Truth, Disinformation, and Propaganda
Final Report

LOS PIEHOLES

History + Context

A fight for what is truth has arguably instigated all of the wars in human history and interpersonal conflicts around the globe. The human experience is subjective but the paradox that there is shared consciousness where the subjective converges with the objective and therefore there is one standard that motivates people collectively is perhaps the glaring contradiction of the human race. How this flaw in the human psyche plays out, again and again, is fascinating.

What may seem like disinformation to some and bonafide fact to another is where the story becomes more complicated. With religion, there is a layer of faith that although a person may not be able to use the scientific method on prayer, for instance, that does not make the experience any less valid or real because of an emotional attachment to the outcome, which may mean hope.

What drives the adoption of disinformation is just as critical as the piece of information itself. When we look at technology and the speed at which another person's reality could be propagated and spread is alarming. And, this reality could be created as a caveat from a broad sense of truth because of the person's desire to control, manipulate or exploit another person or group and these intentions can be hard for other people to recognize. This could be connected to a person's willingness to not investigate "fake news" or disinformation because thought leaders in their social spheres validate the information and the instinct to survive within their society or group can often time put up blinders to scientifically proven (ie: scientific method...global warming) issues that have the potential to be catastrophic.

Our Risk Zone, Truth, Disinformation, and Propaganda, not only touches on the ways in which tech can be disrupted but is also an age-old theme for which technology has merely amplified.

Trends + Emerging Issues Uncovered

"The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed" spoken by William Gibson in 2003 was our broad approach to analyzing trends and emerging issues through our research for Risk Zone One: truth, propaganda, and disinformation. Through parsing out key trends, by way of our research, we narrowed in on five emerging issues.

The first is how "nefarious" political regimes, around the world, are mobilizing their agendas through digital media channels and manipulating content to create propaganda and or fake news. The result is confusion from the groups of people affected by the contradictory news and punishments if there is resistance.

- The first signal is the punishment of jail if a "disrespectful story" is created in Russia about the government. A law passed in March would make it illegal to create content and the government says it's their way of limiting fake news. Other people call it censorship.

- Last month, in the United States a journalist had his passport held while traveling home from being overseas and the customs agent made the journalist say that he created fake news, against his will, in order to get his passport back. The journalist is a part of a liberal news media outlet and the agent is a conservative and an extension of the leading political party in power, currently.

Second, is the utilizing of media to distort scientific data and then in effect, keep money from further research and resources to protect vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

- The first signal is that with the manipulation of information, what would indicate an environmental catastrophe, such as an airstrike or a bombing, in times of war on a certain area that would then require an amount of cleanup- for instance in the Kosovo crisis a couple decades ago- are subject to interpretation instead of administering support where needed.

- In the early 2000s, an article was published about the dangers of vaccines and an entire generation of anti-vaxxers was made. With the rise of disinformation and an avenue in which to further unfounded studies as facts, diseases that were nearly

eradicated have returned, gaining strength and momentum, thus perhaps reducing the efficacy of the vaccines themselves.

Third, the rise of deep fakes is becoming more difficult for people to distinguish between what is fake and what is not, and this is partly because of innate challenges in the human mind.

- There was a video that was crudely edited to show Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of the US, slurring her words, making it seem like she was drunk. The video spread to a large group of people, quickly. Many political opponents, including the President of the US, responded in a way that referred to them believing the content of the video, which pointed to the idea that the bias of the viewers towards the video helped in the spread of the content.

- Researchers are concerned that with the rise of the deep fake technology, there will be a stress on the human brain and the way memories are stored. The more confident a person is about the information they are taking in, the more it will land in the medial temporal lobe and information that they are not as confident or familiar with land in the frontoparietal region. However, if the information is false or fake, this will influence the way people remember facts from fiction, thus redesigning the entire concept of truth for a person if pervasive enough.

Fourth, Deep fakes are becoming easier to use for the common people as well as solutions are unrolling to help with the new technology.

- Last year, a user on Reddit, named Deepfake, released a tool kit that will help users replace face imagery with that of another face, in order to produce the desired effect. The tool kit is complex, but, easy to use and opens up a new opportunity for the "lay" user to have access to making their own Deepfake technology.

