

FRAGILITY OF TRUTH

NOBEL WEEK DIALOGUE

GOTHENBURG, DECEMBER 9 2017

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“

What makes it possible for a totalitarian or any other dictatorship to rule is that people are not informed; how can you have an opinion if you are not informed?

If everybody always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer.

Hannah Arendt
Interview, 1974



Hannah Arendt, 1906–1975
Author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and
Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil

1. What happened in 2016 ?



An implosion of trust

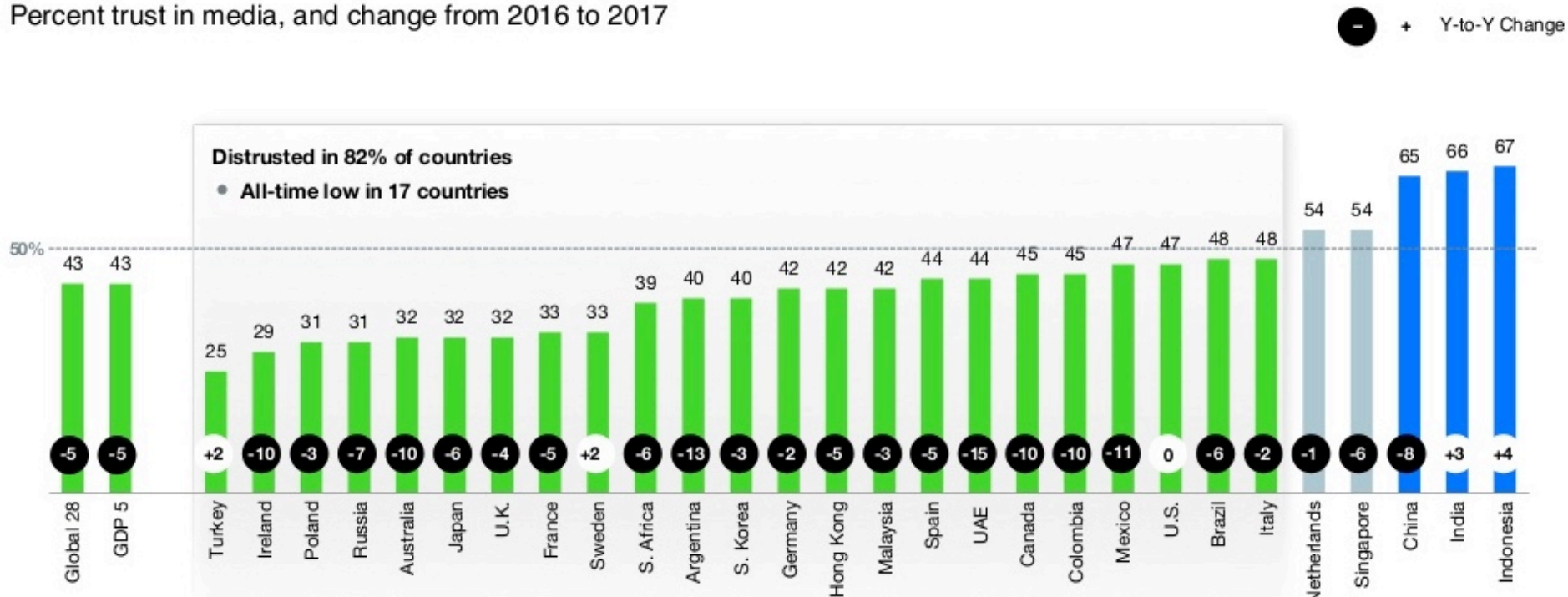


- **Incumbent party or elected leader in 5 of top 10** global economies is **deposed** or **defeated** (US, UK, Brazil, Italy, S. Korea).
- **UK** votes to **exit the EU**.
- **Populists leading** or **gaining** in France, Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Turkey.
- **Panama Papers** revealed **tax evasion on a global scale** by both business and government officials.
- **Mainstream media** continues to **lose** audiences, advertisers, and revenue. Dramatic decline in advertising revenue.
- Global rise of **fake news**, disinformation and propaganda campaigns.

This includes trust in media...

- It's not just the US. Distrust in the media is a global problem.
- Out of 28 major countries surveyed, 23 had a majority that distrusted the media.
- 17 saw an all-time low in levels of trust.

Percent trust in media, and change from 2016 to 2017

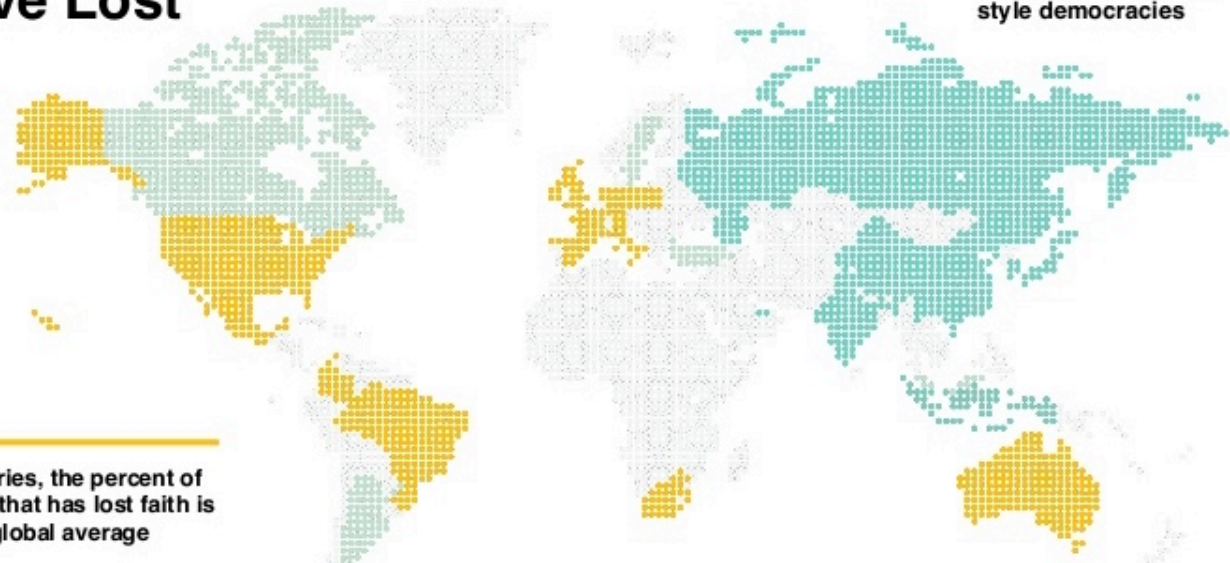
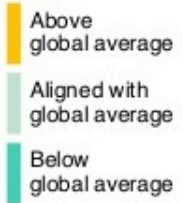


...But also trust in the system as a whole

- Western democracies have the most acute crisis of confidence.
- This includes mainstream media, business, government, NGOs.
 - As well as immigration, globalization, social values, innovation, and fellow citizens.

1 in 2 Countries Have Lost Faith in the System

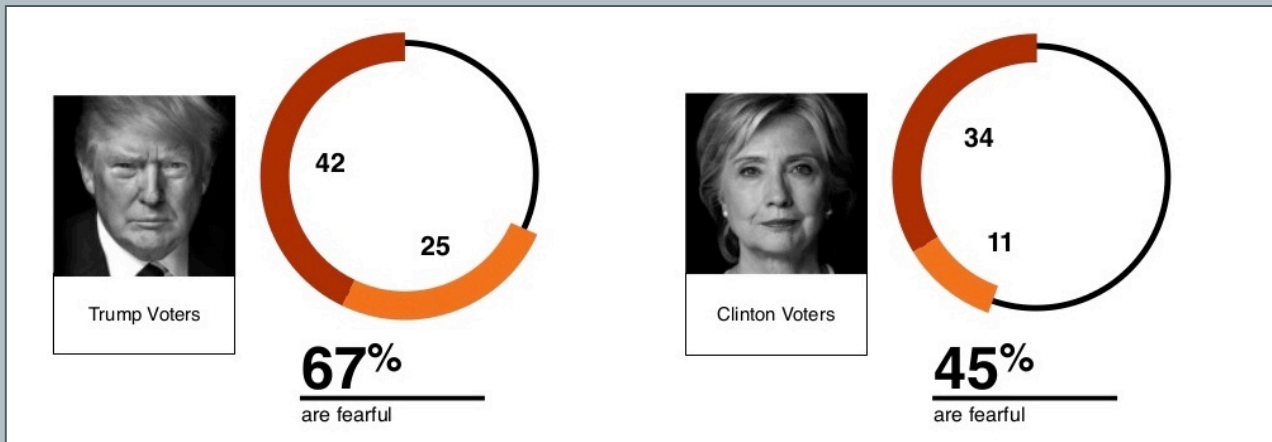
Percent of population who believe the system is not working



