizable logos.

Have a look on the language that they used.

Try to understand the mission and ethics statement behind news. The language used here is straightforward. If it's melodramatic and seems overblown, you should be skeptical.

Have a keen look at the studies

Most publications have multiple sources in each story who are professionals and have expertise in the fields they talk about. If it's a serious or controversial issue, there are more likely to be quotes — and lots of them. Look for professors or other academics who can speak to the research they've done. And if they are talking about research, look up those studies.

Google the controversial statements that on has made.

In order to verify some fake news from the part of famous persons and to check are they a reputable source with a title that you can verify through a quick Google search. See what the statement was about, who he was addressing and when it happened.

Check the comments

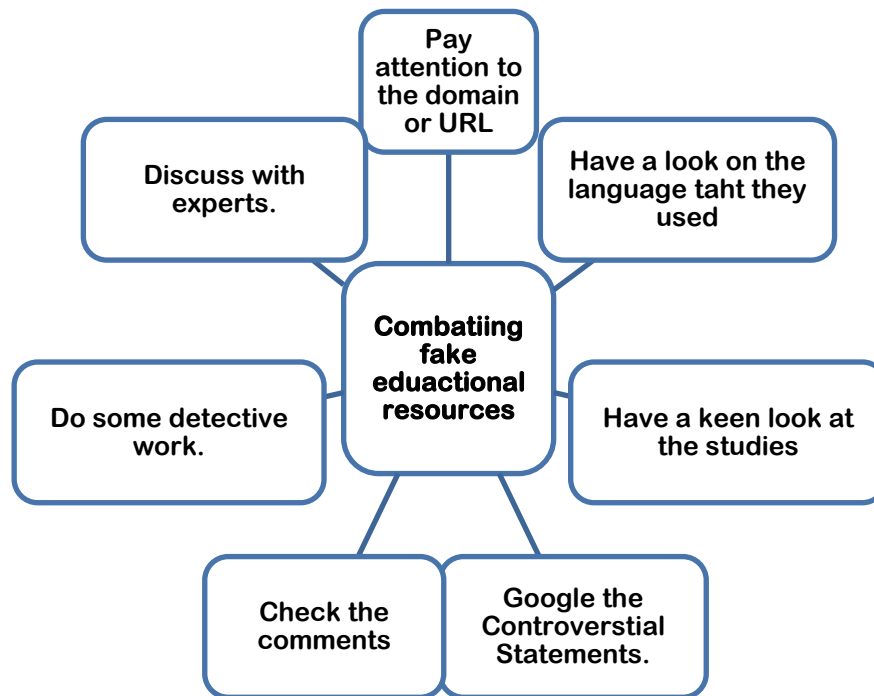
A lot of these fake and misleading stories are shared on social media platforms. Headlines are meant to get the reader's attention, but they're also supposed to accurately reflect what the story is about. Lately, that hasn't been the case. Headlines often will be written in exaggerated language with the intention of being misleading and then attached to stories that are about a completely different topic or just not true. These stories usually generate a lot of comments on Facebook or Twitter. If a lot of these comments call out the article for being fake or misleading, it probably is.

Do some detective work for fake images

A picture should be accurate in illustrating what the story is about. This often doesn't happen in fake news. Do a little detective work and reverse search for the image on Google. You can do this by right-clicking on the image and choosing to search Google for it. If the image is appearing on a lot of stories about many different topics, there's a good chance it's not actually an image of what it says it was on the first story.

Discuss news with others before sharing.

Being a consumer of information we have the responsibility to validate the news. Hence before sharing the news to others makes discuss about the news that you wish to share. Meanwhile when you are the reliable source of the news and you see your friends sharing blatantly fake news, be a friend and kindly tell them it's not real. Don't shy away from these conversations even if they might be uncomfortable.

Combating fake educational resources**General Tips for combating fake information**

- Find the source
- Read beyond headlines.
- Look at the credentials of writers or creators of information.
- Quick search of the author
- Check the date.
- Install browser Plug in
- Identify self-biases
- Think and read beyond
- Seek the help of experts

- Check with supporting evidences.
- Verify facts with multiple sources
- Check Before you share.

Legal and other initiative to combat fake information

There are some legal provisions for stopping fake information .On its basis social media platforms — more responsive to blocking fake news, as part of Section 79 of IT Act (2000), that will bind social media companies to respond to complaints about fake news content within a few hours.Also GOI is planning to launch awareness campaigns with state governments to emphasize the role they can play in sensitizing students and teachers on online safety. The intent is to curb the viral circulation of misinformation on social media and make public “adapt” in spotting fake news on popular platforms.

Whatsapp initiative

WhatsApp has already taken some initiatives introducing ‘forwarded’ label and restricting an individual to only a certain number of forwards.

Facebook and instagram initiative

Facebook is working to fight the spread of false news in three key areas:

- Disrupting economic incentives -Identifying false news through our community and third-party fact-checking organizations so that we can limit its spread, which, in turn, makes it uneconomical.
- Building new products to curb the spread of false news-Improve News Feed by listening to what the community tells us.
- Helping people make more informed decisions - Exploring ways to give people more context about stories so they can make more informed decisions about what to read, trust and share and ways to give people access to more perspectives about the topics that they're reading.

Most of the social media platforms have Report option. If we click on to that our response to the information can be easily get registered.

Websites that helps to check fake information.

- RealorSatire.com
- Factcheck.org
- Politifact.org
- Google
- Snopes.com
- BOOM part of Ping Digital Network([www.pingnetwork .in](http://www.pingnetwork.in))

Conclusion

People need information as quickly as possible, but accelerating the distribution of information in the Digital Era has increased the chances that the fake information. Fake information is not a new phenomenon, and all of us- tech companies, media companies, newsrooms, teachers have a responsibility to do our part in addressing it. Proliferation of fake information is an evil in the society it in turn affect societies ethical conscience. Despite of all these the major responsibility falls in people who validate the information and it need a joint effort .Hence the policy makers, parents and educators, must take a keen concern and more deliberate initiatives to help our younger generation become more savvy consumers of information.

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