



*Disinformation as a social  
phenomenon: concept, types  
and impact on society*



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# What is fake news?

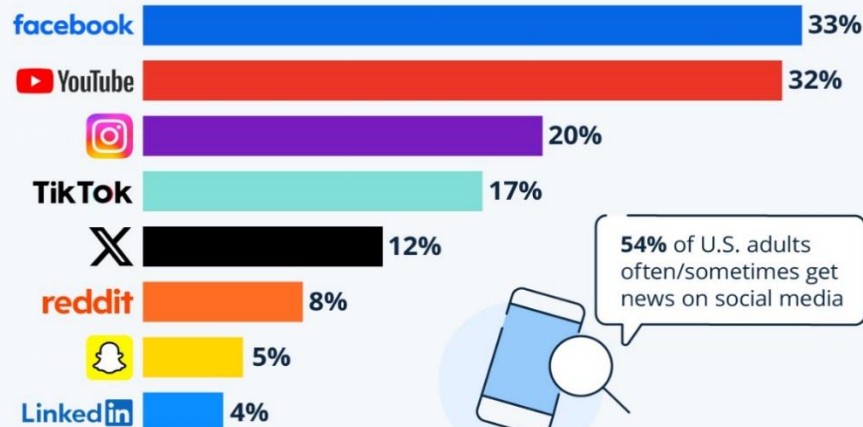
- Fake news refers to intentionally false or misleading information presented as legitimate news, designed to deceive readers or viewers. It often mimics the appearance and format of authentic news to gain credibility while aiming to misinform or manipulate public opinion for political, economic, or ideological purposes.
- The term "fake news" has also been used more broadly in political and social discourse, sometimes to discredit unfavorable or critical reports, which can undermine its original meaning.



# The Power of Social Media

## 54% of Americans Get (Mis)informed on Social Media

Share of U.S. adults who regularly get news on the following social media platforms



54% of U.S. adults often/sometimes get news on social media

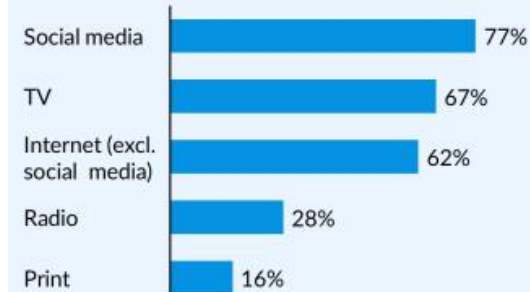
10,658 U.S. adults surveyed Jul-Aug 2024  
Source: Pew Research Center



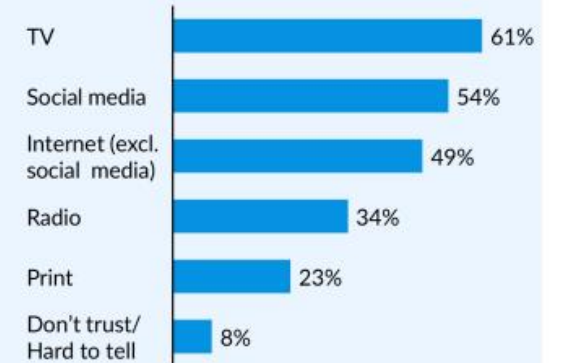
statista

## Ukrainians news consumption habits (% of survey respondents; data gathered in May 2022)

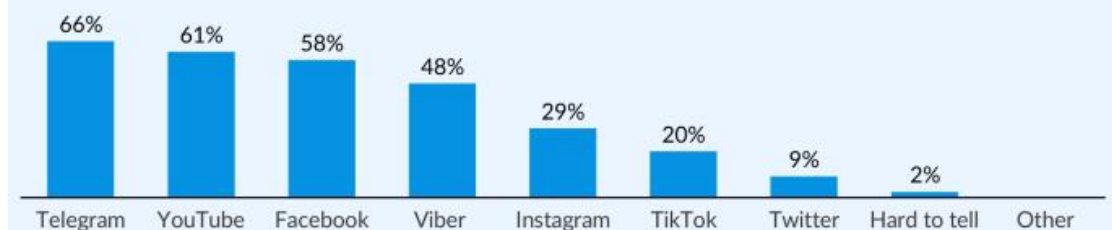
### The main sources of information



### Trust in different media sources



### The most read social media network



Source: Opora Research ([https://oporaua.org/report/polit\\_ad/24068-mediaspozivannia-ukrayintsiv-v-umovakh-povnomashtabnoyi-viini-opituvannia-opori](https://oporaua.org/report/polit_ad/24068-mediaspozivannia-ukrayintsiv-v-umovakh-povnomashtabnoyi-viini-opituvannia-opori))