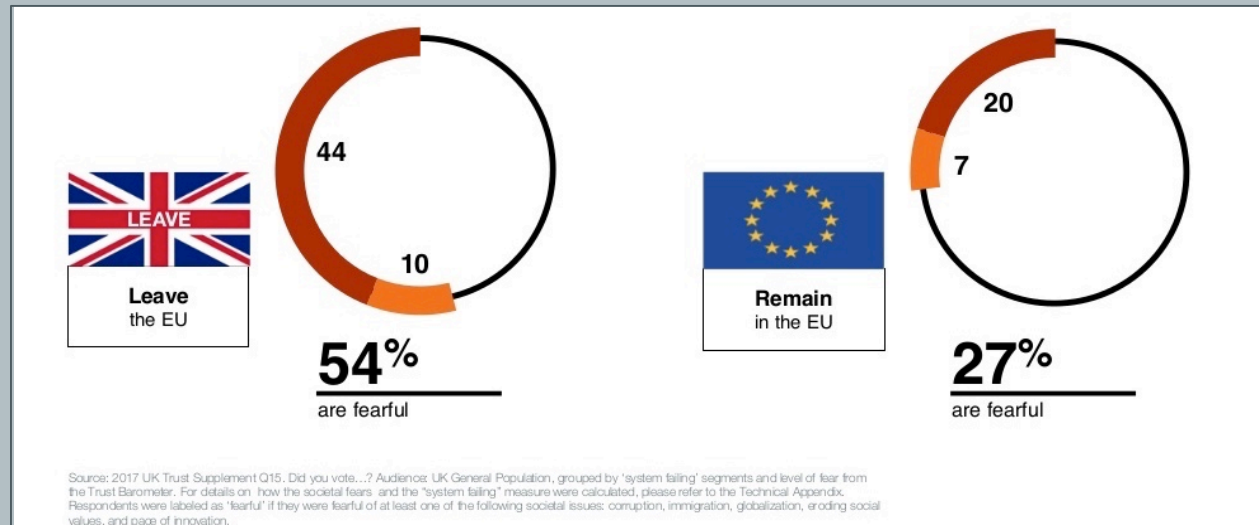
In 14 countries, the percent of population that has lost faith is above the global average

	Global	France	Italy	Mexico	S. Africa	Spain	Poland	Brazil	Colombia	Germany	U.K.	Australia	Ireland	U.S.	Netherlands	Canada	Sweden	Argentina	Malaysia	Turkey	Russia	S. Korea	Indonesia	Japan	India	Hong Kong	Singapore	China	UAE
System failing	53	72	72	67	67	67	64	62	62	62	60	59	59	57	56	55	55	53	52	51	48	48	42	42	36	35	30	23	19
Uncertain	32	22	24	25	24	25	25	25	27	26	29	30	26	33	33	30	29	29	37	31	28	41	40	45	45	50	43	47	40

Fears of systemic failure have proven conducive to populism in the US —



— and in **the UK.**



Was social media to blame? Many say yes.

- **Social media** helps spread **misinformation** and **fake news**.
- **Filter bubbles** deepen **partisanship**, strengthen **confirmation bias**.
- **Echo chambers** foster **extremism** among voters.
- Objective / moderate / accurate / voices get lost in the noise.


select/all Search Like Us Follow Us

Donald Trump Won Because of Facebook

By Max Read

November 9, 2016 2:37 pm

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The Intersect

Facebook fake-news writer: 'I think Donald Trump is in the White House because of me'

By Caitlin Dewey November 17, 2016

Most Read Lifestyle

This Analysis Shows How Viral Fake Election News Stories Outperformed Real News On Facebook

A BuzzFeed News analysis found that top fake election news stories generated more total engagement on Facebook than top election stories from 19 major news outlets combined.


Posted on November 16, 2016, at 4:15 p.m.


BuzzFeed NEWS / REPORTING TO YOU

Most Americans Who See Fake News Believe It, New Survey Says

An exclusive Ipsos poll conducted for BuzzFeed News found that 75% of American adults who were familiar with a fake news headline viewed the story as accurate.

Posted on December 6, 2016, at 7:31 p.m.

 **Craig Silverman**
BuzzFeed News Media Editor

 **Jeremy Singer-Vine**
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Even if only a **small group** of people **promote mis/disinformation**, that small group can still have a **disproportionate impact**.

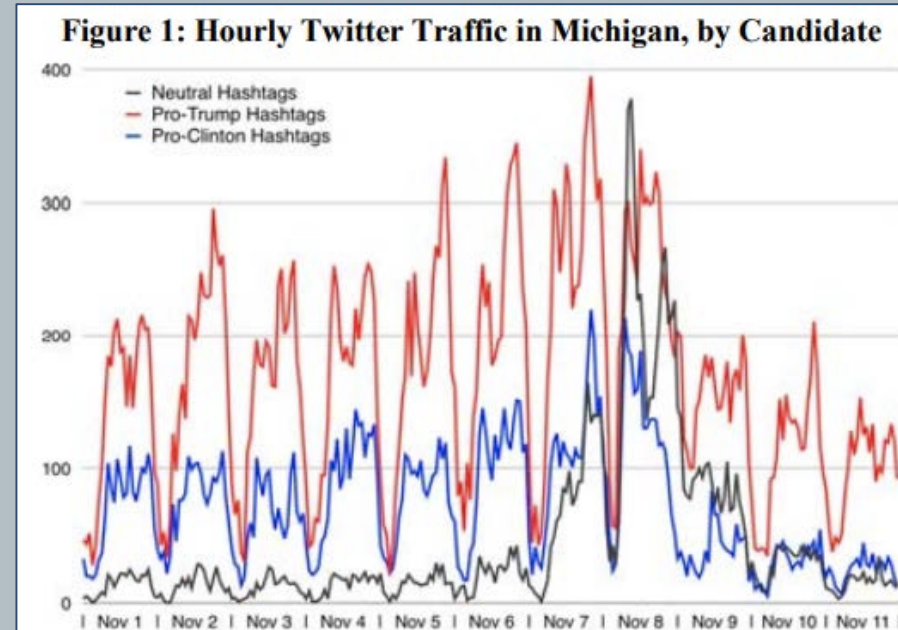
Philip Howard, 2017

(sociologist, Oxford University Internet Institute)

Focus: Social media use in Michigan during the presidential campaign.

Findings:

- Trump-supporting hashtags were used **more than twice as often** as Clinton-supporting hashtags.
- Professional (real) political news was **drowned out by junk news**:
 - Extremist, sensationalist, conspiratorial, masked commentary, fake news
- The proportion of professional news content getting shared hit its **lowest point on the day before the election**.



Yochai Benkler, Rob Faris, Ethan Zuckerman et al.

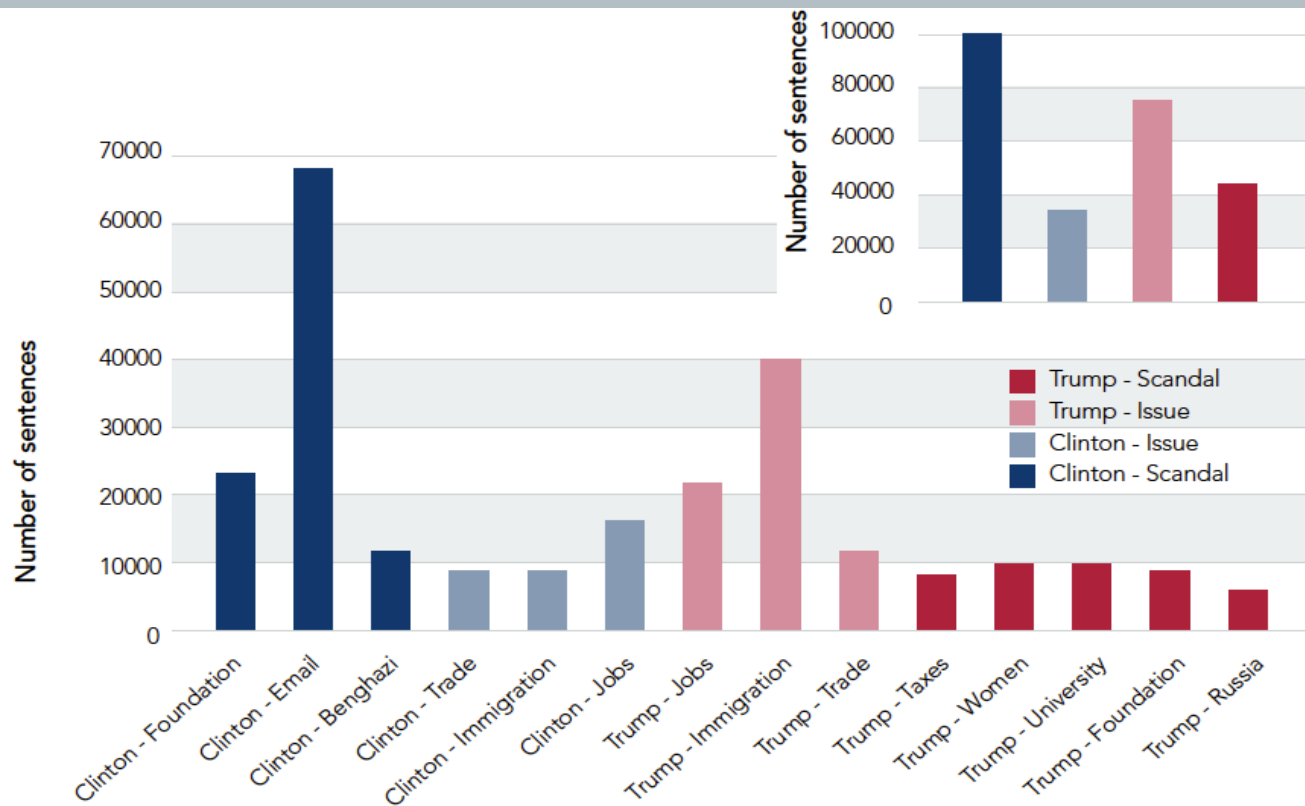
(Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard)

