

Imedial

Online MEDIA
Literacy skills



Workbook

ENG VERSION



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IMEDIAL Workbook Foreword

Dear Reader,

This **Workbook** that you are just reading is part of a set of tools – **Workbook** (printed and .pdf form), **Cards** and **App** for **Android** and **ios** developed by a group of organization from 6 countries and financially supported by **EC-European Commission**.

The **Workbook** addresses both, **learners and educators**, to extend and develop of adult educators media literacy skills and competences in effective teaching of those skills (especially those who work with disadvantaged learners) and to increase media literacy skills of adult learners (especially disadvantaged).

Media literacy is a “catchy” term nowadays but not much of ground-work is done to support the ability for conscious consumption of media-distributed messages among adults.

Adult educators acting on behalf of learners as part of civil society need to learn how to recognise, analyse and explain to their learners key terms and ideas for understanding disinformation with media literacy principles.

Particullarry, this Workbook addresses to:

- **adult educators** especially those that work in non-formal education settings, adult education centres, social centres, NGOs, associations and freelancers working with disadvantaged learners
- **learners** from disadvantaged groups, including persons with low skills and with lower level qualifications, with low income, from remote areas; unemployed, women, immigrants

The main impact on low-skilled adult learners, especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, is upgrading of their media literacy and digital skills which will allow them to have critical understanding of media, be able to identify fake news, manage information they receive and in effect develop trust in media.

Using the Workbook

All Chapters from this Workbook are having three parts : **theoretical part**, defining the terms, followed by a **practical examples** and in the end of Chapters are **exercises** conducted by **adult learners** in order to make learners to understand the theoretical parts presented in the Chapters.

This **Workbook** is an **Open Access Source** and can be used accordingly.

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The opinions expressed in this Workbook are those of the authors ; they are not necessarily those of EC and do not commit their Organization(s).



Also, to mention that the structure of the Chapters of this Workbook is using the publication **Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation**, available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>).



The **.pdf** form is downloadable [here](https://imedial.erasmus.site/).
(<https://imedial.erasmus.site/>)

In the printed version, some links are also provided in QR (quick reader) format.
You can “read” the QR Codes by using App on smart phones in Google Play (for Android) or App store (for ios).



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1. Fake news



Chapter 1.1. what are fake news?

Outline

1.1.1. FAKE NEWS OR MANIPULATION?

This section briefly defines fake news, its format and how it manipulates information as well as people's thoughts and emotions, with a particular focus on online fake news.

1.2.1 TYPES OF FAKE NEWS AND HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM

This section provides a brief overview on different types of fake news and strategies to spot them, with a particular focus on online fake news.

1.3.1. SOURCES OF FAKE NEWS

The last subsection provides information on “who” the creators of fake news may be, “how” and “why” it is spread, with a particular focus on online fake news.

Chapter aims

- *To provide clear definitions and examples of fake news enabling participants to become aware of their different forms and types*
- *To provide participants with critical discerning strategies and tools to identify, unmask and escape the danger of fake news*
- *To raise participants' awareness on who, how and why fake news is created*

Learning outcomes

1. *Outcome 1 – learners will understand what fake news are and will learn about the different types of fake news and manipulation of information.*
2. *Outcome 2 – learners will be able to give different examples of fake news, distinguish and explain them*
3. *Outcome 4 – learners will learn about strategies and tools to recognise fake news and unmask them*

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:



1.1.1 Fake news or manipulation?

According to the **Center for Information Technology & Society**¹, the term *fake news* means “news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false” designed to manipulate people’s perceptions of real facts, events, and statements. It’s about information presented as news that is known by its promoter to be false based on facts that are demonstrably incorrect, or statements or events that verifiably did not happen”.

In addition, “**fake news** is false or misleading information presented as news. It often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity, or making money through advertising revenue.²” In other words, fake news is fabricated news that seems true and can be presented in traditional news, social media or websites as being factually accurate.

It consists in producing and spreading false or manipulated information, facts, data, images and videos **to deliberately misinform or deceive readers and users as well as to sell something, to do harm, to create fear, to influence audiences, to discredit**. Usually, fake news is created to either influence people’s views, push a political agenda or cause confusion and can often be a profitable business for publishers. In fact, it may be about facts, data and images that are not true and entirely invented designed to make people believe something false, to buy a certain product, or to visit a certain website.

However, fake news is more than simply false information that nowadays has become a major phenomenon in the context of Internet-based media.

They can also be based on some truth without being 100% accurate though. This may be the case of a journalist for instance who quotes only part of what a politician says and therefore gives a false impression of their meaning. This can be deliberate to convince readers of a certain viewpoint or it can be the result of an innocent mistake by altering the content, cropping an image.

Therefore, fake news can have all formats, from print to online, podcasts, YouTube videos, radio shows, images starting from different types of manipulation of:

Photos	by editing them or showing real photos, but done at another time or in another place
Videos	by using old videos to illustrate new events - placing a video or part of it in another context or building a completely fake video
News	by publishing a true piece of news under a false title - presenting opinion as a fact - distorting a fact - presenting completely made-up information as fact - neglecting important details that completely change the context of the news
Expert opinions or statements	by falsifying reality uses fake experts or misrepresents real experts - inventing experts from scratch - twisting experts’ statements or faking them – presenting opinions and allegations as facts - translating the words of an expert in a manipulative way (often used when translating from English into other languages)

¹ Source: <https://www.cits.ucsb.edu/fake-news/what-is-fake-news>

² Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news



Data	by misinterpreting results
Media Messages	by using messages of marginal media or blogs claiming they come from reputable media - changing real messages of reputable media

1.1.2 types of fake news and how to identify them

Nowadays communication is mainly spread and implemented online. With a close look at online fake news, according to media professor Melissa Zimdars of Merrimack College³, there are four main categories of fake news.

01 Fake, false, or regularly misleading websites that are shared on Facebook and social media. Some of these websites may rely on "outrage" by using distorted headlines and decontextualized or dubious information in order to generate likes, shares, and profits.

02 Websites that may circulate misleading and/or potentially unreliable information

03 Websites that sometimes use clickbait-y headlines and social media descriptions

04 Satire/comedy sites. They can offer important critical commentary on politics and society, but have the potential to be shared as actual/literal news

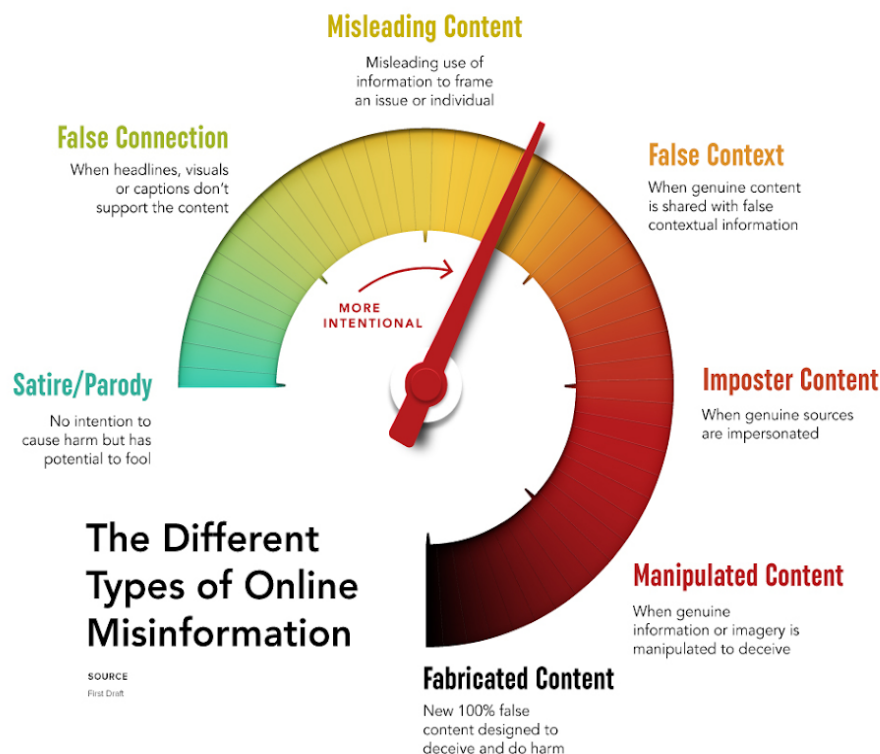
Therefore, it is crucial to be aware that not all fake news is created equal or with the intent to deceive. Some start as opinions or jokes that become misunderstood, twisted over time, and eventually turn into misinformation. Others begin with the sole purpose of deception.

³ Source: [Fake News: Develop Your Fact-Checking Skills: What Kinds of Fake News Exist?](#)



How To Spot Fake News

"Fake news" might feel like an overused term, but misinformation online is everywhere. Here are the key characteristics of fake news and how to spot them.

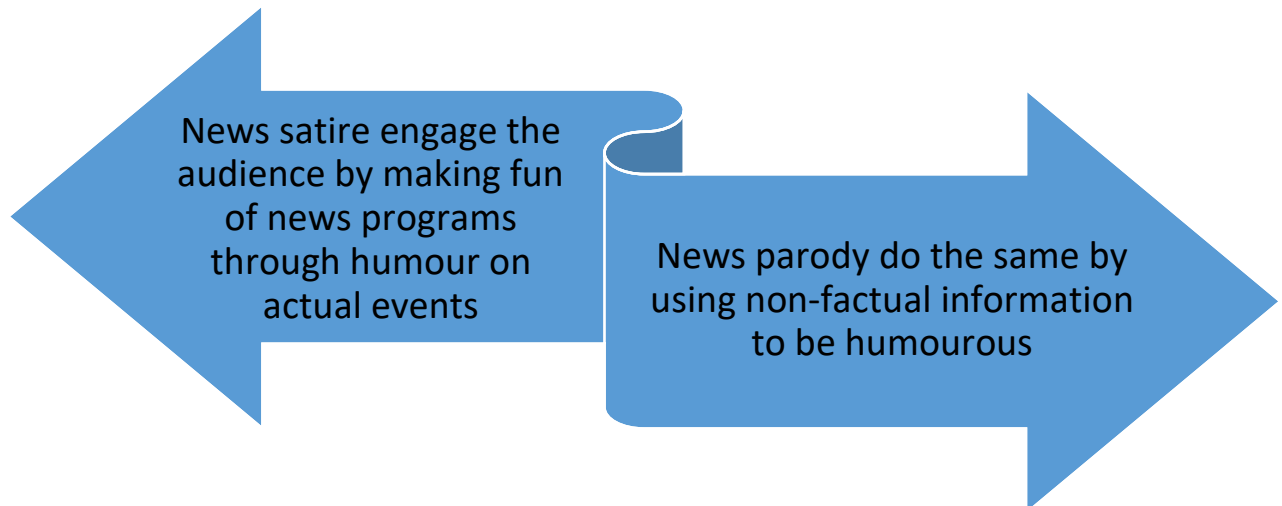


Despite many types of misinformation appearing to be obvious at a glance, it is harder to discern when browsing online. In a 2019 [global survey](#)⁴ on social media conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation ("CIGI") between December 21st, 2018 & February 10th, 2019, **44% of people** admitted to being duped by fake news at least once, while others may have been duped unwittingly.

It is worthy to explain very briefly why satire and parody may be included under the category of fake news and their difference.

Firstly, the key differences are:

⁴ Source: [2019 CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey - Part 3 Social Media, Fake News & Algorithms](#)



Satirical information often comes from comedians or entertainers, rather than journalists with the general purpose to criticise political, social or cultural events humorously.

Parody uses humour in a slightly different way as it “plays on the ludicrousness of issues and highlights them by making up entirely fictitious news stories,” according to the scholars, Tandoc, Lim and Ling (2018).⁵

Although there is no clear intention to cause harm, their intrinsic humorous and trendy headlines and content can have a strong influence on people’s beliefs and be even more impactful than people might think.

⁵ Source: DEFINING “FAKE NEWS” - A typology of scholarly definitions - Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Zheng Wei Lim and Richard Ling



The *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA)⁶ published a summary shown in the diagram below of the main points on how to spot fake news.

- Since fake news often aims at generating instinctive feelings (such as fear or anger), approach what you are reading / seeing with a rational and critical mindset by asking yourself if the ultimate goal is to sell something or to influence your opinions or to get you to click through to another website and so on.
- Always check the source, if the author / publisher is known as well as any spelling errors in company names or strange-sounding extensions like ".infonet" and ".offer".
- Double check that the same type of information is confirmed and reported by other well-known, trusted and

official sources.

- Examine the facts and make sure that for instance they have not been selected or "twisted" to back up a particular viewpoint
- Check the factual reality of images and some signs may be strange shadows on the image, for example, or jagged edges around a figure.

1.1.3. sources of fake news

Although fake news is not new indeed and the ways it is generated and spread have changed due to the use of internet and social media. The process to create fake news consists of different steps, from making or taking others' contents to passing false news as real ones.

There may be different reasons "why" create fake news is created, such as propaganda, political influence, bad journalism, provocation, partisanship, profit (see types of fake news in the following section).

Moreover, the reasons "why" fake news are spread may vary from wanting as many visitors to certain websites to wanting users and visitors to see the content in order to have it influence

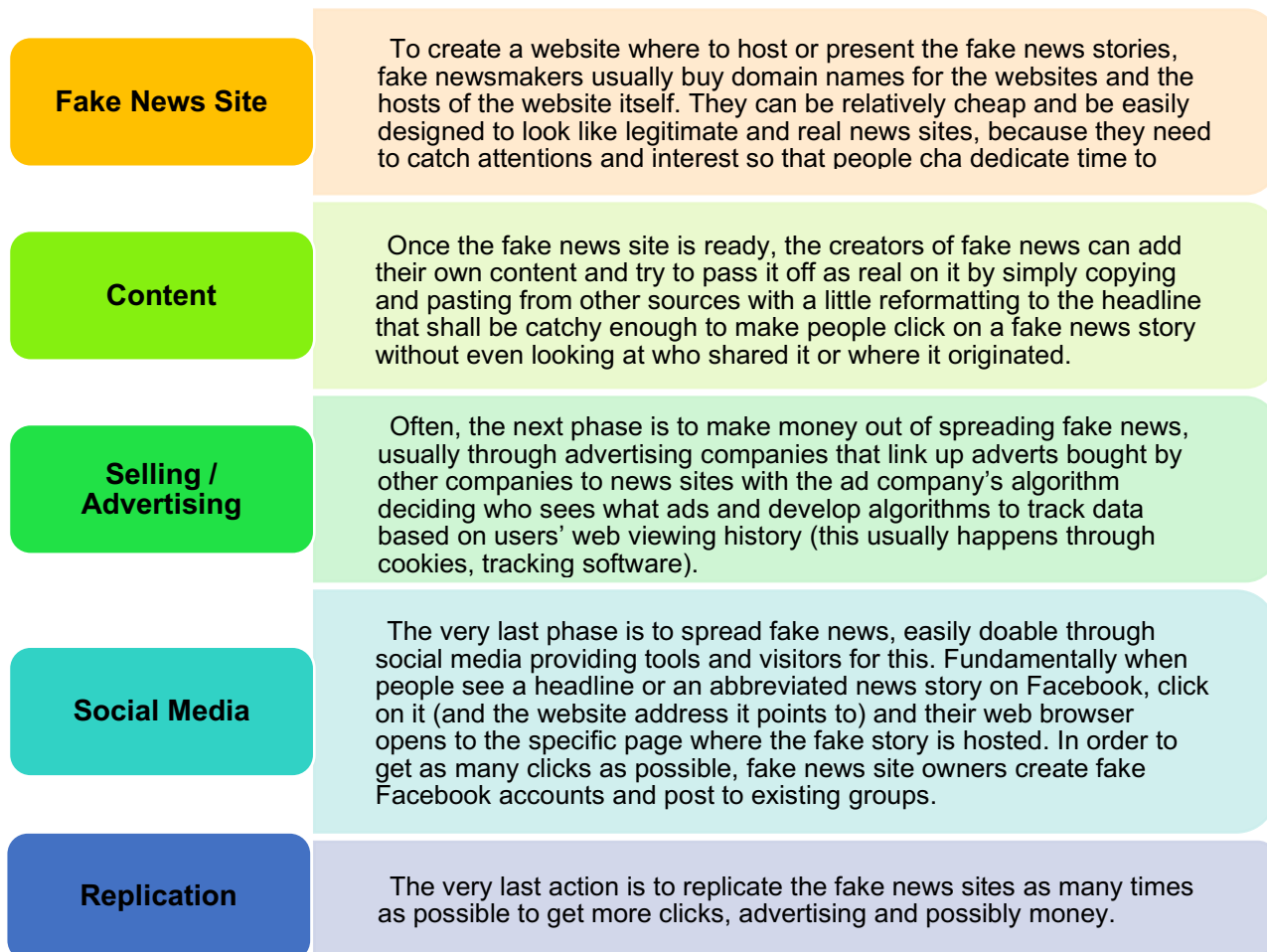
⁶ Source: [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions](https://www.ifla.org/publications/spot-fake-news) (IFLA)



people's political values and/or to advertise/sell something. Of course, in order to reach these ideological and/or commercial goals, fake newsmakers need as many people to click on the website link and visit as possible.

In order to do so, fake news is shared and spread through social media, ad hoc disinformation campaigns, as "clickbait" ("articles, photographs, etc. on the internet to attract attention and encourage people to click on links to particular websites"⁷) that often use sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines.

Therefore, the "how" fake news are created and spread through social media involves 5 core phases.



Nowadays, creators of fake news now have the knowledge and tools to make their content even more believable and persuasive and take advantages of:

- 1) bias, as people tend to interpret news as confirmation of their believes;
- 2) echo chambers, as people's beliefs are reinforced by repetitive inside closed circle of life;
- 3) filter bubbles (or also cookies), as websites algorithms present information that they predict people want to see and read based on their reading or viewing history;
- 4) information overload, as people's ability to make accurate decisions and judgement is reduced if they encounter more information that they are able to process

⁷ Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/clickbait>



5) information avoidance, as people avoid information making them feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed

Fake news may have different and several creators.

Fake news sources

Who



Practical examples & case studies

- Example(s) for Sub Chapter 1.1.1.

To learn more

[Manipulated Media](#)

Videos

Video [What Is Fake News?](#)



Video

[People Are Posting Examples Of How Media Can Manipulate The Truth \(12 Pics\)](#)

Video [The rise of 'fake news', manipulation and 'alternative facts' - BBC Newsnight](#) (How do we discern what is true and what is 'fake news' in the fast-paced age of social media and technology? Our technology editor



Video and reading [How the Media Uses Language to Manipulate You](#)

[Real or fake news: how do you know?](#)



Quiz [Fact or fake — can you tell the difference online?](#)



Case studies

1. [*The Lifecycle of Media Manipulation*](#)
2. [*Case Study – Fake News Dissemination: Pizzagate*](#)
3. [*The case of ibuprofen: evidence of huge impact of COVID-19 misinformation when coming from credible sources*](#)

- **Example(s) for Sub Chapter 1.1.2.**

Type of fake news – examples

1. [*Understanding 10 types of 'fake news'*](#)
2. [*Fake News Week 2019: Fake News Examples and How They're Shared*](#)

Fake news through fake images/photographs

3. Reading [*Evaluating News: "Fake News" and Beyond*](#)
4. Reading [*Fake news, hoax images: How to spot a digitally altered photo from the real deal*](#)

Videos

5. Video [*Learning to Spot Fake News I: Things to Look for*](#)
6. Video [*Fake News Generator: Who starts viral misinformation? - BBC News*](#)
7. Video [*Why do we believe fake news?*](#)
8. Video [*Helping Students Identify Fake News with the Five C's of Critical Consuming*](#)





Videos with quizzes and exercises



9. [Five ways to spot fake news](#)
10. [Evaluating Websites: Identifying Fake News Sources](#)

- Example(s) for Sub Chapter 1.1.3.

To learn more



1. [How false news can spread - Noah Tavlin](#)
2. [How Online Bots Spread Fake News](#)
3. [How to deal with FAKE NEWS in 2020](#)
4. [List of fake news websites](#)
5. [COVID-19: FAKE NEWS](#)

Case studies

6. With Lesson Plan [The Making of Fake News: A Case Study](#)
7. [FAKE NEWS! Let's create some to educate](#)
(Show your family and friends how easy it is to manipulate using fake news by creating a shocking story about... them! The best way to learn is through experience.)



Video

8. [Here's How Fake News Works \(and How the Internet Can Stop It\)](#)
9. [Which News Sources Can Be Trusted? - BTN Media Literacy](#)



Videos with quizzes and exercises

10. Video [Evaluating Websites: Identifying Fake News Sources](#)

Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - **THEORETICAL** (2 examples)

The theoretical activities presented below will introduce learners to what fake news is indeed, why it is an important issue and what strategies and knowledge can be helpful to identify and avoid Xsharing it.



1. Lecture “Fake news: if you know it, you avoid it”

Activity description:

- Introduction to the topic through a survey, presentation created by the educator, videos and readings
- Debate led by educator

Requirements:

- Knowledge about fake news - it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic (please refer to the theory and materials proposed in this module chapter)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, pens, paper / computer

Educator's notes:

1. Brief introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce learners to the topic of classes – the educator may produce a ppt presentation showing key information (see chapter 1.1.1. for contents)

2. News survey (5 minutes)

Prepare a google form with the following questions and ask students to rate their answers from 1- not confident to 2 - Somewhat confident and 3- Very confident. Allow time for discussion (total 10 minutes)

- 1. How do you primarily get your news? (social media/online media sites/cable news /newspaper /other)
- 2. How often do you watch/read/listen to news?
- 3. Do you think it is important to pay attention to the news why or why not?
- 4. How do you know if what you read/hear/listen to in the news is trustworthy?
- 5. How confident are you that you would know fake news if you saw it? (circle one)

3. Introduce key contents and show a video (15 minutes)

Prepare and show a ppt presentation including the contents below:

Reliability of Sources

Historians need to determine the authenticity and reliability of sources in order to establish their usefulness

- *Identify the author of the source*
- *Consider possible bias*
- *View multiple points of view of the same historical event*
- *Read sceptically and critically*
- *Verify evidence by cross-checking with other sources*

Review the issue using graphs (Fake news is a current issue affecting our ability to address other problems of our time)

What is and is NOT fake News?

