



iJRASET

International Journal For Research in
Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 14 **Issue:** VIII **Month of publication:** August 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2026.47647>

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Socioeconomic News Coverage Worldwide

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“News is something somebody doesn’t want printed; all else is advertising.”

— William Randolph Hearst

Abstract: Widespread concern exists regarding the prevalence of fake news in our unbalanced news media, which devotes the majority of their valuable screen time to celebrities and politicians. Our political, economic, and social systems are profoundly impacted by false information. This project seeks to identify a dependable method for filtering reputable news sources. Various solutions will be proposed to address this concern.

Keywords: Fake News, Media Bias, News Coverage, Fact-Checking, Journalism, Misinformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous nations are omitted or ignored from news coverage. The Western news media do not appear to present a comprehensive or balanced account of world events. Adding to the fact that many developing nations lack a well-developed media infrastructure. [1]

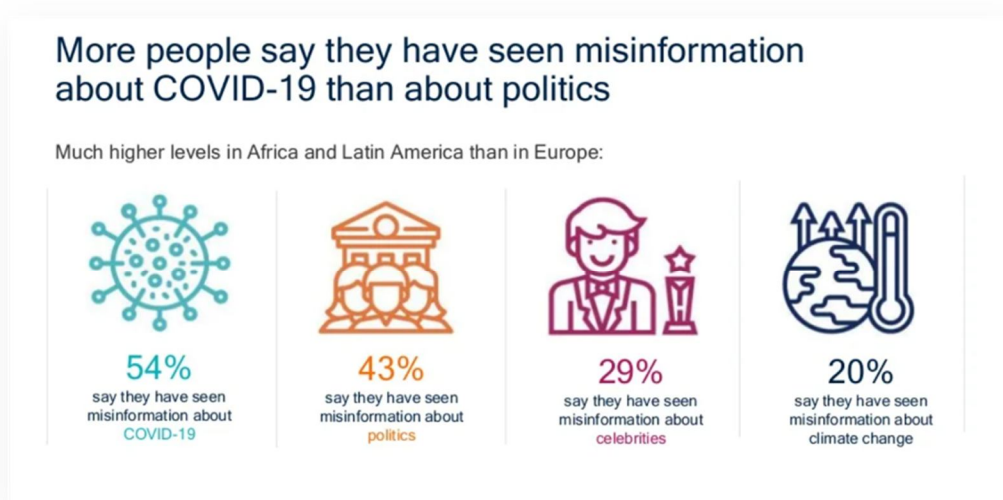


Fig. 1 More people say they have seen misinformation about COVID-19 than about politics [1].

II. EXAMPLES

A. Source Science: “Lies Spread Faster than the Truth”

We found that false news was more novel than true news, which suggests that people were more likely to share novel information. Whereas false stories inspired fear, disgust, and surprise in replies, true stories inspired anticipation, sadness, joy, and trust. Contrary to conventional wisdom, social media algorithms accelerated the spread of true and false news at the same rate, implying that false news spreads more than the truth because humans, not robots, are more likely to spread it.

To understand how false news spreads, Vosoughi et al. used a data set of rumour cascades on Twitter from 2006 to 2017. About 126,000 rumours were spread by ~3 million people. False news reached more people than the truth. False rumours have affected stock prices and the motivation for large-scale investments, for example, wiping out \$130 billion in stock value after a false tweet claimed that Barack Obama was injured in an explosion. [2]

B. The Independent

Attacks based on religious disagreements have increased in Bangladesh, many of which have occurred after a Facebook post. [3]

C. Examples Important but Uncovered Stories

- 1) *New York Times*: Cotton is Burkina Faso's primary export and economic foundation. In the year between 2001 and 2002, America's 25,000 cotton growers received around 3 billion dollar in subsidies than the whole economic production of Burkina Faso, resulting in the impoverishment of around 10 million rural poor people in West and Central Africa. This resulted in massive migration to western countries. [4]
- 2) *Down to Earth*: The population of Salem, India, is above a million. Originally intended to serve as a reservoir, Salem's 58-acre water body instead became a landfill for the city's garbage. The administration also ignored this problem. In Salem, India, locals have undertaken a massive endeavour to bring this body of water back to life. [5]
- 3) *War in Ethiopia*: War in Ethiopia has almost zero coverage compared to the Ukraine war. [6]

