FAKE NEWS AND THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL JOURNALISM

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FRAMEWORK FOR TOXICITY – HOW THE INTEGRITY OF INFORMATION CAN BE CORRUPTED:

	Actors: **Gvts, psy-ops, political parties, entrepreneurs, PR firms, individuals, media**	**Software enablement:**
Create content – eg. stories, comments, "likes", videos, memes.	Often with concealed or stolen or false ID	Interactive interfaces
Circulate content such as by sharing and linking	Harnessing bots to help	Bots
"Edit" content: alter/amend, moderate & curate	Hacking and gaming	Algorithms

WHAT IS "FAKE *NEWS*" SPECIFICALLY?

1. *DISTINCT PART OF THE WIDER TOXIC INFO ENVIRONMENT*

2. **NOT** PER SE ABUSE, INCIVILITY, TROLLING, CYBER ABUSE, SPAMMING, DOXING, ETC – EVEN THOUGH IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY ALL THIS AND MORE…

3. IT IS **FABRICATED** CONTENT AND/OR MEDIA SITES **POSING AS AUTHENTIC NEWS**

4. FORMAT CAN BE A TWEET, OR A NEWS ARTICLE, OR A PHOTO, OR A QUOTE

5. *IT MASQUERADES AS FACTUAL*

WHAT IS IT REALLY ABOUT?

1. THIS IS NOT THE ARCHIES (SUGAR-SUGAR) – IT'S NOT INCONSEQUENTIAL
2. THIS IS NOT TEENAGE PRANKS; NOR ABOUT "SHEEP" BEING MISLED
3. IT IS NOT PER SE *PARTISAN* MEDIA; NOR IS IT *WEAK JOURNALISM*..

LESSONS OF UNESCO'S 2017 "MEDIA UNDER FIRE" COLLOQUIUM:

1. FAKE NEWS IS PARTLY ABOUT DISSEMINATING DISINFORMATION: IT IS **SERIOUS**
2. ITS WIDER SIGNIFICANCE IS: *DELIBERATE DISCREDITING* PROFESSIONAL NEWS MEDIA (NOT THAT THE NEWS MEDIA IS ALWAYS ENTIRELY INNOCENT…)
6. IT IS INCREASINGLY THE *WEAPONISATION* OF *MISTRUST* FOR RELATIVISM

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF DROWNING OUT TRUTH AND SOWING CYNICISM & POLARISATION?

1. BAD FOR DEMOCRACY, FOR BUSINESS, FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2. CREATES BASE FOR CONSPIRACY THINKING, FOSTERING PERCEPTIONS OVER FACTS (EG. ON IMMIGRATION, CRIME, TERROR)

3. STIMULATES POLITICAL **OVER-REACTION**,

4. BAD FOR **JOURNALISTS** WHO ARE ATTACKED AS PURVEYORS OF FAKE NEWS

5. BAD FOR **CREDIBILITY** OF JOURNALISM AS COUNTER-BALANCE IN/TO SOCIAL MEDIA

6. BAD ULTIMATELY FOR **ALL** PERPETRATORS, INCL GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED

BUT IT HIGHLIGHTS RESPONSES BY AND FOR JOURNALISM … ALL THE MORE

1. Underlines why we need **credible** news institutions
2. Private news media Brands have opportunity
3. Independent Public Service Broadcasting is vital
4. **Training** journalists (vs trained trolls) – greater professionalism
5. Avoiding ad links to **unverified** info (click bait)
6. neglected stories to tell: leave no vacuum!
7. Transparency (incl ownership, bias & practice) & self-regulation
8. Follow, debunk and tell the fake news stories!

PROTECTING JOURNALISM: WHAT STATES CAN DO

1. MONITOR THE PROBLEM OF FAKE NEWS AND OTHER TOXIC ELEMENTS

2. REPORT .. ALSO IN TERMS OF SDG 16.10 (PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFO AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS)

3. PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY ON STATE INVOLVEMENT

4. PREVENT & PROTECT WHERE JOURNALISTS ARE VICTIMS

5. PROSECUTE FRAUD OR INCITEMENT OR HACKING

6. DON'T CRIMINALIZE "FALSE NEWS" OR ANONYMITY

7. INTEGRATE MEDIA AND INFO LITERACY (MIL) INTO EDUCATION

CONCLUSION

- WIDER COMPLEX OF ACTORS, ACTIONS & TOOLS

- UNDERSTAND DISTINCT ASPECT OF "FAKE NEWS"

- HELP PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM AS AN ANTIDOTE

- PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY, NOT CENSORSHIP

- MIL

- MONITOR

- KEEP POSTED FOR NEW UNESCO STUDY: *WORLD TRENDS*

World Trends in
Freedom
of **Expression**
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GLOBAL REPORT 2017/18