

## **WAYS OF INFLUENCING SOCIETY THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the concept and essence of social networks. It examines the transformation of social networks into an information space, analyzes the dissemination of information through social networks, messengers, videos, music, and other sources. It explores the impact of social networks on society and addresses their challenges. Additionally, it investigates how foreign mass media spreads fake news to manipulate public perception. Social networks are discussed as a factor in the proliferation of "mass culture."

**Keywords:** Social network, Instagram, Fake News, Deepfake, manipulation, fake profiles.

### **Introduction**

Today, social networks have become an inseparable part of human life. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok serve as primary daily sources of information for millions of people. Through these networks, users follow news, communicate with friends, and express their thoughts. However, the convenience and freedom provided by these platforms also carry risks. These include the spread of misinformation, manipulation, fake content, and the use of bots, which collectively influence people's decisions and perceptions. This article explores the pressing threats posed by social networks, provides real-world examples, and offers strategies for mitigating these risks.

#### **1. Major Threats in Social Networks**

##### **Dissemination of False Information (Fake News)**

One of the most common issues on social networks is the spread of false information. People often share news without verifying its authenticity, leading to confusion, fear, and panic. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about vaccines being harmful or ineffective spread widely, misleading the public. Example: In 2020, rumors claiming that '5G technology spreads the virus' circulated on social media, prompting attacks on 5G towers in several countries. These incidents created fear and mistrust towards the technology.

##### **Deepfake and Fake Content**

Deepfake technology, which uses artificial intelligence to modify images and voices, is rapidly advancing, posing greater threats. Deepfake content can damage reputations and convince audiences to believe false narratives. Public figures and political leaders are often targeted, with fake speeches or behaviors presented as real. Example: In 2019, a deepfake video depicting Barack Obama making threatening statements about other nations went viral, causing widespread concern and debate.

##### **Manipulative Advertising and Influence Campaigns**

Social networks are frequently utilized for manipulative advertising targeted at specific groups. These campaigns influence beliefs, ranging from political elections to consumer behavior. Example: In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed the use of Facebook data to deliver targeted advertisements, potentially swaying voters' decisions.

##### **Bots and Fake Profiles**

Bots and fake profiles are extensively used to disseminate false information, create disturbances, or serve political and economic interests. This leads to:

- 1.«Spread of Disinformation»: Fake profiles circulate rumors and fake narratives to manipulate public opinion.
2. «Erosion of Trust»: Users lose confidence in the information they encounter on social networks.
3. «Cybersecurity Risks»: Fake accounts facilitate identity theft, phishing, and financial fraud.
- 4.«Public Opinion Manipulation»: Bots artificially amplify or suppress narratives, distorting public perceptions.

## **2. Solutions to Social Media Threats**

### **Enhancing Digital Literacy**

Increasing users' digital literacy is vital for combating misinformation. This includes teaching users how to verify information and distinguish between credible and unreliable sources. Implementation: Introduce digital literacy courses in schools and universities, and provide public training on identifying trustworthy information.

### **Regulations on Hidden Advertising and Manipulation**

Social media platforms should implement strict policies to counter hidden advertising and manipulative campaigns. Implementation: Clearly label advertisements and disclose their sponsors, ensuring users can differentiate between ads and regular content.

### **Developing Deepfake Detection Technologies**

As deepfake technology becomes more sophisticated, equally advanced detection methods must be developed. Implementation: Integrate artificial intelligence to detect deepfake content on social media platforms and provide users with tools to verify the authenticity of media.

### **Raising Awareness of Threats**

Social networks should actively educate users about emerging threats, such as misinformation and cyber attacks. Implementation: Regularly publish safety notices and offer tutorials on recognizing and responding to information attacks.

### **Conclusion**

While social networks provide numerous benefits, they also bring significant risks, including fake news, deepfake content, and manipulative advertisements. Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts from both users and social media companies. Key steps include:

1. Enhancing digital literacy.
2. Advancing deepfake detection technologies.
3. Implementing stricter regulations against hidden advertisements.
4. Raising user awareness of potential threats.

By taking these measures, social networks can become safer and more reliable platforms, empowering users to make informed decisions and use them effectively.

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