


DISINFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Disinformation affects most spheres of social life, and it does not spare media enterprises, influencing their work on several levels. In recent years, we have witnessed changes in the structure of the media, the profession of journalism, and the process of source verification. All of this shapes the current information ecosystem, which in turn impacts the condition of contemporary societies. The aim of this article is to examine the changes that the increase in disinformation content has triggered in the operations of media enterprises. It is also important to answer the question of what practices the media employ to ensure that falsehoods, manipulation, and distorted realities do not destabilize their activities. The adopted methodology is a qualitative, exploratory, and verification-based study, including a critical literature review in the field of social communication and media management. The analysis shows that disinformation affects media companies by destabilizing the market, which influences their value and reduces trust in them as content creators and distributors. However, this has a positive side: the profession of journalism is becoming more professionalized, distinguishing it from media workers, and a completely new profession has emerged—that of the fact-checker. While disinformation as a phenomenon is generally viewed negatively, we can observe that its impact can also lead to the development of good practices and beneficial behaviors.

Keywords: disinformation, media, management, fact checking, media worker, trust

Considering the condition of the contemporary media ecosystem, we can undoubtedly say that the phenomenon of disinformation has become a significant element of it, and at the same time one of its greatest challenges. Due to its multi-aspect and complex nature, disinformation affects most spheres of social life. The media are particularly affected by the consequences of this phenomenon, and considering the fact that they have several socially assigned roles to fulfill, and are also companies from an economic point of view, the topic appears to be extremely interesting. Therefore, the aim of this article is to look at how media companies approach the topic of disinformation, whether any changes are taking place in the area of media management and what practices they use to prevent distortions, manipulations and falsified reality from destabilizing their activities.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this article is a qualitative study with an exploratory-verificatory character, including a critical literature review in the field of social communication and media management. The author decided to review the literature according to two thematic keys: media management and disinformation theories. The aim of this approach is, in line with Andrea Tricco's methodology, to map the literature in order to identify the main concepts, theories, sources, and research gaps (Tricco 2018). The choice of method was driven by the fact that through the process of deduction and induction, we can obtain facts, understand them, and interpret them. Extracting, processing, and organizing information from available sources allows us to capture the essence of the phenomenon of disinformation in the context of media management processes, thus enabling us to answer the question about the impact of this phenomenon and ways to cope with its dynamic growth. The topic of disinformation in media management is relatively new, and due to the intensification of the phenomenon in recent years, it is worth deeper investigation. This article is an attempt to initiate a discussion on the mentioned topic and to explore its dimensions as well as the signs of changes that disinformation causes in the field of media management. Hence, the analysis of two professions—fact checker and media worker—whose emergence and consolidation within media structures is a result of the impact of disinformation. However, to understand this phenomenon thoroughly, further in-depth research is necessary.

Disinformation and its tools

The concept of disinformation is not new. The term was first used in 1923, when the vice-chairman of the State Political Police in the Soviet Union, Józef Unszlicht, called for the creation of a special disinformation bureau to conduct active intelligence operations, and the term disinformation itself, also in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is presented as a translation from Russian (Wachowicz 2019). However, in order

to understand disinformation, we must see it in the broader context of information disorder, in which we can distinguish three types of communication distortions.

