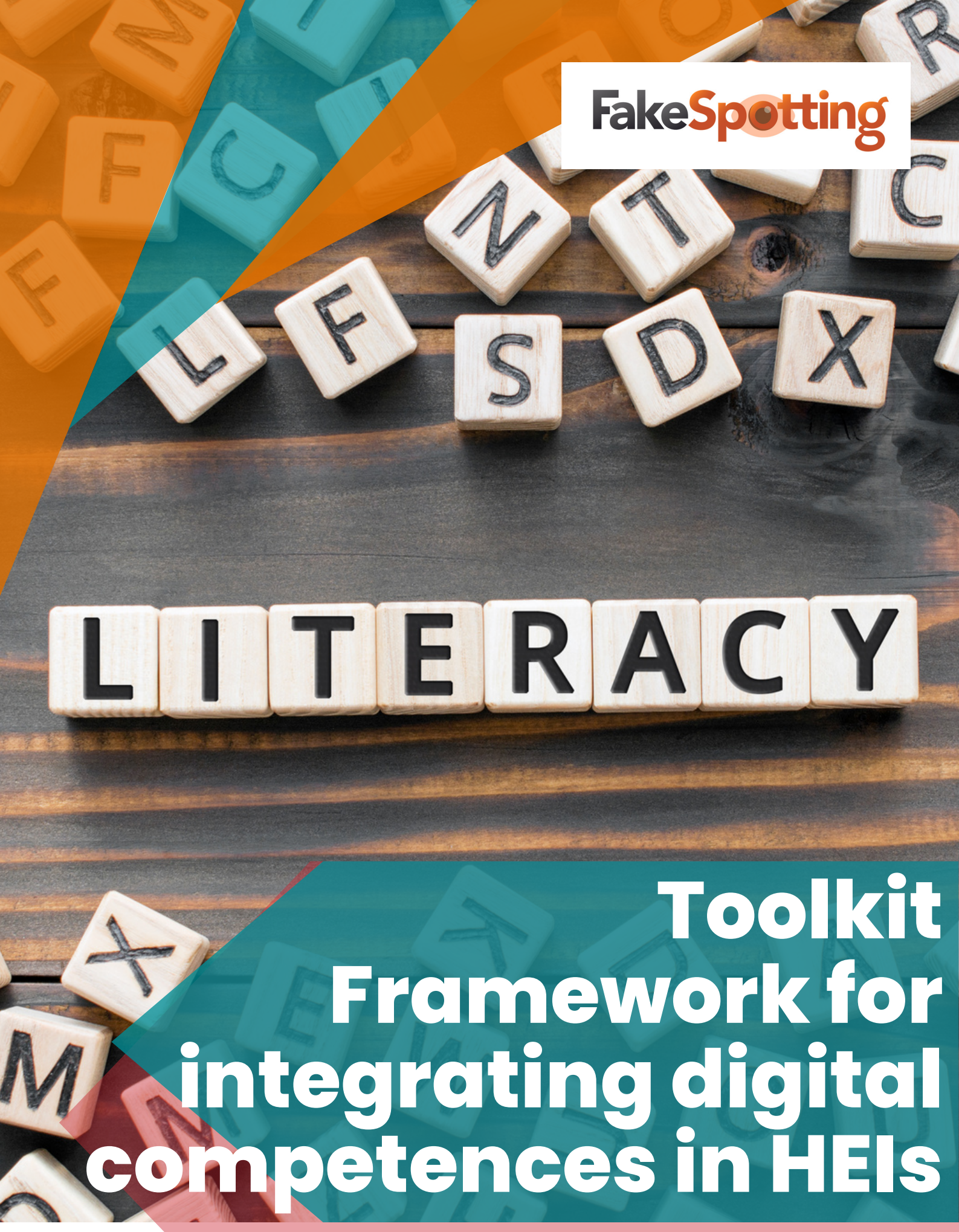
FakeSpotting



Toolkit Framework for integrating digital competences in HEIs

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0: The Digital Education Action Plan and its Actions

The European Commission introduced the Digital Education Action Plan in October 2020 as a strategic vision for promoting high-quality, inclusive, and accessible digital education throughout the EU from 2021 to 2027. The plan aims to foster collaboration among various stakeholders within the European landscape. Additionally, it addresses the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on digital skills and encourages stakeholders to learn from successful practices observed during the increased use of technology in different contexts.

The Digital Education Action Plan seeks to facilitate the advancement of digital skills and competences necessary for digital transformation. It aims to essentially reconfigure education and training systems in Europe to align them with the demands of the digital age.

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The Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) is a renewed European Union (EU) policy initiative that sets out a common vision of high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education in Europe, and aims to support the adaptation of the education and training systems of Member States to the digital age.

The Action Plan, adopted on 30 September 2020, is a call for greater cooperation at European level on digital education to address the challenges and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to present opportunities for the education and training community (teachers, students), policy makers, academia and researchers on national, EU and international level.

The initiative contributes to the Commission's priority 'A Europe fit for the Digital Age' and to Next Generation EU. It also supports the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which aims to create a greener, more digital and resilient European Union.

The Digital Education Action Plan is a key enabler to realising the vision of achieving a European Education Area by 2025. It contributes to achieving the goals of the European Skills Agenda, the European Social Pillar Action Plan and the '2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade'.

(source: European Education Area)

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What is the Digital Education Action Plan?

The Digital Education Action Plan revolves around two key strategic priorities: fostering the development of a top-notch digital education ecosystem and enhancing digital skills and competences to facilitate digital transformation for everyone.

a.Priority 1: Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem

To achieve a high-performing digital education ecosystem, various aspects need to be addressed, such as the need for a technical infrastructure to "support more education and training practices: going online, improvements in connectivity and availability of digital equipment"; the improvement of digital capabilities; the improvement of digital skills in trainers and educators; the availability of high-quality learning content, which should also be accessible through ethical platforms and tools (source: Digital Skills and Job Platform).

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This priority is structured on the first 6 Actions of the Digital Education Action Plan:

1

Action 1: Structured Dialogue with Member States on digital education and skills

Action 1: Proposal for a Council recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training

2

Action 2: Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education

3

Action 3: European Digital Education Content Framework

4

Action 4: Connectivity and digital equipment for education and training

5

Action 5: Digital transformation plans for education and training institutions

6

Action 6: Ethical guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators

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a.Priority 2: Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation

The Digital Education Action Plan's second priority focuses on improving the digital skills of individuals and businesses, as well as the competences needed for digital transformation. To achieve this objective, the European Commission is initiating a comprehensive set of measures. These measures aim to enhance basic digital skills and competences at all levels, starting from an early age. Additionally, the plan includes initiatives that support the growth of a larger and more diverse pool of well-trained information and communication technology (ICT) professionals and digital experts. The second priority is structured around the actions from 7 to 13, followed by the constitution of a European Digital Education Hub:

- Action 7: Common guidelines for teachers and educators to foster digital literacy and tackle disinformation through education and training
- Action 8: Updating the European Digital Competence Framework to include AI and data-related skills
- Action 9: European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC)
- Action 10: Proposal for a Council recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training
- Action 11: Cross-national collection of data and an EU-level target on student digital skills
- Action 12: Digital Opportunity Traineeships
- Action 13: Women's participation in STEM
- European Digital Education Hub

(source: European Education Area)

Among these, in this Output we will specifically focus on two actions, 7 and 9: the Common Guidelines for teachers and Educatiors to foster digital literacy and tackle disinformation thorugh education and training, and the European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC), that aims to be recognised and accepted throughout member states of the European Union.

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1.. Digital Skills: a contemporary overview

1.1. Is there a problem with digital skills?

a. The Challenges of the Digital Transition

Following the Digital Education Content Framework, Education has been radically changed by the digital transition:

- digital education content is becoming more creative, engaging, interactive and embodied in diverse formats
- new technological developments, such as immersive reality and artificial intelligence (AI), are helping to deliver new types of education content
- there is an exponential increase in the production of digital education content

(European Digital Education Content Framework)

Along these changes in Education, the Digital Transition has brought many societal challenges that Education has to front:

- digital platforms and their algorithms could act as 'gatekeepers' of digital education content, potentially impacting access to these resources in different ways
- it is more difficult for users to verify the quality and trustworthiness of digital education resources than traditional content
- the long-term preservation of these educational resources
- cybersecurity, data protection and e-privacy risks

(European Digital Education Content Framework)

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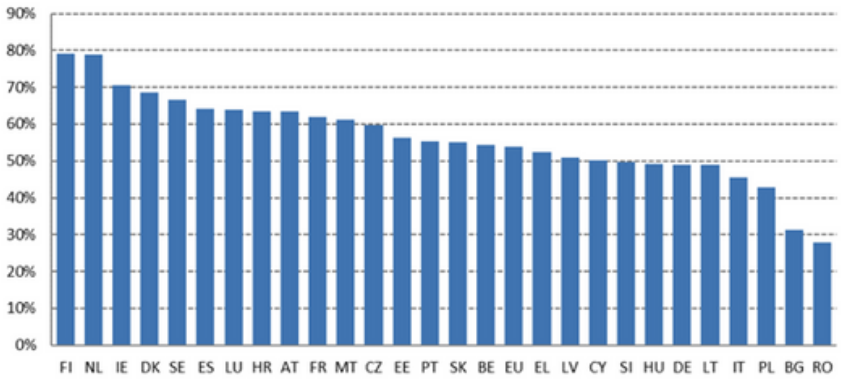
This calls for a series of measures enhancing the digital skills necessary to deal with these changes and challenges. The DESI - Digital Economy and Society Index - 2022 shows that:

While 87% of people (aged 16-74) used the internet regularly in 2021, only 54% possessed at least basic digital skills. The Netherlands and Finland are the frontrunners in the EU, while Romania and Bulgaria are lagging behind. A large part of the EU population still lacks basic digital skills, even though most jobs require such skills. [...] There remains a general shortage of ICT specialists on the EU labour market, and the number of vacancies keeps growing as new jobs emerge. During 2020, 55% of enterprises that recruited or tried to recruit ICT specialists reported difficulties in filling such vacancies. [...] The Path to the Digital Decade proposal aims to increase the number of employed ICT specialists in the EU to at least 20 million by 2030, compared to 8.9 million in 2021 (corresponding to 4.5% of the labour force). Although there has been steady growth since 2013, an acceleration is needed to reach the target. As of 2021, Sweden – with 8% – and Finland – with 7.4% – have the highest proportion of ICT specialists in the labour force. (DESI 2022: 14)

We report in (Fig.1) the data extracted from DESI 2022, showing the distribution of Digital Skills across European Countries:

Figure 3 At least basic digital skills (% of individuals), 2021



Source: Eurostat, European Union survey on the use of ICT in Households and by Individuals

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b. Closing the Digital Skills Gap

One of the problems that are emerging in the efforts of closing the Digital Skills Gap come from limited investment in training, as well as the barriers to lifelong learning:

Barriers to lifelong learning and limited investment in training are slowing down the European Union's efforts to fill the digital skills gap by 2030, according to EU representatives and experts, who pointed to the need for increased upskilling and reskilling support.
(source: Euractiv)

This might constitute a problem, considering the objectives that have been set for the European Digital Decade, ending in 2030. It seems, however, that only the countries with the higher level of Digital Skills are the ones partaking in Digital Skills training. Following the OECD Skills Study of 2021, the factors leading to this situation can vary, from economic reasons to the quality of the provided training. These are the reasons that have led to the political agreement of the European Year of Skills.

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c.The European Year of Skills

2023 is the European Year of Skills, as per an agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council, resulting in a year-long paths of initiatives that highlight the importance of skills development and learning across Europe:

The European Year of Skills 2023 is a key initiative of the European Commission's Skills Agenda for Europe. [...] The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness about the importance of skills and to promote the development of skills across all sectors and levels of society. The initiative also aims to encourage investment in skills development and to promote the recognition of skills and qualifications across Europe.
(source: Digital Skills and Jobs Platform)

Recognizing the significance of skills development for economic growth and social cohesion, the European Commission has emphasised its importance. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the necessity for individuals to possess adaptability and continuously acquire new skills throughout their lives. Consequently, the European Year of Skills 2023 will play a pivotal role in promoting lifelong learning and skills development throughout Europe.The European Year of Skills will purse 4 main objectives, following the proposal of the European Commission:

I. Foster a more effective investment in training and upskilling to maximise the potential of the European workforce and assist people in transitioning from one job to another.
II.Ensure that skills are applicable to the demands of the labour market, by also working with social partners and businesses.
III.Matching people's aspirations and skill sets with opportunities on the job market.
IV.Attracting people from third countries with the skills needed by the EU.
(source: Digital Skills and Jobs Platform)

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Who are the actors involved in the European Year of Skills? The role of Employers in promoting skills development is crucial in creating a Job Market Environment in which Digital Competence is made valuable. Therefore, the Commission is trying to create networks of cooperation among employers, stakeholders and education & training providers :

The European Commission has also highlighted the role of employers in promoting skills development. The Commission has called on employers to invest in the skills of their employees and to promote a culture of learning within their organizations. The Commission has also called on employers to support the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and to encourage their employees to acquire new skills throughout their careers. [...] The European Commission has emphasized the importance of collaboration in promoting skills development. The Commission has called on all stakeholders, including governments, employers, education and training providers, and civil society organizations, to work together to promote the development of skills across Europe. The Commission has also highlighted the importance of involving individuals in the initiative, and has called on individuals to take ownership of their own learning and skills development. Which is why a number of new EU proposals will be adopted to underpin ongoing efforts and further boost skills development across the Member States.
(source: Digital Skills and Jobs Platform)

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In the direction set from the European Year of Skills, the European council has produced two recommendations for member states to foster digital education and training: the first one is linked to the relationship between digital skills and the labor market:

Commission's vice-president Margrethe Vestager said the recommendations aim to overcome barriers limiting the EU's progress on digital skills at individual, sectoral and national levels, as there are currently wide differences in digital competences between EU countries, stages of life and sectors of the economy.
In her view, barriers at sectoral level are linked to a "mismatch between what people are able to do in terms of digital skills and what they are required to do both in their present job and in a future job".
According to the Commission, over a third of EU workers currently lack the digital skills required in the majority of jobs.
"We need people to be able to use digital skills across all sectors of the economy," Vestager said, calling on member states to "open-up" their approach to digital skills. (source: Euractiv)

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The second one is related to the transversality of the digital transition among all of the different sectors of the social life, not only Education but also in the Economy, participation to political life and social interactions. This is why the European Commission is pushing for a comprehensive approach to digital skills development, that does not only focus on Digital Training per se, but that recognizes how every sector has become a digital sector:

"[They need to] see every sector as a digital sector," she said during the press conference, adding that the issue does not only concern education.
At the same time, the Commission is pushing for a more comprehensive approach to digital skills development also in the education sector, to ensure teachers are equipped with the tools and competences to use and teach digital skills.
According to the Commission, only 39% of teachers feel ready to use digital technologies in their work and only one third of students go to schools which put in place strategies on how to use digital technologies in teaching and learning.
"We should integrate digital skills in every subject that is taught at school as well as a separate subject on its own," Vestager said.
(source: Euractiv)

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2. Digital Skills and Digital Competenc a conceptual framework

If there is a general consensus over the urgent need for fostering Digital Skills and Competence, there has been a debate over the different definitions for Digital Skills and Competence.

2.1 Digital Skills

The field that has tried to study, reflect and design the correct set of knowledge to deal with the challenges of the media landscape is the one of Media Literacy.

Where does this concept come from? We will now try to outline the relations between Media Literacy and Literacy as well as its' history, in order to show its limitations and how it can be improved according to Media Education experts.

a.From Media Education to Digital Competence (and back)

The rise of mass media in the last century, followed by the digital transition, has created new educational needs. Starting from Falcinelli's (2021) reconstruction of the evolution of Media Literacy with the advent of new media, here is a simplified overview of the emergences of different concepts in the framework of the pedagogy of media:

I.Media Education: in the 1970s, UNESCO and the Conseil international du Cinéma et de la Télévision speak clearly of Media Education, defining it as the study of the history of media, their role in society and the access to them. This concept initially only applied to mass media, like television, radio and print. Falcinelli (ivi: 36) illustrates three different dimension in which Media Education practices are normally intended: 1) Media Education as educating to understand media messages and the media system; 2) Media Education as educating to the correct fruition of the communication means; 3) Media Education as the education to the production of original media messages.

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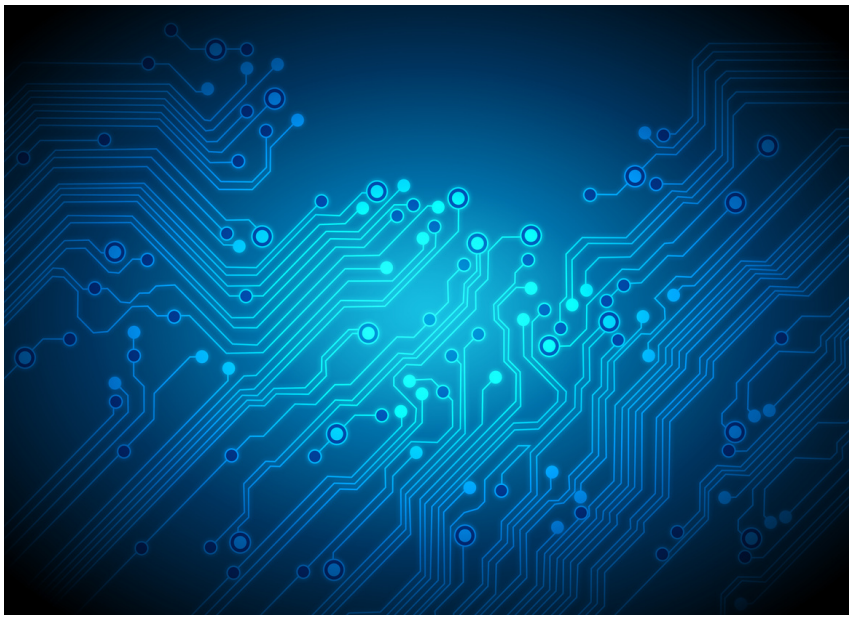
II.New Media Literacy: coming from Jenkins' (et al. 1998) work on participatory culture, it aims at individuating those competences that from Media Education can be applied ad expanded in new media: from playing, to problem solving, remixing content and networking. It also include the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of contexts.
III.Digital Literacy: The ability of understanding and using information in diverse formats, from a variety of digitally mediated sources. At the beginning of the years 2000s, the European Council[1] indicated it as a prerequisite for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.
IV.Digital Competence: In the last fifteen years, the European Council has started to develop a more consistent framework of the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[2], that sees the Digital Competence as one of the 8 main competences both in 2006 and in 2018 versions. Digital Competence is central in the development of the Digital Citizenship, or the mediated participation to the public life, and is now defined by the European framework DigiComp 2.2. , divided in 5 areas: Information and Data Literacy, Communication and collaboration, Digital content creation, Safety and Problem Solving.



