



# Fake Roots and Social Consequences

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**Abstract:** This article explores the origins, classification, and social consequences of fake news. It examines how misinformation has evolved from historical rumors to modern digital disinformation campaigns. Drawing on the work of leading researchers, particularly A.P. Sukhodolov, the paper identifies different types of fakes based on their structure, intent, and perceived credibility. It discusses how fake news can be intentionally or unintentionally produced and highlights its impact on society, politics, and information trust. The commercialization of fake content and the use of bots and troll farms are also addressed as growing challenges in the digital age. The study emphasizes the importance of media literacy and critical thinking in combating the spread of fake news.

**Keywords:** Fake news, disinformation, media literacy, public opinion, bots, troll farms, misinformation, information manipulation, social networks, digital media.

**Introduction:** Media literacy teaches individuals to distinguish fake news from real ones. In order to differentiate a real fact from a “fake,” it is essential to have a critical approach to information, analyze the received content, compare it with other sources, and be able to draw independent conclusions. These conclusions must be based on good faith, experience, and knowledge. “Fake news” poses a great danger in any country and society. Today, the words “fake” and “fake news” are widely used as modern terms, but the history of spreading false information goes back a long way. When discussing the origins of the concept of “fake news,” it is important to recognize that its roots can be traced to ancient times.

For example, in the first century BC, Octavian led a

disinformation campaign against his rival Mark Antony, spreading rumors that Mark had become an alcoholic and was a puppet of Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt [1]. There are many such examples throughout history. False or fabricated information—what we now call “fake news”—has long existed. If not properly studied, analyzed, and prevented in today’s media environment, it can cause serious negative consequences and provoke intense public debate. Before the emergence of journalism as a formal institution, false information often spread in the form of rumors among the public. In the development of oral communication, such information was frequently used to provoke conflict or serve personal interests. This oral transmission of fake or misleading content continues to this day, and its influence is no less dangerous than that of modern digital fakes. So, who benefits from creating fake news—and why? First and foremost, fake news is often created to distract the public from important events or truths. Since the main goal of disinformation is to manipulate public opinion, it is often supported or exploited by political actors.

Although the mass media have evolved significantly over time, the modern term “fake news” gained global popularity only recently—especially around 2016–2017. The phrase became widely used during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. In fact, in 2017, Britain’s Collins English Dictionary named “fake news” the Word of the Year. The phenomenon of fake news was first studied in-depth by American journalist Sharyl Attkisson [2], who, in the course of her reporting, encountered large volumes of disinformation tied to the U.S. presidential race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. During the campaign for the next presidential election in the United States, numerous scandals emerged surrounding the candidate Donald Trump. In an effort to divert public attention from the release of new, potentially damaging revelations about the businessman’s personal life, Michael Flynn, a candidate for the position of National Security Advisor, made a sensational post on social media under the title “Sex Crimes with Children”, allegedly involving members of the Democratic Party. This was a deliberate attempt to shift public focus toward the Democrats and away from Trump’s own controversies, thereby minimizing the negative perception of his moral character. It was later revealed that this message was entirely fabricated. Similar examples of fake news involving high-profile individuals have also occurred in other regions. For instance, rumors about the death of Gulnara Karimova, daughter of the first President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, or the death of Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, circulated widely on the internet.

However, these reports were soon proven to be false and classified as deliberate disinformation [3].

Another notable example comes from Syria, where so-called “fake news” was extensively used as a tool of manipulation. The purpose behind such manipulation was to redirect public attention and control collective perception of events in line with the interests of specific groups or political actors. In the Syrian context, disinformation took several forms:

1. Complete falsehoods – the deliberate dissemination of entirely fabricated information;
2. Partially false information – mixing unverified or false claims with factual reporting to lend credibility;
3. Lies by omission – the intentional withholding of important facts while presenting a curated narrative that shapes audience perception in a specific way [3].

