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Madelyn Rose Sanfilippo and Melissa G. Ocepek (Eds.), **Governing Misinformation in Everyday Knowledge Commons,** Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2025, 278 pp., $59.00 (paperback), $130.00 (hardcover), open access[1].

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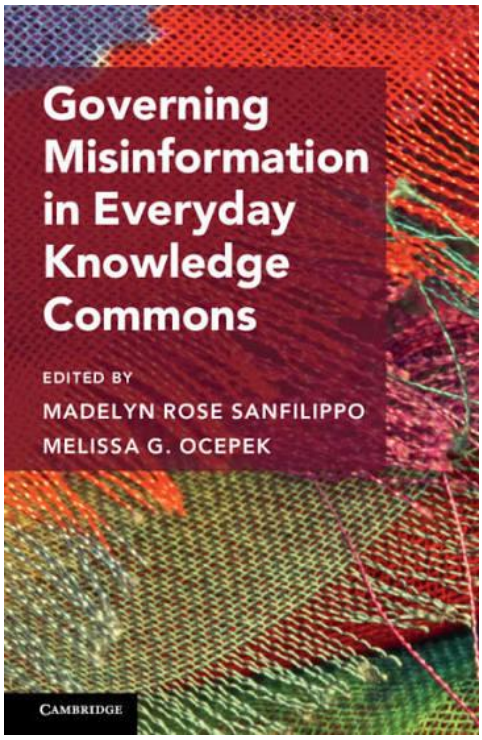

Governing Misinformation in Everyday Knowledge Commons is an exemplary edited collection presenting original ideas and case studies advancing misinformation research. The book consists of twelve chapters written by academics and researchers, drawing on diverse expertise in information sciences, computer science, law, communication studies, and media studies. As the definition of misinformation is highly debated in research, the book defines it as false or inaccurate information shared without the intention to mislead. Targeted at scholars, researchers, and policy makers, the book aims to help experts understand the invisible structures influencing misinformation's movement, development, and communication. It is achieved by first exploring overlooked and under-researched places where misinformation exists in everyday life, such as social networks, advertisements, community knowledge, and online platforms. It further analyzes case studies of misinformation using the Governing Knowledge Commons (GKC) framework (Frischmann et al., 2014). For analyzing the data presented in each chapter, understanding the GKC framework is central.

The GKC framework examines the creation, use, and movement of information across institutional arrangements known as knowledge commons. Knowledge commons were initially conceptualized with digital intellectual information domains, like Wikipedia, in mind (Frischmann et al., 2014); however, the authors argue that social communities, professional networks, and social media platforms also act as vital knowledge commons responsible for sharing information. They influence access, availability, and movement of resources, information, and communities for those inside and outside their commons. Social belonging, cultural identity, monetary incentive, history, and institutional hierarchies contribute to aligning information within knowledge commons structures. By applying the GKC framework to misinformation, the authors identify how communities and networks produce and engage with misinformation; consequently, leaving members susceptible to believing it.

[1] https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/governing-misinformation-in-everyday-knowledge-commons/2BB6609089878128A21E85B37452735B

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Above all, the book is less concerned with discussing the harms of misinformation or specific intervention strategies to debunk it; rather, its original argument seeks to normalize the existence of misinformation and its perpetual appearance in daily life, better known as everyday misinformation. "Everyday-ing misinformation" acts as a foundation of the book that encourages researchers to question misinformation's existence outside of the dominant discussions of COVID-19 and election deniers. Ocepek and Sanfilippo (chapter 1) and Frischmann and Johnson (chapter 7) provide several examples of the appearance and consequences of everyday misinformation. By using the telephone game (p. 6), a fraudulent farmers' market exchange (p. 9), and password security myths and beliefs (p. 99), the authors depict the prevalence and ordinariness of misinformation in day-to-day life. Regardless of the everyday nature of misinformation, the authors indicate that it still poses risks that can range from simply losing a game to jeopardizing personal or public cybersecurity.

To prevent susceptibility to misinformation, the final analysis using the GKC framework reveals seven foundational themes that can aid researchers and policymakers in developing suitable measures for governing misinformation. The seven themes include belongingness; infrastructure; power and incentives; storytelling; partial truths; boundaries, gatekeeping, and impacted outsiders; and audience and receptiveness. Power and incentives, as well as audience and receptiveness, were particularly applicable to nearly every chapter.