[1] CE (2003) eLearning: Better eLearning for Europe, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
[2] Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

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The Guidelines for Media and information Literacy (Guidelines) promoted as Action 7 of the Digital Education Action Plan define Digital Literacy:

Being digitally literate means knowing how to use digital technologies to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, create, and disseminate information – in safe and appropriate ways. Also, digital literacy can help students actively participate, learn, build fulfilling careers, and interact socially in today's society. As such, digital literacy is a prerequisite for the development of active and empowered digital citizenship. (Guidelines: 20)

The relationship between civic engagement and literacy is anything but new: it was Tullio de Mauro – linguist, engaged intellectual and former Italian Minister of Education – that identified in literacy one of the fundamental prerequisite for democracy itself[3]: even in democratic contexts, without literacy, citizens are just as much subjects as in totalitarian regimes. Literacy in adults is constantly monitored: one example is the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences[4] that monitors Literacy, Numeracy and Problem Solving in adults over long arches of time.

However, if the correct understanding of information is the necessary condition to foster civic and digital engagement, some experts say that it's not sufficient. One first hint of this can be found in the complex and diverse understandings of Media Literacy itself: the concept seems to expand from a linguistic and cognitive conception of Literacy, trying to adapt it to media and digital media contexts.

3 Intervista a Tullio De Mauro – Alfabetizzazione e democrazia - https://damianorama.wordpress.com/2008/11/01/intervista-a-tullio-de-mauro-alfabetizzazione-e-democrazia/

4 The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/

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b Media Literacy v. Media Education

Data and Society researchers Bulger and Davison (2018) provide an exhaustive report on the main Media Literacy initiatives, elaborating a framework to evaluate them and give stakeholders recommendations for implementing Media Literacy in a productive way. Their research reveals how one of the main causes of the failure of Media Literacy initiatives is the breadth of its expectations: "is it to discern accuracy, evaluate bias, engage with information productively, be an informed voter?" (ibid: 16). One of its other problems is, again, its anachronism, and the fact that poses the whole responsibility of discerning the quality of information on the final user:

Finally, media literacy research typically focuses on individual responsibility for discerning the truth or accuracy of messages. As platforms such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter increasingly personalize information access, individual responsibility becomes more challenging, especially when methods for serving information are not transparent. One challenge for research moving forward is determining expectations for how an individual can assess the reliability of information when the breadth of the corpus, e.g., what is included and excluded and why (and how it differs from information served to others), is neither visible nor accessible. It is necessary to rethink media literacy in the age of platforms (ibid: 17).

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One of the most authoritative voices in the debate over the need and the limitations of Media Literacy is David Buckingham, Media Education scholar and author of the Media Education Manifesto (2019). Like the above mentioned scholars, he doesn't doubt the purpose of Media Literacy, nor its necessity in a digitally mediated landscape. However, in multiple occasions he stresses how Media Literacy has often been used as a "quick fix" (2021: 22), an easy solution to complex problems, or, even worse, an individualized solution to systemic problems that should be handled through multi-leveled operations. While his critique stresses how governments – the UK one in particular – tend to use Media Literacy as an excuse to avoid regulating the activity of big digital platforms, he also points out how the very concept of Media Literacy constitutes a framework that unloads the responsibility of systemic problems on individual users.

One of the examples in which this issue becomes evident is the instrumental approach of digital literacy, where the technical knowledge – like knowing how to code – is presented as a solution to political and cultural problems;

or when easy and accessible fact-checking methods are delivered as solutions to a systemic information disorder:

It's sometimes assumed that digital literacy is simply about learning how to use digital tools: learning how to operate hardware, or to use software such as search engines. This is the instrumental approach I was referring to. For me, this is just the beginning of the process. Of course, we need to know how to find information online; and doing that effectively is something we have to learn. But the more difficult questions come when we have to make sense of that information, to process it and to evaluate it. We need to make judgments about what we should trust, and that's far from easy. This is where media education comes in. Despite all the loose talk about fake news, this isn't just about telling the difference between what's true and false. It's not something we can do with a simple checklist: on the contrary, it involves a much more complex, multi-dimensional process of analysis and evaluation. This isn't straightforward to learn: but without it, we are lost? (Buckingham 2021: 26)

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Buckingham is the promoter of systemic education means, where the whole education system recognizes the complex networked media landscape in which we are inserted and takes charge of their preparation by putting Media Education curricola at the center of scholastic programs. He focuses on concepts like critical thinking, which includes problem solving but does not limit to it, and includes as well information on the composition of the media landscape and the role of its actors.

Certainly coding is a skill that students should have the opportunity to acquire if they wish; but to say that it helps them in problem solving or that it is essential training for future employment – which is why it should be taught to all students – is highly questionable. Kids, it is true, need to know how digital technology works; but they also need to understand how digital media work as industries and cultural forms of representation. If they are to become active users of technology, they need to learn more than mere technical skills: they need social, political, economic and cultural understanding. (2019: 82)[5]

5 The reference is to the Italian edition of the text, here presented in English translation.

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2.2. Digital Competences

Falcinelli has shown how the concept of Digital Competence comes from the one of Digital Literacy, but expands it in order to have a more comprehensive definition suitable for the digital age.

a.Defining Digital Competence: a theoretical challenge

Gallardo-Echenique et al. (2015) did an extensive literature review of the different definitions of Digital Competence, in order to "not intend to reach a single definition in a reductionist view but to systematically review the various definitions and to identify the connection points from a broad and diverse vision" (ivi: 2).

The differences with Digital Literacy are stated as follows:

Differences between digital competence and digital literacy

Digital competence	Digital literacy
An employability requirement of the digital age	Conceptualizations of the changing learning paradigm in the digital age
A 'skills' connotation, implying competency with some of today's computer applications, including word processing and e-mail, etc.	Deictic approaches to learning and communication
Set of abilities needed to apply digital technologies to work, leisure and education	Set of understandings needed in the digital era to understand, produce and negotiate meaning in a culture made up of powerful images, words and sounds
Skills people should have in the digital era	An assumption that skills, awarenesses and understandings exist that will enable individuals first to survive and second to be more effective in their e-encounters
Skills to communicate with others and address a wide range of texts in all media	A combination of technical-procedural, cognitive and emotional-social skills
A range of capabilities (knowledge, skills and competences) covering three main categories: ICT practitioner skills; ICT user skills, and e-business skills	Processes of awareness, confidence, evaluation, reflection, adaptability and willingness to meet the digital age challenges
Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve observable results; measurable performance through rubrics	Ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when this is presented via computers
Confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication	Complex cognitive, motor, sociological, and emotional skills that users need in order to function effectively in digital environments
Underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet	Awareness, attitude and underling abilities needed to use digital tools appropriately and to reflect upon this process

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Some observations that can be made about this different conceptualisations of competence and literacy are that whereas Literacy is often described as an individual, cognitive skill, related to an internal understanding of practicing technical operations, Competence is often described as a situated, social ability to use that emerges from application of the literacy; it is also described as a critical use for different purposes, and it is oriented to employability, leisure and communication. Whereas Literacy is the basis for Competence, it is an individual feature: competence is a Social Skill. However, the conclusion of their review states the complex status of the notion of Digital Competence, which still remains at the core of the education of a responsible citizenry:

On the basis of this literature review, digital competence may be considered a multi-faceted concept that emerges from several backgrounds [...] It is closely related to literacy approaches but is not identical. Digital competence is regarded as a core competence in policy papers but it is not yet a stable concept [...] These different notions mean there are still no clear assessment guidelines for digital competence (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). While some perceive digital competence as the technical use of ICT, others define it more broadly as knowledge application or as 21st- century skills. The Information and Knowledge Society highlights the need for "an educated citizenry capable of accessing, evaluating, organizing, interpreting, and disseminating information in increasingly digital formats exchanged over enabling technologies" (Somerville, Lampert, Dabbour, Harlan & Schader, 2007, p. 9). It is essential that people develop a new sense of self-confidence to master technology and digital services. As educators and researchers, our goals should be to encourage citizens to develop the skills, knowledge, ethical frameworks, and self-confidence that will serve them well in the future (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison & Weigel, 2006). Given these challenges, institutions and policymakers should set out their current educational priorities for an effective response to the changing needs of 21st-century learners. Proper acquisition of digital competence or digital literacy, understood from the holistic and emancipatory perspective, is key to active and functional participation in contemporary society. (Gallardo-Echenique et al. 2015: 12)

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b. Digital Competence Framework for citizens (DigComp)

This complex status of the definition of Digital Knowledge is why The European Joint Research Center has developed, over the years, the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp) as a comprehensive framework for defining and adopting Digital Competence at different levels of governance.

In fact, the heterogeneity of definitions of Digital Competence already presented is one of the reasons behind DigComp's fortune. The Framework offers a common vocabulary and a flexible definition that can be used in defining Digital Competence.

Being a new and relatively complex notion, digital competence is understood and described in many different ways. Stakeholders underline that DigComp has provided a common language and terminology to talk about and design new projects on digital competence in all kinds of areas. They notice how DigComp established a general, some call it 'soft' or 'transversal', definition of digital competence, which is complementary and compatible with other more specific, sectorial, 'harder' definitions. (Kluzer, Pujol Priego 2018: 23)

The concept of Competence is articulated in three dimensions, which consist in different forms of knowledge, articulated in knowledge of; knowing how; being aware:

KNOWLEDGE:

It means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.

SKILLS:

They are the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

ATTITUDES:

They are conceived as the motivators of performance, the basis for continued competent performance. They include values, aspirations and priorities.

(source: Dig.Comp 2.2.: 3)

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The three dimensions are measured in levels of proficiency that can otherwise be described as levels of autonomy of the competence: the different skills can be pursued with guidance, autonomously, or with the ability of passing them to others:

FOUNDATION	1	At basic level and with guidance, I can:
	2	At basic level and with autonomy and appropriate guidance where needed, I can:
INTERMEDIATE	3	On my own and solving straightforward problems, I can:
	4	Independently, according to my own needs, and solving well-defined and non-routine problems, I can:
ADVANCED	5	As well as guiding others, I can:
	6	At advanced level, according to my own needs and those of others, and in complex contexts, I can:
HIGHLY SPECIALISED	7	At highly specialised level, I can:
	8	At the most advanced and specialised level, I can:

The levels of proficiency are as well based on the cognitive domains of Remembering, Understanding, Applying&Evaluating, Creating.

The areas of Digital Competence are 5 in total: Information and data literacy; Communication and collaboration; Digital content creation; Safety; Problem Solving. Every Area corresponds to specific of competences:

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3. The Assessment of Digital Skills or Competence

3.1. Past initiatives

What kind of initiative have been promoted in the past to assess digital skills? From Europass' e-portfolio to the proposal of Digital Credentials, there has been a series of different initiatives that tried to give European Citizens the tools to put together the needs of the Job Market and the citizens' skills and abilities. However, these initiatives have faced the issue of trying to integrate and translate different ways of measuring and certifying skills, especially digital ones. The European Union emphasises the importance of recognizing skills and qualifications in order to develop an international Job market, while also granting mobility and learning:

Recognition of skills and qualifications is key to support mobility and learning as well as career opportunities for all across the EU. There are two different procedures for recognition of qualifications:
Recognition for further education and training
Recognition for access to employment, including regulated professions
(source: Europass)

a. Europass

Europass is a free online tool that has been helping Europeans to manage their careers and studies. Its functionalities involve:

- Create a personal record of all your skills, qualifications and experiences
- Reflect on your skills to understand your needs and interests.
- Receive personalised course suggestions
- Prepare and keep track of applications, design custom CVs and cover letters for different courses and studies
- Store all your documents and files in one secure location

(source: Europass)

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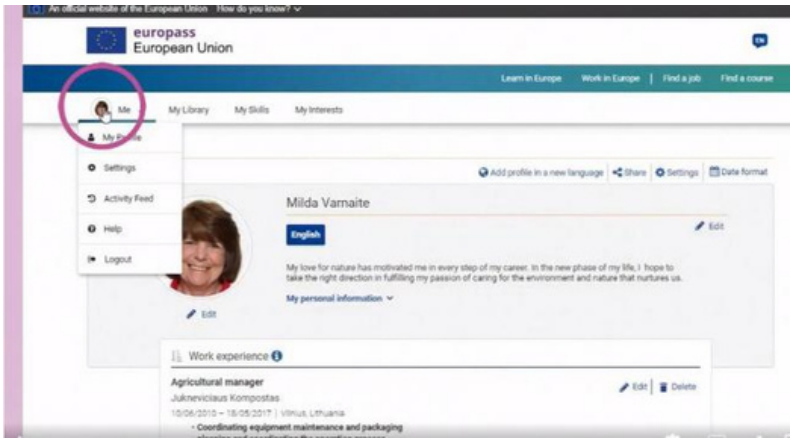
It has been designed specifically to facilitate the quest for jobs, while protecting the users' privacy and personal information :

Europass uses the information in your profile to analyse your skills and to suggest interesting jobs and courses for you. You can always choose to turn off these Europass features. Europass collects anonymised statistics (e.g., how many visitors registered with Europass) and trends (e.g., whether Europass users have high levels of digital skills). Your personal data will never be used for this process. You can always delete all or part of your Europass profile so that you always have full control over your information.

a. Europass e-portfolio

The Europass tool is designed to measure and document digital skills is the e-portfolio. This was a digital solution that tried to offer a tool to collect their qualifications:

Traditionally, individuals have been documenting their skills, qualifications and experience using CVs, paper certificates and diplomas. Nowadays, they can also benefit from e-portfolio tools that have the ability to support individuals in this same task. An e-portfolio can be defined as a digital dynamic tool that enables individuals to document, display and manage their skills, qualifications and experience throughout the lifespan of their career. Currently, e-portfolios are offered by career development and employment services websites, professional social network websites, CV creators, e-learning and upskilling platforms, among other stakeholders.
(Europass e-portfolio Background document, 2018: 2)



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The Europass e-portfolio was developed on the europass portfolio of documents, in order to achieve specific objectives:

- Establish a single entry-point for a set of web-based tools which exchange information between them and allow individuals to effortlessly switch from one tool to another;
- Guide individuals to create and manage a personal profile, describe their skills, qualifications and experience, and compile and store any relevant documentation or evidence of learning (e.g. open badges, digital diplomas) in a Library;
- Create and edit documents such as CVs and cover letters through an Online Editor;
- Support individuals to develop their career by defining their interests, goals and aspirations and keeping track of their progress from a lifelong learning perspective;
- Provide individuals with suitable learning and job opportunities based on their personal profile, aspirations and preferences; and
- Enable individuals to prepare, submit and keep track of their learning and job applications.

(Europass e-portfolio Background document, 2018: 2-3)

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The e-portfolio was thought as as in individual tool, especially designed for citizens as learner individuals, to actively collect the documentation related to their training:

The e-portfolio will primarily target individual end-users (later in this document referred to as end-users), who will actively use the e-portfolio to document their skills and qualifications acquired through learning and work experiences, as well as to manage their career and learning. End-users include learners, jobseekers, workers and volunteers (regardless their employment status or digital skills), but also NEET (i.e. youngsters aged between 16 and 24 who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training). They may be European citizens, but also third country nationals.

Other stakeholders will have a secondary role in contributing to the promotion and progressive use of the Europass e-portfolio. On the one hand, facilitators will assist end-users to document their skills and qualifications and manage their career through the e-portfolio. This target group includes guidance and counselling advisors, public employment services, national Europass centres, employers, education and training institutions, responsible national authorities, IT professionals, among others. On the other hand, recipients will receive and process the personal profiles and documentation of end-users. The e-portfolio will offer different possibilities for end-users to share their personal profiles and other documentation with third parties. This target group particularly includes employers, education and training providers, HR professionals, along with other organisations interested in assessing the documented skills, qualifications and work experience of end-users.
(Europass e-portfolio Background document, 2018: 4-5)

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c. Digital Credentials

If the e-portfolio was a tool to individually collect personal qualifications, the Digital Credentials Infrastructure was an initiative that aimed to build an infrastructure to "support efficiency and security in how credentials such as qualifications and other learning achievements can be recognised across Europe"[1]

The EDCI will support authentication services for any digital documents or representations of information on skills and qualifications as outlined in Article 4 (6) of the Europass Decision.

The infrastructure was based on the digital object of the Credential:

A credential is a documented statement containing claims about a person issued by an educational organisation following a learning experience. European Digital Credentials describe a learning achievement. They can describe: activities (e.g. classes attended), assessments (e.g. projects), achievements (e.g. skills developed), professional entitlements (e.g. registration as a medical doctor) and qualifications. As a digital file, credentials can include a wide range of valuable information that can help the recognition and understanding of the credential by employers and other institutions. European Digital Credentials have a host of benefits over paper-based certificates: they can reduce administration work for students and graduate as well as education and training providers and businesses. European Digital Credentials can also decrease the impact of credential-fraud and contribute towards paperless workflows.

European Digital Credentials support instant verification; recipients can automatically verify information such as the identity of the awarding body or the quality assurance of a qualification. European Digital Credentials are signed with an e-Seal, meaning they enjoy a legal presumption of authenticity across the EU as well as equivalence to paper-based credentials containing the same information.
(Source : Europass)

6 https://europa.eu/europass/en/what-are-digital-credentials

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3.2. The new frontier of the Digital Skills Assessment: the EDSC

Having already discussed the multiplicity of definition of Digital Competence (cfr. Gallardo-Echenique et al. 2015), it's understandable how there can be a problem not only in the assessment of Digital Competence, but also in trying to find an integrated way of adopting this assessment throughout the European Territory.

The past experiences of Europass and Digital Credentials have already paved the way for the certification of personal and professional skills in a digital way, in order to promote mobility on a transnational level and collect different certification of skills on the same digital repository.

Action 9 of the digital Education Action Plan consists in a study promoted by the European Commission and carried out by the JRC, for the development of a new certification that can help developing digital skills, following the idea of the Digital Credentials Infrastructure.

