



BEYOND 'fake news'



Lucile Stengel, Sapna Solanki

India WhatsApp killings: Why mobs are lynching outsiders over fake videos



WATCH ABOVE: The first portion of this staged abduction has been used to fuel child-lifting rumours in India.

There is growing concern a steady flow of news reports.

At least 20 individuals have been lynched or beaten to death in incidents across India, while hundreds on thousands have incurred injuries, many to severe cases, including of being child abductees. Dozens more have been injured in similar attacks.

Incidents have been reported for long outlands, stretching to as far as...

Study: On Twitter, false news travels faster than true stories

Research project finds humans, not bots, are primarily responsible for spread of misleading information.

Three MIT scholars have found that false news spreads more rapidly on the site than real news does – and by a substantial margin.

...false significantly faster, faster, deeper, and more broadly than...

How Facebook's Rise Fueled Chaos and Confusion in Myanmar

The social network exploded in Myanmar, driving fear and violence to a country emerging from military rule.

The site would have helped fuel Facebook's rise in Myanmar.

1 Year of WIRED for \$10
Only one month.
...the site would have helped fuel Facebook's rise in Myanmar.

The rise of the company in 2011 is a result of its early adoption of a mobile-first strategy. The company's success was largely due to its focus on mobile devices.

The company's success has largely resulted from its early adoption of a mobile-first strategy. The company's success was largely due to its focus on mobile devices.

Fake News Is Poisoning Brazilian Politics. WhatsApp Can Stop It.

By Cristina Tardaglia, Fabricio Benevenuto and Pablo Ortollado
Ms. Tardaglia, Mr. Benevenuto and Mr. Ortollado are the authors of a new report on misinformation in Brazil.

You have 1 free article remaining. Ends soon.



A screenshot of a news article from BBC News. The headline reads "Fake news worries 'are growing' suggest: BBC poll". The article is dated 22 September 2017. Below the headline is a small image of a newspaper with the words "FAKE NEWS" in large red letters. The article text is partially visible, mentioning "Fake news worries 'are growing' suggest: BBC poll".

Fake news, in the news.

Gone missing, the ordinary citizen.

The agency and responsibility of the citizen who consumes and shares 'fake news'.

What happens when they receive 'fake news'? Why do they share it?





Why does the ordinary citizen share 'fake news'?

Approach



Ethnographic interviews

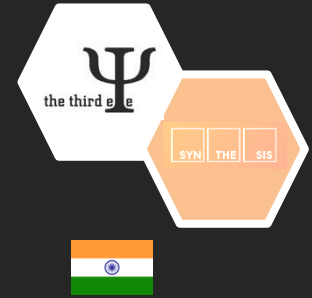
Content analysis
- WhatsApp & Facebook feeds

Network mapping

Co-funders



Research partners



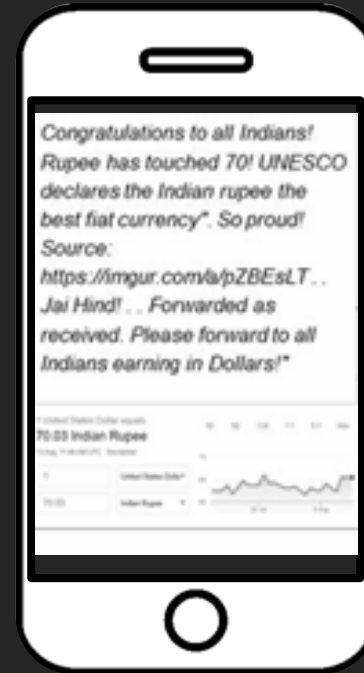


Scams/scares

'If a thief forces you to take money out of the ATM (...) punch your PIN backwards (...) the machine will immediately alert without the robber's knowledge. SHARE IT AND MAKE EVERYONE AWARE!!!'

National pride

'Congratulations to all Indians! (...) Unesco declares the Indian rupee the best fiat currency. So proud!. Source: <https://imgur.com> (...) Please forward..'



Why are
people
sharing
this?

