Electronic flies and public opinion

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الذباب الإلكتروني والرأي العام

الملخص:

نهدف من خلال هذه الورقة العلمية إلى تسليط الضوء على مصطلح الذباب الإلكتروني نظرا لكونه مصطلح جديد على الساحة العلمية، خاصة مع التطور الهائل لوسائل الإعلام والاتصال الرقمية وتأثيرها المباشر والرهيب في سلوك الأفراد وتبنيهم لمواقف معينة. ومن جهة أخرى، فإن الاضطرابات السياسية والأمنية بدول العالم أدت إلى ضرورة الاستعانة بهاته الوسائل الاتصالية لتحقيق أهدافها وتوجيه الرأي العام العالمي والمحلي، مما أدى إلى مصطلحات وظواهر جديدة على غرار الدعاية الرقمية، الحرب الرقمية، الجيوش الرقمية، الذباب الإلكتروني وغيرها من المصطلحات التي تلتقي وتتكامل فيما بينها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، البروباغندا، الذباب الإلكتروني، الحرب الإلكترونية، الرأي العام.

Abstract

We aim through this paper to highlight the term e-flies because it is a new term in the scientific arena, especially with the enormous development of digital media and communication and its direct impact on the behavior of individuals and their adoption of certain situations, and on the other hand, political and security disorders in the world countries have led to the need for the end of the communication means ; and to achieve their goals and direct international and local public opinion, leading to new terms and phenomena such as digital propaganda, digital war, digital, digital armies, electronic terminology and other issues that range from among them.

Keywords: Social Media ; E-Accounts ; Digital Propaganda ; E-flies ; e-war, public opinion.

Introduction

The technological development of means of communication in recent years has radically altered human activities at all levels, whether in economic, social, psychological, even political and security terms. The measurement of the power and progress of any country that has become governed by modern technological media, and armies in their traditional sense are no longer the basic determinant of power, but rather the so-called electronic armies based on information and information media.

In the light of the global developments of political and economic upheavals in various countries in the world, and in

the balance of power, conventional armaments should have used new methods that are compatible with these changes and reflect what is known as soft weapons ; wich based on the new communication technology in guiding domestic and international public opinion, gaining support and creating opposition to the other, as a new form of propaganda . Several labels have emerged, including electronic propaganda, electronic flies, electronic warfare, electronic chaos and other electronic labels that are integrated among them and that have proved effective in many international events in the recent period, including Gulf events and political unrest in Algeria.

So we pose the following problem: What is electronic flies? And what do you control and act on? How can it be theoretically framed in the field of information and communication sciences ?

Concept definitions :

Social Media : **Andrias Kaplan** (Andreas Kaplan :German economist born in 1977 Munich, Germany.) concider that the term refers to the use of Internet technologies and mobile technologies (telephone) to transform communications into an interactive dialog.

Michael Hanlin (Michael Hanlon: a British writer, born December 20, 1964 in Brstell, UK, died February 9, 2016) :Social Media is a "collection of Internet applications based on ideology and technology from the Web 2.0, which allows the creation and sharing of user-generated content. "One of the most popular social media sites is Facebook, which is the world's first in terms of number of users, Twitter, and other websites.

Electronic Accounts (E-Account   ): In our scientific paper we mean by the term e-accounts, virtual accounts of social media sites that are operated by specialized programs and devices according to certain political and propaganda plans for the publication and republication of social media publications. In other words, the accounts do not have real people, but imaginary figures, and the material elements of this paper will be detailed at this point.

Electronic Propaganda: Propaganda or propaganda means directing a focused set of messages to influence the opinions or behavior of the largest number of people, namely to present information in order to influence the target recipient by providing incomplete and false information by refraining from providing complete information, and they influence people emotionally rather than rationally (wikipedia.org).

In the light of the technological development of means of communication and the great impact of social media on the behavior of individuals, they have been used in the process of misleading and falsifying facts through the virtual world and by the multiplicity of opinions and positions presented intensively and quickly, an information chaos is created among individuals. This can be called digital proganda e-propaganda as an extension of traditional Proganda that used traditional means of communication.

Definition of Electronic flies:

The term electronic flies is varied in number because of its recent events, from the last three (03) to the fifth (5) years, among which are the following definitions:

- **Mark Owen Jones (Lecturer in Gulf History, Exeter University):**

Electronic flies are robots or software that are designed to appear as real people on social media, i.e., as unreal users, but just computer programs that manage social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook, or others.