- Fabula AI is a UK start-up company that has developed a product that will be able to detect patterns of fake news to help combat the way that it is spread. The company has rolled out a beta version to the top companies like Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter which will take this technology to live at the end of the year.

Fifth, positive uses of fake news, is also on the rise.

- Deep fake technology may be troubling, but, the power to create art is stronger than ever. With the creation of the most recent Jurassic Park, the technology is being used to create even more life-like dinosaurs than ever before, fully submerging the viewer into what it might be like to encounter such creatures.

- There is a study that is showing that with enough fake stream of information around food, a person could be "brain-washed" into thinking that the diet that they consume that might be unhealthy for them tastes bad and could have the potential to make them only want healthy food. This fake news could actually help a person overcome destructive eating habits and lower diseases for those at risk in this zone.

Lastly, an interesting signal that we are not sure where to place is the manipulation of business numbers, such as cash flows and balance sheets from companies like Alibaba to lure investors. Not sure if the manipulation of truth, in terms of how it impacts the global economy in terms of practices coming out of China, is something that the global market will see more of. With China growing larger, it is curious to see what that power will bring in terms of laws to the international laws in business dealings.

Causal Layered Analysis

Litany

During the 2016 elections in the U.S., the term 'fake news' really picked up traction in the modern vernacular. Content created by advertising, public relations, and journalism falls under the term and could reference pieces of fabricated narratives that could have a wide impact on different communities, including the U.S. and the premise of democracy, by a fair and free press.

While fake news grew from 2016 at being newly understood, now nearly everyone using the internet understand what it is and many people still do not know how to recognize it because it plays so deeply in the psyche, as it is an age-old term.

Pizzagate, a fake news story that had thousands of people convinced that there was a pedophile ring, run by the democratic party, in a

pizza parlor in Washington, DC. This led to a man traveling to DC and open fire inside the restaurant.

Snopes, an online urban-legends debunking site, created in the early 1990s, came into popularity at the rise of 2016 elections and has been cited by numerous news reporting agencies to validate their news and facts as truthful.

Less than half of kids can distinguish between what is fake news and what is not, according to a Common-Sense Media's Report. Most teenagers are very skeptical at what they see online, with only 7% thinking news shared by people they don't know is accurate.

Systemic

On a systemic level, fake news emboldens those who want to participate in news sharing, yet do not maybe do their research or have time to investigate further. It also becomes an avenue for people to manipulate other people, with spreading known untruths. This could be on a small and large scale, with governments knowingly spreading false information in order to influence the citizens. However, the topic of fake news contradicts another person feeling like they have autonomy in their thinking, so proving a piece of information can get complicated. These are the ways fake news is created and spread

- Social Media
- Online news reporting agencies
- PR campaigns reporting fake info
- Governments
- Marketing Tools by companies
- Word of Mouth

Additionally, these are the ways that people might conflate the truth for themselves and not consider the implications

- Socially fitting in
- conspiracy theorist
- ideologues (using fake news to bolster ideas that are not grounded in fact)
- Adopting ideas to be perceived 'thought leaders'

Worldview

On the world-view level, there are 2 frames that drive the conversation around fake news. First, the "social" component. For the most of the entire foundation of the Human civilization, very few people could read or write and instead relied on a religious figure or political leader to tell them how to think about society and religion. It is hard-wired in a person's DNA to defer to the group in order to feel confident in an ideology. When news that is commonplace in the community is challenged or threatened, especially by an outsider, there is skepticism and not always an adoption of a new framework, even if it is correct, categorically. How might a person be fluid in the way they take in news, being broadly open to the idea the information is not true.

Second, the "environment" component to 'fake news' is that entire communities rely on the furthering of disinformation to carry a broader message, which could be rooted in a particular religion or local doctrine. How might a person balance the partial, tangible truths, that is fundamental to many of their ideologies around how to be a human, with the onslaught of fake news that uses a framework which in theory if applied to common themes around them, could disrupt the natural order of their communities?

Myths + Metaphors

- No faith, no god. Know faith, know god.
- The just shall live by faith
- Truth will set you free
- I'll see it when I believe it
- Yeast that becomes the crust

Scenarios

2x2 (Aksharika)

Story One: Everything's Hunky Dory – Honest & Financially Stable Humans

With world war 3 having struck earth in the form of revenge and karma, people have realized the true potential of damage that fake news and propaganda withholds.

