Definition: <u>Fake news is false or misleading information presented as news.</u>
- Influences our attitudes, our beliefs, and we also know that can influence our actual behavior

Affecting the Elections
- In 2016, Foreign entities infiltrated social media
- Pick hot topics that we are divided on and still discussing as a nation - Gun rights, race relations, immigration issues.
- Divide us and make us fight each other from within.
- Causes social unrest.
  - Top 20 fake news received more enagementet (Right before 2016 elections) - In terms of liking; sharing and commenting
    - How has this influenced voters?
    - Results to favouritism of one specific running party
- CNN and Fox - Biased reporting (Hard left and hard right respectively)
- There are reputable news sources out there, even if someone tells you that they're considered false, because they don't agree with what's being reported. That's how the term "fake news" is being tossed around these days — if it doesn't agree with your view, you just say, "Oh, that's fake news. Ignore it." But that's not what fake news is. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but I tell students in my class, it should be an educated opinion. You should have facts and figures and sources to support the views that you hold.
  - Leftist political party - Ideologies and parties with emphasis placed on issues of social equality and social hierarchy (Communism; anarchists) - Favor changing the status quo
  - Rightist political party - Social orders and hierarchies are inevitable natural and desirable - Supports this based on basis of natural law, economics or tradition' - Favor defending the status quo
    - Existing state of affairs, especially regarding social or political issues
- False news on that reached Donald Trump
  - Map of voting in battleground state Michigan wrongly showed an increase of over 138,000 votes for Biden - No increase of votes for trump
    - Result of a data entry error.
  - Posted on 8kun (Message board filled with extreme language and views)
  - Found its way to twitter - Significant no. of shares.
  - Shared to political parties - Even Donald Trump retweeting it from Matt Walsh (A conservative writer)
- Democrats & Republicans against fake news

- ○ Morphing their scrutiny of online falsehoods into a broader campaign against misinformation on right leaning television outlets
- ○ Republicans rebutting it by quoting the first amendment
- ○ Fox News Newsmax One America News Network 0 Echoing President Donald Trump's baseless claims of election fraud

Fake News & Its Impact on the United States Election

Fake News is defined as false or misleading information presented as news, meant to influence the audience's attitudes, beliefs and their behavior in real life. Fake news has become even more prevalent in today's world in comparison to the traditional media outlets in the past as a result of the digital age that we live in today, where news can be generated with much more dynamism, interactivity and flexibility in terms of how information is presented, conveyed and shared. As a result, the creation of fake news is seen to be unrestricted and inevitable by many, and for good reason - such is the case of the United States.

Fake news has always been prevalent in the United States, given the divergence of views and opinions of the rightists and leftists, resulting in extreme acceptance and selective ignorance of news presented in the media in the United States. For instance, the news channels in the United States have polarizing views on the information that is presented. This is because media outlets such as: Cable News Network (CNN) is a hard left media outlet that emphasizes on issues of social equality and social hierarchy, while the new channel : Fox News, is a hard right media outlet that defends the status quo. Due to the opposing views that these media outlets have, this influences the perspective that citizens may have on the information presented to them, and thus individuals may consider the opposing view to be "fake news" as it is not agreeable with a citizen's perspective. Due to these polarizing viewpoints, when hot topics such as gun rights, race relations and immigration issues are brought up for discussion, resulting in Americans to fight with each other from within and cause social unrest in the long run.

The divide in America is worsened in the Presidential Elections, due to the differing perspectives and aims of parties running for the elections - with Democrats being the leftist political party and Republicans being the rightist political party. Thus, much more fake news will be created during this time in order to slander the opposing party or presidential candidate running for said party, in order to favor the party which they support. Such is the case of the fake news spread during the 2020 presidential elections, when a map that showcased the battleground of votes in the state of Michigan had wrongly presented an increase of over 138,000 votes for Biden as a

result of a data entry error. However, netizens took this another way, posting it to social media sites declaring a foul play of election votes being counted. This was shared widely throughout social media, eventually even finding its way to Donald Trump's official Twitter account, before it could be properly addressed by the administrators in charge of vote counting.

Even then, Donald Trump still believes in election fraud as a result of the post despite it already being clarified, and right leaning media networks further supplement the fuel to the fire by constantly echoing his claims to the rightist American people, resulting in the 2021 United States Capitol attack carried out by extreme Trump supporters, and growing political tensions of the Democrats and Republicans as the Democrats morphed their scrutiny of online falsehoods against the earlier mentioned right leaning media outlets, such as Fox News, Newsmax and One America News Network.

Sociologists suggest that the 2020 elections have caused a great rift in the American people as a result of their polarizing views, and will lead into a ripple effect of growing distrust for information presented in the future presidential elections of America. As a result, America has just begun to realise the impact of fake news and are urging Americans to make smart value judgments from less opinionated and objective news outlets such as the New York Times, and from the facts and figures presented by media outlets, rather than the opinions presented by Newscasters and other extremists.