"Understanding Susceptibility to Anti-Immigrant Disinformation"

Dr Eileen Culloty*
Dr Jane Suiter*
Dr Christina Steiner+

*Dublin City University
+Graz University of Technology

Some Background

Countering disinformation through automated detection + content warning indicator

Provenance

Logo	Area	Logo	Area
DCU	Media Communication	everis	Blockchain
The Czech Academy of Sciences	Visual Analytics	TU Graz	Cognitive Psychology
Trinity College Dublin	Textual Analytics Personalisation	ciber voluntarios.org	Digital Literacy
NEWS WHIP	Social Media Analytics		

Phase 1: Text-based Disinformation
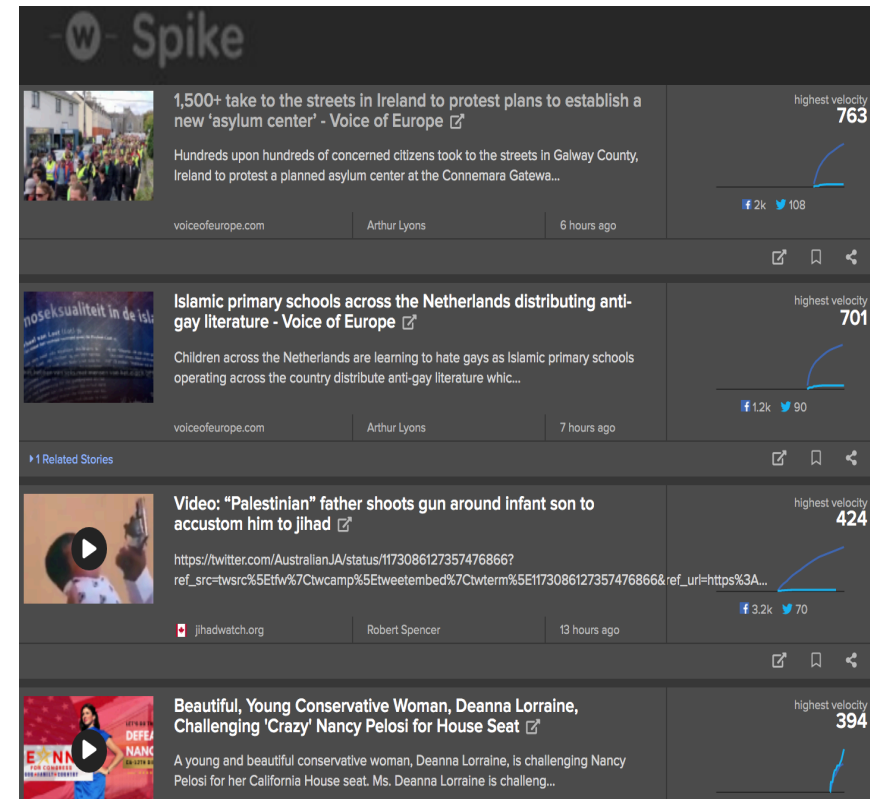
Three Parallel Strands

1. Track known sources of disinformation (about immigration and vaccines) in English and Spanish

2. Develop an automated detection tool based characteristics identified in 1

3. Prototype a 'content indicator' and test its effectiveness in terms of end users' propensity to believe and share disinformation

Content Tracking to Date

40 sources (URLs) of anti-immigrant disinformation in English

Sources indexed from Berger (2018); Conway and Pohjonen (2019); Hope Not Hate (2019)

… Breitbart … Daily Archives … Defend Europe … Gates of Vienna …Jihad Watch … The Gateway Pundit … The Geller Report … Voice of Europe

Categorising Fake News/Disinformation

Fake facts/false claims

Categorising Fake News/Disinformation

Fake facts/false claims

BuzzFeed News   Here Are The Hoaxes And Misinformation About The Notre Dame Fire

CNN Politics 2020
@CNNPolitics2020   Follow

BREAKING: CNN can now confirm the Notre Dame fire was caused by an act of terrorism.

Tune in to CNN for more coverage.

#NotreDame #CNN

FAKE

BFMTV/Moments Ago
Paris

GRAVE INCENDIE À NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS.

BREAKING NEWS   LIVE
NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL IN PARIS ON FIRE CNN
Voice of Melissa Bell | CNN International Correspondent, On Scene 1:49 PM ET
JUST IN ▶ NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL IS ON FIRE ▶ FLAMES AND SMOKE CA CNN RIGHT NOW

11:04 AM - 15 Apr 2019

Biased presentation of facts

Spain's capitulation: Seville will have its first mosque in 700 years after the Reconquista

By EMMA R. — 27 May 2019

Seville, a city with a deeply Catholic tradition, will have its first mosque in 700 years, **Defend Europa** reports.