Fake news is...

- *Disinformation for profit - hoax sites who engineer fake news stories to reap digital advertising revenue*



- *Disinformation for political gain - state-funded fraudulent websites set up by one country to sow confusion in another*
- *Hacking - Hackers gain access to the websites or social media accounts of reputable news outlets and disseminate fake stories.*
- *Viral pranks - hoaxes spread for fun*
- *Uncritically reporting a hoax as fact: a well-crafted hoax spreads widely enough that a credible news outlet reports on it as fact or as a rumor*

Fake news is NOT....

- *Satire Websites: Websites like The Onion write news parodies. Readers who do not know its satire may mistake it for fact.*
- *Satirical stories from regular news sites: Opinion and feature writers in mainstream media will sometimes use satire or fanciful hypothetical examples to make a point.*
- *Honest reporting mistakes: Even the best reporters sometimes get things wrong, report things as fact before they are confirmed or get spun by sources who aren't telling the whole truth. However, if there is no intention to fool anyone, it is not fake news.*
- *Journalism you do not like: Just because you do not like what the author says, that does not make it fake news.*

Show a video (5 minutes)

The educator may choose 1 of the suggested videos in the practice section, use the materials to create a short presentation on fake news or show this video

[How to choose your news - Damon Brown](#)



4. Discussion (10 minutes)

Questions for learners:

- 1) What is Fake News? Where does it come from? Why is it so dangerous?
- 2) How can we as individuals ensure we are getting the best information about current events?
- 3) How can you make sure you do not fall victim to fake news?

5. **Reading [How to avoid fake news & hoaxes](#) (20 minutes)** Students will read the articles provided. Then with their group, they will come up with their Top 5 Tips for avoiding fake news.

6. Wrap up discussion (5 minutes)

Number of hours (minutes) 60 – 70 minutes

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to...

- to learn why fake news is an important issue
- to describe and recognise fake news and the need to verify online sources
- to verify the reliability of a variety of online sources



2. Lecture “Types of Fake news”

Activity description:

- Introduction to the main types of fake new, presentation created by the educator, videos and readings
- Debate led by educator

Requirements:

- Knowledge about different key types of fake news - it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic (please refer to the theory and materials proposed in this module chapter)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, pens, paper / computer

Educator's notes:

1. **Brief introduction (5 minutes)**

Introduce learners to the topic of classes – the educator may produce a ppt presentation showing key information (see chapter 1.1.2. for contents)

2. **Introduce key contents and show a video (20 minutes)**

Prepare and show a ppt presentation including the contents and one video suggested in chapter 1.1.2. or use go to [Fake News & Disinformation](#).

3. **Discussion (20 minutes)**

Before starting a brief debate, you may ask your students to take this

Quiz: Can You Spot the Fake News Story?



Questions:

- What types of fake news do you know?
- Can you give authentic examples from your personal experience?
- Have you ever been able to identify a fake news before being tricked by it? Describe it.

4. **Wrap up discussion (5 minutes)**

Number of hours (minutes) about 50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- to be able to give different examples of fake news
- to be able to name the different types of fake news and identify them

Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – **PRACTICAL (2 examples)**

Examples of practical activities are designed to help educators feel more confident in teaching about fake news, its types and tips to identify it as well as support them in becoming aware of the ways it is created and spread and let them learn how easy it is to believe and spread themselves fake news.



1. Workshop “Fake News Bingo game”

Activity description:

- Group or individual activity
- Playing a Bingo game (F2F or online)
- Questions for debriefing
- Open discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge about fake news
- Material: a device to access the internet, Wi-Fi, printed out Bingo-sheets or online. (it is advisable that participants have an active social media account (FB but also YouTube is fine))

Educator's notes:

1. Preparation and game (20 minutes)

Educator prints Bingo sheets with different indicators for Fake News or alternatively shares the online link to play [StopFake Bingo](#).

Participants have to find a news site, news feed, etc. that fulfils all the requirements on their Bingo sheet. If they find one, they shout BINGO!

Educator can limit it to one specific homepage, open up to find one story for each phrase on the Bingo sheet.

As some participants may finish much earlier than others, educator can tell those who have finished earlier to find more pages.

2. Discussion (20 minutes)

Educator can lead the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What did you find out?
- Where does the news come from?
- Which type of misinformation did you find? (satire, misleading content, false connection, ...)

3. Quick quiz (3 minutes)

Finally, educator can ask participants to take a very [quick Fake or Real? The all-new NewsWise headlines quiz!](#) to try and identify which stories are real and which are fake by their headlines.

Number of hours (minutes) 45 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to know where one can find Fake News
- to know how fake news look like



2. Workshop “Reliable or fake posts?”

Activity description:

- Group or individual activity
- Brainstorming and teamwork
- Creation of a social post prototype
- Questions for debriefing
- Open discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge about fake news
- Material: if F2F, Flipcharts, markers, pencils, pens, colours, post-its, colour papers, scissors, tape.

Educator’s notes:

1. Preparation and instructions (10 minutes)

Educator creates groups of minimum 3 and maximum 5 participants and prepares a piece of paper for each group (or singular texts to share with each group in the chat in case of online delivery of the activity) with a topic (health, politics, celebrities ecc. – see examples provided in this chapter) stating whether that topic is “true” or “false”. Explain that each group will have to create a “social media post” starting from the paper/text provided to them and if the post is true, they will have to make it false; conversely, if it is false they will have to make it true.

Tip: before starting, educator can decide which social media post he/she wants the group to create (Instagram, Facebook, etc.) and review the main elements of those specific social media posts (author, text, time when the post was launched, language use, pictures or videos, comments, etc.)

2. Teamwork and sharing (30 minutes)

Each group works to create the posts and then in plenary, participants show the newly created posts.

Finally, the results can be discussed in the plenary and true and fake posts can be revealed.

3. Discussion (20 minutes)

Educator can lead the discussion by asking the following questions:

- Was it hard/easy to create your post? Why?
- When creating the true/fake post, what did you think was the most important thing to show that the post was true or fake?

Number of hours (minutes) 45 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to know where one can find Fake News
- to know how fake news look like

Suggested Assignment

Work with participants in small groups either F2F or online by making sure that you have the opportunity to create “rooms” for teamwork activities and following plenary debates.



Glossary of terms

- **Fake news:** false information that is broadcast or published as news for fraudulent or politically motivated purposes ([Oxford dictionary](#))
- **News Manipulation:** it is a series of related techniques in which partisans create an image or argument that favours their particular interests.^[1] Such tactics may include the use of [logical fallacies](#), [psychological manipulations](#), outright deception ([disinformation](#)), rhetorical and [propaganda](#) techniques, and often involve the [suppression of information](#) or points of view by crowding them out, by inducing other people or groups of people to stop listening to certain arguments, or by simply diverting [attention](#) elsewhere ([Wikipedia](#))
- **Fabricated information:** it can be found in traditional news, social media or fake news websites and has no basis in fact, but is presented as being factually accurate (Wikipedia). ([Fake news: About fake news](#))
- **Satire or parody:** the intention is not to harm, but it has the potential to mislead or fool ([Fake news: About fake news](#))
- **Propaganda:** it is about stories that are created to deliberately mislead audiences, promote a biased point of view or particular political cause or agenda. ([Fake news: About fake news](#))
- **Hoax:** a hoax is a falsehood deliberately fabricated to masquerade as the truth. It is distinguishable from errors in observation or judgment, rumours, urban legends, pseudoscience, and April Fools' Day events that are passed along in good faith by believers or as jokes. ([Wikipedia](#))
- **Bias:** a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned: unreasonably hostile feelings or opinions about a social group; prejudice: Statistics. A systematic as opposed to a random distortion of a statistic as a result of sampling procedure. ([Fake News, Misleading News, Biased News: Terms and Definitions](#))
- **Clickbait:** internet content whose main purpose is to encourage users to follow a link to a web page, esp. where that web page is considered to be of low quality or value. ([Fake News, Misleading News, Biased News: Terms and Definitions](#))
- **Echo chambers:** an **echo chamber** refers to situations in which [beliefs](#) are amplified or reinforced by communication and repetition inside a closed system and insulated from rebuttal. as people's beliefs are reinforced by repetitive inside closed circle of life;
- **Filter bubbles (or also cookies):** a filter bubble is a term coined by the Internet activist Eli Pariser to refer to a state of intellectual isolation that can result from personalized searches when a website algorithm selectively guesses what information a user would like to see based on information about the user, such as location, past click-behaviour and search history. ([Wikipedia](#))



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Chapter 1.2 how and where fake news are spread?

Chapter aims

In this chapter participants will learn how the fake news spreads among adults and what factors enable fake news to spread so easily, emphasizing the importance of protecting ourselves against manipulation, ideological bubbles and fake news.

1.2.1 Social media and emotions: How the fake news can affect the human well-being?

1.2.2 Fake news and politics: Is the politic taking advantage of the fake news?

1.2.3 Bots: the main causes of the spread of fake news

1.2.4 “Microtargeting” and its relation with the spreading of the fake news

1.2.5 The role of users in spreading fake news

1.2.6 Tradition and History of the fake news

Learning outcomes

- *Making participants aware how they can be easily pulled into fake news within online environments*
- *Give to the participants some tools to avoid or detect fake news.*
- *To think critically on their own over the news.*
- *To understand what microtargeting mean and how they affect us in our decisions of our daily lives*

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

Fake news is defined as information that has been published with the intention of misleading and confusing the reader. The media in charge of disseminating this news try to copy the way in which reliable media are published, avoiding verification processes or directly modifying the content of the news. This is how they manage to translate a false opinion or news into a true story. Technology has grown by leaps and bounds during the last decades, and nowadays it is possible to find multiple ways to manipulate a news item by making reference to other truthful factors in order to go unnoticed. Finally, it should be mentioned that the subjectivity of any news item directly affects the difficulty of verifying its veracity (Tandoc et al. 2018).

In the 21st century, it is a reality that the Internet has revolutionized the lives of citizens like no other tool has done in the past. It is the fastest access to meet some needs such as entertainment, information, communication, job search, online shopping and countless other things. However, in the same way that the network has given way to a new world full of opportunities unimaginable just a few years ago, what used to be established as a parallel and



separate bubble in our lives, is becoming, if it is not currently, our new reality, giving rise to new and great challenges that either as unique citizens or as societies we have to face.

The results published in the journal Science in 2018 were shattering as researchers concluded that fake news reaches a greater number of people than true news. The top 1% of the most widespread fake news reaches between 1,000 and 100,000 people, while truthful news rarely reaches more than 1,000 people. In addition to reaching more people, it was also observed that fake news spread faster. The dissemination of this type of news is independent of the subject matter. However, as will be shown later, it is political news that accounts for the greatest number of fake news stories (Lazer et al. 2018).

1.2.1. social media and emotions: How the fake news can affect the human well-being?

Today, the vast majority of fake news is artificially generated and spread by increasingly sophisticated bot platforms. As we have been able to observe again and especially during the last and current health crisis we have suffered, the coronavirus, fake news have been gaining much prominence in social networks and have a direct and strong impact on public opinion and the political world (Haya, 2020).

The spreading of fake news affects directly to the citizen well-being. The main concern is the speed of this viralisation and the number of people that can be reached.

To better understand the idea of how the fake news can affect the mental health and emotions of the people, it may be interesting to mention as example the data published by the WHO in April 2020. During this month, more than 360 millions videos were upload to Youtube under the "COVID-19" category. In March, 550 millions-pandemic related tweets filled this social network. Much of the information disseminated by these social networks was untrue (i.e the non-existence of the virus). This caused citizen to ignore health measures. *Social media and emotions:*

1.2.2. fake news and politics: is the politic taking advantage of the fake news?

In this section we have analyzed the impact of fake news in politics. The spread of fake news poses a threat to the democracies of Western countries by undermining the pillars of democracy and coexistence among citizens. Diversity of information is seriously attacked when disinformation campaigns produce confusion and frustration in public opinion (Haya, 2020). It becomes complicated to differentiate between what is true and what is false, and in recent years



the massive use of fake news together with the selective profiling of users, with the aim of manipulating the vote of citizens, has already been confirmed.

One of the best-known cases is that of the company Cambridge Analytics, which influenced multiple elections such as the 2017 American presidential election (Hern, 2018). This company stole the personal information of Facebook users, which was obtained by a researcher who claimed it was for academic research. When the information was stolen, the company, which supported former president Donald Trump, used the data to create persuasive and manipulative political content during the 2016 US presidential election.

The essence of informational diversity that could exist thanks to the advancement of technology is directly damaged when these campaigns aim to misinform the citizen.

Fake news finds and acts upon these cognitive biases of human beings so that fake news attracts more attention from citizens and consequently becomes more attractive. The path through which this information passes is based on two aspects that are actually two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the human brain automatically tries to filter incoming information by absorbing that which positively and negatively reinforces previous beliefs and schemes. Therefore, information that challenges us is eliminated because it would be an extra expenditure of energy to reorganize cognitive schemas. This is called confirmatory bias. On the other hand, the easy path is to find those arguments and conclusions that coincide with previous beliefs, rather than finding facts that refute them. (Haya, 2020).

This is called motivated reasoning.

1.2.3 bots: the main causes of the spread of fake news

As previously mentioned, the appeal of fake news and the conveniences offered by social platforms to spread it are taking center stage. But the real protagonist of the viralization of fake news are the bots. In the 21st century, the content generated automatically by social bots has grown exponentially. Ferreira et al. have been concluded that bots play an important role as sources of dissemination of information of low or no quality, and that they boost fake news in the initial moments, before it goes viral, targeting those users who have a large number of followers and increase the probability that this fake news spreads. These bots try to create confusion in users by imitating human behavior and proving to be efficient in disseminating electoral propaganda and information during elections in different countries. The most common form is the automatic and artificial generation of hashtags, likes to content advertised by the official accounts of a party or the increase of followers of candidates. Although politics is the main focus of bots, there are other sources of disinformation such as public health, rumors and conspiracy theories, recruitment and terrorist propaganda or manipulation of financial markets.



Source:

[To find out more about bots, please check the chapter 2.2.2.5](#)



1.2.4. “Microtargeting” and its relation with the spreading of the fake news

Microtargeting is the name given to the use of data to display specific information at a specific time to those people who are likely to read, like and share that post, and enter the website (fake news or otherwise) where it was created.

There are companies that specialise in analysing data to manipulate the citizen's vote. The analytical basis of social media allows companies to target precisely. They know what advertising or news to offer to make citizens vote for one candidate or another based on topics, and the candidates' positions on those topics, which they have reason to believe may appeal to the citizen (CITS)

1.2.5. the role of users in spreading fake news

Social networks have become authentic echo chambers, showing users the content that increases the probability that they remain on the social network. In this way the fake news are considered as parasites, taking advantage of this condition. The human being has ingrained different values and convictions that are influenced by the groups to which she/he belongs. This is why false news are more viralised using the echo chambers of social networks that reinforce the identity of our group in front of the rest (Vosoughi, 2018).

In addition to bots, most fake news is retweeted by real people. The research by Tandoc et al. highlights an additional social movement in relation to popularity indicators: When a post is followed by positive reactions such as many "likes," "shares," or "comments," it directly increases the likelihood that it will receive users' attention and time and is therefore more likely to continue to be liked, shared, or commented on."

Vosoughi et al. found staggering findings that concluded that real human Twitter users are nearly 71% more likely to retweet fake news than truthful stories. Social media users like what's new and especially love to share it for their followers to see.



1.2.6. tradition and History of the fake news

Fake news has always existed. But the impact they have now is more noticeable thanks to the internet and social media.

What we now call fake news was what was called hoaxes hundreds of years ago. One of the best-known cases, which had a great impact worldwide, is to be found in the Second World War. Joseph Goebbels was Adolf Hitler's trusted right-hand man. One of the hoaxes he promoted through posters, newspapers, talks and word of mouth was that: "The people must be made to believe that hunger, thirst, shortages and disease are the fault of our opponents and our sympathisers must repeat this at every turn". With this, what Joseph Goebbels sought to do was to manipulate, persuade and make the population believe false information.

PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS (1 hour):

Required – flip chart or a white board, post it, pens or markers, projector, laptop.

1. Distribute sheets of paper and pens and ask them to answer:

How do you rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the veracity of the news that appears on your social networks on a daily basis? (2 min)

2. Present Cambridge Analytics scandal case – Two videos, (5 min each, 10 in total)
3. Provide and explain the information regarding to the case and highlight the main aspects. (5 min)
4. Ask them again:

Now that you have listened this case, how do you rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the veracity of the news that appears on your social networks on a daily basis? (2 min)

5. Divide participants in 3-4 people groups. Distribute sheets of paper, pens/markers and sticky notes and ask them to share their opinions about the case. At the end they should write down on the sheets their ideas regarding (15 min):

- What was the role of Cambridge Analytics in the US elections?
- What was the main purpose of creating fake news?
- How did they get millions of private data?

6. Ask each group to present their ideas and consolidate their contributions (10 min.)
7. Ask participants how they manage to detect the fake news in the social media (5 min)
8. Explain, inform and discuss about the bots, the microtargeting and the cookies. Then ask participants if they are able to detect those bots. Also, if they were aware of the main objective of the cookies and microtargeting (10 min.)
9. Ask participants if they can think about other examples when fake news has been used to manipulate citizen. Expressing their views or sharing news/knowledge etc. (10 min.)



Glossary of terms

Microtargeting is the name given to the use of data to display specific information at a specific time to those people who are likely to read, like and share that post, and enter the website where it was created.

Bots: It is a computer software that can imitate human behavior on the internet, automating things like sending messages, emails, and posting on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram that would be nearly impossible or extremely time-consuming for a human to complete.

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Chapter 1.3. protecting against fake news

This chapter focuses on strategies that will help to identify reliable information in order to avoid fake news.

1.3.1 The definition of reliable information

Signs revealing that the information is reliable.

1.3.2 Laws and policies against misleading information

1.3.3 Strategies to prevent fake news

Outline

The chapter focuses on strategies that a person can apply while reading news in order to avoid misinformation. It starts by reviewing the signs that define reliable information and then briefly examines laws and policies against misleading information. The biggest emphasis is given on strategies, examples and case studies that will help participant to get protected against fake news.

Chapter aims

- *To help participants to get familiar with reliable and fake news in digital media environments*
- *To encourage participants to become critical news consumers*
- *To help participants learn how to analyze, evaluate, trust, share, and act upon news responsibly*

Learning outcomes

What the participants will be able to achieve, at the end of the Chapter:

1. *Outcome 1 – To identify reliable information and fake news*
2. *Outcome 2 – To think critically on their own over the intension of the information (entertain or inform or cause harm and confusion)*
3. *Outcome 3 – To learn practical strategies for fact-checking*

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

1.3.1 The quality of reliable information

Signs revealing that the information is reliable.

There are four characteristics of reliable publications, according to the Columbia Journalism Review⁸.

A reliable source is

- **Independent:** the information provided is not guided in order to serve interests
- **Balanced and Accurate:** reporting without commentary, looking at multiple sides of an issue, professional editing
- **Accountable and Transparent:** it is easy spot the creator of the information and who is in charge to contact, it is clearly labeled whether it is opinion article or advertisement
- **Careful and Measured:** the tone is respectful, the publication relies on experts, eyewitnesses and primary sources (not gossip)

There are various categories of information and it is useful to recognize them, as every category has a different purpose⁹:

- **News:** Informs you, through objective reporting, about local, national and international events, issues and people of significance or of interest.
- **Opinion:** Persuades you, ideally through the use of fact-based evidence, to adopt a specific point of view about an issue or event.
- **Advertising:** Sells you a product or service.
- **Entertainment:** Amuses, pleases, relaxes or distracts you.
- **Propaganda:** Provokes you — often by using false or distorted information to manipulate your emotions.
- **Raw information:** Documents an event or trend. It has not been analyzed, checked, edited, explained or placed in any context.

1.3.2 Laws and policies against fake news

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. During World War II, The Commission on Freedom of the Press (known as the Hutchins Commission) was formed by academics in order to conduct a Code of Ethics in Media upon journalists' demand. This Code is valid until today and promotes the values of Accuracy, Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Harm Minimization, Engagement, Accountability¹⁰ in media.

Thus journalists and news publishers may have these ethical codes to fact-check their information, when it comes to social media platforms it seems that everyone has a right to say anything without ethical boundaries. According to the European Commission's 2018 report, "The

⁸ <https://s3.amazonaws.com/kqed-learn/resources/KQED+Learn+-+Investigate+-+What+IS+a+Reliable+Source+Anyway.pdf> and https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/ovadya-credibility-journalism-ocasio.php

⁹ <https://newslit.org/tips-tools/news-lit-tip-primary-purpose/>

¹⁰ <https://www.fourthestate.org/journalism-code-of-practice/>



digital transformation of news media and the rise of disinformation and fake news”, “in Western countries, the only legal limitations are hate speech and calls to violence”¹¹.

There are some public policy initiatives such as the European Commission’s reports which provide recommendations to policymakers for tackling fake news and disinformation¹².

