

In Current Conditions of Unprecedented Flow of Information, Forming Youth’s “Fact Checking” Skills is a Priority

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Annotation: Today, among the products consumed by mankind, it is obvious that information is the most popular one. The need for it has always been high. Especially in the current conditions, its place and importance is increasing more than ever. Therefore, the formation of information analysis skills by forming “fact-checking” opportunities among youth is considered one of the important issues, and in this article, it is theoretically analyzed that the formation of “fact-checking” skills among young people is a priority in the current conditions of increased information flow.

Keywords: information flow, youth, fact-checking, mass media, fake news, disinformation, misinformation, internet, audience, society, globalization, fake, social network, blogger, non-standard.

Many experts call the era we live in “post-reality” - that is, the era after the truth. Such a definition actually applies to the state of the modern digital society, where facts are less valued than people’s feelings.

In recent years, mass media has become a means of exchange of ideas rather than channels of information transmission. With the increasing activity of bloggers in social networks, the opinions of community leaders are gradually taking the audience away from traditional mass media and Internet information resources. Materials published in social networks, blogs, forums, photo and video hosting are widely discussed among users. Modern means of communication are increasingly becoming sources of unverified or hearsay information. Such information, consisting of lies, fabrications, and fake information, is called “fake news” in journalism.

In the conditions of the rapid development of information technologies and the expansion of technical capabilities, it is difficult to distinguish rumors and half-true, half-joking materials from the real ones. The reason is that now there is technology that “allows” every user to easily copy documents, images, audio files, which is always a barrier to reliable information [1].

In order to prevent, stop and reject this, we need techniques and filters that help organize the work of journalists at a professional level. Today, in the course of the development of new media and Internet journalism, other concepts have entered the field of mass media, which differ in the methods and means of audience participation and influence on readers. Its name is mystification.

Mystification is also close to the meaning of “fake news”, but does not fully reveal the essence of this concept. It is known that real facts are referred to in fiction, and denying these facts in fiction can lead to negative results, so authors use images based on real facts in literature. Bots, trolls, and pranksters are new ways of disguising authors as a result of the development of the Internet. It is known that the fake author of the text is the subject of a certain process, he narrates real life events

in his materials and, by enlivening the imagination of the information consumer, reflects “as if” situations that did not actually happen.

Mystifying authors, unlike true creative authors, do not fully reflect the spiritual world in their works. Mystifiers take into account the human role in the communication process and thus spread their messages to other people. The purpose of this is to falsify information, that is, to convert or promote false information.

Mystifiers create fake news. Today, media texts in the spirit of mystification are used in the following areas:

- scientific and political processes;
- news;
- documents;
- advertising.

Indeed, currently in the field of mystification “reframing” the process is being observed.

Scientific mystification. In this type, the focus of the author’s attention is sensation, that is, sensation. Most of the scientific “fakes” consist of information based on a certain interest, aimed at meeting the needs of people’s lives.

The sources given in science “fakes” are questionable. Journalists, on the other hand, do not indicate sources that are reliable, test the results of research, do not use terms, and make quick conclusions about the importance of certain scientific discoveries. For example, in 2002, the BBC radio station reported that, according to a report by German researchers, the birth rate of blond people has decreased dramatically over the next two centuries, and they point to a recessive gene (a gene that is not passed from generation to generation) as the reason. A year later, The New York Times published a rebuttal stating that the above news was a “fake”. It is important to note that the results of this study, which do not exist, will be cited as reliable fact for another 10 years. A similar story circulated in 2007 with the following content: “According to the results of the Procter and Gamble research laboratory, blondes will really disappear in the coming years”. The purpose of the company’s announcement was to increase the sales of blonde hair dyes in this way. Scientists immediately rejected the results of the study: “the mutated gene responsible for blond hair can be passed on to a child if both parents are black-haired, if the offspring had blond hair”.

It is not difficult to detect scientific mystification, it is necessary to pay attention to the definition of the target. It is well known that the purpose of creating pseudo-popular science texts is to adapt false scientific information for a mass audience. Here are some examples from mass media practice.

Political mystification A false endorsement by politicians, the news often creates ambivalence among the general public and journalists. The main goal of the authors of this type of text is to hide political views that reflect the interests of the state, a political organization, or certain groups [2].

The lack of professional potential of a journalist working in one or another editorial office may also be the reason for the dissemination of unverified information today. This motivated the formation of fact-checking teams among journalists as a result of activities to re-verify the veracity of information within the framework of international projects.

For this, the international fact-checking association “The International Fact-Checking Network” was created as a support to editors. IFCN was established in September 2015 with the main goal of supporting the rapidly evolving information verification practice through information sharing.

The tasks of these organizations are as follows [3]:

- monitors fact-checking trends, formats and policies worldwide, regularly publishes articles on this topic;
- promotes the basic standards of fact-checkers, a set of principles and projects aimed at the development of fact-checking;
- allocates annual scholarships and grants for innovations and programs on this topic;
- invites journalists to annual conferences (Global Fact) and supports general actions on fact-checking at the international level;
- Provides online training on fact-checking topics.

In short, these communities and online resources aim to create a global network among the media and eliminate various forms of misinterpretation of information in the global media environment.

There are specialized projects and services such as Storyful.com, FactCheck.org, PolitiFact.com or The Fact Checker, created by the editorial staff of the “Washington Post” for fact checking. Unfortunately, they are mainly aimed at the English-speaking public. However, it should be noted that more universal instruments have been created in recent years. The site Mediakritika.by recommended a number of useful services in the article “5 new programs and applications that help the reader to check the reliability of online content”. These are: Trueclick, Truth Goggles, Lazy Truth, Skeptive, and Genius.

Each published material on the CrossCheck platform has an editorial or resource logo and is subject to content reliability analysis. Also, the material differs according to the following typology:

- The truth
- A lie
- Warning
- Not being reliable enough
- Information requiring caution.

Also, simple web tools can be useful in this regard, for example, it is possible to check the title, a certain part of the text or phrases through Yandex, Google sites. Google images or TinEye services check images (pictures) [4].

The next necessary skill is to learn to identify “fakes”. This is not an easy task at first glance. It is necessary to avoid the understanding that “fake” is only made. It may also contain typographical and technical errors due to carelessness. Therefore, it is very important to check the names, occupations and titles of the mentioned people, compare dates, names, addresses. “Fake” can be an act aimed at a specific goal and serve the entertainment of the masses. We do not review overt video pranks or social experiments. However, the phenomenon of pseudo-news and quasi-journalistic projects is very interesting.

American comic actor Sasha Baron Cohen, who created the image of Kazakh journalist Borat Sagdiev, works in the mockumentary format. The feature film and many short stories feature these characters. Sasha Baron Cohen also has a role as a fashion journalist named Bruno. In Russia by Andrey Loshak “Russia. Full eclipse” was implemented. Fake news projects are popular. Some of them, for example, project Onion, work openly as entertainment media. Others pretend to be

“serious” publishers. For example, the World News Daily Report news about the discovery of Marilyn Monroe’s killer was published by many media.

Emotions are a fact-checker’s worst enemy (but also a journalist’s best friend). In most cases, our work is dominated by a general mood. Some media are happy to publish factoids, which are popular with their audience. Indifference is accompanied by emotions, to inform the world faster and be the first with global news. Professionals advise that fast and unverified messages should be posted on social networks, emphasizing that they are not credible. This allows information to be clarified and verified.

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