

MEDIALOGICA: The Hate Playbook, Episode 6

Handboek voor haatzaaiers

The documentary series Medialogica focuses on how media works and public opinion is shaped. This episode deals with the topic of online harassment and intimidation. More specifically, it shows how this influences the public debate more and more. In the Netherlands conspiracy theories such as ‘the great replacement’ are spreading rapidly into the public debate and even into politics. Online discussions can be very harsh. People argue, bully and harass each other on a daily basis. Especially on Twitter, trolls seem to have a large influence. At first sight, online harassment might seem a random act. However, it is also used as a thought-out tactic to spread extreme messages. The so-called playbook helps spreading hateful ideas from dark corners of the internet into mainstream media.

In our episode we discovered how an American based hate campaign called #Gamergate changed the way hate and extremist ideas are being spread on the internet. #Gamergate even inspired Steve Bannon when it comes to his tactics regarding politics and media.

As a consequence, this has led to more fake news and polarisation. The tactics from #Gamergate and the playbook have been used in other parts of the world too. Medialogica takes a closer look at the role of journalists when it comes to the described mechanisms. It shows that basic journalistic principles, such as giving both sides of a certain story a stage, can be misused. With the result that some extreme ideas can get disproportional attention. Thus, unwittingly contributing to further polarisation.

What is the role of reporters? Should they be more aware of their task? And is there a possible solution?

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