For example, High Level Group on Fake news (European Commission, 2018a) “recommends five lines of action:

- enhance transparency of online news, involving an adequate and privacy-compliant sharing of data about the systems that enable their circulation online;
- promote media and information literacy to counter disinformation and help users navigate the digital media environment;
- develop tools for empowering users and journalists to tackle disinformation and foster a positive engagement with fast-evolving information technologies;
- safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem, and
- promote continued research on the impact of disinformation in Europe to evaluate the measures taken by different actors and constantly adjust the necessary responses”.

These are measures that policymakers could take, however there are some strategies that everyone could follow in order to get protect against fake news.

1.3.3 Strategies to prevent fake news

Since there is no legislations to prevent fake news, everyone should be critical about the information they receive by cultivating media literacy. There are some strategies which can help everyone to check if the information is reliable; key questions when reading an article and online tools that can check or mute the fake news streaming.

Some key questions, according Quartz¹³, that everyone could ask her/himself when reading are:

1. Where is the information from?
2. Does the headline sound neutral?
3. Who wrote it?
4. What are the article’s sources?

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/jrc111529.pdf>

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/jrc111529.pdf>

¹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7eCB2F89K8&ab_channel=Quartz



5. Are the images accurate?

Online tools¹⁴:

Fact-checking “has often been proposed as a solution to bridge the information asymmetry between consumers and news providers. Fact-checking only applies to the narrow definition of verifiably false news; it does not address the wider concerns about the quality of online news”.

Google has developed some tools for news filtering; “Google News allows users to set filters for preferred and unwanted news topics and sources” and “Snippet” reading introduces an extreme form of filtering in news. Readers only get a very short message that summarizes some essential features of the news article but does not offer any background, explanation or context of the news event”.

Online tools can be used as supportive tools and they don’t substitute the process of reading/watching and evaluating a media source critically.

Practical examples & case studies

Example(s) for Sub Chapter 1.3.1 The quality of reliable information

1. Identifying a reliable source

- What is a reliable source:
- 10 types of misleading news:



2. Platforms/organisations/courses on media literacy (to prevent disinformation)

- [News Literacy Project](#)



- First Draft News



¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/jrc111529.pdf>



- [The Dark\(er\) Side of Media: Crash Course Media Literacy #10 - YouTube](#)



Example(s) for Sub Chapter 1.3.2 Laws and policies against fake news

1. Journalists Code of Ethics

- [Commission on the Freedom of the Press - Media Governance | Coursera](#)
- [Global Charter of Ethics_EN.pdf \(ifj.org\)](#)



2. Case study about the journalists procedure before news publication

- [Calculating the Work Behind Our Work — ProPublica](#)



3. Relevant EU and National policies

- [Tackling online disinformation | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Code of Practice on Disinformation | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [In The Wake Of Ukraine's Civil War, Students Learn How To Identify Fake News](#)





Examples for Sub Chapter 1.3.3 Strategies to prevent fake news

1. Case studies of Fake News

- [Fake Coronavirus Cures, Part 2: Garlic Isn't a 'Cure' - FactCheck.org](#)
- [EU vs DISINFORMATION - EU vs DISINFORMATION](#)
- [Online influencers have become powerful vectors in promoting false information and conspiracy theories \(firstdraftnews.org\)](#)



2. Key Questions Map

- [OTM_Consumer_Handbook_FakeNewsEdition_800.png \(800x800\) \(kqed.org\)](#)



3. Simple guidelines for fake news identification

- [How to spot when news is fake? - YouTube](#)
- [Five ways to spot fake news - YouTube](#)
- [How To Spot Fake News - YouTube](#)
- [5 Ways To Spot Fake News - YouTube](#)
- [Helping Students Identify Fake News with the Five C's of Critical Consuming - YouTube](#)





- [Don't get tricked: Checks on fake news that anyone can do \(firstdraftnews.org\)](https://firstdraftnews.org)



3. Resources for further investigation of fake news

- [Fake News: How to spot it - BBC My World - YouTube](#)



- [Investigate: How Do I Search for Relevant Resources? - Google Slides](#)



- [How to Tell If a Photo Is Photoshopped](#)
[| Nine Ways to Spot a Fake Photo | Digital Trends](#)



- [Beware the bots — News Literacy Project](#)



4. Tools for Fact-Checking and news feed personalization

- [International Fact-Checking Network fact-checkers' code of principles - Poynter](#)



- [The Facts about Fact Checking:](#)
[Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #2 - YouTube](#)



- [Introducing the new Google News - YouTube](#)





Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL (2 examples)

1. Presentation and discussion “How to spot a reliable source?”

- Discussion on what is/ is not a reliable source
- Definition of a reliable source according to the Columbia Journalism Review (presentation)
- Read articles related to policies regarding fake news protection (national case studies and legislations)
- Discussion on given articles

Number of hours (minutes) 40-50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- Identify reliable sources/news
- Raise awareness on the importance of reliable sources
- Beware of policies and legislations regarding fake news protection
- Cultivate critical thinking

(Necessary logistical equipment: internet access, projector, tablets or laptops if the articles are given digitally or printed articles)

2. Presentation and discussion “How to spot fake news?”

- Watch videos on “how to spot fake news”
- Discussion/Revision on “what can I do to protect myself from fake news and why?”

Number of hours (minutes) 40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- Identify fake news
- Raise awareness on self-protection against fake news
- Cultivate critical thinking

(Necessary logistical equipment: internet access, projector)



Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL (2 examples)

1. Workshop “Reliable news vs Fake news. How to spot them?”

This lesson could be based on exercises of the:

[Lesson-Plan-fake-News-and-Fact-Checking.pdf \(eavi.eu\)](#)



Exercise 1: Case studies review

- Participants will be divided into working groups
- Each working group is to be provided with an example of a news publication in order to examine whether it is fake news or reliable news (educator could retrieve the fake example from [EU vs DISINFORMATION - EU vs DISINFORMATION](#))
- Each group presents the given example and supports their opinion while the other groups say if they agree



Exercise 2: Key Questions Map

- Each learner writes on 3 post-its 3 key questions answering the question “how to spot fake news”
- Everyone posts them on the same board and review
- Division of post-its into categories according to the theme (e.g. layout of the website, content, author, etc.)
- Discuss and create a map with key question on identifying fake news regarding the resources

Exercise 3: Comprehension (quiz)

The educator can share one of the following quizzes or create a quick quiz based on the following:

- News Lit Quiz: Avoid conspiratorial thinking

<https://newslit.org/tips-tools/news-lit-quiz-avoid-the-trap-of-conspiratorial-thinking/>



- News Lit Quiz: Should you share it?

<https://newslit.org/tips-tools/nnlw-quiz-should-you-share-it/>





- [EUvsDisinfo quiz - EU vs DISINFORMATION](#)



Number of hours (minutes) depending on the amount of participants (e.g. 4 groups – 2 hours)

Learning outcomes

- Understand the difference between reliable and fake news
- Recognize unreliable channels of communication quickly
- Get confidence on recognizing reliable sources
- Cultivate critical thinking

(Necessary logistical equipment-internet access, projector, tablets or laptops, post-its, papers, markers. The lessons could be applied in groups either face-to-face or in an online environment with the possibility of break-out rooms).

Suggested Assignment

Write or find a fake news article and share it among friends and see if they are going to believe it is true. Then discuss about fake news.

2. Workshop: Using web tools to identify fake news websites

It is important to stressed out that online tools can be used as supportive tools and they don't substitute the process of reading/watching and evaluating a media source critically.

Exercise 1: Fact-checking

- The educator illustrates how to use a Fact-checking website.
- Each participant receives a quiz form with a list of websites that should examine whether it is reliable or not, according to him/her.
- Afterwards check the answers with a fact-checking website
- Discussion about the results

Exercise 2: Google news

- The educator shows how to use the Google News platform in order to avoid spam feed
- Participants navigate through the platform and explore its potential

Number of hours (40 minutes)



Learning outcomes

- Get familiar with online tools for fake news protection
- Understand the fake news common format

(Necessary logistical equipment-internet access, projector, laptops, etc. The lessons could be applied in groups either face-to-face or in an online environment with the possibility of break-out rooms).

Suggested Assignment

Discover more online tools for fact-checking, etc. and present them to the fellow students.

Glossary of terms

Bibliography and references (*** mention on the foot page the source and the link*)

2. Misinformation – disinformation malicious information

Chapter 2.1. the three types of information disorder

Identifying the type of information disorder¹⁵

2.1.1. MISINFORMATION

Unintentional that can be fixed

2.1.2. DISINFORMATION

Intentional, but consequences could led damages

2.1.3. MALICIOUS INFORMATION

Deliberately made to harm.

2.1.4. How to detect or identify misinformation, disinformation and malicious Information

2.1.5. Sources

2.1.6. Why?

2.1.7. To whom (target)?

2.1.8. Mechanism

Outline

The term of misinformation is connected to a real and correct information, but from mistake or similar reasons is wrong presented and can be corrected.

Disinformation are clearly different of the real information.

The reason of using the above mentioned technique is to manipulate and obtain advantages- financial, market position, patrimonial.

The worst and dangerous situation is malinformation. In this case fabricated and deliberately made false information conduct to harm a person or organization or even a country.

In this case it could have very bad consequences and must be treated very seriously and checked accordingly.

Chapter aims

For what the participants will be prepared:

to encourage participants to be open mind and develop a habit to check

to better understand the mechanism and the reasons for creating and circulating information disorder

to help participants to be able to make difference between real information and false information

to help participants to be more carefully cooperative in circulating the information on social networks

¹⁵ (Handbook for Journalism Education and Training /UNESCO Series on Journalism Education)
(Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan)



Learning outcomes

What the participants will be able to achieve, at the end of the Chapter :

Outcome 1 – to understand the types of information disorder

Outcome 2 - to think critically on their own over the information

Outcome 3 - to understand the mechanism of the creating disinformation

Outcome 4 – to spread the techniques learned to others

2.1.1. Misinformation¹⁶

Misinformation is

information that is false, but the person who is disseminating it believes that it is true incorrect or misleading information false or inaccurate information



2.1.2. Disinformation

information that is false, and the person who is disseminating it knows it is false

It is a deliberate, intentional lie, and points to people being actively disinformed fabricated Content

2.1.3. Malicious information

information, that is based on reality, but used to inflict harm on a person, organization(s) or country with serious consequence

2.1.4. How to identify and mechanism

How to detect or identify misinformation, disinformation and malicious Information ?

Most of disinformation and misinformation is spread via social media and TV/radio. The creators are targeting emotional reaction.

¹⁶ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrE1ZvldiFE>)



How to spot ?

First, ask yourself questions:

- is the information original created or re sent ?
- who are the creators : a human or bot (computer)?
- date of creation
- is there a hidden agenda ?
- is the information made to feel you “good” ?
- too great to be real ?

Then start looking on line for more or similar information to compare, check the author of the information, pictures or link (s)

2.1.5. Sources

People are more likely to trust their friends and family on social media than journalists but they do not always impose the same checks on whether a story, picture or claim is true or not.

By far the most common sources of fake news are “well meaning people who just share things and push them out and that causes them to go viral”.

Some types of official sources of propaganda:

- Governments and political actors
- Activists, marketers and businesses
- Individual hoaxers
- Fake news sites
- ‘Unintentional propagators’

(<https://firstdraftnews.org/latest/the-5-sources-of-fake-news-everyone-needs-to-look-out-for-online/>)

2.1.6. Why?

Disinformation¹⁷ is created to be widely shared online for the purpose of generating ad revenue via web traffic or discrediting a public figure, political movement, company or reach special targets – political, economical, military.

The websites need as many visitors to their sites as possible.
The reasons are multiples :

¹⁷ (<https://libguides.madisoncollege.edu/fakenews>)



see the content and have it influence their political values
internet users to click on them
takes users to a website where users see more content and see advertising
when a website has ads on it, those visits pay the website owner advertising revenue

2.1.7. To whom (target)?

Target population is a wide range of categories: common people (majority), businessman, children, NGO's, agencies, markets.

The principal effect of misinformation is to grow fear and suspicion among a population.

2.1.8. Mechanism

Information disorder¹⁸ is a multi-step process that involves making or taking content that others have produced, passing it off as real news, and capitalizing on social media to get as much attention as possible.

It is absolutely necessary to have a site for disinformation.

The most closer to target is the name of the site, the most "attractive" is.

The content of information disorder can be "collected" from different sources, but look as "real" as possible.

The new source of information disorder must be promoted as many as possible

The use of social media is the most appropriate.

Six "degrees of manipulation" :

impersonation, conspiracy, emotion, polarization, discrediting, and trolling
are used to spread misinformation and disinformation, according to Sander van der Linden, PhD, a professor of social psychology in society at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom and director of the [Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab](https://www.cambridge.ac.uk/social-decision-making-lab).

For instance, a false news story may quote a fake expert, use emotional language, or propose a conspiracy theory in order to manipulate readers.¹⁹

The disinformation disorder consists of three elements :AGENT(of spreading), MESSAGE and final RECEIVER.

It must be checked for

AGENT

If it is official or unofficial

¹⁸ (<https://www.cits.ucsb.edu/fake-news/where>)

¹⁹ (<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/03/controlling-misinformation>)



Type of organization

Motivation financial, political, or social

If it comes from a computerized message or human

Intention to mislead or to harm

MESSAGE

If it fabricated, manipulated or misleading

Targeting individuals, ONG's, social groups

RECEIVER

can ignore

or share to others positively

or share to others negatively

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

Interactive workshops through examples & case studies.

Provide access to internet, a laptop, eventually a projector (if is necessarily)

Practical examples & case studies

Examples for subchapters

2.1.1. MISINFORMATION

2.1.2. DISINFORMATION

2.1.3. MALICIOUS INFORMATION

The three types of information disorder²⁰



²⁰ (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIBW_LMPZvE)



Misinformation

Exemple 1

Klaus Iohannis²¹, President of Romania, apologizes for incorrectly transmitted information by the Ministry of Health.

“The Presidential Administration said in a statement on Thursday evening that President Klaus Iohannis had spoken at Wednesday's conference on the basis of incorrect information, incorrectly provided by the Ministry of Health. This is an error in the calculation formula that underlies the establishment of the three scenarios for pre-university education, starting with September 14.”

According to the quoted source, the correct information is as follows: the epidemiological criterion according to which schools will fall into the "green", "yellow" or "red" scenarios is the total number of new cases registered in the last 14 days compared to 1000 inhabitants in the locality where the school is located ”.

At Wednesday's press conference, the President referred to the "daily average of illnesses over the last 14 days," information that was corrected today in a statement.

Disinformation

Exemple 1

An example of disinformation comes from very recent days from an advertising spot on Romanian TV's.

A bakery company ordered an advertising saying that the packed bread that this company is producing is 500 times safer in the presence of COVID 19 bacteria than other competitors unpackaged products.

As no scientific evidence has been presented on this fact (“500 times safer on the packaging of bakery products”), the spot has been modified.

The words "500 times safer on the packaging of bakery products" have been withdrawn and replaced by" We ask the national authority to take measures regarding the packaging of bakery products).

Exemple 2

Cancer, unproven cures and vaccines²²



Eighty percent of people online are using the internet to search for health information.

²¹ <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/klaus-iohannis-isi-cere-scuze-pentru-o-informatie-transmis-gresit-de-ministerul-sanatatii-1349361>

²² (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/social-media-hosted-lot-fake-health-news-year-here-s-n1107466>)



An NBC News analysis raises concerns about just what information people might have found in 2019.

The most viral health misinformation in 2019 was on the topics of cancer, unproven cures and vaccines, according to the review. In relation to some topics, including cancer and fluoride, fake health news dominated overall news.

The most engaged-with article about cancer in 2019, for example, pushed a stew of medical conspiracies, including one positing that "Big Pharma," a nebulous group that includes doctors and federal health organizations, is hiding a cure for cancer.

The April article, "Cancer industry not looking for a cure; they're too busy making money," garnered 5.4 million engagements on Natural News, a website owned and operated by Mike Adams, a dietary supplement purveyor who goes by the moniker "The Health Ranger." The article found its widest audience on Facebook, where Natural News had nearly 3 million followers until it was banned in June for using "misleading or inaccurate information" to attract engagement, according to a statement that Facebook sent Ars Technica.

The three most popular creators of this kind of health misinformation in 2019 were Adams' Natural News; Children's Health Defense, an organization led by the anti-vaccine activist Robert Kennedy Jr.; and Stop Mandatory Vaccination, a website led by the self-described social media activist Larry Cook. Their anti-vaccine content generated over a million engagements on our list. The viral Children's Health Defense articles misinterpret research to stoke fears that vaccines might be dangerous for children and pregnant women. Stop Mandatory Vaccination's articles are accounts from parents who claim that a baby's death was the result of a vaccination. Many of those viral articles have been debunked with official, medically supported explanations that include sudden infant death syndrome, pneumonia and accidental asphyxiation.

Consequences of misinformation

The impact of health misinformation can be enormous.

The most common concerns among health professionals are compliance with health treatments or prevention efforts, said Nat Gyenes, who leads the Digital Health Lab at the technology nonprofit Meedan and researches technology and health at Harvard University's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society.

"It can lead to vaccination levels below herd immunity, harmful impacts on minors whose parents are responsible for their health care and well-being, engaging in alternative or homeopathic treatments as a primary approach and only complying with necessary medical treatments at a time where effectiveness is decreased," Gyenes said.



Malicious information

Exemple 1

In the December 1989 Romanian Revolution for freedom of communism regime, there were many disinformation disorder.

A malinformation with very serious consequences was intentionally spread by old regime security people.

It was made an announcement by the announcer of the national television: "Three trucks full of terrorists are preparing to storm Otopeni airport. Take emergency action! "

The soldiers from Romanian army who were defending the International Airport Otopeni (now Henri Coanda), were told by the security responsible from the Airport that three buses of terrorists are coming to attack the Airport.

The soldiers have to be ready to reject the attack by armed force.

In the same time the security officer from the military cadets school in Campina ask the commander in chief to send three buses of cadets to Otopeni international Airport to free the Airport from the terrorists.

It seems to be that the order came from the Minister of National Defense- Nicolae Militaru, who was very new in that position (but NOT new as military officer!) and very confused.

The buses (trucks) of cadets were on their way to Airport.

The moment that they were approaching the Airport, the soldiers from Airport start shooting the buses filled with so called " terrorists".

The result was a tragic one - 40 young people out of 82 died in such tragic manipulated malinformation !

Examples for subchapter

*how to identify and mechanism of information disorder*²³



How to detect or identify misinformation, disinformation and malicious Information

If you use these questions and do some simple digging before sharing, you too can help prevent disinformation fires on social media, here's how:

1. Search online for the information or claim.

Sometimes, you'll be able to find fact-checkers online who have worked to debunk them.

If the claim hasn't been reported widely by the press, there's a good chance this is because journalists couldn't confirm it.

²³ (<https://abcnews.go.com/US/ways-spot-disinformation-social-media-feeds/story?id=67784438>)



2. Look at who posted this content.

Inspect the poster's profile, how long their account has been active, and post history to see if they demonstrate bot-like behavior.

For example if an account posts at all hours of the day, from different parts of the world, and includes highly polarizing political content and content retweeted from other accounts, those posts were likely made by a machine.

3. Check the profile picture of the account.

Do a reverse image search of the photo. If it's a stock image or an image of a celebrity, then that's a less reliable source because it's anonymous.

4. Search for other social media accounts for this person.

See what you can find out about that person, do they have political or religious affiliations that might give them a reason for spreading a particular point of view?

5. Inspect the content the account posted.

Does it look too good to be true? If it does, then it usually isn't real.

Try a reverse image search. Using a tool like RevEye, you can search for any previous instances of any image that appears online.

Much disinformation uses old images out of context to push a narrative.

Using reverse image search you can find if the image is from a different story.

If you know the location of the image or video use 'Street View' mapping services (Google, Bing and others provide the service) to see if what you're looking at matches what appears on the map.

You can also reverse image search the profile picture to see if it or similar photos are being used on other accounts, a common practice used to create so-called "sockpuppet" accounts, fake personas created online that allow people to act as trolls while protecting their identity.

Example for subchapter 2.2.2. Mistake or intention?

"European Commission²⁴ experts will visit Romania and Bulgaria again next week, to analyze the measures taken in the field of justice, in view of the reports it will present in July, EC spokesman Mark Gray told HotNews.ro on Thursday. However, the context is one in which more and more voices in Brussels consider that the integration of the two countries in the EU was a mistake and EU member states are putting pressure on the Commission to activate the safeguard clause on justice."



Comments :

"It would be a shame for Hotnews to reach the level of a scandalous tabloid, with provocative headlines to the point of vulgarity" The title above is false, for that it is not "Brussels" that is "disappointed", but a Commission official, not even the whole EU Commission. Extrapolating to the whole of Romania and the whole Commission is abusive, a simplistic manipulation.

²⁴ (<https://m.hotnews.ro/stire/3016577>)



And the object of disappointment is not a general one compared to Romania, it is very well specified: "high level corruption". As specified for Bulgaria.
(Jurnalism series ROMAN [anonim], Joi, 15 mai 2008, 13:52)

How to detect or identify misinformation, disinformation and malicious Information

Example for subchapter 2.2.3. Sources

Sources

- people I don't know
- people I know
- politicians
- news channels
- government
- international organizations

Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL

Share and discuss the types of information disorder and mechanism previously presented.

Lecture.

Information disorder have different forms (types), as was previously presented.

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose

- a misinformation is made by mistake or less informed
- it is not dangerous;it can and must be corrected as soon as possible
- consequences are not bad and do not harm

Number of hours (minutes) 30 min

Learning Outcome 1 – to understand the types of information disorder

Learning Outcome 2 - to think critically over the information disorder

Lecture.

