

## Module 4

# Digital Manipulation

Incl. Social Bots, Clickbait Strategies



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## Module 4 – Digital Manipulation

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# Social Bots

## Topic 1

### 1 Learning Objectives

1. Understanding Social Bots
2. Recognizing Social Bots
3. Reacting to Social Bots
4. Raise awareness about social bots in the classroom

### 2 General Description

Based on the national research it became clear that students are not familiar with the concept of social bots and online opinion- manipulation. This module provides information on different kinds of social bots as well as information on the danger of social bots for citizens and democracy. Students will learn how to recognize, expose and react to social bots. Finally, students will create an awareness campaign to sensitive their classrooms and their school environment to the topic.

### 3 Introduction to the Topic

"Bot" is short for the English term "robot" for robots. These are computer programs that automatically fulfill specific tasks. Opinion bots in social networks can also fake human identities in fake accounts. False messages often spread through social media channels like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Programming a social bot is easy. There are free software on the Internet that can be used quickly with few changes in the code. Behind bots, there is no artificial intelligence, but an algorithm<sup>1</sup>. This module pursues the goal to highlighting the danger of such social bots and their impact on online conversations. Additionally, it is important not only to know different types of social bots, but also to know strategies to identify them and to react in a proper way. This will be an integral part of that module.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.bpb.de/252585/was-sind-social-bots>

## 4 Framework

TOPIC 1	Indicators (Level)	Benchmarks (Aim)	Syllabus	Activity	Resources / Scenarios <i>Basic</i> (10-12 y.o.)	Resources / Scenarios <i>Advanced</i> (12-15 y.o.)	Assessment
DIGITAL MANIPULATION	<b>Understand</b>	<p><b>1.1</b> The student understands the basic concept of <i>social bots</i> (basic concept of algorithms).</p> <p><b>1.2</b> The student understands that there are different kinds of <i>social bots</i> (overloading bots; trendsetter; trolls)</p> <p><b>1.3</b> The student understands the impact of <i>social bots</i> on online-conversations.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> I understand that the social bot is one form of an algorithm</p> <p><b>1.2</b> I understand that there are three mayor types of social bots and I am able to name them</p> <p><b>1.3</b> I understand that social bots try to manipulate opinions</p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> Lecture via online-tools</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Showing examples of very obvious social bots</p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> Online tutorial/ video</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Screenshots of social bot accounts and their posts</p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> Online tutorial/ video</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Screenshots of social bot accounts and their posts + concrete example on how social bots had an influence on the US-election in 2017</p>	Pre-Posttest via Quiz
	<b>Engage / Interact</b>	<p><b>2.1</b> The student knows indicators to recognize e.g. opinion bots / websites / accounts</p>	<p><b>2.1 and 2.2</b> I know the important questions in order to recognize social bots:</p>	<p><b>2.1 and 2.2</b> Presentation on the indicators</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Students get one account of a social bot and click on all</p>	<p><b>2.2</b> Students get two different accounts and need to</p>	Assessment by ratio of right answers/ tries in order to get all answers right

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		2.2 The student knows how to use the indicators in order to expose social bots	<a href="https://www.tellerreport.com/tech/--bot-or-no-bot--how-to-recognize-opinion-robots-r1c6Eaoy4.html">https://www.tellerreport.com/tech/--bot-or-no-bot--how-to-recognize-opinion-robots-r1c6Eaoy4.html</a>		indicators that seem to be indicators that it is a social bot	recognize which one is a social bot and which one is a real person by using the indicators	
Analyze	3.1 The students analyse the influence of social bots on social networks.	3.1 I am able to analyze which influence social bots have on our democracy / community / society	3.1 Presentation 3.1 Example of social bots in our daily lives	Different examples of different bots that have a serious impact on politics ( e.g. migration; refugees – social bots that tried to push the right-wing movement)	Different examples of social bots with different goals: 1. Analyze different kinds of social bots and their area of impact (politics, environment, friendships etc.) 2. Analyze the treats of social bots in democracy	3.1 writing a short letter explaining aspects of social bots to a friend  3.2 Scenario: A social bot starts to comment your post – what reaction would you show? (select from several options)	
Evaluate	4.1 Students rate websites for their susceptibility to social bots.	4.1 I know security standards against social bots on webpages and can assess if these standards are	4.1 Students decide based on their own inquiry if you could use different online	4.1 different sources which are either trustworthy or not	4.1 different sources which are either trustworthy or not (less obvious	Assessment by ratio of right answers/ tries in order to get all answers right	

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			implemented.	platforms as a source for information or not		than in the basic scenario)	
<b>Create</b>	<p><b>5.1</b> The students develop these why social bots attract people.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> The students design a flyer and a campaign that raises awareness for the problem of social bots, and how to recognize them.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> The students create a captcha tool, which allows identifying social bots.</p>	<p><b>5.1-5.3</b> I am reacting on the problem of social bots by creating awareness on the problem</p>	<p><b>5.1-5.3</b> Students bring the topic of social bots to their classrooms and develop strategies to combat them/ to sensitize for them</p>	<p><b>5.1-5.3</b> “Social bots action guide” – templates and instructions to create an awareness-campaign in schools</p>	<p><b>5.1-5.3</b> “Social bots action guide” – templates and instructions to create an awareness-campaign in schools (advanced level)</p>	<p>Assessment by evaluating the results of the in-schools campaign</p>	