# Historical Background and Evolution of Disinformation



# Defining misinformation, disinformation and malinformation

## MISINFORMATION

False or inaccurate information is being created and spread accidentally **without intention** to deceive or harm

## DISINFORMATION

False information is being created and spread purposely **with the intention** to hide the truth

## MALINFORMATION

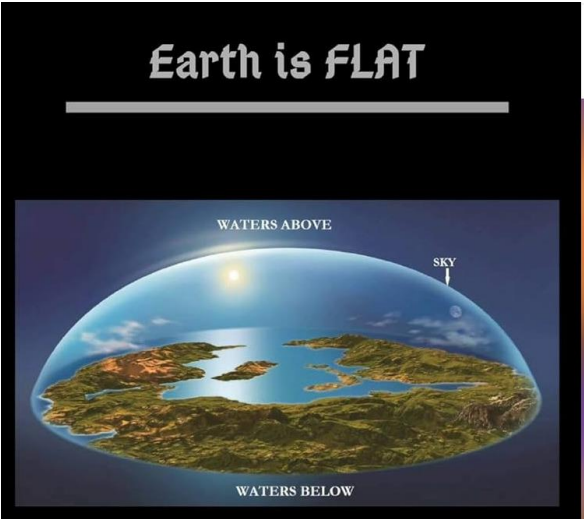
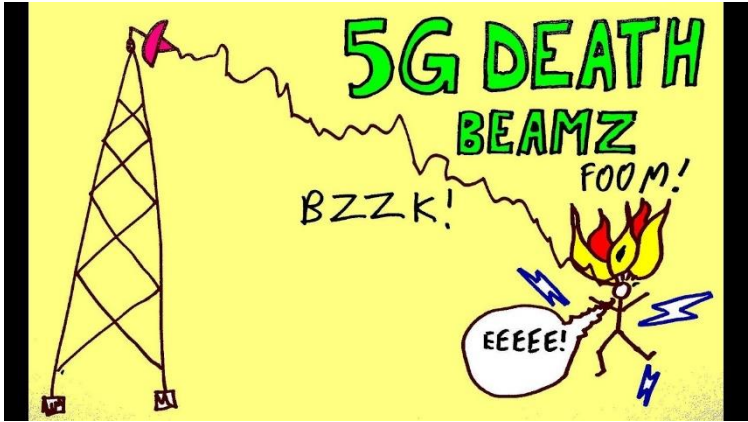
Information is based on reality but it is used to **inflict harm** on a person, organisation or country

(University of Michigan 2021; Media Defence n.d.)

