

Who is responsible for ensuring trustworthy news?

The US 2016 election season generated many headlines, some of which were notable for being blatantly false, such as “the Pope endorsed Donald Trump”.

Did “fake news” influence the outcome of the 2016 US Presidential election? While the answer is unclear, one thing is certain. The rise of fake news has reached unprecedented levels and has raised serious concerns about how citizens receive their news and form opinions.

The increase in fake news has several sources. Social media platforms like Facebook gave these stories the same visibility as news publications, such as those from the New York Times or Wall Street Journal. Moreover, these posts often had higher engagement rates (comments and reactions) resulting in them receiving even higher visibility and prevalence in users’ news feeds.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg initially downplayed the problem, calling it a “pretty crazy idea” that fake news on Facebook influenced the election. Zuckerberg has since begun to address the fake news issue, but warns, “We must proceed very carefully... and must be extremely cautious about becoming arbiters of truth ourselves.” He reminded that the US Constitution protects people’s freedom of speech as well.

The Society of Professional Journalists has a code of ethics with four principles: seek truth and report it; minimize harm; act independently; and be accountable and transparent. But the transition to online platforms has fundamentally changed journalism. Google and Facebook control 80 percent of ad revenues; the same revenue source that news publishers depend on. Moreover, more than 40 percent of people now get their news from social media networks – making Facebook a de facto middleman in people’s intake of news.

Does Facebook have an obligation to address the fake news problem? If so, what should be done about it?

1. Who are the stakeholders? How are they affected by Facebook’s decision?
2. What would you do if you were Mark Zuckerberg?

誰該負責確保值得信賴的新聞？

2016 年的選舉季節產生了許多頭條新聞，其中一些因為公然虛假而引人注目，例如：「教皇支持川普」。「假新聞」是否影響了 2016 年美國總統大選的結果？雖然答案尚不清楚，但有一件事是肯定的。假新聞的興起達到了前所未有的程度，並引發了對公民如何接收新聞和形成意見的嚴重關切。

假新聞的增加有幾個來源。像 Facebook 這樣的社交媒體平台使這些故事與紐約時報或華爾街日報的新聞出版物具有相同的曝光度。此外，這些帖子通常具有更高的參與率（評論和反應），從而使他們在用戶的新聞提要中獲得更高的曝光度和普及性。

Facebook 的 CEO 祖克柏一開始淡化了這個議題，他宣稱臉書上的虛假新聞影響了選舉是一個「非常瘋狂的想法」。雖然祖克柏稍後試圖解決假新聞問題，但警告說：「我們必須非常謹慎地行事……並且必須非常謹慎地避免讓我們自己成為真理的替身。」而且別忘了，美國憲法保障了言論自由的權力。

專業記者協會的道德準則有四個原則：尋求真相並報告、減少傷害、獨立行事、並且要負責任和透明。但媒體向線上平台的轉移從根本上改變了新聞業。Google 和 Facebook 控制著 80% 的廣告收入，而一般新聞媒體也同樣依賴這些廣告。此外，現在超過 40% 的人從社群媒體獲取新聞，Facebook 已成為人們接收新聞的實際中介者。

請問 Facebook 是否有義務解決假新聞問題？如果是這樣，應該怎麼做呢？

1. 上述情境中，誰是利害關係人？他們如何受到臉書決定的影響？
2. 如果你是 Facebook 的 CEO 祖克柏，你會怎麼做？