

To the Editor April 6, 2020

Digital Literacy *Updated*

Digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to find, evaluate, and compose clear information through reading and writing and other mediums on various digital platforms. Digital literacy builds on the skills of traditional literacy, and is sometimes called Digital intelligence (DQ) like IQ or EQ.

In an earlier letter, I wrote about the need for citizens and especially children to be able to analyze the viability and credibility of the vast amount of information, disinformation (fake news and deep fake videos) and misinformation circling around them in this digital age. In that letter, I pointed out one disinformation technique called Whataboutism, and how you can identify and combat it.

I would like to expand on my initial thoughts here.

The term digital literacy now goes far beyond the previous meaning of having the technical skills and knowledge to navigate computer systems and software. It now includes the abilities of individuals to evaluate information, in both analog and digital forms. Digital literacy includes the ability to examine, comprehend and express the meaning of messages, judge credibility, veracity, and assess the quality of digital works.

Propaganda Machines

But now there is something called the Digital Influence Industry. They are the Google's, and Facebooks of the world. Russians election influence campaigns of millions of dollars pale in comparison to the billions that are being spent using these industries as their delivery vehicles.

These industries basically run psychological operations. Psychological Operations or (PSYOPS) are operations conducted to convey selected information and indicators to their audiences. These adapted military grade psychological warfare techniques are used to influence our emotions, motives, and objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of governments, organizations, and groups. This is being done now by Micro targeting persuadables (buyers or swing voters), with short source-identified ads which are not retained for further inspection later. We are also being subjected to the typical mental manipulation techniques of propaganda and casino gambling.

A lot of people are making a lot of money now from our polarization, they are working hard to foment it, under the guise of freedom of speech.

Data companies are now the most valuable companies in the world, making data our most valuable societal asset. But right now our data is being abused. It is being used against us in the most predatory and parasitic ways imaginable. We are all being subjected to the violence and ramifications of personal data theft. We are the producers of data yet do not have access to the value of it, or even how it is used. Data rights can be seen as human property rights, and we did not knowingly agree to some corporate eminent domain over these rights. We did not knowledgeably or knowingly make this deal with the devil.

"If you understand the tactics and strategies that are being used to manipulate you, you can then protect yourself from that. We have given up our rights to privacy and freedom for convenience and cannot allow ourselves to be manipulated into this any longer". Brittany Kaiser formally employed by the shadowy data firm Cambridge Analytica, now turned whistleblower.

Though the use of psychographic micro targeting of ads, in small groups or down to a specific individual, we are all being manipulated. They have the scientific results of what causes behavioral changes, and what makes people stay engaged in social and digital media longer. Since this is advertising based, it means more profits. Our fear, anger, and hate instincts on social media are meant to engage people (buyers or voters) longer and is more profitable for them. They are exploiting our emotions through advertising to allow us to each create our own reality. It then becomes easy for them to manipulate us.

Facebook and Google have allowed this to happen, crafted it to their benefit, profited from it, and are continuing to hide the full extent of it. They cannot be responsible for their own moral compass and conscience, because they have proven time and time again, that they cannot and will not be accountable. They need to be forced into this. Our government representatives work for us. We desperately need government regulation and legislation. This will not be a fast process, but it has to start some time. It will certainly be faster if we all actively advocate for this.

Some places to look for more information:

[Center for Media and Information Literacy](#)

[Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)

[The Center for Media and Democracy](#)

[Center for Humane Technology](#)

[Federal Trade Commission](#) – encourage them to do the job they were hired by you to do.

[The Great Hack documentary](#) –featuring Brittany Kaiser the Cambridge Analytica whistleblower, and author of “Targeted: The Cambridge Analytica Whistleblower’s Inside Story of How Big Data, Trump, and Facebook Broke Democracy and How It Can Happen Again”

“Facebook Is an Information Crime Scene” “The Great Hack” co-director Karim Amer.

You are being attacked! Educate yourself, know your rights, and become digitally literate.

You also need to believe in societal redemption, become active, and know that you and I can help fix this.

Update

Facebook Doubles Down on Its Policy of Allowing Lies in Political Ads - Jan 09, 2020

https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/9/headlines/facebook_doubles_down_on_its_policy_of_allowing_lies_in_political_ads

Facebook is insisting that it will not limit lies in political campaign ads, refusing to back down from a policy that has come under massive criticism from lawmakers and voting rights activists. Facebook also said it would continue to allow so-called micro targeting for political ads, a tactic for targeting advertisements for a tiny group of Facebook users. Critics say micro targeting is an ideal tactic for spreading fake information.

This comes as a Facebook executive wrote in an internal memo that the Trump campaign's Facebook advertising strategy was key in his 2016 election and that if Facebook keeps the same advertising policies in place, it could lead to his re-election. In the memo, Andrew Bosworth wrote, "So was Facebook responsible for Donald Trump getting elected? I think the answer is yes ... That brings me to the present moment, where we have maintained the same ad policies. It occurs to me that it very well may lead to the same result."