What are propaganda and media manipulation?

Propaganda

1. **Propaganda** is communication that is primarily used to influence an audience and further an agenda, which may not be objective and may be selectively presenting facts to encourage a particular synthesis or perception, or using loaded language to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is being presented. Propaganda can be found in news and journalism, government, entertainment, education, and activism and is often associated with material which is prepared by governments as part of war efforts, political campaigns, revolutionaries, big businesses, ultra-religious organizations, the media, and certain individuals such as soapboxers. It is a legitimate form of communication ; A speech that works using persuasive language.
2. **Propaganda and advertising** (the activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services) are linked to each other.

How is propaganda related to advertising?

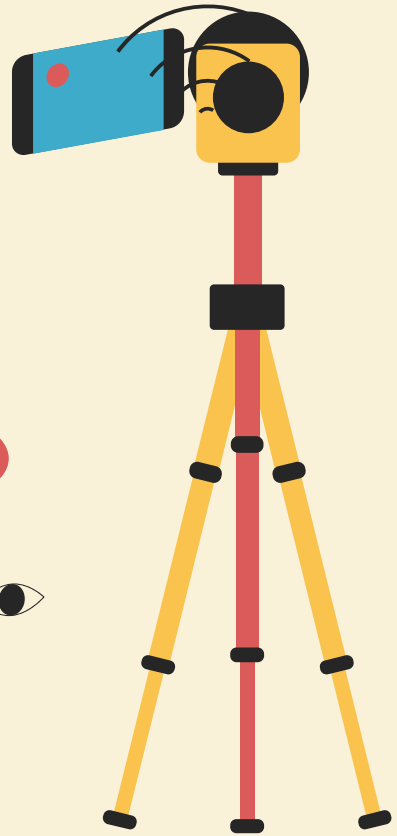
Both advertising and propaganda are legitimate forms of expression, as long as their purpose is explicit and the actors involved are known to the public. The same as their communication intentions.
Advertising is a legitimate type of expression, with the role of information. It brings to public knowledge of business information to assist them in making a decision purchase , while propaganda is a type of persuasive discourse that seeks to influence human behavior in a certain direction.

How is propaganda related to advertising?

Advertising and propaganda are part of what we call the language of persuasion. The objectives of transmitting media messages can be different: they are messages whose purpose is to inform, such as news, but also messages that aim to convince the public to believe something about a subject or to act in a certain way.

Even though propaganda is using persuasive language in order to influence/make an impact on people’s believes and opinions, it is important to understand that we can not label it as being positive or negative.

The positive or negative character of the message is given by the intention of the creator of information



Propaganda

Examples of using propaganda:

Negative purposes:

-using fake news in order to influence opinions on certain subjects
-during the communist period, propaganda was used as a mean of creating beliefs in favor of the leader of that period , it was a way to influence on the attitude of the community towards wrong causes

Positive purposes :

-vaccination campaigns in order to keep people safe from COVID-19
-charitable campaigns (to promote helping unlucky people/donating)
-used for highlighting the importance of media education

What are persuasion techniques used for?

By using persuasion techniques, the creator of a message wants:

-to convince us to buy a product or service (advertising)

-to attract our attention and convince us about the credibility of a person or a organizations (public relations)

- to adhere to a certain vision, faith, policy (advocacy, lobby).

10 persuasion techniques- often used in media communication

1 Association
2 Beautiful people
3 The promise
4 Celebrities
5 Experts
6 Fear
7 Simple people
8 Rehearsal
9 Compassion
10 Humor

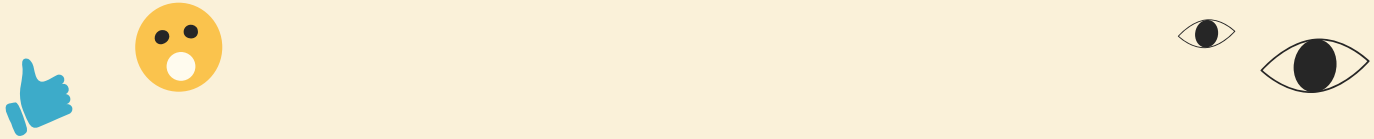
These techniques make the connection between a product, a service or an idea and an emotional sensation positive at the level of the receiver (fun, pleasure, beauty, security, privacy, success, wealth, etc.)