The creation of fake news on the internet is also often motivated by the desire to increase popularity, traffic, or revenue. For example, when news related to a celebrity breaks, fans tend to quickly share or comment on the content. This increased activity boosts the visibility and profitability of the source—regardless of the truthfulness of the information. Fake news is also employed for public relations (PR) purposes, such as artificially boosting an individual’s popularity or influence. Russian researcher A.P. Sukhodolov defines fake news as content stylistically designed to resemble real news but which is wholly or partially false [4]. Similarly, S. N. Ilchenko, in his work “Fake in the Practice of Electronic Mass Media: Criteria of Credibility”, describes a fake as a journalistic message published in the mass media that contains unverified and unreliable information, which does not correspond to factual or empirical reality [4]. All researchers agree that the primary goal of creating and spreading fake news is to influence public perception and to implant specific ideas into the minds of the population. Fake news can be aimed at shaping public opinion about political or social issues, events, celebrities, or certain individuals or groups. Importantly, fake news can be created either intentionally or unintentionally—but regardless of motive, its consequences can be profound and far-reaching.

Researchers at the London School of Economics and Politics distinguish six categories of fake news[6]:

1. Foreign interference in local elections through fake news.
2. Spreading fake news based on advertising traffic for profit.
3. Parody and satire.
4. Low-quality journalism.

5. News that received a fake marker representing a different ideology.

6. News that question the traditional forms of power and power relations.

The Russian researcher A.P. Sukhodolov, in his scientific article “The Phenomenon of Fake News in the Modern Media Space”, offers an in-depth analysis of the fake news phenomenon and classifies such news based on the ratio of reliable and unreliable information. According to him, fake news can appear in different forms: some are entirely fabricated, i.e., they consist of completely false information; others strike a balance between truth and falsehood—where false facts are embedded among reliable information; and another category includes news based on real events, but with certain details deliberately distorted [7].

The researcher also distinguishes fake news based on the degree of accuracy of time and location indicators related to the events. Sometimes, real events are mentioned in news stories but are portrayed as if they happened recently, even though they occurred in the past. In other cases, the actual location of the event is deliberately misrepresented. These distortions are intended to mislead the audience and steer the interpretation of the events in a false direction. Sukhodolov also classifies fake news based on the people involved in the reports. For instance, some fake news may include statements issued from fake accounts, making the false information appear to come from a trustworthy source. In other cases, a secondary participant in an event is portrayed as the main figure, thus distorting the facts. There are also cases where the news is based on vague or unverified eyewitness accounts, the authenticity of which is highly questionable.

The purpose behind creating fake news is also crucial in Sukhodolov’s classification. He highlights several

motivations for creating and distributing fake news, such as:

- attracting audience attention and increasing viewership;
- gaining political advantage;
- discriminating against or defaming certain social groups;
- increasing web traffic and generating income from it;
- committing fraud to obtain users' money or other assets;
- damaging information stored on users' computers;
- drawing attention to a particular person, company, project, or movement;
- gaining market influence or competitive advantage in economic activity.

According to Sukhodolov, the level of credibility in fake news is directly linked to its impact on the audience. He identifies three main types in this regard:

1. Clearly fake news, which the audience can immediately recognize as false;
2. News that arouses suspicion, prompting the consumer to verify the information;
3. Well-crafted fake news, which is so convincingly forged that its authenticity is rarely questioned—making it the most dangerous form of misinformation, as it is often accepted as real by the general public.

Sukhodolov’s classification reveals the complex, multi-layered nature of fake news. His approach is not only important for analyzing misinformation but also plays a practical role in developing strategies to counter it. In a modern society saturated with diverse media sources and information flows, such scientific frameworks are crucial for enhancing media literacy.

N	Types of Fake news	Practical examples
1	Clickbait: sensational headlines designed to get clicks and shares, often leading to misleading or false articles.	