"the work of electronic flies is to poison the right information posted by real people, and to make electronic flies show the huge number of fake (**haashtag**) publications that make real publications prolific, unreaching and if they arrive, they will be weak, so that social media sites become a weak tool to know what is going on in the world (BBC, 2019).

From here, electronic accounts can be divided into the following sections:

1)a real person and a true digital identity: A real character on earth in fact, she has a name,

place of residence, interests, and a whole life, and he chose to create an account on Twitter as an example, putting his name, picture, phone number, or e-mail and starting to interact according to his real interests.

2) a real person and a fake digital identity: Here we find someone who chose not to reveal his true identity, perhaps for the purpose of disguise, for the purpose of fraud or for the purpose of moving in larger areas electronically by searching, writing and watching for things that he cannot do in his true personality such as pornography. Or even because of a

psychological feeling of inferiority, it is an attempt to live electronically what one cannot actually live.

3) an anonymous (fictitious) : An account of a person who does not already exist, accounts that are usually created for the purpose of using electronic advertising, which is often programd, in what is known as BOT or flies/electronic committees, these accounts are without a real identity. In fact, it does not belong to a particular person, nor does it have a digital identity; it uses public character images as a portrait or no portrait, and its name (Handle/Handle) is a serial number or code generated from electronic generators.

These accounts operate at certain times only for the purpose of supporting a particular post / *hashtag* or promoting a particular idea or even for a particular product, but for the rest of the time they are either discovered from Twitter and deleted, or remain inactive, unless there is any campaign to share.

The number of these accounts in 2014 reached 23 million, but it is important to note that these automatic accounts are not used only in political propaganda, but are generally programd for the main purpose of providing human effort in the publication process. Whether it's automatic publishing from certain links, even certain companies, or services such as weather, stock exchange, and so on, these automated accounts publish what has been programd to them without human intervention

4) An integrated digital identity for a person who does not exist this latest type of account is the most professional and used by large companies, creating electronic accounts and

each account has its full digital identity, built like building cinematographic characters in movies. That is, there is a picture of someone and a name that may indicate affiliation with a particular family or tribe, and there are interests for each account.

In general, electronic flies or e-committees can be defined as a collection of social media accounts that are managed either by special programs or by a group of people whose purpose is to intensify the dissemination of certain publications or tweets with a view to influencing public opinion or attracting attention and looking at a corresponding idea Another marginalization may be important.

appearence of electronic flies :

Many researchers go to confine electronic flies in recent years (3-5 years ago). But, in our view, the advent of electronic flies goes beyond this period, as we must differentiate between two levels:

First: The appearance of electronic flies as a term: The term electronic flies appeared in 2017 by former Al Jazeera director Yasser **ABU HELALA** who used it to describe automated bott calculations allegedly used by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to influence public opinion (wikipedia, 2019).

We come here to the Gulf crisis between Qatar and the countries that have declared their boycott (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt) ; As for the work of the committees and electronic cells in all their elements, we will find a fierce war on the communication platforms, with the

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elements of electronic flies, each working to serve its cause and face the other.

What distinguishes this crisis is the great role it played and played by the flies cells, where the long accounts, which are said to be operating around the clock, are security centers spread in more than one place to achieve their goal, whether legitimate or illegitimate, by spreading false or incorrect information. Or even the transmission of information that could mislead public opinion (JANOUBI, 2019).

