News Item

Why researchers want broader access to social media data | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Teresa Carr

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> Within days of Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, several social media companies took steps to reduce the circulation of Russian state-backed media and anti-Ukrainian propaganda. Meta (formerly Facebook), for example, said it took down about 40 accounts, part of a larger network that had already spread across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram, and Russian social media. The accounts used fake personas, replete with profile pictures likely generated with artificial intelligence, posing as news editors, engineers, and scientists in Kyiv. The people behind the network also created phony news websites that portrayed Ukraine as a failed state betrayed by the West.
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> Disinformation campaigns have become pervasive in the vast realm of social media. Will technology companies' recent efforts to combat propaganda be effective? Because outsiders are not privy to most of the inner workings of the handful of companies that run the digital world — the details of where information originates, how it spreads, and how it affects the real world — it's hard to know.
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