Information disorder that can harm people and produce material or worst, human damages.

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose

- round table to discuss the example presented
- it can be prevented in time

Number of hours ((minutes) 30 min

Outcome 1 – to understand the types of information disorder



Outcome 2 - to think critically over the information disorder

Outcome 3 - to understand the mechanism of the creating disinformation

Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL

1.

Learning outcome 1 - to understand the types of information disorder

Learning Outcome 2 - to think critically over the information disorder

Lecture

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose.

Example for subchapter 2.1.1. MISINFORMATION

Example 1

Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania, apologizes for incorrectly transmitted information by the Ministry of Health

Following the example for misinformation resulted from a less informed source.

The correction must be done and must reach the same audience.

The participants will be gathered in one group for the beginning.

It will be collectively discussed the subject.

Then they are splitting in two groups.

First group have to identify the necessarily corrections to be made.

The other group have to identify the way(s) of that correction to reach the same audience.

Finally, both groups will made the presentation of their results.

Number of hours (minutes) 60 min

2. MALICIOUS INFORMATION

Learning Outcome 1 - to understand the types of information disorder

Learning Outcome 2 - to think critically over the information

Learning Outcome 3 - to understand the mechanism of the creating disinformation

Lecture

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose.

Example to be use is from subchapter 2.1.3. MALICIOS INFORMATION



In the December 1989 Romanian Revolution for freedom of communism regime, there were many disinformation disorder.

A malinformation with very serious consequences was intentionally spread by security people.

It will be class round table and interactive discussions.

The learners have analyze the case, answer the questions and than present the answers to the group.

Analyze the reasons of why the security people spread mal information.

Respond the following questions:

- was it mistake
- was it deliberately
- was it a coordinated action
- what was the reason
- the new established regime needed to be legitimate itself and gather credibility
- the former security needs to be "reconverted" to new regime

At the end, the group will draw a conclusion of how mal information was creating such harmful and bad consequences.

Number of hours (minutes) 1 h

Glossary of terms

Misinformation - information that is not completely true or accurate

Disinformation - false information deliberately spread

Malinformation - false information deliberately created to harm



Chapter 2.2. How and where is misleading information spread ?

2.2.1 By traditional

Printed newspapers/ magazines.

Cable and FTA (Free to Air) radio / tv

2.2.2.By Internet

Online radio / tv

Understanding online radio/tv

Social media

Most used social media for spreading information

Influencers

The difference between categories

Professional and freelancers

Who is paying and for what ?

What is a Bot ?

Machine better than human ?

Trolls

Fabricated human behavior. Danger !

It is not new that manipulation²⁵ is used by politicians – along the years or even centuries. But on the occasion of internet development, it is an accelerated and in a very extended way. Misconceptions about disinformation leave us vulnerable to manipulation online.

OUTLINE

This Chapter allows participants to understand which are the **tools or channels/ means or ways** used to spread information disorder.

Along with traditional vectors of spreading information there are more extended online one.

Being online is a very easy and much extended activity, allowing a large number of “contributors” to develop more and more ways of propagation.

This activity is very fast growing.

²⁵ (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02235-x>)



CHAPTER AIMS

For what the participants will be prepared:

- to be able to identified types of information disorder spreading vectors
- to be able to analyze the source and to evaluate the target of information disorder
- to help participants to be more preventives on the contain of information
- to encourage participants to be cooperative with trusted sources and share only verified information

LEARNING OUTCOMES

What the participants will be able to achieve, at the end of the Chapter :

- Outcome 1. Identify the vectors supporting source of information-being true or deliberately false
- Outcome 2. Think critically about the social media source of spreading information disorder
- Outcome 3. Understanding the types of social media for spreading information disorder
- Outcome 4. Understanding the efficiency between traditional and online way of spreading information disorder

2.2.1. By traditional

Not so long ago, before the Internet (and its applications) was spreading, the information were collected by traditional means.

These were made by **Printed media - Newspapers and magazines.**

While these still continues to exist, fewer people are continue of using it.

Nevertheless, information disorder still exists on these printed forms, but far less as the online one.

There are some explanations: information is by far fewer, slower and less dynamic than the online ones.

Also, a printed disinformation could lead to juridical problems for the publisher, while online are not much regulated yet !

Another source of information (disorder) is the local, national or international broadcasters – via **cable or FTA (Free to Air) radio / tv.**

Radio and tv news channels are most used at home by cable TV and most “manipulated” information is applied by news channels.

Most of all, radio is used at home, office or in car – commuting or long distance travel.



2.2.2. Internet

By the fast spreading Internet access, a large majority of population is using it for different reasons- e.g. - Informations, news, travel, medical, legislation, socializing, etc.

Online radio / tv.

The Internet was not only extended notably at home online desktop, but in the recent years on mobile applications.

As the mobile devices became most affordable the apps were fast growing on (Android & iOS and less mobile Windows).

As a consequent, most TV and radio apps made more easily accessed “ on the move”.

Social media – some identified social media.

What is social media ?

Social media²⁶ is computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities.

Users engage with social media via computer, tablet or smartphone via web-based software or web application, often utilizing it for messaging.

Social media has become larger and more accessible thanks to access to mobile applications, with some examples of social media including WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn

It offers many advantages

Direct access to personalities in the world, became a kind of its “circle of friends” e.g Donald TRUMP

Easily to redirect the information to all your friends

Information are fast – instantly circulated, keeping you with most recent data

Access is most used on mobile devices- phones, being very easy to be kept “ updated”

Costs are reduce and insignificant

All the down listed types of social media (both desk or mobile) can be used for spreading “information” disorder :

Social networks—Connect with people

Media sharing networks—Share photos, videos, and other media

Discussion forums—Share news and ideas

Bookmarking and content curation networks—Discover, save, and share new content

Consumer review networks—Find and review businesses

Blogging and publishing networks—Publish content online

Interest-based networks—Share interests and hobbies

²⁶ (<https://blog.hootsuite.com/types-of-social-media/>)



Social shopping networks - Shop online

Anonymous social networks - Communicate anonymously

Along by now, “traditional” social media²⁷, as [Facebook](#), [WhatsApp](#), [WeChat](#), [QZone](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Baidu Tieba](#), [Skype](#), [Viber](#), [Pinterest](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Reddit](#), [Myspace](#), [YouTube](#), [Classmates](#), [MyHeritage](#), [Quora](#), [TikTok](#), [Signal](#),

There are newly added Social Networks e.g.:

[Triller](#), [WT Social](#), [Valence](#), [Flip](#), [Popbase](#), [Elpha](#), [Yubo](#), [Peanut](#), [HouseParty](#), [Caffeine](#), [Steemit](#), [Goodreads](#), [Twitch](#), [CaringBridge](#), [WattPad](#), [Crunchyroll](#) / , [Soundcloud](#), [Mocospace](#), [CouchSurfing](#), [italki](#), [Medium](#), [Ello](#), [Vimeo](#), [Giphy](#), [Tribe](#), [Kuaishou](#), [Imgur](#), [Inflenster](#), [FilmAffinity](#), [Open Diary](#), [Bubbly](#).

Influencers

What is an influencer?

An influencer is someone who has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his or her audience. It is important to note that these individuals are not merely marketing tools, but rather social relationship assets with which brands can collaborate to achieve their marketing objectives.

What are Social Media Influencers²⁸?

Over the last decade, we have seen social media growing rapidly in importance. According to the January 2019 [We Are Social](#) report, 3.484 billion people actively use social media - that's 45% of the world's population.

Influencers in social media are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views.



Types of Influencers²⁹

²⁷ (<https://makeawebsitehub.com/social-media-sites/>)

²⁸ [We Are Social](#)

²⁹ (<https://youtu.be/PYlj1YvU9pl>)

(<https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/>)

Different types of influencers in multiple ways, like : by follower numbers, by types of content and by the level of influence.

By Follower Numbers

Mega-Influencers

Mega influencers are the people with a vast number of followers on their social networks, more than 1 million followers on at least one social platform. Many mega-influencers are celebrities who have gained their fame offline – movie stars, sportspeople, musicians, and even reality television stars.

Macro-Influencers

People with followers in the range between 40,000 and 1 million followers on a social network.

Micro-Influencers

Are ordinary everyday people who have become known for their knowledge about some specialist niche.

It could be considered micro-influencers as having between 1,000 and 40,000 followers on a single social platform.

Nano-Influencers

The newest influencer-type to gain recognition is the nano-influencer. These people only have a small number of followers, but they tend to be experts in an obscure or highly specialized field. They have fewer than 1,000 followers.

By Types of Content

Bloggers

Bloggers and influencers in social media (predominantly micro-bloggers) have the most authentic and active relationships with their fans.

YouTubers

In this case, rather than each video maker having their own site, most create a channel on YouTube.

Podcasters

Podcasting is a relatively recent form of online content that is growing in popularity.

By Level of Influence Celebrities

Celebrities were the original influencers, and they still have a role to play

One problem with using celebrities as influencers is if they may lack credibility with a product's target audience. e.g. Justin Bieber may be highly influential if he recommended a type of acne cream, but would have little chance influencing the buying patterns of those looking for a retirement village.



Key Opinion Leaders

Industry experts and thought leaders such as journalists can also be considered influencers and hold an important position for brands.

These experts include:

Journalists

Academics

Industry experts

Professional advisors

If you can gain the attention of a journalist in a national newspaper, who in turn talks positively about your company in an article, then you are using him or her as an influencer in much the same way as you would a blogger or a social media influencer.

Professional and freelancers

There are freelancers and professionals ready to work for a paid service.

The location of these persons has no relevance, as they could receive the “subject” and “act” globally, practically anywhere in the world. More or less, it can be assimilate to “mercenaries”.

Anyway, “Nothing new under the Sun” !

Disinformation’s spread: trolls, bots and all of us!

What is a Bot³⁰ ?

What does the slang word BOT mean?

Back On Topic

Back On Topic - **BOT** is also used in messaging, with the **meaning** "Back On Topic". In this context, **BOT** indicates that the sender wishes to return to the point of the conversation.

What is a bot on social media?

A bot is a software application that is programmed to do certain tasks.

Bots are automated, which means they run according to their instructions without a human user needing to manually start them up every time.

Bots often imitate or replace a human user's behavior.

Typically they do repetitive tasks, and they can do them much faster than human users could.

Bots³¹ are operated on **social media networks**, and used to automatically generate messages, advocate ideas, act as a follower of users, and as fake accounts to gain followers themselves.

³⁰ (<https://youtu.be/PYlj1YvU9pl>)

(<https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/>)

³¹ (<https://www.cloudflare.com/learning/bots/what-is-a-bot/>)



Social bots can be used to infiltrate groups of people and used to propagate specific ideas.

Trolls

What is a Troll³² ?



A troll is a being in Scandinavian folklore, including Norse mythology.

In Old Norse sources, beings described as trolls dwell in isolated rocks, mountains, or caves, live together in small family units, and are rarely helpful to human beings.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll>)

Internet trolling is a behavior in which users post derogatory or false messages in a public forum such as a message board, newsgroup or social media. The purpose of trolling is to provoke others into displaying emotional responses or to normalize tangential discussion either for amusement or personal gain.

What is the Troll factory³³?

A **troll farm** or **troll factory** is an institutionalised group of internet trolls that seeks to interfere in political opinions and decision-making.

There are governments that are using paid commentators, trolls, and bots to harass journalists and erode trust in the media, but not only.



Theoretical Lecture & Practical Workshop:

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

Necessarily logistical equipment-internet access, projector, tablets; access to FTA (Free to Air) or cable radio / tv

Interactive workshops through examples & case studies.

³² (Sources: [PC Magazine online encyclopedia](#), [Indiana University Information Technology Services](#))

(<https://youtu.be/psmpWVuCb8s>)

(https://guides.monmouth.edu/media_literacy/how_fake_news_spreads)

³³ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw6Jy5MeLZo>)



Practical examples & case studies

Example for subchapter 2.2.1. cable radio / TV

Cable tv/radio

[TVR](#)

[RAI](#)

[RTVES](#)

[RTP](#)

[Telewizja Polska](#)

[CyprusTV](#)

Local cable tv/radio

Examples for subchapter 2.2.2.

Example 1

INSTAGRAM example

[Photo](#) ³⁴ of the Brazilian model Natalia Garibotto, appreciated from the official account of the Pope.

The Vatican asks Instagram how pope's account liked photo of Brazilian model Natalia Garibotto !



Natalia Garibotto joked she was going to heaven after picture was liked by official account of Pope Francis – “*At least I’m going to heaven.*”

Natalia Garibotto

Twitch Partner

The Pope's Favorite

[@natkiswim](#) [@natagatatv](#) // [@bangenergy](#) // [@thepopesfavorite](#)

779 posts [2.9mil followers](#)

³⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/nataagataa/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/19/pope-francis-instagram-like-brazil-model-natalia-garibotto>

<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/fotografie-a-modelului-brazilian-natalia-garibotto-apreciata-de-pe-contul-oficial-al-papei-vaticanul-cere-explicatii-de-la-instagram-1404624>



Example 2 of way of spreading

Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election³⁵

Abstract:

“We present new evidence on the role of false stories circulated on social media prior to the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Drawing on audience data, archives of fact-checking websites, and results from a new online survey,

we find:

- (i) social media was an important but not dominant source of news in the run-up to the election, with 14 percent of Americans calling social media their “most important” source of election news;
- (ii) of the known false news stories that appeared in the three months before the election, those favoring Trump were shared a total of 30 million times on Facebook, while those favoring Clinton were shared eight million times;
- (iii) the average American saw and remembered 0.92 pro-Trump fake news stories and 0.23 pro-Clinton fake news stories, with just over half of those who recalled seeing fake news stories believing them;
- (iv) for fake news to have changed the outcome of the election, a single fake article would need to have had the same persuasive effect as 36 television campaign ads.”

Example for subchapter 2.2.2.Influencers

The Top 100 Instagram Influencers in The World

Ariana Grande

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson

Selena Gomez

Kylie Jenner

Kim Kardashian

Neymar Jr.

Justin Bieber

Taylor Swift

Top Instagram Influencers: 30 Major-League Instagrammers Worth Following In 2021

Amanda Cerny (@amandacerny) – 24.7M Followers

Zach King (@zachking) – 20.5M Followers

Liza Koshy (@lizakoshy) – 17.7M Followers

James Charles (@jamescharles) – 15M Followers

Nikkie de Jager (@nikkietutorials) – 11.8M Followers

³⁵ Allcott, Hunt; Gentzkow, Matthew. Working paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research, No. 23089, 2017.

(<https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/fake-news-conspiracy-theories-journalism-research/>)



Eleonora Pons

The Venezuelan-born influencer has 39 million followers, and gets paid \$144,000 per post. She currently has a net worth of \$3 million.

The 23-year-old internet celebrity first came into prominence on Vine, and branched out to creating comedy sketches on YouTube after Vine shut down in 2016.

The Most Followed Accounts on Twitter

Shakira (52.3m followers) ...

Bill Gates (53.1m followers) ...

Demi Lovato (55.4m followers) ...

Britney Spears (55.9m followers) ...

Twitter (58.9m followers) ...

CNN Breaking News (60.2m followers) ...

Selena Gomez (64.1m followers) ...

Justin Timberlake (64.2m followers)

Rank	Change (monthly)	Account name	Owner	Followers (millions)	Activity	Country
1	—	@BarackObama	Barack Obama	129	44th President of the United States	United States
2	—	@justinbieber	Justin Bieber	114	Musician	Canada
3	—	@katyperry ^[a]	Katy Perry	109	Musician	United States
4	—	@rihanna	Rihanna	102	Musician and businesswoman	Barbados
5	—	@Cristiano	Cristiano Ronaldo	91	Footballer	Portugal
6	▼	@taylorswift13	Taylor Swift	88	Musician	United States



Rank	Change (monthly)	Account name	Owner	Followers (millions)	Activity	Country
7	▲	@ladygaga	Lady Gaga	83	Musician and actress	United States
8	—	@ArianaGrande	Ariana Grande	82	Musician and actress	United States
9	▼	@TheEllenShow	Ellen DeGeneres	79	Comedian and television hostess	United States
10	—	@YouTube	YouTube	72	Online video platform	United States
11	▲	@KimKardashian	Kim Kardashian	69	Television personality and businesswoman	United States
12	▲	@narendramodi	Narendra Modi	66	Current Prime Minister of India	India
13	▲	@selenagomez	Selena Gomez	64	Musician and actress	United States
14	▼	@jtimberlake	Justin Timberlake	64	Musician and actor	United States
15	—	@cnnbrk	CNN Breaking News	60	News channel	United States



How can you tell if a celebrity is real on twitter?

Find Verified Celebrity Accounts

In the search box in the upper-right corner of the Twitter home screen, enter the name of your favorite celebrity.

A list of possible matches appears.

If you see one with the verified badge, select it. Otherwise, press Enter on the keyboard.

A search screen appears.

Most Twitter accounts follower³⁶

Example for subchapter Professional and freelancers³⁷



Example for subchapter What is a Bot ?

Top Signs You are Talking with a Bad Bot

Mentions a Product or Service

Sends a Link Without You Asking for One

Asks for Personal Financial Information

Responds Suspiciously Quickly

Repeat Answers

Does Not Speak Naturally

Or They Do the Opposite

Weird Syntax

How to spot the Bot ?

Experts use multiple criteria to judge whether a particular Twitter account is a bot. Learn to recognize some key telltale signs!

Example 1

A Twitter bot is a type of automated software that controls a Twitter account

Activity – How many posts per day have been generated by the account?

The Oxford Internet Institute's Computational Propaganda team views an average of more than 50 posts a day as suspicious.

Suspicious ³⁸patterns of likes/retweets – very high numbers of likes/retweets vs. original posts, often in quantities that are very close.

³⁶ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-followed_Twitter_accounts)

³⁷ <https://www.freelancer.sg/work/internet-troll/#>

³⁸ (Source: [Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab](#))

High number of account followers, low number of account follows.

4chan, an online message board in which users remain anonymous, is responsible for some of the largest hoaxes, cyberbullying incidents and Internet pranks of the past few years.

Reddit³⁹ has its own troubled history with fake news.

While these and other message boards are by no means inherently bad, news and information appearing on such outlets should be treated with caution.

Example for Trolls

Example 1

Trolls for hire: Russia's freelance disinformation firms offer propaganda with a professional touch. Firms charged varying prices for services, such as \$8 for a social media post, \$100 per 10 comments made on an article or post and \$65 for contacting a media source.

And to prove it, the researchers created a fake company⁴⁰ — then paid one Russian group \$1,850 to build up its reputation and another \$4,200 to tear it down.

The groups were highly professional, offering responsive, polite customer service, and a menu of services. Firms charged varying prices for services, such as \$8 for a social media post, \$100 per 10 comments made on an article or post and \$65 for contacting a media source. Each firm the researchers hired claimed to have experience working on targets in the West.

Example 2

The "Barcagate" business broke out 2019 after an investigation by the Spanish radio station Cadena Ser in connection with an alleged slander campaign against some Barca figures (such as star Lionel Messi or defender Gerard Pique) on social networks, campaign orchestrated by a company that worked for the club.

This campaign would aim to improve the image of the then president of Barca, Josep Maria Bartomeu, and to tarnish the reputation of some former or current players or some of the club's management.

Bartomeu was accused of hiring I3 Ventures to improve his image in the last year of his term as president and to provide a positive version of the Board's work on social media.

In addition to this role, the company has started a campaign to denigrate important figures in the Blaugrana family. I3 Ventures has launched criticism on various social media accounts against Barcelona officials, former players, coaches and presidents, as well as candidates for the 2021 presidential election.

³⁹(Sources: PC Magazine, Washington Post)

⁴⁰ (<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/trolls-hire-russia-s-freelance-disinformation-firms-offer-propaganda-professional-n1060781>)



Political Disinformation

While it's important to be skeptical of political news, especially during an election, it's also important to be able to recognize and dismiss outright disinformation: the deliberate spreading of false or misleading information.

The content of political disinformation spans a wide spectrum, from stories that might be credible (such as an endorsement of a politician from a surprising source) to those that are utterly unbelievable (such as the accusation that a candidate for national office is involved in a child-exploitation ring housed in the basement of a pizza parlour).

Those spreading disinformation can include governments, political activists and even for-profit publishers (some of whom run multiple disinformation operations that cater to different parts of the political spectrum).

An analysis of the threats of online misinformation to democracy in Canada suggests that disinformation agents “could use social media to spread lies and propaganda to a mass audience at a low cost [or] masquerade as legitimate information providers, blurring the line between what is real and what is disinformation.”

There are four main ways in which disinformation can affect the outcome of an election:

Reaching an audience that's vulnerable to the message:

Because of the effect our beliefs have on our thinking, targeted advertising works even better for political messages than traditional commercial ones.

Political parties and disinformation agents can both draw on the data profiles provided by social networks, search engines and ad brokers to deliver their messages both to those who are known to hold those beliefs and to “lookalike audiences” that resemble them closely enough that they are highly likely to believe the same things: “the more disinformation operators know about their target audiences, the easier it is to find, manipulate, and deceive them.”

Energizing or suppressing voters: While political disinformation may not convert anyone to an opposing point of view, it may have a powerful impact on whether or not someone actually votes. While ads with extreme messages were once seen as risky because they might alienate more moderate voters, targeted ads make it possible to send extreme messages just to hard-core supporters – or, perhaps more importantly, to send messages to their opponent's likely supporters to discourage them from voting.

Example 3

While committed Trump supporters were shown ads that called Hillary Clinton a traitor, likely Clinton voters received ads highlighting comments she'd made referring to some African-American men as “super predators” in order to make them conflicted about voting for her.)