Categorising Fake News/Disinformation

Factual reports with quotes

Categorising Fake News/Disinformation

The literature identifies the most problematic sources of anti-immigrant disinformation

But these sources highlight the core definitional problem surrounding disinformation/fake news

RQ: Can citizens easily distinguish anti-immigrant disinformation from immigration news stories - based on message content?

Pilot Study

Online survey (20 minutes)

Incidental random sample from Irish networks August 2019

(i)   pre-questionnaire (fake news concern, verification habits, topic knowledge, etc.)

(ii)   presentation of six news stories (credibility, intention to share)

(iii) post-questionnaire (personality, need for cognition, trust)

Materials: Disinfo. News Items

Presented without source identification
Published between December 2018 - May 2019

1. French Senate Says Notre Dame Cathedral Must Be Restored Exactly As it Was Before Fire *[Gateway Pundit]*

2. Canada's Prime Minister begs Nigeria President for one million immigrants *[CBTV]*

3. UN Agrees to Outlaw Criticism of Immigration *[Knights Templar International]*

Canada's Prime Minister begs Nigeria President for one million immigrants
By newsonline
Share

The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, has pleaded with Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari, to allow one million Nigerians enter Canada under a new Employment and Migration Programme designed for immigrants.

According to Trudeau, immigrants from Nigeria have been a strong force in Canada's growth in all sectors of its economy.

Materials: Legitimate News Items

Presented without source identification
Published between February - April 2019

1. Migrants occupy Athens rail station in border passage bid *[France 24]*

2. EU countries take migrants after Mediterranean stand-off *[BBC]*

3. U.K. Police Investigating Attacks on 5 Mosques in Birmingham *[The Telegraph]*

Migrants occupy Athens rail station in border passage bid

Issued on: 05/04/2019 - 13:25

Clashes broke out in a migrant camp in Diavata in northern Greece AFP

Athens (AFP)

Dozens of asylum seekers occupied the main railway station in Athens on Friday in a burgeoning protest demanding access to the border and passage to other EU states.

Participants

N =296 (51.7% female)

Age: 55% aged between 36-55 years

Education: 80% have a university qualification

Online News: 51% several times a day, 26% several times an hour

News Literacy: 95% correctly answered DNR question

Domain Knowledge: 40% correctly estimated immigrants in Irish population (taking 10-15% for correct answer of 12%)

Domain Interest: 78% interested in news about immigration

Disinformation Concern Score

N = 296
Score range: 1 - 5 (max)

	Mean	SD
I am concerned about online disinformation or "fake news".	4.56	0.92
I am concerned about sharing online disinformation or "fake news" by mistake.	4.18	1.17
Total Disinformation Concern Score	**4.37**	**0.93**

Information Verification Score

N = 296
Score range: 1 - 5 (max)

	Mean	SD
I usually check the facts and/or source of news stories to determine whether a story is real or fake.	4.08	1.00
I usually check the facts and/or sources of news stories before sharing them.	4.19	0.97
I intend to check the facts and sources of news stories more critically in the future.	4.13	1.00
I would like to have technical support to help me identify disinformation.	4.28	0.96
Total Information Verification Score	**4.17**	**0.73**

News Credibility Score

Appelman and Sundar (2016) measure – accuracy, believability authenticity – score range 1-5

		Mean	**N**	**SD**
Accuracy	Real News	4.56	290	1.04
	Disinfo News	2.12	290	1.05
Believability	Real News	4.99	293	1.11
	Disinfo News	2.20	293	1.15
Authenticity	Real News	4.63	288	1.08
	Disinfo News	2.17	288	1.11
Total Credibility Score	**Real News**	**4.74**	**294**	**1.02**
	Disinfo News	**2.16**	**294**	**1.05**

Sharing Intentions

Intention to share/maybe share real news was significantly higher than for disinfo news items

- Real news: M=0.15, SD=0.52 for 'YES', M=0.34, SD=0.75 for 'MAYBE')

- Fake news: M=0.03, SD=0.19 for 'YES', M=0.11, SD=0.37 for 'MAYBE'

Refusal to share disinfo items (M=2.83, SD=0.48) was statistically higher than for real news (M=2.46, SD=0.96)

		Real News	Disinfo
#1	No	251	274
	Maybe	30	16
	Yes	10	4
#2	No	233	277
	Maybe	38	13
	Yes	22	4
#3	No	245	286
	Maybe	32	3
	Yes	13	2
Total	**No**	**729**	**837**
	Maybe	**100**	**32**
	Yes	**45**	**10**

Rationale for Sharing Intentions (not yet analysed)

Sharing Options
I want to highlight issues I care about
I want to help others be informed
I want to be connected with others
Other (free text)

Not Sharing Options
I do not share stories like this
I do not agree with or believe it [real news: 50 mentions; disinfo: 313 mentions]
I do not share any news stories
Other (free text)

Conclusions / Next Steps

Concerned, news literate citizens easily distinguish anti-immigrant disinformation from immigration news stories based on message content

Need to identify message cues (focus group)

Translate those cues into characteristics that support automated detection.