

Evaluating the Accuracy of Social Media News Reports

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Abstract

The emergence of social media has led to the emergence of new generation of content creators and distributors. Some of these creators have also delved into the business of news production and distribution online. Online news reports come with a lot of imperfections because of the flexible or outright lack of professional gatekeeping. This has led to the emergence of fake news. Based on the Uses and Gratification theory, this study evaluates the accuracy of online news reports, audience reliability on online news platforms and their level of believability. To achieve the afore-mentioned, a pragmatic process of data mining, unobtrusive observation coupled with online and offline survey research methods were deployed. The study also identified and presented dataset of conflicting online news reports and the diverse reactions that follow them. Findings from the study support the need to defend the journalism profession by promoting truthfulness and professionalism in news reporting and dissemination. As a check on the rising profile of online news platforms or social media news, news consumers are advised to check the veracity of such news circulated online through other credible platforms before believing and even sharing them.

Keywords: Accuracy, Ethics, News, Social Media, Professionalism, Online news, Journalism.