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A Fake News Seeker to Detect Fake News in Social Media

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Abstract:

The development of environments that permit immediate communication and information distribution is a result of the advancement of technology. False news, article manipulation, a loss of confidence in the media, and information bubbles have consequently developed into high impact issues. In this context, there is a growing demand for automated technologies that can categorize content as trustworthy or unreliable and that can provide a trustworthy environment. Because of the task's high degree of difficulty and dependence on variables like language, news source, and subject volatility, current solutions do not fully resolve this issue. The purpose of this study is to build an application which can detect fake news. When the interaction between social media and society gets higher, it has become easier to fabricate news to mislead society. The problem is that some organizations had been fabricating news with factually inaccurate data for their benefit. Recent events have been proven that; fabricated information can have huge impact on society. Studies that had been done on this subject area are quite a few. The proposed solution, Fake News Seeker application, is to explore a method to give a visual representation of true news and the sources used for verification and also if fake news detect, true information about that incident will be displayed with the help of the machine learning techniques. With help of the collaborative filtering, News Seeker can recommend news articles according to user's preference.

Keywords —Natural Language Processing, Machine Learning, Fake News Detection.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional media consists of mostly nameless and faceless people deciding what does and what does not get printed and broadcasted to the public. In this new era of internet and with a variety of social media available, creation and consumption of news and information in the society is changing. The rapid transformation of traditional print media into online portals has become a new trend. On the other hand, online social media has democratized the means of news production and dissemination, also, it has become a breeding ground for false and fake news. The increase use of mobile devices and easy Wi-Fi access to 3G/4G networks, then Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter being

powerful platforms for providing news and entertainment has been a major way for this fake news to spread rapidly. The proliferation of misinformation on social media platforms are faster than the spread of the Corona virus disease.

A. Problem Statement

Facebook, a well-known social networking platform, claimed that during the months of March and April of 2020, warning labels were placed on almost 90 million pieces of content related to Covid-19 because they were associated with fake treatments, anti-vaccination propaganda, and conspiracy theories (Solon, 2020). The public shopping habits in regard to buying personal protection equipment displayed an odd pattern as a

result of the panic caused by this misleading news. Moreover, people may eat harmful chemicals as a result of disinformation about health on social media. The misinformation impact is also connected to purchasing and ingesting medications without a prescription from a doctor, in addition to other factors. The virus is being created in a lab for use as a biological weapon, religious fundamentalists are spreading false information that praying to God can protect you from getting Covid-19, and so on. This misinformation regarding Covid-19 is creating in many different ways.

So fake information can make situation worst because of the decision made on incorrect information could never be correct. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the impact of such fake information on any emergency situation and develop mechanism with the use of information technology to assess the correctness of information received.

B. Fake news and COVID 19

An "infodemic" has been sparked by the COVID-19 situation and an increase in the volume of online misinformation (Brennen et al., 2020; Kouzy et al., 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). It has been proposed, for instance, that exposure to COVID-19 fake news may weaken rules on social distance or encourage readers to self-medicate with unapproved medications. Anecdotal accounts of harms caused by such fake news items are common (Bavel et al., 2020). Computer modeling implies that exposure to false health news may have a negative impact on the public's response to a disease outbreak (Brainard et al., 2020), but no actual evidence of this has been shown. We are aware of only one study that has attempted to trace the behavioral impacts of fake news in any setting, despite the fact that some researchers have presented evidence that disinformation may affect beliefs and attitudes (Drummond et al., 2020). Many studies have shown that a variety of factors, such as repeated exposure to the information and whether the misinformation fits with a person's preexisting ideas or social identity, can affect susceptibility to misinformation ((Frenda et al.,

2013; Greene et al., 2021; Kahan, 2017; Murphy et al., 2019).

C. Comparison of Similar Research, Products and Technologies

News plays an important role in everyone's life. Mainly two types of news categories are identified, and they are real news and fake news. Fake news has a significant impact on our social life and a study shows that identification of fake news is a challenging task (Vlachos and Riedel, 2014). Fake news detection is an emerging research area which is gaining interest but is involved with some challenges due to the limited number of resources (i.e., data sets, published literature) available (Ahmed et al., 2017). In this section a critical evaluation about the similar products, researches and the technologies & features used in those respective products will be provided (Ahmed et al., 2017)

D. Comparison of Commercial Products

In the world, there aren't many apps for detecting fake news. As a result, testing was carried out by downloading the relevant apps. Because implementation details for these commercial apps are not available, information from online websites has been gathered. The feature comparison chart between five products is shown below.

