

Fake News is something that has become a hot topic in the past couple years, with misinformation spreading across social media. To be clear, fake news is defined as “fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent” (Lazer). Because it mimics news content, it can often cause confusion over what is true and what is not—and now many are wondering if it should be allowed on social media. When it comes to dangerous and misleading information, it should be removed from social media.

To be clear, fake news is *not* news that you disagree with. It is news that is built on false information in order to deceive people (Lazer). If it were simply news that you disagree with, it would be used to take down political enemies or opposites. One reason it should be removed is that it takes away from actual news stories. A study by three MIT scholars found that fake news spread across platforms like twitter faster than actual news, even when bots were removed from the data (Dizikes). That means that people were more likely to believe and spread misinformation than information. The group found that “People respond to false news more with surprise and disgust,” and that true stories “true stories produced replies more generally characterized by sadness, anticipation, and trust (Dizikes). Because of that, people were more likely to spread that misinformation and cause more extreme emotions to arise. But the question is, why spread it?

Fake news can be used to control the masses. Fake news is mainly used for two different methods of control. One is to “intensify social conflict to undermine people’s faith in the democratic process and people’s ability to work together,” and the other is to “Second, they distract people from important issues so that these issues remain unresolved” (“The Danger of Fake News...”). In a way, fake news has recreated Cultural Marxism (where those in power

create media to control those under them) in the social media landscape in order to further their political goals or stir up disintent.

A big opposition to removing fake news from the internet is the idea of Freedom of Speech. America is a free country and therefore, you should be able to post whatever you like. However, according to John Vile at the The First Amendment Encyclopedia, “Because the First Amendment is designed to further the pursuit of truth, it may not protect individuals who engage in slander or libel, especially those who display actual malice by knowingly publishing false information or publishing information ‘with reckless disregard for the truth.’” Fake news is not protected under Free Speech because the original creator published information they knew to be false to create discord. In fact, Fake News takes it a step further by consistently undermining people’s ability to make informed decisions about the fate of their country.

It should be noted that Fake News is not about opinions or whether or not the government can weigh in on opinions. People can have opinions and that cannot be taken off the internet unless it is a direct threat. The government cannot control the facts, nor can they control the opinions of the constituents. However, not only is social media often controlled by private companies with their own rules, fake news is also about verifiably false information being spread to thousands of people. Believing a false fact is not an opinion. It is believing in a false fact.

Being able to make informed decisions is important for any government to work, especially a democratic republic like the U.S. Removing Fake News removes lies from the internet, and protects the interests of the citizens. It does not mean the government is controlling the people, nor is it silencing people. It is removing harmful and false information from a place where people are likely to believe and share those thoughts. Banning Fake News can help create better informed voters in the future and improve the morale of the nation.

Works Cited

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