

## **DISINFORMATION AND *ONLINE* IDENTITY THEFT THROUGH FALSE ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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**Abstract:** *The present study aims to analyze the phenomenon of identity theft on social networks or how users become creators of fake content through cloned accounts, for private or commercial purposes. Fake content distributed on social media, through fake accounts, is a type of online disinformation or fake news (Posetti 120-121).*

*The hypothesis from which we start is the following: the higher the prices at which fake accounts are sold and the more difficult it is for the authorities to identify the creators of fake content, the more the economic mechanism in the virtual space will allow the cloning of accounts in spite of current regulations.*

*The case study is represented by the results of a questionnaire applied to users on social networks in 2020, and of interviews with creators of false accounts and content, or users of taken over accounts. The centralization of answers shows the extent of the illegal exploitation of other people's data, the amplification of the collection and dissemination of data through the complexity and permissiveness of technology, the electronic modification of posted images, the irresponsibility of creators of false accounts, elements that determine the influencing and misinformation of the other users.*

**Keywords:** *fake accounts / fake profiles, online misinformation, online identity theft, social media, digital ethics*