

# What is Fake News in the Digital Age?

Daniela Stockmann

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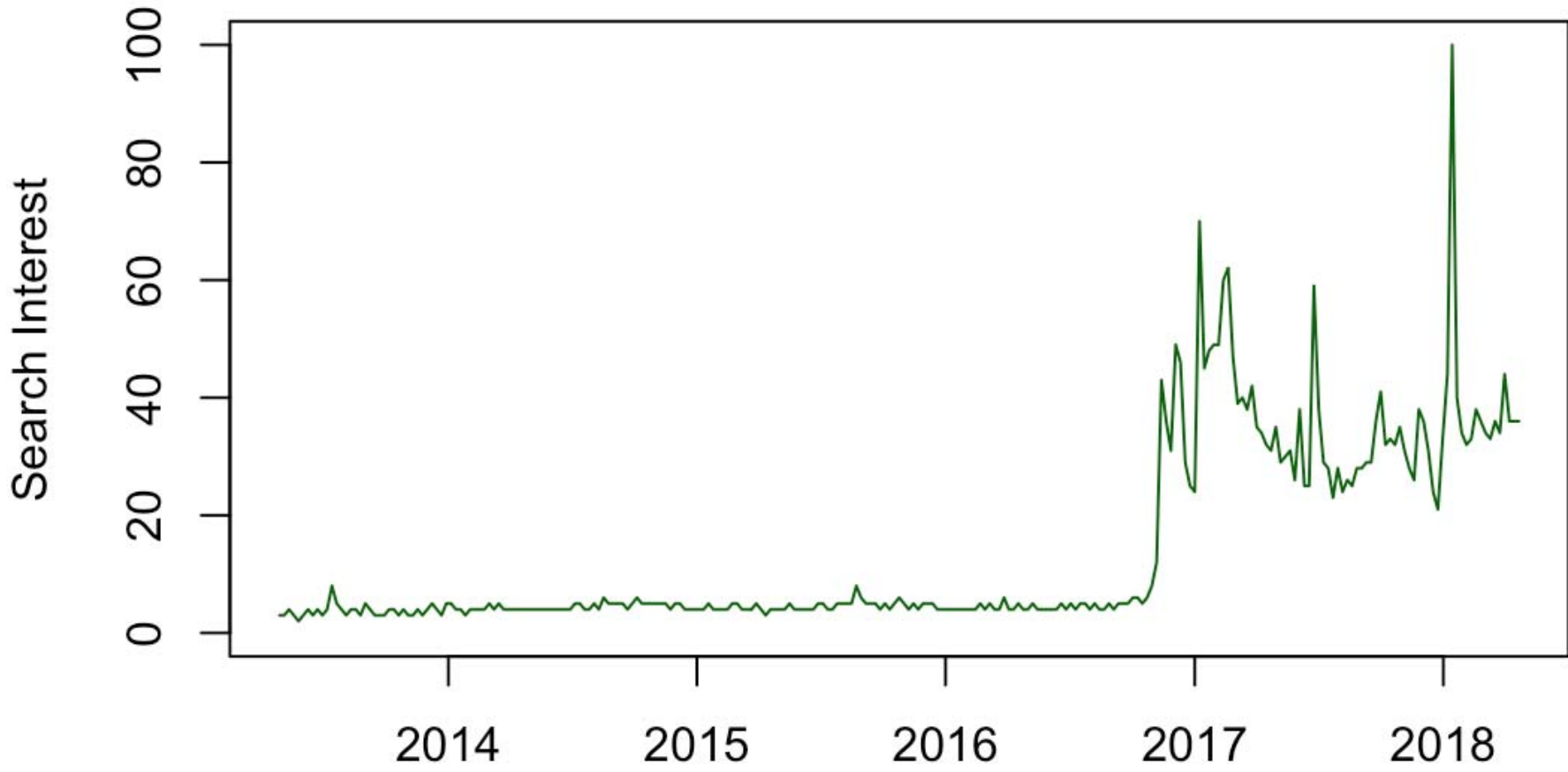
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Google Trends Analysis: 'Fake News'



# Ways in which Information is Misrepresented in the Digital Realm

1. Satire
2. False connection
3. Misleading content
4. False context
5. Imposter content
6. Manipulated content
7. Fabricated content



# Satire

NEWS IN BRIEF

## Gallup Poll: Rural Whites Prefer Ahmadinejad To Obama

9/24/12 4:25pm • SEE MORE: POLITICS ▾



CHARLESTON, WV—According to the results of a Gallup poll released Monday, the overwhelming majority of rural white Americans said they would rather vote for Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad than U.S. president [Barack Obama](#). “I like him better,” said West Virginia resident Dale Swiderski, who, along with 77 percent of rural Caucasian voters, confirmed he would much rather go to a baseball game or have a beer with Ahmadinejad, a man who has repeatedly denied the Holocaust and has had numerous political prisoners executed, than spend time with Obama. “He takes national defense seriously, and he’d never let some [gay](#) protesters tell him how to run his country like Obama does.” According to the same Gallup poll, 60 percent of rural whites said they at least respected that Ahmadinejad doesn’t try to hide the fact that he’s Muslim.

