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How to Fabricate Fake News with Factually Correct Evidence

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A Conceptual Framework to Explain and Mitigate Beliefs of Malinformation

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Although significant progress has been made to understand the phenomenon of FN, gaps still exist. First, most research on FN in the IS field focuses on fake news that are factually false (Zwass, 2021). However, news articles could also mislead or deceive people by constructing narratives that are partially, or even entirely, based on factually truthful evidence. This type of news are also referred as "fictious information blends" (Rojecki and Meraz, 2016: 26), "spin" (Manson, 2012: 200), or "malinformation" (Khan et al., 2021: 8) which manipulatively and selectively include truthful evidence and surround this nucleus with unwarranted and unsupported theories and speculations (Rojecki and Meraz, 2016). Second, confirmation bias, one type of belief bias, has been widely observed (Moravec et al., 2019) and well discussed (Taber and Lodge, 2006; Walter et al., 2020) in the literature. Unfortunately, how to overcome confirmation bias has proved challenging. Instead, most studies, implicitly or explicitly, consider confirmation bias as unfortunate but an unavoidable cognitive mechanism that fosters beliefs of fake news (e.g. Kim and Dennis, 2019).

To bridge this gap, we propose a Malinformation Acceptance Model (MAM) based on Toulmin's argument framework to understand why individuals believe Fake News fabricated by factually correct information. We believe that the IS community should not only study how to identify factually incorrect news, but also investigate how malinformation is fabricated and why people believe in them.

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