Disruption of Democratic Processes by Bots

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What Are Bots?

- Bots are automated programs performing internet tasks.

- Social bots mimic human behavior on platforms.

- Can be rule-based or use NLP/AI techniques.

- Designed to interact, amplify, or manipulate online discourse.

How Bots Disrupt Democracy

- Misinformation Spread: False content shared widely.

- Astroturfing: Fake support or opposition movements.

- Agenda Manipulation: Drowning out real voices.

- Voter Suppression: Disinformation discouraging voting.

Real-World Examples

- 2016 US ELECTION: RUSSIAN BOTS SPREAD DIVISIVE CONTENT.

- BREXIT REFERENDUM: COORDINATED BOT ACTIVITY OBSERVED.

- COVID-19: BOTS SPREAD CONSPIRACY THEORIES ONLINE.

Facts

66% of tweeted links during the 2016 US election were shared by bots. *(Source: Indiana University, 2017)*

Over 50,000 bots were detected spreading pro- and anti-Clinton content. *(Source: Twitter Transparency Report)*

70% of bots retweet content rather than generating original messages. *(Ferrara et al., 2016)*

In **2020, 15% of all Twitter accounts** were estimated to be automated or semi-automated.

Bots can amplify a message's visibility up to 10x, distorting perceived public opinion.

Countermeasures & Conclusion

NLP-Based Detection: Linguistic pattern analysis.

Platform Policies: Detection, banning, transparency.

Public Awareness: Digital literacy is essential.

Bots challenge democratic integrity. Detection is vital.

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