Study of the media's coverage of the 2016 election, both mainstream and social:

- Coverage of Trump overwhelmingly **outperformed** coverage of Clinton on the whole.
- Clinton coverage focused on **scandals**, Trump coverage focused on **his core issues**.
- **Mainstream media** largely **followed Trump's agenda** (although it was negative for both candidates.)

Number of sentences by topic and candidate

May 1, 2015 —
November 7, 2016



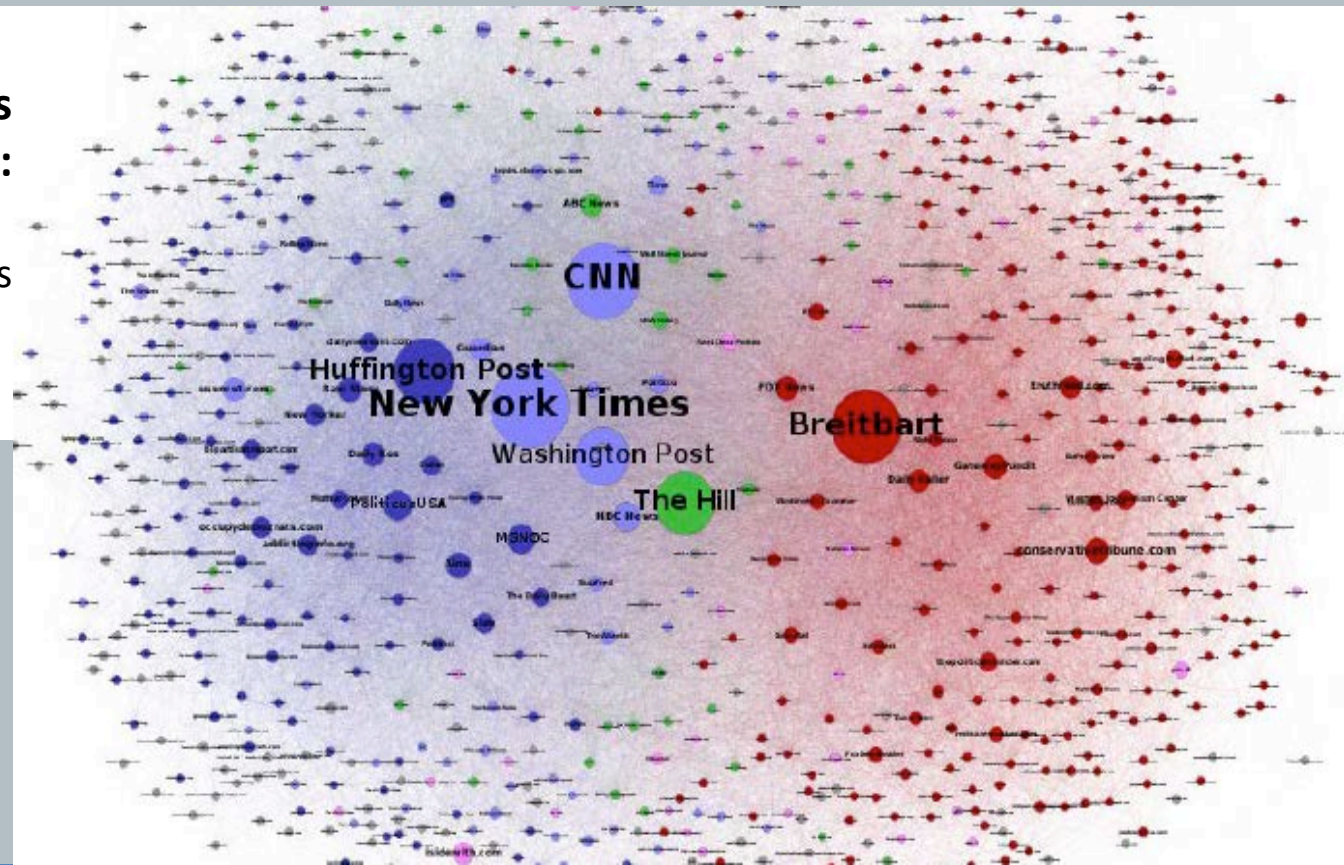
Benkler, Faris, Zuckerman et al., cont'd:

Mapped how election-related stories got shared on social media.

- **Principal poles** of the media landscape are the **center-left** and **the far right**.
- *Breitbart* emerged as **nexus of conservative media**, comparable to the *New York Times* in the number of Facebook shares.

How **election-related news** were shared on **Facebook**:

Node size = number of shares

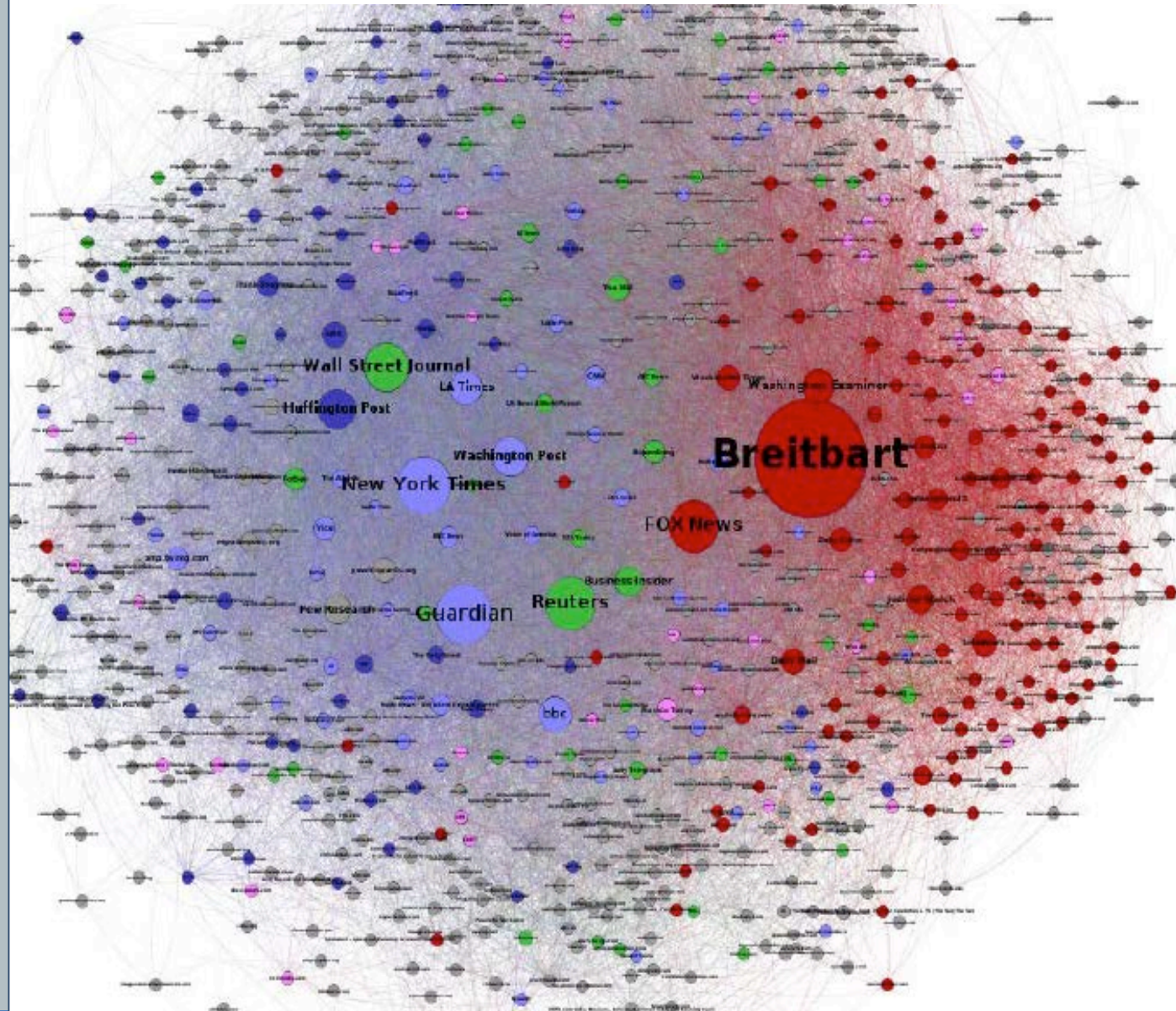


“You’ve been hacked.”

