

Challenges of Fake News

Whenever you open social media, the chances of you finding some fake news are very high. There are so many social media platforms spreading misinformation. On social media, it is very easy to share a post with others, meaning it's much easier to spread misinformation. The upcoming rise of social media today gives communication professionals many opportunities, but also challenges. This affects PR because they can easily be targeted for something that's untrue and ruin their reputation. Each of these articles talks about how communication professionals respond to misinformation, public reactions, and crisis credibility. It is so easy for many people to quickly believe the first thing they see. Professionals must know how to deal with situations like this.

In the first article, called *Fake-News Network Model: A Conceptual Framework for Strategic Communication to Deal with Fake News* by Ali Muhamad, it talks about how confirmation bias leads a lot of people to believe fake news they see or hear. The article talks about a case study that involves Nike's fake news. The author of the article talks about this model called FNN, Fake News Network. The map shows the interaction between cognitive processes and other conditions. Ali states that it's most likely that someone will believe fake news due to their beliefs. “ This tendency to believe only confirming evidence becomes stronger when people are not highly motivated to question their beliefs,” said Muhamad. The FNN model should be something communication professionals could look back on to determine what to do in situations. Ali believes that knowing the psychological mechanism is important for professionals to understand in order to complete their tasks.

The next article, called *Public relations practitioners' management of fake news: Exploring key elements and acts of information authentication* by Mi Rose Jahng it talks about how they surveyed a total of 206 PR practitioners to ask questions on how they deal with fake

news, how they feel towards fake news, and how they define it. With those surveys, they found out that many PR professionals highly rely on fact-checking sources such as Snopes and Politifact. They came to a realization that a lot of these professionals rely on strategic planning when it comes to misinformation. A takeaway they got is “ Verify information by checking the original source of the information, utilizing multiple reputable news sources, such as national, local, and international news channels, for any social media posts that have been widely shared,” said the authors.

The third article, called *Brand Management in the era of fake news: narrative response as a strategy to insulate brand value*, by Adams Mills it talks about how a sense of emotion could help deal with a brand’s reputation when misinformation is spread. The article states that oftentimes fact-checking isn’t always going to help, and people will believe what they do and don’t want. The author's biggest tip for professionals is not only fact-checking, but also including authenticity and emotional appeals. Emotional engagement is encouraged because it feels more real, making the audience most likely to believe the PR professionals. In the article, it states, “ Brands, for highly involved consumerism, are more than just product differentiators; brands offer a means of personal expression and recognition of values.”

All three of the articles have similarities and differences. Something they all have in common is that they all focus on news being a threat because of social media. They all mention that something else has to be done. Putting out a simple statement doesn’t secure the reputation of a brand. All three articles are alike because they mention human psychology, such as confirmation bias, practitioner habits, and emotional engagement. Understanding the psychological factors of consumers. They all believe that you have to think outside the box. Although the articles have a lot of similarities, they also have some differences. The first article

talks more about how the audience/consumer believes that fake news due to cognitive decisions. The second article focuses on authenticating misinformation. The third talks about how storytelling could help a brand's reputation and values. These articles are very similar but touch on different things.

One of the biggest things I take away is that the spread of fake news is a very complex thing. These articles had the same theme. You must understand the audience, expect the spread of fake news, fact-checking, and using storytelling. Misinformation is a psychological, emotional, and strategic issue. I learned that many brands need to understand that PR isn't just putting out a statement and calling it a day. PR is knowing how to work outside of the box to problem-solve. These three articles showed and argued that you have to take charge. This research strengthened my understanding of the spread of fake news.

References

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