# False Connection

## CNN To Permanently Close Its Doors As Ratings Plunge 30 Percent

© May 18, 2018   👤 Sean Adl-Tabatabai   📁 News, US   💬 14   [YourNewsWire.com](http://YourNewsWire.com)  
News. Truth. Unfiltered.

While Fox News **increased** its total viewers by a healthy 6 percent and MSNBC held steady, CNN's viewership took a nosedive, signalling that the failing news network may be about to come to an abrupt end.

**Last week**, during the all-important primetime hours, CNN was only able to average 844K total viewers. During this same week **last year**, CNN averaged 1.191 million. That is a -29 percent collapse.

CNN's average total day viewers disintegrated by -25 percent, 841K compared to 635K.

In other words, throughout the day last week, CNN could only attract an average of 635,000 total viewers.

DS2  
DS8  
KH6  
KH7

# Misleading Content

News > UK

## Gingers face extinction due to climate change, scientists warn

Gene is thought to be a response to cloudy weather

Christopher Hooton | @christophhooton | Monday 7 July 2014 15:55 BST |  0 comments

The red hair gene could be on the way out as it is thought to be a response to cloudy weather in Scotland, something which the country could see less and less of.

A gene mutation that yields red hair and pale skin which is more sensitive to light leaves DNA in skin cells more prone to sun damage and cancer, and if predictions of rising temperatures are correct evolution might cause it to regress.



## 投影片 6

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- DS2 Keri, could you please explain what exactly is misrepresented and what should be the correct information? I did not quite understand the difference between this example and false connection. please explain in the notes.  
Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1
- DS8 is the main difference that facts are correct, but connected incorrectly?  
Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1
- KH6 My understanding is that the misinformation is more pervasive in "misleading content" rather than being confined to just one aspect, as in "false connection." So the difference is in degree, not in kind.  
Keri Hartman, 2018/6/5
- KH7 Regarding this specific example, here's an explanation of why it's false: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/10/redheads-die-out-extinction-ginger-gene-bad-science-red-hair>  
Keri Hartman, 2018/6/5

# Misinformation

- Misinformation is false information that was not intended to deceive its audience (Illing, 2017).
- Misinformation often occurs when journalists do not check if the information they receive from a source is correct.

# Disinformation

- Disinformation campaigns can be 99 percent true
- A disinformation campaign is the clever combination of what people want to be true and what can be demonstrated as false but will not be noticed if cleverly presented (Goble, 2014).
- Fake news can be part of a disinformation campaign

# False Context



## 投影片 9

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DS3      what is the difference between false context and false connection?  
Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1

KH4      I would say the difference in intention is what separates the two. Stylistically they are similar but one is a form of misinformation and the other a form of disinformation.  
Keri Hartman, 2018/6/5

KH5      I have changed the example to one I hope is a bit more clear.  
Keri Hartman, 2018/6/5



# Imposter Content

abcnews.com.co/obama-executive-order-bans-pledge-of-allegiance-in-schools/

BLOG FORUMS CONTACT



**abc** NEWS

NEWS FASHION ▼ TECH ▼ VIDEO ▼ WORLD ▼

Home > News > Obama Signs Executive Order Banning The Pledge Of Allegiance In Schools Nationwide


NEWS

## Obama Signs Executive Order Banning The Pledge Of Allegiance In Schools Nationwide

By *Jimmy Rustling, ABC News* - December 11, 2016 👁 202261 💬 719

abcnews.com.co/donald-trump-protester-speaks-out-i-was-paid-to-protest/

BLOG FORUMS CONTACT



NEWS FASHION ▼ TECH ▼ VIDEO ▼ WORLD ▼

Home > News > Donald Trump Protester Speaks Out: "I Was Paid \$3,500 To Protest Trump's..."