In this context, Bahrain Watch published an article about the publication (Hashtag) in 2017 about the closure of Al Jazeera, " (#want_shut-off_Al-Khnazira نطالب_باغلاق_قناة_الخنزيرة #). It appeared through a sample of 8107 tweets that about 71% of tweets came from automated accounts (OUSSAMA, 2019).
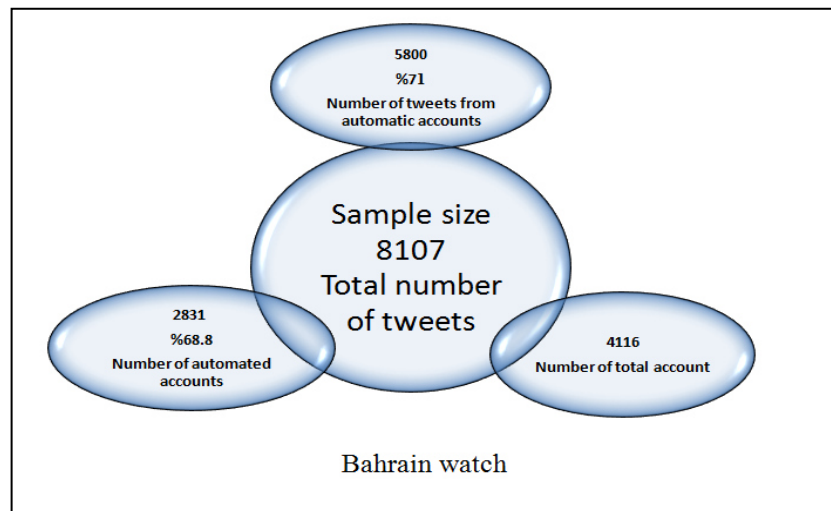
Second: Electronic flies as a phenomenon: Talking about electronic flies as a phenomenon is the result of technological breakthroughs, especially the emergence of the second generation of Web 2.0 by Tim O'Reilly*, who turned the Internet into a platform for action rather than just sites, and its configuration depends on social networks and its applications **blogs**. Wikis, YouTube and more have pages that site visitors can edit and each user can produce and publish information, which has increased the flow of information in record time and has also made it difficult or impossible to verify the authenticity and reliability of the information Published (tech-wd, 2019) .

Therefore, electronic flies as a phenomenon that derives its importance from its environment, which are social media sites, according to the latest statistics (the last five years), the number of Internet users in the world is about 04 billion out of 7.5 billion total world population. The number of social media users exceeded the 03 billion that ranked Facebook first with about 02 billion Distributed in 119 countries out of 149 countries in the world, statistics indicated that more than 05 billion people have smart phones, including more than 2.5 billion people use their smart phones to browse social media ;Social media allowed new actors to enter the media scene, which was confined to elites, as they became able to influence public opinion and address the public in close language, and social networks became an effective and influential tool in shaping public opinion in societies (BENSOULA, 2020, p. 65).

Social media is no longer just a normal means, but it has become a major source of news, especially if we know that journalists and editors rely on social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, to get news at a rate of 65%, according to a center for studies, research and information (NACER, 2019).

It can therefore be said that social media has become a new kitchen for manufacturing and generating a new public opinion on issues and issues, and it is an effective tool that cannot be overlooked, especially as it witnesses more interest and new entrants from the public in its different categories, ages and levels. Social media has developed a media revolution, and the world cannot be imagined today without Facebook and Twitter (openmediahub, 2019). No journalist can use social media, which has become an imperative in journalism, as well as the spread of citizenship journalism, where citizens can send tweets and news via Facebook or Twitter ; everyone can become a source of news and information (HAMDAOUI, 2019) .

In this context, we recall that, given the many positive aspects of the citizen's press and its role in disseminating information from different sources, it understood that it did not comply with professional standards and contributed to the dissemination of news regardless of its validity and without awareness of its seriousness. Also, the distance from objectivity, neutrality and accuracy in moving the event as citizens' feelings are controlled in formulating what they want to convey based on their own experience ;also the lack of censorship and organization has contributed to the launch of numerous news sites and fictitious pages that spread lies and

rumors and deliberately stirred up societies, and also opened the door for terrorist groups and organizations to spread their destructive ideas in society (ABDELKADER, 2019).

Who stands behind electronic flies?

The people behind this phenomenon change according to the issue, geographical location and other factors, but the opposition also resorts to a similar approach by using automatic social comment services to start foreign and fake accounts by publishing tons of offensive comments to the government, and by publishing publications in the same direction.

Electronic flies can also be used to promote a particular brand by deploying a large number of tweets with a special **hashtag** to lead the popular, become more popular and get the celebrity lights.

It is not difficult to use this technology because there are many services on the web that provide a particular ***hashtag*** delivery to the common. And the publication of many publications and tweets in a specific direction and purpose at an appropriate price (AFFICHKO, 2019).

Electronic flies and political disorders in Algeria:

The use and circulation of the term e-flies in Algeria coincided with the popular movement that started on 22 February 2019, as it was not expected that the popular movement would erupt in Algeria or even the centers of researches and studies interested in Algeria, where it erupted through all states of the country without "organization" and without warning. Social media sites were the only media

means that accompanied this popular movement, especially with the first beginnings, as different media outlets, whether public or private, abstained from accompanying the popular movement because it was not expected that these political changes would be achieved in Algeria ; and in the media vacuum, Facebook played a crucial role in delivering popular demands and expressing them to the whole world, and the tweets and publications of citizens were a source of information for Arab and international media about the events in Algeria even for Algerian media after joining the popular movement after weeks.