Power and incentives are key drivers that influence how misinformation is communicated, who benefits from it, and who partakes in its communication. These incentives operate on both small and large scales by individuals, platforms, and institutions, as can be witnessed from chapters 6–8. Some of the key motivations identified by Nemer and Marks (chapter 7) and Paris and Pasquetto (chapter 8) include social status, public influence, monetary gain, and political power. Noone and Bhandari (chapter 6) detail how Google Maps (like other companies that prioritize profits) uses its position of power to discredit low-quality reviews (minimal text, blurry images) as misinformation to maintain credibility, brand image, and reputation with users. Power and incentives reveal the invisible political and financial structures that encourage misinformation's communication among individuals and collective groups. It is shaped by familiarity, perceived stakes, finances, and social networks that motivate people to believe and communicate misinformation in ways that serve their interests.

Equally important to thematic findings are audience and receptiveness, which play fundamental roles in developing sustainable policies to moderate and analyze misinformation in everyday life. It can shape how audiences react to, believe, or dismiss information, especially when it is spread by figures in positions of power (politicians, experts, and influencers), as witnessed in chapters 7–9. Contrarily, even if the information being communicated is factually correct, audiences may be equally nonreceptive to it, which poses difficulties to debunking misinformation. As demonstrated by McDowell (chapter 2) and Kelly and Burkell (chapter 3), nonreceptiveness is often impacted by cultural beliefs, psychology, social conformity, and community mistrust. Subsequently, McDowell emphasizes the need for misinformation research to consider how storytelling can improve trust-building and receptiveness among mistrustful audiences (p. 37). This echoes Amazeen et al.'s (2023) earlier misinformation research with underrepresented communities, which advocates for applying cultural sensitivity and awareness to misinformation research and intervention strategies.

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Throughout the array of case studies, this book successfully reveals that, above all else, misinformation is far more complicated than current academic research suggests. Whereas substantial misinformation focuses on harm and intervention strategies, this collection's strength lies in its expansion of the conversation and research perspectives surrounding where and why misinformation exists. The findings complicate academic understandings of who dictates what qualifies as misinformation based on power, knowledge, and experience, helping future policies develop nuanced efforts for governing misinformation across knowledge commons. Finally, although some authors, like Burnett and Williams (chapter 9) and Paris and Pasquetto (chapter 8), take a more pessimistic view on the prospects for effectively combating harmful misinformation, the collection underscores the role of brainstorming and adapting research frameworks to comprehend and moderate misinformation better. The potential for misinformation research to support future policy is witnessed in how scholars from diverse disciplines applied the GKC framework and identified shared themes, concerns, and governance strategies present within varied knowledge commons.

Even though the GKC framework acts as a foundational concept for the collection's objectives, several chapters do not clearly position their research within the GKC framework (see chapters 3 and 8). While the authors provide insightful and valuable additions to misinformation research, they would benefit from a more explicit discussion of knowledge commons or the guiding framework within their research scope. The absence of this contextualization risks leaving readers disconnected from one of the book's main objectives.

Furthermore, although this collection offers admirable contributions to misinformation research, it does overlook a nonexpert or nonacademic reader. Regardless of the text's interdisciplinary approach, its nuanced presentation of topics such as heuristics, conspiracy, and platform moderation systems requires readers to have some degree of familiarity with these topics to engage with the content effectively and critically. Moreover, beyond the challenges nonexpert academic readers may face, the noticeable use of academic language creates significant barriers to connecting with most nonacademic audiences, thus unintentionally limiting valuable insight and research about misinformation to scholars. Too often, knowledge and research findings are restricted to those with access to the language, credentials, theoretical familiarity, and resources available in academia. As the collection's focus comprises the "everyday," would it not be worthwhile to ensure this research can also be transferred to a less knowledgeable audience?

Bélair-Gagnon et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of policy and experts in combating misinformation while also documenting the role of other vital stakeholders in supporting misinformation prevention and information literacy; these include nonprofit organizations, public educators, advocates, parents, community spaces, and support workers (pp. 671–672). Therefore, expert and "everyday" readers may consider accompanying this text with additional readings to deepen their comprehension of the content presented. Texts on prebunking and debunking misinformation, current misinformation policy developments, digital literacy skills, and information communication are ideal for readers to consider. For those seeking further research on the GKC framework itself, this reading can be paired alongside foundational work such as Frischmann et al. (2014) *Governing Knowledge Commons*.

To conclude, the research in this book is evidence of the transformational and innovative climate of misinformation research. The GKC framework featured in this work serves as an excellent guide for researchers to explore governing and investigating misinformation across diverse environments.

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