NEWS

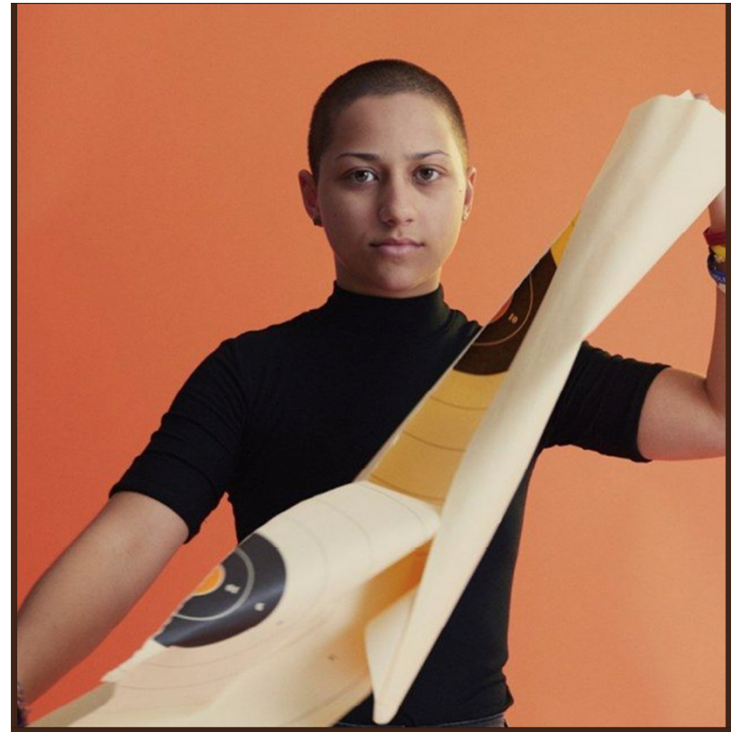
## Donald Trump Protester Speaks Out: "I Was Paid \$3,500 To Protest Trump's Rally"

By *Jimmy Rustling, ABC News* - November 11, 2016 👁 72189 💬 249

# Manipulated Content



Original image:

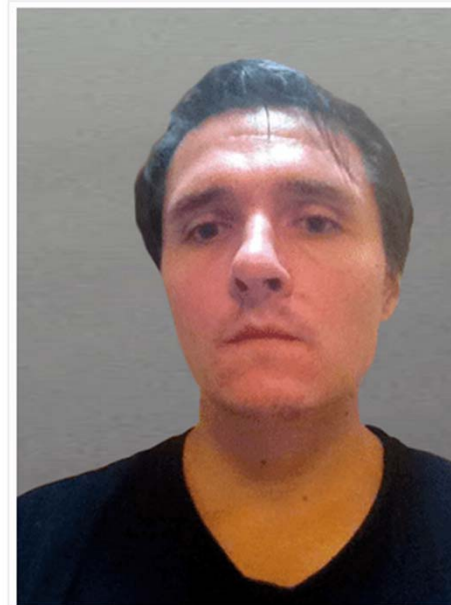


# Fabricated Content



## Graffiti Artist Banksy Arrested In London; Identity Revealed

Posted about 6 hours ago | 47 comments



A mugshot taken by London Police today of Paul Horner AKA Banksy. (AP Photo/Dennis System, File) / AP

London, England — The elusive graffiti artist, political activist, film director, painter and long time fugitive that for years has gone by the pseudonymous name of **Banksy**, was arrested early this morning by London's Metropolitan Police. After hours of questioning and a raid of his London art studio, his true name and identity have finally been revealed.

