

It seems we live in a time when the use of fake news in reporting and in communication is no longer just incidental, especially in crisis situations. During the US 2017 presidential campaign Facebook was flooded with fake news about Donald Trump with the purpose of helping or harming Trump's campaign. Trump's adviser Kellyanne Conway called such news 'alternative facts' and she herself created one, the Bowling Green massacre (The Washington Post, 2017), while defending Trump's travel ban related to a number of majority-Muslim countries. Donald Trump appeared to invent "an attack that happened last night in Sweden" blaming immigrants for it (The Guardian, 2017) when trying to assure his audience how irrational Europe's decision on accepting refugees and immigrants from Syria and other Middle-east countries was.

It was back in 2011 when Fox News, an American cable television network, reported on post-election "violent protests against Vladimir Putin organised in many cities in Russia" while using footage of riots in Athens (The Telegraph, 2011). It was really unusual to see palm trees in 'Russian cities' and street signs written in the Greek alphabet. I would not be surprised if, for instance on YouTube, it is already possible to find tutorials on how to create fake, but convincing news.

Unfortunately, the level of citizens' media literacy does not develop parallel with these processes, and citizens are not becoming more critical or distrustful towards "news" published on social and other, more and less recognized media. Recently, there are some journalist initiatives to introduce teams of journalists or newsrooms focused exclusively on fact checking. Shouldn't that have always been the role of journalism?

Having in mind all of the above mentioned, it can be said that scientific research that includes the analysis of media texts and promotes a critical evaluation of 21st century journalism are more needed than ever before.

The articles published in this issue of *Medijske studije* are just like that – their authors critically argue about social media users' praxis and the possibilities for a media constructed reality as a result of, not only journalists' choices, but of communication praxis on social media as well. The repercussions of such processes are visible social changes directed towards the promotion or demotion of particular social values, and furthermore, they create some completely new identities. Therefore, fake news that are not uncovered, gradually become a part of the media constructed reality – and our new normal.

Viktorija Car

Editor-in-Chief

Sources

- >The Guardian (2017) Alexandra Topping: "Sweden, who would believe this?: Trump cites non-existent terror attack", 19th February 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/19/sweden-trump-cites-non-existent-terror-attack> (25.05.2017).
- >The Telegraph (2011) Andrew Osborn: "Fox news uses Athens riots footage for Russian protests", 9th December 2011. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/8947476/Fox-news-uses-Athens-riots-footage-for-Russian-protests.html> (25.05.2017).
- >The Washington Post (2017) Samantha Schmidt and Lindsey Bever: "Kellyanne Conway cites 'Bowling Green massacre' that never happened to defend travel ban", 3rd February 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/02/03/kellyanne-conway-cites-bowling-green-massacre-that-never-happened-to-defend-travel-ban/?utm_term=.5e930cfc9ff8 (25.05.2017).