TABLE 1
FEATURE COMPARISON CHART

Features	News Seeker	Google News	News Cop	Test News	Watch Dog App
Identifying real news	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identifying fake news	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Search for News	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Accuracy of news	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
News Recommendation based on user Preferences	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Using Machine Learning to Filter the news	✓	✓	✓		✗
Discussion forum	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
User Registration	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

The first app tested was ‘Google News’ (Table 1 column Three). Google News can be accessed via their website or the app they have created. For testing purposes, the Google News app was tested so that it would be easier to compare with other similar apps. All types of news available to view and watch on Google News, but it was unable to find out if the news were real or fake. Google News users can find news in any language in any country, but other applications did not have that feature. One of the most important features of Google News is that they categorize their news as sports, entertainment, business, health, politics etc. and Google News suggests new news to the user using previously searched news by the user. In summary the only flaw found in Google News is that it doesn’t have the ability to filter fake news from real news.

The next app tested was ‘NewsCop’ (Table 1 column Four). When the app was tested it responded really well for the news items that have been already searched, but the app was unable to give a quick response to new news items re-

leased. Additionally, it also does not provide a feature to search for a news item, but it allows the user to post a news item to get the public’s opinion about the news item. Another thing that was identified was the ability to choose news based on the preferences of the user. Even though the app allowed the user to select the news category they want, it does not suggest news items on the poll based on the user’s preferences. In summary the main flaws in the ‘NewsCop’ app was that it does not have the timeliness and the ability to search for a specific news item.

The next app tested was ‘Test News’ (Table 1, column Five). This was the only app that had the ability to search for a specific news item. There was no evidence to be found if the app was using machine learning for the news filtering process. The app performed really well but the main flaw identified was that the information provided by the app was not accurate and the information provided was not timely. Other than that, it lacked some features such as news recommendation based on user preferences, user registration and a discussion forum to discuss about the news which are not fully verified.

The last app tested was a local app named ‘WatchDog’ (Table 1 column Six). The app doesn’t use machine learning techniques when filtering the fake news from the real news. They (WatchDog Team) filter the news manually and then the news is uploaded. This process takes a long time and all the news cannot be covered in such a short time period. Other than that, the app also lacked some features such as accuracy of the news, user registrations, searching for news items, news recommendation based on user preferences and a discussion forum. The main flaw in this app was that the information was inaccurate and not timely.

In summary most of the apps lack the timeliness of information, accuracy of the information, the ability to search if it’s a fake or real news item, and most importantly they don’t use machine learning to filter fake news from real news. The main reason to focus on timeliness is due to ‘The Golden Rule of Information’ (Figure 1).

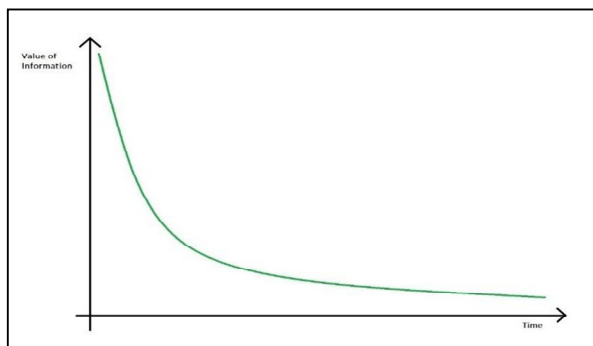


Figure 1 Golden Rule of Information

As shown in Figure 1, the value of information decreases over time, hence you need to show the information as soon as it is released. By automating this process, all the news can be filtered more accurately, efficiently and with more speed. This will make News Seeker comparatively better than the competitor's apps.