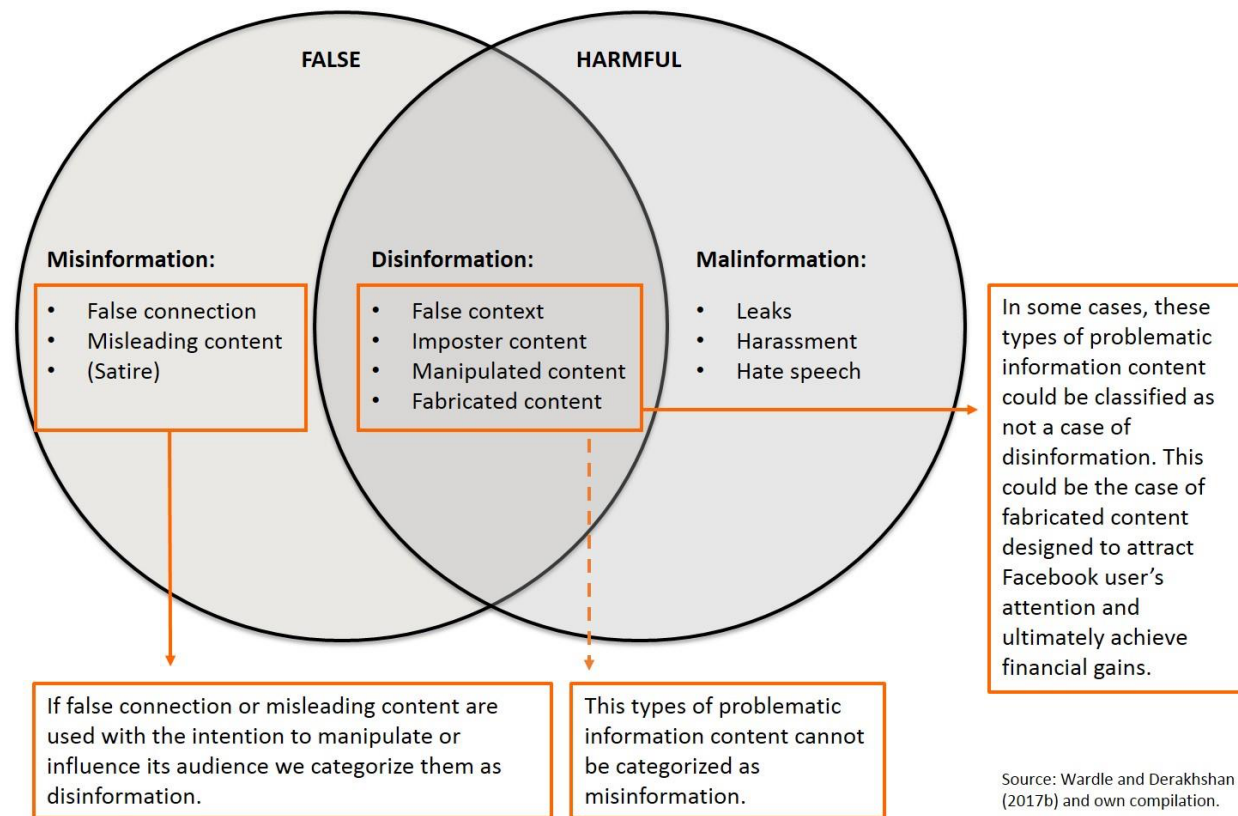
The City of London Police say Banksy's real name is Paul Horner, a 35-year old male born in Liverpool, England. The BBC has confirmed this information with Banksy's PR agent Jo Brooks along with Pest Control, a website that acts as a handling service on behalf of the artist.

London Police Chief Lyndon Edwards held a press conference to answer questions about Banksy and how Horner was finally apprehended after all these years on the run.

"We had a 24-hour Anti-Graffiti Task Force monitoring different groups where Banksy was known to frequent. We received word that around 2am a group of individuals left a flat speculated to be one of Banksy's art studios. This group was followed by agents and once vandalism had occurred, we then arrested the group, 5 men total. These individuals all had ID on them except for one, and that is

the one we believed to be Banksy," Edwards said. "We then raided the studio where this group was last seen leaving from. Inside we found thousands of dollars of counterfeit money along with future projects of vandalism. We also found

