

Why Generation Z falls for online misinformation | MIT Technology Review

By Jennifer Neda John

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A teenage girl peers gravely at the camera, the frame wobbling as she angles her phone at her face. A caption superimposed on her hoodie shares an ominous warning: If Joe Biden is elected president of the United States, “trumpies” will commit mass murder of LGBT individuals and people of color. A second caption announces, “this really is ww3.” That video was posted to TikTok on November 2, 2020, and liked more than 20,000 times. Around that time, dozens of other young people shared similar warnings across social media, and their posts drew hundreds of thousands of views, likes, and comments.

Clearly, the claims were false. Why, then, did so many members of Generation Z—a label applied to people aged roughly 9 to 24, who are presumably more digitally savvy than their predecessors—fall for such flagrant misinformation?

[...]

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