

An Experimental Paradigm for Studying Exposure to Fake News

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Abstract

We develop, validate, and demonstrate the value of an experimental paradigm for studying exposure to fake news. This paradigm complements existing methods for studying fake news by helping researchers address questions that current methods cannot. It allows participants to be ethically exposed to real and fake news items. Like their real-world counterparts, these news items describe information that is consequential for later (in-experiment) decisions. Importantly, we provide a way to manipulate participants' exposure to fake news without deceiving or misinforming them. This makes it possible to study the effect of mere exposure to fake news on participants, rather than a combined effect of exposure and misinformation. And because the experimental paradigm does not involve deception, it is especially suitable to experiments in behavioral and experimental economics.

Keywords: *News Consumption; Fake News; Behavioral Economics*

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