

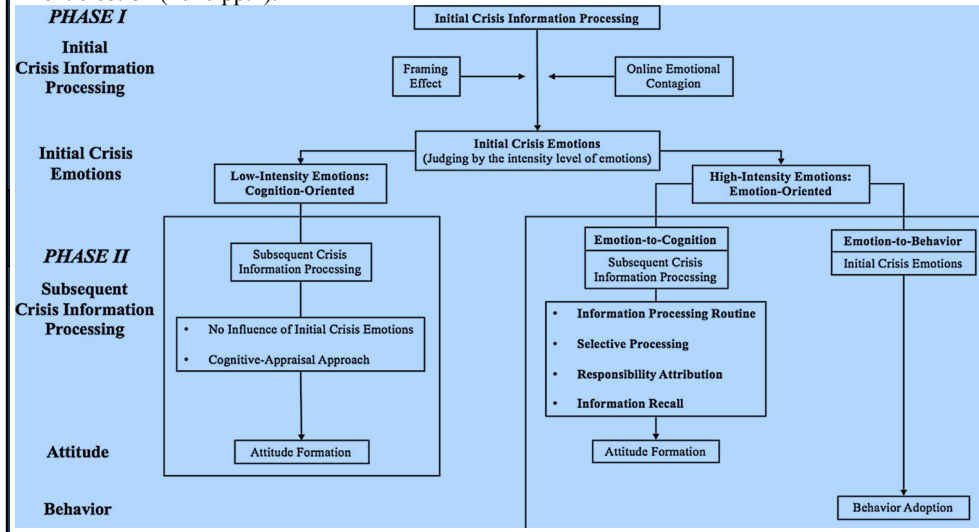
Abstract

Social media is an ever evolving door of receiving and sharing information. Whether it be real or fake news, the receiver responds in two emotional ways: anger or fear (Lu and Huang, 2018). Depending on which emotional response affects the cognitive abilities and the behavior outcome of the receiver of information. Do they “like” or “share” the information into becoming secondary crisis communication? Or do they spiral into silence thinking they are the minority? An and Gower (2009) states that when reporting on a crisis, the news media tend to attribute the information to an organization or individual. The media tend to put light on a specific character to attribute the story to someone or something. When that happens the receiver shifts to emotional behaviors and cognitive behaviors, if they re-share the information, and their own bias on the news story, the online news starts again to become a revolving door of information (Lu and Huang, 2018). McLuhan (1964) states that the method of the medium in which you use is actually the message you are portraying to the audience. The “medium (media) is the message” (1964, p.7). Currently, the most use form of media to obtain news is social media. The Pew Research Center found that 68% of adults in the United States say they occasionally get their news from social media. However, more than half, 57%, says that they expect the news to be inaccurate (Shearer & Masta, 2018). However, even when there are inaccuracies, “liking” and “sharing” still happen, even with the belief of inaccuracies. This paper proposes to shed light on how people receive information and respond during secondary crisis communication situations.

Methodology

The SCC responds on emotional-to-cognitive behavior. Lu and Huang (2018) describe two main emotions the receiver deals with in a crisis communication online setting. Those two emotions are anger and fear. Depending on which the receiver of the information feels, their process to re-share information online changes. If the receiver of the information experiences anger, they will follow heuristic information processing and they will more than likely rely on information from credible sources, leaders, and professional media. They will research on their own, consider the source, and dive into more information on the subject. However, the exact opposite is true for the receivers who experience fear. The fear driven receivers will base their information and make judgements on information with very little or no credible source. They will not check sources or research for themselves. What they see based on fear, must be true, and therefore compelled to re-share online (p. 104).
 -Emotional Contagion
 -Instant Gratification
 -Emotional Responses
 -Selectively Bias

Figure 1A. Which emotional response the receiver chooses, determines if the share storm of accuracy or inaccurate news flows freely into the social media platforms. Starbird believes that during the current COVID-19 pandemic that an “infodemic” of “vast and complicated mix of information, misinformation, and disinformation” will only get more challenging leading up to the next election (2020 pp.1).



Conclusion

Technology changes and the way we communicate with each other changes daily. Social media is a means of receiving and sharing information, especially during the unprecedented times of lockdown that we currently face. The way we interpret emotionally and cognitively understand the information we see, and hear online determines whether we hit “like,” “share” put our own narrative on the information. Online news sharing has two main emotional responses: anger or fear (Lu and Huang, 2018). Secondary crisis communication in an online social media setting, we will respond most likely with a emotional-to-behavior response (Lu & Huang, 2018, Appendix 1A). Which emotional response the receiver chooses, determines if the share storm of accuracy or inaccurate news flows freely into the social media platforms. Starbird believes that during the current COVID-19 pandemic that an “infodemic” of “vast and complicated mix of information, misinformation, and disinformation” will only get more challenging leading up to the next election (2020 pp.1). Fish (2020) proposes more fact checking in a world of misinformation, deep fakes, and propaganda. With more than half Americans getting their news source from online social media platforms, the receiver should assess their emotions and think thoughtfully before reshaping information and re-sharing (Shearer & Masta, 2018). In an unprecedented time such as COVID-19, emotional response, human behavior, instant gratification, and biases all play a huge role in the secondary crisis communication of online news information.

Future Work

1. Determine the election results and compare to social media responses from both parties.
2. Determining if emotional responses were an influence in posting to social media, specifically Facebook.
3. Distinguish the direct targets in sharing false information via social media platforms.
4. Find the mediums which the the “medium (media) is message” and see if that had any biased on demographics it might have targeted (McLuhan, 1964).
5. Work with social media platforms such as Twitter to see if the results are similar to that of Facebook with misinformation regarding news information.

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