



Theme 1: Bringing local disinformation into the discussion: a contribution from Portugal.

Pedro Jerónimo, Beira Interior University (Portugal).

Abstract: Fake news and disinformation are not a new phenomenon. However, in recent years, they have acquired great prominence on the public agenda, conditioning electoral results and generating episodes of political destabilization. Academic interest runs in parallel with the consideration of disinformation as a growing priority for governments and international organizations, due to its geostrategic relevance and its importance for national sovereignty and security. The pandemic has accelerated the decline of local media and that leaves communities in a state of serious vulnerability. Reliable resources and sources around local information are scarce assets, information is increasingly consumed through social media, and in them disinformation easily proliferates. With this proposal we intend to discuss disinformation at the local level, something that is at a very early stage.

Theme 2: Political actors and promotion of disinformation content in Spain. Twitter Case.

Marta Sánchez-Esparza, Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain); Adoracion Merino-Arriba, Internacional University of La Rioja (Spain).

Abstract: The work shows the results obtained from 'Spain's Fund and Form of Political Digital Disinformation project. Analysis, Data Mining and Data Laboratory' (B0036-1920), done with the International University of La Rioja's support between 2019 and 2020. The study aims to know the role played by the main political groups in Spain in promoting disinformative content on Twitter. The study applies statistical and topic analysis to the total of tweets published in Spanish (N = 40,445 tweets), between September (2019) and February (2020), by the official accounts of the parties, leaders, and spokespersons of each of the main groups' politicians in Spain (PSOE, Popular Party, United We Can, Vox and Citizens); and disinformative content identified, between August 2019 and March 2020, by two of the leading journalistic projects of Fact-Checking (n = 2,730 disinformative contents) in Spain (Maldita.es and Newtral.es). The data allow us to see how the analyzed political groups carry out a high co-occurrence with disinformative contents identified by Maldita.es and Newtral.es, confirming the active role of these actors in the expansion of this type of content on Twitter.

Theme 3: Hate Speech's taxonomy in Spanish professional news media.

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Tamara Antona, International University of La Rioja (Spain); Elias Said-Hung, International University of La Rioja (Spain); Julio Montero, International University of La Rioja (Spain)

Abstract: The communication seeks to show the preliminary results of a project (funded by Spanish Research and Innovation Ministry) that try to, in first terms, prepare a map of hate expressions promoted by users and digital spaces linked to the media in Spain. The goal is to favour the detection and monitoring of hate expressions from the digital scenarios provided by the media in Spain. To achieve these purposes, the research, firstly, takes data extracted from Twitter and Facebook users and institutional portals linked to the leading media in Spain. Moreover, semiotic-discursive analysis of the contents published by both the analyzed media and their followers will be collected and analyzed during the information collection period (during year 1 of the project). These contents are classified and analyzed with expressions of hatred according to the intensity levels proposed in the project. This results will be the root of an algorithm that will be develop and that serves to monitor, in real-time, expressions of hatred from the institutional settings associated with the media studied in this project.

Theme 4: From citizen-led to business projects: the diversity of the fact-checking sphere in Portugal.

Silvio Santos, University of Coimbra (Portugal).

Abstract: Portuguese journalism is in crisis for nearly two decades. Entering the profession is often getting a precarious job with low salaries and reporting became a desk occupation for most journalists. Several media outlets have shut their operations or fired senior reporters. However, this crisis is also a multifaceted crisis of trust in news media, that has been fuelled by the rise of fake news and disinformation in the last five years. Today, people face false information everyday. Considering the constraints that affect the news media, journalism has been unable to effectually fight this wave: disinformation and infoxication are now intrinsic elements of communication. Fact-checking initiatives have been one of the main answers to this problem. In Portugal, they have a diverse nature: either created by media outlets or by the civil society, they are leading the discussion on how journalism is losing its foundations: skeptical revision of sources and emancipatory nature of knowledge. This exploratory study aims to identify and characterize the fact-checking initiatives in Portugal (running in 2021). Through online documental search and analysis, we map the existing initiatives in Portugal and reflect on the diverse nature of these projects.

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This paper aims to provide a deeper knowledge of the development of fact-checking projects in small countries, while promoting a discussion on the future of journalism in these contexts.

Theme 5: A research on the characteristics of the hate speech among youngsters in Europe.

Roberto Moreno-López, Castilla-La Mancha University, César Arroyo-López, Institute for International Studies in Education and Society - INEEYS.

Abstract: The technological revolution that began in the late 1960s and the expansion of the Internet since the late 1990s, was a real shock that has not yet stopped. Its impact was so deep that it has eliminated and affected all areas of society. Its impact on the economy, culture or communication is undeniable. We have gone from unilateral communication dominated by the mass media and administrations to a knowledge society where citizens can not only become transmitters of information but also co-creators of new content in a before much more limited. In this internet world, as a space for global relationships where space-time limitations have been diluted (Sacristán, 2013), any person, with access to the resources that allow them to connect to the online world, can offer their opinion, contribute to dialogue and global discussion and build knowledge with their perception and ideas, contributing to modern cultural gestation or "cyberculture". It should be noted that, in this online framework, communication on the Internet and social networks is endowed with a series of particularities, among which we will especially highlight the experience of anonymity and the feeling of disinhibiting virtuality.