E. Data Representation

Since the computer cannot understand the language of the humans it should be represented in a way that the computer understands. A simple and efficient way of representing data is the "bag of words" approach which is used in natural language processing. Going through this process is essential before feeding it into a classification algorithm (Chen, 2015). This data pre-processing technique will increase the efficiency of the machine learning algorithm since some of the machine learning algorithms use a specific format of data. In this model "bag of words" the text is represented in a bag or in other words in a multiset regardless of its grammar and even the order of the words, but it stores the multiplicity of each word.

F. Removal of the Stop Words

Stop words are the most common words used in any language such as a, an, the, in, etc. these stop words don't carry any amount of discriminating power and therefore need to be eliminated before creating the "bag of words" model. The main reason to do this is to reduce the space that these words use and

also to increase the processing speed (Kumbhar et al, 2020). These types of words are not much relevant in the process, if a word occurs in the document a high number of times that word carries a higher level of relevancy. Which means the local frequency of each word in the document is proportional to the relevancy of that word. Term frequency-inverse document frequency is focused on removing the stop words from the document by calculating its relevancy. Term frequency – inverse document frequency is a numerical and a statistical way of calculating the importance of a word to a document in a collection of them.

$$TF(w, d) = \frac{\text{occurrences of } w \text{ in document } d}{\text{total number of words in document } d}$$

$$IDF(w, D) = \ln\left(\frac{\text{Total number of documents } (N) \text{ in corpus } D}{\text{number of documents containing } w}\right)$$

$$TFIDF(w, d, D) = TF(w, d) * IDF(w, D)$$

The IDF is lower on the stop words compared to the other words in the document. The stop words have a higher document frequency. Which means, the number of documents in the corpus containing that word is higher. So, as mentioned earlier, these stop words are identified and before proceeding to the model content-based features using the "bag of words" model, these stop words are discarded.

G. Fact Checking

Fact checking is the process of verifying various information in nonfictional and fictional text in order to determine its accuracy and veracity. Although fact checking is a difficult task, various lexical features can help us understand the differences between more reliable and less reliable digital news sources. To archive this task, it is necessary to train a long short-term model that will take the sequence of words and predict the rating for this specific statement (Chen, 2015). A long short-term memory model is a type of artificial recurrent neural network architecture used in deep learning. This will store the previous inputs to the system in other words it will

remember the inputs to the system to optimize the performance. This has the ability to process single data points as well as an entire sequence of data.

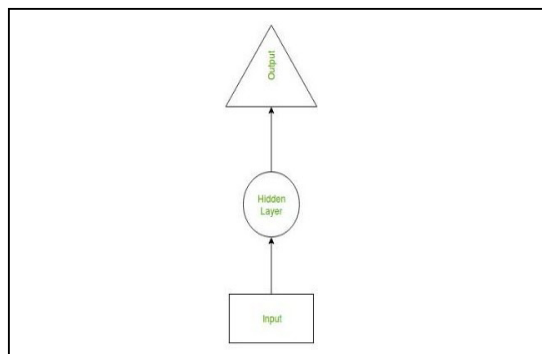


Figure 2 Fact Checking

H. Stance Detection

To identify if the news is fake or not first, it is required to find out on which side of the debate is the user or the author is on, to fulfil that requirement, the technique stance detection will be used. The stance detection will mainly be used when it is needed to find evidence about the user's claim (Rashkin., 2017). This technique will be able to find out about if the user's claim is agreeable or not by going through various documents and searching through them.

I. Algorithmic Analysis

According to recent studies, fake news is detected 76% of the time. By cross-referencing with other stories, linguistic analysis could be used to detect fake news even when it is new. Linguistic analysis takes a unique approach, examining quantitative characteristics such as grammatical structure, word alternative, punctuation, and complexity (Krusche and Alperowitz, 2014). The data sets will be fed into the systems, which will be trained to detect fake news. Participants in the study were paid to turn short, actual news stories into similar but fake news items, mimicking the journalistic style of the articles, using Amazon Mechanical Turk (Ståhl and Bosch, 2017). At the end of the process, the research team had a data set of 500

real and fake news stories (Fake news detector algorithm works better than human, 2020).

2. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Approach

In addition to the actual research phase, the research strategy is a crucial part of the project because it allows the developers to communicate their expectations and hypotheses through prototypes. To archive a well-developed application in a short amount of time, development methodologies should be used. Deductive approach and inductive approach are the two sub-phases that make up this research approach phase. While the inductive technique will provide a deeper grasp of new theories through obtained data, the deductive approach will concentrate on testing the creators' hypotheses. This research will be carried out utilizing a logical approach with the intention of identifying fake news and suggesting the pertinent accurate news for that circumstance.

B. Process Model

Programming frameworks are determined, planned, implemented, and tested using process models, which are organized collections of actions. A software process model is an abstract illustration of a process that illustrates the process as seen from a certain angle.

The Iterative Process Model will be utilized for this project out of all the existing software process models, such as the Waterfall Model, the Incremental Model, the Agile Model, the Spiral Model, etc. The Iterative Process Model focuses on an initial, basic set of user features, which then gradually becomes more sophisticated and full of features until the final system is achieved.

Little sets of the software requirements will be established across the application components while using the iterative process model. As there would be fewer iterations, the application development and testing process would be easier.

C. Analysis and Design approach

The analysis and design approach have been chosen using the Object Oriented Analysis and Design (OOAD) methodology. The OOAD technique improves the readability and reuse of the code while reducing system difficulties. We'll use the iteration approach for implementation, as was indicated previously. The New Seeker application's versatility will enhance by adhering to the Object-Oriented Principles (Encapsulation, Inheritance, Abstraction, and Polymorphism). This paradigm builds interactions between system components by treating them as individual objects. The system's efficiency will rise as a result.

D. Programming Methodology

- Natural Language Processing and Machine Learning will be used for the project with OOP methodology.
- Behavioral Design Pattern will be used in the applications since there are some predictions for users.
- Implementations will be done using the Multi-Level Detection Approach, Observer pattern and Model-View-Controller (MVC).

E. Testing Methodology

The testing for the project will be done using the IEEE 829-2008 test plan template, which is the IEEE Standard for Software and System Test Documentation. Unit testing, performance testing, usability testing, compatibility testing, and load testing are a few of the testing approaches that will be used.

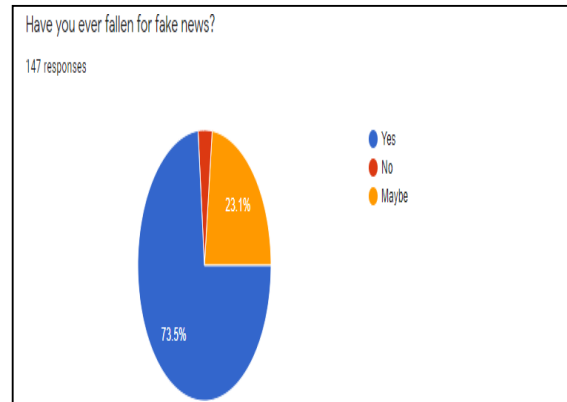
3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE GATHERED DATA

A. Questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed to identify the users' perspectives on the fake news detection system. One hundred and forty-

seven responses were recorded, and those responses have been evaluated.

Figure 3 Fallen % for fake news



This question was used to get a proper understanding about the number of people who have fallen for fake news. Out of the people who responded to the Google form, 73.5% of people have fallen for fake news while 23.1% of people have responded saying that they might have fallen for fake news. A minority of the people mentioned that they haven't fallen for fake news.

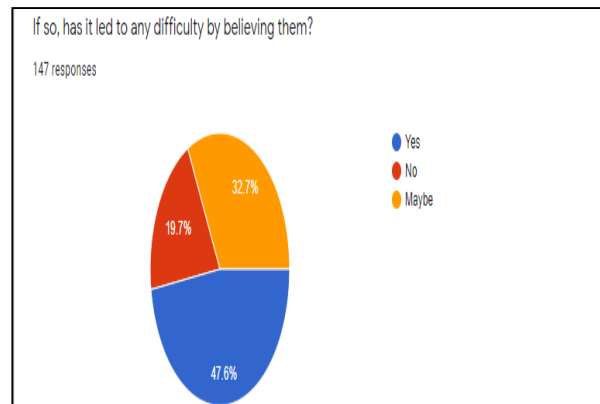


Figure 4 Difficulty by believing fake news

This question was used to identify whether people have faced any difficulties by believing in fake news. 47.6% of people have faced difficulties by believing in fake news and 32.7% of people responded saying that they might have faced difficulties. Meanwhile, less than 20% of the responses show that a small segment of people hasn't faced any difficulties by believing fake news.

