

How to identify fake news? The impact of source credibility, sensational headlines and fake news awareness on the classification of online information

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Abstract

With the development of social media, fake news has become a common phenomenon difficult to combat. In order to reduce the effects of fake news, it is important to find the factors that reduce or increase the belief that a piece of information is fake or not. In three mediation models, we empirically test how source credibility, sensational headlines and fake news awareness influence information quality and the classification of a piece of information as fake or not. Our results show that source credibility has the greatest impact on perceived information quality and it reduces the perception of information as being fake. Information quality fully mediates the relationship between sensational headlines and fake news classification, while fake news awareness reduces the perceived information quality of a news story and increases the classification of a news as being fake.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing, Information Processing*

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