

Chapter 1

Information, Misinformation, and Disinformation: Social Diffusion and Misinformation Prevention

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ABSTRACT

Information has various definitions and combinations, which have to be regarded for proper information management. The purpose of this study is to clarify the concepts of information, misinformation, and disinformation for having a better understanding of their dimensions as well as to explain the patterns and motives of diffusion of misinformation and disinformation. The present study examines studies of a social diffusion model of information, misinformation, and disinformation as well as a prevention framework of misinformation. Knowing these concepts and their dimensions provides the basis for more accurate and comprehensive analysis in this area. Skills of critical thinking and information evaluation in the forms of information literacy and web literacy can prevent users from publishing, retrieving, and using misinformation and disinformation.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the information society, changing the information environment and the importance of information as a vital element of various economic, occupational, educational, research and recreational activities of different segments of society

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has led to increasing attention to the issue of human-information interaction. The pervasiveness and widespread use of information by academic disciplines and the general public has led to a variety of definitions of information. More than 600 years after the advent of the word information, its meaning has not yet been established and a consensus has not been formed about it.

After an in-depth examination of the word information, Brock & Dhillon (2001) stated that it is almost anything and everything, and attributed it to the Aether also called quintessence (fifth element), the substance that permeated everything; But its exact meaning was unknown. A creative way to explore the concept of information is to analyze its compound. One of the neglected dimensions of information combinations is the negative components of information such as information bombardment, information pollution also called info pollution, information explosion, information overload, misinformation, and disinformation.

Social networks, as the latest form of information and communication technologies of the present age, have provided a platform for the presentation of ideas and opinions, and have greatly increased the speed of information penetration. Today, most social decisions are made based on information that is collected through personal and social networks as important channels of knowledge (Qiu et al., 2013). The ease of disseminating information on social media is like a double-edged sword that, while useful, has devastating effects on human-information interactions and poses fundamental challenges. One of the challenges is the uncontrolled increase in creation, manipulation, sharing, and consumption of information without spatial and temporal limitations through social networks and the spread of misinformation and disinformation, so that it has become difficult to distinguish true information from false and misleading information.

The purpose of this study is to clarify the concepts of information, misinformation, and disinformation, provide a better understanding of their commonalities, differences, and relationships, and explain the patterns and motives for the diffusion of information, misinformation, and disinformation. Additionally, this chapter reviews the social diffusion model of information, misinformation, and disinformation proposed by Karlova and Fisher (2013) and the misinformation prevention framework developed by Koohang and Weiss (2003).

INFORMATION

One of the assumptions of information is the assumption that information is true. The criterion of truth makes it possible to distinguish between the concepts of information, misinformation, and disinformation. Despite the relatively long history of debating fact and lie, no universally accepted theory or definition of fact has been

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