A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a teal face mask, is walking from left to right in the foreground. Behind her is a red wall covered in hand-drawn illustrations. At the top, a large hand is shown with a dashed outline, reaching towards a hole in the wall. To the right, another hand is shown holding a blue spray bottle. Below these, a circular illustration shows two hands holding a white face mask. To the right of the woman, another circular illustration shows a hand being washed under a blue faucet. The overall scene suggests a public health or educational setting.

E(c)ho systems of cohesion and rupture

A South Asian perspective on the
infodemic

Dr. Sanjana Hattotuwa

Context matters

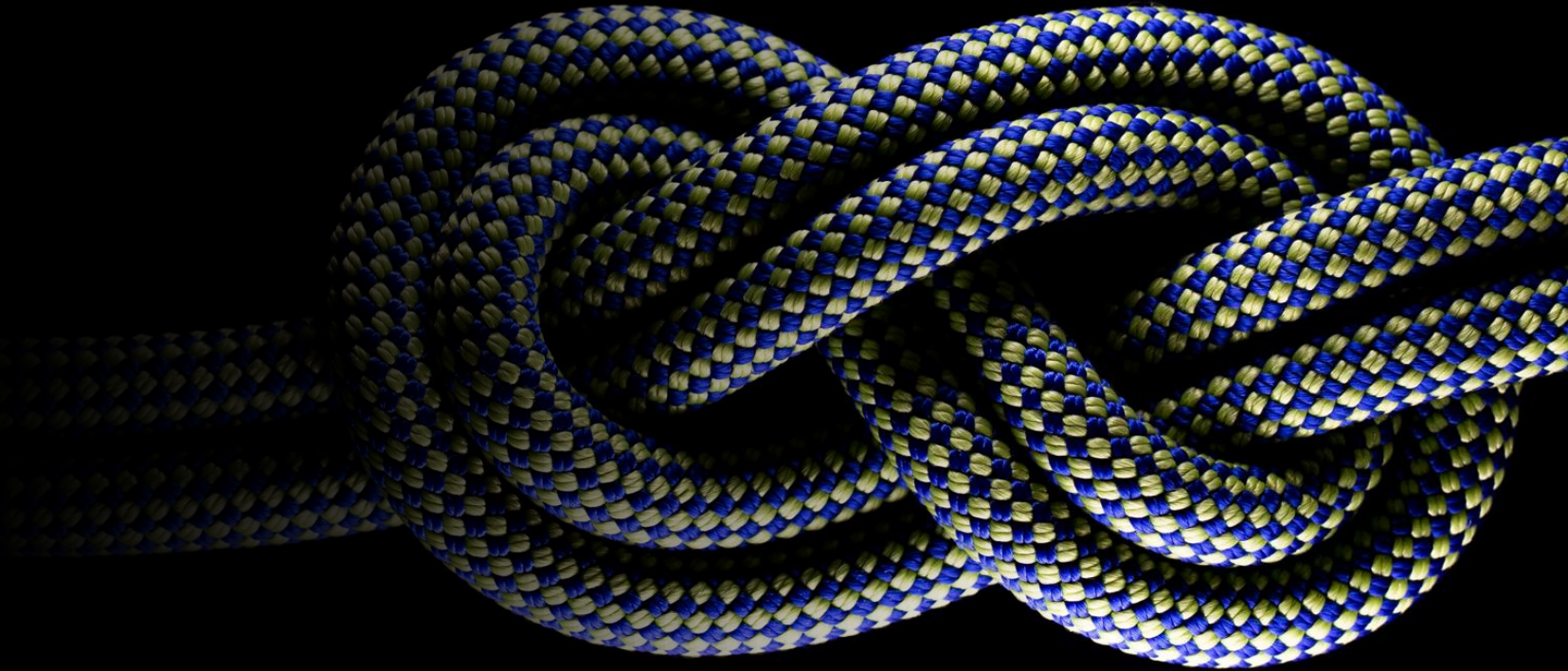
- Product
- Platform
- Time
- Language
- Location
- Data subjects are never embodied selves
- Gender and identity





It's complicated

- Unlike traditional media or political architectures, where a few influential individuals or entities generate or represent the most significant authority, social media is “multi-centred, multi-tiered, dynamic, and dispersed” (Bennett, W. L. and A. Segerberg).