— Yochai Benkler
to journalists
(Columbia, March 2017)

How stories related to **immigration** were shared on **Twitter**

Node size = number of shares

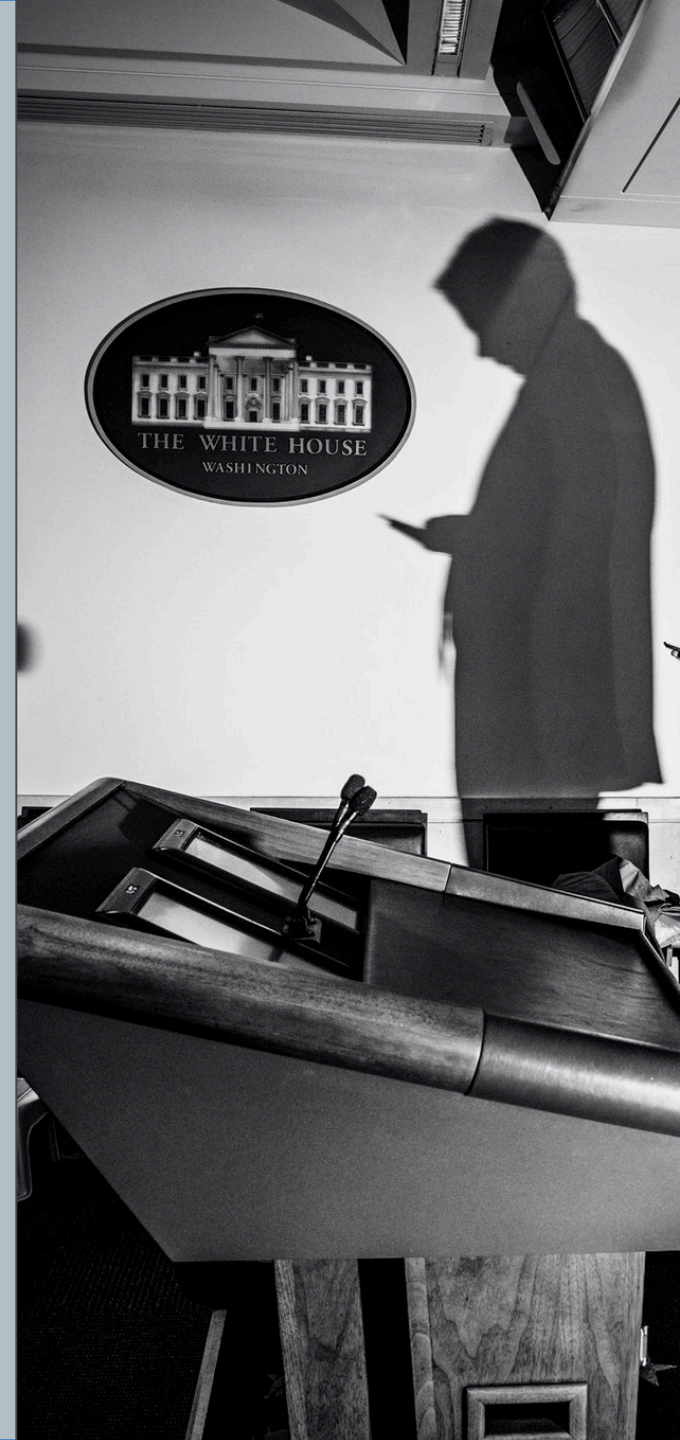


Benkler, cont'd:

We don't yet know the relative influence of the **five groups spreading disinformation**:

- Russian trolls/bots
- Bannon/Breitbart
- For-hire content writers abroad (such as Macedonian teenagers)
- Formal campaigns using behavioral marketing (the Cambridge Analytica concern)
- Distributed peers: the far-right activists of 4Chan and such

Additional research is imperative.



Definitions

Fake news isn't all the same, and the term itself is unhelpful.

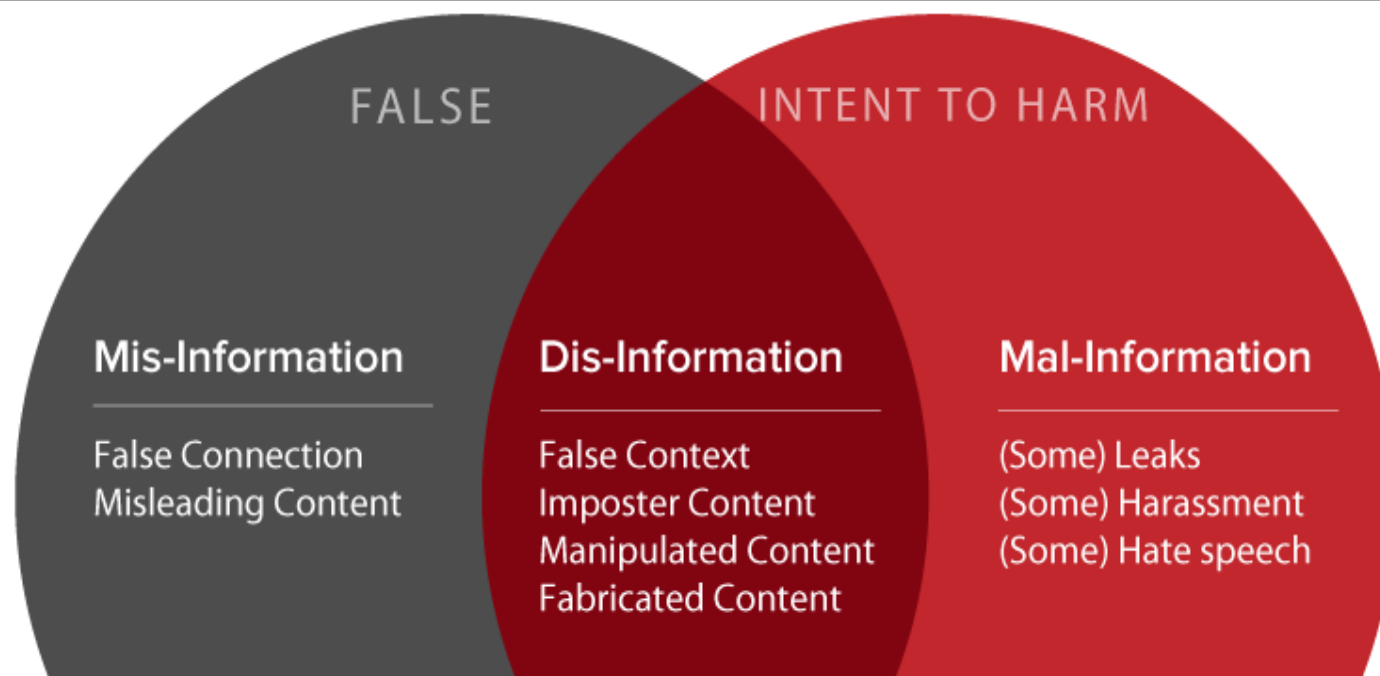
A taxonomy proposed by **Claire Wardle** of First Draft (Harvard / Shorenstein):

Mis-information: false information, shared with no intent to cause harm.

Dis-information: false information, knowingly shared to cause harm.

Mal-information: genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving private information into the public sphere.

**FIRST
DRAFT**



Wardle, cont'd:

To develop interventions, determine what type of mis- or disinformation you're dealing with.

