Recent Computational Propaganda Trends

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Overview

Different Forms of Computational Propaganda

Authoritarian State-Backed News Outlets

Advertising and Social Media Algorithms

Junk News on Emerging Platforms
Computational Propaganda
Algorithm, automation, and direct human efforts which purposefully distribute misleading information over social media networks (Woolley & Howard 2017).

Junk News
Various forms of propaganda and ideologically extreme, hyper-partisan, or conspiratorial political news and information (Bolsover & Howard 2017).

Authoritarian State-Backed News
Produced by organisations either directly funded by the state or editorially managed by authoritarian governments.
1. Criticising Western democracies (Elswah & Howard 2020)

2. Promoting the authoritarian country’s own leadership (Bright et al. 2020)
Figure 1: Followers of State-Backed Social Distribution Networks

Source: Authors’ calculations based on data collected between March 18th and March 31st, 2020.
Note: Sum of the follower count of unique Twitter accounts and Facebook groups/pages sharing content.
Authoritarian State-Backed News Outlets

Figure 3: Average Engagement Generated per Article.

Note: Median engagement for all Facebook and Twitter posts.
Source: Authors’ calculations based on data collected between March 18th and March 31st, 2020.
Junk news outlets make extensive use of advertising to monetize their operations (Taylor et al. 2020)

Figure 2: Advertising Platforms Providing Ad Space on Professional News versus Junk News & Disinformation Domains

Source: Authors' calculations based on data collected on 16/04/2020 and on 23/05/2020
Social media platforms do not take into account the spread of junk news through cross-platform sharing (Marchal & Au 2020b)

Figure 1. The Relationship Between Facebook Shares and Views on YouTube

Source: Author's calculations based on collected data,
### Figure 1: Distribution of views between Telegram channels for the 8 English-language news sources with most views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Views from all channels (millions)</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Views from single top channel</th>
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<td>8.4</td>
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Source: Authors’ calculation based on open access data[5]
In Sum

1. Higher level of engagement
2. Access to advertising
3. Migrating to emerging platforms
Bibliography

