[NL] Study on digitization and fake news

IRIS 2018-9:1/29

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In July 2018, the Dutch Media Authority (CvdM) and the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) published a joint study on digitization and fake news. The ACM and CvdM both monitor the media. The ACM ensures that consumers are well informed and fights unfair competition, and the CvdM's primary task is to protect the freedom of information by ensuring pluralism, accessibility and the independence of the Dutch media. The study was prompted by the rapidly changing media landscape and the increasing number of possibilities to disseminate fake news. Combining their expertise, the two organisations assessed the conditions conducive to the dissemination of fake news and its possible effects.

According to the study, there are several risks to the Dutch media landscape. It is vulnerable because income from advertising is increasingly shifting towards other online services. If the number of consumers who pay for quality news drops and the financing of high quality news comes under pressure, fake news then gets more opportunities to spread. Consequently, the quality of news may dwindle if traditional news providers focus more on quick ways of generating attention by offering "sensational news stories". The study also underlines the importance of maintaining media diversity. Since competition between news providers allows for variety in news sources, it boosts the resilience against fake news. However, the number of mergers and acquisitions in the media sector over the past few years has increased. Due to the strong competitive pressure from other online services, this trend of media concentration is also expected to persist.

In response to these dangers, the study identifies a number of possible measures. News providers have to continue to invest in innovation and new business models in order to maintain a high level of news quality. Since online platforms play an important part in the dissemination of fake news, they too can contribute a great deal. They could take measures aimed at filtering out fake news and improving the findability of good information. In spite of all efforts, fake news will, in all likelihood, still reach consumers. According to the study, this is why it is also important to invest in improving digital literacy. In collaboration with others, the ACM and CvdM aim to raise awareness of the methods of recognising and dealing with fake news.

All in all, as the study underlines, the impact of fake news in the Netherlands is currently limited. However, in order to prevent fake news from gaining a foothold,

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the ACM and CvdM warn all stakeholders to remain alert.

Digitalisering en Nepnieuws - Een gezamenlijke verkenning van de Autoriteit Consument & Markt en het Commissariaat voor de Media

https://www.cvdm.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapport-Nepnieuws-en-digitalisering-CvdM-ACM.pdf

Joint study by the Dutch Media Authority and the Authority for Consumers & Markets

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