

# Lots of visible likes and shares on social lead people to spread more misinformation | Nieman Journalism Lab

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It's time to rethink engagement metrics, say the authors of a [paper](#) published last week in the Harvard Kennedy School's [Misinformation Review](#). [Mihai Avram](#), [Nicholas Micallef](#), [Sameer Patil](#), and [Filippo Menczer](#) found that "the display of social engagement metrics" — visible displays of how many times a piece of content has been liked and shared, i.e. the norm on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram — "can strongly influence interaction with low-credibility information. The higher the engagement, the more prone people are to sharing questionable content and less to fact checking it."

The researchers developed an online news literacy game called "[Fakey](#)" that "simulates fact checking on a social media feed"; it's available in a web browser or as an Apple or Android app. (Yes, you can play it!) Between May 18 and November 2019, the researchers recorded game sessions from 8,606 players with 120,000 news articles, about half of which were from "low-credibility sources." 78% of the players were from the U.S.

[...]

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