Disinformation is the concept we encounter most often in public discourse. It means intentionally misleading the recipient of the message, which may be motivated by many factors. It involves the distribution of manipulated messages and, which is the essence of the phenomenon, it is done consciously, intentionally, using channels that accelerate this distribution and increase the number of recipients of the content (Gans 2004). It is not the act of conveying a message through lies, but distorting or concealing facts to achieve the creator's goal (Wardle 2022). The goal may be to introduce changes in the recipients' awareness, cause a change in attitudes towards phenomena, trigger a specific social, political or economic reaction, which in turn leads to controlling social behavior (Muras, Zakrzewski 2018). Another type of information distortion is misinformation, which involves the unintentional dissemination of manipulated information, which can often be done in good faith and by people unaware of what they are transmitting. Misinformation may have its roots in disinformation because, over time, intentional lies and misleading narratives introduced into public discourse begin to morph and spread throughout the information ecosystem. In practice, distinguishing these two phenomena may be very difficult, because the key is the intention of the sender and creator of the message, which we are often unable to know or verify (Southwell 2022). The third form of information disorder is malinformation. This term describes truthful information but transmitted with the intent to cause harm. Presenting facts in a changed, falsified context has the same effect as disinformation or misinformation, misleading the recipient of the message. The goal of malinformation content creators is not to provide information that will enrich the recipient with knowledge, but to provide information that will evoke certain emotions in him or her because they are easier to manage. Therefore, even though the recipient receives a true message, his feelings about it will be completely different than if he received it in a neutral or content-consistent context. Malinformation activities are very often used in politics. They are then used to build a narrative that aims to discredit a social group or person, put it in an unfavorable light and deprive it of social respect. Theoretically, the message is true, but in practice its consequences are disinformation (Wardle 2020). The matter is becoming so serious that while systems for detecting disinformation content in social media are able to detect suspicious activities involving the distribution of manipulated information, artificial intelligence cannot cope with content that is true and verifiable in terms of the words used. In some cases, at best, these materials are classified as ineligible for fact checking. The impact of this phenomenon is so serious and may be more dangerous than the other two as it is difficult to identify and eliminate it, because the criteria for context manipulation are not as transparent as finding a false fragment in the content. The social impact is also significant because it is information aimed at causing harm. In the case of disinformation, we can talk about various causes that may be more or less dangerous, but malinformation will have definitely negative consequences and high social harm (Bąkiewicz 2023).

When analyzing information disorder, one can see its power of influence in the area of international politics, influence on democratic mechanisms, the polarization of society and building propaganda. All these activities use the media, which become an important link in the process of creating and distributing manipulated content. Especially since tools and techniques for manipulating information are constantly being created and changed. In the foreground here is fake news, which is manipulated information, but always containing true fragments, but distorted or taken out of context (Gilin 2017). It should not be equated with journalistic mistakes or publications based on unverified sources. Its purpose is to consciously mislead the recipient, for example in order to achieve financial, political or propaganda benefits by introducing distortions, untruths or over-interpretations (Bąkowicz 2019). Its impact is very strong; almost half of fake news remains unrecognized by the recipient of media content (Musiał 2022). This may have to do with its various forms. Claire Wardle identifies seven of them. The first is satire or parody, which can cause harm only potentially and not intentionally. The recipient knows (has been informed about it) that he or she is reading or watching entertainment content. Another type is false connection, which involves using a header, image or signature that is incompatible with the content. Misleading content is based on the use of information to make an entity or person believe something. False context involves presenting true information in a false context. Imposter content is based on impersonating real sources of information, for example, using confusingly similar graphics. Manipulated content is the manipulation of information or images in order to deceive the recipient, and fabricated content involves completely falsifying the content (Wardle 2017).

Fake news can also take the form of visual distortion: deepfake or cheapfake. Deepfakes use artificial intelligence resources and capabilities to manipulate an image or sound, or both. Deep faking technology is a completely new way of creating content using GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks), developed in 2014, which involves the juxtaposition of two competing algorithms that evaluate their own results in terms of what people might consider real. The result is photos or videos that closely resemble real ones, often starring public figures (Westerlund 2019). While deepfake is still quite time-consuming and expensive to produce, its cheaper version is cheapfake. An available and often free tool for creating a substitute for an alternative reality poses just as much threat as its more expensive counterpart. Photo editing programs, filters, video image manipulation (slowing down or speeding up videos) – all this falls into the category of cheapfake and, just like any other type of fake news – it disinforms and misleads. The situation is so dangerous that every user of a computer, the Internet or social media platforms can create a cheapfake using one of many available programs or applications. Therefore, it is a tool that can be used virtually without limits, and the increasing statistics of its use show that it arouses interest and is willingly used by Internet users. The only barrier against distorting the image of reality is ethics and the internal moral norms of the content recipient (Paris, Donovan 2019).

