DETECTING DISINFORMATION

يَلّا ضمني إلى التعداد
yalla COUNT ME IN!

Ever since the 2016 election, the idea of "fake news" or **false news** (also known as disinformation or misinformation) has been making headlines. But what is false news? And how can you spot it?

It can be difficult to detect disinformation, even though the **facts** of the situation are known. In the age of social media, there is a huge amount of information out there, and it can be hard to sort through it all. However, here are some generalizations about what disinformation looks like and some tools to let you dig deeper into disinformation online.

WHAT IS DISINFORMATION?

Disinformation is false information spread with the intent to **deceive or harm**. It may be created as propaganda, as part of a scam, or simply to cause chaos.

Misinformation is false information spread with **good intentions**, but that refers to **inaccurate sources**. It may be created by people who saw and believed disinformation.

AT A GLANCE

bias: reporting that presents opinion as fact or is heavily skewed towards one ideology.

highly emotional language: this may take the form of misleading headlines, personal attacks on people the author disagrees with, or exaggerated reactions of anger or disgust.

unprofessionalism: news articles that hide who wrote and edited their articles, do not give sources for their claims, or that do not issue corrections fail to uphold professionalism.

poor fact-checking: articles with poor fact-checking may use only one source or fail to check if their sources are accurate.

deceptive presentation: fake news outlets may copy the appearance of mainstream news websites and use similar titles or URLs.

embellishment: fake news frequently exaggerate stories, taking a single true event and fabricating additional information to make it seem much better or worse than it really was.

IN MORE DEPTH

EDITED IMAGES

Many disinformation articles edit images or video to make it appear they are backed up by facts, or else reuse real images out of context. These can be hard to spot, but there are tools to help!

- **FotoForensics** analyzes images for invisible traces of editing software.
- **SurfSafe** is a browser extension for Chrome that helps identify original sources for photos.
- **InVID** is a browser plugin that can find edited video frames and original sources.

BOTS & FAKE ACCOUNTS

Disinformation on social media is often spread by **bots**, or computer programs that automate social media posts. Bots may pretend to be human, but have non-human behavior that can be detected.

- **Botcheck.me** is a browser plugin that adds a button to every Twitter user's profile that rates how confident it is that the user is a bot.
- **Botometer** takes in the name of a Twitter account and returns how likely it is to be a bot, based on the account's activity levels.