

WHY DO PEOPLE SHARE MISINFORMATION?

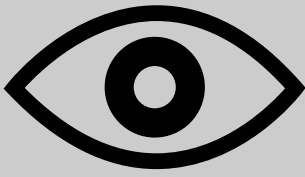
Created by William Dance (@williamdance)



1

THEY THINK IT IS TRUE

One simple reason that some people share false content is because they think that it is true. Misinformation can be explosive and sensationalist but also mundane and unexciting, meaning there is no reason to assume it is not true.



2

CONSPIRACY

Conspiracy theories spread rapidly on social media platforms and are often amplified by influencers, celebrities and disinformation outlets. They are appealing because they provide satisfying, logical answers, even if they are entirely fabricated.



3

EMOTIONAL REACTION

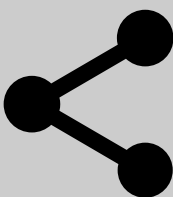
Emotions like fear, anger and surprise play a role in the spread of misinformation online. Emotional reactions override our critical faculties and affect our abilities to check facts. In the heat of the moment, it is easy to share information too hastily.



4

ALTERNATIVE NEWS

There is an increasingly large subculture of disinformation that claims to offer its readers "alternative" news. These news outlets claim to produce "real" news not shared by the mainstream media, tapping into anti-establishment beliefs.



5

MALICIOUS SHARING

Sharing false content maliciously is the difference between **misinformation** and **disinformation**. People who do this share the content with the express purpose of deceiving others around them.



6

CRISIS SITUATIONS

In crisis situations such as terrorist attacks, there is often an information vacuum immediately afterwards - this is a period when people need information but do not yet have it. The result is that they share rumours and decontextualised stories in their search for relevant information.