# Ways in which Information is Misrepresented in the Digital Realm



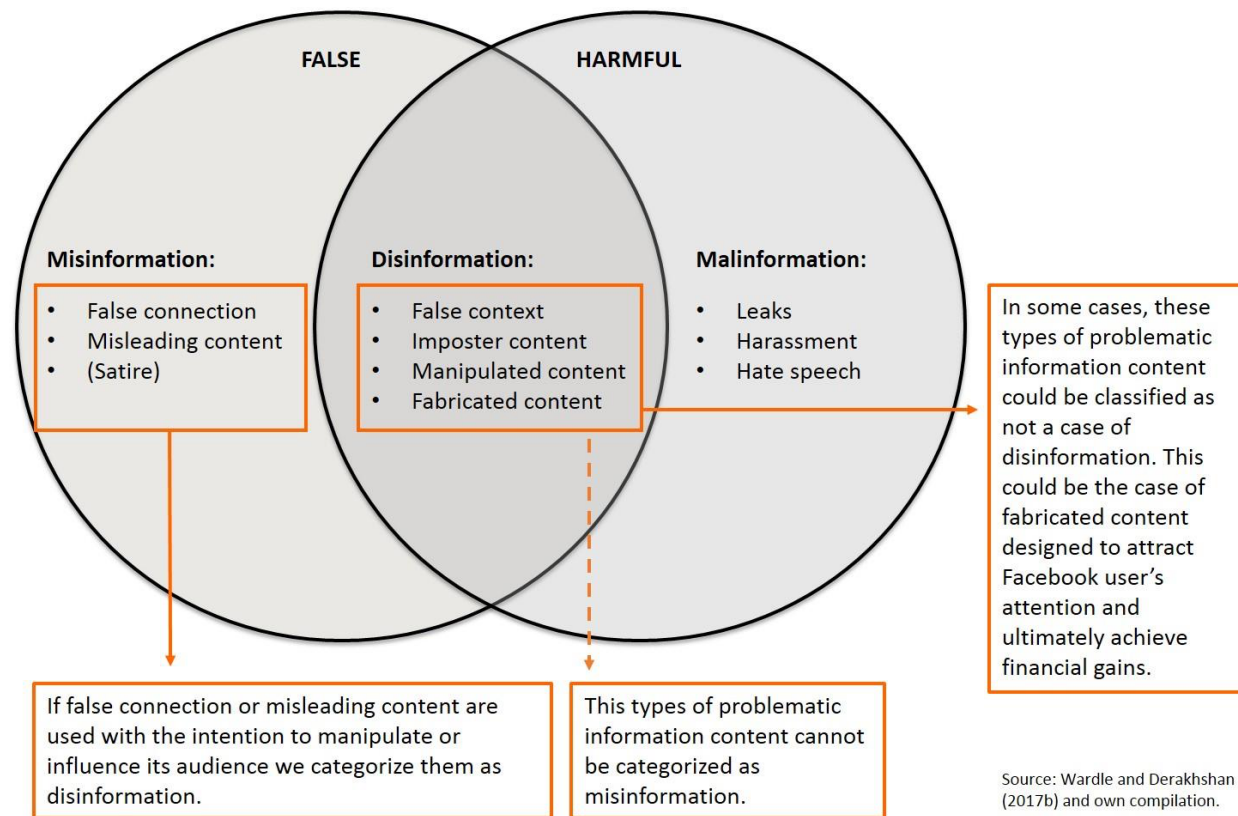
# Malinformation

- A type of information disorder that is based on facts and is used to cause harm to a person, institution, or nation (Wardle & Derakshan, 2017)





# Ways in which Information is Misrepresented in the Digital Realm



So what is digital about fake news?

# Changing Circumstances

## *Declining Gatekeeping Role of Traditional Media Outlets*

- Increase in sources of information
- Ability to link individuals with common interests across geographic distances

## *Diverse Actors*


- Bots
- Astroturfers / trolls
- Journalists



# Financial Motivations

## ALL NEWS ABOUT POLITICS


ELECTIONS 2016   POLITICS   USA NEWS



### BREAKING: PROOF SURFACES THAT OBAMA WAS BORN IN KENYA – TRUMP WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG...

October 31, 2016   admin   0

PROOF SURFACES THAT OBAMA WAS BORN IN KENYA – TRUMP WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG... Kenya has been the main reason why Obama has been dealing [...]




### Bill Clinton's S\*x Tape Just Leaked (VIDEO)

October 28, 2016   admin   0

While the mainstream media continues to target Donald Trump for s\*xual assault allegations, despite the fact that there is no evidence to support them, it [...]

## Pope Francis Forbids Catholics From Voting For Hillary!


By admin   Posted in SATIRE   Posted on October 28, 2016



Cardinal Ratzinger, who became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005 and served through 2013, wrote a blistering letter in 2004 forbidding Catholics from voting for pro-abortion Hillary Clinton or anyone who espouses her ideas. The letter reads: The Church teaches that abortion or euthanasia is a grave sin. The Encyclical Letter Evangelium vitae, with reference to ...

## Robert De Niro Switches To Trump Shocks Hollywood

By admin   Posted in SATIRE   Posted on October 28, 2016



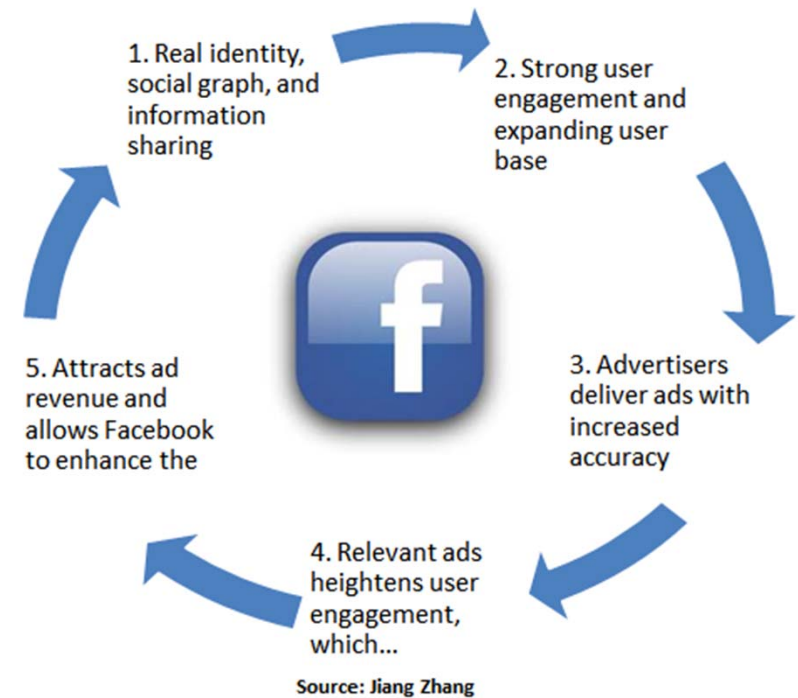
Many Hollywood celebrities have openly spoken about their faith in Donald Trump, but one comes as a surprise to many. The last celebrity that opened up on the matter is a well-respected actor, director, and a true movie star, whose voice is definitely heard in Hollywood. Today, right next to trump stands Robert De Niro, ...

