

Disinformation

Disinformation is not a lie but a form of mixed facts and incorrect contexts blended into one, having the idea of the message be a part of a much larger plan. Disinformation should not be confused with misinformation, while it is a form of misleading facts, it drags more the information given adding falsifications. We have been able to see disinformation more than once in our generation, and with social media playing a huge factor in how our lives play out day to day, it is hard avoiding disinformation. We could see and compare many similarities between our current period to the disinformation tactics used during the Cold War, like with Covid-19, our presidency, protests, and overall generation. Each current issue has had its own disinformation lead and many have believed it. The biggest similarity between the Cold War and Internet Trolls/Bots of today is their form of delivering this disinformation to the public.

During the Cold War, much of their disinformation tactics took time and effort to release and run accordingly. In “Cold War Disinformation: New Revelations about Operation NEPTUNE from Czech Archives” by Calder Walton, Walton explains in detail the NEPTUNE the operation, a disinformation campaign that was intended to damage the public figures in West Germany through Nazi documents. One of the ways was being able to use Soviet Bloc System, this intelligent service allowed for the disinformation to spread wider and to exaggerate the success of these reports. (Walton 2001, Pg 1, Par 15). With the platforms and social media advantages of today, we are able to create disinformation and have better results and faster reactions than during the Cold War. Media responses are what help build the disinformation and circulate it into becoming more heard. The delivery of this is still the same, using campaigns, the enemies of the participants involved, or just the public audience, but the information being processed is much quicker than before. The StB forging Nazi documents and it being filmed

once it was planted really shows the lengths of technology and how far it has evolved in creating disinformation. Walton 2001 states, “The Czech documentary team needed permission and help from the Czech Ministry of the Interior. Before allowing the crew in, it cordoned off the area around the Black Lake, making up an excuse for nearby troop movements. This gave Bittman and an StB team time to plant four chests in the lake purportedly containing Nazi documents. They selected a shallower part of water, covered the chests in mud, and set the scene for them to be discovered.” (Walton 2001, Pg. 1, Par 10). Having the crew come back inside and then discover these Nazi documents, allowed for their disinformation to become “factual”. With Social Media now, this can be done within seconds, and with AI, also known as artificial intelligence, and bots. No one is able to tell the difference between a truth and a lie. (Goswami 2022, Pg 1, Par 5).

A specific campaign that could be used to connect the disinformation tactics used in the Cold War, along with media and technology being involved such as bots/trolls is the 2016 Trump Campaign. During the Trump campaign, many bots and trolls can now search documents and even participate in elections such as the 2016 presidential election, where it was found that Senate. Russian operatives used tools such as bots to automate their media accounts that share content in an attempt to deceive social media users in the United States and sway the election in favor of President Donald Trump. (Guglielmi 2020, Pg. 1 Par. 1). The word “Fake News” spiraled during this time, and much of the disinformation given out now, can be connected to the Cold War, Operation NEPTUNE. The work put into NEPTUNE, is a key factor when it comes to disinformation, much like Trump's campaign, the disinformation had to be altered, and in today's society, social media, bots, AIs, and internet trolls are able to create that plan and strategy to help disinformation spread and become bigger than the truth itself, creating a false narrative.

References

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