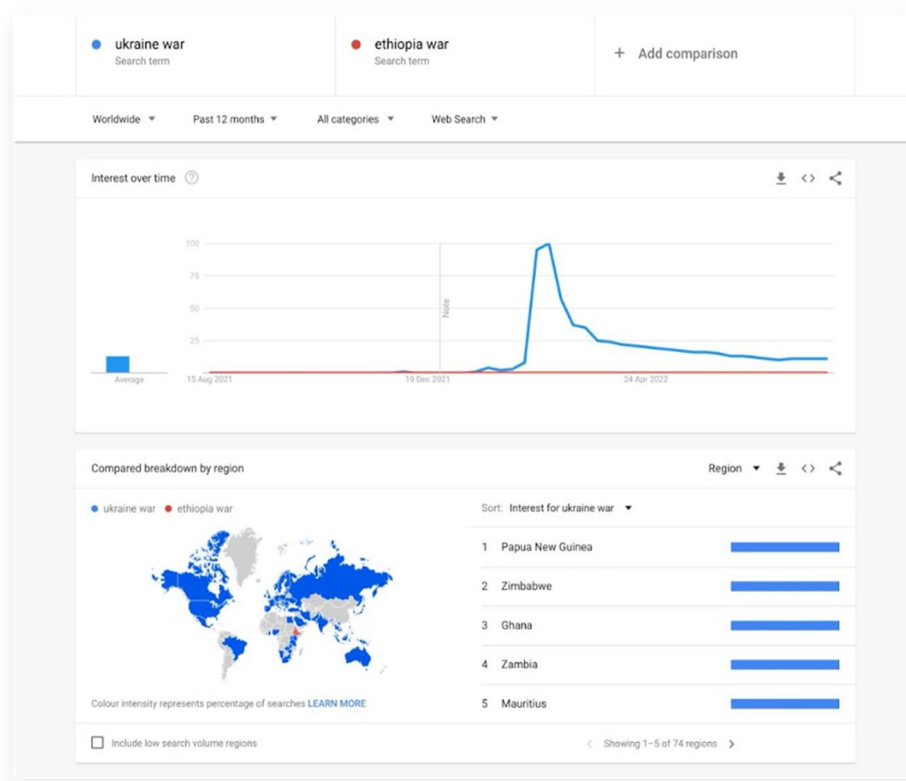


Fig. 2 Ukraine war, Ethiopia war — Explore, Google Trends [6].

- 4) *Hunger in India*: Another example, approximately 4500 children die every day due to hunger in India. There has been huge support to resolve this by the government and small non-profits but news coverage about it almost zero. [7]

Indeed, our responses to everything from natural disasters to terrorist attacks have been disrupted by the spread of false news online.

III. TARGET USERS

User Stories from primary and secondary research - all user interviews were done with local reporters and few surveys were conducted in UX communities (UX rescue)

Q1. what is the your work process of looking for event or activities to cover?

Q2. How do you identify the truth ??

Q3. what do you do if the media company denies to publish your story ??

Q4. do you cover international stories

A. Researchers, Journalists

As a Recent journalism graduate I want to write about topics which are important but not covered by our media so that I can stand out.

B. Content Creators

As a content creator (YouTube) I wish to collect trustworthy information about topics relevant to people around the world so that I can cater to the worldwide audience and increase my views.

C. Non-Profit Organisation

As a volunteer for a non-profit organisation, I wish to establish a social network that will help share reliable information so that necessary aid may be provided during crisis. [8]

D. Ideal User Persona



Tamara Jenkins

Age: 30 years

Education: Economics & Journalism

Hometown: San Francisco

Family: Husband, & Daughter

Occupation: Journalist

"Its frustrating when I don't get the visual proof and reliability from the sources "

Goals

- Produce reliable and updated stories to the newsroom.
- Interview related people to gather more details for the article.
- To cover international news without political, or celebrities influence.
- Cover worldwide breaking news in the reporting article.