The breeding ground, a changing media environment



The digital deluge



From consuming news a few times a day, for a long time, to consuming news a lot of times, for a short time.



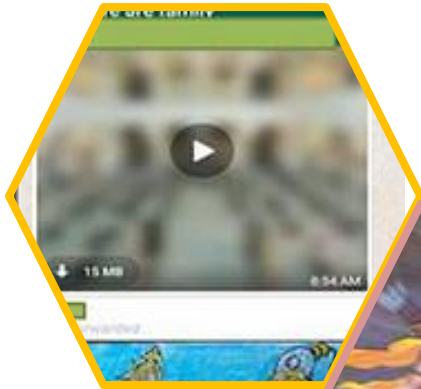
Scepticism about the news media



Blurred definition of 'news' driven by Facebook and Whatsapp



The consequences: coping mechanisms



**Selective
consumption**



**Preference
for images**



**Sender
primacy**



Source agnosticism



“... You don't want, but still, the posts are coming through, right?”

So, why do people share without verifying in the first place?



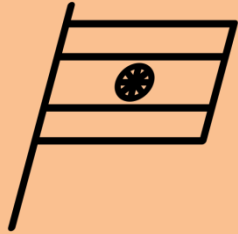
Sharing to verify



Sharing as civic duty
- in context of low trust in the media



The reasons for sharing without verifying in the first place



Sharing for
nation-building



Sharing as an expression of identity





Sharing for nation-building

‘Nasa has released this rare historical image showing the color of the rivers after Holi (...) Nowadays people are using Chinese colours which contain harmful metals (..) Please forward this to all your friends and request them to use only Indian made colours. (..)Jai Hind! Proud to be Indian!’

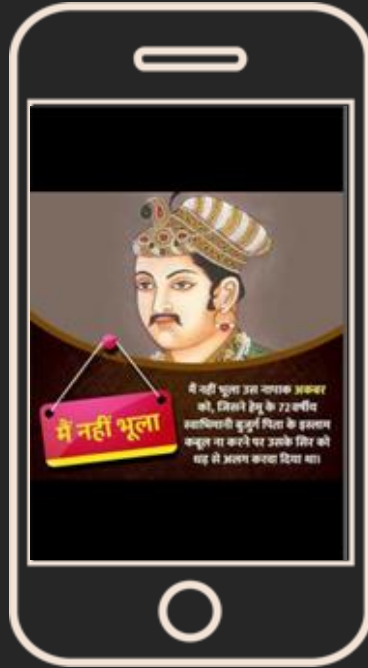
Sharing as an expression of identity

expressions of Hindu nationalism/Hindutva on the right

Anti-minority (less commonplace)

"I haven't forgotten that impure Akbar, who asked Hemu's elderly 72 year old father to accept Islam and when he didn't accept beheaded him."

- anti Muslim animosity
- often using misleading readings of history



Hindu power/superiority

"Nasa existed since Vedic times(...) the name Nasa itself is a Sanskrit word(...) The Americans found NASA and claimed as their own."

- The supposed glories of the ancient Vedic age, suggest that many great achievements of humankind, had their roots in ancient India
- Also some, suggesting that India is superior to the West



**On the left,
no unifying identity other than anti BJP, Modi, or affiliations.**



Anti BJP, Modi, or its affiliates

“See ‘deshdrohis’ who is the real traitor”.

- Facebook post showing PM Modi, and replacing the image of then Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif with that of Hafiz Saeed, founder of the Pakistan based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
- Deshdrohi is the term often used in right wing circles to call out their opponents for lacking sufficient patriotism

To summarise

1/ Audiences are aware of misinformation, but as a problem for society, not really a problem they are facing themselves

2/ The link between consumption and sharing is broken

- Sharing can happen without consumption – largely due to the flood of digital information, and the coping mechanisms developed to deal with this.

3/ Fact-checking is limited

- Fact-checking on news websites rarely happens – people sometimes use TV and Google search – but most times heuristics will be used to fact-check
- Emotions and beliefs trump facts

4/ More ethno-nationalism and greater political division = more fake news

Thank you

