

Economy of the Contemporary Information War

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Zero Marginal Costs of the Information	2
Disinformation and the Density of the Internet Environment	3
Manipulation with the E-identity	5
Conclusions: Contemporary Disinformation War and the Open Society	6
Bibliography.....	7

Introduction

The Internet and social media were the promise of an uninterrupted interpersonal exchange of ideas and an universal forum. It was projected to be an ideal place for the free artistic creation unrestrained by commercial attitude, and of exchange of thoughts and self-organization. The Internet gave a promise of fulfilling the Utopia of direct democracy¹. In the nineties of the last century and even in early 2000's, attention was paid to the technological possibilities of the Internet: the speed of information transfer, the utility of the economy, administration and entertainment. The importance of the Internet, however, has not only emerged in the field of technology but has become a cause of a profound social change.

It has also become a laggard, terrorist tool of an organized crime and propaganda war and influence policy on an unprecedented scale². It made the Internet an important factor in international politics, albeit in a completely different way than expected. Internet and social media, contrary to the intentions of their creators, are today a serious threat to democracy and the rule of law, as well as to world peace.

Numerous aspects of this phenomenon are already being analyzed³. Too little attention is devoted to economic issues that allow disinformation on such a scale. Generally and preliminarily, it is important to note that disinformation warfare encompasses enormous financial resources, while at the same time substantially reducing the costs of dissemination / misinformation, while it is not known how to combat misinformation, and therefore it is not known how to spend money even if they are found.

It is also important to use terminology which, due to the novelty of the phenomenon, is misleading and not quite precise. There are terms such as hybrid war, cyber security or more recent propaganda war and information war.

In essence, however, it is all about mass and deliberate dissemination of misinformation. This way of doing things can be achieved by a party that is ready to break the most basic principles of international order and the value of an open, democratic society. Whoever recognizes such a principle and wants to sustain it cannot use misinformation. So the situation is basically asymmetrical. Therefore, the name of the propaganda war (or information war) is misleading, because the war in which the weapon is large-scale disinformation can only be lead by one side, while the attacked must invent other effective means of countermeasures.

¹BenklerYohai (2006), The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Tranforms Markets and Freedom.

²Belarussian-American analyst EvgenuyMorozovdescribes the delay and the beginnings of Moscow disinformation war, In: EvgenyMorozov (2012), The Net Delusion:Dark Side of the Internet Freedom

³The most important report appears to be: <http://cepa.org/reports/winning-the-Information-War>; Significance of the information war is however noted by many institutions incl. the government agencies <http://www.stratcomcoe.org/social-media-tool-hybrid-warfare>; <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/dec/28/czech-republic-to-fight-fake-news-with-specialist-unit>

When such measures are not worked out, it is also difficult to allocate sufficient funds to offset the costs of the opponent. Deceptive warfare gives allocate resources to the "density of the internet environment" and "manipulation of e-identity"

Zero Marginal Costs of Information

Jeremi Rifkin - enthusiast dominated by computers and Internet postmodernity - announced the end of capitalism on the basis of the statement that the costs of many branches of production were greatly reduced. This Rifkin's society is supposed to be able to produce on such a mass scale and so cheaply that the unit cost is approaching zero. The Internet fundamentally changes entire segments of production and the labour market. Visible examples of this are the difficulties experienced by the printed press and the expansion of the Internet as a source of information. While Rifkin's far-reaching generalizations of the so-called "Internet of Things" or "sharing economics" are far-reaching, it is obvious that dissemination of information is a fact of course.

This phenomenon is connected with the transition from the "spectacle society", which theoreticians of communication consider the dominant of the twentieth century, to "the society of the network."

The performance of the "spectacle society" can be accurately depicted with the help of metaphor of the theatre, where there are few actors on the central stage (sender), and a large audience sits in front. A relatively small number of active broadcasters - thanks to radio and television - send a message to the mass of passive recipients.

The Internet, as a means of communication, transforms the "society of the spectacle" into a "network society". The network society does not have a central scene. Each participant is located near some node, but has very limited ability to observe it in its entirety. He does not know where to get the information from, but can reproduce it itself and even create it. Not all senders, of course, find more recipients, but at the same time the role of the broadcaster in comparison to the society of the show is in many ways profoundly transformed.

The difference between the spectacle society and the society of the network is also, inter alia, the fact that the passive receiver of the spectacle society is capable of identifying the sender (the author of the spectacle) to a large extent, while in the network society the sender may be anonymous or effective under counterfeited or falsified identity. The best example of this is an anonymous Facebook profile, but it may well be an expanded information portal.

While the traditional broadcaster was the author of the original content, to which dissemination needed resources available to only a few and requiring significant financial outlay, in the public network, dissemination of almost every content becomes easier and much cheaper.

