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Fake News : Fabricated Communication & Contesting Perspectives

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Defining 'Fake News'

The debate around fake news, which is by far a broad condescending term, turned into significant deliberations after referendum on exit of Britain from European Union and Donald Trump's triumph in the US presidential elections.

Debate around fake news is not only about fake news, it is about freedom of speech and expression, about strengthening democracy, about information rights of people, about free flow of communication, about ideology, political correctness, truth, facts and justice, and it is also a reflection of a deep concern with regard to a desirable rule-based international communication architecture. While there are oversimplified definitions and contesting theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon of fake news, there is little agreement on what fake news is, how big a problem it can pose to the rule of law, democracy and a just world order and what to do about it.

Claire Wardle of First Draft, a UK-based non-profit organization which is now part of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard, categorized misinformation into seven categories, namely: satire or parody, misleading content, imposter

content, fabricated content, false connection, false content and manipulated content (Dhubbedu & Dodda, 2017).

CNN describes "fake news" in one of its telecast in three ways: First, as utmost lie, fraud, disinformation; second, as mixture of fact and fiction; and third, as an approach to amplify only certain aspects of emerging news to mislead the popular masses. Others define "fake news" to be news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers. Their definition includes intentionally fabricated news articles (Allison & Gentskow, 2017).

Phenomenon of fake news appears easy to understand, but it is extremely difficult for media consumers to immediately define or identify it. Part of the problem is the nature of social networking sites and news portals. News portals spreading falsehood are as accessible and appear as credible as the mainstream media outlets. Consumers are easily tricked in believing the fake news stories.

What kind of journalism do audiences think qualify as fake news? People associate the term with superficial, inaccurate, and sensationalist reporting, especially in areas like celebrity, health, and sports coverage. People blame