

WHEN LEGEND BECOMES FACT, TWEET THE LEGEND: INFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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For over a hundred years, people have learned the news from journalists. In recent years, however, news about a wide range of topics from politics to criminal justice is increasingly disseminated via social media networks. Some see this change as positive, arguing that it facilitates citizen journalism and gives voice to the voiceless. Others, however, predict that we are heading down a path of misinformation, where news is filtered through private corporations such as Google and Facebook, and the news we see is shaped by algorithms that tailor to our personal preferences. This commentary considers both sides of this important debate from a sociological perspective to promote a sociological research agenda. We used the social media site Twitter as our primary case study.