What each persuasion technique means

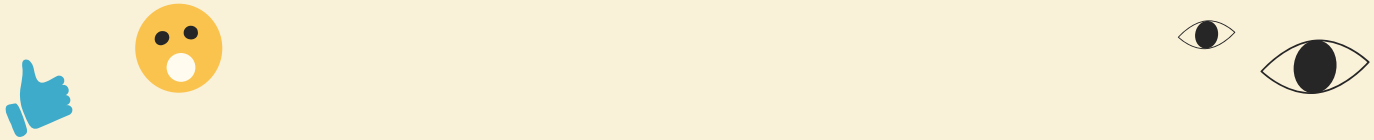
1. Association: This persuasion technique tries to link a product, service, or idea with something already linked or desired by the target audience, such as fun, pleasure, beauty, security, success.
2. Beautiful people: Advertising, TV shows, movies, use characters with beautiful features , to attract our attention and create a beautiful picture of reality - itself can use the image for discussion

3. The Promise: Discounts, coupons, gifts are promises that merchants make to increase their chances of buying
4. Celebrities: We pay more attention, but also credibility to celebrities.

5. Experts: We rely on experts to inform us about things we don't know enough.
6.Fear: The appeal to fear puts the subject presented in antagonism with something we don't like or which we fear and offers us a solution



7. Ordinary People: The testimonies offered by people similar to us gain credibility, for that we identify with them and believe in their sincerity
8. Repetition: Words, sounds, or images can be repeated to reinforce a message, to make it memorable.



9. Compassion: Understanding the pain of others, which sometimes determines the action for solving a problem makes us feel better.
10. Humor: Humor as a persuasive technique can pursue different goals: to enhance positive emotions towards the source of information, to make it pleasant, and thus to increase it credibility, just as it can, through irony, distract from factual information or counter-arguments and increase confidence in a speaker skillful.

Such techniques are often used in media in order to manipulate you, using your emotions(fear, angriness, etc.)

Media manipulation->

Media manipulation

Media manipulation is a series of related techniques in which partisans create an image or argument that favours their particular interests. Such tactics may include the use of logical fallacies, manipulation, outright deception (disinformation), rhetorical and propaganda techniques, and often involve the suppression of information or points of view by crowding them out, by inducing other people or groups of people to stop listening to certain arguments, or by simply diverting attention elsewhere.

Manipulation techniques

- Fear: When a speaker warns his audience that if he doesn't do a certain thing, the situation will become catastrophic, it appeals to our deepest fears. So, attention from the intrinsic value of the idea or program is diverted to removal danger.
- To be successful, such a technique must include four elements:
- 1. a threat;
- 2. a specific recommendation on how the public should react; convincing the public that the suggested action is effective, that if it will act as he is told, the danger will be removed and the public will be convinced that the suggested action is feasible, that it is in his power to carry out the action.
- If the public feels powerless, the recourse to fear will not work.
- On the on the other hand, the more frightened the public, the greater the chances are.

An example of media manipulation:

30% Facebook

45% Instagram

25% Twitter

The best example of how media manipulation works would be the Washington Post investigation on Facebook.