Frustrations/ Pain points

- Overwhelmed by the limited time to produce relevant articles for the editorial.
- Anxious to investigate and research the reliability of the source and data.
- No visual data to analyze.
- Fear of rejection due to fake news
- Worry about reachability to the public.

Tamara is a well-established journalist working for the top news media company. She specializes in writing articles covering current international affairs. Tamara spend her afternoons writing and producing articles checking on social media if there are any items that are more relevant to her research. She calls various persons involved in the news, including politicians and members of government.

Her time is always scarce, sometimes she must deliver an article in a matter of hours, because it can be a very important topic that needs to be published right away. She also likes to write lighthearted news to post on social media. She checks email and website analytics every day to update report to the newsroom and likes to be updated to benefit anchors and reporters. She loves to work as a team.

Fig. 3 Ideal user persona — Tamara Jenkins, journalist.

IV. IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS (HYPOTHESIS)

- 1) Due to the lack of resources, news from developing countries does not get worldwide coverage.
- 2) Basis of media outlets with regards to their own countries.
- 3) Media outlets owned by government or corporations, have the biggest budgets which leads to widest coverage.
- 4) Concerns regarding human life and related topics are not prioritised over celebrity or entertainment.
- 5) Positive achievements are not covered, which helps innovative social start-ups or Non-profits to attain funds.

V. CURRENT IMPLEMENTATIONS

A. Google Fact Check

The Fact Check Tools consist of two tools: Fact Check Explorer and Fact Check Markup Tool. Both tools aim to facilitate the work of fact checkers, journalists and researchers. Google does not endorse or create any of these fact checks. If you disagree with one, please contact the website owner that published it. [9]

i.e. Multiple media sources verify different claims. This does not resolve our primary concern of prioritising and filtering relevant facts and verifying events.

B. *Fact Check.org*

List of fact check networks around the world. [10]

C. *Politifact.com*

Only works on fact checking statements said by politicians. [11]

VI. OUR APPROACH

- 1) RSS feeds will be compiled from the work of fact-checking groups and individual journalists.
- 2) Every news item and video will be given a credibility score that indicates how likely it is that the story is accurate.

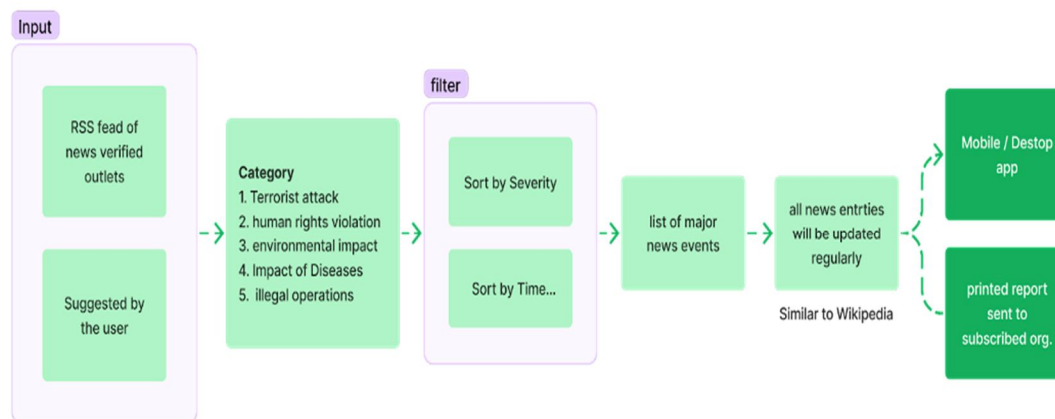


Fig. 4 Our Approach: proposed RSS feed compilation and credibility-scoring workflow.

Objective: User trying to discredit an article or verify a news article.