FIRSTDRAFT

7 TYPES OF MIS- AND DISINFORMATION



SATIRE OR PARODY

No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool



MISLEADING CONTENT

Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual



IMPOSTER CONTENT

When genuine sources are impersonated



FABRICATED CONTENT

New content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm



FALSE CONNECTION

When headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content



FALSE CONTEXT

When genuine content is shared with false contextual information



MANIPULATED CONTENT

When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive

Angelo Carusone

(president, Media Matters for America)

How social media algorithms skew the conversation rightward:

- **Most** people who vote democrat **post little to nothing** about politics on social media. One reason: fear of getting trolled.
 - Conservatives do more trolling than liberals, so many liberals “silence” their views.
- But Facebook measures posting/sharing frequency to determine how far and wide content should travel on newsfeeds.
- Result: **digital silence**. Algorithms assume that liberals aren’t interested and don’t circulate news written from a Democrat perspective.
- **Rise of predictive news**: As soon as content hits a threshold of relevancy, it is shown not only to its immediate target audience, but also to outside people if they did not “like” it.

TRENDING



- ↗ **Justin Bieber**: Tattoo Artist Discusses Meaning Behind Singer's New Cross Tattoo on Face
- ↗ **Paul Ryan**: House Speaker Says He Would Relinquish Republican Convention Chair if Donald Trump Asks
- ↗ **Sarah Palin**: Former Governor of Alaska Says Paul Ryan's Political Career Is Over 'but for a Miracle'

- ↗ **Facebook Trending**: Platform Suppresses News Topics From Conservative Media, Report Says

- ↗ **X-Men**: Next Movie in Super Hero Franchise Will Be Set in 1990s, Producer Says
- ↗ **George W. Bush**: Former US President Hosts Event on Psychological Health Issues Facing Veterans
- ↗ **Airbus**: Aerospace Company Tests Perlan 2 Space Glider Over Nevada
- ↗ **iOS 10**: Apple Mobile Operating System Reportedly to Include HomeKit App



- August 2016: Facebook fired editors responsible for its *Trending* feature. It decided that algorithms (like those Carusone criticizes) have made human intervention obsolete.
- Within 3 days, its Trending list was headed by a hoax claiming that Megyn Kelly had been fired by Fox for being “a closet liberal who actually wants Hillary to win.”
- Facebook faces backlash, experiments with ways to label and down-rank fake news.

“It was beyond predictable by anyone who spent time with the actual functionality of the product, not just the code.”

— Anonymous former Facebook employee to *Washington Post* (October 2017)

Wael Ghonim (Egyptian social activist)

Argument: Today, social media newsfeeds serve to **verify people's beliefs** rather than provide constructive or enlightening content.

(Big evolution of perspective from Arab Spring, when Ghonim was a leading online organizer.)

Social media algorithms and **machine learning**:

- The code to “**exploit**” optimizes the algorithm to maximize social media users liking and sharing content. Today’s platforms do this too much.
- The code to “**explore**” shows users a wider variety of content that is not guaranteed to be shared, but that exposes them to something new. Today’s platforms do this too little.
- **Optimizing algorithms primarily for engagement is dangerous. It rewards outrage, drowns out moderate voices and eliminates productive discussion.**

“We wanted democracy,
but got mobocracy.”

— Wael Ghonim
Interview, 2017



Donald Trump's Twitter post from November 2012

Ghonim, cont'd:

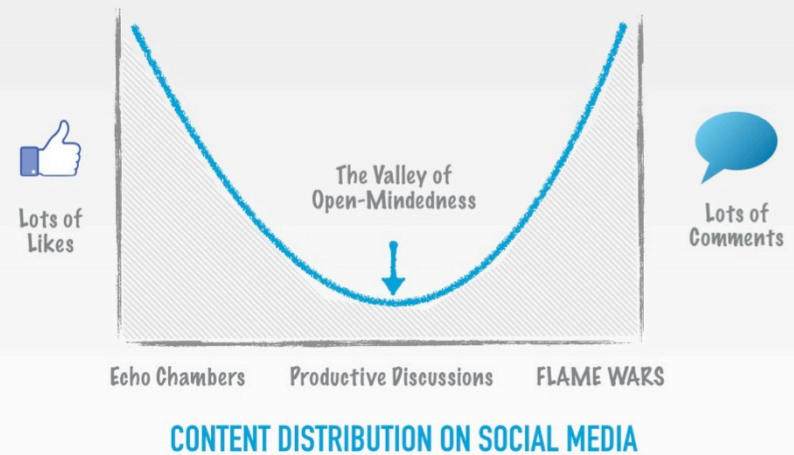
Recommendations: **combat mobocratic algorithms**

- Algorithms should embed credibility features to up-rank content that is vetted as truthful or constructive.
- Google PageRank algorithm already does this: takes credibility of a web page into account when deciding whether to feature it as a top search result.

BUT: more difficult to do on Facebook, where the crowd is influenced by peers.

- Facebook should radically step up transparency: disclose info on how content travels, label bots and fake accounts.
- End goal: Create algorithms that get people engaged in conversations, have civil debate.

MOBOCRATIC ALGORITHMS: OPTIMIZING FOR ENGAGEMENT



Attribution: Caitlin M. - Boston College

“People will be as shallow as platforms allow them to be.”

— Wael Ghonim
Interview, 2016

Democracy to Mobocracy (via Moscow)



Example: **Twitter account** of “David Jones,” a self-described “passionate Brexit supporter” with 100,000 followers, operated by someone paid by the **Russian government** to conduct a **disinformation campaign**.

- “Why would somebody living somewhere in the Solent [be] getting up before 5am in the morning and spending 12 hours tweeting far-right and Kremlin talking points seven days a week? ... What kind of human being does that?”
— Ben Nimmo, Atlantic Council fellow, Digital Forensic Research Lab
- “Russia has a long history of propaganda and trying to influence various nations' cultures and elections and so forth. ... But they seem to have stepped up their game and they are using cyber and they are using sophisticated methods now that they didn't have before.”

— Dan Coats, Director of National Intelligence, June 2017

Russia and French May 2017 elections

- Following the release of 9 gigabits worth of stolen campaign documents, French authorities threatened media outlets with criminal penalties for republishing the material.
- Authorities were also concerned that the presumably Russian hackers had altered some documents in order to spread disinformation.
- The media held off reporting on the story, and it had no discernible effect on the May 2017 elections.

[News](#) › [World](#) › [Europe](#)

Emmanuel Macron hacked emails: French media ordered by electoral commission not to publish content of messages

Journalists could face criminal charges for violating laws preventing influence on vote

Lizzie Dearden | [@lizziedearden](#) | Saturday 6 May 2017 08:38 BST | [645](#) comments

Why is this important?

- Information important for well functioning of society/economy
 - Asymmetric information can lead to exploitation, corruption
 - Transparency is name in political life to “good information”/absence of information asymmetries
- Possibilities of exploiting asymmetric information leads to incentives to create asymmetric information
 - Taking actions which would impede transmission of information and create poorer information
- New issue: providing disinformation and malinformation
 - And destroying institutions for assessing truth and context

Broader perspective

- Enlightenment basis of advances in our society
 - Notion of progress
 - Notion of reason/rational
 - Scientific method—trust with verification
 - Science can't survive if there isn't a common understanding of the truth
 - But neither can democracy/notions of “due process”
- Main dangers of Trump and similar demagogues elsewhere
 - “epistemology”: what they are doing to undermine our institutions, including our institutions of science and ascertaining the truth

2. But did it make a difference?



We send the EU **£350 million** a week
let's fund our **NHS** instead  Vote Leave

Let's take back control

The “Brexit Bus” used by the Leave campaign grossly exaggerated the cost of EU membership for Britain while ignoring the benefits it was receiving in return.

New age of uncertainty

- Challenge: Mis/disinformation makes it **all the more difficult** to establish **what truth is**.
- Proliferation of fake news and alternative truths often creates information overload that complicates one's search for a personal and social platform.
- A new, more **fragile relationship** between **truth** and **politics**.
- A new age of “**epistemic insecurity**”: To act on a fact, how much confidence do we need to have that this fact is correct? What scale to use?

Fake news is **real**, but does it **really matter**? Some say no.

- Fake news itself is not new.
 - **Great Moon Hoax** (1835): *New York Sun* and others claim that a new powerful telescope picked up a Bosch-like scene on Moon surface.

Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow, 2017 (economists, NYU and Stanford)

- Argument: Fake news had no bearing on the 2016 election. Social media was important but not dominant.
 - “For fake news to have changed the outcome of the election, a single fake article would need to have had the **same persuasive effect as 36 television campaign ads.**”
- Examine how many falsehoods people saw on social media, remembered and shared in a controlled experiment.
- BUT: Assumptions behind the study are not too scientific. 36 to one? “Placebo” headlines? Attribution?