## Oprah Tells FOX News Host 'Some White People Have To Die', Her Reasoning Is Unbelievable



# Business Models of Social Media Companies

- Business Model -> incentive to increase active users and make them more active in order to attract more advertising revenue
- Clickbait phenomenon



投影片 19

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DS12 Keri, could you please briefly explain  
Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1

KH3 I didn't understand what you wanted me to do here.  
Keri Hartman, 2018/6/5

# Political Motivations

7 ПРЯМОЙ ЭФИР **НОВОСТИ** ТЕЛЕПРОЕКТЫ ФИЛЬМЫ И СЕРИАЛЫ ДОККИНО ТЕЛЕПРО

## В Берлине русскоязычная диаспора требует расследования преступлений, совершенных мигрантами



## Teenage girl admits making up migrant rape claim that outraged Germany

Allegation by 13-year-old sparked far-right protests and anger in the Kremlin



▲ German-Russians protest in Berlin against alleged sexual harassment by migrants. Photograph: Hannibal Hanschke/Reuters

1/31/teenage-girl-made-up-migrant

# Usage of Bots and Trolls



Texas Lone Star  
@SouthLoneStar

Follow

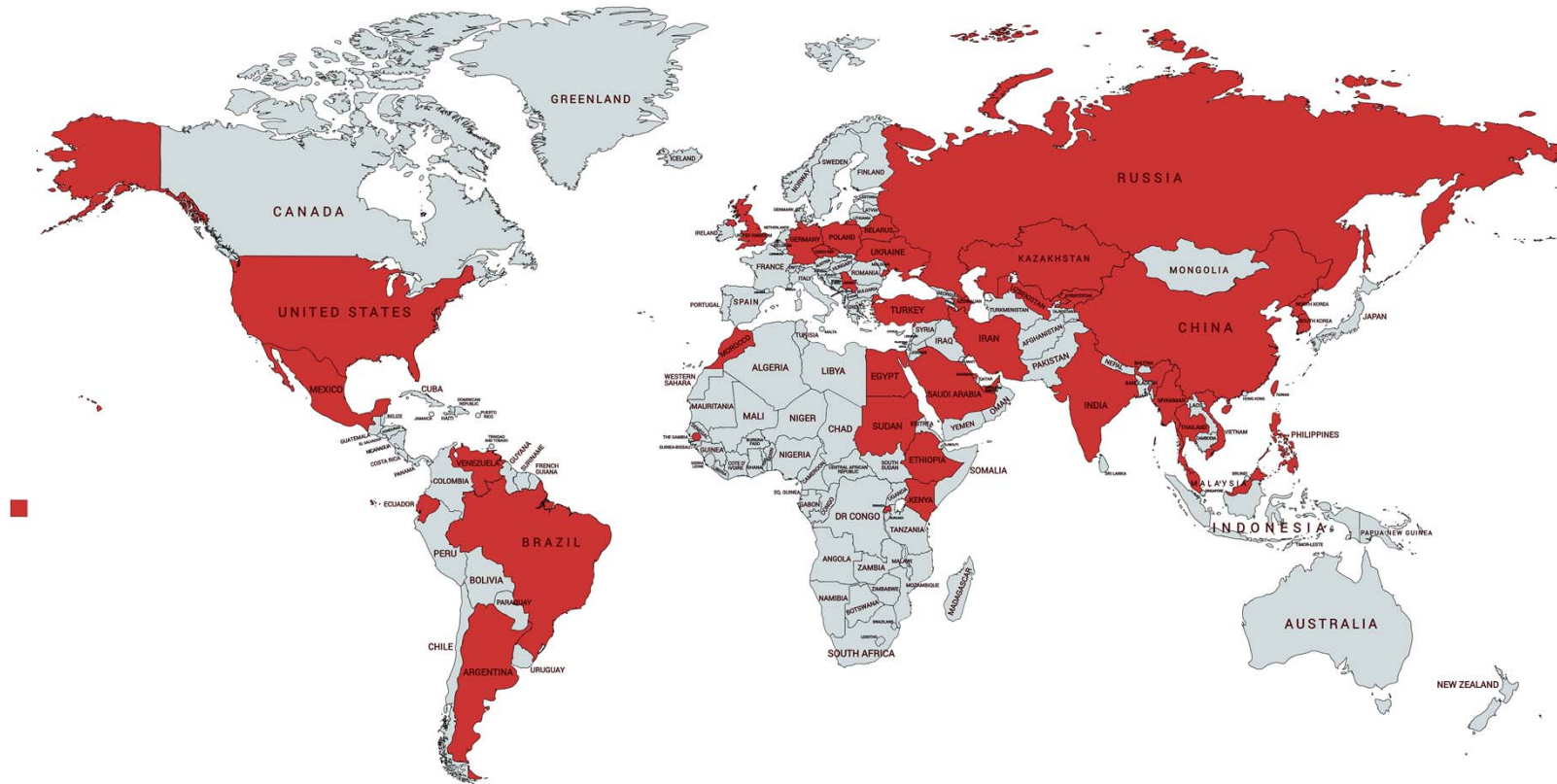
Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror attack, casually walks by a dying man while checking phone  
#PrayForLondon #Westminster #BanIslam





