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Fake News as a Critical Incident in Journalism

Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Joy Jenkins & Stephanie Craft

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how American newspapers made sense of the issue of fake news. By analysing newspaper editorials and considering the problem of fake news as a critical incident confronting journalism, this study found that news organizations in the US recognize fake news as a social problem while acknowledging the challenge in defining it. They generally considered fake news as a social media phenomenon thriving on political polarization driven by mostly ideological, but sometimes also financial, motivations. Therefore, they assigned blame for the rise of fake news to the current political environment, to technological platforms Google and Facebook, and to audiences.

KEYWORDS:

Boundary work | critical incident | editorials | fake news | journalism | social media

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Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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