



Post-truth and fake news

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RESPONSES TO EDITORIAL

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Responses to the Editorial 'Education in a post-truth world'

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There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds, and it is characteristic of the system that basic error propagates itself.

–Gregory Bateson, *Steps Towards an Ecology of Mind*

In 'Post-truth: Study epidemiology of fake news' Adam Kucharski (2016) writing for *Nature* claims there are similarities between the propagation of fake news and social media 'echo chambers' and the evolution and transmission of infectious diseases. He suggests 'disease strains can evolve and compete in a host population, much like rumours, and infections and opinions are both shaped by social contacts.' Now in the wake of the US elections we find that during the final three months of the US presidential election campaign, fake election news on Facebook outperformed real news.¹ The problem took a determinate form with fake news concerning Obama's birth, a false story championed by President-elect Donald Trump. At the end of 2016, I wrote a brief Editorial entitled 'Education in a post-truth world' and invited a group of scholars to respond to my piece. Here are the results.

–The Editor, Michael A. Peters

Note

1. https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook?utm_term=.xcKQVeadDM#.ncvb7QJr0Z

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