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## Quantifying the Fakeness of Media Artifacts

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# Quantifying the Fakeness of Media Artifacts

TREO Talk Paper

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## Abstract

The harmful societal implications of false narratives spread on social media are well documented. IS scholars have studied various means of understanding and mitigating the proliferation of these false messages (George et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021). This research generally uses the umbrella term "fake news". Most scholars agree that fake news has two components: factual incorrectness and the intention to deceive (Tandoc et al., 2018). Factual incorrectness or *facticity* is simply the veracity of the information in the media artifact. Intention to deceive is a subjective assessment of the intentions of the media artifact's creator. However, it is very difficult for readers (or even researchers) to identify these deceptive intentions. Fake news creators, as part of their intention to deceive, imitate the conventions of legitimate journalistic practices to package their factually incorrect information as news.

Legitimate news artifacts have characteristics termed *newsness* (Tandoc et al., 2021) that signal their legitimacy. The components of newsness are news value (subjective journalistic norms of timeliness, negativity, prominence, and impact), objectivity (credibility that signals that a journalist has obtained and vetted all relevant information), and news format (format of journalistic prose). Fake news often resembles real news on several newsness dimensions (e.g., format), but does not/can not imitate objectivity.



**Figure 1 Fakeness**

We propose that the intention to deceive is reflected by the level of *newsness* in the packaging of the false message (Figure 1). We intend to develop a measure of fakeness based on facticity and newsness and gauge the effects of fakeness on the believability of false messages and the subsequent propagation behaviors of readers. Having a measure of fakeness is a step towards developing effective interventions to reduce the propagation of harmful false narratives on social media.

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