Dangerous speech & borderline content



An abstract illustration with a teal background. A hand at the top holds a dark tablet displaying a large white eye with a yellow iris. Below the tablet, a hand holds another tablet with a smaller eye. A black, patterned shape resembling a snake or a stylized figure with multiple eyes is positioned between the two tablets. Other eyes are scattered throughout the scene, some with red irises. The overall style is graphic and symbolic.

Truth isn't trust

- Bruce Schneier – “hackable society” and attacking society’s core systems: elections, the market economy, lawmaking, tax policy, journalism etc.
- Attention
- High trust societies extremely vulnerable but have little to no mitigation.



Simultaneous hate and harm

- Anti-social and prosocial
- Harmful and healing
- Destructive and democratic
- Divisive and cohesive
- Fact and fiction
- Organic and engineered
- Foreign and domestic

Symbiotic
relationship
between online
& offline



Hacking Circadian rhythm

- In 2018, academic Zeynep Tufekci warned that “... the core business model underlying Big Tech platform – harvesting attention with massive surveillance infrastructure to allow for targeted, mostly automated advertising at a very large scale – is far too compatible with authoritarianism, propaganda, misinformation and polarisation”
- Online patterns observed during periods of heightened offline unrest

Reactions & responses

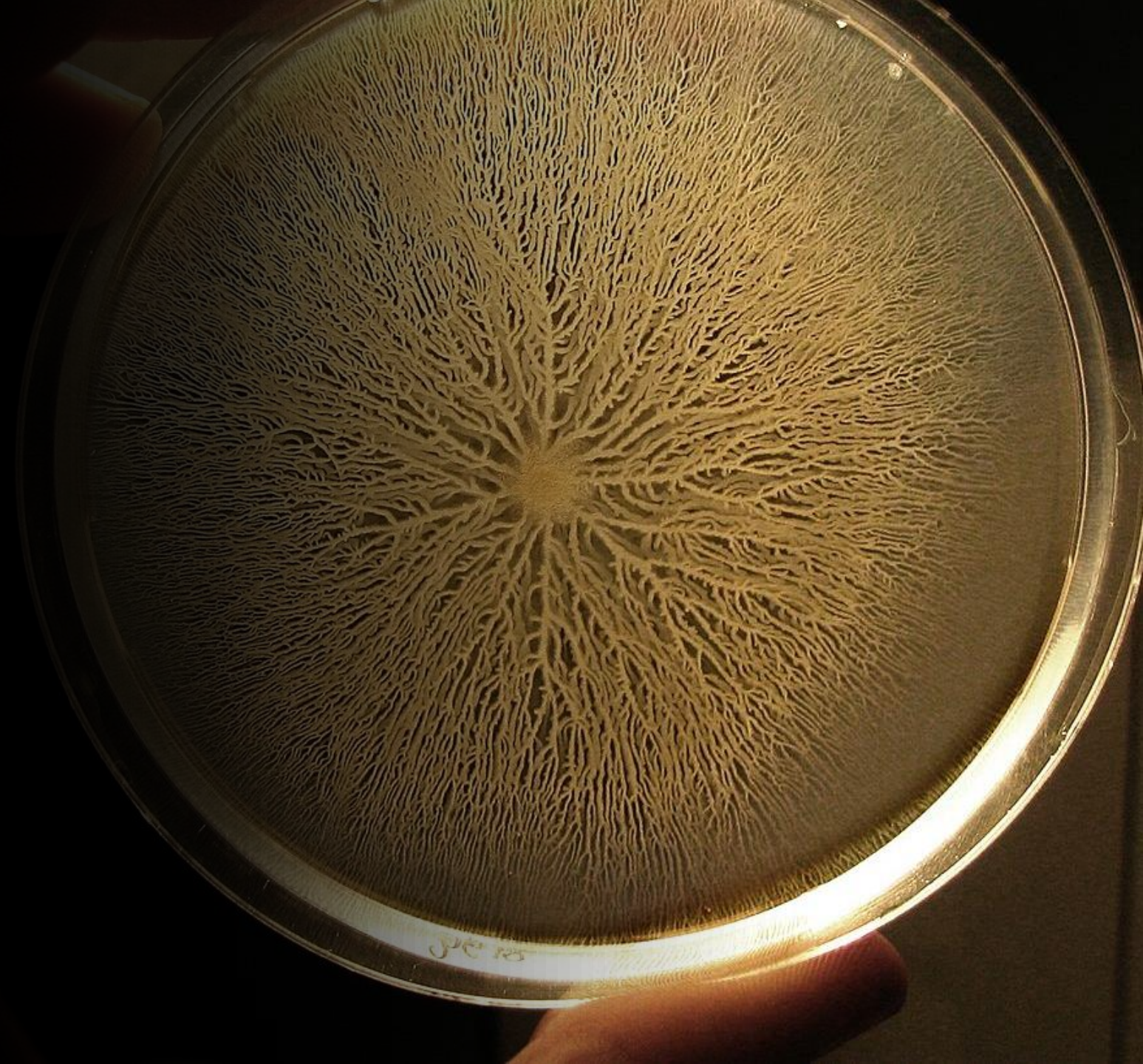
- No critical appreciation
- Reflexive sharing
- Reactions over reflection
- Spill over to offline behaviours