Clickbait is not, by definition, a form of disinformation, but due to its structure and the creator's motivation, it becomes fake news (Alves et al. 2016). It should therefore be understood as a dynamic communication phenomenon based on pseudo-journalistic content created using attention economy strategies very similar to sensationalism and infotainment. It is based on preparing photos, descriptions or titles of publications in such a way as to cause the largest possible number of clicks, i.e. openings of a given content. It is used for two things: distributing content on the Internet and evoking specific emotions. It can take many forms. One of them is incomplete information, which will lack the most important data, the author will ask questions that will not be answered, will use deliberate ambiguity and will also take the form of a calculation or list. The second form is an appeal to the recipient, often in a quite direct form, for example using the vocative case. Another form of clickbait is the adoption of repetitions, which may concern a topic, a fragment of text or presenting the same information in subsequent views, on separate pages. You may also notice the use of exaggerations. They take the form of textual hyperboles, comparisons of the superiority of something over something, neologisms with the prefix super or intensification of adjectives. Clickbait often takes the form of the so-called soft news, i.e. soft news based on a personal, emotional message that gives the recipient a sense of personalization of the content or, on the contrary, has a shocking visual (or audiovisual) setting, manipulates the image or uses the form of a meme (Bazaco 2019).

A term that must appear when analyzing the information ecosystem in the face of the phenomenon of disinformation is hate speech. We can understand it as various types of statements directed against groups or individuals due to real or perceived belonging to a group based on prejudice. These are all forms of speech that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed in aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, migrants and people of migrant origin. Its goal is to cause fear through negative, highly emotional communication that is intended to make recipients feel a real threat. Hate speech undermines the right of the person concerned to equality and freedom from discrimination. It promotes prejudice and hatred that undermines the foundations of society, creates divisions between groups and ultimately leads to profoundly destructive changes in social cohesion. It consists of more than just words. The context, intention, and likelihood of causing harm to the extent described above are also important (Palmadóttir, Kalenikova). Hate speech, viewed from the form it takes, is a mixture of various types of disinformation: disinformation, misinformation, rumors and stereotypes. Its embeddedness in the realities of both analog and digital communication fuels social tensions, contributing to acts of aggression, ostracism and exclusion (ICRC 2021).

A tool for disinformation and increasing information chaos is astroturfing, the impact of which is mainly related to social media. It is a way of conducting marketing-type activities, which involves creating the impression of grassrootsness and spontaneity in the recipients. However, they are based on fraud and manipulation.

Behind such false movements are interest groups that often employ professional public relations agencies and the media. The condition for online astroturfing is the use of bots, i.e. programs or applications appropriately programmed to replace humans on the Internet. They are often associated with fake social media accounts, they automatically publish content, conduct correspondence, but they can also conduct cyber attacks (Węglińska 2019).

When discussing disinformation as a phenomenon, it should be remembered that its dynamics and variability are relevant to the condition of the information ecosystem. This makes it difficult to create a closed list of disinformation tools, which is constantly expanding and changing. The author considered it sufficient to examine the impact on the functioning of media enterprises.

The impact of disinformation on media companies

The role of the media is extremely important from the point of view of the stability of the structures of the state and society. The priority remains to provide information, but it must be done within a specific system. The media informs citizens and creates an information loop between message senders and their recipients. Without the participation of the media, the feedback loop is interrupted and the circulation of information is not possible. This is a very risky situation that may even result in the collapse of the system. Moreover, the media confronts us with opinions that are contrary to ours, they take us out of information bubbles, which in the long run blur our image of reality (Stanford University).

When we look at the roles of media as businesses, there are a few important areas we should pay attention to. The main activity of the media is the production of goods, such as media products, which are intangible goods. They are created in the process of media production, i.e. the transformation of specific labor, capital and people resources into media goods (products) and services (Kowalski 2006). Regardless of the type of media or the profile of their activity, the factor determining their „to be or not to be” on the market is the law of supply and demand. With a few exceptions (public media, which are partially subsidized by the state), they are enterprises that must compete with each other (if they want to function) and their activities are largely determined by economic factors. To understand the media, it is necessary to adopt the position that in many aspects they are similar to other areas of the economy (Kowalski, Jung 2006). What distinguishes them from others is social interest (McQuail 2007).