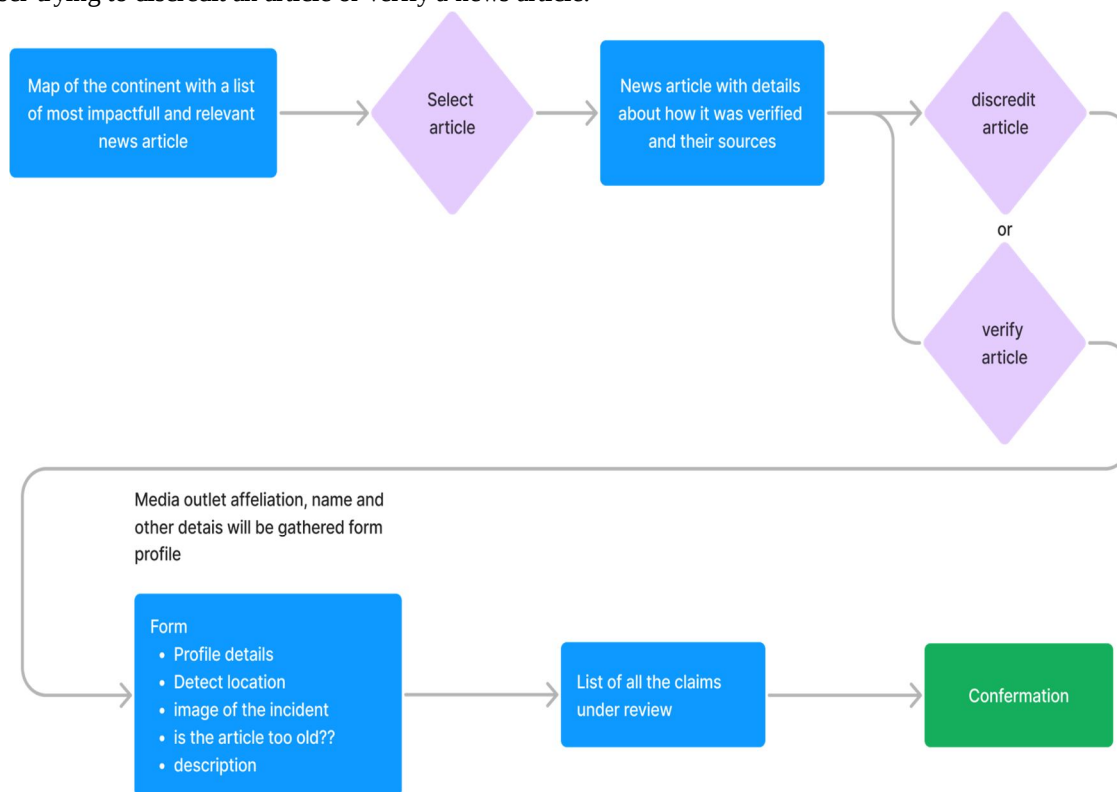


Fig. 5 Objective: user trying to discredit an article or verify a news article.