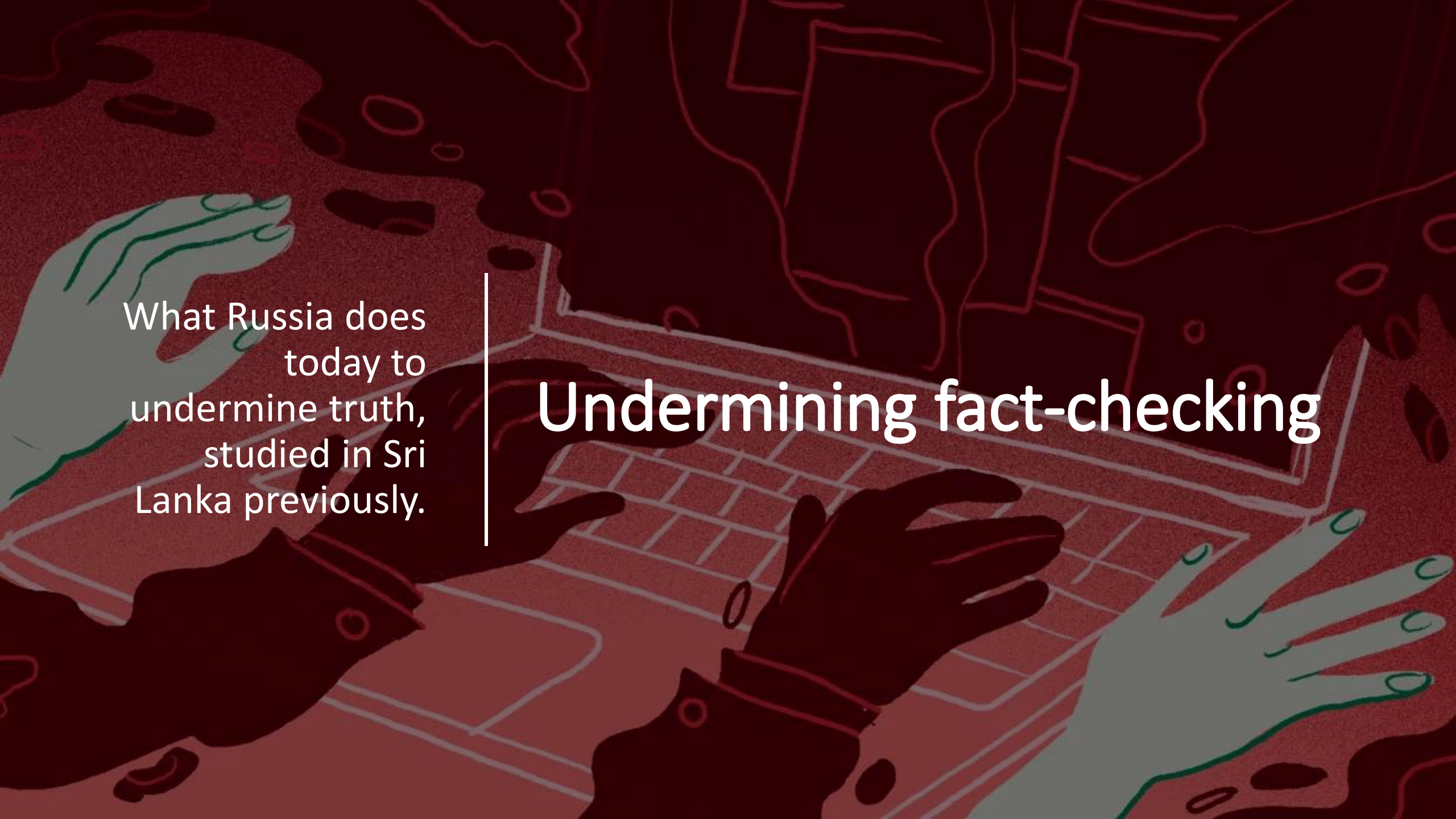




Petrie dish

- Media ecologies, enclaves of exposure, enclave deliberation, group polarisation, individual action frames, power signatures.
- The Global South has generally seen, lived and negotiated it first.



An illustration in a dark red, textured style. It shows a pair of hands in dark clothing typing on a laptop keyboard. The background features faint, stylized outlines of faces and hands, suggesting a digital or social media environment. The overall mood is somber and focused on digital activity.

What Russia does
today to
undermine truth,
studied in Sri
Lanka previously.

Undermining fact-checking



Volatility is its own goal

Generating instability and enduring disorders a goal of disinformation



Information disorders

- “If everybody always lies to you, the consequence is not that you believe the lies, but rather that nobody believes anything any longer... And with such a people, you can then do what you please.” - Hannah Arendt



Law of apparent realities