Over the course of their existence, the media have become an important part of the system contributing to the improvement of living conditions by creating opportunities for social groups to work, meet their material needs and self-fulfillment. This is even more valuable because, compared to other branches of the economy, it is achieved with relatively little human interference in the natural environment, without the need for devastation. Operating within the free market also carries certain risks, such as restrictions on free access to information, which

may lead to conflicts and social inequalities. However, media companies generate profits not only by selling their products. This phenomenon, defined by Robert G. Picard, is called the dual product market and consists in the fact that, on the one hand, the media sell information or entertainment placed in a specific medium to the recipient, and on the other hand, they offer the advertising industry space or airtime to present their products to the consumer. However, it is not about the physical place or time, but the recipient's attention related to them, which becomes a commodity purchased by others. Media products are also immaterial, they only take the form of media through which we have access to them (Soczyński 2018). However, their essence is the sphere of ideas, so they are also cultural products. This shows that the media cannot therefore be considered as exactly the same types of commercial enterprises as any other, since their task is to contribute to lasting social benefits, which is related to a public mission. Their task is therefore to create a media space for works of culture, transmit cultural heritage, contribute to the development of democracy by providing information and a critical perspective while maintaining impartiality and avoiding pushing their own views, beliefs or applying pressure (Goban-Klas 2011). Creating a space for information exchange, in which there is room for various positions, opinions and building dialogue is a necessary condition for the process of social integration. The media become an intermediary through which people meet each other. At the same time, it should be remembered that this is only a tool function, where the main task is to convey the communicated content as faithfully as possible, so that it is consistent with reality.

All these aspects of the functioning of media companies show that they are under the pressure of many determinants: the state, society and the market. It should be remembered here that the media are not assessed selectively, but are looked at as a comprehensive system with many subsystems (Nierenberg 2006). One of the key factors significantly influencing the entire system is the progressive, dynamic development of the Internet and social media and the related convergence mechanisms (Nierenberg 2013). Media companies, faced with this significant change, faced many challenges related to both the business management of the organizations themselves and the management of information, which also changed its form. Media technology, the way they are managed, the basis for generating revenues, operational efficiency and ownership relations are just some of the elements of media economics that had to face change. Traditional companies with stable ownership have become a thing of the past, now media companies have an impersonal ownership structure, are increasingly listed on stock exchanges, and their content, i.e. manufactured products, can be distributed in many forms, on a global scale, at great speed. Media conglomerates are becoming increasingly important, and their expansive strategies pose challenges to other market participants. Their presence constitutes a potential threat not only in terms of ownership but also content and management (Kowalski 2013).

The phenomenon of disinformation, which is spreading more and more widely throughout the media ecosystem, affects media companies in many ways. Firstly, if we treat the media as commercial companies, disinformation may affect them