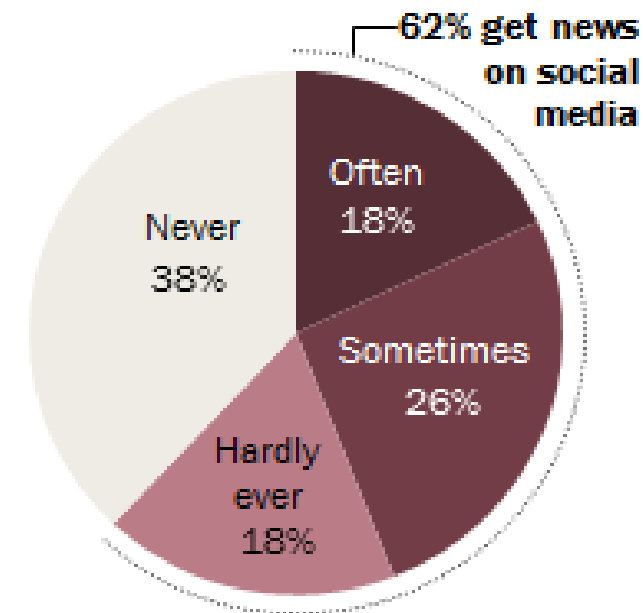


The Great Moon Hoax, as reported by the *New York Sun*, 1835

- **TV remains a far more important news source for Americans.**
 - 62% US adults get news from social media. But only 18% of this group report that they get news from social media “often,” 26% say “sometimes,” and 18% “hardly ever.”
 - By comparison, the shares who “often” get news from local television, national broadcast television, and cable television are 46 percent, 30 percent, and 31 percent respectively.
 - Social media have become an important but not dominant source of political news and information.
- **BUT: Social media is quickly catching up to television as a news source (Millennials!) so this advantage, too, might soon fade.**
- A different study (Martin & Yurukoglu, American Economic Review, Sept 2017) shows **causality of Fox News and Republican voting.**

About 6-in-10 Americans get news from social media

% of U.S. adults who get news on a social networking site ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.

"News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sensationalism + opinion-laced analysis: a formula popular long before clicktivism.

- In the early 1990s, **Carole Kneeland** (news director, Austin KVUE-TV), tried putting a stop to sensationalist coverage.
- Carole's checklist for any crime stories that go on the air:
 1. Do viewers need to take action?
 2. Is there an immediate threat to public safety?
 3. Is there a threat to children?
 4. Is there a crime-prevention aspect to the story?
 5. Will the crime have a significant impact in the community?
- KVUE-TV was briefly #1 in the ratings, but the trend did not take across the industry.



Carole Kneeland, 1948-1998



Fox News, August 2017

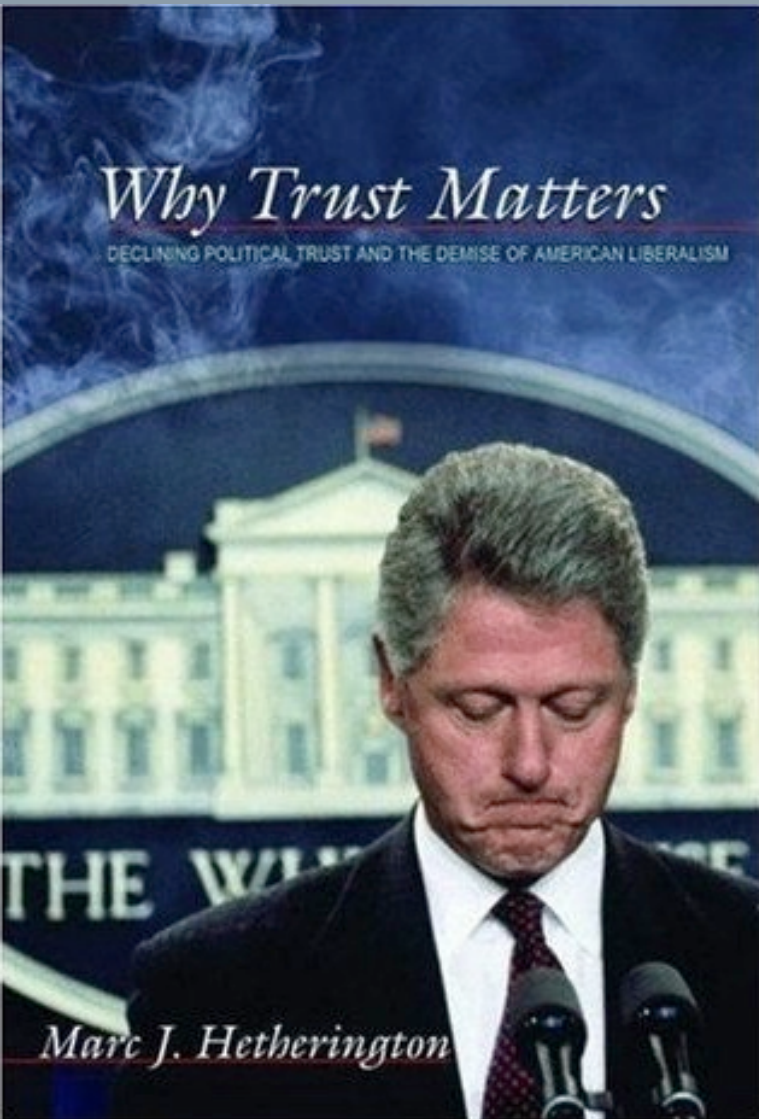
Jonathan Ladd, 2011

(political scientist, Georgetown University)

- Days when US media was trusted (Walter Cronkite era) were a **historical anomaly**.
- Then: **party polarization** in the 1950s–70s, proliferation of **partisan media outlets**, new competition for audiences.
- **Partisanship fuels confirmation bias**: people trust the news they already consume.
- They then **become more partisan** and **vote accordingly**.
- Economic competition fuels **move to soft news** because that is what people want, but consuming these soft news makes them trust the media less.
- **Declining trust in media** is both a **consequence** of polarization and a **contributing factor**.

Why Americans **Hate** the Media *and How It Matters*





Marc Hetherington, 2004

(political scientist, Vanderbilt University)

- **Public opinion has not grown more conservative, but the government has.**
- Research question: Why has support for redistribution fallen since Nixon? Looks at why, uses **survey data**.
- Argument: Public support for **progressive social programs** is weakened by the public's **falling trust** in federal government.
- When people trust the government, they have confidence in gov't ability to administer programs. When they don't, they only trust programs that go to everyone.
 - Case in point: **Social security**—but **not welfare**.
 - Clinton healthcare defeat was due to lack of trust.
- Opposition to redistributive spending is higher among people who would have to pay for the programs—not those who would benefit from them.
- Political leaders get scared of supporting programs, as people attack “big government.”

3. Solutions, problems, hopes

<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Massa: "Hoy las empresas de información valen 20 y hasta 30 veces más que las empresas que..."</p> <p>FALSO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Mauricio Macri: "Ha avanzado el delito en esta década como nunca antes, igual que..."</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Massa: "La Argentina, comparada con el resto de los países de la región, tiene su edad de imputa..."</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Macri: "Hoy crecen seis cocinas de paco por día"...</p> <p>INSOSTENIBLE</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Stolbizer: "100 de las 650 toneladas de cocaína producidas en el mundo salen por Argentina"...</p> <p>INSOSTENIBLE</p>
<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Macri: "El gobierno de la ciudad de Buenos Aires construyó en los últimos 15 años"...</p> <p>VERDADERO, PERO...</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Del Caño: "El Código Penal que el gobierno establece perpetua para narcotraficantes, perpetua para viol..."</p> <p>FALSO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Stolbizer: "El Fondo de \$500 mil millones [...] cuyo resultado anual garantiza el..."</p> <p>ENGAÑOSO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Rodríguez Saá: "El problema más grande que tiene la educación en el país es su falta de calidad..."</p> <p>VERDADERO, PERO...</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Del Caño: "3 millones de familias se encuentran en emergencia habitacional"...</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>
<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Macri: "Nuestro gobierno ha sido el único en Argentina en implementar las formas de gobierno abie..."</p> <p>EXAGERADO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Del Caño: "En el 2% de las escuelas públicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires hay jornada extendi..."</p> <p>EXAGERADO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Stolbizer: "Hay 111 policías procesados por narcotráfico en los últimos 30 meses"...</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Del Caño: "El salario promedio real cayó desde el año '74 a la fecha un 40%"...</p> <p>ENGAÑOSO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Rodríguez Saá: "Hay doce millones de pobres en la Argentina"...</p> <p>DISCUTIBLE</p>
<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Stolbizer: "En el año 2001 la mitad de los hogares no tenían cloaca. Después de diez años de c..."</p> <p>EXAGERADO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Del Caño a Massa: "Él se ausentó de casi el 90% de las votaciones este año en la Cámara de Di..."</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Margarita Stolbizer: "Hay 40% de precariedad laboral"...</p> <p>VERDADERO</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Rodríguez Saá: "El 48% [de la coparticipación] era para la Nación y el 52% para las provincias..."</p> <p>VERDADERO, PERO...</p>	<p>Chequeos</p> <p>Macri: "El país hace cuatro años que no crece"...</p> <p>VERDADERO, PERO...</p>

What to do about it?

