

Exploring Social Media Chatter During a Rumoring Phenomenon

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Abstract:

Online rumors are unverified messages that spread on the Internet. Despite the lack of evidence, such messages spread rapidly as digital wildfires, and even some are reported on news outlets. When rumors receive significant social support and eventually turn out to be false, the consequences would be dire. Given that social media facilitate users to react to and to discuss, it is important to explore the discussions factors associated with rumoring phenomena. Hence, the aim of this paper is to identify discussion factors in a rumoring phenomenon on social media. Tweets were collected to capture the messages related to the rumoring phenomenon. A total of 1,070 tweets were admitted for the purpose of qualitative content analysis. This paper extends news value theory in the context of online rumoring. Discussion factors such as rumor acceptance, rumor refutation, aggression, facticity and uncertainty stimulated discussions among the members of the online community.

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