

Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook

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How was Fake News shared on Facebook during the 2016 election?

Data and Method:

- Representative online panel survey
($N = 3500$)
- Only 2711 of the respondents use Facebook





“

We are interested in the news people have read and shared on Facebook this year. To save time and to get the most accurate information, with your permission we can learn this directly from Facebook. Facebook has agreed to help this way. Of course, we would keep this information confidential, just like everything else you tell us.”

Facebook Data

Parsing of raw Facebook profile data and identified the domains of any links posted by respondents to their own timelines.

Fake News

Combination of two lists that identify fake news domains and stories specifically debunked by fact-checking organizations



BuzzFeed List without hard news domains:

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- (1) usaneWSflash.com
 - (2) abcnews.com.co
 - (3) denverguardian.com
 - (4) americanmilitarynews.com
 - (5) truepundit.com
 - (6) redstatewatcher.com
 - (7) worldpoliticus.com
 - (8) subjectpolitics.com
 - (9) conservativestate.com
 - (10) conservativedailyreport.com
 - (11) libertywritersnews.com
 - (12) worldnewsdailyreport.com
 - (13) endingthefed.com
 - (14) donaldtrumpnews.co
 - (15) yesimright.com
 - (16) burrardstreetjournal.com
 - (17) bizstandardnews.com
 - (18) everynewshere.com
 - (19) departed.co
 - (20) rickwells.us
 - (21) tmzhiphop.com

Findings:

Sharing articles from fake news domains: **Rare**

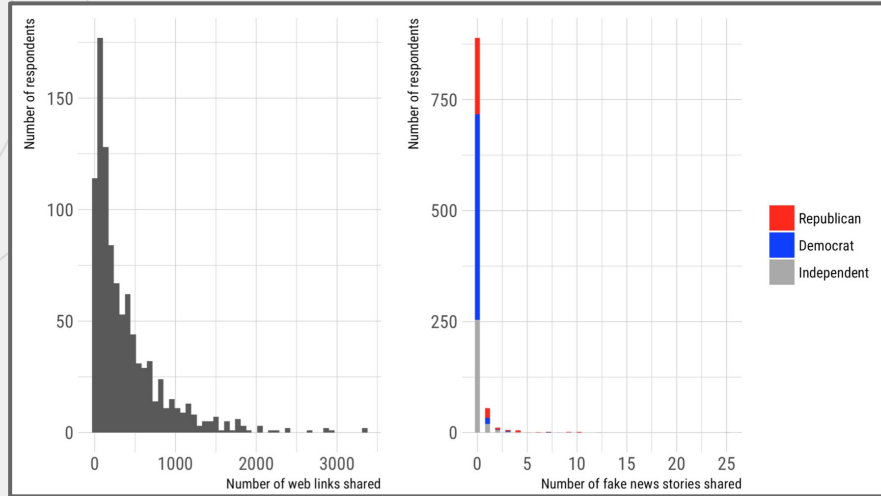


Table 1. Distribution of fake news shares.

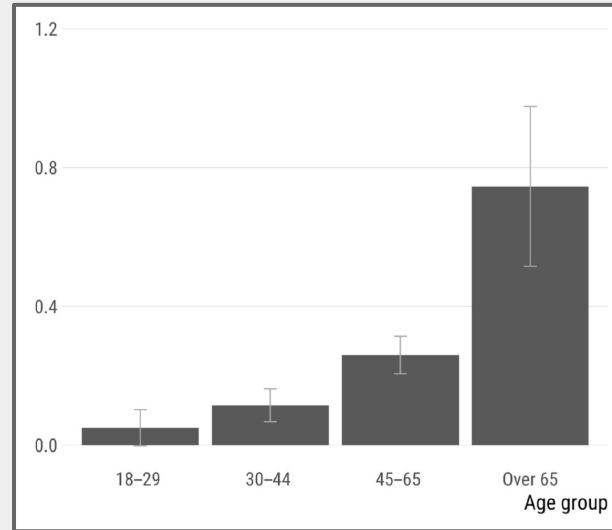
0	1	2	3	4	5-10	11-50
1090 (91.5%)	63 (5.3%)	12 (1.0%)	8 (0.01%)	5 (<0.01%)	9 (0.01%)	4 (<0.01%)

Findings:

Demographic characteristic that has the most consistent effect on sharing fake news:

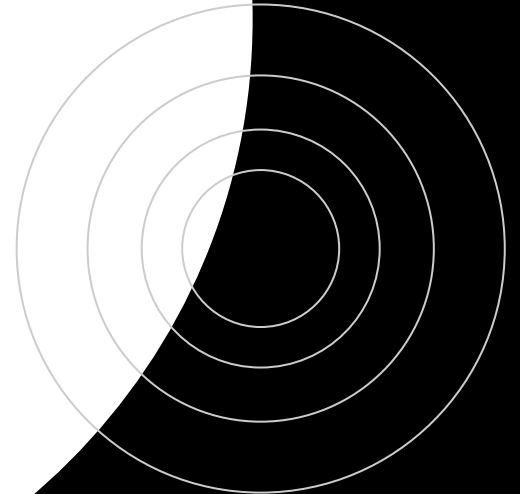


Age



Potential explanations

1. Older individuals lack digital media literacy necessary to reliably determine the trustworthiness of news
2. Effect of aging on memory



Limitations

- Unknown composition of respondents' Facebook News Feeds.



Future research

Will the age factor hold up?
If yes what could be the cause?

1. Lack of digital or media literacy
2. Cognitive abilities and memory

The unobserved
Newsfeed

Is there a relationship between consumption and spreading?

Solution?

If media literacy is a factor, how can it be overcome?



Questions:

- How were respondents selected?
- Will the data of 2711 respondents who actually use Facebook be a good representation of the entire population?
- Does the amount of time one has been using Facebook affect whether a user shares fake news or not?
- Is this all black or white?



Thanks!

A. Guess, J. Nagler, J. Tucker, Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Sci. Adv.* 5, eaau4586 (2019).