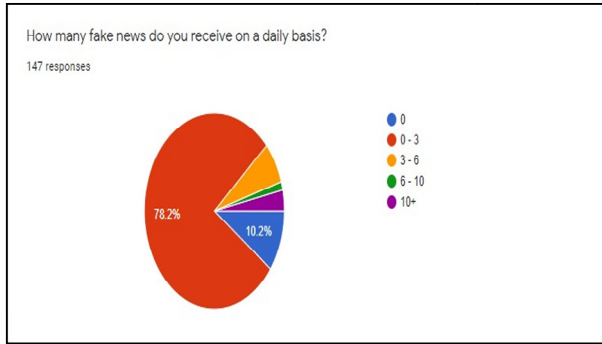


Figure 5 Number of fake news receive on a daily basis

This question was used to get a rough idea about the number of fake news people receive on a daily basis. More than 75% of the responses are about that people are receiving 0-3 fake news on a daily basis.

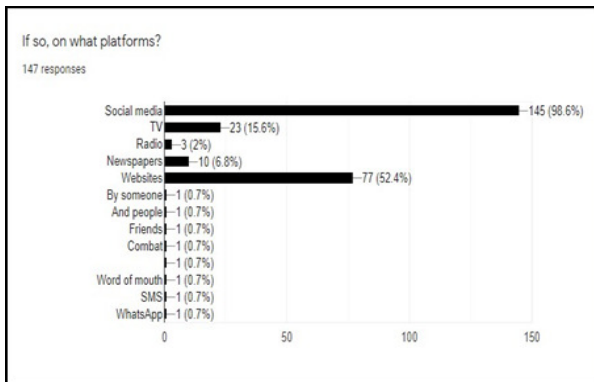


Figure 6 Type of platforms in fake news

This question was a multiple-choice question and was used to identify the platforms that have been providing fake news. Majority (98.6%) of the responses represent social media as the main platform that has been providing fake news. Also, more than 50% of people have expressed that websites also provide a considerable amount of false news on a daily basis.

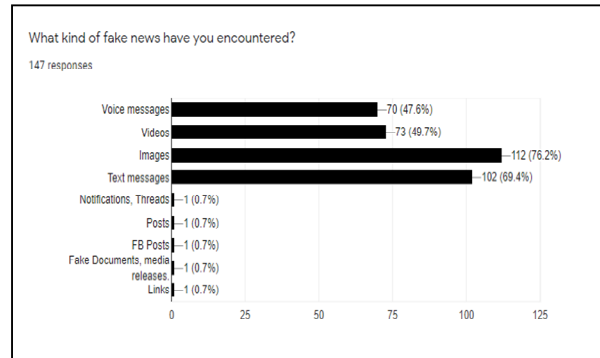


Figure 7 Type of fake news encountered

This was a multiple-choice question and was used to get a rough idea about the file type of the fake news. 76.2% of the people expressed that mainly false news was provided through images and 69.4% of the responses represent that a considerable amount of fake news is spread through text messages. People who encountered this fake news might have been misled to a certain extent.

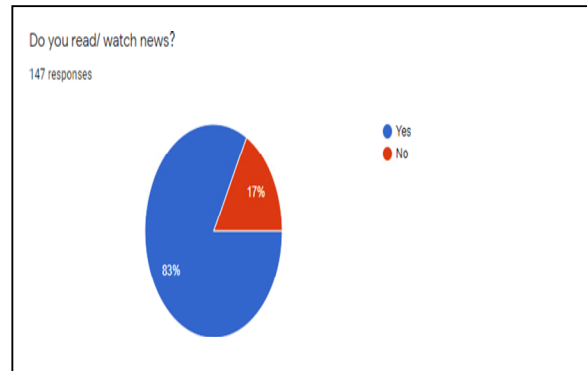


Figure 8 Do you read/watch news?

