

**THE FAKE NEWS ECOSYSTEM AND THE ISSUE OF
RESPONSIBILITY: VELES-MACEDONIA PRODUCTION, TECH
PLATFORM DISTRIBUTION, AND AMERICAN CONSUMPTION**

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Abstract: *“Creators, consumers, and arbiters of disinformation have a reinforcing effect on each other. This leads to a fake news ecosystem” (Kshetri, Voas 5). We take this observation as our point of departure to explore the issue of responsibility of the main actors within a given fake news ecosystem: content producers, platform distributors, and consuming audiences. We undertook an empirical research in Veles, Macedonia where there is a large community of fake news producers, in order to have a first-hand understanding of the phenomena. The paper aims to ask two main questions: Q1) Whose responsibility is it for fake news: the producer’s, the distributor’s, the user’s? and Q2) How is responsibility distributed? The working hypothesis is that the producers, the consumers and the arbiters of disinformation have a reinforcing effect upon one other that make them function in a vicious circle that allows for the production, reproduction and dissemination of fake news.*

Keywords: *fake news; responsibility; producer; platform; consumer; public interest*