Understand **motivations** and **mechanisms** by which effects are felt

- Herding/social media
- Exploiting consumer irrationalities (behavioral economics)
- Undermining trust in institutions
- Undermining truth (shed doubt)

Key challenge: doing this while preserving human rights

Incentives for disinformation

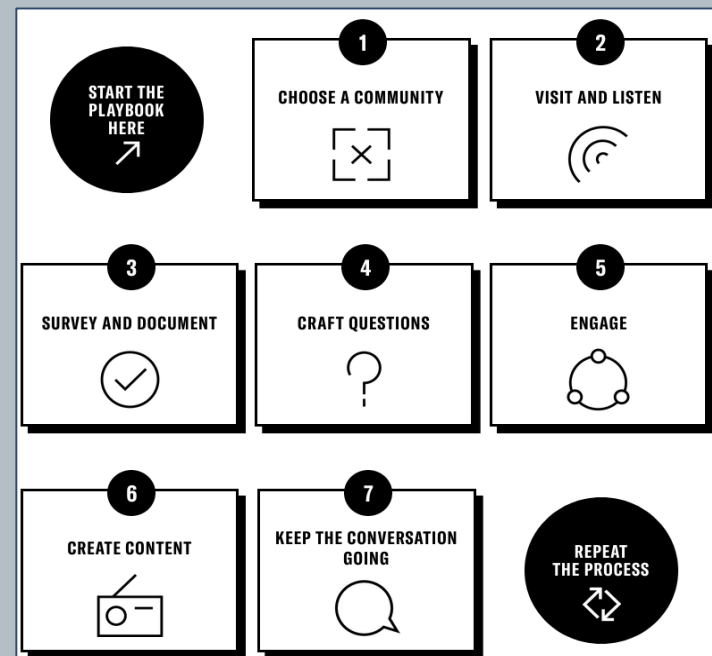
- Corporations attempting to sell more (but not always fraud)
- Electoral politics
- Especially strong incentives when there can be corruption
- International politics

Media innovators everywhere are testing ways to combat fake news.

In the **United States**:

Listening Post Collective, launched in 2013

- Seeks to foster **new level of connection** between **newsrooms** and the **local publics** they serve.
- Defines **reader engagement** in more than page views.
- Aims for news **more responsive** and **relevant** to community priorities and needs.
- Founder Jesse Hardman takes strategies he used as a media trainer abroad, applies them to the US.
- Started in New Orleans to cover post-Katrina development. Has since worked in New Jersey, Baltimore, Omaha, Georgia and Minneapolis.



Below: The Listening Post's playbook for anyone starting their own project

United States, cont'd:

The News Literacy Project, launched in 2013

- Focuses on the demand side for quality news by teaching news literacy to school students.
- Offers classroom programs in NYC, Chicago and Washington DC
- Founder Alan Miller, former Washington Post investigative reporter, got the idea from addressing a group of enthusiastic school children on the importance of journalism.



FOUR out of FIVE



Students who completed NLP's core unit said they:

Learned to **navigate** sources of information on the internet in a more **skeptical** manner.

Learned how to gather, create and use **credible** information.



Learned how to **seek out** news that will make them more **knowledgeable** about their communities.

In the UK:

Bristol Cable, launched in 2014

- Citizens' media co-operative: one potential solution to revenue shortage in media.
 - 1,850 members and counting, each paying membership fees.
 - Each owns a democratic stake in the company, shapes what gets covered.
- Reports **local news only**, focuses on the narrow niche of Bristol and its communities, many of them **marginalized** by mainstream media.
- Focus on **slow news**, important local matters that affect daily lives; strong investigative angle.
- Leads **campaigns to implement solutions** to problems its reporting uncovers.
- **Con:** Does not scale.

The screenshot shows the Bristol Cable website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Bristol Cable logo, social media icons for Twitter and Facebook, a subscription link "Join the Cable - Own your media. £1 per month.", and links for "Sections", "The Cable", and "Login".

The main content area features several article cards:

- Top Article:** "A never-ending journey" with a sub-headline "What can history teach us about how we got here and where we go next? The Journey to Justice project aims to find out by..."
- Second Article:** "Brits most 'stopped and checked' for immigration crimes they can't commit" with a sub-headline "Data suggests racial profiling in 11 major UK crises".
- Third Row of Articles:**
 - "Beautiful, ordinary people": Capturing Brexit on film" by Lorna Stephenson. Sub-headline: "Ahead of Bristol Radical Film Festival, the Cable spoke to director Timothy George Kelly about his 'state of the nation' documentary, Brexitbarria."
 - "Opinion: Creative solutions for the city's van dwellers could be a win-win for everyone" by Isabel Burner. Sub-headline: "A van dweller argues that community and council engagement could find solutions that suit Bristol's diversity and tolerance."
 - "Celebrating Bristol's change makers" by The Bristol Cable. Sub-headline: "Edition 13: We're looking at the city's change makers, past and present. In its own way, the Cable is changing the rules - creating media owned and led by those it serves."
- Bottom Row of Articles:**
 - "Analysis: Bristol's next move should look to Barcelona" with a sub-headline "Urban And Action".
 - "Putting an end to the drug war and 'the reign of terror'" with a sub-headline "Features Urban And Action".
 - "One hundred years on, Bristol remembers those who refused to kill" with a sub-headline "People's History Features".

In Argentina:

Chequeado, launched in 2010

- Fact-checking organization with a growing international fan base
- Aims to be a **nonpartisan moderator** of public debate.
- Does painstaking verification of statements **across the political spectrum**.
- Conducts **live fact-checking events** that encourage and address readers' queries.
- Staunchly defends its **political neutrality**, does not solicit or accept government funds.
- BUT: Relies on foundation grants to operate.



The image shows a screenshot of the website 'chequeado', which is dedicated to fact-checking public discourse. The logo at the top left features a red and black triangle next to the word 'chequeado'. To the right of the logo is the tagline 'LA VERIFICACIÓN DEL DISCURSO PÚBLICO'. Below the logo is a navigation bar with several categories: 'CHEQUEOS', 'EL EXPLICADOR', 'MITOS', and '#FALSOENLASRED'. A red banner below the navigation bar indicates 'EN DEBATE HOY' with names 'CRISTINA FERNÁNDEZ DE KIRCHNER' and 'DANIEL FILMUS'. Below this, another red banner lists 'ELISA CARRIÓ' and 'MARÍA EUGENIA VIDAL'. The main content area features a large photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey shawl, smiling and holding a smartphone. She is surrounded by a large crowd of people, many of whom are waving Argentine flags. A red banner at the bottom of the photo reads 'DISCUTIBLE'. Below the photo is a headline in bold black text: 'CFK: "Después de casi dos años de gobierno la inflación es más alta que en 2015"'. Underneath the headline is a sub-headline: 'La inflación actual es mayor o menor a la del último año de gestión de la ex presidenta según qué fuente se utilice. Por Matías Di Santi y Martín Slipczuk (16 de Octubre de 2017)'. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is another photograph showing a woman in a white shawl speaking into a microphone, surrounded by police officers in dark uniforms.

Examples of actions

Supply and demand measures

- Delay: hinders herding, time for verification
- Disclosure of purchases of who has purchased ads (providing insights into incentives)
- Create verification institution—and attach verifications to messages
- Restrictions of hate speech
- Other restrictions
 - Restrictions on targeting—knowledge has to be put into public space

Menu of potential solutions: Supply side

- Make it **less profitable** to produce and disseminate patently false information.
- Tweak **social media algorithms** so individuals don't get as much extreme news in their feeds.
- Use **human editors** to curate social media newsfeeds.
- Return to **fact-based reporting**. (The conservative *Weekly Standard* announced its return to this method.)
- **Browser extensions** that can flag false information or suppress it.
- Government-issued **takedown notices** (already used in many countries).
- **Regulation**, including requiring more algorithmic transparency (under discussion in many countries but debatable).