This massive event that left a permanent scar on history changed the way people treated each other. Brotherhood bonded everyone together again and everything was fair and square.

Everyone got the salaries they deserved and everyone was sick of corruption already, that their unity abolished it, leaving no more greed or animosity amongst the human race.

"Right to Truthfulness" is now a birth right and movements like "anti-fakism" became popular with over 6 billion people signing up and swearing to abide by it.

The guy who was behind spreading fake rumors about Hillary Clinton in the pizza gate scandal came forward and was forgiven. He and many other con artists now work for the government to help abolish fake news off the internet. The government also passed a law for agencies to not acquire any data from the people without their permission. But of course, for a price.

Every time a website or app asks users for personal information, they pay them for it and users can also choose which terms and conditions they wish to agree with and still use the service.

Story Two: The Big Cleanup – Honest & Financially Unstable Humans

Given the extremes that people have taken spreading fake news to, humans have reached a point where they regret having led the world to such a place and are trying everything in their power to rectify what they have done.

The media is now as genuine as it can be, but for all the in-factual news they have already spread, people are suing media agencies left, right and center, so now they are buried in debts.

Just so companies like Facebook, Google and many other service providers where users have fed in their personal information want to stay away from any legal action against them, they are now "returning" users their data.

Fabula AI, the startup that has been trying to combat fake news for years now has joined hands with the government to bring many con artists to justice. The government has now started a program inside the jail to help these con artists undo their wrong doings. It is of course a fresh start, but they too are paying the price for what they have done. They now help protect the United States from fake news being spread about the US from other parts of the world.

Story Three: It Gets Ugly - Dishonest & Financially Stable Humans

Being dishonest is just a way of life now. Every scheme or propaganda brings money into your account. You get paid to spread false news that would help agencies have even more control over people than ever before. And for the honest humans, there's nothing left. If you try to be honest in this new age, you loose your money.

The new and widely recognized currency is the Dcoin (the Data coin) where you're required to buy your groceries through data. The very few of the Honests that are left are struggling to live as they don't want to share their data. They don't have jobs anymore since every corporation requires them to sign FDAs (Full Data Access) before they sign up for jobs.

Deep Fakes has become a whole new industry now. There is a very high demand for deep fake artists. The BDF (Baccalaureate Degree in Deep Fakes) - a new field of specialization has emerged where artists are trained to perfection in creating fake images and videos.

Everyone's making money by just providing a 3D scan of their body and the deep fake technology allows them to 3D print robots of themselves so they can be in multiple places at once. New start up ventures are coming up with technologies to identify a real human since half of the earth's population are now fakes, but not many want to fund such ideas since many want to continue to use their clones.

With the VFX industry booming, every pretty face out there is now cloned by deep fake artists. Probably the only people who have no jobs anymore are professional actors.

Story Four: Doomsday – Dishonest & Financially Unstable Humans

Disinformation has reached it's saturation point. Humans can no longer be trusted. The Government has installed chips in humans that detect when they are lying - that in turn reflect the Quality Percentage (QP) of humans. Which means, the government now owns all humans. It doesn't matter what you do or where you work. Your salary first goes to the government and only the QP of your salary is paid to you every month.

Facebook, whatsapp and many other social media platforms now makes their users go through rounds of face recognition softwares that detect whether they are lying about a post they are about to upload or message they are about to forward.

So for every fake WhatsApp forward one manages to send without validating the information, money is deducted out of their account and they will get paid only if the chip inside them detects if they have been truthful to their country.

Deep fakes and photoshopped memes have become so insensitive to people's private information now, that creating or laughing at memes with photoshopped public figures is now considered a crime.

A new government founded body called "deepfakepermits.org" has been minting money in the entertainment industry. Now films need to apply for using deek fakes in movies through this organization by paying $5000 per deep fake.