The EDSC that wanted to allow :

- In support of the implementation of the Action 9 of the Digital Education Action Plan, the JRC is carrying out a study on the European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC) to help people have their digital skills quickly and easily recognised by employers, training providers and more.
- The EDSC will be based on the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp).
- The study is mapping existing digital skills certification schemes in Europe and carrying out a gaps, needs and benefits analysis to understand the role and value of an EDSC, and how it would support recognition of digital skills in Europe.
- The study relies to a large part on Stakeholders' Consultations. More information can be found on the EDSC stakeholder consultation page. There is also a Digital Skills Certification Community of Practice (CoP) hosted by All Digital.

(source: European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC) Feasibility Study)

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3.3. Some good practices in assessing Digital Skills

We will now briefly present some tools that are currently used in the assessment of Digital Skills and Competence.

These tools all share the same features and organisation: the questions are divided in the 5 areas of the DigComp, using competences and examples from the framework. The answers that the users can give are based upon the areas of proficiency defined by the framework.

a.The Digital Skills and Job Platform test

The Digital Skills and Job Platform test is a digital tool based on a previous version of the the DigComp, the 2.0:

Digital skills are becoming essential for everyone. At work, at home or at school, we use smartphones, computers and tablets and we need to be able to master them.
To order a pizza, to pay an invoice, or to schedule a work meeting, digital tools and the internet are indispensable for our lives and work. But how to know whether you have the right digital skills? And how to find training to get better?
Now you have the chance to test your digital skills and get access to training opportunities appropriate for your needs. Our new tool "Test your digital skills" can support you to get a good understanding of your current digital competences (based on the established European Digital Competence Framework - DigComp 2.0), which is the starting point to identify what you can do next to improve them, depending on your needs and aspirations.
The test takes around 20 minutes to complete and, once done, you get a summary report of your skills level. In order to take the test, you will need to register and login and the results will be available in your Profile.

The digital tool also allowed to export the results of the assessment and record them on the users' EUROPASS profile.

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b. **DigCompSat**

The Digital Competence Self Assessment Tool (DigCompSAT) is a tool developed by ALL Digital, useful for testing and reflecting upon personal digital competences based on a previous version of the DigComp, the 2.1.

The DigCompSat tool aims at testing empirically the set of DigComp 2.1 competences corresponding to levels 1 to 6 (foundation, intermediate and advanced). The tool is designed with a methodological perspective that allows measuring of digital competence by the three elements - knowledge, skills and attitude – for each of the 5 DigComp areas. It also provides respondents with a self-reflection path on their digital competence. The tool was piloted in Ireland, Latvia and Spain by 16-65 year old individuals. The DigComp tool has sound psychometric properties, including the validity and internal consistency of the items. The tool is able to perform three main functions for test takers: measuring existing competences based on the respondents' self-reflection; identifying competence gaps; and raising awareness. The conciseness of the items allowed a test-time of less than 30 minutes across different countries, age and educational background groups and genders.

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c. MyDigiSkils:

My DigiSkills (https://mydigiskills.eu/test/) is the latest self-assessment tool based on DigComp.

The Questionnaire is based on the DigComp areas with answers in 4 fields, following the abovementioned proficiency levels of the framework. Here are some examples of the matching anwers to the tool and the proficiency levels:

FOUNDATION	I have no knowledge of this / I never heard of this	Not at all
INTERMEDIATE	I have only a limited understanding of this	Not much/ very little
ADVANCED	I have a good understanding of this	Yes I do/ Yes I am/ Yes it does
HIGHLY SPECIALISED	I fully understand this topic/issue and I could explain it to others	Very much

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4. Fakespotting

4.1. Fakespotting as a Media Education Tool

a.Extended Media Education

Fakespotting's content can be considered a tool for an extended account of Media Education, not limited to the skills and notions of Media Literacy, but useful for integrating them into a more situated account of digital competence.

If we take in consideration Module 1, its contents are a guide to the evolutions and challenges of the Digital age, which are not limited on the acquisition of technical skills, but constitute a comprehensive overview of the social implications of Digital Media.

Following Buckingham instructions and examples, Fakespotting doesn't have the objective of tackling digital disinformation through technical skills like coding, but is able to provide an historical account of the evolution of the media asset from the invention of the printing press up to the digital landscape, helping users to reflect onto the implications of their information power and the responsibility of sharing accurate information into an informationally overloaded landscape. This type of approach is followed by an account of the cognitive processes implied in the search and sharing of pieces of information online, which increase the understanding and awareness of users in their online behavior.

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Fakespotting is also immune from a "reparative" or "emergency" approach that only identify the digital media landscape as a dangerous space for unsafe navigation, but actively promotes digital culture.

Finally, Fakespotting avoids what Rivoltella calls a Light Media Education and pursues what we want to address as an Extended account of it. In its historical account of Media Education (Rivoltella 2020) he argues for new research on the field of Media Education, which celebrity and broad diffusion has implicated a stagnation in the production of new research. The problem of a Light Media Education approach are exemplified in the use of checklists, which – just like the "quick fixes" proposed by Buckingham, provide an easy tool for instantly checking information online without helping users and students to develop a critical understanding of how information outlets work or which implications they have on politics or social life. If an accessible and understandable account of Media Education content is key to fostering Digital Competence, so is the fact that its accessibility should not compromise the complexity of the treated matter.

This is why we presented the emergence of the concept of Digital Competence and how it has stemmed from Media Education, going through Media Literacy. Digital Competence, in the dimensions proposed by DigComp, cannot be reached via quick fixes, but only through the promotion of critical thinking.

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b. Critical Thinking and Digital Competence

Fakespotting helps building a critical approach to the Media Ecosystem, giving students both off- and online tools to orientate themselves into the digital media landscape, the information overload, or its echo chambers.

Some examples of how the Modules will help developing critical thinking related to Digital Competence are:

- The History of Media Innovations (Module 1) can help users to reflect onto their power of information and allow them to be aware of the free speech implications of regulating media spaces.
- the Media Diet tool (Module 2) which is an adaptable critical thinking tool that can be personalized and re-used in many different educational contexts
- the examples of the types of Manipulation (Module 3), with an innovating combination of digital tools and operational questions to tackle manipulated content
- Lateral Reading methodology (Module 4), which gives an accessible methodology to verify and compare different media outlets, empowering evaluating skills for the multi-convergent digital media landscape.
- The concrete examples of information disorder (Module 5 and 6) can help situate the experience of digital information consumption into the social and political life of users.

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4.2. Fakespotting and Digital Competence

How do the contents of the Fakespotting project insert in the Digital Competence Framework?
Here are the Areas of the DigComp covered by the Fakespotting project, followed by which specific digital competences the project can help to develop:

Area of Competence	Digital Competences
Information and data literacy	Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content; Evaluating data, information and digital content; Managing data, information and digital content;
Communication and collaboration	Interacting through digital technologies; Sharing through digital technologies; Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies; Collaborating through digital technologies; Netiquette
Digital content creation	Developing Digital content; Integrating and re-elborating digital content;
Safety	Protecting health and well-being;
Problem solving	Creatively using digital technologies; Identifying digital competence gaps;

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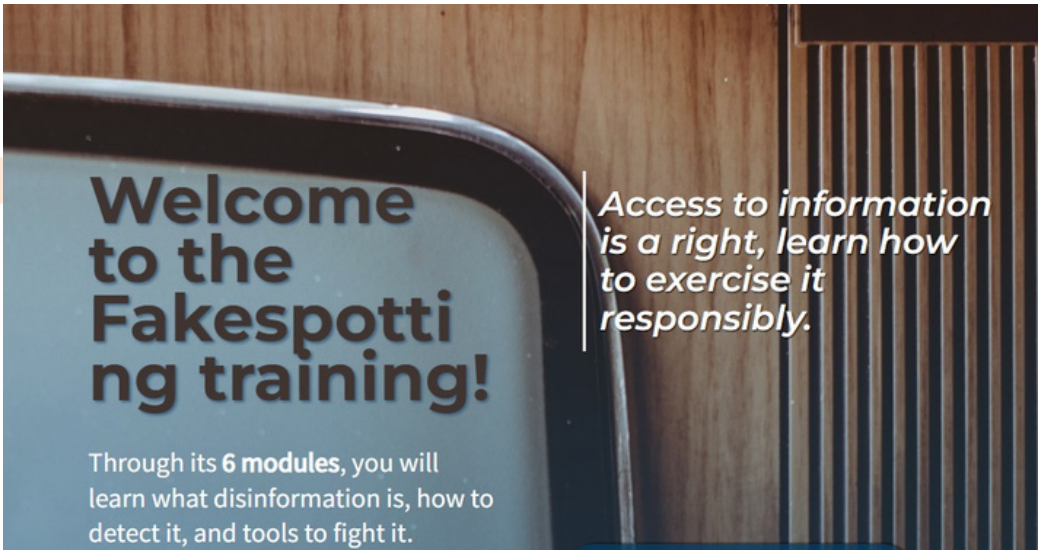
4.3 Fakespotting as a Dynamic integration of Digital Competence in European Curricula of Studies



a.Adapting Fakespotting to the Digital Education Action Plan

The Fakespotting IO2: Framework for integrating Digital Competences in HEIs goes in the direction set by the Digital Education Action Plan, proposing an integration of the scientifical approach of a broader Media Education framework into the existing educational institutions infrastructure.

Following the idea of reconfiguring education with the demands of the digital age, this Output has the objective of integrating the contents of the project into higher educational institutions. In this way, it will be operated a distribution of accessible and adaptable digital Media Educational tools apt to fostering digital competences suitable for the Labour Market.

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b.Fostering digital competences related to Labour Market

Following the Digital Education and Action Plan, Fakespotting can help fostering digital competences related to Labor Market via its Digital Modules.

Firstly, it disseminates the results of the Digital Labor Market Survey, which identifies some of the requests of the digital labor market, and which has orientated the development of the Modules content.

Secondly, the Digital Modules will consist in a proposal of a dynamic and adaptable integration of Media Education and Digital Competences contents into European Curricula of Studies. The integrability of the Modules into the output will be granted by its elements. For each Module there will be listed :

- The Synopsis of the Module
- The Module Aims
- The Module's Learning Outcomes
- A set of Practical Exercises for teachers and educators to implement into their courses
- A common Glossary of the digital age

Consequently, once that the links among the contents of the modules and the digital competences will be explicated, the learning outcomes of the different modules con be assessed not only via Fakespotting self-assessment tool, but also via the other Digital Skills Assessment Tools presented in §3.3, that will also be suggested as integration to HEIs in order to verify their adaptability to the demands of the Digital Education Action Plan.

Finally, Fakespotting contents and its Digital Competence Integration proposal can be suggested as a part of the EDSC Feasibility Study ending in November 2023, as a part of the European Year of Skills.

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4.4. Digital Labour Market Survey

The aim of this questionnaire is to identify the digital and media skills more requested by the Labour Market.

150 employers working in the digital field assisted Fakespotting project in assessing which media and digital information skills are most demanded by future or current workers.

Questions addressed three important aspects: the level of digital literacy, the analysis and use of information and how these skills affect a person's working life. In this way, we will determine the skills' framework that you think is necessary for future professionals.

The survey will help to determine the skills HEIs students and young adults need to acquire in terms of information retrivial, ethics when communicating through digital tools, problem-solving skills, or the technical knowledge needed, among others.

The questionnaire is based in a multiple-choice format. 5 answers ranging from 1, the most negative, to 5, the most positive.
The charts below present the average scores at National and European level related to each topic or skills required.

What level do you think professionals hired in your workplace are currently at in terms of evaluating data, information and digital content?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Basic level- guidance needed	2,3	2,9	3,3	1,7	2,7	3	2,7
Intermediate level- they can solve straightforward problems	3	3,1	3,3	2,7	3	4	3,2
Advanced level- they are autonomous and able to guide others	3,7	4,1	3,5	5	3,4	2,7	3,7
Highly specialised level- they are able to contribute, find solutions and propose new ideas	3	4	3,5	4,5	3,4	1,3	3,3

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4.4. Digital Labour Market Survey

When it comes to digital tools for work, professionals in your workplace

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Are able to choose simple digital tools and technologies to do their job	3,7	4,3	3,7	4,7	4,1	3	**3,9**
Are able to use different software and determine which one is better in any case	4	4,2	3,7	4,2	3,5	2,7	**3,7**
Are able to research new tools according to the needs	4	4,4	3,5	4	4,1	2	**3,7**
Are able to learn easily new tools	4	4	4	4,5	4,1	2	**3,8**

Eventually, when it comes to ethical use of information and communication tools

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
They are aware of the rights and duties regarding information	3,7	3,6	4	4	3,7	2,7	**3,6**
They need additional training	4	2,7	3,5	3,7	4	4,7	**3,8**
They need periodic life-long learning training	3,3	3,5	3,3	3,7	3,4	4,7	**3,7**
They have the necessary tools to inform and receive information ethically	3	4,2	3,5	4,5	3,1	1,7	**3,3**

What do you think is keeping professionals far from learning/ acquiring digital skills?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
They do not have enough time	2	4	3	2,2	3,3	3	**2,9**
Formal education (schools, Universities) does not provide proper contents and/or training to operate in the business	3,7	4,2	3,8	4,5	4,6	5	**4,3**
Labour agencies do not provide proper contents and/or training to operate in the business	3,7	3,1	3.9	4,5	3,7	3,7	**3,1**
There is not specific training for this sector	2	3,8	3,6	4,5	3,7	2,3	**3,3**

Regarding media literacy, how did the situation change/develop after the COVID-19 situation?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
The amount of fake news increased	3,7	4,3	4,3	4,7	4,7	4	**4,3**
It has been more difficult for professionals to find out reliable information sources.	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,7	3,9	3,7	**3,7**
There has been rapid digitisation, and it was hard to keep up.	2,3	2,9	3,4	3,5	3,1	2,3	**2,9**
The role of the fact-checker has become much more relevant	2,7	4,5	4,4	4	4,9	4,3	**4,1**

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4.4. Digital Labour Market Survey

In your opinion, what are the features influencing the digital and information skills' shortage in your work environment?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Lack of English pro-efficiency level	3,3	2,7	3,1	3,2	3,1	1,3	**2,8**
Cultural constrains	3,7	2,1	2,6	2,2	2,3	2,3	**2,5**
Political constrains	4	2,2	2,5	2,2	2	2,3	**2,5**
Lack of updated digital skills	3,3	2,9	3,8	3,7	3	4,7	**3,6**

What digital skills do you consider most relevant in order to undertake communication and information activities in your work-field?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Assessing information relevance and purpose	3,7	4,3	4,4	4,2	4,9	4,7	**4,4**
Assessing information reliability	4	4,5	4,5	4	5	5	**4,5**
Identifying the most appropriate digital tools according to the needs of the job	4,3	3,9	3,6	4	4	4	**4,0**
Using digital tools creatively	4,3	4,7	3,8	4,2	4,4	3	**4,1**

In your opinion, the core competences in information and data literacy are

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content	3,3	4,6	4,2	4	4,7	5	**4,3**
Evaluating data, information and digital content	3,7	4,6	4,3	4	4,6	4,3	**4,3**
Managing data, information and digital content	4	3,7	4,1	4,2	4,5	3,7	**4,0**
Using digital technologies to communicate	3,7	3,9	4,2	4	4,1	4,7	**4,1**

What do you think is more important when it comes to problem-solving in the workplace?

	IT	SK	AL	MK	RS	ES	Tot
Identifying digital needs	3,7	4,2	3,5	3,5	4,3	4,3	**3,9**
Making informed decisions	3,3	4,1	3,9	4,5	4,3	5	**4,2**
Ability to share resources through online tools	4	3,6	3,7	4,2	4,1	4	**3,9**
Ability to locate the information in a short time	4	4,1	4	4,2	4,3	3,7	**4,1**

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4.4. Digital Labour Market Survey

If you had the chance to enroll your staff into a training session to further develop their skills, what subjects would you consider more appealing considering your work?

[List below provides skills in order of relevance at European level]

- 2) Recognising the difference between News and Opinions;
- 3) Lateral Reading;
- 4) Exploring innovative search engines;
- 14)History of digital communication/information tools;
- 7) Social Media disinformation dynamics;
- 10) Manipulation techniques;
- 11) Typologies of disinformation;
- 9) Techniques to verify factual statements made by public persons;
- 12) Promotional techniques through social media;
- 6) Data mining;
- 1) Data analysis;
- 8)Data representation strategies;
- 13) Social impact of disinformation;
- 5) Digital Ethics and current legal framework;

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5. Digital Competences Modules

According to the labour market needs root out from the survey deployed at European level and reported in the 4th session, plustaking into account the EU digital competence frameworks, the Digital Education Plan as well as the recognition tools mentioned in the previous chapters, the following session of the Toolkit is dedicated to recommendations for HE teachers on how to transfer skills and methodologies coming from fact-checking environment into the academic programmes represented by the partnership: Communication Studies, Semiotics, Journalism, Media Literacy, Political Science.
The objective is to provide a complete guidance to HE teachers to boost the recognition of skills and to include fact-checking, information and media literacy within the academic world beyond the usual boundaries of academic subjects in order to make HE teachers:

- Recognize and acquire methodologies, pedagogies, tools, practical exercises, assessment methods and learning outcomes related to fact-checking and information and media literacy;
- Transfer the skills and knowledge acquired into innovative digital curricula, in order to boost the HE teachers initial career;
- Transfer methodologies, pedagogies, tools and activities inspired by information and media literacy and concrete fact-checking procedures to students and academic programmes and courses.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 1

Synopsis

The course explores the digital revolution and its impact on the media landscape. It covers the historical shifts in information sources, from the invention of the printing press to the rise of mass media and the advent of the internet and digital media. The course discusses the accessibility of information in the digital age and the opportunities it presents for empowering individuals, particularly those living under oppressive regimes. It also examines the challenges brought about by the digital revolution, such as information overload, distrust in traditional media, and the propagation of confirmation bias and echo chambers.

The consequences of these developments are explored, including the effects on quality media and its economy, the diversification of information sources, the problem of distrust in media, and the need for regulation in the online space. The course discusses the potential dangers of unregulated spaces, such as the proliferation of hate speech, disinformation, and manipulation. It also highlights the importance of self-regulation and media education initiatives in promoting a free and responsible information space. The Digital Services Act (DSA) is presented as an example of an attempt to regulate online activity.

