



Combating the rise and influence of 'fake news'

Hello, my name is Olivia Ford, and alongside Gaby Smith, I'll be chairing the Media Committee at the NBHS Model United Nations Conference 2017. We are looking forward to welcoming both old and new delegates to debate current and problematic issues facing the world in media today. It is in the committee's best interests that you come prepared, enthusiastic and ready to debate. We ask that each country prepares a position paper detailing your country's view on the issues which are to be debated. This need be no more than a paragraph of 50 words. Please email this to nboford12@edubuzz.org or nbgsm12@edubuzz.org. We also suggest you prepare some resolutions to bring along on the day which express what actions your country would want the UN to take on the topic. This will allow you to be more involved in the debate throughout the day and gives you the opportunity to participate fully. Good luck and we look forward to seeing you all on the 10th November!

Introduction to Debate

'fake news' refers to false or biased information and propaganda which is published under the guise of being authentic in an attempt to mislead the public. The distribution of false news is by no means a new phenomenon, yet the rise of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, has opened the floodgates to the wide-scale sharing of (dis-)information. Artificially fabricated news has sometimes been so convincing it can be near impossible to distinguish from the genuine article, with a recent survey finding that only 4% of people surveyed were able to correctly identify which was which.

This rise in disinformation is taking place at a time when the number of in-print newspapers is plummeting and a marked decrease in the number full-time daily journalists. A recent study showed that 62% of adults from Western nations received their daily news via social media. Although there is the notion that 'fake news' does little harm to the public or countries, the impact a series of false information may potentially have is a cause of concern in a world where the press of a button can spread the data to thousands across the globe in an instant.

A well-cited, recent example of the impact of 'fake news' is the 2016 US Presidential Election. A large number of headlines appeared online providing the electorate and other members of the global public with unreliable information on a variety of topics central to the campaign. The importance of the issue was raised world-wide with multiple media outlets around the world reporting on the impact of these viral rumours in the press.



Some points to consider:

- Has your country been affected by large 'fake news' scandals and how has it been dealt with?
- Is there any legislation in your country regarding the distribution of 'fake news' in the media?
- How could 'fake news' be identified and reported?
- How can we educate citizens on the issue?

Useful Links

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-40575479>

- Considering how to deal with issue of 'fake news'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/0/fake-news-origins-grew-2016/>

- What 'fake news' is and other information on it

<https://digiday.com/uk/status-report-four-european-countries-dealing-fake-news/>

- How some EU countries are dealing with 'fake news'

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56336>

- Recent UN stance on 'fake news'