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国際学会報告

BOBCATSSS 2020 Paris: Information Management, Fake News,
and Disinformation

2020 年 1 月 22 日（水）～ 1 月 24 日（金）パリ（フランス）

国際コミュニケーション学部 デニス ハーモン

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発表題目

Japan's Sontaku Culture and its Democracy Based on Fake News – a critical examination of Japanese political and internet society

Masayo Aihara, Dennis Harmon II., and Akiyo Yoshida



1. Bobcatss and Bobcatss 2020

Bobcatss is a symposium held annually in the field of library and information sciences and is connected with the European Association for Library and Information Education and Research (EUCLID). The symposium is moved to a different country in Europe each year and has been held regularly since 1993. Bobcatss 2020 was the 27th annual session. The term “BOBCATSSS” itself is an acronym for the cities that initiated the first symposium in 1993: Budapest, Oslo, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Tampere, Stuttgart, Szombathely, and Sheffield.

Bobcatss 2020's theme was “Information Management, Fake News, and Disinformation,” which represents a growing trend of discussion in the modern global discourse. Now, with the proliferation of social media, the way people consume news and information has become a greater influence on day to day activities. This expansion of media and access to information saturates users of social media and consumers of media in general. This saturation results in a need to develop information literacy to understand and to differentiate reputable sources from the less reputable. The conference focused on these

issues with a primary focusing being to explain the subject of disinformation and its influence on democracy and how education and library professionals can find solutions to these complex issues.

2. Our Research Presentation

We presented a paper titled “Japan’s Sontaku Culture and its Democracy Based on Fake News – a critical examination of Japanese political and internet society,” which was connected to the concept of fake news and disinformation through an exploration of Japan’s past and its approach to the concept of “sontaku.” Sontaku was selected as 2017’s buzzword-of-the-year in Japan and was inspired by a corruption scandal. “Sontaku” refers to doing or saying something to please an important person or a person in power over the subject in action. In our paper, we explore the relationship between internet culture and examine sontaku-like behavior which governs how Japanese youth consume and interact in online groups. To do this we examine identity and performance theory and review an NHK Media consumption questionnaire (Hodaka, 2018), and then report the findings of our own questionnaire ($n = 97$). Our research focused on media consumption of Japanese university students aged 18-24. We found that participants media consumption was focused within their own specific interest groups and they had little consideration for accuracy in the information they consumed.

We conducted a twenty-minute paper presentation with a five-minute question and answer session. Our paper was accepted to the conference and will be included in the proceedings for the symposium, when the proceedings are published.

3. Concluding Remarks

This project was originally designed through a dialogue between Masayo Aihara and Dennis Harmon. In addition, Akiyo Yoshida’s contribution including providing insights, research, and editing to our project was instrumental in its final success. During the writing phase, everyone contributed, but this project’s success is directly predicated on the expertise and understanding of Masayo Aihara. We would also like to thank BOBCATSSS 2020 and the Université Gustave Eiffel for hosting the event and accepting our manuscript. Further,



material support from Hokuriku University’s research division and the Faculty of International Communications aided us in making a successful trip to Paris to present this work and to represent Hokuriku University.

We hope to continue this research as the core theory of this paper is being expanded on for several subsequent projects that we look forward to publishing and presenting over the next few years.