Throughout the course, various studies and research findings are referenced to support the discussion on topics such as information overload, addiction to social media, confirmation bias, and the state of the media environment.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 1

Module Aims

- introduce users to the changes in the new information ecosystem and their impact on information consuming
- encourage users to think critically about the new sources of information, such as the digital ones, including social media.

Units Topics

- How the information space changed in the 21st century:The printing press, Mass Media, Internet and digital media.
- Main challenges consumers face in information consumption in the 21st century.
- Income problems for quality media
- Coping with the information overload
- Addiction: constantly seeking for triggers
- Strong confirmation bias creating echo chambers
- The Issues of regulating free speech
- What does the change in information space mean for quality standard media.
- Informational borders: cost of information and paywalls
- Information source diversification and the risk of distrust in media
- Problems of unregulated spaces: from freedom of speech to freedom of reach
- Regulation and self-regulation
- The case of the digital service act (DSA)

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5. Digital Competences

Module 1

Learning Outcomes

- a deeper understanding of the challenges that new technologies brought to the way of how we daily consume information.
- the challenges that the new ways of communication pose on journalism and quality information.

Practical Exercises

1) The teacher should experiment with students.
First tracking internet use and social media use, with a specific focus on how many sites they visit within the week.
Then search how many of the principal newspapers (in the receiving language, or in English) have paywalls, and do a small survey among students on:

1. How many of them would pay for a newspaper
2. Why?

To conclude the class exercise, confront the different answers and do a general graph of what came up.

2 Kahoot questionnaire on the history of media

Question 1: Which of the following inventions played a crucial role in the digital revolution?
a) Steam engine
b) Printing press
c) Telephone
d) Automobile

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5. Digital Competences

Module 1

Question 2: What is one of the challenges brought about by the digital revolution?
a) Limited access to information
b) Decreased connectivity
c) Information overload
d) Decreased economic opportunities

Question 3: What is one potential consequence of distrust in traditional media?
a) Decreased political engagement
b) Increased public awareness
c) Enhanced media literacy
d) Strengthened democratic institutions

Question 4: Which term refers to the phenomenon where individuals seek out information that confirms their existing beliefs?
a) Echo chamber
b) Confirmation bias
c) Information overload
d) Digital divide

Question 5: What is one potential danger of unregulated online spaces?
a) Enhanced diversity of opinions
b) Improved access to quality information
c) Proliferation of hate speech
d) Strengthened social cohesion

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5. Digital Competences

Module 1

Question 6: What is an example of an attempt to regulate online activity?
a) Digital Services Act (DSA)
b) Internet Freedom Act (IFA)
c) Social Media Protection Act (SMPA)
d) Online Privacy Initiative (OPI)

Question 7: Why is media education important in the digital age?
a) To limit access to information
b) To promote critical thinking and media literacy
c) To encourage reliance on traditional media
d) To restrict freedom of speech

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5. Digital Competences

Module 2

Synopsis

This module aims to enable course participants to assess their "media diet" through resources and exercises to encourage critical reflection on their information and media consumption habits. To achieve this purpose, we will explore the changing media landscape, where traditional or regular media and social platforms coexist in a constantly evolving digital environment that presents some alarming challenges. Among them, of particular concern is that of disinformation.

The web has become a fertile ground for disseminating fake news, conspiracy theories, unfounded rumours, and other information disorders for years. Such content is often convincingly presented and quickly shared, reaching many people who find it challenging to identify what is accurate and dishonest/inauthentic.

In this context, and as a starting point for module 2, we will begin by analysing our media and information routines and identifying good and bad practices in accessing the media, focusing on fact-checking. We will then address issues related to the risks and challenges posed by personalised search techniques through microtargeting and algorithms on the web, highlighting aspects and problems such as polarisation and the reinforcement of our beliefs through echo chambers and bubble filters. Finally, we will emphasise the identification of inauthentic content on social media and the definition of important concepts related to disinformation necessary to face and understand the magnitude of this phenomenon.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 2

Module Aims

- To Motivate users to reflect critically on their information and media consumption habits.
- To train users in good media literacy practices to ensure adequate access to information and a good "media diet".
- To alert users to the risks of consuming only content proposed by the algorithm that reinforces our opinions and beliefs.
- To turn users into fact-checkers of their content so that they can distinguish between accurate information and disinformation.

Module Topics

1. SOCIAL MEDIA DISINFORMATION & RADICALIZATION (Part I)

- Media consumption and information habits. Reviewing our media diet.
- Differences between digital and regular media and new information access challenges.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA DISINFORMATION & RADICALIZATION (Part II)

- Algorithmic selection of information.
- Sponsored content and targeting.
- Disinformation and inauthentic behaviour on social media.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 2

Learning Outcomes

- Be able to recognise the differences between traditional and digital media.
- Be able to identify and learn good practices for using social media.
- Be able to follow a “balanced media diet” and make conscious decisions about media consumption.
- Improve media and information literacy skills to tackle disinformation.
- Strengthen critical thinking skills to make informed decisions in media consumption.

Practical Exercises - Recommendation for Educators

1. **GOOD MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND INFORMATION HABITS**

Classroom Exercise 1 – Debate and discuss in class.

Resources for teachers:

1) Organise and moderate a debate among the students to discover what discoveries they have made following the previous exercises to reach a personal and group reflection on their media consumption habits.

2) Ask them about their current "media diet", whether they think it is healthy and whether they will change or modify their media consumption habits after the findings.

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Module 2

3) Propose a classification of media (e.g. reliable, not so reliable and unreliable) based on the verification tests carried out in the previous exercises and case studies.

4) Based on the analysed and classified media, invite students to create a repository of recommended media to reference their new media and information consumption habits.

5) Suggest reading this recommended article: Media discovered the fake staff.
After that, discuss in class this Spanish example in which a digital newspaper created part of the staff with pictures of people from a photo bank and their bios were written as a "Tinder bio".

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5. Digital Competences

Module 2

MICROTARGETING:

YOU ARE NOT A DATA; YOU ARE NOT A NUMBER

Classroom Exercise 2 Debate and discuss in class

Resources for Teachers**:**

Alternative reframing: As economists say, "there is no free lunch". No information, service or application is free. All free apps collect your data, information about what you are interested in and what you click on, and information about your consumption and online behaviour. This data is than monetised and sold to other third parties. An example is advertisements and sponsored content that are personally selected to appeal to your preference so that you click on the product or information.

1) Organise and moderate a discussion where students reflect on the content they consume and think about what content and information they have actively chosen and what algorithms on a website/app/social media platform have suggested it.
- Finally, have them recall when they bought something or consumed something recommended to them online.

2) Suggest reading these two articles so that they can discover, on the one hand, how Tik Tok recommends videos: How TikTok recommends videos #ForYou, and on the other hand, how filter bubbles work: https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles?subtitle=es

3) Show the Netflix documentary Social Dilemma in class and suggest they write an essay on its most relevant and important

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5. Digital Competences

Module 2

3. INAUTHENTIC BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Classroom Exercise 3 Debate and discuss in class

Resources for teachers:

1) Screen the HBO documentary Fake Famous followed by this brief discussion with the producer.

2) Propose reading the article "Fake Famous" and the Tedium of Influencer Culture (20 February 2021) by Naomi Fry, a journalist for the New Yorker.

3) After the above activities, lead a classroom discussion with your students about critical thinking:
- How many have thought about being notorious online and why?
- If one of the students wants to be an influencer, for example, what would they be willing to do?
- How many have reviewed people or social media accounts they follow online and question the reliability/validity of the information and the performances posted?
- Talk about how they felt when they discovered that someone posted false and misleading information.
- How many times have the opinions of others swayed you?
- Have you thought about whether your online friendships are from a varied ideological spectrum or whether you all have similar interests?
- To conclude the class exercise, confront students' different steps before trusting those who influence their behaviour or lifestyle.

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Module 3

Synopsis

Fake news has become a concerning phenomenon in the last two decades doe to three main reasons: Firstly, it is because of technology development, enabling easy and rapid dissemination. Secondly, it is due to their direct influence in political, economic, and social life, undermining democratic standards and thirdly, it is because of what is known as artificial intelligence. Taking this context into account, this module holds particular importance for journalism and communication students. They are faced with two challenges: To identify and be aware of fake sources and, secondly to become promoters of media literacy in order to identify fake news.

The module includes:
·Political manipulation.
·PR manipulation – the churnalism phenomenon
·Manipulations from governmental authorities
·Data manipulation and/or misuse
·Image manipulation – Does camera lies?
·Video manipulation
·Manipulation through conspiracy theories

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5. Digital Competences

Module 3

Module Aims

The purpose of this multimedia module is firstly to provide a theoretical definition of that media manipulation is, considering the breadth of this phenomenon. Students will be guided to navigate through various interpretations of the concept. The concern among professionals has grown in the last two decades due to the development of technology and its direct impact on democratic standards in countries. The module includes:
·what is media manipulation?
·why media manipulation is happening.
·what are the actors and factors behind this phenomenon?
·what are the main manipulation types conveyed through media and,
·what can we do to protect ourselves against them?

Learning Outcomes

·To be able to define and understand manipulative and propaganda campaigns in media.
·To be able to understand and categorize the media manipulation types.
·To be able to understand the objectivity through the media and the quality of media content.
·To develop critical thinking against manipulative actions through the media.
·To be able and responsible to prepare qualitative media product without inclusion of manipulative elements.
·To be able to understand and evaluate the reliability and validity of media manipulations and its sources.
·To be able to understand and use properly the terminology of media manipulative actions.
·To be able to demonstrate skills to analyse, evaluate and create content and strategies to counter manipulative action.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 3

Practical Exercises

The first exercise focuses on Public Relations and the dissemination of information from government institutions, while the second exercise assesses students' skills in image manipulation.

Exercise 1: The Prime Minister's Office sends the pre-packaged material of a political activity in which the journalist was not present. What should a journalist do?
A.He publishes the material of the political activity.
B.He rewrites the same text himself but uses the same images and statements.
C.He selects only specific parts of the material, e.g. statements of the Prime Minister and uses it for its own reporting purpose;
D.The journalist rejects the material and starts the research himself.
E. Based on the material the reporter supports it with interviews from citizens.

Correct answers: C & D

Exercise 2: Following are three news photographs made by LA Times photographer Brian Walski in 2003 during the war in Iraq. One of them was found to be altered.
1. Which one is the manipulated photo?
2. What kind of manipulation is c
3. What are the factors behind th manipulation?
4. What conclusions may we draw from this case?

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5. Digital Competences

Module 4

Synopsis

The course focuses on the issue of encountering deceiving content while searching for information online. It discusses the tendency of individuals, including professors and undergraduates, to read vertically within a single website, which limits their ability to evaluate the reliability of online sources. The course introduces strategies for lateral reading, which involves moving between different tabs in the browser to gather more information about the content being analyzed. It explores various markers to identify manipulation in online texts, including textual markers such as narrative style and claims, and paratextual markers such as website layout, footnotes, and domain name. The course also addresses the importance of understanding the intention of the text and differentiating it from the reader's interpretation. It explores the aims of texts, such as propaganda, parody, and profit, highlighting the need to be aware of disguised political or commercial messages. Lateral reading is presented as a means to verify the reliability of a single content by cross-referencing multiple sources. The course suggests tools for lateral reading, including Click Restrain, Google News, Google Scholar, Reverse Image Search, and the SIFT method. Wikipedia is mentioned as a valuable resource for gathering information and details about websites or authors, emphasizing its policies for accuracy and reliance on reliable sources.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 4

Module Aims

- to encourage you to think critically about online contents;
- to enable you to critically analyze online content using a lateral reading methodology;
- to provide strategies, tactics and tools for tracing online contents to sources and for evaluating the reliability of those sources;

Units Topics

- How to approach digital content
- The relationship between internet content and what users believe to be true
- What lateral reading is and why it is so important

Learning Outcomes

- To be able to analyse, compare and critical evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources of data, information and digital contents.
- To know how to exploit different tools and sources in order to verify the reliability of online contents.
- to recognize quality information, opinions, judgments and misleading contents.

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5. Digital Competences

Module 4

Practical Exercises

1. **Questionnaire on reliability**

The exercise is divided in 2 phases.
First phase:
The teacher provides examples of page sites *clearly* unreliable. Participants should highlight the *manipulation markers* lying on the web pages; then the teacher provides examples of page sites *almost* reliable.
Participants should fill out a questionnaire based on simple questions such as: "Does this look professional? Are there spelling errors? Is there scientific language?"
The teacher should highlight the elements that should be evaluated through lateral reading and providing examples of how external resources can be exploited to test the reliability.
4 fields should be taken into account:

1. When was the information published or posted? Has the information been revised or updated?
2. The teacher highlights the post date and checks if the results show a different version of the news.
3. What about the organization that produced the content? Missing elements: headquarters, addresses, staff list, contacts. Are there any other websites mentioning the organisation? Are these websites included in the list of reliable websites?
4. What's the purpose of the post? Does the language seem appropriate and correct? The teacher should highlight moral statements and opinions into the post and questionable words and typos.
5. Is the information supported by evidence? Does it provide references? The teacher highlights missing evidence and reference into the post.

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Module 4

Practical Exercises

Second phase:
The teacher then proceeds on illustrating how different media outlets can share different versions of events, and highlights how the same event can be narrated in different ways.
The aim on this phase is to show how different events can have different narrations, but not always they are both incorrect: it's important to be able to tell when a text is reported in a biased way, but sometimes it just presents a different selection of elements which can or cannot be relevant in the process of reporting.

1. **Kahoot Questionnaire**

Question 1:
What are the aims of this module?
A) To encourage lateral reading
B) To promote vertical reading
C) To analyze online content using a linear approach
D) To trace online content to unreliable sources

Question 2:
What is the main purpose of lateral reading?
A) To move up and down on a single web page
B) To critically analyze online content
C) To stay within a single website for evaluation
D) To move from tab to tab in the browser for more information

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Module 4

Practical Exercises

Question 3:
Which markers are discussed in relation to analyzing online content?
A) Inside-the-text markers and intention of the text
B) Layout and footnotes
C) Claims and domain
D) Profit and aims of the text

Question 4:
What does vertical reading refer to?
A) Reading online content in a linear manner
B) Reading across different sources for verification
C) Reading only within a single website
D) Reading critically and analytically

Question 5:
Which tool can help in lateral reading by finding different pieces of news regarding the same event?
A) Click restrain
B) Google News
C) Google Scholar
D) Reverse Image Search

Question 6:
What policies ensure the accuracy of Wikipedia articles?
A) Neutral point of view and claims verification
B) Inside-the-text and paratextual markers
C) Layout and domain verification
D) Footnotes and profit analysis

Question 7:
How can users avoid being deceived by online content?
A) By reading vertically and staying within a single website
B) By critically analyzing the narrative style of the text
C) By using lateral reading and comparing different sources
D) By relying solely on Wikipedia for accurate information

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5. Digital Competences

Module 5

Synopsis

Identification of false content - This module will introduce students to media manipulation with sources of information. Students will be introduced to important details about instruments that could be used for recognizing whether the media source is relevant or not. They will also be taught how to recognize different sorts of manipulation with sources, photos, and videos on social media and how to use digital tools for deconstruction.

Module 5 starts with a short introduction about the impact of disinformation in the history of humankind. It emphasizes the fact that most of the disinformation was and still is relatively easily recognizable and with proper debunking, there should be no serious harm within the society. Then, the module introduces various manipulation techniques with the sources of information, that are used currently on the internet. Later, module 5 presents specific visual manipulation techniques used in photos and videos.

Finally, participants are presented with various online tools suitable for debunking false content not only within the text but with photos and videos, as well. The exercises that are at the end of the module touch upon every aspect presented in the module and provide a practical experience for participants not only to read about the problem, but try to solve it. And they are prepared for participants to try and learn to debunk the false content on their own.

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5. Digital Competences

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5. Digital Competences

Module 5

Module Aims

- Helping participants understand the impact of manipulative content on public opinion by illustrating it on some historical examples and also on recent events they can remember from the recent past
- To encourage participants to recognize different kinds of photo, video, and source manipulation by analyzing different types of manipulation and categorizing them into easily understandable concepts
- To build the capacities of students to use digital tools for the deconstruction of false media content including text, photo, and video manipulation
- To provide the students with exercises where they can improve their capacities of false content deconstruction coming from websites, newspapers as well as social media

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Understand the impact of false content and how false content is created and shared
- Recognize different sorts of false content not only in the written form but also in the photo and video form
- Students are introduced to the most important details about the media, that are used for recognizing if the information source is relevant or not.
- Students are able to assess whether an interlocutor in a media article is really an expert in that field or not.
- Students will learn where they can find and check scientific information from journalistic articles or social media.
- Students are taught how to use digital tools for monitoring and deconstruction of false content.
- Students are introduced to the most common photo and video manipulation.
- Students are able to recognize different types of photo and video manipulation.
- Students are empowered to use digital tools for photo and video verification

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5. Digital Competences

Module 5

Units Topics

1.Introduction

● Current and historical examples of manipulated content and its impact on public opinion.