These “dark ads” are visible only to the ad buyer, the recipients and the social network, which makes it almost impossible for an opponent – or government bodies tasked with overseeing an election – to track or respond to them.

Setting the agenda during breaking news: News has been described as “the first rough draft of history,” but increasingly it is the final draft as well: once a false or inaccurate story has been widely spread, people are likely to believe it over a new one – even if the new story is a retraction from the same source as the original.

Disinformation agents have a variety of techniques for getting their version of a story spread first, many of which involve “gaming” the algorithms of search engines and social networks. These include techniques such as having automated “bot” accounts spread a story (particularly with a shared hashtag, to push it to a “trending” level) or posting a web address hundreds of times on a forum site such as Reddit, to boost its place in search engine results.

Example 4

For example, search results following the mass shooting in Las Vegas⁴¹ were dominated by conspiracy theories, and a tweet of a doctored BuzzFeed article spread by the blog Gateway Pundit that supposedly called for all guns owned by White people to be confiscated was widely circulated following the school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

“Infecting” legitimate news: As noted previously, legitimate news sources can be led by bias – their own or their perception of their audience’s – to give too much credence to a plausible but not confirmed story.

Example 5

For example, during the 2016 U.S. election, a YouTube video suggesting that Hillary Clinton had unrevealed health problems led to the appearance of #hillaryshealth as a trending topic on Twitter, which led to it being seen as being more newsworthy by journalists (though no new information had appeared).

This phenomenon provides a vehicle for a small number of highly committed, reasonably savvy operators – freelance or state-sponsored – to have a hugely disproportionate effect on the public conversation, especially during times such as elections when news outlets are constantly looking for fresh and engaging content.

Example 6

The web brigades⁴² (Russian: Веб-бригады), also known as Russia's troll army (Армия троллей России), Russian bots (Русские боты), Putinbots, Kremlinbots (Путиноботы, кремлеботы), troll factory (Фабрика троллей), Lakhta trolls (Лакхтинские тролли) or troll farms (Фермы троллей), are made-up state-sponsored anonymous.



⁴¹ (<https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/digital-issues/authenticating-information/impact-misinformation-democratic-process/political-disinformation>)

⁴² (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhg-0Hiz3J8>)

Example 7

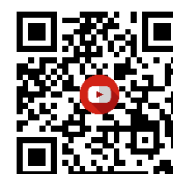
IRA⁴³-Internet Research Agency

MOSCOW — At first, new recruits to the Internet Research Agency, the notorious Russian troll factory, were thrilled by the better-than-average salaries they earned simply for posting on the internet. But one says he eventually realized that the work hid a darker reality: both they and their audience were meant to turn into zombies.



Example

AGENTS of CHAOS an HBO Documentary film



It's just a suggestion for watching the recommended movie !

It presents in a very documented way, the manipulating 2016 elections in USA, using fabricated trolls as: online radio, newspaper, facebook account, etc.

AGENTS of CHAOS⁴⁴ an HBO Documentary film

Producers JIGSAW / INVESTIGATE STUDIOS PRODUCTION

Directed by Alex GIBNEY

(Suggested : Min 55 / min 56:40 / min 59:57 / min 1:27:15 Guccifer 2.0 min1:27:25)

Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL

Share and discuss the types of information' disorder's ways of spreading – in the previously chapters presented

Lecture

Identifying possible source of information and comparing the results sources :

- FTA/cable radio/tv
- social media
- official sites

Number of hours (minutes) 30 min

Learning Outcomes 1. Identify the source of information as being true or deliberately false

Learning Outcomes 3. Understanding the best types of using social media information

⁴³ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeKCKhIFqvs>)

⁴⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwtsFrf_u3w

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkCsrlWWXH8&t=1364s>



Lecture

As previously was presented, the social media and radio / tv are the most used vectors for spreading information.

- evaluate which are the most used social media ranked by number of users (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- identify local FTA or cable radio / tv

Number of hours (minutes) 30 min

Learning Outcomes 3. Understanding the best types of using social media information

Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL

1.

Lecture

In the following examples, the user of the Instagram Natalia Garibotto account, took an advantage, mentioning the official site of Vatican, the Pope itself.

The company that manages Natalia Garibotto's account took full advantage of the publicity and redistributed the image on its own Instagram account, joking that it received "the official blessing of the pope".

For her part, Natalia Garibotto, who has 2.4 million followers on Instagram, joked: "At least I'm going to Heaven."

The Vatican is asking for explanations from Instagram.

An investigation was underway to determine how the photo came to be appreciated, the Catholic News Agency reported, citing sources close to the Vatican's press office.

The various social accounts of the Pope are managed by several people.

We can exclude the fact that the like came from Pope Francis. I turned to Instagram for explanations, a Vatican spokesman told The Guardian.

Pope Francis is extremely popular on social networks, his official Instagram account being followed by 7.4 million people. The account does not track other accounts.

On Twitter, the Pope is followed by 18.8 million people. In 2017, he was the most popular world leader on the social networking platform. However, the Sovereign Pontiff rarely puts content on social media himself.

Natalia Garibotto

Twitch Partner

The Pope's Favorite

[@natkiswim](#) [@nataqatav](#) // [@bangenergy](#) // [@thepopesfavorite](#) "



Example 3

INSTAGRAM⁴⁵ example

The workshop / Exercise or Test could adopt the format

Participants will be divided into two working groups.

Each working group has to provide an explanation of this Instagram case – why and how efficient was for the Natalia Instagram account.

What were the consequences for the “image” of Vatican or Pope Francesco ?

Was it possible that the “like” from pope’s Instagram account to be real, taking in consideration that Vatican withdraw the “like” next day ?

Exercise: Study the above information, links, comments and answer the questions :

- A.
 - a. is it a mistake ?
 - b. is it real ?
 - c. is it made intentionally ?
- B.
 - a. the intention was to denigrate the Holy Seat ?
 - b. the intention was to be a joke ?
 - c. the intention was commercial ?
- C
 - a. what can we do ?
 - b. shall we act immediately ?
 - c. shall we do nothing and simply go on ?

Conclusions to be reach.

“ nataagataa ”

“ I can teach you a thing or two 🐱 can’t wait for you guys to see my October shoot on my site (www.natagata.com) monthly subscriber benefits:

- **monthly giveaways**
- **follow back on instagram**
- **fire daily content**
- **chat with me daily**

What more can you ask for ?”

Number of hours (minutes) 60 min

⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/19/pope-francis-instagram-like-brazil-model-natalia-garibotto>

<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/fotografie-a-modelului-brazilian-natalia-garibotto-apreciata-de-pe-contul-oficial-al-papei-vaticanul-cere-explicatii-de-la-instagram-1404624>



Learning Outcomes 1. Identify the source of information as being true or deliberately false

Learning Outcomes 2. Think critically about the social media source of spreading information disorder

2.

Lecture

The "[Barcagate](#)"



In order to reach an objective, a special freelancer or dedicated company was used to spread disinformation.

The group of learners should have a round table to discuss the next example.

The discussion can have assignment in different elements and requires participants to work jointly

Example 2

The "Barcagate" business broke out 2019 after an investigation by the Spanish radio station Cadena Ser in connection with an alleged slander campaign against some Barca figures (such as star Lionel Messi or defender Gerard Pique) on social networks, campaign orchestrated by a company that worked for the club.

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Bartomeu was accused of hiring I3 Ventures to improve his image in the last year of his term as president and to provide a positive version of the Board's work on social media. In addition to this role, the company has started a campaign to denigrate important figures in the Blaugrana family. I3 Ventures has launched criticism on various social media accounts against Barcelona officials, former players, coaches and presidents, as well as candidates for the 2021 presidential election.

Number of hours ((minutes) 60 min

Learning Outcomes 1. Identify the vectors supporting source of information-being true or deliberately false

Learning Outcomes 2. Think critically about the social media source of spreading information disorder

Suggested Assignment

How to work with participants – in one group

Lecture and interactive round-table discussion



Glossary of terms

FTA radio / tv.- free to air TV/radio

BOT - Back On Topic

TROLL - is a being in Scandinavian folklore, including Norse mythology

IRA- Internet **R**esearch **A**gency



Chapter 2.3. Protecting against misleading information

2.3.1. Protect and combat.

The participants will understand methods to be used to protect the online and off line disinformation.

From whom do people/organizations defend themselves?

Governments or politicians (military, clandestine security services)

2.3.2. Tools, how to use it and training.

A presentation of some online tools on how to use detect and prevent spreading disinformation.

2.3.3. How to report misinformation disorder. How is abuse reported

Participants will be prepared for the methods and the ways offered by social media to report information disorder.

OUTLINE

Understanding the mechanism, the targets that the information disorder is used is important. These allow all of us to think on how we can check and protect ourselves.

In order to prevent spreading, the most important is how to report such information disorder.

CHAPTER AIMS

Participants will be prepared on how to :

use different on line tools or ways to assess information disorder

the possibilities that social media is offering on how to protect and report

be more cooperative online and offline with authorities

have a general view of internet social media and be able to search themselves of new tools

LEARNING OUTCOMES

What the participants will be able to achieve, at the end of the Chapter :

Outcome 1 – how to use existing social media tools to block or report disinformation

Outcome 2 – how to use existing tools for identifying original or fabricated information

Outcome 3 – reporting information disorder to cable radio/tv news channels



2.3.1. Protect and combat.

From whom do people/organizations defend themselves?

Governments or politicians (military, clandestine security services, deep state).

Organizations (corporations, conglomerates)

False Non-governmental organizations and charities or Individuals

Effects on individuals. Basics !

Combating misinformation is exposing to online attacks.

The Problem

Information ⁴⁶– who controls it and who might be manipulating it !

Disinformation can undermine democracies, affect people's health and economic decisions.

Political actors have used disinformation for their benefit for millennia.

The “misinformation effect:” the way false or misleading information, received by subjects after they've received correct information, can distort their understanding”

Disinformation fuels distrust and even violence at all levels of Governments.

Dangerous⁴⁷ disinformation, conspiracy theories, disinformation and distrust in the election system have sown controversy, and even violence, at all levels of government in recent months.

Results :

destabilizing democracy

distrust and disruption

money and power

How to protect / defend against disinformation ?

Don't stay passive. Ask ⁴⁸!

Always ask yourself and check the information.

First is education !

In the long-term is to prepare the ourselves to understand the dangers of misinformation.

This handbook is part of it.

Actors involved:

Media, tech companies, governments are responsible for informing the public about information and misinformation.

⁴⁶ (<https://internews.org/impact/disinformation>)

⁴⁷ (<https://www.npr.org/2021/03/01/971436680/from-the-u-s-capitol-to-local-governments-disinformation-disrupts?t=1615195277604>)

Helen Lee Bouygues is the president of the Reboot Foundation.

⁴⁸ (<https://reboot-foundation.org/misinformation-effect/>)

Governments should make efforts to combat misinformation.

Carefully, politically not to become an excuse for violating or seeming to violate free speech principles.

Not to become part of the problem !

Media should remain clear and accurate in information that combats misinformation.

Carefully avoiding panic about it !

Social media platforms, should have a clear and transparent policies about what information is allowed to appear and what should be removed.

Fight misinformation on all these levels: schools, online habits, public institutions.

Any time you try and say that, "*This is not true*"⁴⁹ you have a lot of haters.

Fighting disinformation and its spread as misinformation is **an iterative process, not a quick fix**. There are actions we can take to fight misinformation, even as individuals:

- improve our own media literacy by carefully considering our sources of information
- fact-check the stories we encounter on social media before believing them
- commit to reading entire articles, and not just headlines, before sharing them
- point others to fact-checking resources when we see misinformation spreading

Example 2⁵⁰

This year, Twitter cracked down on millions of accounts that did not represent real human users for spreading misinformation.

Several tech platforms, including Apple, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, banned the conspiracy theories



Another noteworthy banning happened in September when Reddit shut down the main subreddit dedicated to discussing the QAnon conspiracy theory; it had over 70,000 subscribers at that point.

Supporting media and digital culture⁵¹

In January 2018, the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts ("the HLEG") to advise on policy initiatives to counter fake news and disinformation spread online.

Any form of censorship either public or private should clearly be avoided.

⁴⁹ (Valerie Strauss <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2018/12/10/word-year-misinformation-heres-why/>)

⁵⁰ (Valerie Strauss / <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2018/12/10/word-year-misinformation-heres-why/>)

⁵¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation>)



The HLEG advises the Commission against simplistic solutions:

enhance transparency of online news

involving an adequate and privacy-compliant sharing of data about the systems that enable their circulation online

promote media and information literacy to counter disinformation and help users navigate the digital media environment

develop tools for empowering users and journalists to tackle disinformation and foster a positive engagement with fast-evolving information technologies

safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem

promote continued research on the impact of disinformation in Europe to evaluate the measures taken by different actors and constantly adjust the necessary responses.

You might have fallen for someone's attempt to disinform you about current events. **But it's not your fault !.**

Even the most well-intentioned news consumers can find today's avalanche of political information difficult to navigate.

With so much news available, many people consume media in an automatic, unconscious .

Get news that's free, independent and evidence-based

1. Seek out your own political news!

Like most people, you probably get a fair amount of your news from apps, sites and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, Apple News and Google.

You should change that!⁵².

These are technology companies – not news outlets.

Their goal is to maximize the time you spend on their sites and apps, generating advertising revenue.

To that end, their algorithms use your browsing history to show you news you'll agree with and like, keeping you engaged for as long as possible.

That means instead of presenting you with the most important news of the day, social media feed you what they think will hold your attention.

Most often, that is algorithmically filtered and may deliver politically biased information.

Instead, regularly visit trusted news apps and news websites directly.

These organizations actually produce news, usually in the spirit of serving the public interest.

There, you'll see a more complete range of political information, not just content that's been curated for you.

⁵² (<https://theconversation.com/4-ways-to-protect-yourself-from-disinformation-130767>)



2. Use basic math.

Untrustworthy news and political campaigns often use statistics to make bogus claims – rightfully assuming most readers won't take the time to fact-check them.

3. Beware of nonpolitical biases.

News media are often accused of catering to people's political biases, favoring either liberal or conservative points of view.

But disinformation campaigns exploit less obvious cognitive biases as well.

For example, humans are biased to underestimate costs or look for information that confirms what they already believe.

One important bias of news audiences is a preference for simple soundbites, which often fail to capture the complexity of important problems.

Research has found that intentionally fake news stories are more likely to use short, nontechnical and redundant language than accurate journalistic stories.

Also beware of the human tendency to believe what's in front of your eyes.

Video content is perceived as more trustworthy – even though deepfake videos can be very deceiving. Think critically about how you determine something is accurate. Seeing – and hearing – should not necessarily be believing. Treat video content with just as much skepticism as news text and memes, verifying any facts with news from a trusted source

The Code of Practice on Disinformation.

The Code of Practice on disinformation is the first that industry has agreed, on a voluntary basis, a set of worldwide self-regulatory standards to fight disinformation.

The code was signed by platforms, leading social networks, advertisers and the advertising industry in October 2018.

Signatories include Facebook, Twitter, Mozilla, Google and associations and members of the advertising industry.

Microsoft subscribed to the Code of Practice in May 2019. TikTok joined the code in June 2020.

Signatories of the Code presented detailed roadmaps to take action in 5 areas:

disrupting advertising revenues of certain accounts and websites that spread disinformation

making political advertising and issue based advertising more transparent

addressing the issue of fake accounts and online bots

empowering consumers to report disinformation and access different news sources, while improving the visibility and **findability** of authoritative content

empowering the research community to monitor online disinformation through privacy-compliant access to the platforms' data

Online platforms and trade associations representing the advertising sector submitted a baseline report in January 2019 setting out the state of play of the measures taken to comply with their commitments under the Code of Practice on Disinformation.



Useful links

[The Code of Practice against Disinformation](#)

[Fifth set of reports — fighting COVID-19 disinformation](#)

[European Democracy Action Plan](#)

[Press release: A Europe that protects: EU reports on progress in fighting disinformation ahead of European Council](#) (14 June 2019)

[Factsheet: Action Plan on Disinformation, Report on progress](#) (14 June 2019)

[Press release: "A Europe that Protects: The EU steps up action against disinformation"](#) (5 December 2018)

[Action plan against disinformation](#)

[Factsheet](#) on tackling online disinformation

[Synopsis report on public consultation](#) on fake news and online disinformation

[Study on fake news and disinformation](#) from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. (<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/tackling-online-disinformation>)



2.3.2. Tools, how to use it and train.

Accordingly the to rand⁵³ it can be found a series of tools and trainings for online activities that can produce false or information disorder, but not only !

Adblock Plus⁵⁴

Adblock Plus is a browser extension and app that blocks advertisements and websites through the use of filtering lists.. Users can opt out of even these ads by adjusting the default settings. The tool, while initially an adblocker, has increasingly seen itself as a way for users to protect themselves not only from harmful ads, but also from other harmful sites, including those that spread disinformation.

Bad News

This tool intended to build user understanding of the techniques involved in the dissemination of disinformation. This game exposes players to fake news tactics used against them by putting them in the position of a news baron for fake news.

⁵³ www.rand.org

⁵⁴ (<https://www.rand.org/research/projects/truth-decay/fighting-disinformation/search.html>)

Bot Sentinel

Bot Sentinel is a free platform developed to detect and track trollbots and untrustworthy Twitter accounts.

Bot Sentinel uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to study Twitter accounts, to classify them as trustworthy or untrustworthy, and to identify bots.

Botometer

Botometer is a web-based program that uses machine learning to classify Twitter accounts as bot or human by looking at features of a profile including friends, social network structure, temporal activity, language and sentiment

BotSlayer

BotSlayer is a browser extension that helps track and detect potential manipulation of information spreading on Twitter. BotSlayer uses a detection algorithm to identify hashtags, links, accounts, and media that are being amplified in a coordinated fashion by likely bots.

Captain Fact

CaptainFact is a web-based collection of tools designed for collaborative verification of internet content. It includes a browser extension that provides a video overlay to internet videos with sources and contextual information, as well as icons showing the credibility based on user votes.

Certified Content Coalition

The Certified Content Coalition is an initiative to encourage standards among online media publishers and certify publishers who meet such standards. Publishers who are certified will receive and display a digital certificate.

Climate Feedback

Climate Feedback is a web-based content annotation tool that allows scientists to annotate articles to provide additional context and draw attention to inaccuracies. The process results in a credibility score.

CrashCourse Media Literacy Videos

CrashCourse videos are a YouTube channel-based series of educational videos. A set of six videos focus on media literacy topics.

CrossCheck

CrossCheck is a collaborative initiative through FirstDraft News that is focused on verification.

Disinformation Index

The Global Disinformation Index is a web-based tool that rates news outlets based on the "probability of disinformation on a specific media outlet."



Domain Whitelist

Domain Whitelist is a browser extension that blocks ads and allows users to identify sites to be whitelisted, and prevents any request to sites not included on that list.

Emergent.Info

Emergent.Info is a web-based tool that tracks, verifies, or debunks rumors and conspiracies online. Rumors are suggested by individuals on the site, and then staff review and determine whether the claim is verified or false.

Exifdata

Exifdata is a web-based tool that provides information about the source, timestamp, creation and modification information.

Facebook Political Ad Collector

This tool shows users the advertisements on their Facebook feeds and guesses which ones are political. It also shows users political advertisements aimed at other users.

First Draft Verification Curriculum

First Draft's web-based "verification curriculum" is designed to teach users (there are versions for both journalists and for the general public) how to verify the accuracy and credibility of different types of media.

Forensically Image Verification Tool

Forensically is a web-based collection of tools that can be used for "digital image forensics." Some functionalities include magnifying functions, clone detection, error level analysis, noise analysis, level sweep, and many more.

Fotoforensics

HackerFactor is a web-based verification tool that provides information about the source, timestamp, creation, and modification information of images.

Get-Metadata Viewer

The Get-Metadata Viewer is a web-based tool that provides users with metadata about photos, videos, and texts, including the location, time, date it was modified, format, file size, etc.

Glorious Contextubot

The Glorious Contextubot is a verification and fact-checking tool that identifies the sources of audio and video content.

Hoaxy (Observatory on Social Media)

Hoaxy is a web-based tool that visualizes the spread of articles online. Hoaxy searches for claims and fact-checking going back to 2016. It tracks the sharing of links to stories from low-credibility sources and independent fact-checking organizations.

Interland

The Google Interland (Be Internet Awesome game) is a web-based game focused on teaching students how to identify false and misleading information.

Lead Stories FactChecker

LeadStories is a web-based fact-checking platform that identifies false or misleading stories, rumors, and conspiracies by using its Trendolizer technology to identify trending content that is then fact-checked by their team of journalists.

Metapicz

Securo is a web-based verification tool that provides information about the source, timestamp, creation, and modification information.

Misinformation Detector

BitPress's Misinformation Detector is a web-based "decentralized trust protocol" blockchain tool that is designed to track the credibility of news in a transparent manner.

OpenSources

OpenSources is a web-based database of information sources that have been analyzed in terms of their reputations for producing credible news. The database classifies websites as: Fake News, Satire, Extreme Bias, Conspiracy Theory, Rumor Mill, State News, Junk Science, Hate News, Clickbait, Proceed with Caution, Political, and Credible.

Trusted Times

Trusted Times is a browser extension that classifies fake news and unreliable of content. It uses machine learning to provide additional information about articles, including bias and details about who is covered positively and negatively. It can classify articles as fake, unreliable, verified, or mainstream media; provide summaries of verified content; identify important topics; identify potential bias; identify historical bias of reporters; and identify historical bias of a specific website. It uses icons to present the reliability of websites.

Truth Goggles

Truth Goggles 2.0 is a web-based tool aimed at presenting factual content to partisan audiences by asking users to read claims, then engage with PolitiFact analysis of those claims, then read the claims again.