This question was used to find out whether the respondents have been reading or watching news. Majority of the pie-chart represents that the responders have been watching or reading news.

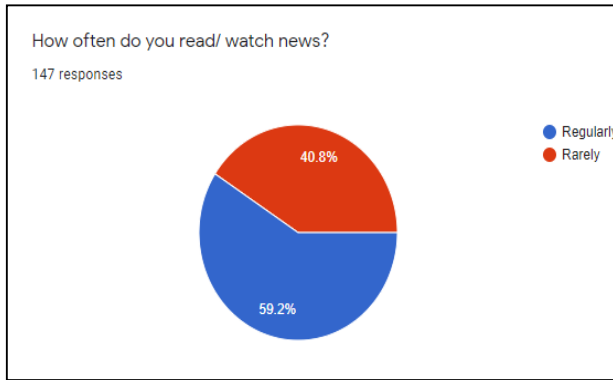


Figure9 Number of timeread/watchnews

This question was used to figure out whether the responders are watching or reading news on a regular basis. Majority (59.2%) of the chart represents that the responders are watching or reading news regularly while 40.8% responded to that as “Rarely”.

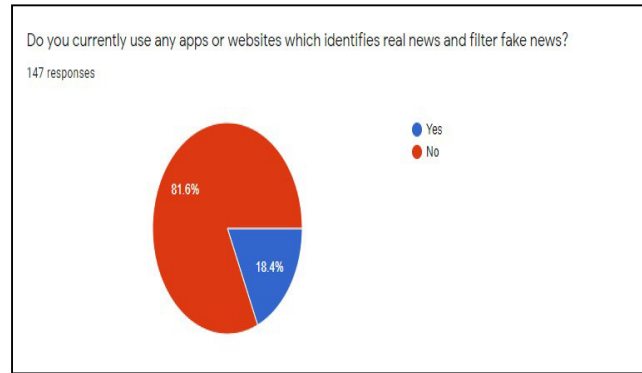


Figure11 Currently use any apps or websites which identifies real news and filter fake news

This question was used to get to know whether the responders use any apps or websites to filter and identify fake news. More than 80% of responders do not use any apps or websites to filter and identify fake news. This shows that majority of the people could face difficulties by being misled by fake news.

Less than 20% of responders use apps or websites to identify real news by filtering fake news off.

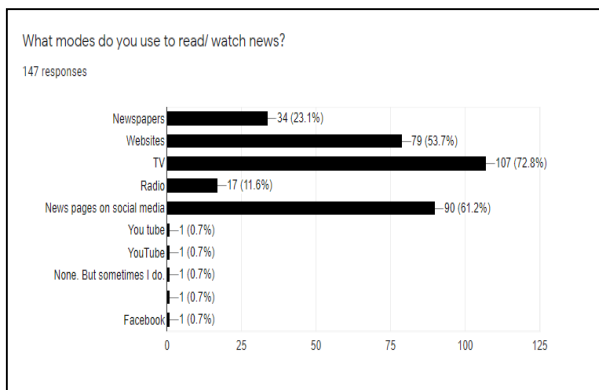


Figure10 Modes used to read/watch news

This question was used to understand the modes used to watch or read news by the responders. Out of the responses most have responded to TV, news pages on social media and websites. A considerable number of responses represent that people also use newspapers and radio to read and to listen to news.

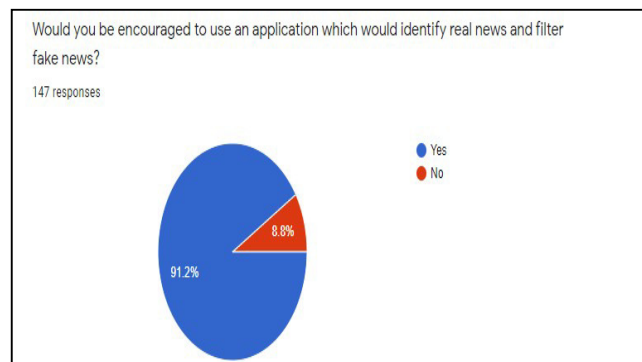


Figure 12 Encouraged to use an application which would identify real news and filter fake news

This question was used to figure out whether the responders would be encouraged in using an application which would identify real news and filter fake news. More than 90% of the responders are encouraged to use an application to detect fake news. This gives clarity that there is a need for a fake news detection system.

