

How We All Contribute to Fake News

By Grace Hendricks

As fake news circulates in the media, no one can agree on whom to blame. News organizations like CNN are often singled out by President Trump for portraying politics in the wrong light, but the root of the problem is much deeper.

Fake news is no longer limited to a misprinted news story. A 2017 [study](#) from the Pew Research Center revealed that 67 percent of American adults get some of their news from a social networks. Sharing news from social networking sites is convenient, but dangerous when inaccurate stories go viral.

Facebook recently faced criticism for failing to intervene with the spread of fake news and propaganda during the 2016 presidential election. Now CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that changes to the site's algorithm will display less news stories, but it may be too late for Americans who have already formed a habit in reading news on social media.

To begin solving the fake news problem, users need to think critically before sharing information online. Reading beyond the headline, noting what sources are quoted, and checking different publications for inconsistencies would decrease the reach of fake news stories.

Internet users cannot tackle this problem alone, however. Other social media companies need to learn from Facebook's mistake, anticipate these issues, and act faster when deceptive information begins to spread.

A recent New York Times [article](#) revealed that many Twitter audiences are filled with bots, or purchased fake Twitter accounts. These accounts contribute to the political conversation like any Twitter user by sharing posts and commenting on news stories. This calls for all social media users to be on alert for accounts that are used to push propaganda and drive controversy.

Selling fake accounts is against Twitter's guidelines, but it's nearly impossible to eradicate them all. Users are encouraged to report accounts with suspicious activity like sharing news stories from different countries in many languages.

Even if internet users are careful to check the credibility of news sources and report suspicious activity, the exponential growth of technology poses new threats to understanding reality.

A recent Holmes Report [article](#) expressed concerns about existing technology that uses AI facial reenactment to change the facial expressions of people in [videos](#). The tool can be valuable in the right context, but detrimental in the wrong hands. The example in the video is concerning. Soon videos of the President may not be safe from manipulation.

Technology companies need to learn from Facebook and Twitter's unfortunate involvement in spreading deceptive information. While internet users should use critical thinking to determine a story's credibility, determining the truth of a seemingly accurate video is a lot to ask.

Instead of pointing fingers at one person or organization, now it is the time to look out for each other and the wellbeing of humanity.