



Delft University of Technology

Online misinformation as a problem of embodied cognition

Marin, Lavinia

Publication date

2019

Document Version

Final published version

Citation (APA)

Marin, L. (2019). *Online misinformation as a problem of embodied cognition*. 310. Abstract from 16th international congress of logic, methodology and philosophy of science and technology, Prague, Czech Republic.

Important note

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

Takedown policy

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*This work is downloaded from Delft University of Technology.
For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to a maximum of 10.*

16th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON LOGIC, METHODOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BRIDGING ACROSS ACADEMIC CULTURES

Prague, 5–10 August 2019

Marin, Lavinia

Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

ONLINE MISINFORMATION AS A PROBLEM OF EMBODIED COGNITION

Session 15M

Congress section(s): C5, C8

This paper argues that the creation and propagation of misinformation in online environments, particularly in social media, is confronted with specific challenges which are not to be found in offline communication. Starting from the widely accepted definition of misinformation as ‘deliberate production and distribution of misleading information’ (Floridi, 2013) which we designate as the semantic view of misinformation, we aim to provide a different definition of misinformation based primarily on the pragmatics of communication and on the role of the technological environment. While misinformation in online environments is also false and misleading, its main characteristic is the truncated way in which it is perceived and re-interpreted and, we will argue, this way of processing information belongs foremost to the online environment as such rather than to a defective way of information-processing from the side of the epistemic agent. From this pragmatic perspective, sometimes misinformation is true information which is interpreted and propagated in a biased way. One of the major features of the online environments which makes it for a medium prone to mis-interpretation and bias concerns a way of leading to impoverished sensory information processing. Assuming an embodied cognition view – in its compatibilist version, see (Varela et al., 1991; Clark, 1997) - then the environment in which we exercise our cognitive abilities has a deciding role for our ability to function as epistemic agents because through our bodies and we acquire cognitive states dependent on the environment to which our bodies are exposed. Following this embodied cognition assumption, then the online environment presents itself as a challenge through the ways in which it prioritises certain senses while obliterating others: the visual senses are primordial to the detriment of other senses such as touch, smell, and even hearing; moreover, we interact with others in online environments through text messages which favor explicit meanings while tacit communication and other pragmatic aspects of communication relying on body-language and non-verbal signs are lost. This presentation will describe the constellation of aspects which characterise the pragmatics of communication in online environments and then show why this kind of communicational situation is biased leading to what we will call an ‘incomplete pragmatics’ of communication. In online environments, we will argue, misunderstandings are the rule and not the exception, because of the dis-embodied and text-biased forms of communication. We will illustrate our theory of incomplete pragmatics of online communication with several case studies of online misinformation based on factually true information which is systematically misunderstood.

References.

- Clark, A. (1997). *Being There: Putting Brain Body and World Together Again*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Clark, A. and Chalmers, D. (1998). The extended mind. *Analysis*, 58, 7-19.
- Floridi, Luciano. *The philosophy of information*. OUP Oxford, 2013.
- Varela, F., Thompson, E., Rosch, E. (1991). *The Embodied Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press