# Clickbait

## Topic 2

### 1 Learning Objectives

5. Understanding Click baiting
6. Recognizing Click baiting
7. Reacting to Click baiting
8. Raise awareness on Click baiting to the classroom

### 2 General Description

This module provides information on click baiting and its working mechanism to attract people with catchy headlines in order to get clicks. Students will learn how to recognize, expose and react on click baiting. Finally, students will think about ways to bring awareness on click baiting to their class and reflect on the influence of click baiting on people.

### 3 Introduction to the Topic

OMG, WOW, LOL or SMH: Click baiting triggers strong emotions and uses psychological effects to get you heading for click and social share. The basic principle was not invented on the Internet, it is already known from the tabloid press and in the form of the Cliffhanger also from the film industry. In click baiting, publishers, and especially marketers, are trying to use click-through phrases and headlines to increase clicks to increase their traffic and thus their advertising revenue. This module pursuits the goal to highlight the danger of click baiting strategies and their impact on online behaviour. Additionally, it is important not only to have basic concepts of click baiting, but also to know strategies to identify click baiting and defend yourself from the influence. This will be an integrative part of that module.

## 4 Framework

TOPIC 2	Indicators (Level)	Benchmarks (Aim)	Syllabus	Activity	Resources / Scenarios <i>Basic</i> (10-12 y.o.)	Resources / Scenarios <i>Advanced</i> (12-15 y.o.)	Assessment
CLICKBAIT	<b>Understand</b>	<p><b>1.1</b> The student understands the basic concept of <i>click baiting</i>.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> The student understands motivation of click baiting.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> I understand why some websites/users use click baiting</p> <p><b>1.2</b> I understand that click baiting could also be a manipulation my opinion</p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> Lecture via online-tools</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Showing examples of obvious click baits.</p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> online tutorial/ video</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Examples from the internet on click baiting: <a href="https://www.giga.de/extra/internet/gallery/click-bait-bedeutung-einfach-erklaert-an-6-beispielen/#page=5">https://www.giga.de/extra/internet/gallery/click-bait-bedeutung-einfach-erklaert-an-6-beispielen/#page=5</a></p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2</b> online tutorial/ video</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Examples from the internet on click baiting (less obvious, student needs to come up him/herself with examples that she/he saw recently on the internet).</p>	Pre-Posttest via Quiz
	<b>Engage / Interact</b>	<p><b>2.1</b> The student is aware that click baiting exists.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> The students is able to show examples</p>	<p><b>2.1 and 2.2</b> I know what click baiting is and I can show examples on social media</p>	<p><b>2.1 and 2.2</b> Students look up click baits in their own feed/online news papers</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Students go through different their own social media and see if</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Students go through different online papers and see if they can find something they</p>	N/A



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		of click baits on the internet.			they can find clickbait there	would describe as clickbait	
<b>Analyze</b>	<p><b>3.1</b> The students analyses the influence of click baiting on people.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> The students analyse clickbait strategies on YouTube videos.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> I am able to analyze which influence micro targeting on people (emotion, reaction, interest)</p> <p><b>3.2</b> I am able to recognize clickbait on YouTube</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Presentation And discussion</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Research</p>	<p><b>3.2</b> Different YouTube videos which use catchy titles and front pictures.</p>	<p><b>3.2</b> Different YouTube videos which use catchy titles and front pictures.</p>	<p><b>3.2</b> Students prepare a short presentation with e.g. screen shorts of YouTube titles that they think are clickbait</p>	
<b>Evaluate</b>	<p><b>4.1</b> The students evaluate in how far the online content can fulfil the headlines used in clickbait strategies.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> students discuss on moral aspects on click baiting</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> I can evaluate for an online video if the content holds what the headline promises</p> <p><b>4.2</b> I thought about the moral aspect of click baits and formed an opinion on that</p>	<p><b>4.1 and 4.2</b> Students decide based on their own inquiry if you could use different online platforms as a source for information or not</p>	<p><b>4.1 and 4.2</b> different sources which are either trustworthy or not</p>	<p><b>4.1 and 4.2</b> different sources which are either trustworthy or not</p>	<p>Students write a letter to a friend on their findings from their inquiry</p>	
<b>Create</b>	<p><b>5.1</b> The students develop theses why clickbait attracts people.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> The students design a flyer that</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Based on my knowledge about click baiting I can develop theses why people do click on content that has a catchy headline</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Students collect ideas and visualize them on a poster</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Student design a flyer</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Collection of different catchy headlines that were used as headlines in the past</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Collection of different catchy headlines that were used as headlines in the past from different areas:</p>	<p>Assessment by evaluating the results of the in-schools activities</p>	

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		raises awareness on possible dangers of click baiting.	<b>5.2</b> I can present my knowledge about click baiting through a flyer			beauty, VIP news, politics etc.	
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