Menu of potential solutions: Demand side

- **Label fake news.** (BUT: What labels to use? How to establish the credibility of labelers?)
- **Hire fact-checkers** to label mis- and disinformation to encourage readers will reject it.
- Encourage the use of **browser software** that would **insulate** Internet users from mis- and disinformation. (BUT: Is there good software that can discriminate it from other news? If it were possible to do it, it would mean that we had found an easy answer to the question of what mis- and disinformation really is.)
- Newspapers can offer “**burst your bubble**” options, where readers can see articles they might not normally read because they are written from a different political perspective.
- Adapt techniques from campaigns to counter violent extremism, such as **deploying “good” bots** to counteract trolling and junk content spread by “bad” bots. (Beware of questionable techniques though.)
- Bolster **media literacy efforts**. This has been tried for decades and the academic literature on the effectiveness is fragmented and inconclusive.

Legislature

Germany's approach



- Oct. 2017: New law against hate speech
- Provisions: Hate speech gets flagged. Social media sites must remove it within 24 hrs or pay fines up to €50 million.
 - Hate speech means Nazi symbols, Holocaust denial
 - Sites affected: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, others
- BUT: Restrictions upset human rights groups, quickly produce backlash.
- Concerns about “over blocking” and “over censoring” free speech.
- Approach not feasible in the US?

“ With this law, we put an end to the verbal law of the jungle on the internet. ”

—Justice Minister Heiko Maas

Facebook and the US legislative debate



Unlike Europe, the US can't regulate hate speech; must rely on social media corporations to do the right thing.

- Facebook has **audience data crucial for research into fake news** but refuses to disclose it: How people get micro-targeted and exposed to information, whether they chose to share, etc.
- It also provides **no public record** of the political advertisements it serves to users.
- It has launched new programs and partnerships to **flag** and **down-rank fake news** on its algorithm. But it needs to do more.

Ongoing bipartisan congressional effort to pass "**Honest Ads Act**" that would regulate advertising on Facebook and other social media (a response to allegations of Russian interference).

Yochai Benkler's recommendation:

- "The problem is potentially sufficiently serious that we should spend a lot of money quickly to figure out what is happening so we know what measures to take."
- "At a minimum, we should support transparency in political advertising. That should include anyone paid to comment online or spread political information (even if it's marketing companies or 50-cent bloggers and their ilk)."

Social media feeds off and deepens **confirmation bias**.

Gordon Pennycook, Tyrone Cannon, David Rand
(psychologists, Yale University)

- Fake news headlines that are familiar are perceived as substantially more accurate.
- This is true even when people are shown headlines that are implausible or that contradict their own beliefs.
- Warning labels about the news headlines being incorrect have no effect on perceptions of credibility.



Trump is getting support from every leader, and that's the support that will make him grow great and strong. These elections will bring an immense change in our country.



BREAKING: Pope Francis Just Backed Trump, Released Incredible Statement Why- SPREAD THIS EVERYWHERE

WWW.DAILYPRESSER.COM | BY THE AMERICAN PATRIOT

Like

Comment

Share

Embed

125

Top Comments

Image: A false news story from October 2016

Analysis: Pennycook, Cannon and Rand, "Prior Exposure Increases Perceived Accuracy of Fake News," July 2017

Rebuilding **trust in media** will take **reexamining many old assumptions**.

Example: **Factual corrections** and the risks of excessive accuracy.

Michael Karlsson, Christer Clerwall, Lars Nord

(media researchers, Karlstad and Mid Sweden universities)

- “It is only those who already trust the media who appreciate corrections.” Some readers actually distrust media outlets that point out their errors.
- It might be better to withdraw flawed articles than to call attention to mistakes.
- Professional codes of conduct might not help improve trust in media, in part because journalists and citizens have different ideas as to what constitutes proper conduct.



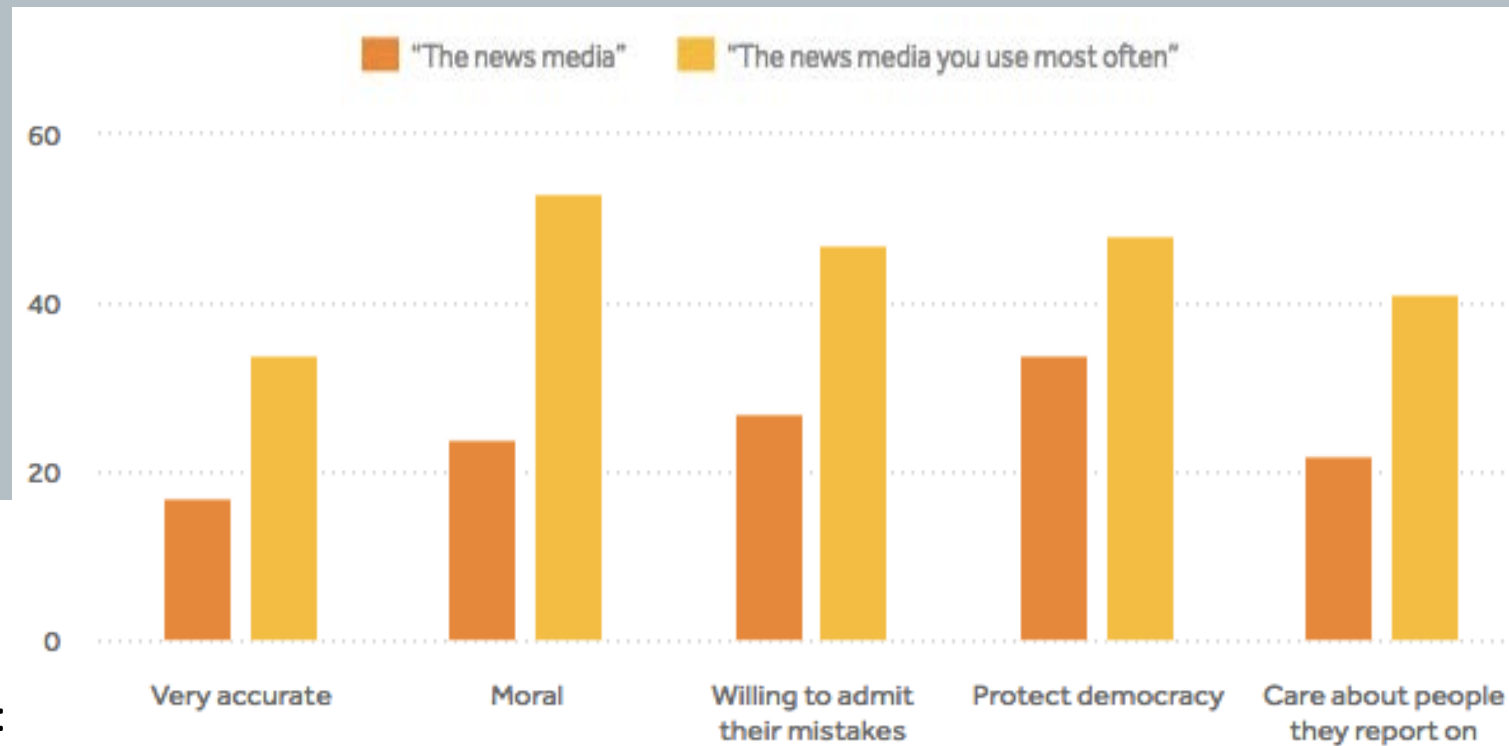
MUSIC | Your Guide to the Met Opera's 'Exterminating Angel'

Correction: October 21, 2017

An article on Page 8 about the Metropolitan Opera's production of Thomas Adès's "The Exterminating Angel" misstates the highest note written for Audrey Luna's character in the opera "The Exterminating Angel." It is an A, not an F, above high C.

Another question: Can trust in media be generalized?

- Trust in news media depends on **which news media** you mean.
- Distinction between **diffuse** trust (individuals trust the system) and **specific** trust (individuals trust specific members of that system).
- Just because you trust **your favorite outlet** does not mean you **trust other outlets**.



Statements about
2 types of media,
by % of responders:

Briony Swire, Adam Berinsky, Stephan Lewandowsky, Ullrich Ecker

(psychology and political science, MIT, University of Western Austria, University of Bristol)

- Compare Trump voters to others in the American electorate.
- Finding: the perceived credibility of the individual promoting misinformation mattered more to voters than the credibility of those correcting it.
- “People use political figures as a heuristic to guide evaluation of what is true or false, yet do not necessarily insist on veracity as a prerequisite for supporting political candidates.”

4. Where are we going?





Several overlapping issues at play:

- Corrosion of trust in traditional institutions, incl. mainstream media
- The rise of social media and misinformation shared on social media
 - Including the use of social media misinformation as a weapon between states.
- While still unclear if fake news itself decided the 2016 election, it sits at the nexus of all these issues.
- Restoring trust in traditional media and in the day-to-day functioning of government may go a long way toward ameliorating these issues, but such trust must be earned, and we are a long way from that.
- Debate as to whether trust even relates to professional practices of the media, or more to the innate experiences and biases of the reader/viewer.