The C.O.N.T.A.C.T project (Building Online Network, Monitoring Team and Phone App to Counter Hate Crime Tactics) is a two-year initiative (2015 – 2017) involving ten countries: Cyprus, Greece, UK, Spain, Italy, Poland, Denmark, Lithuania, Romania and Malta, through the synergy between 5 Universities and 7 NGOs. The objectives pursued by this project are to improve, promote and analyze the reporting of hate crime and speech, as well as training and raising awareness about what hate crime is, how to prevent it and how to report it. The most relevant results of the research developed during the project is that young people consider that hate speech is part of communication on the internet and social networks, although it is true that they did not identify it in the street with the same presence, and its reach and impact is considered different from the online world. They understand that their diffusion and diffusion is facilitated more easily by the theoretical anonymity that social networks provide.

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Theme 6: Approach to the concept and identification of hate in digital media in Spain.

Max Römer, Camilo José Cela University, Alberto De Luca, International University of La Rioja (Spain), Damaso Izquierdo, Navarra University (Spain).

Abstract: The study of hate in digital media and social networks in Spain is a way to propose an instrument to the research community for the understanding of the intensities of hate in written discourses. The purpose of this dissertation is to expose the way in which researchers obtained the intensities of hate in Twitter and Media. The methodology used was a forum of discussion among researchers with two main objectives: 1) determine the levels of hate messages in Spain; 2) define how hate grows with the interaction in social networks. This classification of hate provides five different intensity levels, labeled from zero to five, being the lowest number that originated from insult and affront, and the highest level the one that represents a physical threat or intimidation to a person or social group. Each level identifies hate in digital media in Spain, and classifies the uses of hate in different matters of Spanish life: social, political, sexual identification, ideological, etc. The results will provide an understanding of the social Spanish context when hate occurs. During the creation of the methodology for this study, the researchers debated the procedure to determine the subtleties of language, semantics, and pragmatic situations about several types of hate in media or social networks like Twitter. On the other hand, the application of the levels of hate by researcher classifiers showed that the instrument of classification works in a simple and friendly way, and allows to know the panorama of hate in Spain.

Theme 7. The narrative structure of hate speech on Social Networks

Orlando París, University for Foreigners of Siena (Italy).

This talk will present a work that focuses on hate speech in social media. The corpus of this work is composed of 2,347 Facebook posts in which migrants are victims of hate speech. The proposed analysis starts from the lexical dimension and gets to the one of narrative structures. This analysis shows that in racist and denigrating discourses on Facebook, the lexicon is rarely denigrating or racist: words are not the main vehicles of hate speech. Hence our main interpretative hypothesis: there are at least two types of hate speech: one that is explicit and easily traceable through lexical reference databases, and the other one that is implicit and creeps into the folds of the discourse and cannot be easily recognized through automatic text analysis.

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Theme 8. A longitudinal approach to fact-checkers: Analyzing the evolution of layouts and contents

Jon Sedano. University of Malaga (Spain)

During the last years, technological platforms have begun collaborating with organizations dedicated to detecting and reduce disinformation (Meta, 2019). Especially as the global pandemic has accelerated the rise of misinformation in social networks (Ahmad, Milic, & Ibahrine, 2021). Numerous content verifiers have implemented innovations in order to reduce the flood of fake news about coronaviruses (Sanchez & Sanchez, 2022). Under these agreements are 57 fact-checkers belonging to the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) whose task is to review content in a non-partisan manner.

This study aims to analyze for the first time the formal characteristics implemented by these fact-checking websites applying a longitudinal approach in order to identify their evolution over time, and the impact that technological platforms offer on their structures. For this purpose, an analysis of the total number of IFCN members has been carried out, selecting organizations that do not belong to media or agencies (22 in total). The methodology of the study is mainly quantitative, based on 23 parameters divided into two areas: editorial design and content (Palomo, 2014). Two analysis sheets have been applied with all the parameters to measure the evolution of the websites: the first one focuses on their launching stage (Internet Web Archive) and the second one explores the websites in November 2021. These data have been complemented with other tools, in order to determine the web positioning and the number of links.

Preliminary results confirm a maturity in the evolution of the fact-checkers websites, based on the increase in citizen collaboration options, advertising support, and politics is positioned as the most relevant topic. From the design perspective, most of these websites were static and basic in their beginnings, inspired by blogging, and now they have transformed into a "media" format, including categories, multimedia content, and the number of news items on the homepage has grown exponentially.