Twitter Trails

Twitter Trails is a web-based tool that uses an algorithm to analyze the spread of a story and how users react to the story.

**Video Verification Plugin (InVid)**

InVid is a plug-in toolkit designed to assist fact-checking through video verification. The tool provides users with contextual information on videos, reverse image searching, video metadata, video copyright information, along with other features to assist in verifying content.

Who Targets Me

This tool allows users to create an anonymous profile, then collect information about the political and other ads that they see, along with information about why they were targeted with those ads.

YouTube Data Viewer - Citizen Evidence Lab

The YouTube Data Viewer is a web-based video verification tool offered through The Citizen Evidence Lab, created by Amnesty International. Users input a YouTube URL, and the tool outputs information about the video that is helpful in verifying a video. This includes upload time and thumbnails that can be used for reverse image searching.

2.3.3. How to report misinformation disorder. How is abuse reported?

Example given on these days, as we face the challenge of an overabundance of information related to the COVID 19. Some of this information may be false and potentially harmful. However, everyone can help to stop the spread. If you see content online that you believe to be false or misleading, you can report it to the hosting social media platform. Most of popular online social media are having facilities to be used to block or report information disorder.

Just to mention some of most popular :

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, LinkedIn

How to report to a cable radio/tv ?

Most of news tv/radio channels are providing a phone number where you can call, send a sms. Also a Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp address are available.

It is the simplest way to make publically, fast and efficient the information you consider not to be true.



Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

Necessarily logistical equipment-internet access, projector, tablets, cable or /FTA radio / tv.

Interactive workshops through examples & case studies.

Practical examples & case studies

Examples for Sub Chapter 2.3.1.

Example 1

IN THE RUN-UP⁵⁵ to Uganda's general election on January 14th, social-media platforms are struggling to combat propaganda and disinformation.

At that time Facebook announced that it had taken down a network of government-linked accounts that it alleges engaged in “coordinated inauthentic behaviour” aimed at boosting support for Yoweri Museveni, the country’s president, at the expense of his opponents.

The social-media giant says the Government Citizens Interaction Centre, part of the Ministry of Information, used “fake and duplicate accounts” to manipulate public opinion. “Given the impending election in Uganda, we moved quickly to investigate and take down this network,” Facebook said in a statement.

Disinformation campaigns such as this are on the rise, according to a new report by the Oxford Internet Institute, a department at the University of Oxford that studies the relationship between the internet and society.

The researchers, who since 2017 have been monitoring efforts by governments and political parties to manipulate public opinion online, say that organised disinformation campaigns were waged in 81 countries in 2020, up from 28 three years ago.

Such propaganda, which has become essential to many governments’ and political parties’ campaigning efforts in recent years, is used to discredit opponents, influence public opinion, drown out dissent and meddle in foreign affairs.

Example 2

For months, Donald Trump⁵⁶ has falsely claimed the November presidential election was rigged and that’s why he wasn’t re-elected.

The president’s words have mirrored and fed conspiracy theories spread by followers of the QAnon movement.



⁵⁵ (<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/01/13/a-growing-number-of-governments-are-spreading-disinformation-online>)

⁵⁶ (<https://qz.com/1954265/the-attack-on-the-us-capitol-shows-the-real-danger-of-qanon/>)



Example 3

In April, Mark Zuckerberg testified before Congress about the spread of misinformation on the platforms he runs, saying:

“It’s not enough to just give people a voice, we need to make sure that people aren’t using it to harm other people or to spread misinformation.

Across the board, we have a responsibility to not just build tools, but to make sure that they are used for good”

Example 4

For instance, a widely circulated meme falsely claimed 10,150 Americans were “killed by illegal immigrants” in 2018.

On the surface, it’s hard to know how to verify or debunk that, but one way to start is to think about finding out how many total murders there were in the U.S. in 2018.

Murder statistics can be found in, among other places, the FBI’s statistics on violent crime. They estimate that in 2018 there were 16,214 murders in the U.S. If the meme’s figure were accurate, it would mean that nearly two-thirds of U.S. murders were committed by the “illegal immigrants” the meme alleged.

Example 5

Next, find out how many people were living in the U.S. illegally.

That group, most news reports and estimates suggest, numbers about 11 million men, women and children – which is only 3% of the country’s 330 million people.

Just 3% of people committed 60% of U.S. murders? With a tiny bit of research and quick math, you can see these numbers just don’t add up.

Examples for Sub Chapter 2.3.2.

AI (artificial intelligence) creates [fake Obama](#) !



Imagine what will happen if such fabricated video of Joe BIDEN will announce starting the nuclear war !

Examples for Sub Chapter 2.3.3.

Facebook

How do I mark a Facebook post as disinformation / false news?

To mark a post as fake news:

Click to the post you want to mark as fake.

Click Receive Help or report the post.

Click False News, then Continue.

Click Done



YouTube

Report inappropriate content.

Content reporting is anonymous.

Other users will not know who reported the content.

When reported, content is not automatically removed, but is reviewed according to YouTube rules.

Report inappropriate content

Twitter

Report a tweet, list, or direct message

Navigate to the Tweet you'd like to report.

Tap the icon located at the top of the Tweet.

Select Report Tweet.

If you select It's abusive or harmful, we'll ask you to provide additional information about the issue you're reporting.

You may be also asked you to select additional Tweets from the account you're reporting.

We will include the text of the Tweets you reported in our follow-up emails and notifications to you.

To opt-out of receiving this information, please uncheck the box next to Updates about this report can show these Tweets.

Once you've submitted your report, we'll provide recommendations for additional actions you can take to improve your Twitter experience.

Instagram

Reducing the spread of false information on Instagram

To report a post as fake information on Instagram:

Touch (iOS) or (Android) above the post.

Touch Report.

Touch False Information.

Touch Send.

WhatsApp

How to report a contact or a group

When you receive a message from an unknown number for the first time, you'll have the option to report the number directly inside the chat.

You can also report a contact or a group from their profile information using the following steps:

Open the chat.

Tap on the contact or group name to open their profile information.

Scroll to the bottom and tap Report contact or Report group.

TikTok

Report inappropriate content



To report a direct message:

1. Go to the direct message.
2. Tap ... to open your settings.
3. Select Report and follow the instructions provided.

Report a comment

To report a comment:

1. Long press the comment that you want to report.
2. Select Report and follow the instructions provided.

Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL

Lecture.

Tools, how to use it and train.

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose

- Lecture briefly some of the online tools / apps mentioned in subchapter 2.3.2.
- It is important to underline the importance to check information before circulate to others.
- Participants should be split in two or three groups – depending of the number existing on that time. They have to choose the best tool for an information that they are considering false.

Number of hours (minutes) 30 min

Learning Outcome 2 – how to use existing tools for identifying original or fabricated information

Lecture.

The on line social media is having tools for block / report information disorder.

Presentation and class's discussions on the subject choose

- lecture and interactive discussion about the presentation made in the subchapter 2.3.3. - mention the most popular social media, describe how can be used to protect and why is important to do so
- round-table discussion about what kind of social media are participants most using and how- desk, phone app, home, working place on the road, commuting

Number of hours (minutes) 30 min

Learning Outcome 1 – how to use existing social media tools to block or report disinformation



Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL

1.

Lecture Tools to identifying a fabricated image/ video

Obama fake



On the example given, the participants should try to use the tool effectively and on line.

(Forensically Image Verification Tool)

(YouTube Data Viewer - Citizen Evidence Lab)

At the beginning of the workshop, the participants will be gathered in one group.

It will be an online video example presentation.

(Obama fake <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmUC4m6w1wo>)

Then the participants will split in two groups, each having the same target: to use apps to identify the video as being original or fake.

The workshop/Exercise or Test could adopt the format

- participants will be divided into two working groups
- each working group is to be provided with an example
- each working group must collaboratively assess the material in the beginning and the end
- participants should provide proves that example is fake

Number of hours (minutes) 60 min

Learning Outcome 2 – how to use existing tools for identifying original or fabricated information

2.

Lecture Reporting an information disorder to a radio/tv

An information was presented on cable radio/tv channel.

It seems to be an incomplete, leading to manipulation.

The Exercise is considering the participants to act on the three ways : by sms, by WhatssApp and by Twitter.

At the beginning the participants will be gathered in one group.



It will be made a presentation of the case.

After that, they will split in there groups.

First group should find a contact of local/national cable tv/radio to report the information disorder. The second goup will do the same but using WhatsApp and the third will find and use the same for a Twitter account.

In the final, a conclusion will be drawn regarding the best easier and efficient way of reporting the information disorder.

Number of hours ((minutes) 60 min

Learning outcome 3. – reporting information disorder to cable radio/tv news channels.

3.

Lecture Reporting an information disorder on social media.

The Exercise is considering the participants to act on in three groups for the three social media presented Facebook, Twitter and WhatssApp.

At the beginning the participants will be gathered in one group presented the three social media to work on.

After that, they will split in there groups.

Each of them have to Report a disinformation disorder the social media choose.

In the final, there three groups will be gathered and each former group will present the way that they made the Report of information disorder.

Number of hours ((minutes) 60 min

Learning outcome 3. – reporting information disorder to social media.

Glossary of terms

The Code of Practice on Disinformation - a set of worldwide self-regulatory standards to fight disinformation

HLEG- high-level group of experts

FTA radio/tv –Free To Air radio/tv

Imedial

Online MEDIA
Literacy skills



3. Cyberbullyng



Chapter 3.1. What is cyberbullying ?

3.1.1.definition of cyberbullying

This section of the chapter briefly defines the problem of cyberbullying. It also includes examples of its manifestations.

3.1.2.types of cyberbullying

In this part. you can find 9 names of different types of cyberbullying along with an explanation of their definitions.

3.1.3. Causes and effects

The last subsection provides information on the causes and consequences of this phenomenon, which can be very serious and long - lasting.

Outline

Chapter aims

To help participants understand the seriousness of cyberbullying.

To make participants aware of the different forms and types of cyberbullying so that they can define them in the future if they ever come into contact with them.

To help participants understand the causes of the problem.

To make participants aware of the serious consequences cyberbullying can have, in order to encourage them to respond and help the victim

Learning outcomes

Outcome 1 – to understand the seriousness and prevalence of cyberbullying

Outcome 2 - to be aware that cyberbullying is wrong, hurtful and it can be a kind of a crime

Outcome 3 – to be able to define the terms cyberbullying and stalker

Outcome 4 – to be able to give different examples of cyberbullying

Outcome 5 – to be able to name the different types of cyberbullying, distinguish between them and explain them

Outcome 6 – to know the causes and consequences of cyberbullying

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:



3.1.1. Definition of cyberbullying

Currently, the Internet, social media and various technological devices are an integral part of our lives. Thanks to them, we have access to a lot of information, we can develop our interests, and these tools significantly facilitate functioning in everyday life, and we also communicate with other people easier. However, in addition to many opportunities and benefits, they also pose a huge threat. One of them is **cyberbullying**.

How can we define cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying – This is a problem that is becoming more common every year and is affecting more and more people (adults as well as teenagers and children).

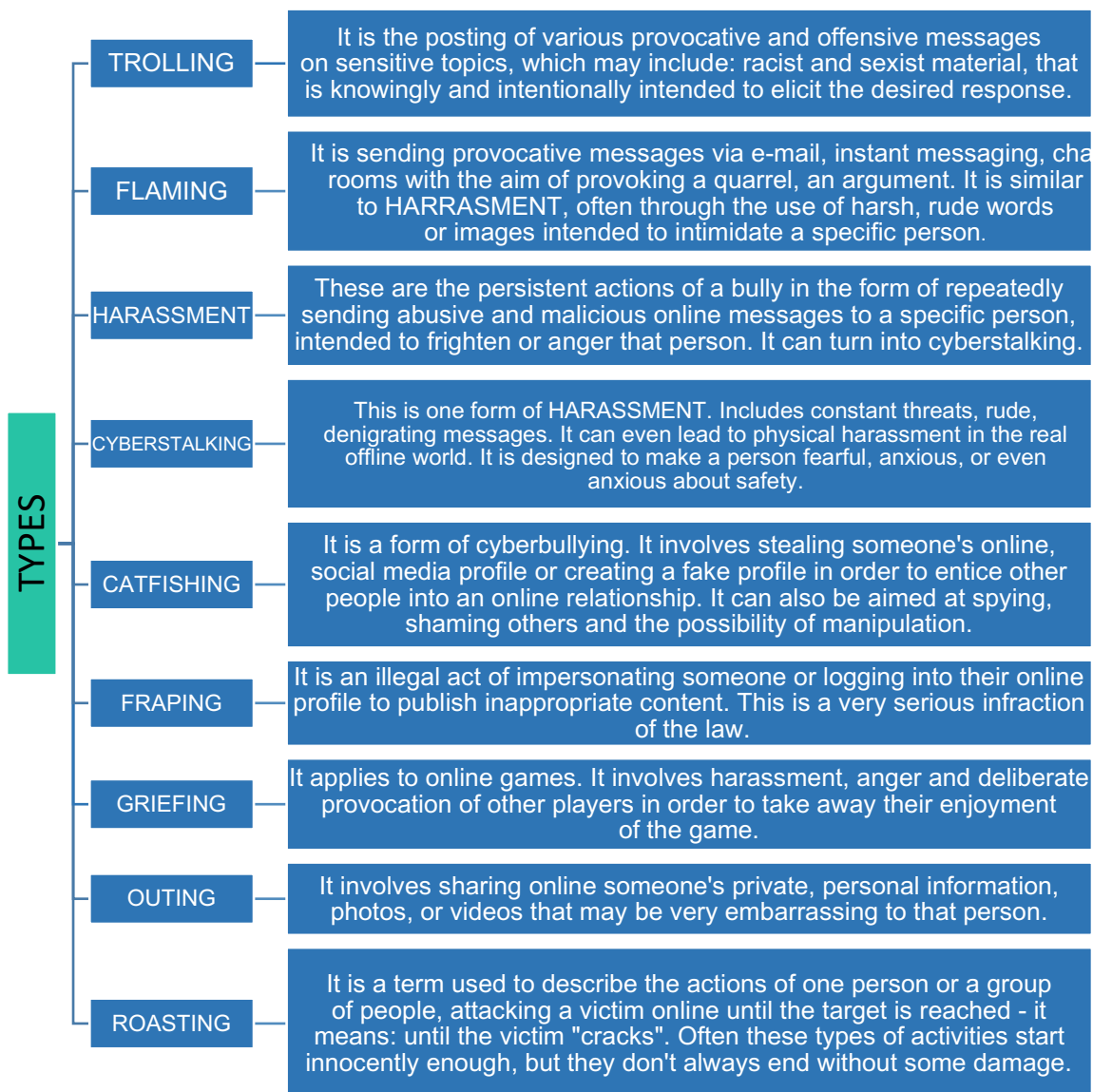
It is a form of emotional abuse that is carried out using the Internet and various technological tools (e.g: sms, mms, social media, email, chat, instant messaging, forums, blogs, websites, etc.). Otherwise known as **electronic aggression**. Most often it manifests itself in sending offensive, intimidating messages, publishing compromising materials, hacking into mailboxes and social media accounts.⁵⁷

*People who commit cyberbullying, display aggression, harass others via the Internet or technological devices are called **stalkers**.*

3.1.2. Types of cyberbullying

There are different types of cyberbullying. Among them, the following can be distinguished:

⁵⁷ <https://nuedusec.com/blog/cyberbullying/>



Source: <https://www.vpnmentor.com/blog/teachers-guide-to-cybersecurity/>



3.1.3. Causes and effects

Cyberbullying seems to be a very convenient and safe way to manifest emotional violence against others. There are several reasons for this:

- Universal access to the Internet and technological tools;
- The Internet provides anonymity, which makes the offender feel more secure and has more courage;
- It is more difficult to find the offender and prove him guilty than in the case of physical violence;
- With the help of the Internet, or technological tools, it is possible to reach a huge number of people in a short period of time;
- no time limit - stalker can create hateful content „at ease”, can think it over well, because there is no need to react on the fly;
- no possibility of escape by the victim due to the fact that the profile is available online all the time;
- The Internet gives great opportunities to illegally break into private accounts or use private materials, photos, etc.

What, besides technicalities, encourages a stalker to abuse others? There are many reasons, such as: low self - esteem, hatred of others, desire to impress others, fear of being attacked by others, desire to bully a weaker person, desire for revenge, personal problems, and sometimes just for fun - without thinking about the possible consequences.

A seemingly innocent phenomenon has really **serious consequences for a victim**:

- Due to the capabilities of the Internet, it is difficult to stop the spread of hurtful content and remove it permanently;
- Negative emotions like: powerlessness, isolation, fear, sadness, loneliness, humiliation, shame;
- Low self - esteem;
- Aggression;
- Relationship problems;
- Guilt;
- Insecurity;
- Problem with learning, at work;
- Somatic disorders, sleep problems, stress;
- Depression;
- Suicidal thoughts and suicide.

Practical examples & case studies

Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.1.1.

Forms of cyberbullying – examples

- verbal aggression - publishing ridiculing, vulgar, comments and posts in chat rooms, forums, social media, etc.;
- publishing degrading, humiliating, ridiculing videos or photos that are private or altered;
- hacking into the accounts of various social networking sites and impersonating someone in order to post offensive posts and photos on other users' profiles in their name;
- blackmailing;
- malicious disclosure of secrets;
- impersonation;
- exclusion from online communities;
- other online activities and the use of technological tools intended to ridicule, annoy or frighten another person.⁵⁸

1. Picture with 3 examples:



Short videos on general knowledge about cyberbullying:

2. Video "What's Cyberbullying?"



3. Video "CyberBullying"



4. Video "Adult Cyberbullying"



5. Video "Adult Cyberbullying"



Short videos - examples of 2 stories of people who were victims of cyberbullying

6. Video "Cyberbully: YouTuber ClearlyChloe's Story"



7. Short film: Unplugged (Cyberbullying)



⁵⁸ <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-tactics>

Example of a quiz on knowledge about cyberbullying

8. Quiz "Cyberbullying"



Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.1.2.

1. [Picture with 7 Most common forms of cyberbullying](#)



2. [Video „Cyberbullying: 5 Types To Watch Out For”](#)



3. [Video „Cyber-bullying Facts – Top 10 Forms of Cyber Bullying”](#)



4. [Video „Top 10 Forms of CyberBullying”](#)



5. [Description of different examples of cyberbullying \(42 examples\)](#)



Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.1.3.

1. Graphics and description of the effects of cyberbullying



2. Short video „Six effects of cyberbullying”



3. Video „Adult Cyber Bullying Made Me Cancel My Wedding”
– a Sara’s story



4. Video „Cyberbullying victims”



Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL (2 examples)

The theoretical activities are aimed at presenting the participants with the problem of cyberbullying, making them aware of how serious and common this phenomenon is and sensitizing them to it, so that they are not indifferent. It is very important to make the participants aware of the serious consequences of cyberbullying - especially for the victims, which may even end in them committing suicide. Knowledge of the different forms and types of cyberbullying will make participants aware of online threats and help them identify them.

3. Lecture „Cyberbullying - a dangerous phenomenon on a huge scale”

Form of the activity:

- Playing a videos or a presentations created by the educator
- Discussion led by educator

Requirements:

- Knowledge about cyberbullying - it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic (he/she can use the theory and materials proposed in chapter 3.1.1. and 3.1.3.)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer

Course of classes:

7. **Short introduction** of learners to the topic of classes – emphasizing the benefits and opportunities to use the Internet and the possibility of various dangers (including the occurrence of cyberbullying) **(5 minutes)**
8. **Discussion (5 minutes)**
 - ask learners if they can define cyberbullying?
9. **Showing a video or prepared presentation (video about 3 minutes/ presentation about 10-15 minutes)**

The educator may choose 1 of the suggested videos in the practice section of Chapter 3.1.1. (Short videos on general knowledge about cyberbullying) or use the materials to create a short presentation on cyberbullying.

10. **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

Questions for learners:

- What is cyberbullying?
- Where does this phenomenon occur?
- Can you give examples of cyberbullying? (A list of examples can be found in the practical part of chapter 3.1.1.).
- Have you ever been a victim or witness to cyberbullying?
- What are the reasons for cyberbullying?

11. **Short video „Six effects of cyberbullying” (3 minutes)**

12. **Discussion (10 minutes)**

- What could be the consequences of cyberbullying?

7. **Video “Cyberbullying victims” (4 minutes)**

8. Summary (5minutes)

Pointing out that this is a negative phenomenon and poses a huge threat to both young people and adults.

Number of hours (minutes) 45 – 60 minutes

Learning Outcomes:

- to understand the seriousness and prevalence of cyberbullying
- to be aware that cyberbullying is wrong, hurtful and it can be a kind of a crime
- to be able to define the terms cyberbullying and stalker
- to be able to give different examples of cyberbullying
- to know the causes and consequences of cyberbullying

4. Lecture „Types of Cyberbullying”

Form of the activity:

- Lecture
- Presentation or Playing a video
- Discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge about types of cyberbullying – it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic (he/she can use the theory and materials proposed in chapter 3.1.2.)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer

Course of classes:

1. **A brief summary of the problem of cyberbullying (5 minutes)**
2. **Showing a video or prepared presentation (video about 2-5 minutes/ presentation about 10-15 minutes)**

The educator may choose 1 of the suggested videos in the practice section of Chapter 3.1.2. or use the materials from the article „Description of different examples of cyberbullying” to create a short presentation about types of cyberbullying.

3. **Discussion (15 minutes)**

Questions:

- What types of cyberbullying do you know from your own experience?
- Can you give specific examples?
- Have you witnessed or been a victim of any type of cyberbullying? Describe the course of this situation.