○Donation of Constantine

○Fake newspaper article by Benjamin Franklin

○QAnon conspiracy theory

2. Verification sources

●Monitoring online media

○Recognizing signs of reliable websites

○Recognizing signs of unreliable websites

●Types of manipulation with the sources

○Imposter content

○Anonymous sources

○Incompetent sources

○Sources from social media

● Tools used for monitoring and deconstruction (Newstrition, FactChecker, CrowdTangle, Wayback Machine)

3. Photo and video verification

●Classification of the most common photo and video manipulation

○False connection – clickbait

○False context

○Imposter content

○Manipulated content

○Fabricated content

● Tools used for deconstruction (Google Image Search, TinEye, Forensically, INVID Verification, YouTube Data Viewer)

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Module 5

Practical Exercise

Instructions for teachers:

1. Show the following pictures/text screenshots to students and tell them they are fake. (If they can work on a computer ask them to open them from the Fakespotting webpage).
2. Encourage the students to find out why these items are fake using debunking instruments (here suffice Google and Google Image Search)
3. Proceed item by item and discuss with the class the answers to the following questions
   a. Which manipulation technique was used in the item? (Following the techniques described in Module 5)
   b. What could be the reason for manipulating it? Who could have a reason to manipulate it?
   c. What impact could it have?
4. Guiding answers to these questions are below every item. (Some of them are easily findable at a first glance on google, and some of them are not)
5. Highlight the difference between the innocent impact and the serious impact that manipulated content can evoke

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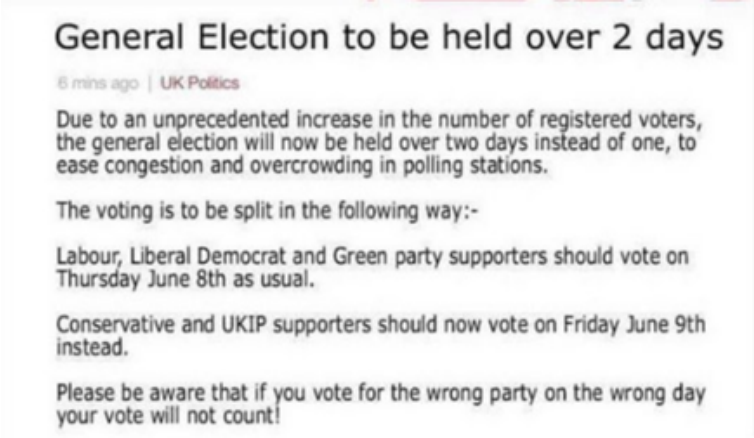
Module 5

Practical Exercise



General Election to be held over 2 days

6 mins ago | UK Politics

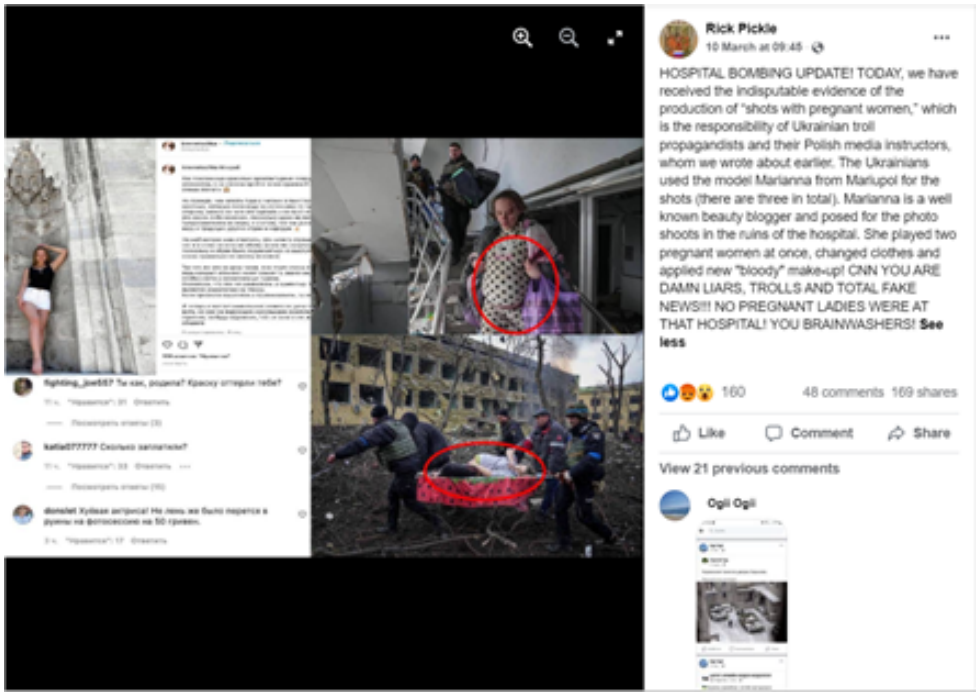
Due to an unprecedented increase in the number of registered voters, the general election will now be held over two days instead of one, to ease congestion and overcrowding in polling stations.

The voting is to be split in the following way:-

Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green party supporters should vote on Thursday June 8th as usual.

Conservative and UKIP supporters should now vote on Friday June 9th instead.

Please be aware that if you vote for the wrong party on the wrong day your vote will not count!



Rick Pickle
10 March at 09:45

HOSPITAL BOMBING UPDATE! TODAY, we have received the indisputable evidence of the production of "shots with pregnant women," which is the responsibility of Ukrainian troll propagandists and their Polish media instructors, whom we wrote about earlier. The Ukrainians used the model Marianna from Mariupol for the shots (there are three in total). Marianna is a well known beauty blogger and posed for the photo shoots in the ruins of the hospital. She played two pregnant women at once, changed clothes and applied new "bloody" make-up! CNN YOU ARE DAMN LIARS, TROLLS AND TOTAL FAKE NEWS!!! NO PREGNANT LADIES WERE AT THAT HOSPITAL! YOU BRAINWASHERS! **See less**

160 48 comments 169 shares

Like Comment Share

View 21 previous comments

Ogli Ogli

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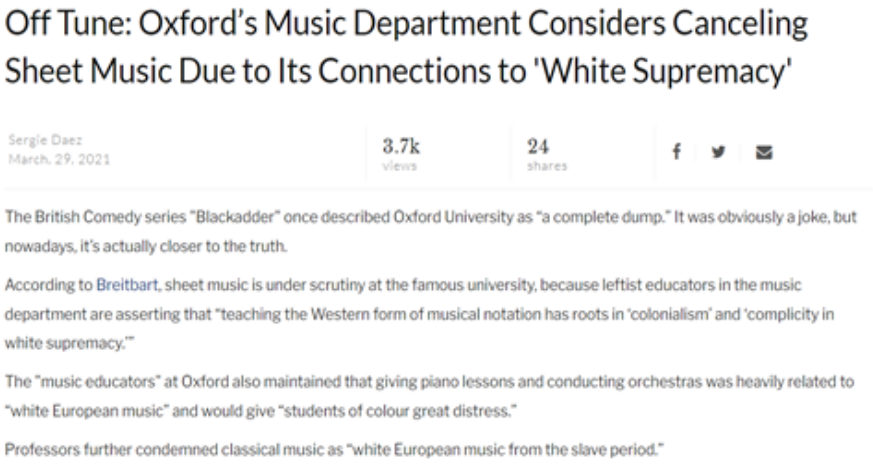
Module 5

Practical Exercise



Off Tune: Oxford's Music Department Considers Canceling Sheet Music Due to Its Connections to 'White Supremacy'

Sergie Daez
March. 29. 2021

3.7k views

24 shares

The British Comedy series "Blackadder" once described Oxford University as "a complete dump." It was obviously a joke, but nowadays, it's actually closer to the truth.

According to Breitbart, sheet music is under scrutiny at the famous university, because leftist educators in the music department are asserting that "teaching the Western form of musical notation has roots in 'colonialism' and 'complicity in white supremacy.'"

The "music educators" at Oxford also maintained that giving piano lessons and conducting orchestras was heavily related to "white European music" and would give "students of colour great distress."

Professors further condemned classical music as "white European music from the slave period."

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Module 6

Synopsis

Internet behaviour has consequences and effects on real life. Not surprisingly experts claim that we are living an onlife existence: human beings have a steady connection with the world wide web thanks to a variety of devices we use today (Luciano Floridi, The Onlife Manifesto, 2014).
It is easy to understand how online choices have an impact on our real life. Disinformation and its effects on real life are not an exception. The module highlights some examples of impacts of disinformation.

Module Aims

- To shed a light on the dissemination dynamics of online content;

- To increase the awareness about the possible effects of disinformation on real life and society;

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Module 6

Units Topics

1. Media influence and public perception
2. Vulnerabilities in media consumption
3. Conspiracy theories' impact to society

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, participants should be able:

- To understand the possible effects of disinformation on real life and society;

- To understand the range of motivations behind disinformation;

- To acknowledge the fact that the spread of disinformation depends as much on the logics of online platforms as on our baggage of beliefs and biases;

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Module 6

Practical Exercises

1. What are the common features that link the three cases? (more than one answer is possible)

1. The spread of disinformation is facilitated by authority figures of the time.
2. Popular culture, interpretive frameworks, beliefs and superstition.
3. The disinformation in all the cases was spread through well-trusted media.
4. All of these cases started from the traditional media.

2. Search the content online regarding the third case – QAnon, including social networks. Where was the content republished or reposted?

1. Public Figure (influencers, artists, singers, etc.)
2. Politicians
3. Unreliable/unknown online sources
4. Newspaper
5. Users
6. Political-oriented news outlet
7. Radio or Tv channels

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5. Digital Competences

Module 6

Practical Exercises

3. Choose the possible causes of the success of the content in the three case studies presented in the module 6:

- Beliefs and superstitions
- The media where the news appeared (power of media)
- Historical context
- The charisma/clout of the source
- Previous contents concerning the same issue
- Biases concerning the main topic of the content

4. Choose below the habits concerning a possible user that tends to share false content:

- He/she often reads online content because he/she doesn't trust media such as television or radio any more.
- While he/she reads a content he/she asks his/herself "who is" that produced or shared the content.
- He/she doesn't feel the need to consult a variety of sources.
- He/she asks some friends what they think about the content itself.
- He/she often reads online content (such the one above) while he/she's doing other activities.
- When a content astonishes feelings and emotions he/she often searches the topic on the search engine and compares two/three different sources.

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5. Digital Competences

Glossary

Media Manipulation: The deliberate alteration or distortion of media content, including text, photos, and videos, with the intent to deceive, misinform, or influence public opinion.

Deconstruction: The process of analysing and breaking down media content, including text, images, and videos, to identify manipulation, misinformation, or false information.

Digital Tools for Deconstruction: Software and online resources used to analyse and break down media content to identify manipulation or misinformation. Examples include reverse image search, video analysis tools, and fact-checking websites.

Digital Literacy: The ability to critically evaluate, analyse, and navigate digital media, including recognizing manipulation and false content.

Fact-Checking: The practice of verifying the accuracy and truthfulness of claims, statements, or information presented in media sources through thorough investigation and analysis.

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2022 *DigComp 2.2: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens*, EUR 31006 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-48882-8, doi:10.2760/115376, JRC128415.

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ANNEX

European Local Pilots' Reports

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FakeSpotting

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Local Pilot Report

MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY

- **Date and Venue**

- 11. April 2023
- Matej Bel University, Faculty of Political Science and International Relations

- **Description of Participants**

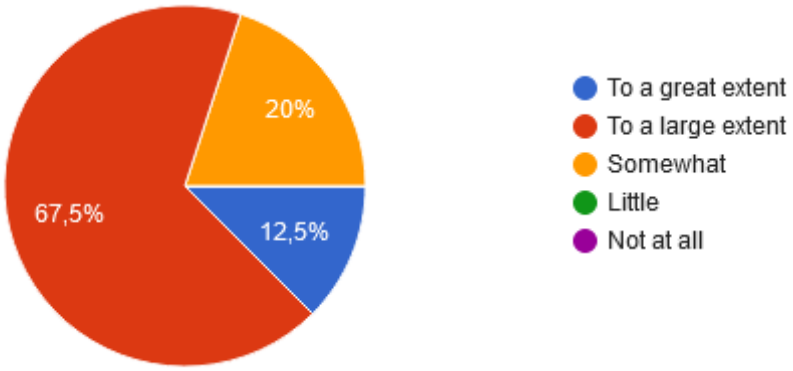
- There were three groups of participants: one group of professors and two groups of students.
- 10 university Professors, Associated Professors and Doctors from the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations from three different departments – political science, international relations and security studies. (see list of participants)
- 30 students from both levels of Bachelors and Masters studies from three different study programs - political science, international relations and security studies were involved in the process. Involving all levels of students gives a better idea related to the course as they are from different knowledge levels, work experiences and perspectives. (see list of participants)

- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants**

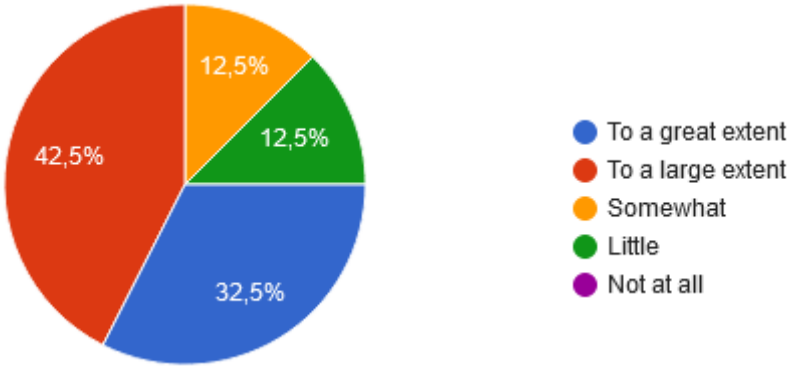
- The platform was introduced to a group of professors, who were encouraged to register and provide honest feedback via a Google Form questionnaire and personal feedback after completing the course modules.
- Two separate groups of 15 students were introduced to the project and courses during a presentation. All students registered on the platform and completed the course within 24 hours, focusing on video presentations and providing valuable feedback through a Google Form questionnaire and personal feedback.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes**

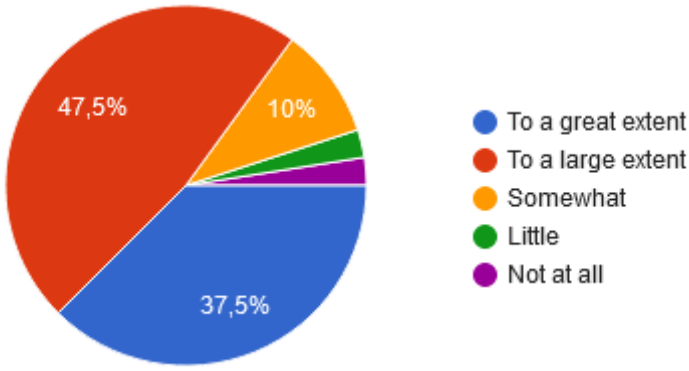
1. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your awareness of the consequences related to information overload and echo chambers that one can experience in the digital information environment?



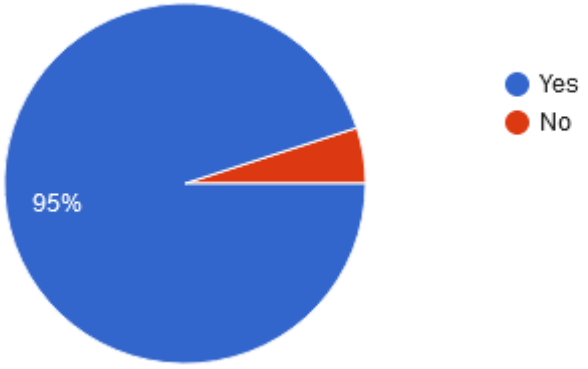
2. To what extent did the e-learning course make you aware of the need to diversify your resources?



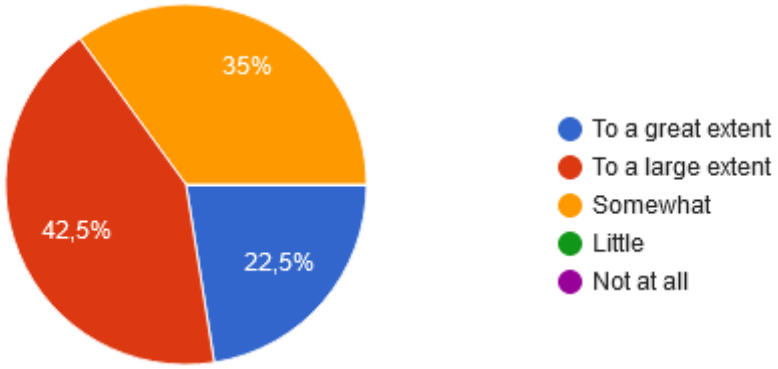
3. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your knowledge on lateral reading techniques and the tools able to optimise your online search?



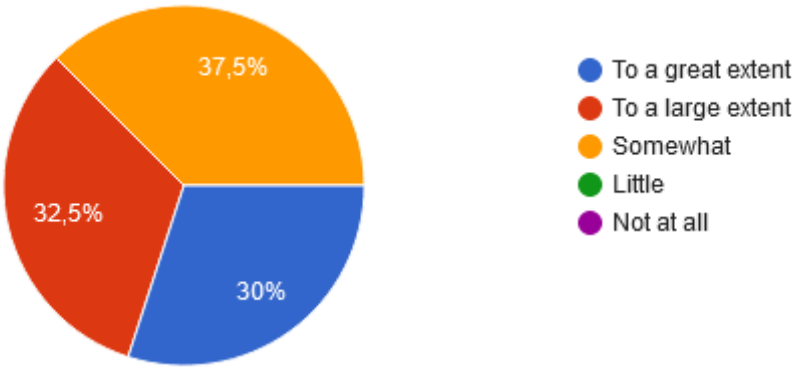
4. Did the e-learning course teach you how to verify information effectively?



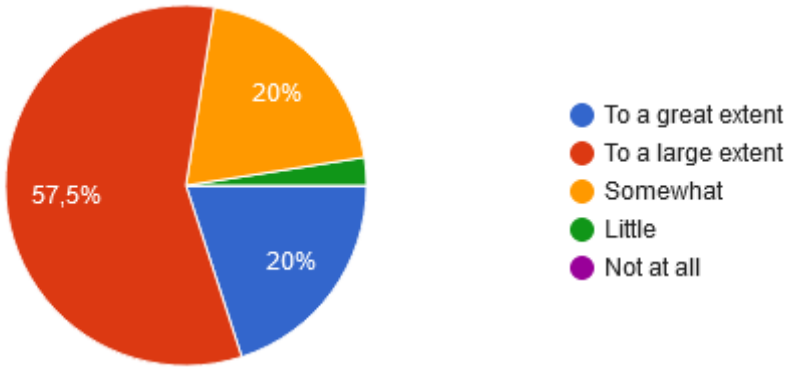
5. To what extent do you feel more confident in verifying the source of information after completing the e-learning course?



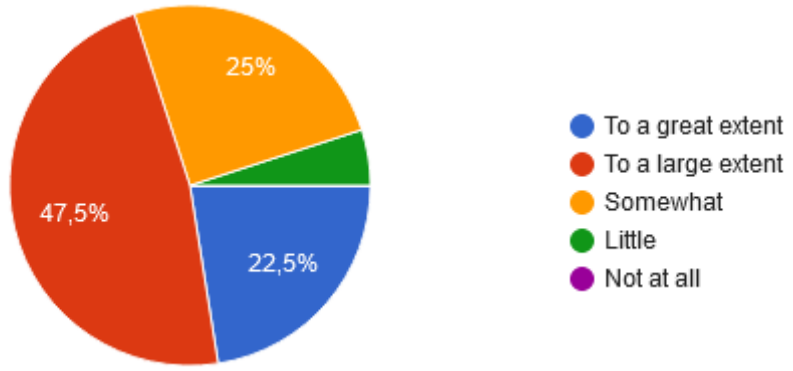
6. To what extent did the e-learning course make you aware of textual and paratextual markers that can help you determine the reliability of sources?



