

Hashtags, Tweets and Fake News: Contemporary [Dis]Information

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Worksheet

Exercise 1

Analyse the statistics presented in the form of charts (Source A).

Find out, which information is false (F) and which true (T).

More people trust information found online than they are sceptical about it.	
Many more people distrust online content than the respondents who have no objection to it.	
A fifth of the respondents are unable to recognise forms of online disinformation or manipulation.	
The most frequent type of false information found online is fake news and trolling.	

Exercise 2

Think about the reasons for people's ignorance concerning online disinformation.

Give several examples and justify them.

Your answer:

Exercise 3

On the basis of Sources A and B, write down your own definitions of the phenomena mentioned in the chart. Feel free to give examples you know.

Your answer:

Exercise 4

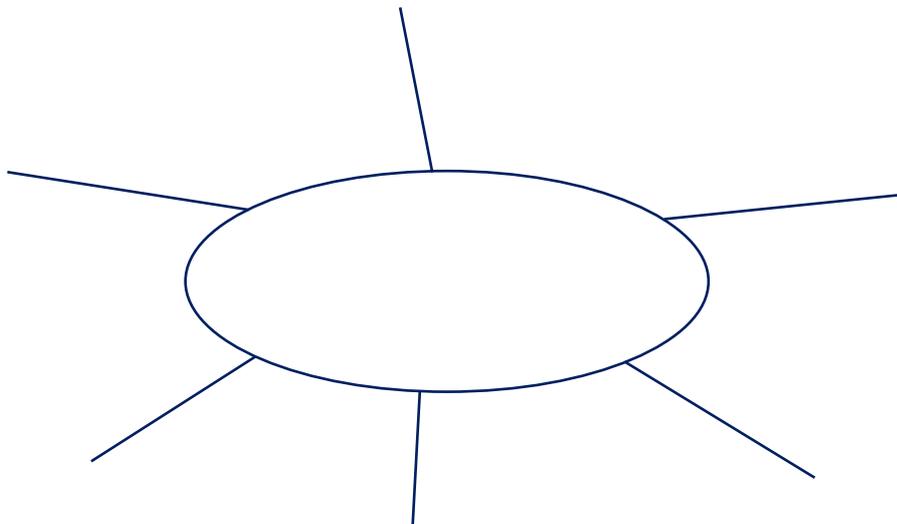
On the basis of Sources C and D, think why certain people decide to take part in debates concerning subjects they have no expertise in. Why is it that a celebrity is more trusted in today's society than a scientist?

Your answer:

Exercise 5

Read Source E and make a mind map¹ for the topic: inconspicuous # as a method of manipulation. Try to write down information that makes that the method of hashtag laundering.* It is difficult for the user to verify information, while easy for specialists to recognise disinformation.

* The method consists in the promotion of a given hashtag by a large number of fake accounts. Thanks to mass sharing, eventually the information is repeated by legitimate accounts too. In this way, it reaches mainstream media and news outlets, gaining a semblance of authenticity.²



¹ For more information, see: [Using Mind Maps as a Teaching and Learning Tool to Promote Student Engagement](#) [accessed 6 December 2021]. A mind map can be also executed online using the available online tools, e.g. <https://coggle.it/>.

² The definition above has been developed by the author on the basis of information included in a report *Blame it on Iran, Qatar, and Turkey: An analysis of a Twitter and Facebook operation linked to Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia*, 2. 4.2020 [accessed 12 December 2020]. Available from the Stanford Internet Observatory Cyber Policy Center: <https://cyber.fsi.stanford.edu/io/publication/twitter-facebook-egypt-uae-saudi>.

Exercise 6

Compare the information in Sources D and F. Is the policy of social media on fake news effective? Is it easy to get round the blockage? If so, how and why?

Present your reflections on a metaplan³ using the model below.

What is the situation?		How should it be?
	PROBLEM Fake news in social media	
Why is it not the way it should be?		What should you do?

Exercise 6

On the basis of Source G, write down what the purpose is of disinformation directed towards state services.

Your answer:

³The method's description can be found at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaplan> [accessed 14 December 2020].