Call for papers:

Disinformation in the Middle East

De Gruyter's Open Information Science journal has a call for papers for a special issue on disinformation in the Middle East.

Similar to other regions around the world, the Middle East has witnessed the widespread of misinformation in relation to different issues like politics, health, and armed conflicts. This is, indeed, not a recent phenomenon as the region has been plagued by infodemics for many decades. For example, disinformation campaigns were used by the US and other countries to assist in the wars on Iraq in 1990 and 2003. Also, the Syrian conflict provides ample evidence on the use of disinformation around attacks targeting innocent civilians to further the strategic interests of the Russian and Syrian governments. Recent reports and data releases by Facebook and Twitter show that there are several systematic and coordinated activities that occur in the Middle East in order to support regional players like Saudi Arabia and the UAE in enhancing their political influence in the region.

There is a need to study infodemics in some specific geographical contexts like the Middle East due to the evolving nature of this phenomenon, and this special issue is focused on the examination of recent case studies involving the spread of misinformation and disinformation. We welcome studies that are focused on the empirical investigation of infodemics targeting the Middle East and/or originating from the region.

Special topics of interests include but are not limited to the following:

♦ The social media use of political trolls by Middle Eastern governments, political parties or their affiliates. The trolling Twitter campaign faced by Jamal Khashoggi before his gruesome killing is one example.

♦ The politicization of fact checking practices in the Middle East as the majority are run by governments. Also, the tremendous challenges independent fact checkers face in curbing the spread and threat of misinformation.

♦ The use of political bots and deep fakes to spread misinformation about political opponents.

♦ Media literacy efforts to inform and educate Middle Eastern audiences about misinformation.

♦ Mobile apps' use in spreading disinformation in the region like Telegram, WhatsApp, and Viber.

The topics above are not exhaustive, so we welcome other studies that are related to this special issue. We also welcome all research approaches including qualitative and quantitative methods. If interested, please send no later than **September 15, 2020 an abstract of 500 words** and a short biography of the author(s) to the following email address: aalrawi@sfu.ca. If the abstract is accepted, we will invite you to submit your full paper for peer-review. The abstract acceptance does not guarantee that the full paper will be published in the special issue as all studies will undergo a thorough peer-review process.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Abstract – **September 15, 2020**

Full paper – **December 1, 2020**

The special issue is expected to appear in May 2021! The Open Information Science journal is an open access and blind peer-reviewed publication and no fees are required from authors upon submission or publication of their studies. More information on the journal can be found in the following link: https://www.degruyter.com/view/journals/opis/opis-overview.xml.

The special issue is guest edited by **Ahmed Al-Rawi**, an assistant professor at the School of Communication of Simon Fraser University.