2	<p>Propaganda:</p> <p>Dissemination of false or misleading information with the intent to influence public opinion or behavior.</p>	 <p>Uzbek-MDK</p> <p>Официально: темная в Узбекистане пешеходы, школьники и велосипедисты в темное время суток должны будут надевать желтые жетки</p> <p>В целях обеспечения безопасности на дорогах, по всей стране введут порядок использования желтых светоотражающих жилетов при передвижении по тротуарам и велослорожам вечером и ночью.</p> <p>Все срочные новости опубликуем на этом канале. Подпишитесь</p> <p><a href="https://telegram.me/joinchat/AAAAAEdc-qam7052mnXKA">https://telegram.me/joinchat/AAAAAEdc-qam7052mnXKA</a></p> <p>90.1K ANTI-FAKE.UZ</p>
3	<p>Conspiracy theories:</p> <p>baseless claims that a powerful group or organization is secretly controlling events and manipulating societal structures.</p>	 <p>СОСЕДИ   Центральная Азия</p> <p>Настораживающая информация появилась сегодня на ленте одного из ТГ-каналов. Со ссылкой на своих подписчиков, приславших видео, коллеги сообщают, что в Узбекистане прямо сейчас идет масштабный протест.</p> <p>Цитируем:</p> <p>#НамПлщут, что в Узбекистане волнения: протестующие требуют отставки президента.</p> <p>«Там масса казахов из Шырдык, они пришли штурмом Ташкент. За них Узбеки со всех окрестностей. Они кричат «Казахи Назарбаева свали, и мы хотим независимости», нам читатель и прислал видео.</p> <p>Официального подтверждения этой информации мы пока не нашли»</p> <p>Мы тоже. Но будем держать руку на пульсе.</p> <p>Напомним, что именно сегодня начался давно запланированный официальный визит президента Узбекистана в столицу Кыргызстана, Бишкек.</p> <p>0013 PECTYB/IRAKA.KZ.media</p> <p>ANTI-FAKE.UZ</p>
4	<p>Satire: Humorous content that is not meant to be taken seriously, but can be misleading if not interpreted as satire.</p>	 <p>O'ZBEKISTON 24</p> <p>17.000.000 СУМ для КАЖДОГО ЖИТЕЛЯ УЗБЕКИСТАНА</p> <p>Теперь заработать может каждый желающий</p> <p>Подробнее</p> <p>O'ZBEKISTON 24</p> <p>17.000.000 СУМ для КАЖДОГО ЖИТЕЛЯ УЗБЕКИСТАНА</p> <p>Теперь заработать может каждый желающий</p> <p>Подробнее</p> <p>ANTI-FAKE.UZ</p>
5	<p>Information out of context: Using a quote or information out of context to support a false narrative.</p>	 <p>Toshkentliklar_24   Расмий канал</p> <p>Жаҳонгир Ортиқхўжаев янги лавозимга тайинланди.</p> <p>Собиқ Тошкент шаҳар ҳокими Жаҳонгир Ортиқхўжаев Бош вазир Абдулла Ариповга маслаҳатчи этиб тайинланди.</p> <p>(Тошкентликлар)</p> <p>ANTI-FAKE.UZ</p>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, researchers unanimously agree that the primary objective of creating and disseminating fake news is to manipulate public opinion and embed

specific narratives or ideologies into the collective mindset of society. Whether politically, socially, or economically motivated, fake news serves as a powerful tool for shaping perceptions, altering behaviors, and



even influencing democratic processes. Importantly, fake news can be produced both intentionally—with clear goals such as discrediting individuals or swaying public sentiment—and unintentionally, when misinformation is spread due to a lack of verification or poor media literacy. Regardless of intent, the consequences of such content are far-reaching and potentially damaging.

Furthermore, cybersecurity and digital risk firms such as Trend Micro have identified that the dissemination of fake news has evolved into a profitable industry. On social media platforms, generating and spreading disinformation has become a business model in itself, where engagement metrics such as views, shares, and clicks are monetized. This has led to the professionalization of deception, where automated bots, AI-generated content, and paid teams of human operators—commonly known as “troll farms”—are employed to mass-produce fake content with high emotional appeal and viral potential.

Such organized manipulation campaigns are particularly dangerous in the digital age, where algorithms on social networks prioritize engagement over accuracy, and emotionally charged content spreads faster than verified information. As a result, fake news can undermine trust in institutions, polarize societies, and even incite violence. Therefore, combating fake news requires a multifaceted approach: enhancing media literacy, promoting critical thinking, implementing stronger content moderation policies, encouraging ethical journalism, and using advanced technologies like AI for detection and verification. Only through coordinated efforts involving governments, tech companies, educators, journalists, and civil society can the spread of fake news be effectively countered, ensuring that truth and integrity remain at the core of public discourse.

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