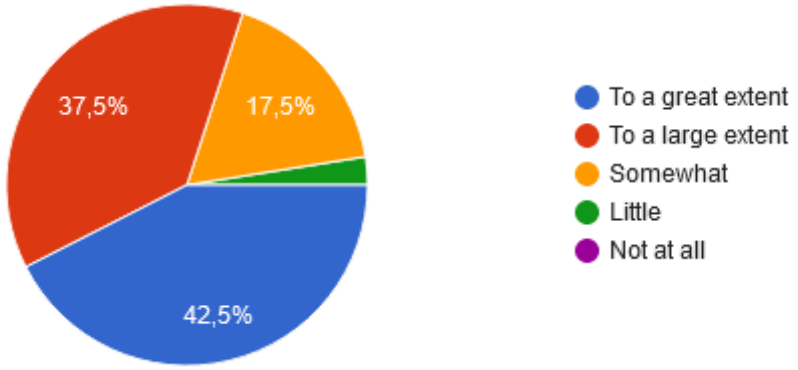
7. To what extent did the e-learning course provide you with understanding and explanation of various types of manipulation (such as false context, manipulated content, fabricated content, etc.)?



8. To what extent did the e-learning course make you confident in recognising how different choices of framing, angles, depth and proportion of a photo/picture can lead to manipulation or distortion of content?



9. After passing the e-learning course my knowledge of the societal impact of disinformation has increased.



Conclusion of findings:

- The course exceeded our expectations, providing valuable insights and practical skills that will be useful in our future careers.
- The instructors were knowledgeable and approachable, making the learning experience enjoyable and effective.
- The course was highly appealing and beneficial to students.
- Professors found the course to be a valuable addition to their lectures, who requested official certification upon completion.
- Both students and professors found the course materials to be engaging and practical.
- Students inquired about sharing the course with their peers, impressed by its usefulness.
- They appreciated the diverse range of learning materials, including interactive exercises and real-world case studies.
- They highly recommend this course to anyone interested in expanding their knowledge and skills in this field.
- A couple of students reported some technical issues (some parts of the texts in cyrilic, inability to display the quizzes) when doing the course on their own laptops.

Prepared by: Prof. Jaroslav Ušiak, Dr. Jozef M. Mintal and Dr. Vladimir Muller

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Local Pilot Report

Universidad Loyola Andalucía

- **Date and Venue:**

  Local pilot with students:
  The local piloting with students occurred on 10 March 2023 at Universidad Loyola Andalucía.
  - Campus in Córdoba: C. Escritor Castilla Aguayo, 4, 14004 Córdoba).

  Local pilot with teachers:
  The local piloting with teachers occurred from 13 to 26 March 2023 at Universidad Loyola Andalucía.
  - Campus in Sevilla: Av. de las Universidades, s/n, 41704 (Dos Hermanas, Sevilla)

- **Description of Participants:**

  Local pilot with students:
  - The participants (a sample of 39 students) were students of the subject "Creation and Design of Digital Content" of the Communication and Business Administration and Management degrees.

  - The trainers were the PhD. José Antonio MuñizVelázquez, the PhD. Pablo NavazoOstúa and the PhD. Candidate José Manuel Marcos Vílchez.

  Local pilot with teachers:
  - The participants (a sample of 10 teachers) were teachers and researchers from the Department of Communication and Education at Universidad Loyola Andalucía:

    PhD. Paula Herrero Diz
    PhD. Salvador Reyes de Cózar
    PhD. José María Barroso Tristán
    PhD. Álvaro Ramos Ruiz
    PhD. Francisco Javier Cristófol Rodríguez
    PhD. Noemí Morejón-LLamas
    PhD. Irene García Lázaro
    PhD. José Antonio Muñiz-Velázquez
    PhD. Pablo Navazo-Ostúa
    PhD. Candidate José Manuel Marcos-Vílchez.

- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants:**

  Local pilot with students:
  We conducted a classroom training of just over 2 hours, where we outlined the objectives of the project and the online training platform. We explain some key concepts through a presentation to complement the contents of the course modules. In addition, we explored the platform and had the trainees test the various contents and exercises. Finally, the students had time to answer the online evaluation questionnaire.

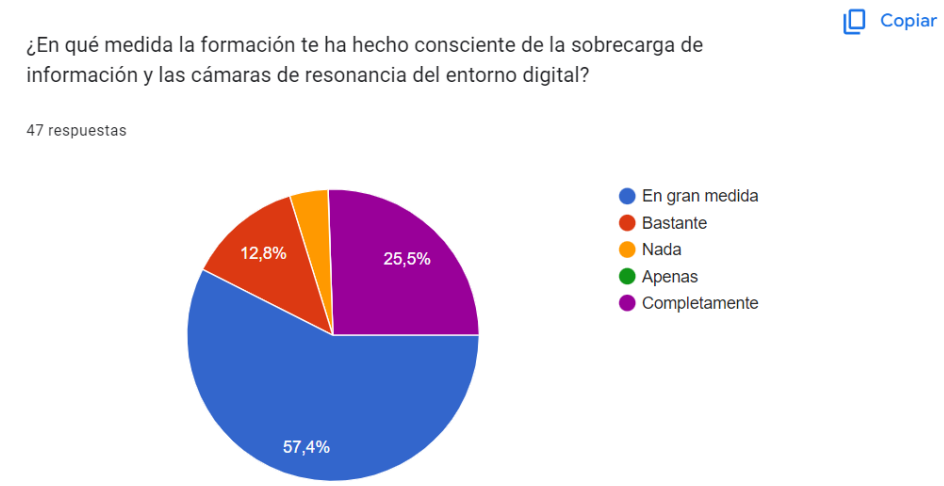
AGENDA AND PROGRAMME:

1) Presentation of the project and Key concepts.
2) Debate on Disinformation in our everyday life.
3) Experiencing the platform by the users.
4) Sharing impressions and feedback.
5) Signing and completion of the online evaluation.

Local pilot with teachers:
Teachers were informed about the objectives of the project and the training platform. Teachers were able to register and test the online course for two weeks. After this period, they sent their impressions by mail and answered the evaluation questionnaire.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes**

Question 1: Information overload and echo chambers:



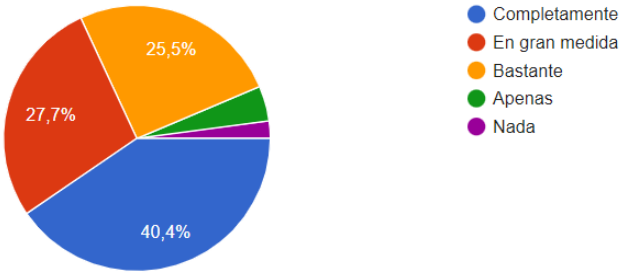
Question 2: The need for source diversification:

Question 3: Lateral reading techniques:

Copiar

¿En qué medida la formación te ha ayudado familiarizarte con las técnicas de lectura lateral y las herramientas capaces de optimizar la búsqueda en Internet?

47 respuestas

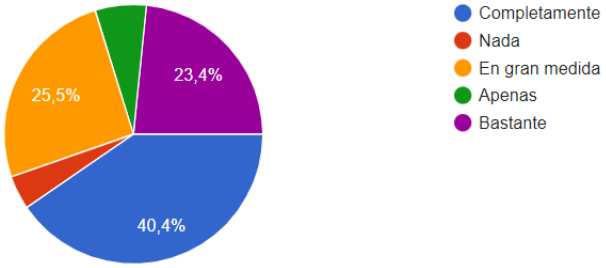


Question 4: Tracing back the source of information:

Copiar

¿En qué medida te sientes más competente a la hora de rastrear la fuente de información después de la formación?

47 respuestas

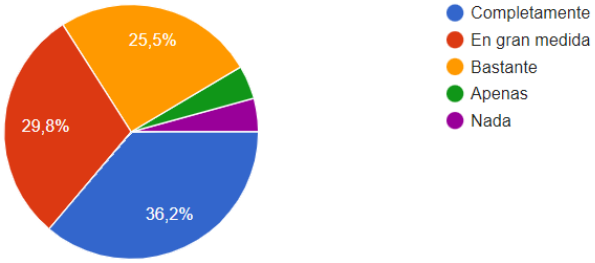


Question 5: Textual and paratextual markers:

Copiar

¿En qué medida la formación te ha ayudado a identificar los marcadores textuales y paratextuales a la hora de valorar la fiabilidad de las fuentes?

47 respuestas

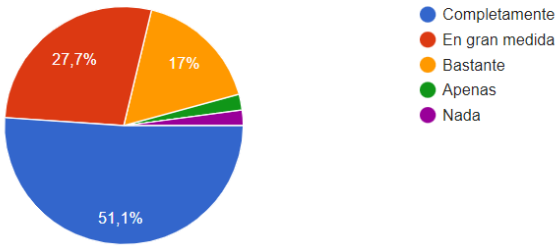


Question 6: Different types of mis/disinformation:

Copiar

¿En qué medida la formación te ha hecho consciente de los diferentes tipos de desinformación en el entorno de la información digital?

47 respuestas

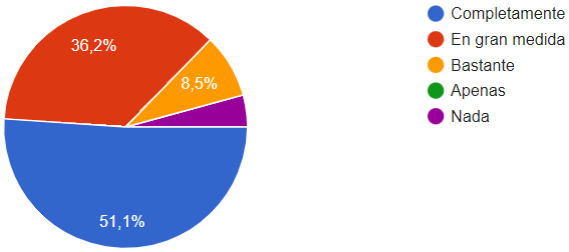


Question 7: Detecting image distortion /manipulation:

Copiar

¿Hasta qué punto la formación te ha ayudado a reconocer cómo las diferentes opciones de encuadre, ángulos, profundidad y proporción en la publicación de una foto/imagen pueden distorsionar el contenido?

47 respuestas



Question 8: Social impacts and consequences of disinformation:

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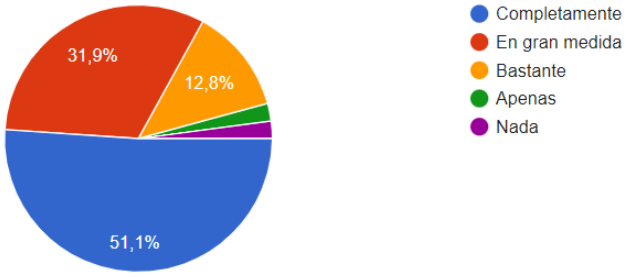
Copiar

¿En qué medida la formación te ha hecho reflexionar sobre las repercusiones y consecuencias de la desinformación?

47 respuestas



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Local Pilot Report

UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA – ALMA MATER STUDIORUM

- **Dates and Venues**

- 02 May 2023
    - University of Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum, Faculty of Philosophy and Communication Studies
- 08-12 May 2023
    - University of Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum.

- **Description of Participants**

- The Pilots have been delivered in two different moments among different groups of participants:
- One group of **7 international students** at the *Semiotics of Memory* class, supervised by prof. Francesco Mazzucchelli.
- One group of **16 students reached** through University of Bologna's student association *Rete degli Universitari*.
- One group of **7 among Doctors and Post-Doc researchers** from the Faculty of Philosophy and Communication Studies of the University of Bologna.

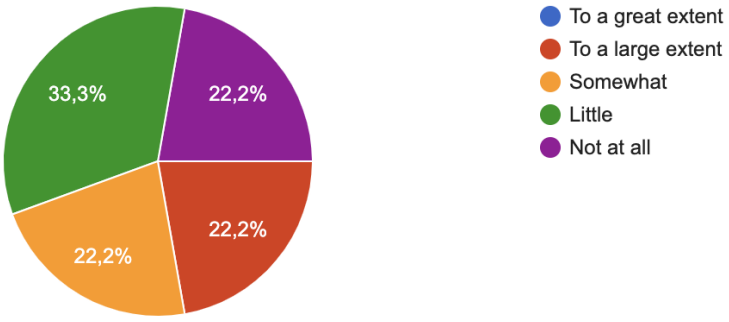
- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants**

- The platform was introduced by one of FakeSpotting trainers to prof. Mazzucchelli and his class on May 2nd via a presentation. Students' feedbacks were collected via a Google Form questionnaire, followed by a class discussion on the platform contents and format.
- During the following week, through the help of the students' association, 16 students were reached and introduced to the platform individually; they were then asked to provide their feedbacks through hand-delivered questionnaires, that were later integrated in the Google

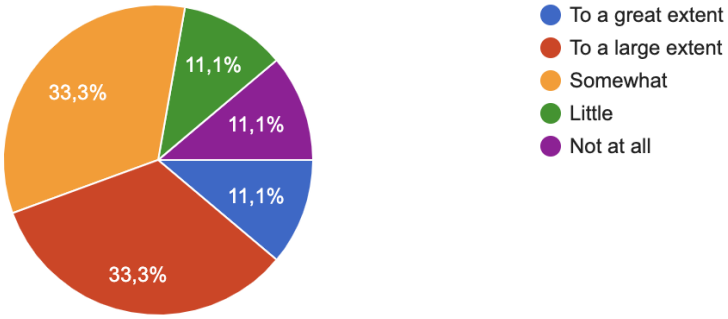
Form. Each introduction has been integrated with a personal discussion on the students' impressions on the platform.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes**

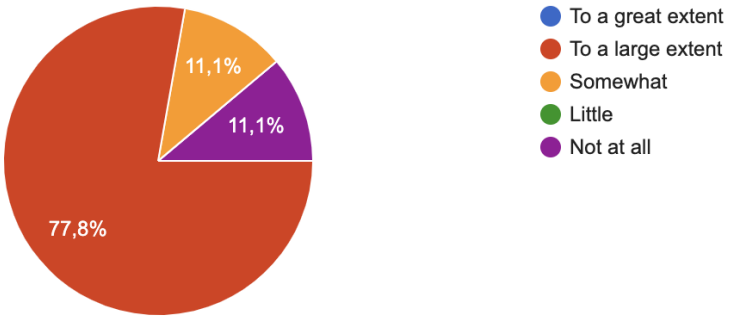
1. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your awareness of the consequences related to the digital revolution and information overload?



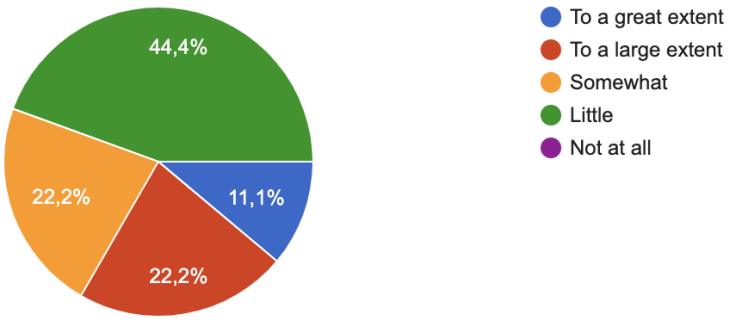
2. To what extent did the e-learning course give you a historical overview of the transformation of the media environment and the process of de-centralization of information?



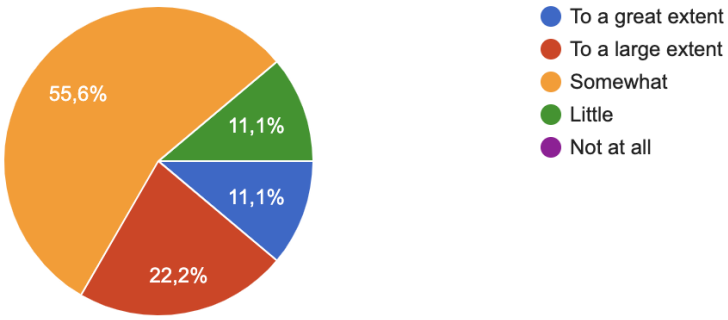
3. To what extent was the e-learning course effective in explaining the dynamics of social media mechanisms and the issue of trust?



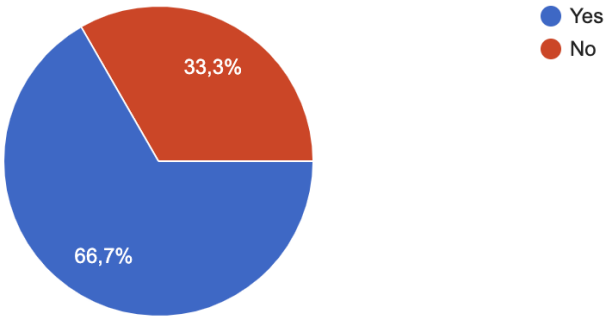
4. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your knowledge on lateral reading techniques and the tools able to optimise your online search?



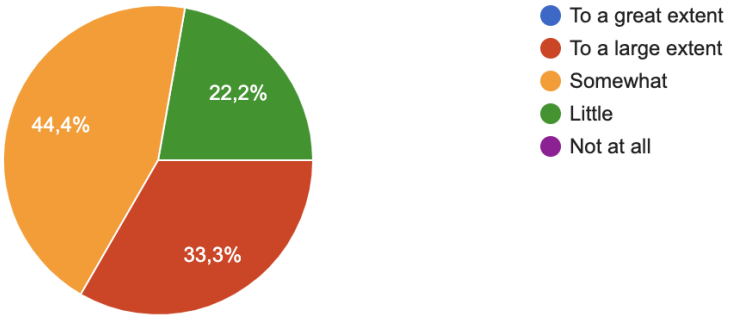
5. To what extent did the e-learning course make you aware of what lateral reading is and why it is useful?



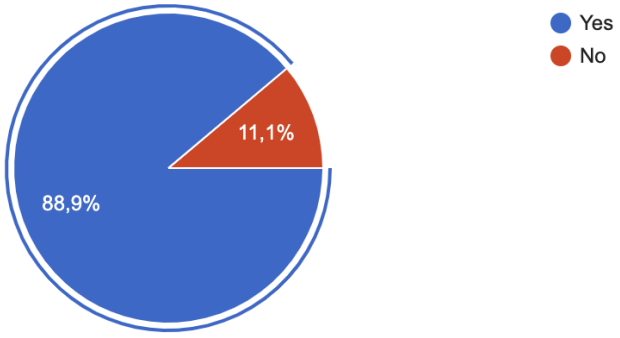
6. Did you know any lateral reading techniques before taking the class?



