Ranked: Celebrities most associated with fake news

There's a world where NFL legend Tom Brady is moving to the Miami Dolphins, where Taylor Swift told us she was pregnant – and Tom Holland has died. It's a world that exists in the mind of people who read fake news, most notably in 2022.

The embedding of fake news in ever more mainstream channels is a worrying trend. Here we look into the celebrities most related to fake news stories in 2022 with a _celebrity fake news index_.

What do we mean by fake news?

Fake news can be broadly defined as deliberately fabricated stories that mirror trusted news to decentre truthful narratives. They often lead to individuals believing and widely propagating patent untruths, with occasionally harmful effects.

Top 10 celebrities associated with 'fake news' in 2022

Using the platform Linkfluence, a specialist in observing digital interactions, it's possible to discover which public figures were mentioned with the highest frequency in conjunction with the term "fake news."

As the saying goes, there's no such thing as bad publicity, and while some celebrities may thrive while in the spotlight, others might not. However, one thing's for certain, fake news definitely becomes an issue if it starts to damage someone's reputation, cause mental health issues, and ruin potential job opportunities. Celebs and publicists will also have to spend large amounts of time correcting any wilful misrepresentations.

Find the principal findings below, including lists of celebrities involved.

Touchdown for Tom: Brady tops the fake news list

Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady rules the roost as the individual most caught up with the dissemination of fake news from last year. According to the research, communications naming him with the term "fake news" were seen by 72,444,290 people over ten months.

Given the tumult of gossip surrounding Brady, this is perhaps no surprise. The football star announced his divorce from Gisele Bündchen–the high-profile supermodel–which was accompanied by an incessant string of rumours surrounding his possible retirement from the game. Equally potent rumour fuel was his significant stake in the now-collapsed crypto company FTX.

Fake news, in short, followed Brady like his own shadow.

Taking the second spot in the rankings is Joe Rogan, now best known for his podcasting and UFC commentating. By no means a close second, mentions of 'fake news' alongside the Joe Rogan Experience host were seen by 39,276,532 people. Again–digging into the genesis of the swirling untruths burdening Rogan provides several possible diagnoses. Rogan is known for inviting controversial public figures onto his podcast, as well as his colourful language throughout the recordings (the latter of which resulted in the removal of 70 episodes from Spotify).

Coming in at a respectable third place is a man who is no stranger to controversy: Twitter owner and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. With an arguably delicate

relationship with the truth himself, Musk often shares radical thoughts and responds to fake news accusations on Twitter. His name was mentioned in conjunction with the divisive term and was seen by over 26,660,800 people. This will surprise approximately nobody, given the maniacal approach Musk has widely been seen to take as a self-described 'chief twit'.

U.S. presidents: how do the last three fare?

With the advent of Donald Trump, fake news and politics became inextricably linked – often with alarming consequences. Although politicians and the media have traditionally separated themselves from the acute melodrama that fake news so often is made up of, they are now seen as overly polarised, agenda-driven institutions. The research indicates that 191,305,451 people have encountered such posts focused on the former president, Donald Trump.

In the U.S. president list, next is current POTUS Joe Biden, whose associated "fake news" posts have reached 50,731,691 people online. Obama comes third.

Stopping the spread

Given fake news dresses itself up as the real McCoy, often shared through otherwise trustworthy channels, people inadvertently believe it and become ensnared. So, how can we avoid it? The sagest advice centres on greater mindfulness and the ability to cross-reference the story in question before sharing.