4. **Summary (5 minutes)**

Number of hours (minutes) about 45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- to be able to give different examples of cyberbullying
- to be able to name the different types of cyberbullying, distinguish between them and explain them

Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL (2 examples)

Examples of practical activities are designed to help educators feel more confident in teaching about cyberbullying, its types and consequences. The impact of these activities on learners, on the other hand, should be about increasing awareness of the huge threat and understanding the negative effects of cyberbullying. Practical activities are designed to activate learners, making it easier for them to acquire knowledge.

1. Workshop „Cyberbullying is bad”

Form of the activity:

- Brainstorming
- Watching short videos
- Open discussion
- Quiz

Requirements:

- Knowledge about cyberbullying
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer for educator, computers for each learners or smartphones, white board and coloured markers

Course of classes:

4. Brainstorming Session (15 minutes)

Educator asks learners what they associate with the word **cyberbullying** - all ideas are written on the board.

5. Watching a short film „Unplugged (Cyberbullying)” and discussion (20 minutes)

The film tells the story of a boy who was a victim of cyberbullying. The story ends very negatively - the boy commits suicide. After watching the video, the educator leads a discussion and asks questions about the story.

Questions:

- What was the story about?
- What problem did the character have?
- What happened one by one? (story analysis)
- What was the end of the story?
- Why did this boy commit suicide?
- Was it a good solution?
- Was that the only solution?

6. Watching a short film „Cyberbully: YouTuber ClearlyChloe's Story” and discussion (15 minutes)

The film describes the problem of cyberbullying, of which the heroine is a victim. The end is good. The victim coped with the persecutors despite the problem and difficult situation. The film aims to show that there are other solutions than committing suicide and that it is worth the effort.

After watching the video, the educator leads a discussion and asks questions about the story.

Questions:

- What problem did the heroine have?
- Was she a victim of cyberbullying? What kind?
- Was it hard for her? Did she give up?
- How did she solve this problem?
- How effective do you think this solution is?
- What else can be done in this situation?

7. **Summary (5 minutes)**

The educator refers to the 2 videos watched. Shows learners that 2 people who were victims of cyberbullying reacted in different ways. For the boy, it was a problem he was alone with and unable to deal with. This resulted in him committing suicide - the worst possible outcome. The second story is also about a victim of cyberbullying, but the girl did not give up despite the difficult situation and found a solution.

8. **Quiz (5 minutes)**

Finally, the educator can test the learners' knowledge with a short quiz. A quizziz app is recommended here, where learners will have fun. The educator can use a pre-made quiz (from section 3.1.1.) or create their own.

Number of hours (minutes) 60 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to be able to define cyberbullying
- to know the causes and consequences of cyberbullying
- to be able to name the negative effects of cyberbullying and their causes
- to be aware that suicide and giving up are not good solutions to cyberbullying

2. **Workshop „Effects of cyberbullying“**

Form of the activity:

- Teamwork
- Watching short video
- Open discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge about effects of cyberbullying
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer for educator, large sheets of paper for making posters and coloured markers

Course of classes:

1. **Teamwork (30 minutes)**

*Participants will be divided into working groups (each group of 4-5 people)
Each group prepares a poster on "The effects of cyberbullying" (20 minutes) and then a representative from each group presents the poster in the forum (10 minutes).*

2. **Watching short video „Adult Cyber Bullying Made Me Cancel My Wedding“ and discussion (15 minutes)**

After watching the video, the educator leads a discussion and asks questions about the story.

Questions:

- What is the story about?
- What type of cyberbullying has Sarah had to deal with?



- What impact has cyberbullying had on Sarah's life?
- What emotions did she feel when she was a victim of cyberbullying?
- Did she manage it?
- Do you know other people who have been victims of cyberbullying?

3. **Discussion (10 minutes)**

What might contribute to many people not coping when they are victims of cyberbullying?

Number of hours (minutes) 55 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to know the consequences of cyberbullying
- to understand what victims of cyberbullying feel
- not to be indifferent to cyberbullying

Suggested Assignment

Work with participants in small groups or if this is not possible, there may be an online format



Glossary of terms

Cyberbullying - a form of emotional abuse that is carried out using the Internet and various technological tools (e.g.: sms, mms, social media, email, chat, instant messaging, forums, blogs, websites, etc.).

Stalker - A person who engages in cyberbullying, displays aggression, and harasses others via the Internet or technological devices.

Trolling - It is the posting of various provocative and offensive messages on sensitive topics, which may include: racist and sexist material, that is knowingly and intentionally intended to elicit the desired response.

Flaming - It is sending provocative messages via e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms with the aim of provoking a quarrel, an argument. It is similar to HARRASMENT, often through the use of harsh, rude words or images intended to intimidate a specific person.

Harassment - These are the persistent actions of a bully in the form of repeatedly sending abusive and malicious online messages to a specific person, intended to frighten or anger that person. It can turn into cyberstalking.

Cyberstalking - This is one form of HARASSMENT. Includes constant threats, rude, denigrating messages. It can even lead to physical harassment in the real offline world. It is designed to make a person fearful, anxious, or even anxious about safety.

Catfishing - It is a form of cyberbullying. It involves stealing someone's online, social media profile or creating a fake profile in order to entice other people into an online relationship. It can also be aimed at spying, shaming others and the possibility of manipulation.

Frapping - It is an illegal act of impersonating someone or logging into their online profile to publish inappropriate content. This is a very serious infraction of the law.

Griefing - It applies to online games. It involves harassment, anger and deliberate provocation of other players in order to take away their enjoyment of the game.

Outing - It involves sharing online someone's private, personal information, photos, or videos that may be very embarrassing to that person.

Roasting - It is a term used to describe the actions of one person or a group of people, attacking a victim online until the target is reached - it means: until the victim "cracks". Often these types of activities start innocently enough, but they don't always end without some damage.

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Chapter 3.2 how and where cyberbullying spreads?

Chapter aims

In this chapter participants will learn how the cyberbullying spreads among adults and what factors enable cyberbullying to spread so widely.

Learning outcomes

- *Making participants aware how they can be easily pulled into cyberbullying within online environments*
- *Helping participants to be more attentive to dangerous triggers that can encourage engagement in cyberbullying and more prepared to avoid common behaviours leading to cyberbullying.*

Theoretical lecture

Cyberbullying is a growing phenomenon that is commonly associated with adolescents and their extensive use of social media platforms. However, cyberbullying is also a widespread phenomenon among adults. Cyberbullying refers to deliberate and hostile behavior intended to harm people within ICT-based environment by leveraging an imbalance of power between bullies and victims⁵⁹.

As such, cyberbullying is not only linked to social media, but it is often related with one's professional environment. While performed in the online environment cyberbullying, among others, is often rooted in the workplace and in many cases impacts not only individual health and wellbeing, but also work performance. I.e. a study of medical community by Farlay et al. 2015⁶⁰, identified that almost half of doctors in training (46.2%) have been victims to workplace cyberbullying.

While the phenomenon of cyberbullying among adults is fairly common and has a significant impact on adult community, it is commonly overlooked and ignored by antibullying and managerial practices. To be able to contribute to combating and prevention of cyberbullying among adults it is critical to understand not only what cyberbullying is, but also how does it spread. To get the full picture lets see first how the bullying starts.

⁵⁹ Lowry, Paul & Zhang, Jun & Wang, Chuang & Siponen, Mikko. (2016). Why do adults engage in cyberbullying on social media? An integration of online disinhibition and deindividuation effects with the social structure and social learning (SSSL) model. Information Systems Research. 27. 962-986. 10.1287/isre.2016.0671.

⁶⁰ Farley, S., Coyne, I., Sprigg, C., Axtell, C. and Subramanian, G. (2015), "Exploring the impact of workplace cyberbullying on trainee doctors", Medical Education, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 436-443.

3.2.1. Why people bully – where/why does it start?

Traditionally there is a widespread believe that bullying is a compensating mechanism for individuals with low self-esteem and/or miserable lives. That it is related with insecurity and feeling powerless.

- i. Insecurity and loss of control

Insecurity not necessarily is a characteristic of shy introverts. All types of individuals may feel not happy with their own performance or feel like they have no control over their own circumstances (i.e. family problems). To compensate for loose of control or power in certain context, individuals can be triggered to improve their own perceived position/value or hide weakness from their community by engaging in dominant behaviors, such as bullying. By exposing weaknesses or devaluating others individuals often try to elevate their social position by bringing others down or cover their weaknesses by exposing weaknesses of others. Especially events related with loss of control over one's circumstances (i.e. being cheated by a partner) can trigger people to engage in aggressive behaviors, such as bullying to feel in control.

- ii. Biological and social conditioning

While traditionally bullying was related with the individual psychological and environmental conditions, such as self-esteem or pathological environment, bullying is currently considered to be linked to human animalistic tendency to compete for dominance and a higher socioeconomic status⁶¹. So, it is linked to social rather than individual factors. Despite traditional notion that bullies are in a long term the miserable actors, dominant individuals can benefit from improvement in their well-being and other benefits⁶². Cyberbullying as most of human behaviors is motivated by the expected social and personal benefits. It is often highly tactically oriented to reach personal and societal reinforcement, both related to the bully social context.

3.2.2. Where does cyberbullying take place.

Together with increased presence of online activity in our life bullying has moved into the online communities. In case of adults the cyberbullying is commonly observed in the scope of social media sites, blogs or news websites, but a significant part of adult-oriented cyberbullying is linked not only to the distant virtual communities, but also to our physical professional communities.

If cyberbullying is an online activity, how does it may occur in the workplace?

The example of Ralph Espinoza shows how cyberharrassment cannot originate in the real world, move online and reach extensive size infused by the online character.

⁶¹ Fridman, S. (2014) Cyberbullying. Greenhaven Press

⁶² Pollastri, A. R., Cardemil and O'Donnell, E. H. (2010) 'Self-Esteem in Pure Bullies and Bully/Victims: A Longitudinal Analysis', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(8), pp. 1489–1502. doi: [10.1177/0886260509354579](https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260509354579).

Ralph Espinoza was an employee of Orange County Probation Department with a deformed right hand. Being well aware of negative perception of his handicapness and possible reactions, Espinoza commonly kept his hand in a pocket to avoid unwanted attention. However, in 2006 an online blog named "Keeping the Peace" has been created by an anonymous individual under the name 'keepdapeace' which unleashed a cyberbullying campaign targeted at Espinoza. The blog introduced Espinoza as a 'one hand bandit' and offered a reward for a photo of Espinoza hand - "Has anyone seen the one-handed bandit's hand[?] First one to get a picture gets a 100 dollars."⁶³.

The cyberbullying campaign (later tracked to Espinoza's colleague - Jeffrey Gallagher) fastly engaged other colleagues, as well as strangers regularly taunting and mocking him. Anonymity and growing interest and involvement of individuals in the cyberbullying in a short time (less than a month) encouraged another colleague to initiate a second blog on the topic. The hostile behaviors were taking place for 1,5 years till the situation forced Espinoza out of the workplace into a medical leave and, despite happening online, resulted in a legal process against the Espinoza employer.

3.2.3. How (why) did it reach the internet? – social learning mechanism and involvement in cyberbullying

The case of Espinoza presents how internet settings enable bullying and may escalate its scale. Research regarding bullying is consistent that people are more likely to engage in bullying and stalking online rather than offline⁶⁴.

Anonymity

The major reason why the online communities facilitate bullying is the perceived anonymity. That involves not only the ability to hide your true identity, but also the diffused responsibility (a broader community is responsible for the aggression), lack of proximity, as well as trust that the online system won't allow others to discover the identity. In practice the cyberbullying is facilitated by such practices as use of pseudonyms, creation of multiple accounts, false identities, as well as specialized tools to hide your identity, even if the system does not allow it.

With all this arsenal of protective tools, but also in many cases just with the perception of anonymity, individuals often feel free to behave online in a way they would not dare to do in the offline reality⁶⁵. It is not only due to the lower risk of being caught and of being associated with morally doubtful behaviour, but also because internet foster depersonalisation of individuals –

⁶³retrieved from https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=3321381477101866066&hl=en&as_sdt=2&as_vis=1&oi=scholar

⁶⁴ Lowry, Paul & Zhang, Jun & Wang, Chuang & Siponen, Mikko. (2016). Why do adults engage in cyberbullying on social media? An integration of online disinhibition and deindividuation effects with the social structure and social learning (SSSL) model. *Information Systems Research*. 27. 962-986. 10.1287/isre.2016.0671.

⁶⁵ Lowry PB, Moody GD, Galletta DF, Vance A (2013) The drivers in the use of online whistle-blowing reporting systems. *Journal of Management Information Systems* 30(1):153-189.



making the group norms more relevant than our internal individual norms and values and make it easier to follow and imitate deviant behaviours of peers⁶⁶.

Next to anonymity there are 2 main aspects responsible for wide spread of bullying online – social learning mechanism and the balance between potential risks and benefits.

Social learning mechanism

Moving your social interactions online can impact your social environment. It will support your affiliation with your online sub-community. With your new affiliations you will deal with new rules of social engagement and norms of behavior that are established within the new community. Online activities, and especially use of social media will allow you to affiliate and interact with more communities than it is possible by other means. While in general it is a positive phenomenon, the broad social reach also increases our exposure to negative social influences, encourages our affiliation with groups with diversified norms and those include exposure to greater variety of bullying⁶⁷.

Can it dangerous? Social studies show that when people are frequently exposed to negative behaviours and deviant role models, they are more likely to initiate deviant behaviors. Simplifying, deviant behaviours, such as cyberbullying, can be partially learnt from exposure to such behaviours, while positive healthy behaviours can be partially learnt by exposure to positive behavioural patterns⁶⁸. Referring it to the online context, engagement in online groups where bullying is a common behaviour and is not obstructed by people opposing cyberbullies will allow 'social learning' of bullying. The more time we will spend exposed to such non-obstructed behaviour, the more probable we are to start accepting such a behaviour as a norm and the more it is probable that we will engage in cyberbullying ourselves⁶⁹. This results in the observed phenomenon that once started the cyberbullying is cascading, engaging new members and is almost unstoppable⁷⁰. While such process happens also in offline reality, the online context causes learning not only from online friends, but also from influential online personalities (i.e. celebrities or influencers) or even from anonymous community members at the same level as from your offline intimate personal social group. The online group influence is especially relevant to encourage initiation of cyberbullying behaviors. Moreover, the fact that the aggressive behaviour occurs online often leads to rationalization, that those are special circumstances and it is not 'the real world' which often leads to neutralization of internal moral code and to allowing people to behave in a way they would never do in the offline situation. The denial of consequences of the behaviour is a common mechanism among cyberbullies. Even though that it is argued that bullying in a cyberspace is more harmful than in the offline environment⁷¹, in online environment it is hard to observe the real consequences of cyberbullying which decreases the

⁶⁶ Keipi, Teo, Matti Näsi, Atte Oksanen and Pekka Räsänen (2017). Online Hate and Harmful Content. Cross-national perspective. Routledge NY

⁶⁷ Lowry, Paul & Zhang, Jun & Wang, Chuang & Siponen, Mikko. (2016). Why do adults engage in cyberbullying on social media? An integration of online disinhibition and deindividuation effects with the social structure and social learning (SSSL) model. Information Systems Research. 27. 962-986. 10.1287/isre.2016.0671.

⁶⁸ Akers, R.L., Jensen, G.F. (2011). Social learning theory and explanation of crime. Transaction Publishers

⁶⁹ Lowry et al. 2016

⁷⁰ Huang, Yun-yin & Chou, Chien. (2010). An analysis of multiple factors of cyberbullying among junior high school students in Taiwan. Computers in Human Behavior. 26. 1581-1590. 10.1016/j.chb.2010.06.005.

⁷¹ Gillespie, Alisdair. (2006). Cyber-bullying and Harassment of Teenagers: The Legal Response. Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law. 28. 123-136. 10.1080/09649060600973772.

chance to empathize with the victim and make it easier for the bullies to disregard their real-life social norms and morals⁷².

Rationale

But why cyberbullying became such an attractive option for offenders and why so many internet users follow cyberbullying and/or decide to join offensive cyberbullying campaigns? Cyberbullying studies suggest that offenders analyse both the costs and the benefits before engaging in cyberbullying^{73 74}. From one side the anonymity allows to engage in aggressive behaviours without the risk of damaging the aggressor position in 'the real world' and risking association with community promoting deviant behaviours. Unfortunately, additionally the social disapproval of such behaviours in online environment tend to be weaker than in offline context and the legal risk of prosecution for harassment is decreased due to difficulties related with legal jurisdiction online and common weakness of legislation related with cyberspace-based behaviours. Meanwhile, the perceived benefits are artificially inflated online. The perceived direct benefits of cyberbullying often include revenge, obtaining social approval, having fun, becoming a center of attention, building a feeling of belonging, gathering social capital or gaining influence.

Coming back to the case of Espinoza, the anonymity of the cyber attacks were the main enabler for the bullying continuing for more than 1,5 year. It was an engine of the aggression which would likely not happen in a context of non-anonymous abuse at Espinosa's workplace or would not get so easily spread among such a broad group of participants. While the benefits for individuals could differ, the likely perceived benefits of the cyberbullies in this case could cover pure entertainment, social bonding, empowerment⁷⁵.

3.2.4 Beyond traditional rationale – suppression of speech

Cyberbullying among all age groups are commonly targeted at those that do not behave, look like or represent different values as the majority^{76 77}. However, in a context of adults, and especially in a professional environment cyberbullying has been used as a way to suppress speech of those that present arguments or solutions that some online users are opposed to.

In 2018 cyberbullying campaigns became a weapon of choice of antivaccination activists. Doctors encouraging vaccinations became victims of online harassment covering not only attacks on social media, but also massive false online reviews undermining their professional position.

⁷² Lowry et al. 2016

⁷³ Ibidem

⁷⁴ Hemphill, Sheryl & Heerde, Jessica. (2014). Adolescent Predictors of Young Adult Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization Among Australian Youth. The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. 55. 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.04.014.

⁷⁵ Lowry et al. 2016

⁷⁶ Davis, Katie & Randall, David & Ambrose, Anthony & Orand, Mania. (2015). 'I was bullied too': stories of bullying and coping in an online community. Information, Communication & Society. 18. 357-375. 10.1080/1369118X.2014.952657.

⁷⁷ Jenaro, Cristina & Flores, Noelia & Vega, Vanessa & Cruz, Maribel & Pérez, Ma & Torres Apolo, Victor. (2018). Cyberbullying among adults with intellectual disabilities: Some preliminary data. Research in Developmental Disabilities. 72. 10.1016/j.ridd.2017.12.006.



Among others, dr. Monique Trello became a victim of cyberbullying campaign after her supporting vaccination post on Instagram. The activists posted more than 100 negative reviews on Trello's profile across different rating websites, referring to her as ignorant, dangerous or not caring about her patience... The broadly disseminated cyberattack on doctors publicly encouraging vaccination successfully discouraged some doctors from publicly endorsing vaccination practices⁷⁸

Practical workshops (1 hour):

Required – flip chart or a white board, post it, pens or markers, projector, laptop.

10. Present a case of Espinosa to the participants (5 min),
11. After introducing the case divide participants in 3-4 people groups. Distribute sheets of paper, pens/markers and sticky notes and ask them to speculate and stick on the sheets their ideas regarding (15 min):
 - What could be the reasons for his colleagues to decide to harass Ralph Espinosa?
 - Why Jeffrey Gallager decided to introduce online campaign even though he personally worked with Espinosa?
 - Why other people join the blog and started to actively harass?
 - Why people not knowing Espinosa would be interested in cyberbullying him?
12. Ask each group to present their ideas and consolidate their contributions (10 min.)
13. Present the 3 key factors of online environment fostering cyberbullying – anonymity, social learning and imbalance between the risk and perceived benefits. After that ask participants if their ideas related with the previously posed questions would differ and if so how? Discuss how the 3 key factors, especially anonymity and specific benefits encouraged cyberbullying in Espinoza case (15 min.)
14. Present the basic reasons behind cyberbullying – insecurity and loss of control; biological and social conditioning. Ask participants if they can think about alternative motivations for cyberbullying (5 min.)
15. Introduce the concept of using cyberbullying as a way to enforce suppression of speech, including the example of antivacciners campaign in 2018. Ask participants if they can think about other examples when cyberbullying has been used to intimidate others from expressing their views or sharing news/knowledge etc. (10 min.)

⁷⁸ Kowalczyk (2019), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/05/11/vaccine-opponents-target-doctors-social-media-and-ratings-websites/Y8RQie1xJdr1RtKvbdR9ml/story.html>



Glossary of terms

Bullying - a repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual, or group of individuals, that creates a risk to health and safety (including mental and physical health)⁷⁹.

Cyberbullying – a deliberate and hostile behavior intended to harm people within ICT-based environment by leveraging an imbalance of power between bullies and victims⁸⁰

Social learning – phenomenon based on the assumption that people learn by watching other people's behaviours by observing and mimicking that behaviour. They can learn from anyone - teachers, parents, siblings, peers, co-workers, YouTube influencers, athletes, even celebrities.

Unreasonable behaviour - behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

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⁷⁹ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

⁸⁰ Lowry, Paul & Zhang, Jun & Wang, Chuang & Siponen, Mikko. (2016). Why do adults engage in cyberbullying on social media? An integration of online disinhibition and deindividuation effects with the social structure and social learning (SSSL) model. *Information Systems Research*. 27. 962-986. 10.1287/isre.2016.0671.

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Chapter 3.3. Protecting against cyberbullying

3.3.1. How to protect yourself from cyberbullying?

In this section you will find information, tips and different tools on how to safeguard and protect yourself from cyberbullying.

3.3.2. *You are a victim of cyberbullying - what should you do?*

This part provides guidance on how to deal with a victim in the fight against cyberbullying.

