

Fifty percent chance you've reacted to junk news at least once

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A new article, published by researchers from the Leiden Institute of Advanced Computer Science and the Leiden University Centre of Linguistics in the journal *PLoS ONE*, shows that 50% of Dutch Facebook users are exposed to junk news at least once. In addition, junk news causes more user engagement than mainstream news.

Junk news is low-quality news which spreads in the form of clickbait and aims to generate a lot of user engagement. By comparing junk news with mainstream news, which is high-quality news, the total reach of junk news could be studied. In addition, it was investigated how junk news develops over time.

Earlier research showed that research on junk news is mainly done on Twitter. The researchers, therefore, focused on Facebook and collected 117 thousand messages published by 63 junk news pages and 20 mainstream news pages over a period of five years. By looking at how often a post was posted and how often Facebook users liked, reacted and shared a post, they were able to study the reach of both junk news and mainstream [news](#).

More information: Peter Burger et al. The reach of commercially motivated junk news on Facebook, *PLOS ONE* (2019). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0220446](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220446)

Provided by Leiden University

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