

# Fake news campaigns can proliferate through tech tools: Cyber security expert

For just US\$1 (\$1.31), fake news operators can buy "likes" or "dislikes" to ratchet up the popularity of fake news stories, or start a campaign against content that they disagree with.

And by harnessing other underground tools and abusing legitimate services, such operators can even manipulate public opinion to the extent that it could provoke a protest – all for a sum of US\$200,000. This could, for example, be done here to instigate a protest against Budget announcements that could affect households, such as the impending increase in goods and services tax, if the content panders to its audience's beliefs, says a cyber security expert.

In her written submission, Ms Myla Pilao, director of core technology

marketing at cyber security company Trend Micro, based in Tokyo, painted this hypothetical scenario to illustrate how fake news campaigns can proliferate through technological tools and services, and have a real-life impact.

While legislation could be one of the counter-measures, technology and education can also help address the issue of fake news, Ms Pilao told Workers' Party MP Pritam Singh, one of the committee members, yesterday.

For example, organisations in the information and communications technology sector, like social media companies, can work together to analyse and monitor fake news.

There should also be a centralised body that can help users validate content, she added.



## How much it costs to run a fake news campaign

In US dollars

0.34



100 Twitter followers, likes or retweets

0.66

100 YouTube subscribers

0.19



1,000 WeChat likes

18



1 million Instagram likes

25

500 Instagram followers / 1-month Facebook auto-like service subscription

30

1,000-1,500-word fake news article

45

8 comments per day for 1 month

50

1,000 high-quality channel subscribers/content takedown service

116

Content distribution on a national news site/site on the Baidu news feed

189



Content distribution on a healthcare site

222-266

Make a video trend for a certain search query service

621

YouTube main page video appearance for 2 minutes



800



10,000 Facebook auto-likes per month

1,065

10,000 votes/petition signatures

1,850

Public opinion-monitoring service for 10 keywords

5,328-9,766

Content distribution on commercial news sites (4,000-6,000 characters)



3,150

Premium YouTube package (1 million high-quality views and 50,000 likes)

14,524

Click farm (1 server with remote control capacity for 100 phones)

21,641

Content distribution (not marked as advertorial/paid)



69,500

WeChat celebrity promotion (with 10.7 million followers)