
The Negative Impact of Fake News on Our Society and Individual Mind

Fake News Storm

This morning started off like any other, I lit a cigarette, wrapped myself in my fuzzy blanket and started to scroll through Facebook. I saw pictures of my friend's babies, what my grandma did at the casino last weekend, and then a story about how Hillary Clinton was supposedly caught on tape making racial slurs about Beyoncé. With thousands of hits, this story is like all the other fake news sources generating through our social media sites. But then we must ask ourselves, is fake news hurting our society? I believe that it is, and fake news is having a major negative impact on our society, and the individual mind.

Some would argue that fake news is only harmful to the ones who are naïve and don't fact check, plus folks can even make up to \$5,000 from one false viral news article! I understand that sometimes fake news can be hilarious, and honestly, who doesn't like the occasional Hillary Clinton body-double story? In addition, we can't forget this is how some people put food on their table, but we can't ignore the outweighing negative effects on our society. Fake news can impact the individual's life, and even have a local, national, or possible global impact.

Online users must be weary of these fake news stories because of how many of these stories are shared per-day, we are being filled with wrong information. Author Farhad Manjoo talks about the dangers of widespread misinformation, specifically in the election. In the 2016 election, fake news stories were being read and shared by nearly everyone, including your great auntie and uncle. We heard everyone talking about it, and in Manjoo's article "How the Internet is Loosening our Grip on the Truth", he argues, "we are roiled by preconceptions and biases, and we usually do what feels easiest — we gorge on information that confirms our ideas, and we shun what does not" (par. 12). Basically, Manjoo is saying that while having easy access to all sorts of different news, we are choosing ones that are strictly what we want to read, no matter the legitimacy. While I agree with Manjoo, this also concerns me. People who are not fact-checking these articles are walking around with all this false information. So, when we look back at Manjoo's viewpoint about the election, could it have been a different outcome if everyone had read legitimate sources? Due to the rise of faulty news sites, we are having a battle we never thought we would, and therefore internet users must fact check so they avoid misinformation and in avoid possibly making decisions without knowing the truth.

Additionally, fake news could not only be a danger to our own mind, but the people that

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surrounding us. Several months ago, a man was arrested for shooting multiple shots in the air at a pizzeria in Washington. His reasoning behind this was because he read a fake news article circulated on InfoWars, declaring there was a secret child sex ring going on behind the scenes. InfoWars is a site that generates nearly 80 million views a day (Infowars.com), and InfoWars is only one of many fake news sites that millions put their trust in, which in turn can be very unsafe. Stories like this is only another example of how dangerous false news stories can be to our society.

Finally, we must take in consideration how fake news stories can affect our morals. In Story Hinkley's article "Why Fake News Holds Such an Allure", he is expressing how important it is to avoid faulty information. Hinkley argues that fake news has, "increasingly focused on confirming readers' own worldview instead of challenging them" (par. 7). Essentially, Hinkley is saying that because we are filling our minds with information we want to know, instead of the truth, we are dulling the way we see things. Fake news is hurting our overall perception and once people become naïve enough, there's not a lot of turning back. While I agree with him, it's another reason that fake news can be so detrimental.

In conclusion, I along many others believe that we should take a fight against fake news sites. Not only are these sites making major impacts to our society, like the election, or hurting the way we see our own town, but they are our hurting us as the individual the most. Though these sites can be entertaining and amusing, they are dangerous and readers must read more thoroughly before taking a stand.

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