

## Written Representation 93

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Dear Sir/Mdm,

I am writing in regarding the issue on fake news.

In my opinion, a piece of news that is totally made up is no where as scary as a piece of news that frames facts in a manipulative manner to achieve an agenda because the former can be debunked much easier than the former.

During one of the parliament sessions, someone suggested that fake news should be defined as totally made up news. Although that is convenient and clear, it would not serve to purpose of protecting us from being negatively influence very well because the news that are able to influence the public to a large extent are those that are sprinkled with some facts and mixed with plenty of opinion.

The real issue is that we are susceptible to negative manipulation and labelling the issue as “tackling fake news” is detracting the discussion.

My points:

1. Defining fake news as made up news is clear and convenient but not useful
2. Because of the above point, it is difficult to define what is fake news and we are stuck in the first step to tackle fake news
3. The real issue is that we are susceptible to negative influence so trying to tackle fake news is a waste of time

My suggestion is instead of suppressing fakes news, we can think of how to promote good journalism, how to ensure a healthy environment for journalism not to be corrupted by paying party, and how to encourage public discussion with critical thinking.

If there is totally made up news circulating, good journalism will debunk it.  
If there is half truth manipulative news circulating, public discussion with critical thinking will assess its validity.

It is tempting to point finger at “fake news”. After all, there were plenty of discussions and journalism in UK and they eventually opted for Brexit. There were plenty of discussions and journalism is US and they voted for Donald Trump. To this point, I feel the outcome might have been the same with or without fake news because more than half of the population is suffering under the incumbent system so any change is better than no change.

Nonetheless, good journalism and critical discussion is the way to combat being negatively influence by fake news. This is the way to go if the desired outcome is for citizen to make informed choice. However if the desired outcome is to for citizen to

obey their government, then censorship in the name of fake news would be the way to go.

Yours sincerely,

Singaporean