3.3.3. **Don't be passive! How to help victims of cyberbullying?**

The third subchapter provides tips for helping the victim of cyberbullying and encourages action against cyberbullying.

Outline

Chapter aims

To make participants aware that it is possible to protect themselves from many unwanted online activities.

To give participants tools and tips for protecting themselves and fighting cyberbullying.

To help participants understand the need to combat cyberbullying.

To encourage participants to act against cyberbullying (as witnesses and victims).

To give participants tips for helping a victim of cyberbullying.

Learning outcomes

Outcome 1 - to be aware of the possible consequences of publishing different information online and prevent them

Outcome 2 - to be familiar with the different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying

Outcome 3 – to know the rules of conduct for fighting cyberbullying as a victim

Outcome 4 – to be aware of the existence of social media help centers

Outcome 5 – to be able to help the victim of cyberbullying

Outcome 6 – to know what to do if you witness cyberbullying

Chapter format

Theoretical lecture & practical workshop:

3.3.1. HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CYBERBULLYING?

Nowadays, many facts of our lives are published online (in the form of various information, photos, videos, etc.) and especially on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. This provides tremendous opportunities for cybercriminals. Online hate and abuse are very common situations. Any of us can be a victim of cyberbullying. However, threats also include the use of our image, hacking into our social media or email accounts, etc. We have no influence on it, but we can protect ourselves to some extent, be more careful, and if we become a victim of cyberbullying - it is worth knowing how to behave in this difficult situation.

How can you protect yourself from cyberbullying?

1. Secure your WiFi network.

This is very important, especially if you live in the urban area. WiFi passwords must not be obvious and short. Good password for wireless connection must have at least 12 characters, with mixture of letters, numbers and special symbols. The worst possible situation is if the WIFI has no security and anyone can easily use it. This is a huge risk and danger! If you don't know how to configure a router, consult technical documentation, product support or ask more technically knowledgeable friend.

2. Protect your computer and mobile phone against hacking and eavesdropping.

Learn how to protect these devices from hacking and eavesdropping. There are various security features, anti-virus software, etc. It is also useful to know the various signals of an attempted break-in. If you are not knowledgeable in this area, seek help from an expert.

3. Think twice about what information you share online.

Remember that once information and content is uploaded, it stays there. Don't add too much detailed information about yourself and your loved ones. Don't add photos or videos that might be problematic or embarrassing – for you or anyone you know. Consider whether it is worthwhile to talk about a topic that is very private or uncomfortable for you using instant messaging. Remember that all of this can be used against you by someone if they have access to it.

4. Adjust your privacy settings on social networks so you can feel safe.

It's worth it. Remember, you decide who has access to your photos, posts, information, friends list, etc. In the same way, you can decide who can add comments on your profile, who can tag you in photos. It will take you a few minutes and can save you from many unpleasant situations. Go to the settings section on your profile and select the options that are friendly to you.

5. Use two-step verification.

Because many passwords are easy for hackers to crack, more and more websites are offering two-step verification. What is it? This is a combination of using a traditional password and

another type of verification, e. g. by a code sent via SMS. This is an additional complication and has proven to be very effective.

6. Use difficult passwords and change them often.

If two-step verification is not an option, use passwords that are difficult for hackers to crack but easy to remember. It is best if the password is not obvious, consists of different characters (upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and symbols). Remember to change your password from time to time.⁸¹ Use a password manager if you have difficulty remembering complex passwords.

3.3.2. You are a victim of cyberbullying - what should you do?

If you have a suspicion that you may be a victim of cyberbullying, **try to analyse the disturbing signs and identify the actions against you**. Remember that watching out for a few indicative signs is a good way to detect cyberbullying.

- Check for signs of harassment in the form of direct contact with you through hate or threatening messages (e.g. name-calling, threats of disclosure of embarrassing or violent information, embarrassing or threatening images or videos).
- Check for signs of online humiliation in the form of public shaming (e.g. spreading rumours and humiliating content via social media, text messaging, and other tools).
- Check for signs of online impersonation e.g. by creating a profile almost identical to yours and then using it for the wrong purpose.

If you are a victim of cyberbullying, you should know how to act and what to do to deal with the problem.

1. Don't panic and don't be intimidated.

It is very stressful, but don't act under fear or panic. Don't give that satisfaction to a cybercriminal. Try to calmly gather and analyse all the information.

2. Talk to a trusted person about the problem.

Emotional support is very important in this situation. Especially when you don't know what to do. Remember that you are not alone and that there are kind people around you.

3. Try talking to the bully calmly.

If you know who is posting the content and it's someone you know well, try to have a calm conversation with that person and ask them to stop hurting you. Speak clearly and directly. This will not work if you don't know who the bully is or if you are being stalked by a group of people.

4. Ignore the bully's messages

Don't respond directly to messages you may have received from the bully. See what's going to happen. Sometimes, the best solution is to simply back away from the pointless conversation

⁸¹<https://www.hayzedmagazine.com/cyberbullying/#:~:text=%20How%20to%20defend%20against%20cyberbullying%20%201,the%20cyberstalker%20is%20to%20get%20information...%20More>



and act in a different way. Remember, it is wrong to threaten a bully. This may provoke him/her to sustain the bad behaviour, and you may also get in trouble because of it.

5. Keep all evidence of cyberbullying.

Having as much information and evidence as possible will help you identify the bully and stop this behaviour. You can also show these materials to the police to prove that you are a victim of cyberbullying.

6. Block the bully.

Block the bully to limit his/her ability to contact you. To do this, use the privacy settings of social networking sites that have options to block selected users. On email, you can add the selected sender's address to a special list. In a cybercrime situation on a blog, you have the option to temporarily disable comments. Mobile phones also allow you to block SMS and incoming calls from selected numbers.

7. Report offensive content to your service providers and social media sites.

Most websites have an option to report offensive or inappropriate content to administrators. If, after verification, your report proves to be justified, the administrator may block the user harassing you. Please, refer to the help section of any major web portal for precise information on what to do in this situation. Cyberbullying also violates the terms of service laid out by cell phone providers or other service providers. Read up on your providers' policies and take steps to report threatening behaviour.

8. Contact the police or law enforcement authorities

If you feel you are in danger, report the matter to the appropriate units. Some manifestations of cyberbullying are treated as a crime (e.g. threats of violence or death, pictures of a sexual nature, pictures of minors, pictures or films recorded without the person's knowledge, harassing messages containing discriminatory content).⁸²

⁸² <https://www.wikihow.com/Stop-Cyber-Bullying>



3.3.3. Don't be passive! How to help victims of cyberbullying?

Being aware of how serious consequences cyberbullying can have for the victim, we shouldn't be indifferent, even if the problem doesn't concern us directly. This is very important to respond appropriately and in a timely manner (it may even save someone's life). You can do more than you think! Each of us should feel co-responsible if we see another person being harmed and fail to react, or worse, take an active part in cyberbullying.

What can you do?

1. If you witness cyberbullying, **don't be passive** and (worse) **don't participate**. Remember, cyberbullying is very bad and can hurt the victim greatly.
2. If you know that someone is going to publish inappropriate content that ridicules or harms another person - **express your objection and try to make that person aware of the consequences** of a "stupid joke".
3. If the content is posted on social media, **stand up for the victim**. Disapprove of cyberbullying behaviour. You can contribute to stopping cyberbullying with your comment or objection.
4. **Talk to the victim** so he/she knows he/she isn't alone with this problem and that he/she can count on your support. Try to listen to his/her and not judge. Try to lift his/her spirits. Knowing that there is someone you can turn to for help or even just to talk to is very important here.
5. Before you take any action, think it through well. **Don't be guided by your emotions**, as this is often not a good solution. **Be alert and react accordingly**. Remember, there are situations where talking isn't enough and sometimes urgent intervention is needed!
6. **Don't be afraid to seek help from others**. If the help of the victim's loved ones isn't enough, be aware that there are various cyberbullying organizations that will give you guidance on how you should behave.
7. **Help the victim gather evidence of cyberbullying**. He/she may not think of it. Make copies, screenshot or print. It is very important to secure this content before it disappears / removes from the network. This is especially helpful if the matter is reported to the police.
8. **Help block inappropriate content**. Sometimes you need to enlist the help of an IT professional, and sometimes you just need to report such activities to an administrator. Each media has a safety center and different capabilities regarding action against cyberbullying.

9. If you think a crime has been committed, **urge the victim to report the matter to the police.**⁸³

Practical examples & case studies

Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.3.1.

1. Video „Protect Yourself Online”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daF-Q9Ifg0>



2. Video „How to Stay Safe on Social Media”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOiWFQQQ_04



3. Poster „Protect yourself from CYBERBULLYING”

https://ab20124113.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/7086-protect-from-cyberbullying_ph70.jpg



4. Some useful tips to online safety (article with graphic) „Protecting Yourself on Facebook”

<https://www.webchoiceonline.com.au/protecting-yourself-on-facebook-some-useful-tips-to-online-safety/>



5. Strategies for keeping yourself safe online „Safe and Responsible Social Networking”

<https://cyberbullying.org/safe-responsible-social-networking.pdf>



6. Scenarios to Use to Discuss Online Safety „Social Media and Tech Misuse”

<https://cyberbullying.org/Social-Media-and-Tech-Misuse-Scenarios.pdf>



⁸³ <https://www.welivesecurity.com/2018/06/15/stop-cyberbullying-day-advice-victims-witnesses/>;
<https://www.wikihow.com/Help-Someone-Who-Is-Being-Bullied>



7. Sample questions about cyberbullying prevention that an educator can use for discussion

<https://cyberbullying.org/Questions-Parents-Should-Ask.pdf>



8. Database of various cybercrime materials for educators

<https://cyberbullying.org/resources/educators>





Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.3.2.

Examples of evidence of cyberbullying:

- e-mails, SMS and MMS
- publications on various websites
- comments on social networks, blogs, etc.
- photos, graphics, videos
- content of communicators or chat conversations.

Apart from the content, it is a good idea to write down other important information: date and time of receiving the material, sender's data (username, e-mail address, mobile phone number, name of profile) or website address where the harmful content appeared. No changes may be made to the copied text! Securing evidence in this way will make it easier to find the perpetrator, remove harmful content, and provides evidence that should be seen by all involved.

Guidelines for recording evidence of cyberbullying

MOBILE PHONE	COMMUNICATORS	CHAT, SOCIAL NETWORKING, WEBSITE	E-MAIL
Don't delete messages Save messages (text and voice) to phone memory	Some communicators have the option to save conversations Copy the conversation, paste it into any word processor, save and print	Take a screenshot You can print the page	Save the message on your computer It is important that in addition to the text of the message all data is visible (sender address, date, etc.) Print the message or send it to the person who is investigating the circumstances of the incident.

Some websites have a **user support and abuse reporting system**. Below are some examples:

- Help Center - Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/help/>
- Help Center – Google: <https://support.google.com/>
- Help Center - YouTube:
<https://support.google.com/youtube/>





- Help Center – Twitter: <https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-rules>



- Help Center – Instagram: <https://help.instagram.com/154475974694511/>





Resources:

1. Poster „How to stop CYBERBULLYING”
<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/563798440136409090>
2. Article „How to Stop Cyber Bullying” with explanation
<https://www.wikihow.com/Stop-Cyber-Bullying>
3. Short video „How to Beat Cyberbullies”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwu_7lqWh8Y
4. Short video „How to Prevent Cyberbullying - NoBullying.com”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4g8w7GV3-iA>
5. Short video „5 Ways to Stop Cyberbullying”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zASfp7_-lhg
6. **Video „What is Cyber bullying and Is there a way to protect yourself?”**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7248nDDjXHE>
7. Short video „I REPORTED MY CYBERBULLY TO THE POLICE” – Elena’s story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5CDOxLD6Jc>

Example(s) for Sub Chapter 3.3.3.

1. Video „Stop Cyberbullyinng”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEQwV8nf3J4>
2. Short video „Cyberbullying - How to Avoid Cyber Abuse”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMdKmHjpgFk>
3. Video „Cyberbullying –What Can You Do to Help?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf6KWE1Q9DI>
4. Article „How to Help Someone Who Is Being Bullied”
<https://www.wikihow.com/Help-Someone-Who-Is-Being-Bullied>



Plan to learning outcomes

Chapter's Plan - THEORETICAL (2 examples)

The theoretical classes are designed to make participants aware that there are different ways to protect and combat cyberbullying. It is very important to take care of your online safety and prevent unpleasant situations. Tips on how to combat cyberbullying will be helpful to participants if they are a victim or witness to cyberbullying in the future.

5. Lecture “Different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying”

Form of the activity:

- Playing a videos or a presentations created by the educator
- Discussion led by educator

Requirements:

- Knowledge of different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying and online threats - it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic (he/she can use the theory and materials proposed in subchapter 3.3.1. or from database of various cybercrime materials for educators:
<https://cyberbullying.org/resources/educators>)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer

Course of classes:

13. **Short introduction** of learners to the topic of classes – highlighting the presence of various threats to using the Internet, including cyberbullying **(5 minutes)**
14. **Discussion (5 minutes)**
 - Ask learners what dangers might exist online?
 - Ask learners if they know how they can protect themselves from these dangers?
15. **Showing prepared presentation and video (presentation about 10-15 minutes and video about 5 minutes)**

The educator, based on the theoretical knowledge contained in subchapter 3.3.1. and using the resource base available in the practical part, should prepare a presentation on the different ways and tools available to protect against cyberbullying. The educator should emphasize the fact that it is worthwhile to act preventively in order to avoid unpleasant situations in the future. At the end of the presentation, the educator can show a short film „Protect Yourself Online“ (link in the practical examples section of subchapter 3.3.1.).

16. **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

Questions for learners:

- Which ways do you know and use?
- Is your WiFi network secured?
- Do you have antivirus software installed?
- How often do you change your password?
- Do you use different passwords, or do you have one the same for everything?
- Have you encountered two-step verification, if so when?
- Is it worth using specialists?

17. **Short video** „How to Stay Safe on Social Media” (**about 6 minutes**) or **short presentation** based on the strategies for keeping yourself safe online „Safe and Responsible Social Networking” or on the article „Protecting Yourself on Facebook: Some useful tips to online safety” (**5-10 minutes**)

18. **Discussion (10 minutes)**

- What social media do you use?
- Have you changed your privacy settings according to your preferences?
- Are your accounts set to Public or Private?
- Are you not posting personal information on social media?
- Are you careful and aware that all the information and pictures someone can use against you?

The educator can use the questions in the file „Cyberbullying Prevention” (part SAFE SOCIAL MEDIA USE)

9. **Summary (5 minutes)**

The educator summarizes the content and conclusions of the discussion. He/she stresses the importance of using social media wisely and keeping your equipment safe to avoid experiencing cyberbullying in the future.

Number of hours (minutes) 45 – 65 minutes

Learning Outcomes:

- to be aware of the possible consequences of publishing different information online and prevent them
- to be familiar with the different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying

6. Lecture “What to do when you are a victim or witness of cyberbullying?”

Form of the activity:

- Lecture
- Presentation or Playing a video
- Discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge of the rules of conduct regarding the fight against cyberbullying – it is recommended that the educator is well acquainted with the topic so that he/she can instruct participants step by step on what they should do and why (educator can use the theory and materials suggested in subchapters 3.3.2. and 3.3.3.)
- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer

Course of classes:

5. **A brief introduction (5 minutes)**

A brief introduction on the prevalence of cyberbullying. Introduction to the topic of the lecture (indicating that it will be divided into 2 parts and will concern the rules of conduct for victims of cyberbullying and witnesses of cyberbullying).

6. **Guidelines for a victim of cyberbullying - Showing a video or prepared presentation (video 5-10 minutes / presentation 10-15 minutes)**

The educator may choose 1 of the suggested videos in the practice section of subchapter 3.3.2. („How to Beat Cyberbullies” or „What is Cyber bullying and Is there a way to protect yourself?”) or



use the materials from the article „How to Stop Cyber Bullying” and from content of subchapters 3.3.2. to create a short presentation of how a victim should act against cyberbullying.

7. Discussion (10 minutes)

Sample questions:

- Have you been a victim of cyberbullying?
- What did you do then?
- What do you think, is the support of a trusted person important?
- What should the victim do first?
- Is recording evidence important?
- What are the tools to block a cybercriminal?
- Why is it important to stay calm and not give in to bad emotions?

4. Guidelines for a witness of cyberbullying – a short presentation (5–10 minutes)

The educator should prepare a short presentation based on the content in subchapter 3.3.3. or from the article „How to Help Someone Who Is Being Bullied”.

5. Brief discussion (5minutes)

Sample questions:

- Is it worth reacting if you witness cyberbullying?
- How should a witness behave?
- What might be most important to the victim?

6. Summary (5 minutes)

Pointing out to the participants that it is not worth giving up and being indifferent to the harm of others.

Number of hours (minutes) 45 – 50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- to know the rules of conduct for fighting cyberbullying as a victim
- to be able to help the victim of cyberbullying
- to know what to do if you witness cyberbullying
- to be aware of the existence of social media help centers

Practical activities & exercises

Chapter's Plan – PRACTICAL (2 examples)

Examples of practical exercises are designed to help educators feel more confident in teaching about tools to protect against cyberbullying and how to combat it. On the other hand, the impact of these activities on learners should be about raising awareness of the need and opportunity to protect themselves from online threats and the negative effects of cyberbullying. The aim is also to motivate the participants to take action, to fight against cyberbullying also when it doesn't affect them directly. Practical exercises are designed to activate learners, making it easier for them to acquire knowledge, as well as sensitize them to the need for action against cyberbullying.



3. Workshop “Prevent the dangers of cyberbullying while it's not too late!”

Form of the activity:

- Work in groups
- Open discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge about different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying and online threats
- printed poster (https://ab20124113.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/7086-protect-from-cyberbullying_ph70.jpg)
- large sheets of paper for making posters and colored markers

Course of classes:

9. Open discussion (10 minutes)

The educator puts a printed poster in the background and, after introducing the topic of the class, starts an open discussion.

Sample questions:

- What online threats do you know?
- Can you protect yourself from online threats (including cyberbullying)?
- Why is it important?
- What ways do you know?

2. Work in groups

Participants will be divided into working groups (each group of 4-5 people).

Educator assigns each group a topic to work on: WAYS TO PROTECT EQUIPMENT FROM CYBERBULLYING or SAFE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA. Each group prepares a poster with tips and tools on how to protect themselves from cyberbullying (**30 minutes**) and then a representative from each group presents the poster to the forum (**10-20 minutes** depending on the number of groups).

3. Summary (5 minutes)

The educator summarizes the work of the groups and the discussion. Makes students aware that there are many tools that allow us to protect ourselves from cyberbullying. Using social media wisely is very important.

Number of hours (minutes) 55 – 65 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to be familiar with the different ways to protect yourself from cyberbullying
- to be aware of the possible consequences of publishing different information online and prevent them

4. Workshop “Don't give up and don't be passive!”

Form of the activity:

- Brainstorming
- Watching short videos
- Open discussion

Requirements:

- Knowledge of ways to combat cyberbullying



- Providing necessary equipment – projector, speakers, computer, whiteboard, marker

Course of classes:

1. **Short video – Introduction (about 5 minutes)**

At the beginning of the workshop, the educator shows the learners a short film „Stop Cyberbullying” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEQwV8nf3J4>).

The video is designed to introduce participants to the topic and help them understand or identify with the feelings of victims of cyberbullying. The educator should explain that many people are victims of cyberbullying. They often receive very upsetting news, messages that hurts them. A huge problem is that they feel powerless, alone and don't know how to proceed. The second problem is that people who witness cyberbullying don't react and sometimes even join the cyberbully and participate in hurting others.

2. **Video and open discussion (15-20 minutes)**

The educator should show the learners a video about Elena's story who was a victim of cyberbullying (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5CDOxLD6Jc>). Together with learners, he/she should analyse the Elena's story and using her example, discuss the victim's rules of conduct against cyberbullying. The educator can choose also 1 of 2 videos („5 Ways to Stop Cyberbullying” or „How to Prevent Cyberbullying - NoBullying.com”) that summarize the rules of conduct for a victim of cyberbullying and then begin the conversation with learners.

Sample questions:

- What is the story about?
- What was Elena's problem?
- What did Elena do?
- How should the victim behave?
- Should he/she react aggressively? Why is it wrong?
- What is the evidence of cyberbullying? How to save them? (brainstorming) – the educator writes down all ideas on the board
- When should the victim report the matter to the police?

3. **Watching a short video „Cyberbullying - How to Avoid Cyber Abuse” and discussion (10 minutes)**

This short video is about the response of a witness to cyberbullying. Discusses different behavioral options and shows the right ones.

After watching the video, the educator leads a discussion and asks questions about the story.

Questions:

- What is the story about?
- What behaviors are appropriate?
- What behaviors are inappropriate?
- Have you witnessed cyberbullying?
- How can you help a victim of cyberbullying?

4. **Discussion (5 minutes)**

- Do you think cybercrime is worth fighting?
- Is it easy?
- Is it worth helping others?

Number of hours (minutes) 45 – 50 minutes



Learning outcomes

- to know the rules of conduct for fighting cyberbullying as a victim
- to be able to help the victim of cyberbullying
- to know what to do if you witness cyberbullying

Suggested Assignment

Work with participants in small groups or if this is not possible, there may be an online format

Glossary of terms

Cybercriminals - a people who use technology to carry out malicious cyberbullying activities

Bully – a person who teases, insults, threatens or otherwise harasses others

Victim - victimized, harassed, intimidated, blackmailed by a cybercriminal

two-step verification – a combination of using an traditional password and another type of verification, e.g. by a code sent via SMS

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