



DISINFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Jahonova Malika Ibodullo kizi

Master's student at the Uzbekistan university of Journalism and mass communications

malikahodiyeva08@gmail.com

Abstract: This article provides a scientific analysis of the threat of disinformation in the digital information space and its impact on professional journalism. The spread of fake news through social networks and artificial intelligence-based technologies, the mechanisms of this process and the negative consequences it brings to journalism are highlighted. The experience of international organizations such as the European Union, UNESCO, OSCE, RSF, and practical solutions of large media outlets justify the need for fact-checking, media literacy, and legal regulation.

Keywords: disinformation, fake news, journalistic ethics, fact-checking, digital media, AI-content.

Абстракт: В статье представлен научный анализ угрозы дезинформации в цифровом информационном пространстве и ее влияния на профессиональную журналистику. Будут рассмотрены распространение фейковых новостей посредством социальных сетей и технологий на основе искусственного интеллекта, механизмы этого процесса и его негативные последствия для журналистики. Необходимость проверки фактов, медиаграмотности и правового регулирования основана на опыте международных организаций, таких как Европейский Союз, ЮНЕСКО, ОБСЕ и «Репортеры без границ», а также на практических решениях крупнейших СМИ.

Ключевые слова: дезинформация, фейковые новости, журналистская этика, проверка фактов, цифровые медиа, контент ИИ

Annotatsiya: Mazkur maqolada raqamli axborot makonida dezinformatsiya tahdidi va uning professional jurnalistikaga ta'siri ilmiy tahlil qilinadi. Ijtimoiy tarmoqlar va sun'iy intellekt asosidagi texnologiyalar orqali yolg'on yangiliklarning tarqatilishi, bu jarayonning mexanizmlari va jurnalistikaga keltirayotgan salbiy oqibatlari yoritiladi. Yevropa Ittifoqi, UNESCO, OSCE, RSF kabi xalqaro tashkilotlar tajribasi va yirik OAV'larning amaliy yechimlari asosida faktcheking, media savodxonlik va huquqiy tartibga solish zaruriyati asoslanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: dezinformatsiya, yolg'on yangiliklar, jurnalistika etikasi, faktcheking, raqamli media, AI-kontent.

Introduction. The rapid digitalization of the media landscape has brought about new challenges for professional journalism, among which disinformation stands out as one of the most critical. The spread of fake news, manipulated content, and conspiracy theories through social networks and digital platforms threatens the integrity of journalism and the public's trust in information sources.

According to the Reuters Institute (2024), 63% of people worldwide have encountered fake news

online in the past year. The World Economic Forum ranks disinformation among the top five global risks. The evolution of AI technologies, particularly deepfakes and content generators, has further complicated the fight against false information.

This paper analyzes the causes and mechanisms of disinformation dissemination, its impact on journalism, and effective countermeasures based on international experience and media practices.

Methodology. This research employs:

- Comparative analysis of international reports (UNESCO, OSCE, RSF, Reuters Institute).
- Case studies from major media organizations (BBC, The Guardian, CNN).
- Review of global fact-checking initiatives (IFCN, Poynter Institute).
- Statistical analysis of global surveys on media consumption.
- Legal document analysis regarding information regulation.

This study was conducted based on a scientifically based multifaceted approach. First, the latest reports of international organizations on disinformation and information security (UNESCO, OSCE, RSF, Reuters Institute) were systematically studied and compared. This approach made it possible to identify global trends.

Second, the practical methods and technological solutions used by major international media outlets - BBC, The Guardian, CNN - were analyzed. This sheds light on the practical aspects of combating disinformation in professional journalism.

Third, the activities and recommendations of international fact-checking networks (IFCN, Poynter Institute) were studied, and mechanisms for fact-checking and exposing fake news were analyzed based on their methodology.

Fourth, global surveys on digital media and information consumption were statistically analyzed, the results clearly showed the level of people's exposure to fake news.

Fifth, the content of legislative documents of the European Union and other regions aimed at regulating disinformation, in particular the Digital Services Act (DSA), was analyzed.

Finally, practical problems and realistic solutions related to disinformation were identified through interviews with professional journalists and media experts in 2024. This methodology provided a comprehensive approach to the topic from a scientific, theoretical and practical perspective.

Results. Mechanisms of Disinformation Dissemination

- Social Media Algorithms: Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter (X) often amplify sensational and misleading content due to engagement-focused algorithms.
- AI Technologies: Deepfakes and AI-generated texts can mimic real content, complicating verification (UNESCO, 2023).
- Troll Farms and Botnets: Used for large-scale dissemination of false information (OSCE report, 2023).
- Political and Commercial Manipulation: Governments and corporations may deliberately spread disinformation to serve specific agendas.

Impact on Professional Journalism

- Erosion of public trust in traditional media.
- Increased workload on journalists to verify information.
- Rise of self-censorship due to fear of spreading false data.

- Ethical challenges: distinguishing between free speech and harmful disinformation.

International Responses and Solutions

- Fact-checking Networks: Organizations like PolitiFact, Snopes, and FactCheck.org actively combat fake news.
- Media Literacy Programs: Implemented in the EU, UK, and Australia to educate the public.
- Legal Regulations: The European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) mandates transparency from digital platforms.
- AI Content Labeling: Some media adopt "AI-generated" labels for transparency.
- Collaborative Initiatives: Cross-border coalitions like IFCN promote unified responses to disinformation.

Discussion. Combating disinformation requires a multifaceted approach involving journalists, technology companies, governments, and civil society. While professional journalism upholds ethical standards and factual accuracy, digital platforms often lack accountability. Fact-checking alone is insufficient unless supported by:

- Ensuring transparency of platform algorithms;
- Developing laws regulating digital information;
- Establishing fact-checking departments in media organizations;
- Strengthening monitoring of content produced using artificial intelligence.

Uzbekistan and other developing countries lack the resources and information literacy to combat disinformation. Therefore, it is important to study international experience and develop practical measures.

Conclusion. Disinformation in the digital age poses a complex threat to journalism and democratic societies. To address this challenge, the following measures are essential:

- Strengthen national and international legal frameworks regulating digital content.
- Mandate transparency from social media platforms regarding content algorithms.
- Institutionalize fact-checking units within media organizations.
- Develop AI detection technologies to identify deepfakes and synthetic content.
- Promote digital media literacy among journalists and the general public.
- Foster global cooperation through transnational organizations like UNESCO and OSCE.

A coordinated, multidisciplinary effort is required to preserve journalism's credibility and protect public discourse from manipulation.

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