Sub-Theme: Arts, Social Sciences, Entrepreneurship for Societal Transformation

ABSTRACT

One of the most distinctive features of the 2017 Kenyan General Election period was metastization of the cancer of “fake news.” The cancer having been detected earlier found an enabling environment (heated campaigns and social media) for its spread. It was manifest in deliberate spread of misinformation-especially on social media platforms like twitter and facebook. Social media platforms are enablers of the fast spread of fake news because they are structured differently and they present changes in media production and distribution. In addition, content can be relayed among users with no gate-keeping, fact checking or filtering. This can negatively affect decision-making.

Fake news is information aimed to deliberately publicise hoaxes, propaganda and disinformation. The occurrence, diversity and footprint of fake news have expanded with the growing ubiquity of the Internet, especially the social media sites. This study will investigate the volume of fake news in Kenya; their characteristics; the substance of their coverage; the motivation for their release; and their impact on their audiences from an information ethics perspective. The researchers will propose strategies of curbing fake news in Kenya. Primary data will be collected from Twitter and Facebook through content analysis. This research hopes to contribute to the growing literature on the challenges of adopting social media in Kenya and how to manage them.

Key words: Fake news. Social Media. Decision making. Information sharing. Ethics.