to exactly the same extent as other producers of goods and services, especially in the area of finance. Technology enables the creation of disinformation campaigns and manipulated narratives that significantly interfere with the activities of a given entity. Destabilizing the market or introducing information chaos are ways to introduce changes in the world order, often related to the collapse of companies or even the entire market. This happens by creating fabricated information about mergers, distorting competitive dynamics or manipulating information about the condition of the industry. This trend is expected to increase because message manipulation is relatively easy to implement but difficult to counter. Companies are especially afraid of the impact on the financial part, because the impact of communication on stock market quotations is extremely strong. In the United States, 59% of companies are afraid of the use of disinformation to manipulate the market, in Italy it is 58% of companies, in the UK 47% (Global Fraud and Risk Report 2019–20). The tools of disinformation here are especially trolls, speculators and foreign flags. Trolls are individuals or entire groups who exhibit anti-social behavior online, especially in places where discussions take place. They carry out disinformation attacks in the form of entertainment publications or hate speech publications, because their role is to ridicule or insult. The phenomenon itself is not subject to legal restrictions as long as the publications do not contain vulgarity, exclusionary, hateful or threatening content. The purpose of trolls is to destabilize the discussion, mislead their interlocutors, and thus, for example, damage the good name of the company, in this case the media broadcaster. Their success is that the administrator closes the discussion and transfers it to a real dimension in the real, offline world (Musiał 2017). Profiteers are behind spreading disinformation on a large scale and profiting from it. Unlike trolls, whose goals are mainly ideological, speculators focus on the possibility of achieving financial profit. They come in two forms: content fabricators and forecasters. In practice, this may mean, for example, creating clickbait that lead Internet users to misleading content or even organizing entire campaigns against competing entities (Bąkowicz 2023). So-called foreign flags are a large-scale organized activity, the purpose of which is to deliberately harm specific companies. Under the guise of diplomatic or image-building activities, they conduct socially and politically harmful activities. However, this is more than just a black PR tool, because in this case these groups distributing disinformation may be supported by state governments. It is reported that such organized disinformation management may take place in up to 70 countries (Law and National Security).

Disinformation affecting media companies also affects the sphere related to the media's mission, which is closely related to trust. This trust must be established on many levels. Society must trust journalists and believe that they provide valuable and verified information. Otherwise, materials created by journalists will not be sought or considered credible. Information sources should also trust the media that their identities will be properly protected and they will not be misrepresented. This is not only an ethical value, but also a pragmatic one, because the media will not survive on the market without the trust of their audiences. Trust in the media

has been gradually decreasing over recent years. The Reuters Institute report states that it is currently lowest in the United States and amounts to only 42%, which coincides with the downward trend observed in half of the 46 countries among those examined by Reuters. In Poland, only 20% of the media consider themselves independent. This is strongly correlated with the credibility of content provided by all types of media, which are often perceived by audiences as being subject to excessive political influence, putting their own commercial interests ahead of social value, and publishing disinformation content. Independent media have a higher trust index than the state-controlled TVP, which is trusted by only 28% of viewers. Hence, the increase in the popularity of social media, in particular TikTok, which is considered more independent than other media (Reuters Institute Report 2022).

The third aspect of the impact of disinformation on media companies is the decline in the quality of media products resulting from reduced levels of trust. The most stable medium so far, television, is seeing audience decline in favor of streaming services. In 2022, in Poland, no program exceeded the threshold of 5 million viewers compared to 2020. In the last 3 years, about 70 press titles were closed and Telewizja Publiczna, openly criticized by many circles for publishing disinformation, is supported mainly by annually increasing government subsidies. There was a similar situation with the Orlen Press group, whose image problems began after the purchase of shares by a state-owned company and the related program changes, including in the area of publications about the Catholic Church. The use of news is also declining significantly, which is visible in the decreasing reach of major news websites (Reuters Institute Report 2023). This departure of viewers from media programs and titles is related to the increasing amount of disinformation content and the redirection of recipients to social media, which, as egalitarian platforms created from the bottom up, seem more credible. However, the classic news was quickly replaced by fake news, which, as a short message, easy to read and looking like real news, gained in strength. The current configuration of the media ecosystem further strengthens this trend, the lack of content control departments in social media that would operate on the same principle as in analog media, fatigue with media polarization, awareness of their lack of independence; all this creates great opportunities for the creation and distribution of disinformation content. In addition, there is a lack of media education for recipients who, unaware of manipulation mechanisms, choose what is closer to their beliefs, which often turns out to be fake news (Banasiewicz 2022).

The declining condition of modern information not only affects recipients, who are disinformed instead of informed, but also affects media companies. The decline in credibility and the related trust, the risk of a disinformation attack and, finally, the departure of content consumers are serious threats that modern broadcasters must face. This forces them to make profound changes in the structure of the companies they manage and to create new tools, procedures and systems.