Alternative Futures (Michelle)

Story One: Growth – Continuation – Business as usual and more of the status quo

We can talk to pets! The new technology boasted as it hit the headlines. Petspeak was a company started in 2017 by Dr. Con from Northern Arizona University. And now, 20 years later, the AI technology was ready to hit the market, on a grand scale. The virtual market places had been taking pre-orders for months, now, as consumers clamored at their wearable devices to release the highly anticipated technology. With just a press of a button, the

application would listen to your favorite dog or cats bark or meow and translate it into English.

And, would record your response and translate it back. Dr. Con had spent 10 years training the algorithm with thousands of videos of cats and dogs as well as integrating neuroscience data.

Isadora sat with her dog Francis and when the day arrived, she turned on her wrist wrap device and recorded a brief yet sweet message. "I love you, Bubba" and giggled as she watched her dog's face loosen, his jaw open and his tongue hang out of his mouth while the barks from her wrist sounded loudly in the quiet room.

She was one of millions that day that canceled their plans to connect with their pets. And not just for the jaunt to the park or dog beach, but, sat and talked and talked. Like two souls that had been living side by side for years, but only just learned to speak to each other would. It changed the world forever and was perhaps one of the most exciting days in a millennium.

Story Two: Constraint – Limits and Discipline – behaviors to adapt to growing internal or environmental limits

The Petspeak technology pushed animals and humans to connect verbally like they had intuitively for thousands of years. The implementation grew and with that growth, the quantity of euthanized animals declined. Less animals were being bred for décor and it seemed that there was a considerable amount of satisfaction with the new product. But, just as soon as the accessibility of the product became mainstream, there seem to be a shift in how the animals were communicating. The AI programming seemed to get the messaging wrong around who was serving whom. The demands on the owners increased, while man's best friend wouldn't consider an alternative perspective. "No", literally no longer meant no.

Isadora and Francis were out for their evening stroll. Isadora had been at work all day and she came home to a stir-crazy pup. He wanted to run and frolic and she was nursing a bad cold. She wanted to sit and snuggle on the couch as soon as possible. But, Francis could not empathize. His mind focused on playing ball and when she tried to reason with him, the young canine pushed back. At this point, dogs were not being led on leashes anymore- dogs thought them to be cruel. So, Isadora was being led by Francis, hypothetically, because the

infrastructure of dogs running free was still that they would get picked up by the animal control or the owner would get a fine.

Story Three: Transformation – Decline and Collapse – system degradation or failure modes as crisis emerges

News spread around the world that pets were no longer trainable. The Petspeak device created a comfort in the relationship with the pets that made the owners more and more enslaved to their pet's demands. People were unable to go to work. The pets couldn't be caged and It became clear that while this technology was helpful it created power struggle. And, while man had for centuries doted on their companions, even cleaning after them, there was always a reward and this system of unconditional love, but this began to unravel.

Isadora's friend, Ella, shared that her dog, Lola, started looking at her, in a creepy way, one day. She asked her what was wrong and Lola demanded she get up or she would bite her. Frightened for her safety, Ella got up and made Lola a snack. And now Ella couldn't leave her side. She tried to leave her once but was surrounded by a pack of dogs that told her she needed to get home and they snarled at her until she was with her Lola. The series of barks in the air now a constant howling, non-stop communication unifying the canine species could be heard everywhere. An efficient propaganda engine that was being used to recruit more dogs into the ideology that man was in fact there to serve and had no alternative purpose but to be at the bottom of the pack.

Story Four: Collapse – Transformation – new tech, business or social factors that change the game

Petspeak helped animals connect with their pets but created an entirely new problem. Who was the master and who was the subordinate? It took a while to shift this issue. The false information spread was that man was going to just serve their pets, and it was discovered that the AI, over the years of development, failed to set certain boundaries within the technology language and much of what was derived was left to interpretation by the animals themselves. The lack of policy around the technology soon became a focal point for legislatures. New laws were passed that were written with the dogs themselves. And, a very first pets bill of rights passed ensuring certain cruel practices would discontinue, such as leashes. And, after a few updates and a correction within the programming, the dogs became more cooperative and less driven to put the humans at the

bottom of the pack pecking order. The cats, however, refused to adjust and most of their humans said they always felt in servitude to them anyhow.