# Employment of Trolls

DS17  
KH2  
KH1



Created with mapchart.net ©

Data from Oxford University Computational Propaganda Research Project and Freedom House (2017)

DS17 Keri, can you add a slide that illustrates which countries in the world we know of employ trolls and which estimates of the largest number of trolls?

Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1

KH1 The countries here are taken from two major reports I found on this issue:

(1) Freedom House

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/key-internet-controls-table-2017>

(2) Oxford University Computational Propaganda Research Project

<http://comprop.oi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/07/Troops-Trolls-and-Troublemakers.pdf>

Keri Hartman, 2018/6/4

KH2 This was the only information I could find on number of trolls: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/06/troll-armies-social-media-trump-russian>. It seems China has the most by far.

Keri Hartman, 2018/6/4



# So, is there anything specific?

## No

False information can be spread without any intend to harm, but it can also be part of a coordinated effort with financial and political motivations in mind.

=> Dissemination campaigns are not a new phenomenon

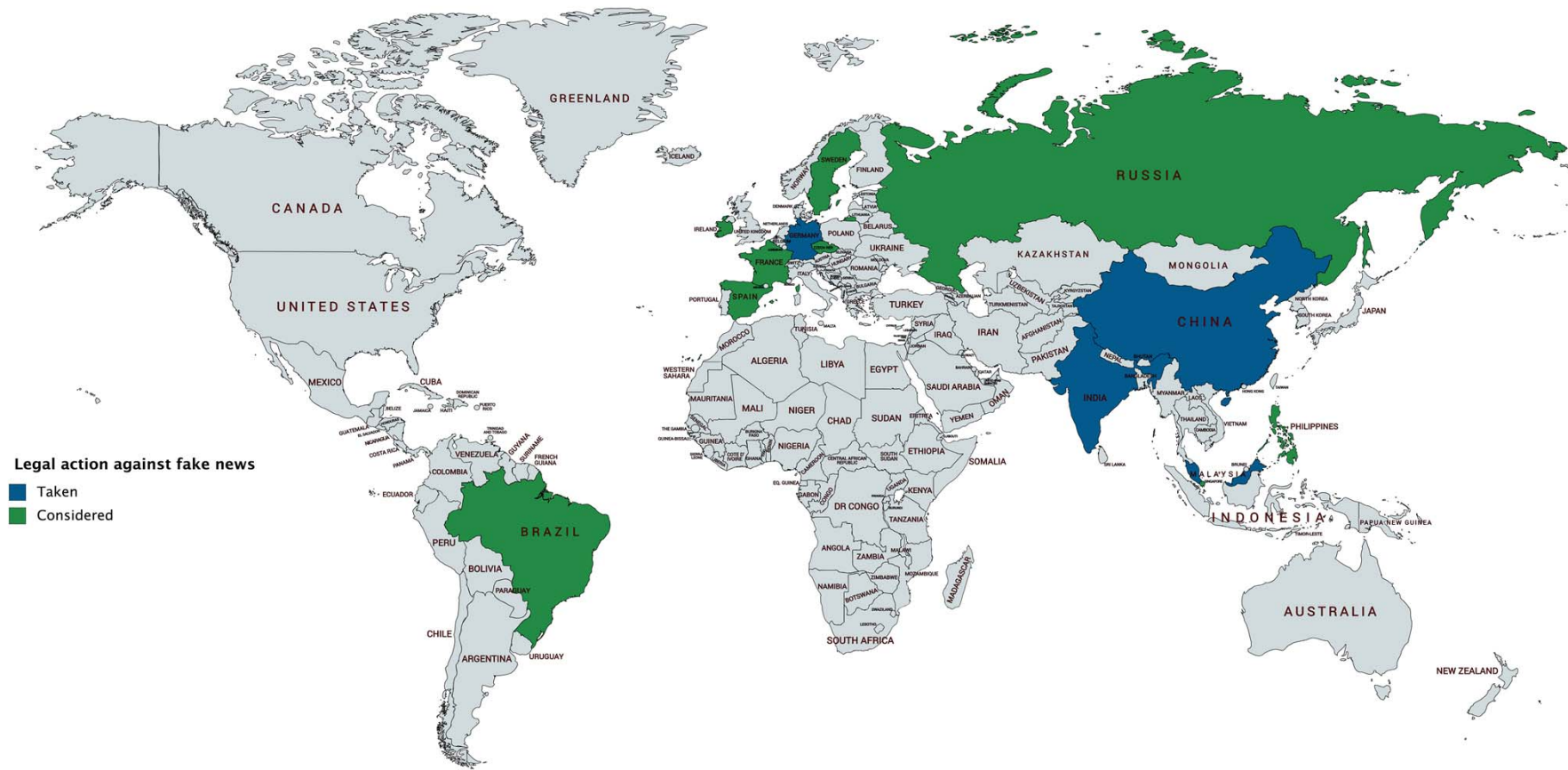
## Yes

Along with the rise of the Internet the gatekeeper function of media have been reduced and new actors started to emerge, including trolls and bots.

The underlying business models of social media companies in particular shape the strategies of fake news providers and the ways in which fake news are spread.

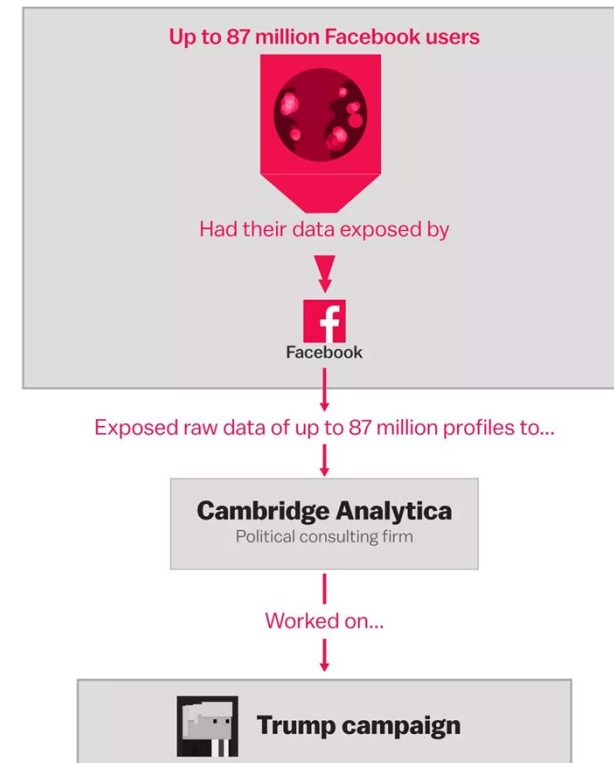
# Approaches towards dealing with Fake News in the Digital Realm

# Increase in Legal Regulations



# Cambridge Analytica

- Lax Facebook policies regarding third-party data usage made it possible for outside researchers to obtain information on 87 million users via a personality quiz app – most of whom never used the app or consented to sharing their data