- “emotions are elicited by events that individuals regard as real, and the intensity of their emotions corresponds to the degree to which they experience the events as real” Dutch psychologist Nico Frijda
- Mass psychosis, or an algorithmically amplified *folie à deux*



Belonging and meaning



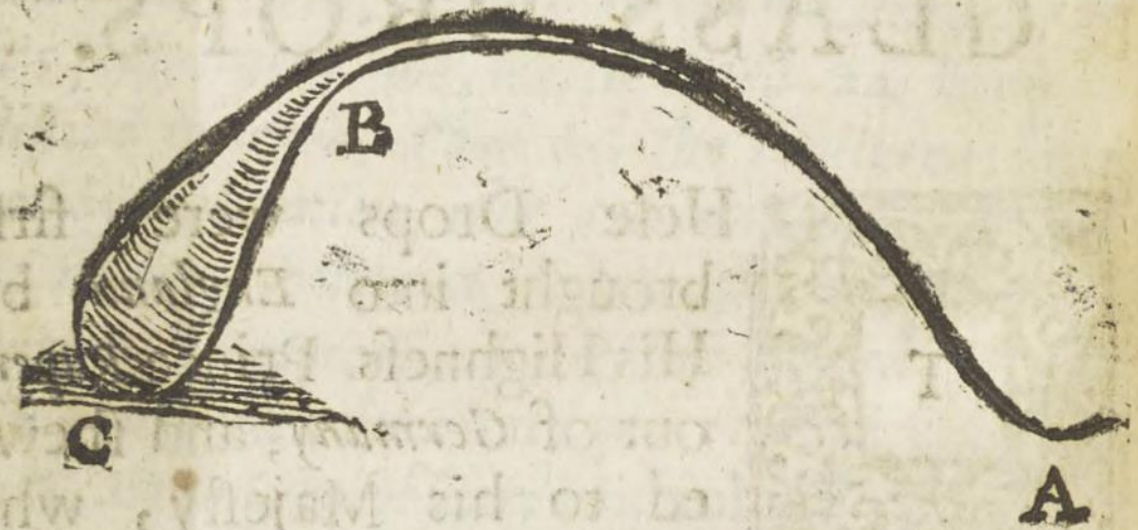
Endemicity of information disorders as a wicked problem

- De-fi
- Distributed and decentralised
- Encrypted
- Democratisation of access as driver of disinformation
- New economies
- New ecologies

How to address?

- Cut off source
- Cut off engagement

*This account was given to the
Society by Sir Robert Mo-
ray, MDC LXI.*



A B the thread, **B C** the body, **B** the neck, **A** the point or end of the thread.

Virtuous viscosity

- How to create friction and around what – freedom of expression is not freedom of reach
- Ecological approach, locating harm in context
- Nurture and nature



Thank you!

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EARTH

explore at solarsystem.nasa.gov/earth