FAKE FACT

7 Misinformation

The hijacking of truth by a more diverse, unregulated community undermines who we trust. Even sophisticated users struggle to determine fact from fiction.

We have already mentioned the significant role and value which society now places on data. Alongside this digitisation is a fundamental change in how people interact with each other. With an increasing number of activities taking place in cyberspace, information will become ever more central to humanity and conflict. We live in a world of an increasingly expanding and unregulated information space, where it is difficult for even sophisticated users to determine what is fact and what is fiction. The threat of cyber-attacks and the spread of misinformation are becoming increasingly commonplace. What's more, some significant social media platforms have helped to polarise opinion, create uncertainty, and in some instances, erode trust in institutions. Some respected middle ground commentators such as the Economist see that *"Digital disinformation is destroying society, but we can fight back."*[27]

Algorithms designed to amplify information, communicate social views, and generate trends and social chatbots coded to post the latest news stories have, to varied extents, become vulnerable to manipulation. Although most frequently attributed to Russia, others such as North Korea and China, and numerous independent bad actors, are often cited as being in the mix. Most attacks to date have, however, been fairly simple, driven by humans or bots. *"Sub-threshold hybrid misinformation is cheap to do, with little regulation, and is extremely hard to defend against."*[28] Going forward as Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and deep learning are variously applied, expect that the use of these "deep fakes" to become more widespread. Credible fake video and audio will be used alongside text and images to deceive many – business, the public, and government agencies alike. As a consequence, *"autocracies will do well, because they control all the information, but democracies are more open and therefore more vulnerable to the misinformation."*[29] A good number will struggle to determine fact from fiction.

An Implication: The ability to be comfortable with ambiguity, and to operate in fluid situations with incomplete and uncertain information makes Service leavers increasingly attractive to potential employers

Lifting our Sights

Beyond 2030 – the impact of future trends on the transition of our Armed Forces Community from military to civilian life