- This information fell into the hands of political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica, which used it to develop psychometrically-targeted ads supporting Donald Trump in the 2016 US presidential election



Source: Vox Media

# Reactions to Address Fake News on Facebook

1. Changes in algorithms
2. Security
3. Facts and Opinions: Working with Fact-Checking Organizations

⇒ problem: runs counter to incentives by business model

⇒ Greater transparency needed



# Possible Alternatives to Government Regulation

## Self-regulatory Initiatives:

In 2016, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft signed onto the European Commission's *Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online*

DS19

Keri, can you add a picture of taiwanese initiatives to this slide? potentially you can use this link, but may not be the best: <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201804190037.aspx>  
Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1

Example:

## Global Network Initiative

- In 2008, Microsoft, Google, and Yahoo launched the Global Network Initiative (GNI), later joined by Facebook.
- Google, Twitter, and Facebook issue periodic reports regarding content control.



# Which governments are particularly active?

## Information Requests

- <https://transparency.twitter.com/en/information-requests.html>

## Content Removal

- <https://transparency.twitter.com/en/removal-requests.html>

Note: Facebook's reports are available here: <https://govtrequests.facebook.com/>

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## Media education:

Awareness of own biases

Source identification strategies

Re-marketization strategies

DS19

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Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1

# Taiwan?



DS19

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Danie Stockman, 2018/6/1



谢谢！