The spectacle society obviously shaped the identity of its participants. Commenting on the spectacle, to a greater or lesser degree, for everyone, was central to social discourse and narrative creation, no matter how far they might otherwise remain in conflict.

Network society is to a large extent devoid of such a central discourse. Unrelated and scattered narratives and discourses are formed around the various nodes of the network. While potentially interacting interactively with a large number of other network participants, the participant is at one of its nodes. A community is formed around a specific network node, often isolated from communities associated with other nodes in the network. The network creates the conditions in which society begins to share in separate and often mutually exclusive circles. Not without such a feature of the Internet is called a "new tribalism."⁴

⁴Godwin Seth, *We are All Weird* (2011)

In the spectacle dominated by print, television and radio, the costs of disseminating information in relation to the cost of producing them were high. The cost of buying paper, printing and distribution of a multi-transaction journal has repeatedly exceeded the editorial costs. Equally evident are the revolutionary changes in the advertising and advertising market as a result of the Internet.

In the world of the Internet, there is no need for a big newspaper to directly and effectively influence the public opinion of another country. Similarly, a terrorist organization may comment on a terrorist act in its social networks. Information that needs to be produced for this purpose does not generate significant costs.

Disinformation and Density of the Internet Environment

The Internet environment, as a communication space, can be materially characterized by the density (frequency, availability) of its content. What does it mean? Searching for anything on the Internet is a paging of site lists that have a specific content containing the key word. An example of such an action is every search engine. The easiest way to find what is on the list of the first page of your computer screen and what is most likely to be repeated.

The Internet is too large and extensive to allow any single entity to dominate the entire network with its own content. However, this is possible with respect to the specified topics or key words, or a specific audience. The point is that the desired content appears on the Web at the right place and at the right time. Creating such a well-targeted density of the internet environment is by no means a mechanical exercise. It's not just about the impact (though important), but also about the correct recognition of what content and passwords and which environments you need to hit in order to get the desired effect. For example, the followers of the French right may be delivered the mems about the defence of Christianity, and the post-communist Left in Germany, referring to the pacifism that defended peace threatened by US militarism, and in Slovakia with contents referring to German domination. In the EU, similarly, provocative minor incidents (in which there are only a few individuals) disseminated through the Internet, such as YouTube, are disproportionate. Correct framing plus the payment of a large number of "likes" allows you to create an impression on an unassigned audience that the event is mass-based and enjoys broad support⁵. In the society of the spectacle you will achieve a situation in which the advantage of information in a foreign area was practically impossible. In the network society, thanks to the internet, this becomes achievable. Appropriate financial means are capable of ensuring that the density of certain content in politically sensitive areas can be sufficiently high. Even if such expenditures are significant, they are anyway incomparably lower than the cost of any classic warfare, because the technological production of information itself tends to zero costs.

The Kremlin's information war today is worth comparing with the propaganda conducted by Soviet Russia, emphasizing analogies and, above all, differences. The point of reference for propaganda of Soviet Russia was communist ideology. This made it difficult to shape the message, because it had to be consistent with the whole ideology. Propagators were primarily cadres of the communist movement. Their maintenance caused huge costs and related further restrictions. Today's Kremlin authorities are deprived of these restrictions. In the current disinformation war, the Kremlin does not have to rely on any ideological constraint on it. Mass misinformation serves to spread the truth of lies and even nonsense, depending on the temporal needs of psychosocial influences. While traditional propaganda, referring to a compact and fairly uniform ideology, was aimed at persuasion in the name of specific ideas, the current task is primarily social disintegration. The content of the disinformation war is varied and often contradictory, as they are directed to different milieus and are to divide, provoke conflicts, create disputes (eg, "Wolyń slaughter" strengthens the Polish-Ukrainian antagonism and give the impression that the authorities neglect the memory of the victims) . They are distributed in very different

⁵ Model character is being realised by quasi-party "Zmiana" during their demonstrations in front of the Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw.

places and are to be found in different environments, often with absolutely contradictory views⁶. The Internet also allows for better linking of propaganda activities with provocation and criminal activity. The fact that Soviet Russia has used provocation and cooperated with terrorists has been repeatedly described⁷. Such a way of policy-making by the Kremlin continues today⁸. It is only reinforced and streamlined by the mechanisms of the disinformation war. This war propaganda machine is governed by recognizable rules: mass dissemination of desirable information (irrelevant to the state of affairs, a specific, useful information for the propaganda message), the rule of emotional stimulation (bringing individuals or social groups into a state where they act unreflectively and irrational), the rule of comprehensibility (message is simplified, in black and white colours), the rule of supposed obviousness (building associations with commonly known stereotypes and myths)⁹. It involves manufacturing often opening up false information, fragmenting the public, creating the impression that a small minority is the majority, evoking an atmosphere of danger and intimidation, introducing chaos into the channels of plural communication, open society.

