


Chapter 7

Combating Fake News With Artificial Intelligence: A Hope or a Threat?

Sinem Yeles Karaman

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4127-6970>

Konya Technical University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Recent technological advances have significantly transformed media, replacing traditional one-way communication with interactive digital structures. However, this shift has also accelerated the spread of fake news, posing serious social and political risks. Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies—such as machine learning and natural language processing—offer promising tools to detect and limit disinformation. Yet, these systems face limitations, including bias, ethical concerns, and misclassification risks. This chapter explores both the opportunities and threats of AI in combating fake news, emphasizing that effective solutions require not only technology but also enhanced media literacy to foster critical, informed news consumption.

INTRODUCTION

With the development of the digital world, profound changes have taken place in many areas of life, including the media. Unlike traditional media, new media environments, which stand out with their interactive nature, have also transformed the understanding of news. The phenomenon of fake news, which has existed for a long time, has become more visible and widespread with the impact of digitalization.

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The main reason for this is that with the increase in the production and circulation of information, such content can reach hundreds or even thousands of people in a very short time.

However, the rapid spread of fake news and its dissemination to large audiences pose serious threats to individuals, societies, institutions, and the functioning of democracy. Information pollution not only misleads public opinion but also leads to a loss of trust and a deepening of social polarization. Therefore, in the digital age, media literacy, verification mechanisms, and journalism based on ethical principles are more important than ever before.

According to Allcott and Gentzkow, fake news is defined as news articles that are intentionally written, verifiable, and deliberately intended to mislead readers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). In fact, although fake news has always existed, it has found more space for itself especially in digital environments such as social media. In addition to personal accounts and widely followed news channels, fake news also spreads through anonymous accounts, providing people with false information and manipulating them through misinformation.

Fake news has many dimensions; it may be produced deliberately, created under the assumption that it is true without verifying its accuracy, or designed as satire or parody. According to the definition by Tandoc et al., fake news is not a new term, and false news is a concept with a long history dating back centuries. They identified six types of fake news: (1) news satire, (2) news parody, (3) fabrication, (4) manipulation, (5) advertising, and (6) propaganda (Tandoc Jr et al., 2018).

Not only fake news, but also other types of information disorder such as misinformation and disinformation (Lazer et al., 2018) overlap with fake news. In general, the main intentions of publishers—such as deceiving the audience, causing harm, or pursuing personal interests like popularity or financial gain—are also taken into account in definitions of fake news. Some researchers emphasize that fake news does not necessarily consist solely of completely false or fabricated claims. Some statements may be considered “misleading” by containing “significant omissions” (Dang, 2021). All of these are evaluated as fake news and pose social problems.

It has been widely experienced that fake news increases during times such as pandemics, natural disasters, or elections. For instance, during election periods, there are examples of fake news ranging from reports produced with political concerns that ridicule the opposition and aim to embarrass them in the eyes of voters, to stories that damage the reputation of well-known brands (Yeles Sinem, 2024). A prominent example of the relationship between global crises and fake news is the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, clearly described the situation by stating that fake news “spreads faster and more easily than this virus” and “we are not just fighting an epidemic; we are fighting an infodemic” (Dang, 2021).

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