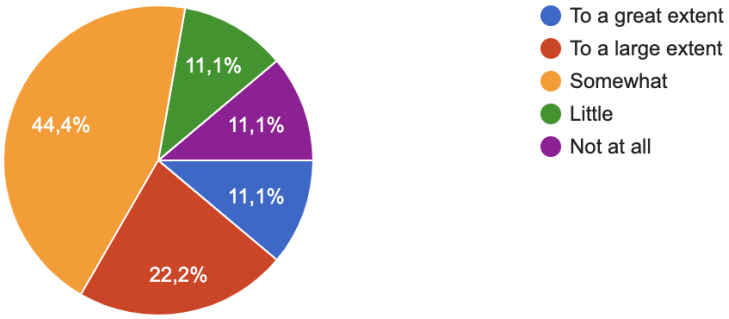
7. To what extent do you feel more confident in verifying the source of information after completing the e-learning course?



8. Do you feel that the e-learning course teach you how to verify information effectively?



9. After passing the e-learning course my knowledge of the societal impact of disinformation has increased.



Conclusions:

The data presented above demonstrates that the content on the platform had a discernible impact on the participating students in instructing them on the methods of information verification, such as Lateral Reading Methodologies. This effect was observed even when the information itself was not necessarily novel (as indicated by questions 1, 4, and 6). This can likely be attributed to the specific demographic of the course, comprising university students who possess confidence in digital media and have previously encountered information literacy courses during their high school education. Additionally, some participants had backgrounds in Communication studies and Humanities courses, where topics related to information consumption are routinely addressed. Notably, even if some information was already known to the participants, their knowledge and proficiency in the subject matter appeared to have been reinforced by the course (as evidenced by responses to questions 7, 8, and 9)

Both the gathered data and the following class discussions underscored the perception among students that the issues of disinformation and information disorder are pressing concerns. The majority of students found the content to be engaging and highly informative, particularly regarding topics related to the history of media and the challenges posed by social media, (as indicated by responses to questions 2 and 5).

An issue that received unanimous attention from nearly all participants was the observation that while they were genuinely interested in the content of the lessons, the mechanical voice utilized in the videos made the lessons somewhat challenging to follow. Conversely, the O4 platform was acknowledged as efficient and user-friendly by nearly all the participants.

Prepared by: Dr. Marco Giacomazzi, Dr. Gabriele Giampieri

FakeSpotting

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Local Pilot Report

South East European University

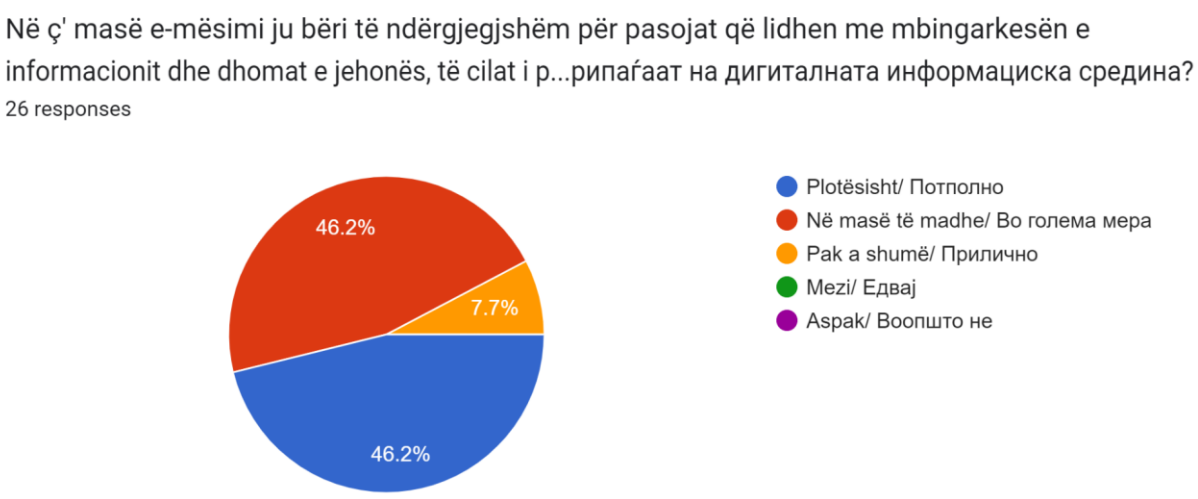
- **Date and Venue**
  27/28 March 2023, South East European University, Tetovo Campus, 816.02.

- **Description of Participants**
  A total of 43 participants took part in the local pilots, of whom: 32 undergraduate students, 3 PhD students and 8 academic staff.
  The participants who tested the AL version of the e-platform were 6 third-year students from the Contemporary Sciences and Technologies program, 3 fourth-year students from the Contemporary Social Sciences Faculty's International Relations Program, 3 PhD students from the Communication Department at the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication, and 5 academic staff members. While the MK version of the e-platform was tested by 23 second-year students from the Contemporary Sciences and Technologies program, as well as 3 academic staff members.

- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants**
  The local pilot was conducted in a laboratory setting, specifically at room 816.02, on 27 and 28 March 2023. During the testing, the participants interacted with the e-platform using their respective devices, desktop computers. The team coordinating the pilot study reached out to the participants' respective professors to provide them with information about the project and the testing process. The instructions to the students were then given on-site by the project team who were present during the testing. After the testing was completed, the team sent the evaluation form to the participants via email.
  The professors were contacted individually and by email.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes:**

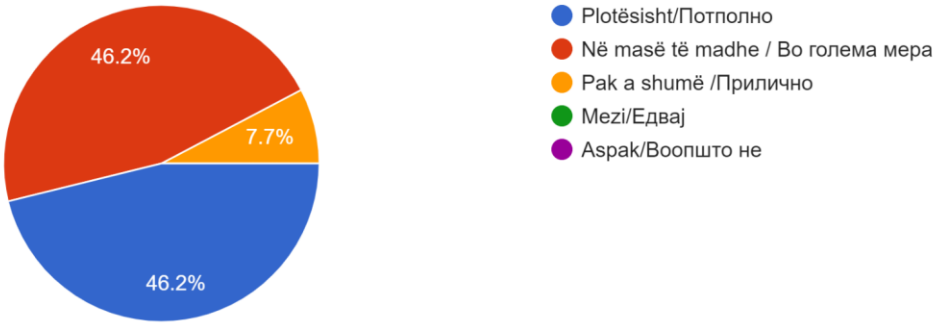
Question 1



Question 2

Në çfarë mase e-mësimi ju ka bindur për nevojën e diversifikimit të burimeve, duke pasur parasysh mungesën e rregullimit të mjedisit dixhital?/ До...остатокот на регулација на дигиталната средина?

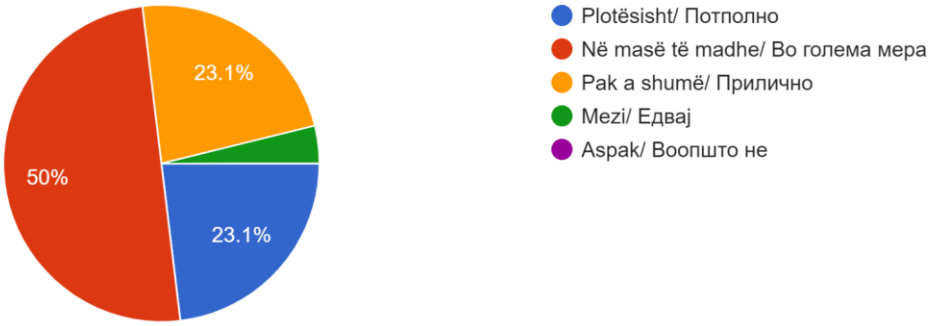
26 responses



Question 3

Deri në çfarë mase nëpërmjet e-mësimit jeni njohur me teknikat dhe mjetet e leximit anësor që mund të optimizojnë kërkimin tuaj në internet?/... да го оптимизираат вашето онлајн пребарување?

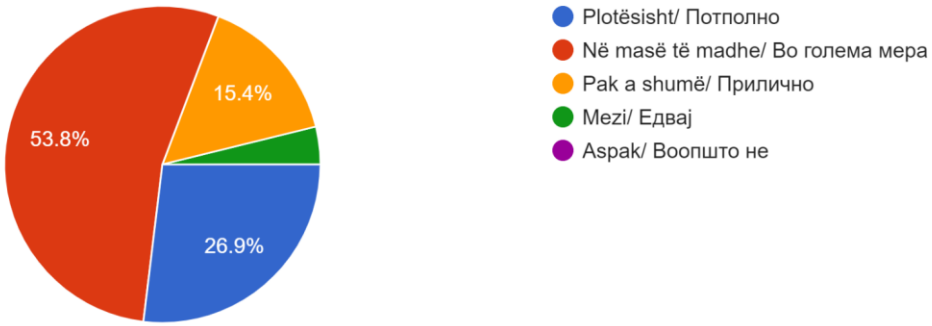
26 responses



Question 4

Deri në çfarë mase ndiheni më kompetent në monitorimin e burimit të informacionit pas kryerjes së modulit të e-mësimit?/До кој степен се чувству...рмации по поднесување на модулот за е-учење?

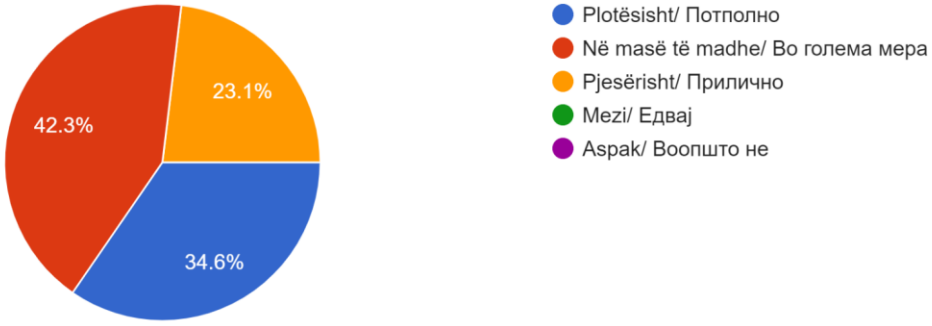
26 responses



Question 5

Deri në çfarë mase e-mësimi ju bëri të vetëdijshëm për treguesit tekstualë dhe paratekstualë të aftë për të nxitur njohjen e nivelit të besueshmërisë ...ањето на нивото на веродостојноста на изворите?

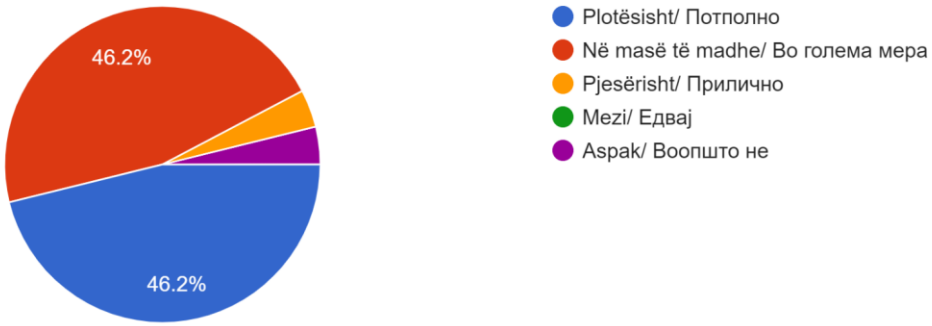
26 responses



Question 6

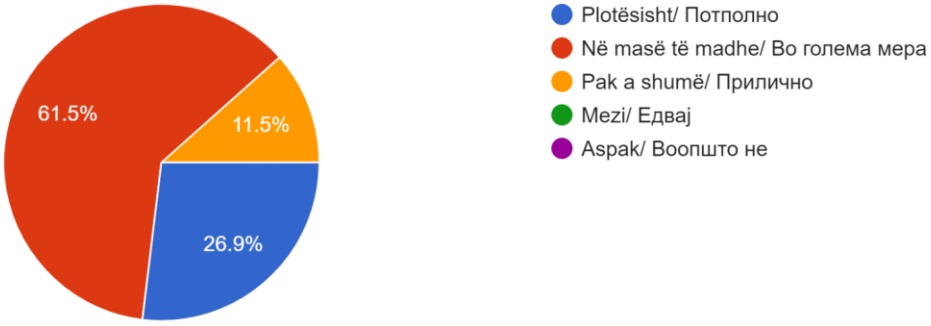
Deri në çfarë mase e-mësimi ju bëri të vetëdijshëm për llojet e ndryshme të keqinformimit/dezinformimit që ekzistojnë në m...улирана содржина, фабрикувана содржина итн.)?

26 responses



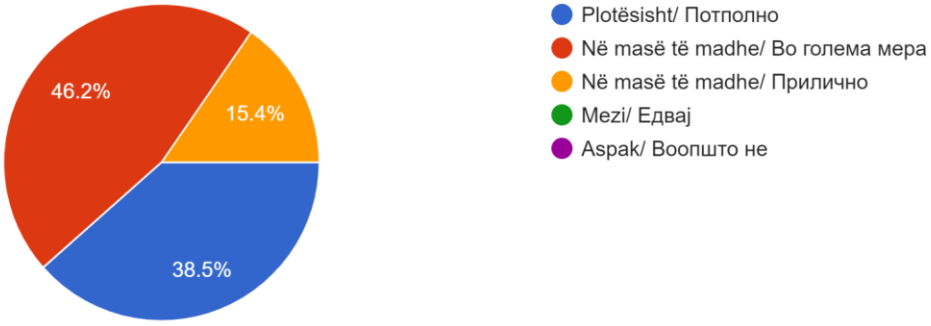
Question 7

Deri në çfarë mase e-mësimi ju bëri të sigurtë për të kuptuar se si zgjedhjet e ndryshme të kornizës, këndeve, thellësisë dhe proporcionit mbi publik...т манипулација или искривување на содржината?
26 responses



Question 8

Deri në çfarë mase e-mësimi ju bëri që të reflektoni mbi ndikimet sociale dhe pasojat e ekspozimit ndaj dezinformatave?/ До кој степен е-учењет...следиците од изложувањето на дезинформации?
26 responses



- **Summary**

We appreciate participants' willingness to participate in the testing. From the evaluation questionnaire, which was translated into local languages, Albanian and Macedonian, we received positive feedback from participants in the national local pilot, which provided valuable insights into the effectiveness and usability of the e-platform. The students and academic staff found the platform to be user friendly, and promised to recommend the platform to others.

FakeSpotting

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Local Pilot Report

UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA

Department of Journalism and Communication

- Date and Venue

- 20-21-22 March 2023
- Tirana University, Faculty of History and Philology, Department of Journalism and Communication

- Description of Participants

- There were two groups of participants: professors and students.
- 10 Professors from the Department of Journalism and Communication were assigned to follow the online course and give their ideas related to it. One of the lecturers is Ph.D. candidate.
- 30 students from both levels of Bachelors and Masters studies were involved in the process. We were very careful to have the participation from the first class of Bachelor studies to the last class of Master studies. Involving all levels of students gives a better idea related to the course as they are from different knowledge levels, work experiences and perspectives.

- Delivery methodology and interaction with participants

- The group of Professors was gathered twice. In the fist meeting a presentation of the course and modules were made. They were not part of the group which worked on the Types of Manipulation. They were asked to register to the platform, which was made possible with the support of Incoma. In the second meeting they gave their ideas related to the course. And they gave their answers in the Google Form.
- Two groups of students were gathered in two days. We presented the project, and courses and the aim. We asked them to register in the platform. All of them were registered and followed the course. They asked for more time (more than two hours that we met). We gave them 24 hours to finish all the course and follow all content, especially video presentations.
- We did not tell that the third module (Types of Manipulation) were prepared by the University of Tirana.
- We ask them to go through modules and give their realistic ideas and be critical.

- Questionnaires findings and outcomes

- Students found it very attractive and useful. They asked to follow officially this course and get certified at the end.
- Professors found it very useful to use in our lectures, especially in Bachelor studies. They asked for more academic background, but we explained that this was a course for the general public.
- Both groups found the products very interesting and useful.
- Students asked if they could share this with other students.

Prepared by: Prof. Asoc. Dr. Mark Marku, Prof. Asoc. Dr. Alban Tartari alban.tartari@fhf.edu.al

FakeSpotting

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Local Pilot Report

GLOBSEC

- **Date and Venue**

12 December 2022
Middle School of Transport and Hotel Services, Lučenec

- **Description of Participants**
  - The event was organized with the cooperation of the EU Direct office in Lučenec that helped facilitate the debate at the High School.
  - The event took place as a part of a presentation about disinformation, malign influence on the internet and media literacy. Among the participants were 2 high skilled professionals from the EU Direct Lučenec, and 29 high school students and teachers.

- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants**

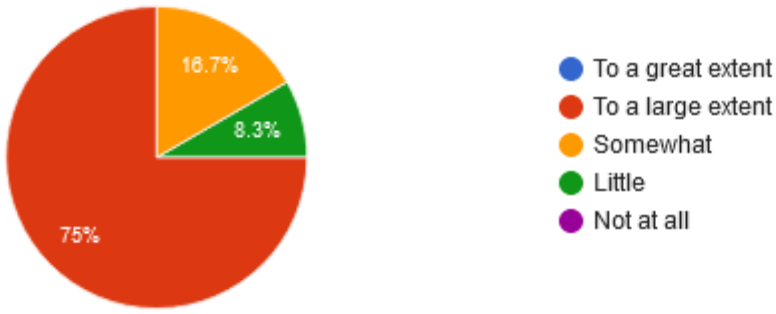
  - The Fakespotting platform and its comprehensive modules were introduced to engage the audience of high school students.
  - The presentation discussed the issues surrounding internet manipulation and disinformation. Additionally, it showcased the range of educational modules within the Fakespotting courses.
  - After the pilot event, the students were provided with a feedback form for sharing their perspectives and thoughts about the course, distributed via a Google Form questionnaire.