New – old professions: media worker and fact checker

Changes caused by technological progress have not spared media enterprises as organizational forms. Due to the revolution that we have been observing for several years, not only the rules of work in the media have changed, but also the professions related to this industry. New challenges, deepening information chaos, time pressure, and economic reasons led to the intensification of the journalist's work and a change in his status. They also had a significant impact on everyday work. A journalist is no longer an engineer of souls, he no longer serves as a guide explaining the intricacies of the modern world, and in his work there is less and less room for mission and more for availability and professional efficiency (Sobczak, Kakarenko, 2017). Creating and publishing more and more materials every day makes it impossible to thoroughly check sources and verify information. Due to the need to create different types of media materials, in the form of short and simple content, it was necessary to create a profession based more on following orders than on the art of journalism. This is how media workers appeared. Their work may resemble journalistic work because it requires knowledge and commitment, but it mainly involves performing tasks assigned by superiors, regardless of ethical and workshop standards. It is more like the work of sellers of goods such as media products. It is not related to mission or ethical obligation. A media worker does not explain or comment on key events in the world, he creates materials that will be attractive and will be clicked, i.e. read and watched. Therefore, depending on the needs, he can act as a manager, graphic designer, editor, translator, presenter or producer, but due to the lack of this key factor, which is the mission, he cannot be called a journalist. Research shows that as a society we consider journalists to be a profession of public trust. It is a legal concept, regulated by the Constitution. It is therefore connected with values such as mission and responsibility, so at the professional level we can expect three equally important elements from a journalist: workshop, professional ethics and knowledge. A media worker can become a journalist and vice versa, it all depends on the type of work he or she performs. It is enough that one day the same person prepares his own, independent material preceded by a reliable interview and analysis, and the next day he sits in the editorial office, working on texts prepared by others, without verifying their consistency with reality. Such fluctuations can cause confusion not only in the process of creating but also receiving information, especially since in editorial offices the work is under enormous time pressure, under great stress, and at the end of the day it has to be done even if the quality is not impressive. For a media company, employing a journalist who works on one material for a long time may prove economically unfavorable; it will be more profitable to focus on quantity rather than quality. Hence, there is such fertile ground for disinformation, which spreads fastest in an environment of chaos and rapid change (Chlebowski 2020).

During the existence of analog media, procedures for verifying information were clearly defined and performed by dedicated, qualified employees or journalists preparing materials. The increase in the number of media workers in editorial

offices meant that verification was not as efficient, which caused the amount of disinformation content to increase dramatically. This contributed to the creation of the profession of fact checker. The idea of fact checking is to verify the truthfulness of publicly stated statements about facts on socially important issues based on confirmed and reliable sources, and then to communicate the results of one's analysis to the public. At the beginning of their activity, fact checkers were involved in verifying the statements of politicians and public officials, and over time, the verification of statements by people from outside these groups was also included. Fact checking itself was created over a hundred years ago, in the interwar period, but the intensification and professionalization of this profession is the result of the increase in disinformation content in the media space and the resulting crisis in journalism. The main goals of fact checkers' activities are: caring for the quality and transparency of public debate as an indicator of a democratic state and protecting citizens against the effects of disinformation. The subject of analysis is content that can be assessed according to the criterion of truth and falsehood; evaluative statements that constitute opinions or views are not subject to verification. Fact checkers do not constitute a homogeneous professional group, they may work in various organizational systems. One of the forms is the creation of separate units within the internal organizational structure of a media company, such as Konkret24, which operates at TVN television. Then, the reporting materials of own journalists are verified before being made public, in the form of an ante hoc control. Sometimes such units also check public statements (post hoc). A large number of fact checkers create independent organizations. Then their area of activity is much wider and is not limited to specific media or types of statements, they are not dependent on any media entity operating on the market, and the effects of their work can be used by everyone, even without being a journalist. Currently, there are 341 such organizations in 102 countries around the world, and over 1/3 of them are members of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Members of the organization are obliged to comply with the code of principles, the most important of which concern impartiality, honesty, transparency of sources, and transparency of the organizational structure and financing. Such an organization in Poland is Demagogue. Media and social media platforms often cooperate with fact checkers to combat disinformation, using the tools and knowledge they have. There are also fact checkers operating at academic centers or public authorities and financed by them, but on a much smaller scale (Maroń 2022).

