

Traditional media breathes a sigh of relief as social media goes rogue

 By [Tess Sulaman](#)

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Last week it emerged that certain operatives purportedly acting on behalf of a certain political party, set up a 'black ops' unit to propagate fake news about their opponents. The entire operation was designed apparently to win the hearts and minds of the electorate. Social media was the primary launch pad for this black ops offensive. It seems social media has become the Apache of digital propaganda warfare.

It has been suggested that social media is the final nail in the coffin of traditional media. But perhaps the 'post-truth' era will bring traditional media back in the game through the backdoor.

Many people who consume news regularly, still have some faith in certain traditional media houses. They (traditional media) may get a prediction or two completely wrong (Trump election, Brexit), and besides some questionable reports coming out of the American media recently, they are mostly still reliable in keeping the public abreast of current affairs.

Social media took our world by storm. In an era where media barons held the power through the one to many broadcast model, suddenly every Jim and Shoni with a social media account was also a broadcaster. I mean who needs CNN if you are Wayne Rooney and have more than 5m Twitter 'listeners' right?



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But with so much fake news all around us and the 'post-truth' era firmly settling in, the public is beginning to ask some searching questions about the authenticity and value of content on these new "digital news channels"?

A decline in trust of social media content will probably mean that we go back to relying on our traditional media houses as sources of reliable news, albeit occasionally delivered to us through social media platforms. Email media and traditional media will probably emerge as the major beneficiaries of the 'post-truth' era. Email media, like traditional media, derives its credibility from the fact that you already know and trust the source of the message or content you receive.

This makes it easier for you to either believe or dismiss the substance of the message. But thanks to alternative truth manufacturers and social media propagandists, email media and traditional media's life spans may have been extended by a few more decades.

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ABOUT TESS SULAMAN

Tess Sulaman is CEO of Rocketseed South Africa.

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