VII. POSSIBLE MOBILE APP UI

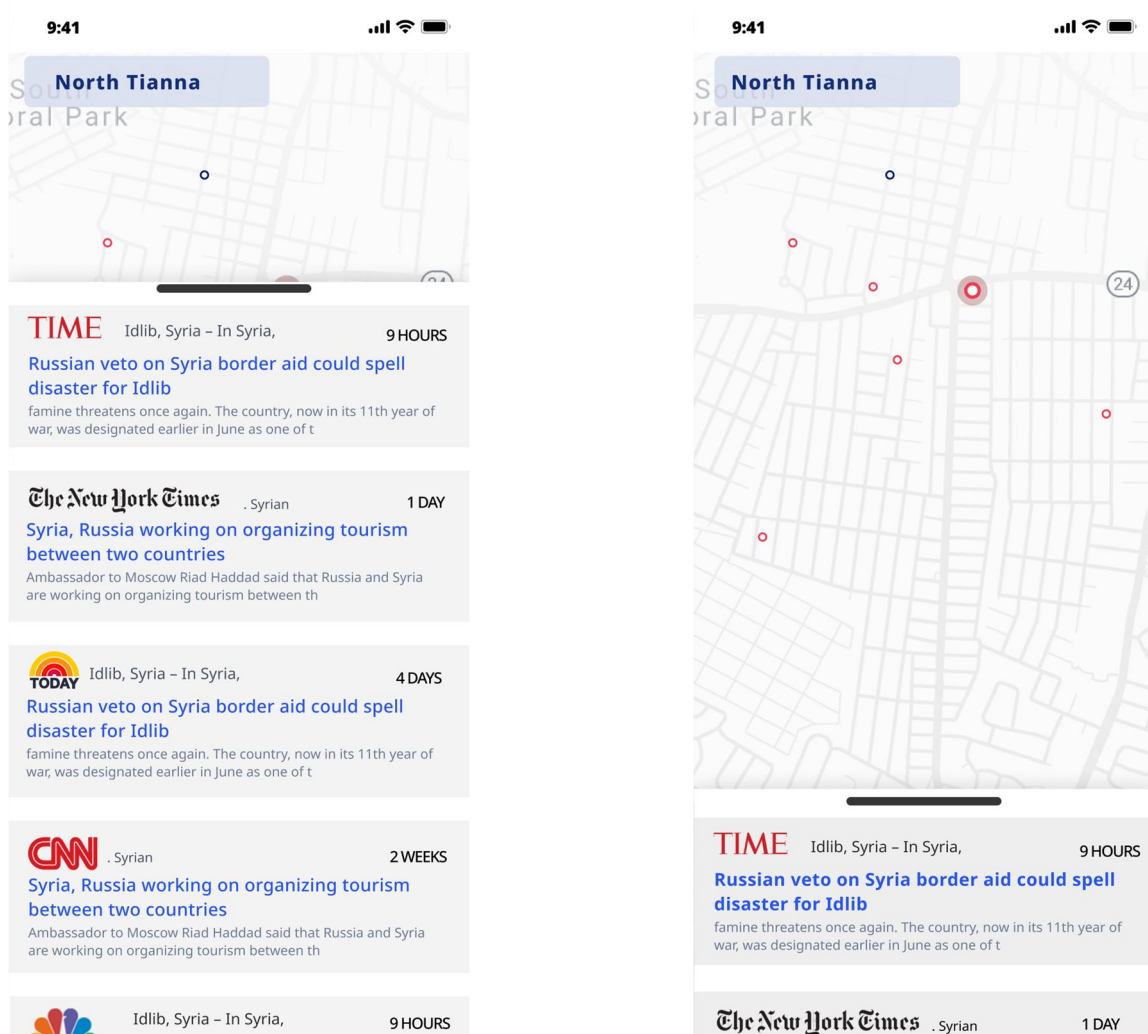


Fig. 6, Fig. 7 Possible mobile app UI screens.
Figjam [12]

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

This project sets out to examine how socioeconomic and geopolitical factors shape which stories receive global news coverage, and to explore whether a more reliable filtering mechanism could help surface underreported but important news. The examples reviewed — from the near-total media silence on the Ethiopian war relative to Ukraine, to the lack of coverage of hunger in India and the economic toll of cotton subsidies on Burkina Faso — support the initial concern that news coverage is skewed toward wealthier, Western, and politically prominent regions, while stories from developing nations are frequently overlooked. The research also confirmed that false news spreads faster and farther than true news, compounding the problem of an already unbalanced media landscape.

Interviews and user stories from journalists, content creators, and non-profit volunteers indicated a shared need for a centralized, trustworthy source of verified international news. Existing tools such as Google's Fact Check Explorer, the Duke Reporters' Lab directory, and PolitiFact each address part of this problem but stop short of prioritizing or filtering news by credibility and importance.

To address this gap, this project proposes an RSS-based aggregation system that compiles reporting from fact-checking organizations and independent journalists, assigns each story a credibility score, and surfaces underreported stories through a mobile and desktop application. Future work should focus on validating the credibility-scoring methodology, expanding source coverage in underrepresented regions, and user-testing the proposed mobile interface with journalists and content creators.

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ASSORTED SOURCES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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