Beware of the Trending Bubbles
On Online Attention Hyper-Synchronization

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The “Fake News crisis”

According to the literature, the notion of fake news is
1. Vague
2. Undistinguishable from past forms of misinformation
3. Charged with a simplistic idea of journalistic truth
4. Politically dangerous

Public Data Lab and the “Fake News crisis”

https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook?utm_term=.qnG0mJyJb#.ximDd5y5B
1. Vague


2. Undistinguishable from past misinformation

3. Charged with a simplistic idea of journalistic truth


4. Politically dangerous


The term “fake news” has also begun to be appropriated by politicians around the world to describe news organisations whose coverage they find disagreeable. In this way, it’s becoming a mechanism by which the powerful can clamp down upon, restrict, undermine and circumvent the free press. It’s also worth noting that the term and its visual derivatives (e.g., the red ‘FAKE’ stamp) have been even more widely appropriated by websites, organisations and political figures identified as untrustworthy by fact-checkers to undermine opposing reporting and news organizations” (p.16)
4. Politically dangerous

What is "fake news" about if it is not about fakeness?

Junk news as junk food

"spread, rather than fakeness, is the birthmark of these contents that should be called "viral news" or possibly "junk news" for, just as junk food, they are consumed because they are addictive, not because they are appreciated."


http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/archive/fake%20news/ttff

“junk news” or “trending bubbles” are contents that attract a large share of online attention but are incapable to sustaining it for a long time.


Mountains out of molehills

https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/mountains-out-of-molehills/
What we are considering here, however, are the psychic and social consequences of the designs or patterns as they amplify or accelerate existing processes.

For the “message” of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.

The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure.


Five overlapping sources of hyper-synchronisations

1. an economy of ephemeral attention that sustains micro-transactions on infinitesimal attention spans
2. technologies that track & push the shallow forms of media engagement
3. social media metrics that nudge users to seek and share trending contents
4. memes-oriented subcultures whose identity is defined by the capacity to spread Internet memes
5. the political exploitation of trolling strategies to disrupt and divert online debate
Google's success came from an understanding of what Chris Anderson refers to as “the long tail,” the collective power of the small sites that make up the bulk of the web's content... The Web 2.0 lesson: leverage customer self-service and algorithmic data management to reach out to the entire web, to the edges and not just the center, to the long tail and not just the head (p.21)
Deep Neural Networks for YouTube Recommendations
Proceedings of the10th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems

Many hours worth of videos are uploaded each second to YouTube. Recommending this recently uploaded (“fresh”) content is extremely important for YouTube as a product.

We consistently observe that users prefer fresh content, though not at the expense of relevance. In addition to the first-order effect of simply recommending new videos that users want to watch, there is a critical secondary phenomenon of bootstrapping and propagating viral content.
3

Social Media Metrics
Nudging Self-Branding

The rise of social/vanity metrics (and how they nudge personal branding)

Everyone is a (nano)celebrity

(Included academics)
memetic subcultures
the rise of meme magic

Trendiness as a subcultural game

Meme magic

https://medium.com/tryangle-magazine/meme-magic-is-real-you-guys-16a897f45b1
5

**political trolling**

disrupting and diverting online debate


Internet trolling

Political trolling VS fake news

Bots drown out activists with nonsense and hate speech

Prevalence of Manipulation Tactics in 65 Countries


The 65 countries covered in Freedom on the Net represent 87 percent of the world’s internet user population.
Infrastructural Feedbacks

"The young Macedonians who run these sites say they don't care about Donald Trump. They are responding to straightforward economic incentives... Several teens and young men who run these sites told BuzzFeed News that they learned that the best way to generate shares on Facebook is to publish sensationalist and often false content that caters to Trump supporters."

Silverman, C. & Lawrence A. (BuzzFeedNews, 2016) "How Teens In The Balkans Are Duping Trump Supporters With Fake News"

OCCRR BuzzFeed News, and the Investigative Reporting Lab Macedonia can now reveal that Veles’ political news industry was not started spontaneously by apolitical teens. Rather, it was launched by a well-known Macedonian media attorney, Trajche Arsov — who worked closely with two high-profile American partners for at least six months during a period that overlapped with Election Day...

the powerful forces of Facebook, digital advertising revenue, and political partisanship gave rise to an unlikely global alliance that increased the spread of misleading and false news in the critical months before Election Day.

The most important finding in this graph is that the posts are far from randomly or uniformly distributed; instead, being highly focused into distinct volume bursts.

The most influential patterns in most social media are the bursts that occur naturally when discussions go viral. The government’s manufactured bursts mirror these naturally occurring influential patterns, but at times of the government’s choosing. Bursts are also much more likely to be effective at accomplishing specific goals than a strategy of randomly scattering government posts in the ocean of real social media.

Hagen, Sal. 2018. “Rendering Legible the Ephemerality of 4chan/Pol/.” Open Intelligence Lab

http://oilab.eu/rendering-legible-the-ephemerality-of-4chanpol/
more infrastructural feedbacks

Subcultural appropriation

the safety pins... are indeed open to a double inflection to 'illegitimate' as well as 'legitimate' uses.

These 'humble objects' can be magically appropriated; 'stolen' by subordinate groups and made to carry 'secret' meanings; meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination...

As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus.

Google, 2016. How Google Fight Piracy

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwxyRPFduTN2cl91LXJ0YjlYSjA/view

Subcultural appropriation

Hebdige, Dick. 1979.
Subcultures: The Meaning of Style.

Meme sharecropping

51

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwxyRPFduTN2cl91LXJ0YjlYSjA/view

Subcultural appropriation

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Meme sharecropping

52
[Nicholas] Carr’s notion [of digital sharecropping] lacked a coercive analog to actual sharecropping, but now, with systems like YouTube’s Content ID system, the licensing option could coerce users to either sign over their rights or lose access. YouTube’s own frequently asked questions (FAQ) on Content ID makes it clear: “In most cases, you can’t monetize a video that has a Content ID claim. Instead, the copyright owners can choose to monetize your video.”

Thank you!