The creation or more popularization of new professions results from the changes taking place in the information ecosystem. Both influence how contemporary media content is created, its quality and what happens to it. And although the activity of media workers may be disturbing due to the lack of ethical foundations, it contributes to the professionalization of the journalist profession and the increasingly clear distinction between one journalist and another. The activity of fact checkers, in turn, shows that it is possible to effectively verify media content and prevent the spread of half-truths, and thus improve the quality of information.

Discussion and Conclusion

The challenges that media companies face due to technological progress and the resulting social changes require a reconstruction of the entire media system. What is happening in the world of information, its pauperization, rapid quantitative growth, and expansion of the area of influence of disinformation, means that the media, both as information senders and companies, must change their functioning model. When looking at the impact of the phenomenon of disinformation on the condition of media companies, two perspectives can be noticed. On the one hand, its impact is negative, contributing to a decline in trust and, therefore, in the consumption of media content. It also makes the media as companies vulnerable to disinformation attacks, just like representatives of other industries, which may result in significant financial losses. On the other hand, however, new professions are emerging that meet the expectations of media recipients and can improve the quality of the materials created. This shows that any change can be managed and its consequences turned to your advantage. It is important to consider the attitude of media companies towards the issue of disinformation and whether the emerging professions are adequately supporting efforts to combat this destructive phenomenon. It is worth reflecting on whether fact checkers and media workers are merely a justification for the media's role in preventing disinformation and whether they are used to mask often unethical practices. At this point, it is necessary to examine the reality of media companies in practice and what guidelines they follow in content creation. A limitation of this article is its theoretical approach, which, in the case of media, should be supplemented with practical studies. This would provide the potential to build a more complete picture of media companies. How will media companies function in the future and will it be possible to stop disinformation and its harmful impact? This question is difficult to answer. Therefore, it seems necessary to carefully observe both the business and social spheres and respond appropriately. This will allow companies to adapt to the world around them, without losses for consumers of media products.

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STRESZCZENIE

Dezinformacja i jej wpływ na zarządzanie mediami

Dezinformacja dotyczy większości dziedzin życia społecznego. Wpływa także na firmy medialne, na których pracę oddziałuje na kilku płaszczyznach. Na przestrzeni ostatnich lat obserwujemy zmiany w strukturze mediów, zawodzie dziennikarza i procesie weryfikacji źródeł. Wszystko to determinuje obecny kształt ekosystemu informacyjnego, co z kolei przekłada się na kondycję współczesnych społeczeństw. Celem artykułu jest przyjrzenie się zmianom, jakie spowodował wzrost ilości treści dezinformacyjnych w obszarze działania firm medialnych. Ważna jest także odpowiedź na pytanie, jakie praktyki stosują media, aby zniekształcenia, manipulacje i zafałszowania rzeczywistości nie destabilizowały ich działania. Przyjęta metodologia ma charakter badań jakościowych o charakterze eksploracyjno-weryfikacyjnym, obejmujących krytyczny przegląd literatury z zakresu komunikacji społecznej i zarządzania mediami. Z analizy wynika, że dezinformacja wpływa na firmy medialne, destabilizując rynek, co wpływa na wartość firm, a także zmniejsza zaufanie do nich jako twórców i dystrybutorów treści. Ma to jednak swoje pozytywne strony, zawód dziennikarza

staje się coraz bardziej profesjonalny, co odróżnia go od *media workera*, a także powstała zupełnie nowa profesja – *fact checker*. Dlatego też, choć dezinformację jako zjawisko oceniać należy jednoznacznie negatywnie, to trzeba zauważyć, że mogą wiązać się z nią także dobre praktyki i korzystne zachowania.

Słowa kluczowe: dezinformacja, media, zarządzanie, *fact checking*, *media worker*, zaufanie

First View

First View