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Perception and Reality in the Digital Age

Disinformation Strategies via New Media



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Introduction

The digital age has fundamentally reshaped how individuals access, process, and interact with information. While technological advancements have democratized communication and expanded the reach of knowledge, they have also facilitated the rapid spread of false or misleading content. The proliferation of disinformation—deliberately misleading or manipulative content—has emerged as one of the most urgent threats to public trust, democratic stability, and societal cohesion. No longer confined to isolated propaganda efforts or fringe misinformation, disinformation now operates through sophisticated strategies, often amplified by social media platforms, algorithmic systems, and emotionally resonant messaging.

This book investigates the complex interplay between new media environments and disinformation, with a particular focus on how digital communication tools shape human perception, influence psychological processing, and manipulate social realities. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from communication psychology, media studies, and strategic communication, the book offers a comprehensive analysis of disinformation as both a sociotechnical phenomenon and a psychological strategy.

Rather than focusing solely on technological detection methods or institutional regulation, this study prioritizes the human dimension: How do individuals internalize disinformation? What are the cognitive and emotional pathways that make them vulnerable to false narratives? How can perception be strategically managed to foster media resilience? These questions form the backbone of the book's approach, which integrates theoretical models with applied solutions—bridging the gap between abstract conceptualization and real-world intervention.

Positioning in Existing Literature

Recent influential works have explored disinformation from various angles. Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan's *Information Disorder* report (2017) offers a foundational typology of mis-, dis-, and mal-information and proposes a

policy-focused framework. Cathy O’Neil’s *Weapons of Math Destruction* (2016) highlights algorithmic bias and the societal harms embedded in opaque data systems, while Alice Marwick’s *Status Update* (2013) focuses on digital celebrity, self-presentation, and cultural production in networked publics.

In contrast to these works, this book positions itself within the perceptual and psychological dimensions of disinformation. While it acknowledges the structural and computational components of the problem, its originality lies in the development of a unified framework that centers human cognition, emotional vulnerability, and strategic media literacy. Moreover, unlike edited volumes or context-specific studies, the book offers a coherent analytical trajectory, from foundational theory to practical strategy, with case studies ranging from public health and electoral politics to algorithmic persuasion and hybrid warfare.

Structure and Scope

This book is designed for readers in academia, media, and policymaking who seek to understand and address the challenges of disinformation and perception management in the digital age. While grounded in academic research, it also provides practical insights relevant to journalists, communication professionals, and public officials engaged in digital communication, media literacy, and information governance.

The book is organized into two main parts. The first part introduces the theoretical underpinnings of communication psychology, media perception, and the historical evolution of disinformation. It also traces the conceptual overlap between propaganda, perception management, and media influence. This section builds a foundation for understanding how disinformation operates within contemporary media ecosystems.

The second part turns toward solutions, presenting a series of case studies that illustrate both the challenges and the possibilities of disinformation resilience. Drawing on examples from Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, the book expands the discussion beyond Western-centric narratives and emphasizes global diversity in both problem and response. Topics such as media literacy, institutional countermeasures, digital education, and ethical considerations are treated in depth.

By situating disinformation at the intersection of perception, power, and technology, the book ultimately seeks to empower readers—not just with theoretical knowledge but with practical tools. It addresses scholars, policymakers, educators, and media practitioners alike, advocating for a more psychologically informed, ethically aware, and globally inclusive response to the information crises of our time.

Contents

Part I Theoretical Foundations and Psychological Aspects of Disinformation

1	New Media and Psychology of Communication.	3
1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Definition and Historical Development of New Media	5
1.3	Basic Concepts of Communication Psychology	8
1.4	Theoretical Frameworks in Communication Psychology	10
1.5	Effects of New Media on Human Psychology	13
1.6	Framework for Analyzing Media Effects	15
1.7	Conclusion	17
	References	19
2	Anatomy of Disinformation	25
2.1	Introduction	25
2.2	Definition and History of Disinformation	26
2.2.1	Mis- and Mal-information	29
2.3	Psychological and Social Impacts of Disinformation	31
2.3.1	Psychological Mechanisms and Susceptibility to Disinformation	31
2.3.2	Societal Trust and Cohesion	31
2.3.3	Impact on Democratic Processes	32
2.3.4	Mitigation Strategies	32
2.4	Disinformation Examples and Analyses Through New Media Tools	33
2.4.1	Disinformation in Political and Public Health Contexts	33
2.4.2	Social Media’s Role in Amplifying and Mitigating Disinformation	36
2.4.3	Algorithms, Echo Chambers, and Disinformation Spread	38
2.4.4	Case Study: Disinformation in the 2016 US Presidential Election	40
2.5	Conclusion	43
	References	44

3	Perception Management and New Media	53
3.1	Introduction	53
3.2	Definition and Importance of Perception Management	54
3.3	Perception Management in the Digital Era	57
3.4	The Roles of New Media Tools in Perception Management	59
3.5	Analyzing Perception Management Through Real Cases	61
3.5.1	Propaganda and Perception Management in Political Campaigns	61
3.5.2	Historical Study Case: Perception Management and the MK Ultra Project	64
3.5.3	Perception Management in Advertising and Marketing	65
3.6	Ethical Considerations in Perception Management	68
3.7	Future Directions in Perception Management	69
3.7.1	Emerging Trends and Technologies in Perception Management	69
3.7.2	Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data on Perception Management	70
3.7.3	Predictions for the Future of Perception Management Practices	71
3.8	Conclusion	71
	References	73

Part II Practical Applications and Solutions to Disinformation

4	Strategies and Solutions to Combat Disinformation	83
4.1	Introduction	83
4.2	Identifying and Analyzing Disinformation Problems	86
4.2.1	Classification of Disinformation	87
4.2.2	Psychological and Societal Impacts	89
4.3	Academic and Practical Solutions to Disinformation	91
4.3.1	Fact-Checking and Corrective Messages	91
4.3.2	Media Literacy and Educational Interventions	91
4.3.3	Content Moderation and Counter-Campaigns	92
4.3.4	Prebunking and Inoculation Strategies	92
4.3.5	Technological Interventions and AI Tools	92
4.3.6	Government Policies and Regulations	93
4.3.7	International Cooperation and Best Practices	93
4.4	Case Studies of Effective Solutions	93
4.4.1	Successful Campaigns in Political Contexts	93
4.4.2	Public Health Communication Strategies	95
4.5	Future Predictions and Recommendations for Combating Disinformation	98
4.6	Conclusion	99
	References	101

- 5 Integrative Strategies and Future Directions 109**
 - 5.1 Introduction 109
 - 5.2 Navigating the Interplay of Perception and Reality 111
 - 5.3 Strategic Responses to Disinformation 114
 - 5.3.1 Comprehensive Approaches to Combat Disinformation . . . 114
 - 5.3.2 Proactive vs. Reactive Strategies 116
 - 5.3.3 Role of International Collaboration 119
 - 5.4 Innovative Approaches to Media Literacy 121
 - 5.4.1 Comprehensive Media Literacy Strategies 121
 - 5.4.2 Digital Literacy for Various Demographics 123
 - 5.4.3 Use of Gamification in Media Literacy 124
 - 5.5 Institutional and Policy Frameworks 126
 - 5.5.1 Policy Development and Institutional Strategies 126
 - 5.5.2 National and International Policies 128
 - 5.5.3 Institutional Best Practices 130
 - 5.6 Future Directions and Anticipated Challenges 131
 - 5.6.1 Emerging Technologies and Their Impacts 133
 - 5.6.2 Anticipating New Forms of Disinformation 134
 - 5.7 Conclusion 136
 - References 137
- Conclusion 143**