

The difference between the facts and the truth | First Draft

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When we think about disinformation, we tend to focus on narratives. 5G causes coronavirus. Bill Gates is trying to depopulate the planet. We're being controlled by lizards.

But while narratives are concerning and compelling, there is another way of thinking about online disinformation. All narratives, no matter how bizarre, are an expression of something that underlies them: a way of knowing the world.

Contrary to claims that we live in a post-truth era, research suggests that people engaging with disinformation care deeply about the truth. William Dance, a disinformation researcher who specializes in linguistics, has found that people engaging with disinformation are more likely to use words related to the truth, such as disingenuous; nonsense; false; charade; deception; concealed, disguised, hiding, show; find; reveals; exposes; uncovers.

People engaging with false news stories are not disinterested in truth, but are hyper-concerned with it — especially the idea that it's being hidden.

[...]

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