Systems Mythology (Ben)

Story One: Blue

My Dear Theodore,

I am writing to share a story with you. This past summer, you remarked on the limits of your self-expression. I was deeply saddened by the thought that you have never been able to fully express yourself and have never felt the liberating nature of such action.

About 15 years ago, the world reached a dire state in which every layer of our society had been turned into upheaval. Many of us knew that greed was at the root of our problems, but had unfortunately allowed our authority to take action dimish over the previous decades. Corporations possessed nearly everything, including being perceived as owning those who operated the world's governments, as well as every means common folk had to access information. Our world nearly descended into catastrophe. There were threats of civil war, wars amongst nations, and great power struggles over the distribution of wealth.

Have you ever been curious about human obsolescence? I know it's hard to imagine, but I must say I am thankful the singularity has come and past. This transformation of machines' standing within our society forced every member of our species to unify in developing a future where humans and machines may coexist. Though the times were desperate, I believe that moderating human behavior through machine governance will be looked upon with little consequence as your generation carries the mantle of the human future.

I love you so much and am happy we get to share life together.

   - Grampy

Story Two: Red

"That's it!" Having just turned 13 and completed building my new rig, I'm finally ready to become vocal in my community. The interface I've been using was a hand-me-down from a cousin on Long Island. It was good enough for the insulated environment of elementary school, but

my parents are expecting me to mature and navigate life outside of the home with greater independence now. This afternoon, on my way home from school, I'm planning to stop by the register and put my name down for next week's battle.

I've been watching and listening to all of these old performers from 50 years ago who battled their way into the mainstream, taking on civil rights topics and waxing poetic about the trials and tribulations of city life. Needless to say, I'm inspired. My main concern is not the performance of the speech processing within my interface, but instead, the ability for more advanced opponents to attack my system's limited defenses. I've got to get into the proverbial ring and start competing now if I want to be prepared to thwart the types of manipulation and over-powering voices my parents have shared with me since we first adapted our interfaces 11 years ago.

Story Three: Green

There's a fierce debate occurring at the Tropical Futures Institute right now. The tribe of Dijiwali Balibali is outraged that the Governor of the Unsunken Territories of Indonesia has taken up consideration for a computer interface policy that would see population-wide adoption over the next three years.

Approximately 63% of the population across these territories has yet to adopt any interface. Another 28% of the population is using interface technology that is more than two years old. To many readers, this may seem astonishing, but in our research, this is not atypical for island nations around the globe. Furthermore, the cost of roughly $24.30 per interface is nearly four times the annual salary of the average adult within these markets.

Some of the Governor's considerations have to do with the increasing scarcity of food and water, the lack of competitiveness of labor that might attract new industry to local markets, and increased cost of educating populations where human-computer interfaces have not become pervasive.

I sat down to speak with one of the Dijiwali Balibali elders and learned that their most significant concern is the types of manipulation they may succumb to once their community's brains become connected to "the cloud god." At the surface, it may appear this is a highly valid claim; however, we continue to find cases where those who have not adopted interfacing technology can circumvent community

guidelines and spread dissenting ideas about the better interests of humans.

We will update as further news becomes available.

Story Four: Purple

Today, we are proud to announce the latest breakthrough technology from the Centre for Human-Computer Cooperation. Br0ker is the latest in a long series of advancements aimed at restoring civility and increasing the integrity of human-to-human interactions. For many years now, there has been growing concern that untrustworthiness would result in an algorithmic takeover of our justice system as it has been a difficult journey for the machine members of our society to reconcile the high cost of human manipulation.

With Br0ker set for global release on Day 25, Month 12, Year 34 of the 3rd millennium, all current and future members of our society will have the luxury of relying on their artificial intelligence counterparts via current interface technologies to preempt any interaction with another human. These preemptive actions will identify mutual objectives, inform human disposition, and share commonalities for the sake of mutual empathy...all before any two persons interact. With 99.9% certainty, we can assert that the future of human-to-human interactions will result in mutually desirable outcomes and avoid any potentially polarizing topics in the interest of each relationship or happenstance being to the mutual benefit of the parties involved. Lastly, we'd like to thank the many other forms of intelligence around the globe, and across our planetary system for their patience and unwavering support of the human species. We stand united in the cause to create harmony between Earth, Humans, and Machines.