Manipulation with an E-identity

It is important to note that despite the intensity of interactive communication that the Internet and social networks allow, it is most often done without the physical presence of another human being. Massive exposure, which is the experience of a social media participant, is paradoxically connected with the experience of shamed privacy in dealing with others. To show the nature of this shamed privacy, attention should be paid to the act of introducing itself to social networks. In the traditional way this is done with the help of Name or name and surname). This is a sufficient and sufficient condition for the identification of another human. This uniqueness of name is an important and essential means of communication in the traditional way. Presentation is also a turning point. It's different in social networks and it's double-edged. An individual participant of the network, even if anonymous, provides a large amount of data. Its features reveal the biographical material produced and this psychosocial profile of the author can be read from the outside¹⁰. It is used for sophisticated analysis tools that use Big Data¹¹. A participant in a social network communicating with his or her smartphone, tablet, or computer with another participant may be guilty of privacy. But the situation can be completely asymmetrical. A single participant in social networks cannot really stay anonymous, but cannot tell who he or she is communicating with and is exposed to manipulation by anonymous institutions. An individual participant without sufficient technical and financial means is unable to identify who he is dealing with. In fact, on the other side, perhaps, a whole team of experts from manipulation reads his psychogramme and strives to shape his beliefs and induce him to act¹². This asymmetric discretion and anonymity of the Internet can be used to manipulate not only individuals, but also to create less visible groups and environments that are hidden on the Internet, can be mobilized to active activities at a time of

⁶ Therefore toxic mems play significantly different role compared to ordinary lie.

⁷ An example of this is the financing of red brigades in Germany. An example of provocation is the acts of vandalism in Jewish cemeteries in West Germany and explaining this fascist atmosphere of political life.

⁸ <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/sterowana-przez-kreml-mafia-przenika-europe/28jytz7>

⁹ A brilliant example is the provocation of dissemination of pseudo information about alleged kidnapping of Russian girls by refugees in Berlin. This provocative pseudoinformation, aimed at mobilizing the Russian-speaking minority in Germany and part of a propaganda campaign directed against Chancellor Merkel, gained immediate support on the Internet. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/russland-aufklaerung-nach-moskauer-art-1.2869744> <http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/aktuell/Bundesregierung-Russland-beeinflusst-deutsche-Oeffentlichkeit,einflussnahme102.html>

¹⁰ The game is a special role for junior networkers and the maturing of the "digital native" generation. But what is the imagined personality in almost inevitably becomes a more or less intense game with its own real personality.

¹¹ Roman Wolański, *Złowrogomocdanych*, Chip.pl, Maj 2017. OCEAN model

¹² This situation is used, among others, by terrorist networks. The issue of interacting with the individual via the Internet has been suggested in Forsyth's novel "Killer Letter"

political need. It may be an environment of extreme nationalists or left-wing extremists who can be accessed from outside to influence or encourage them to participate properly¹³.

Conclusions: Contemporary Disinformation War and Open Society

Democracy is largely conditioned by the openness and transparency of the social spectacle. Internet and social networks produce mechanisms that facilitate clandestine and secretive activities. This also provides new ways of interacting with individuals and entire communities. For many of the major reasons for the war of disinformation, Western democracies cannot respond to similar measures used by the Kremlin. Massive use of lies would lead to self-harm. An organized and highly funded campaign of lies and pseudo information cannot be effectively countered. Straightening lies and fighting pseudo information cannot be effective. Paradoxically, the entire technological infrastructure of the Internet is the creation of Western societies. This enabled the development of technology (which involved huge investments), but dissemination of information / disinformation using this infrastructure takes place at a disproportionately low cost. While efforts by democratic governments have been and are to expand the Internet, so that the public has the widest access to it, the Kremlin has decided to invest in the creation of toxic content for political use. These investments allow you to drown the online environment around passwords useful for the Kremlin's policy and influence selected groups or individuals to gain their support or support for their own agents of influence. Paradoxically, today Russia, apparently much weaker in many respects than Soviet Russia, can spend relatively more money on a war traditionally called propaganda (and indeed disinformation) and despite the fall of communist ideology may be in dispute over the fundamental principles that govern the world order, a dangerous opponent of the West.

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¹³ More detailed analysis in our previous report: „Wojna informacyjna prezydenta Putina”, http://akademia.krzyzowa.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=77:wojna-informacyjna-prezydenta-putina-raport-akademii-europejskiej-krzyzowa&catid=12&lang=pl&Itemid=211