What happens when the “truth” is crowd-sourced?

A study of the effects of fact-checkers

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Motivation: the age of fact-checking
Why do we need fact-checkers?

Donald Trump

310 total fact-checks

Hillary Clinton

196 total fact-checks


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Content creation Vs. Content evaluation

• Online platforms and social media *facilitate* and *accelerate* information diffusion (Cooper and Zmud 1990)

• Network structure can influence the spread (mis)information (Tambuscio, Ruffo, Flammini, Menczer 2015)

• Consumer behavior in the presence of information quality cues (Dellarocas 2003)
  • Fact checkers act as a filter to evaluate claims (Graves et al. 2015)

• Gap: Explosive popularity despite little research attesting their efficacy in shaping public opinion/intentions/behavior
Early evidence: Exploiting ‘fact check’ tag in Google News
Early evidence:
Following Google News for 10 days

• 1200 story boxes with label ‘fact-check’

• Stories with the label had 45% (***) more shares in social media
  • after controlling for source (i.e. newspaper) and text characteristics (i.e. word-length, topic)

• Suggesting that consumers actually value the label
Questions:

1. Under what conditions do fact checker sites *influence* consumers?
2. What *moderates* this effect?
Potential moderators

• Characteristics and motivations of the speaker
  • *Marketing: Chan and Sengupta (2010)*

• Characteristics and cost of deception
  • *Economics: Gneezy (2005)*

• Focus on appearance
  • *Objectification: Heflick (2010)*
Next:
Test gender and truth-level in the lab

A for pay lab experiment with IU Undergrads
2x3x2 Design

- Gender: Male vs. Female (2)
- Politifact Grade: False, Half true, True (3)
- Focus on appearance
- ~500 undergrads recruited for pay
Pants on Fire! Trump says Clinton would let 650 million people into the U.S., in one week

By Miriam Valverde on Monday, October 31st, 2016 at 3:45 p.m.
Outcomes:

• The stereotype content model (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002)
  • Positive perceptions of humanity: Warm, competence and morality

• What other outcomes should we measure?
  • Affect
  • Credibility
  • Attitudes
  • Feelings
  • Influence
  • Persuasion
Results expected

Warm, morality, and Competence
Other directions

• Motivations:
  • Occupation: Are politicians are expected to lie but not journalists?
  • Partisanship: Do I discount the lies (truth) depending on my affiliations?

• Status:
  • High Vs. Low
Thank you

Please do reach out if you want to talk more (or just have coffee)

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