Types of  
fake news

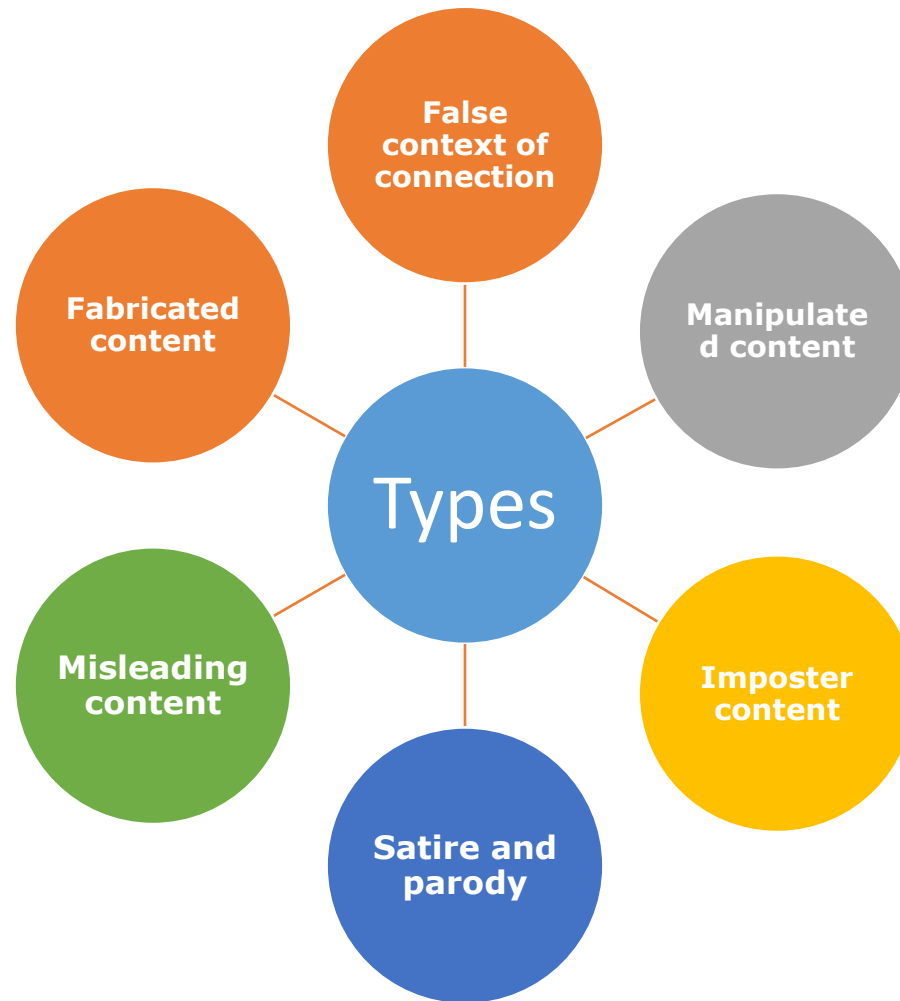
*E.g.: Clickbait, misleading headlines, biased news*

# Forms of Misinformation





# Types of Disinformation



## Man Tries to Hug a Wild Lion, You Won't Believe What Happens Next!



# Artificial Intelligence and Disinformation

## Synthetic Media

- The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has also given birth to new forms of misinformation and disinformation - “**Deep Fakes**”
- **Deepfakes** are images, videos, or audio which are edited or generated using artificial intelligence tools, and which may depict real or non-existent people.



## Some specific approaches to creating deepfakes:

- **Source video deepfakes.** When working from a source video, a neural network-based deepfake autoencoder analyzes the content to understand relevant attributes of the target, such as facial expressions and body language. It then imposes these characteristics onto the original video. This autoencoder includes an encoder, which encodes the relevant attributes and a decoder, which imposes these attributes onto the target video.
- **Audio deepfakes.** For audio deepfakes, a GAN clones the audio of a person's voice, creates a model based on the vocal patterns and uses that AI model to make the voice say anything the creator wants. Video game developers commonly use this technique.
- **Lip syncing.** Lip syncing is another common technique used in deepfakes. Here, the deepfake maps a voice recording to the video, making it appear as though the person in the video is speaking the words in the recording. If the audio itself is a deepfake, then the video adds an extra layer of deception.

# HOW DOES FAKE NEWS SPREAD?

*Modern media frequently exposes us to fake news, so let's consider the four steps in how it is created and spread!*

## CREATION

The fake news message is created.



Ex) A fake news article is produced with the goal to discredit a politician.

## PRODUCTION

The fake news message is turned into a media product.



Ex) A fake news article is formatted and published so that it looks like credible journalism.

## DISTRIBUTION

The fake news product is distributed to the public.



Ex) A fake news article is shared by the publisher on social media platforms.

## REPRODUCTION

The fake news product is further spread by the public.



Ex) The public spreads the fake news article through online platforms, in-person conversations, etc.

*The more widespread a fake news story becomes, the more likely it is to be considered "true". It is important that we verify a news story before 'liking', sharing, or reposting it.*



Fake information spreads through various mechanisms, often leveraging technology, human psychology, and social dynamics. Here's an overview:

### 1.Social Media Platforms:

Algorithms prioritize engaging content, often promoting sensational or emotional posts. Fake news gains traction because it is designed to capture attention and go viral.

### 2.Echo Chambers:

People often interact within like-minded communities online. These echo chambers amplify fake news, as individuals are exposed to similar false narratives repeatedly.

### 3.Bots and Troll Farms:

Automated accounts (bots) and coordinated human efforts (troll farms) spread fake information by mass-sharing or posting false content to create the illusion of widespread support.

### 4.Traditional Media:

Some fake stories are picked up by traditional media outlets, especially when sensational headlines attract attention without thorough fact-checking.