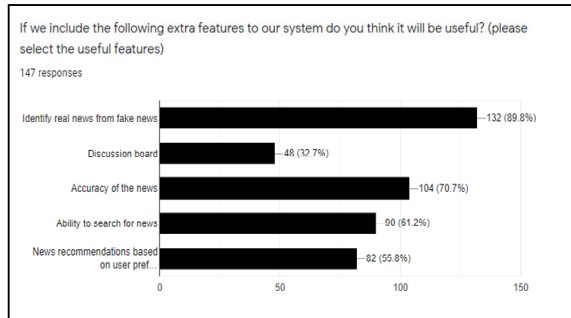


Figure 13 If we include the following extra features to our system do you think it will be useful?

This question was a multiple-choice question and was used to get an opinion from the responders whether News Seeker should include the above features. Out of the responses, most had responded to identifying real news from fake news, accuracy of news and the ability to search for news. But other features also show a considerable number of responses about their usefulness to the “News Seeker” application.

B. Design

In the section on System Requirements Specification that was previously covered, functional and non-functional requirements, models, and strategies for gathering requirements were all discussed. The design of News Seeker, including the High-Level Architecture diagram, Sequence diagram, Class diagram, Activity diagram, and Wireframe diagram, will be explained in this article.

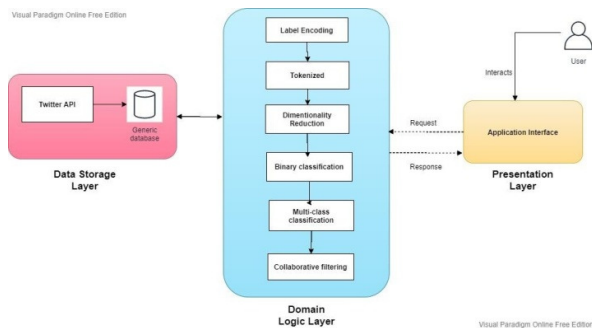


Figure 14 High Level Architecture Diagram for News Seeker

Above figure represent the high-level architecture diagram of News Seeker application. The architecture diagram consists of data storage layer, domain layer and presentation layer.

Data Storage layer is about the measurements that have been taken out to store data. News Seeker use twitter APIs to pass data to the database. Modular approach of the backend logic is explained through Domain logic layer. Presentation layer illustrates the frontend of the application which was developed using android studios.

4. DISCUSSION

The system's requirement specifications, which covered stakeholder analysis, requirement collection, data analysis, models, and functional and non-functional requirements, were covered in the preceding chapter. This chapter, which serves as the project's last chapter, will go over the data set component as well as legal, social, ethical, and professional considerations as well as the strategies for implementing News Seeker.

A. Dataset

The required first data set for this project was acquired from the website “Kaggle.com”. It is an in-detail data set with 23524 fake news and 21418 real news. The fake and real news CSV files include 4 fields. They are title, text, subject and date. This dataset was published by Mr. Clément Bissailon.

The second dataset contains files from “IEEE.org”. This file has two datasets. The first one is Fake News Detection (Fake Newsnet) and that data set has three CSV files. The Development CSV file includes 8 fields and 1059 news. The Test CSV file also includes 8 fields and has 1055 news. Finally, the Training CSV file contains 8 fields and 15213 news. These three CSV files have 8 fields and some of them are id, date, speaker, statement, source etc. The next data set is Fake News Detection (LIAR). It also has 3 CSV files like the first data set

asTest, Development and Training. 1266 news are included in the Development CSV file. The Testfile has 1267 news and the Training file has 15053 news. These three data sets have 8 fields like Fake News Detection (Fake Newsnet).The specialty of these data sets is that they do not specify whether the news is true or false. Mr. Amir Jalaly Bidgoly and Mr. Hossein Amirkhanicreatedthesedatasets andpublishedthemto“IEEE.org”.

Due to the lack of data sets for this project, verifying news using popular websites will also be tested in the developing stage.