Theme 10. Astroturfing, the technique of disseminating disinformation campaigns on social networks

Sergio Arce-García, International University of La Rioja (Spain)

Among the different styles of campaigning employed by the propaganda and disinformation industry is astroturfing. Although it is a commercial technique that had to be regulated in the 1970s in some countries, it has become one of the most successful techniques of propaganda and disinformation insertion. It is used in many countries for several reasons: it is easy to carry out, has a high probability of success and is difficult to detect by platforms, fact-checkers and academic studies. Depending on the success of each of its steps, it will progress to the next one. A brief history of

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this phenomenon is given, followed by a description of its different phases and a discussion of current detection techniques.

Theme 11. Studying hate and disinformation in different contexts: A textual analysis approach

Susana Salgado, University of Lisbon - Instituto de Ciências Sociais (Portugal), Pedro Alcântara da Silva, University of Lisbon - Instituto de Ciências Sociais (Portugal), Homero Gil Zuniga, University of Salamanca (Spain), Tatiana Dourado, Getulio Vargas Foundation (Brazil), Miguel Coimbra, University of Lisbon - Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores: Investigação e Desenvolvimento (Portugal), Alexandre Francisco, University of Lisbon - Instituto Superior Técnico & Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores: Investigação e Desenvolvimento, Portugal Bruno Martins, University of Lisbon - Instituto Superior Técnico & Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores: Investigação e Desenvolvimento (Portugal), Sérgio Nunes, University of Porto - Faculty of Engineering, (Portugal).

Different actors have referred to the pervasiveness of hate circulating in different media environments when users discuss politics and issues. The problem is perceived as a global trend that has increasingly been affecting offline politics. Research project Hate investigates the spread of offensive language, hate messages, message distortion, and polarization of issues in six countries (Brazil, Chile, Portugal, Spain, US, UK) which represent different regions of the world, dissimilar media and political systems and varying levels of success of different kinds of populist political actors. The data was collected in a one-year period, between 2019 and 2020, partly covering the beginning of the corona virus pandemics, and the final sample is composed of 4783088 items originating from social media platforms (Twitter and Reddit) and newspapers' websites (readers comments). The analysis methodologically relies on content analysis and automated text coding, to assess and discuss the extent to which the abovementioned features are present in these different online environments in the six countries, as well as to assess whether and how hate is expressed and reacted to by online users. We also investigate the links between hateful messages, political orientation, and populism. Finally, we examine how often the perception of disinformation acts as a driver for hateful messages and if the pandemic crisis influenced any of these features and trends. Preliminary results show that there are considerable variations in the prevalence of online hate according to the country, but some overarching trends also emerged, in particular those involving specific targets of hate and a general distrust in politicians. Our paper thus offers a clear contribution to this conference, more specifically in the following topic: "Understanding the narrative structure of hate speech and disinformation content on social media and digital news media". Research project Hate is funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (reference: PTDC/CPO-CPO/28495/2017). <https://hate.ics.ulisboa.p>

Theme 12. How disinformation is transforming public relations industry: Black&Dark PR

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Leticia Rodríguez-Fernández, University of Cádiz

Disinformation has reached a high degree of professionalization in recent years, transforming, among others, the corporate communications and public relations sector. According to the report "Industrialized Disinformation 2020 Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation" (Bradshaw; Bailey and Howard, 2020) during the year analyzed, the use of computational propaganda was detected in 81 countries and in 48 the mediation of a specialized firm was observed. Since 2009, more than 65 companies have been detected offering computer propaganda services, reaching an investment of 60 million dollars.

Traditionally, public relations worked to build the reputation of a person or organization in a positive way, but the growing trend of negative influence forces them to confront the very ethics of the sector. Thus, the Declaration of Helsinki, collects 10 principles among which there is a direct allusion to honesty rejecting practices such as astroturfing or fake news (International Communications Consultancy Organisations, 2014). Increasingly, there are companies that from marketing and also from public relations offer this type of digital propaganda campaigns, in which prescription and influence are fictionalized, usually with the aim of discrediting the political adversary or competitor.

It is proposed in this pre-conference to analyze the terms "Black PR" and "Dark PR", concepts occasionally used to describe these practices and little addressed from the academic literature. Their similarities and differences will be discussed, as well as the main techniques used, taking case studies as examples. For this purpose, a content analysis is proposed based on the publications that any user could access through the Google search engine. The first was performed in the general Google search engine, which normally offers 10 page results. In this case, 13 pages of results were obtained for both terms, with 129 indexed contents for the term "Black PR" and 115 for "Dark PR". The second search was carried out in Google Scholar, with the aim of comparing and broadening the vision that the media or specialized pages can offer. This was limited to the first 10 pages, i.e. the first 100 results collected for each term.

The final objective is to claim that unethical practices are not part of public relations, nor should they be recognized as such. Even more, considering that the professional sector itself can be affected by this new reality by being observed as the creator of this new information disorder.

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