### 5.Human Cognitive Biases:

Psychological factors like **confirmation bias** (believing information that aligns with pre-existing views) and **emotional bias** (reacting to fear, outrage, or humor) make individuals more likely to share fake news without verifying it.

### 6.Word of Mouth:

Beyond digital platforms, people share fake information in conversations, extending its reach offline and across generations.

# Where could it have come from?

- Fake news could start as **disinformation** (things deliberately made up for a specific purpose) or end up being **misinformation** (false content shared accidentally by people who don't know that the information is inaccurate).
- **It might have been:**



**Made up** to promote  
a person, party  
or point of view  
– or to make money

**Designed** to promote a  
person, party or point of  
view

# How to spot disinformation and stop its spread

- **Check the source:** Look at your sources of information – who has published it and shared it? A site that does not clearly state editorial responsibility is not trustworthy. On social media, check an account's handle or username - if it has many random letters and numbers in succession, it could be a bot. If you see an unverified account posting content hundreds of times a day, alarm bells should ring.
- You can try one of the free bot detectors, and online tools, such as **NewsGuard**, which flag and rate misinformation sites.
- **Check the story:** Real news is usually covered by more than one source. If mainstream media are not picking up the story, there's a good chance it can't be confirmed. By running a search, you might find that independent fact-checkers have already debunked the story.
- Fact-checking sites, such as **BBC Reality Check** and **AFP Fact Check**, allow you to check the accuracy of stories.



# How to spot disinformation and stop its spread

- **Check the tone:** Disinformation is often designed to trigger an emotional response. Be cautious of content that uses emotional language to elicit a strong reaction. Fear and anger are big drivers that allow disinformation to thrive.
- **Check your biases:** Research indicates that people are much less likely to identify disinformation if it aligns with their own beliefs or preferences. Be smart and think about whether you are sharing content because you know it's true or just because you agree with it.

- **! Keep Calm**



# How to spot disinformation and stop its spread

- **Check the images:** Does an image show what it claims? Platforms like Google, TinEye and Bing allow you to run a reverse image search to see where an image appears on the Internet and discover similar images.
- Tools and applications, such as **SurfSafe** and **Serelay**, can also help you determine whether an image has been doctored.

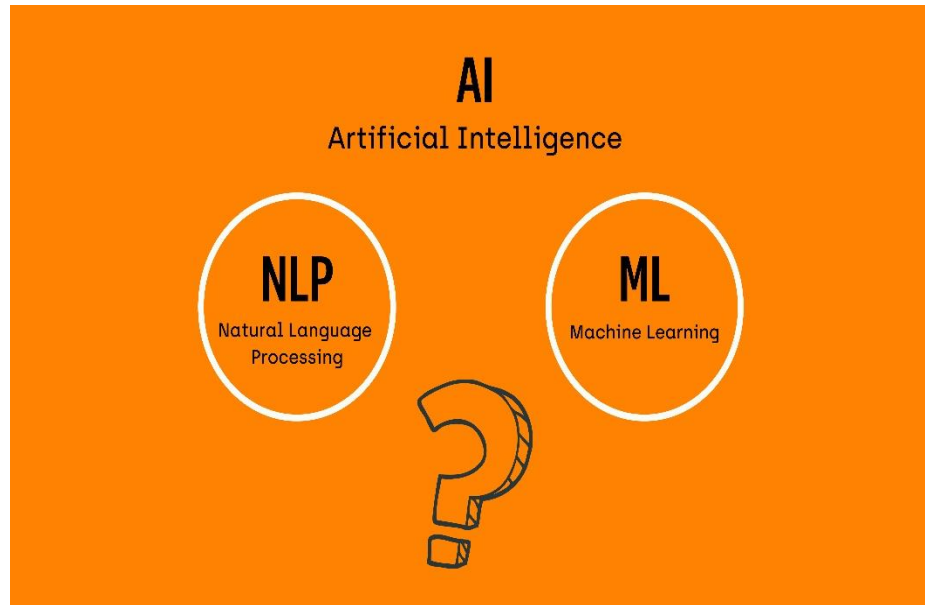


Same person poses as different people



# Modern approach

- New technologies like **machine learning**, **natural language processing (NLP)**, and **amplification networks** have become powerful tools for analysing disinformation and discrediting factual information.



*Thank You*  
*For Your Attention*