1. **The investigation reveals about facebook what many people have already assumed , more exactely : Facebook's algorithm exploits users' emotions, being programmed to display mainly the content that has the greatest potential to annoy / infuriate / move us to distribute, to comment, to generate more engagement**
2. **Five years ago, the company announced the introduction of a new feature - more feedback buttons, in addition to the classic "like". These reactions express the basic emotions: "love," "haha," "wow," "sad," "angry." At the time, Mark Zuckerberg justified the decision by saying that "people want to be able to show empathy and be able to share a wider range of emotions with other users." By the way (!), The emotional "care" was introduced in the context of the pandemic, after serious reservations from Facebook engineers; reservations about the fact that a sixth button, a sixth reaction "spoils" the overall architecture and disrupts the accuracy measurements performed on a scale of 1 to 5. The PR overcame this reserve, and the sixth emoticon was finally accepted at an acceptable cost in relation to the benefit of doing “something responsible in the pandemic**”.

The company promotes a business model based on increasing engagement by stimulating negative emotions and promoting controversial content.

We cannot dissociate this revelation from the fulminating amplification of the deceptive, truncated or erroneous content, of misinformation, of toxic narratives. Posts containing this type of polluting information trigger negative emotions which, in turn, stimulate the viralization of that content through the contribution of the human factor (regular users who distribute on impulse) and the technological factor (algorithms that promote the display of emotional content). In addition, when we are exposed to a pseudo-informational bombardment at a time when we are under the rule of emotions, the perceived credibility of that pseudo-informational content increases.

In other words, digital platforms are an environment conducive to emotions, and emotions trick us into falling into the trap of false, truncated, erroneous information. It seems that Facebook researchers have reported since 2019 that posts that triggered reactions of anger (the "angry" emoji) contained or amplified misleading or simply false content, toxic messages and poor quality news disproportionately high compared to posts that generated other, more balanced types of reactions.

ECHO CHAMBERS AND FILTER BUBBLES

In discussion about media manipulation we need to become familiar with the terms “echo chambers” and “filter bubbles”

- Echo chambers and filter bubbles are **potent metaphors** that encapsulate widespread public fear that the use of social media may limit the information that users encounter or con- sume online, thus failing to promote a shared experience of free-flowing information

- echo chambers and filter bubbles are the result of the algorithms used by social media

Echo chambers

In discussions of news media, an **echo chamber** refers to situations in which beliefs are amplified or reinforced by communication and repetition inside a closed system and insulated from rebuttal. By participating in an echo chamber, people are able to seek out information that reinforces their existing views without encountering opposing views, potentially resulting in an unintended exercise in confirmation bias. Echo chambers may increase social and political polarization and extremism.

Participants in online discussions may find their opinions constantly echoed back to them, which reinforces their individual belief systems due to the declining exposure to other's opinions. Individuals who participate in echo chambers often do so because they feel more confident that their opinions will be more readily accepted by others in the echo chamber.

This happens because the Internet has provided access to a wide range of readily available information. People are receiving their news online more rapidly through less traditional sources, such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter. These and many other social platforms and online media outlets have established personalized algorithms intended to cater specific information to individuals’ online feeds. This method of curating content has replaced the function of the traditional news editor. The mediated spread of information through online networks causes a risk of an algorithmic filter bubble, leading to concern regarding how the effects of echo chambers on the internet promote the division of online interaction

Filter bubble

A **filter bubble** – a term coined by internet activist Eli Pariser – is a state of intellectual isolation that allegedly can result from personalized searches when a website algorithm selectively guesses what information a user would like to see based on information about the user, such as location, past click-behavior and search history. As a result, users become separated from information that disagrees with their viewpoints, effectively isolating them in their own cultural or ideological bubbles. The choices made by these algorithms are not transparent.
(It basically means that due to the algorithms that are used on social media platforms people are being “trapped” in a loop where they are able to see only what they would want to and opinions similar to their owns.)
Example: Google Personalized Search is a personalized search feature of Google Search, introduced in 2004

