

**2018**  
**MANIFESTO**

**DROG**

# **The Bad News manifesto. Introducing: Prebunking**



# The Bad News Manifesto

Last May two Dutch fourteen-year-olds perfectly spread a fake story about an upcoming heat wave that attracted 800,000 unique visitors in just one week.

And we made them do it, during class, with their teacher's encouragement. It shows we need to accept that disinformation is an easy and powerful instrument.

It perfectly exploits our human weaknesses and is successfully dividing societies. It is the first choice of weapon for demagogues and authoritarian regimes. And it wields great power to involve and mobilise the public, more so than journalism or politics.

This may look like we're heaping praise onto your worst nightmare, but if we want to solve what people often refer to as 'the problem' of disinformation, we should not be afraid of it; we should embrace it.

Because after all, fear and distrust are the nuclear engine of disinformation.

In order to achieve this we need to adhere to the following rules:



# 1.

## **FACTS ARE OBSOLETE**

Facts are obsolete in the first line of defence against disinformation. As much as we want the truth to be about objective facts, the reality is that the acceptance of truth is a social construct. And emotions are more effective than facts.



# 2.

## **VICTIMS ARE YOUR BIGGEST PROBLEM**

Disinformation can only be effective if it is amplified by true believers. Factors like distrust of authority, the feeling of loss of control, or even the feeling of belonging make people active amplifiers of disinformation and at the same time extremely hard to reach.



# 3.

## **THE INTERNET IS NOT A SACRED PLACE**

The Internet has never been a sacred place, and we should not want to clean it entirely. Trying to defend ourselves from encountering disinformation by blocking it will not increase the resilience of society and will only further convince true believers of the righteousness of their path.



# 4.

## **CREATE A NEW PLAYING FIELD**

We need to create our own playing field. Accept that disinformation has a high entertainment value and use those same techniques to make something else, something harmless that will meet the demand.



# The Bad News Manifesto

That is why, with Bad News, we let people experience the process of disinformation first hand. Developed in collaboration with researchers at the University of Cambridge, the aim of our individual approach is to create triggers in people's minds so that they can recognize manipulation when they encounter it. We want them to feel confident about their ability and learn to embrace the problem in order to diminish societal anxiety.