

FIGHTING THE INSTRUMENT OF LIES THROUGH ENHANCED EDUCATION

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Social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have been the Filipino's go-to-source of information, especially now in the digital era. Even without proper validation, what those videos or posts taught were absorbed, and thus we often see comments stating how they did not learn these things from school, or how school "kept things hidden from their enlightenment." Thus, the ordinary Filipino student often proclaims, "hindi ito tinuro sa akin sa school, sa TikTok ko lang nalaman.."

The power of social media has been misused and abused as they turned it into an instrument of lies. Interest groups are exploiting its use and accessibility to sensationalize and skew historical knowledge. Creators of online posts frequently prey on viewers' curiosity by employing clickbait headlines or thumbnails in order to increase the likelihood that their work will go viral on social media, which disproportionately favors aesthetically appealing or highly controversial content. By arousing people's emotions and imaginations, it is intended to persuade and force them into believing a certain way.

Furthermore, highly dubious versions of history can flourish and be accepted in the name of free speech since social media encourages a setting where anyone can freely engage and contribute. When the expression "everyone is entitled to their own opinion" is misused, it can lead to mob mentality and groupthink. Additionally, it supports the postmodern idea that history is never absolute but always relative – a statement further proved by Ella Cruz's "History is like tsismis," (Marcellones, 2022). As a result, we are currently witnessing the ongoing reinterpretation, reframing, and reimagining of

contentious historical events in our nation, such as martial law and the people power movement, in an effort to ascertain the "unbiased" and "untainted" truth.

Social media's democratization of historical discourse has also made it easier for people and organizations to further their own interests and overt political agendas. Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and the recently popular TikTok are being intentionally abused to promote historical misinformation, advance ideologies, and even to make money due to the loss of authoritative framing in social media. The proliferation of online fake news, troll farms, and red-tagging, all of which ultimately undermine our democratic values and procedures, are being blamed on organizations that were let loose by both public and private parties.

It is obvious that the issue does not lay in the Filipino youth's capacity to use and navigate these new digital devices, but rather in their ability to effectively process and interpret the information that is offered to them. Given the severity of the historical misinformation issue on social media, one of the most important roles of educators is to assist students in screening material from these online sources. The ability to distinguish between historically correct and unreliable accounts must be taught to students. They will eventually be able to use digital information more intelligently and independently as a result, and they will be skilled at evaluating the accuracy and legitimacy of data from a variety of sources, both online and offline.

However, it is not just students who require good education in digital literacy. To stay up with the newest technology trends and advancements, history teachers should also be retooled and retrained in the usage of these ICT tools. As educators, we should not let the fast-evolving technology and educational landscape catch us off guard. We must also continue to be open to change if we want to enhance the way we impart knowledge. Ultimately, in a culture that has quickly slid into the "post-truth" period, tackling the root causes of online historical misrepresentation may be the most effective

strategy. This requires using these platforms as well and producing content that will immediately stop the spread of historical misinformation.

References:

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