In front of this situation, former President Abdul Aziz Bouteflika's regime was searching for ways and mechanisms to disperse and suppress the popular movement in any way. Special committees have been set up to follow up on social media publications and tweets, as well as to disseminate misinformation and dissipate public opinion.

According to a young dissident from Algeria's electronic committees that were trying to suppress popular movement, the former ruling regime in Algeria employed unemployed and university students living in the university districts, male and female, with acceptable amounts (more than 40,000 Algerian dinars per month). Joining these committees was so secret that the staff did not know more than the limits of their offices that the members of these committees were not allowed to resign.

The work of the electronic committees was continuous throughout the day and in three groups ranging from 50 to 60 persons, the headquarters was a building divided into offices

equipped with the latest systems, its tasks divided into stages: Starting with follow-up on pages that have large followings and influence public opinion such as the blogger Amir DZ, 123 Viva l'Lagerie and others.

In other words, the first stage was to follow up the publications and reactions carefully, followed by the second stage, which is to establish different imaginary accounts and to help public opinion through comments, interaction with publications, publication of the positive and achievements of former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the sense of propaganda for the former president .

It is worth mentioning that the members of the electronic committees were divided into two sections in terms of publishing and abstraction in Arabic and French, which can be attributed to the nature of the Algerian structure and the historical dimensions represented in the French colonization that created French speakers based in the tribes region and Arabic speakers (ADLANE, 2019).

Theoretical framing : spiral of silence :

The principle of the operation of electronic flies can be dropped on the theoretical current known as the spiral of silence That returns to Elizabeth Noelle Neumann (German political researcher 1916-2010) ; The basic idea of the theory is that the individual tends to shape his or her opinion in accordance with the public opinion prevailing in the society in which he or she lives. When the media adopts certain views or trends over a period of time, most individuals will move in the direction supported by the media. Public opinion is thus made up in line with the ideas supported by the media.

Some researchers have noted that mass media sometimes take a side in favor of a case or figure, which leads to the support of most individuals for the trend adopted by the mass media in search of social harmony, but the individuals opposed to this issue or that direction. They are silent in order to avoid persecution of the group and fear social isolation, and therefore if they believe in opinions contrary to what the media offer, they would be unwilling to talk about them with others. (BENSOULA, 2020, p. 39)

The spiral of silence is one of the pro-media trends in the formation of public opinion and its impact on society and based on three basic elements:

- cumulative: Cumulative effect through iteration, the

media tend to provide similar and frequent messages about topics, personalities, or issues, and this cumulative presentation has long-term implications for recipients.

- totalitarianism: The media control and siege man in

everywhere, they dominate the information environment available, resulting in extensive effects on the individual that are difficult to escape from their messages.

- homogeneity: The consensus of ideas that the media

broadcast and present to audiences , It also means that there is agreement and harmony between those who

communicate with the organizations they belong to, which leads to the similarity of their media attitudes and values, so that the messages that the different mass media broadcast seem similar and consistent with each other, which increases their influence on the audience of the recipients (BENSOULA, 2020, p. 39).

Conclusion

These former factors reduce the opportunity for an individual recipient to have an independant opinion on the issues raised, thereby increasing the opportunity of the new media and media to form ideas and trends affecting public opinion ; As human dependence on smart phones increases, social media is becoming an essential part of the daily life of Internet users; social media platforms themselves become a tool in which the form of advertising, and awareness-building around the world changes, and they are now the most powerful tool in the process of the so-called propaganda industry ; In terms of content, the development of Web 2.0 has made the two-way communication between the content source and product of the content and the recipient.

Even the recipient – or user in technical language – became a producer of online content, creating an environment that initially helped to break the monopoly of digital content production from countries, governments, and large companies.

User generated Content is itself a source of information and content on the Internet, which has changed the form of advertising and advertising structurally and in a fundamental manner; Users are more dependant on each other in

determining their preferences from products to ideas in exchange for relying on the power of advertising campaigns and what the company, government or even political party is promoting before the end of users' content. This has made any desire to promote anything dependant on several key elements, including user content.

What users share on social media platforms is now very important and almost certainly causes great concern to owners of capital, ideologies and ideas, and governments and systems; this has had a major impact on political life and societal fabric in most countries, because user-produced content now reaches the rest of the user and affects their purchasing behavior, ideas, and beliefs.

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