Filter bubbles

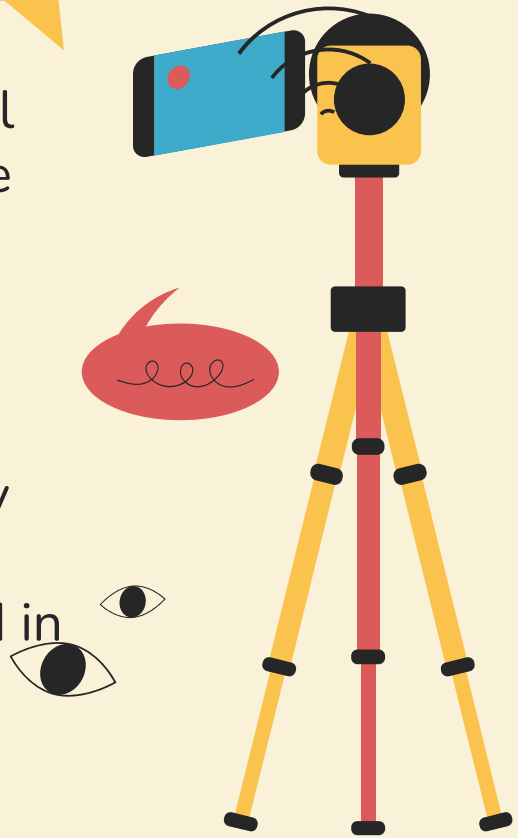
. All searches on Google Search are associated with a browser cookie record. When a user performs a search, the search results are not only based on the relevance of each web page to the search term, but also on which websites the user (or someone else using the same browser) visited through previous search results.[1] This provides a more personalized experience that can increase the relevance of the search results for the particular user. Such filtering may also have side effects, such as the creation of a filter bubble.

Knowing the existence of these manipulation techniques it is essential to understand the process of how media manipulates us and also how to know to avoid being manipulated

5 essential questions

The concepts are transposed in the form of 5 essential questions that help us discover how a media message works, addressing all its facets.

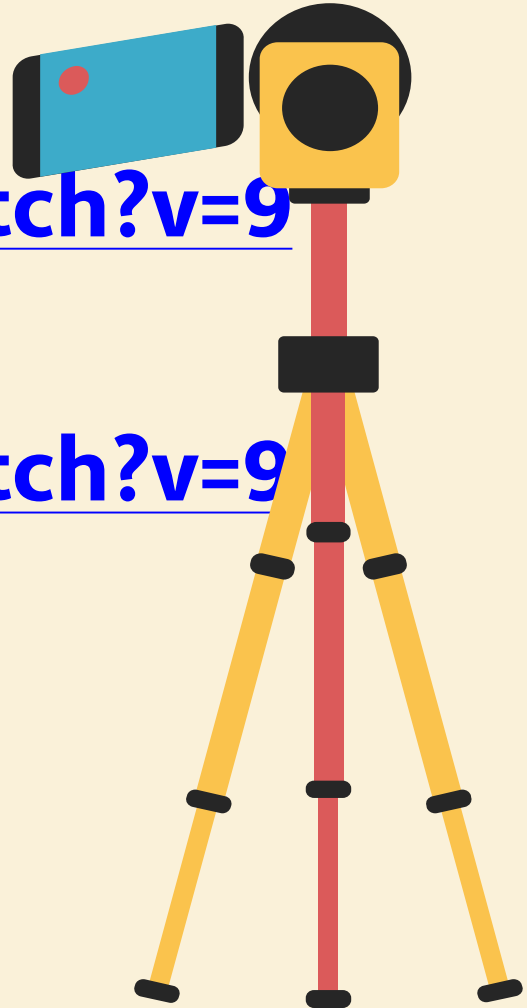
1) Who created this message?
2) What are the creative techniques used to attract attention?
3) How can the message be understood differently by different recipients?
4) What values, lifestyle, points of view are represented in the message? But omitted?
5) Why was this message sent?



1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zKfF40jeCA

2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zKfF40jeCA

3. https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro



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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union