B. Legal, social, ethical and professional issues

When conducting a project like this it is very important that all the legal, social, ethical and professional issues during the project are handled accordingly. In the following topics there will be an explanation of how the team managed to resolve all the issues mentioned earlier.

1. Legal Issues

In the process of developing News Seeker, a higher level of priority was given to data protection laws and to make sure that none of those laws will be broken in the process. Information will be used from websites such as Ada Derana, BBC etc. and the dataset which will be used is available to the public. The terms and conditions of such websites as well as the data set was carefully reviewed, and it will be priority to make sure that the information on the data set will not be misused or altered in anyway. Most importantly it will not be used to conduct any sort of illegal activities.

It was made sure to not gather any personal information in the questionnaire conducted, that could breach the user's privacy. The data gathered from the questioner will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used to understand their requirements.

All the software that is/was used were legally purchased such as Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Office. Some Online tools were used to design some of the diagrams creatively. For an example, these entry level tools were available for the public to use for free of charge. Therefore, it didn't need any licensing.

2. Social Issues

The project News Seeker does not have any major social or cultural affect. However, since the general public can comment on the discussion forum about news, which are not verified, the project could have a very low level of impact on the relevant news category. Even though news is used by almost everyone in the world, people with low literacy skills won't be able to use the app. Since, for these searching news feature it will require for the user to type and input the news. As a solution, image processing and voice processing will be added in the future versions. Additionally, for the prototype, the model will only be created using English language. This might affect the people who do not understand English. Multi-language support will be added later in a future version.

3. Ethical Issues

At the beginning of the survey for News Seeker, permission was requested from the responder to represent their identity through an email. The responses from the survey have been analyzed in the SRS chapter. In order to protect the identity of the users, their personal information (e-mail addresses) hasn't been included in the SRS chapter. The data sets that have been used in this project are visible to the public. The data in the given data sets have been utilized in a secure way to minimize the damage caused to the victim's identity. The source code or the link of the data sets were not shared through shareable open-media, through a private Google Drive cloud account (private secured environment to handle

he information).

4. Professional Issues

The dataset required for this project was acquired online from a webpage where it was available for the public to acquire for free. Many other attempts also were made to acquire a dataset from local corporations in a professional way by producing a letter to the respective corporation. The questionnaire was distributed amongst people via e-mail and the people were given ample time to be prepared in order to answer it. They were well informed on how the data gathered was going to be utilized in aid to the project and their permission on utilizing the data was requested first. This underlines the professionalism taken into consideration thus far.

C. Plans for Implementation

1. Continuous Delivery

Continuous Delivery is the ability to get change of fully pes including new features, configuration changes, bug fixes and experiments into production or into the hands of users, safely and quickly in a sustainable way. S. Krusche has introduced CD into multi customer project courses and evaluated its usage, experience and benefits. There is a rapid trend in investment on CD due to its benefits such as improved productivity and efficiency, reliable releases, improves customer satisfaction, accelerated time to market and making the right product.

2. Continuous Deployment

According to Amazon, CD signifies that each change committed ensures that it is ready for production and that Continuous Deployment will immediately apply to it there. Several researchers today employ the continuous deployment automation strategy to improve the efficiency of their job. According to Rahman et al., continuous deployment has sped up the processes in agile methodologies. They name Facebook, GitHub, Netflix, and Rally Soft as examples of companies that effectively employ continuous deployment on

their production deployments. Changes are immediately deployed to production through a deployment pipeline after developers commit them.

5. CONCLUSION

This research project presents a solution for a fake news filtering system using machine learning (ML) and natural language processing (NLP). For this project the existing products, technologies and research were critically analyzed and the best features of each and every one of them was identified in order to identify the feasible solution. The requirements for the system were identified using a questionnaire that was given to the general public since the main target market for this is them. Some of the features for the software was added from competitor products but all those features will be improved when they are implemented in the project. In order to identify the most suitable project management method a thorough evaluation was done between the existing methodologies and iterative model was selected for the software development lifecycle (SDLC) of this project. The design for the prototype was first designed using UML diagrams and then all the information required for the designing part was gathered based on that. Finally, in the conclusion the main approach for this project and the plans for implementation are thoroughly explained.

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