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The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: A Case Study of the Growth of Satirical Television and Disinformation

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The Daily Show with Jon Stewart: A Case Study of the Growth of Satirical Television and Disinformation



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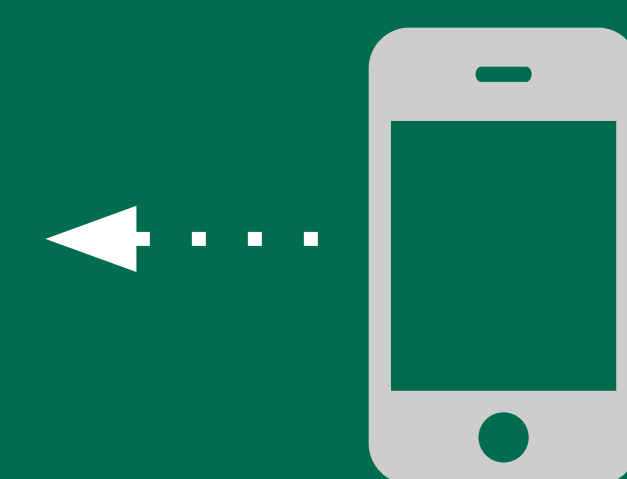
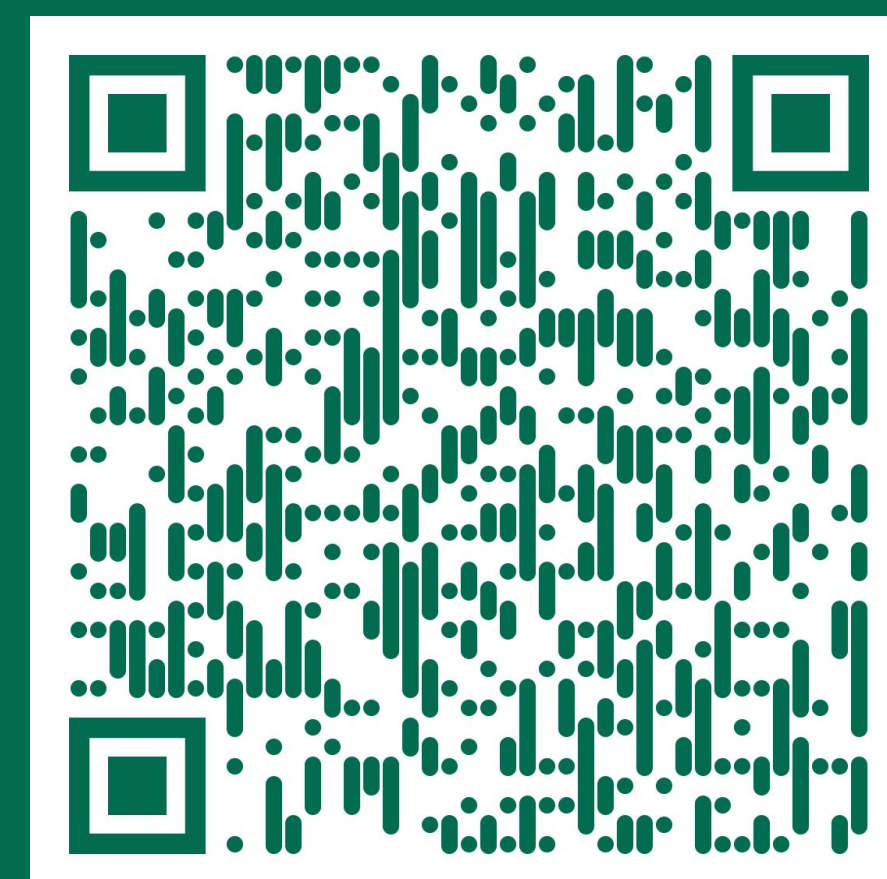
BACKGROUND

As massive media conglomerates increase their holdings and control over the entire media landscape, news moves further away from an important public service and deeper into the realm of a profitable product. As it does so, trust in the media decreases and with it, the public's exposure to important information. This creates the need for alternative sources of information dissemination. Satirical news and comedy programs have the potential to fulfill this need.

METHODS

1. Researched the uses, successes, and changes in satire throughout history
2. Examined quantitative data from surveys about satirical content and its relation to political efficacy and involvement
3. Studied analyses of the changes in the American information-media landscape and of the shifting roles of traditional and alternative media sources
4. Analyzed case studies and research about satire's role in combating naivete

As trust in traditional media sources continues to decrease, political satire television programs serve as an effective source of information dissemination in political discourse and the modern information-media landscape.



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The Rise of Satire

In the past few decades, there has been an explosion of satirical programs on television. Both late-night comedy shows and those that are specifically dedicated to political and news-related satire have seen massive success and popularity. These programs garner large audiences and their stated intentions of being purely entertainment are not only inconsequential to their ability to spread information, they can be beneficial. Existing outside of the sphere of traditional journalism, these constraints don't apply to satirical programs, allowing them greater freedom to cover and criticize powerful people and structures within American politics.

Satire as a Cure for Naivete

As distrust and reliance on traditional sources of news decreases, some viewers don't seek out new sources of information. An uninformed population can be as harmful as a misinformed population in some cases. Many who tune into satirical television shows do so for the sole purpose of entertainment but gaining new information, specifically about politics, can be an unintended consequence

Dangers of Disinformation

As factual information is satirized, the possibility for misinterpretation is drastically increased. Numerous examples of content created by popular satirists, including The Onion News, being misconstrued and read as fact exist and demonstrate the harm that such content can cause. This issue is compounded as content from these sources is spread further as misinformation..