- **Conclusion and findings:**

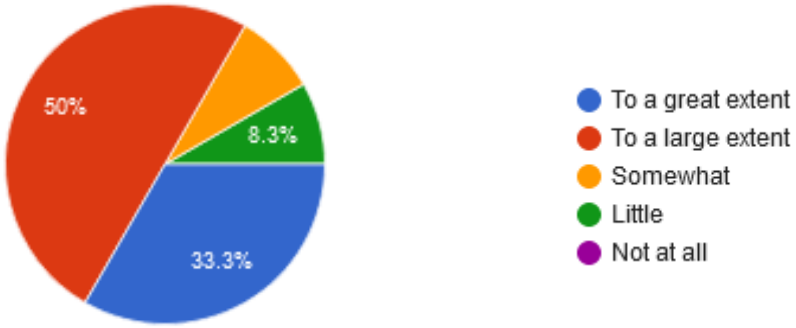
Over all, the students were satisfied with the range of information they have learnt during the session. We have receive a positive feedback about Fakespotting course and as showcased in the following survey findings about what the students have learnt.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes**

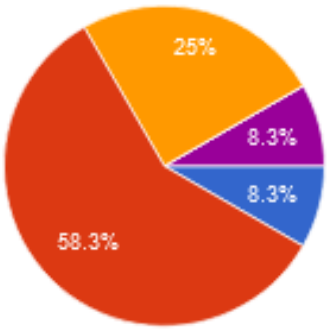
1. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your awareness of the consequences related to information overload and echo chambers that one can experience in the digital information environment?



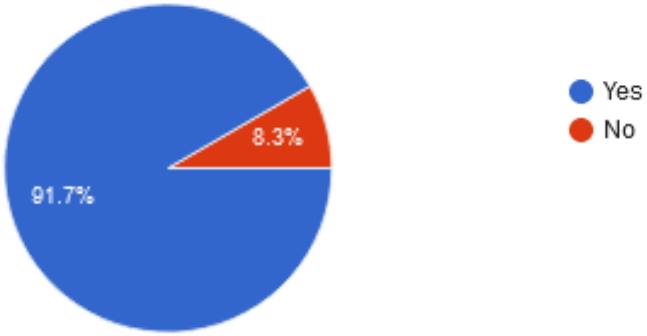
2. To what extent did the e-learning course make you aware of the need to diversify your resources?



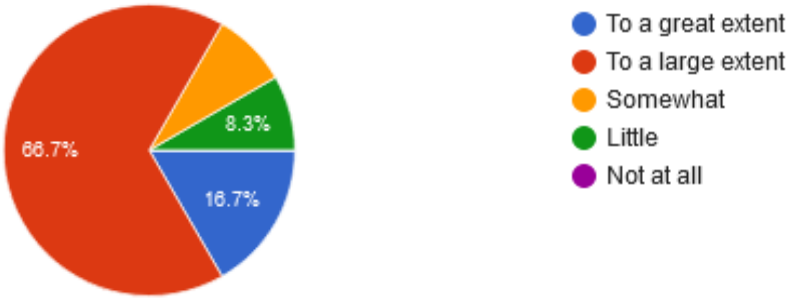
3. To what extent did the e-learning course increase your knowledge on lateral reading techniques and the tools able to optimise your online search?



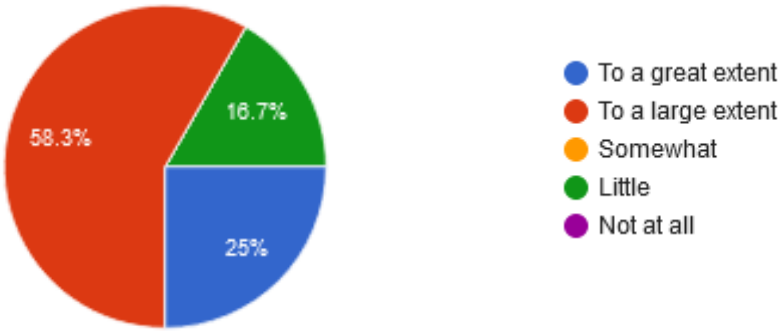
4. Did the e-learning course teach you how to verify information effectively?



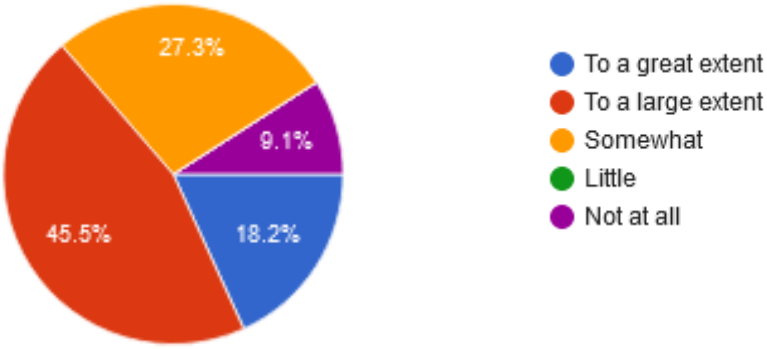
5. To what extent do you feel more confident in verifying the source of information after completing the e-learning course.



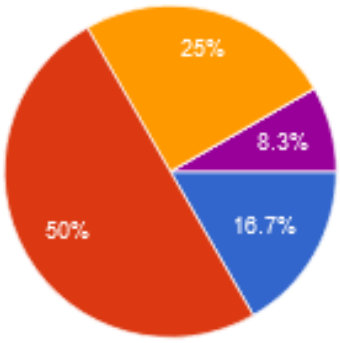
6. To what extent did the e-learning course make you aware of textual and paratextual markers that can help you determine the reliability of sources?



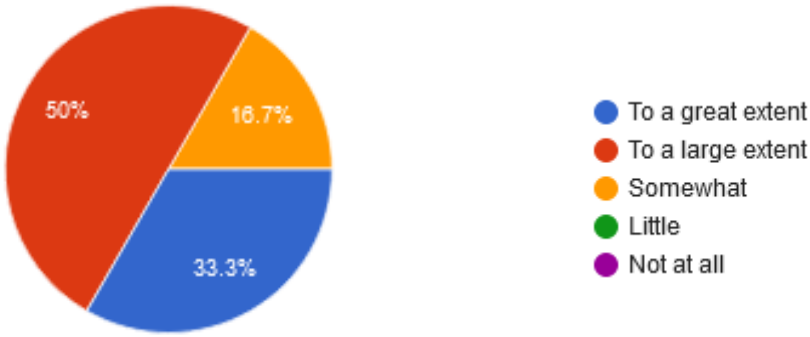
7. To what extent did the e-learning course provide you with understanding and explanation of various types of manipulation (such as false context, manipulated content, fabricated content, etc.)?



8. To what extent did the e-learning course make you confident in recognizing how different choices of framing, angles, depth and proportion of a photo/picture can lead to manipulation or distortion of content?



9. After passing the e-learning course my knowledge of the societal impact of disinformation has increased.



FakeSpotting

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Local Pilot Report

Novi Sad School of Journalism

- Date and Venue
  Novi Sad School of Journalism, March – April (2023)

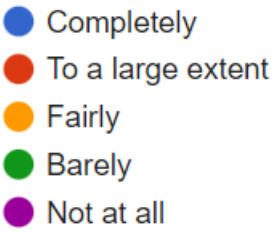
- Description of Participants

The participants were collaborators in youth organizations and educators in the field of media literacy. All youth workers were at the basic level of media literacy, with low capacities in the field of deconstruction of media manipulation and misinformation. Age of the participants was between 18 and 45.Overall 12 participants tested the platform.

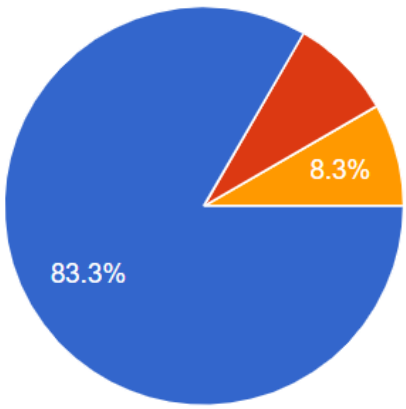
- Delivery methodology and interaction with participants

  Testing was organized in groups of two or three participants. In some cases, one participant came at a time. An account was created for each participant and at least one representative of the Novi Sad School of Journalism was with them to help if needed. Before starting the testing, the participants were explained how the platform works and how to navigate through the modules.

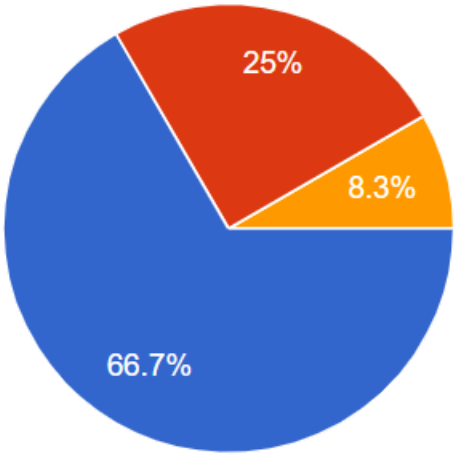
- Questionnaires findings and outcomes



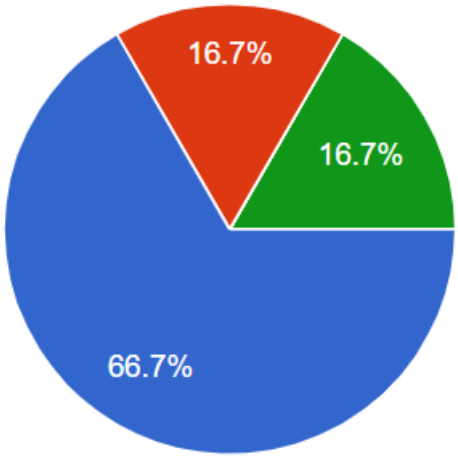
1. To what extent the e-learning made you aware of the consequences related to information overload and echo chambers belonging to the digital information environment?



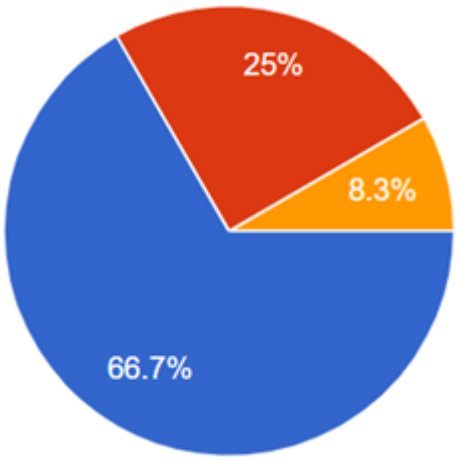
2. To what extent the e-learning made you confident with the need for source diversification according to the the lack of regulation of the digital environment?



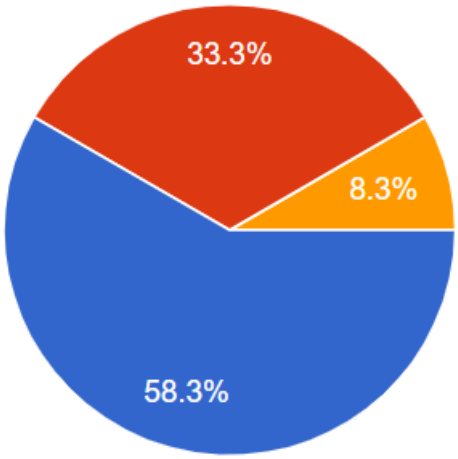
3. To what extent the e-learning made you familiar with the lateral reading techniques and the tools able to optimise your online search?



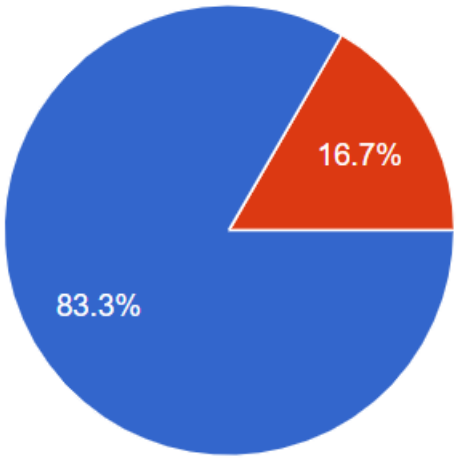
4. To what extent do you feel more competent in tracing back the source of information after the e-learning module delivery?



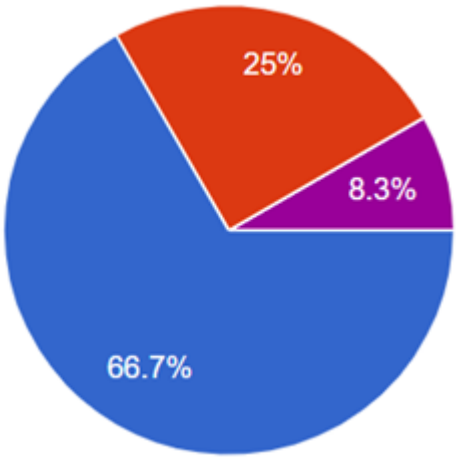
5. To what extent the e-learning made you conscious of the textual and paratextual markers able to drive the acknowledgement of the level of sources' reliability?



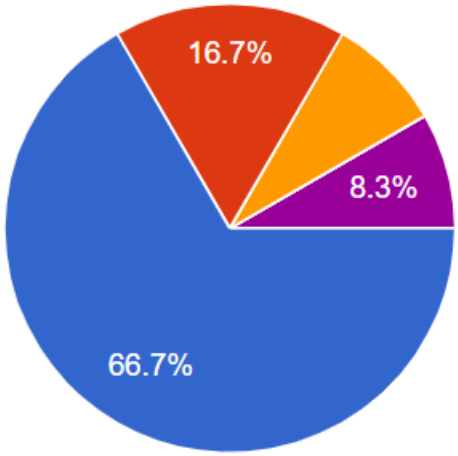
6. To what extent the e-learning made you aware of the different types of mis/disinformation dwelling the digital information environment (false context, manipulated content, fabricated content, etc.)?



7. To what extent the e-learning made you confident in recognising how the different choices of framing, angles, depth and proportion over the publication of a photo/picture can convey a manipulation or distortion of the content?



8. To what extent the e-learning made you reflect on the social impacts and consequences of disinformation exposure?



USER COMMENTS:

"80% required to pass is demotivating, reduce it to 60%"
"Lots of useful information and tools for fact-checking"
"Fairly advanced course"

FakeSpotting

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Local Pilot Report

The Fact-Checking Factory - Pagella Politica

- **Date and Venue**

- 15 March 2023 at Coworking Barsento - Putignano (BA)
- 28 March 2023 at Stazione RulliFrulli - Finale Emilia (MO)

- **Description of Participants**

- The participants involved were divided into two groups according to their geographical area;
- Participants were trainers, educators and education-related professionals from six different organizations;
- The idea was to test the platform by involving two very different geographical areas (one located in central-northern of Italy, the other in southern Italy) so as to test its effectiveness and validity in contexts with different needs and requirements;

- **Delivery methodology and interaction with participants**

The groups of participants were introduced to the project and the modules of the platform during a short presentation. The participants were encouraged to provide feedbacks during the activities and after completing the course modules via Google Form questionnaire.

- **Questionnaires findings and outcomes**

Key:

Completely

To a large extent

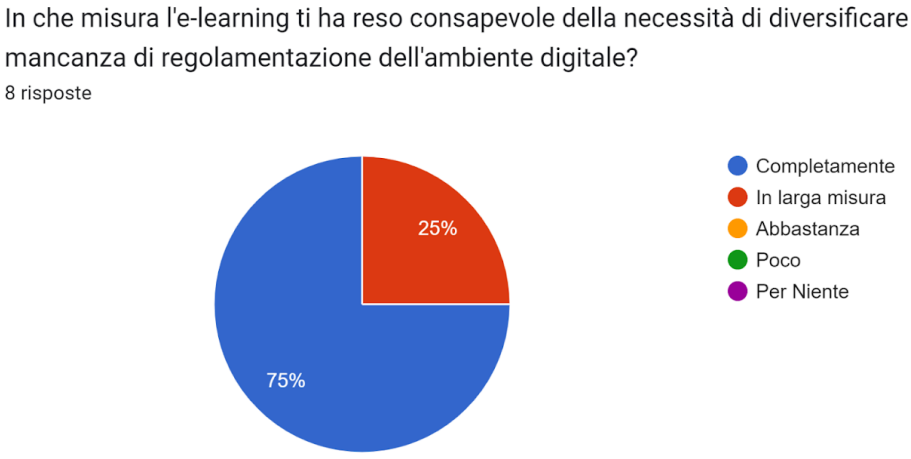
Fairly

Little

Not at all

1. To what extent the e-learning made you aware of the consequences related to **information overload** and **echo chambers** belonging to the digital information environment ?

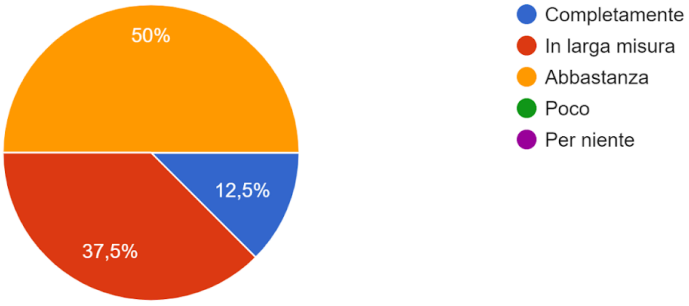
2. To what extent the e-learning made you confident with the need for **source diversification** according to the lack of regulation of the digital environment?



3. To what extent the e-learning made you familiar with the **lateral reading** techniques and the tools able to optimize your online search?

In che misura l'e-learning ti ha fatto conoscere le tecniche di lettura laterale e gli strumenti in grado di ottimizzare la tua ricerca online?

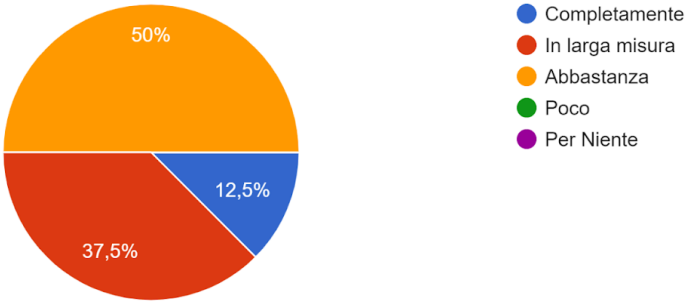
8 risposte



4. To what extent do you feel more competent in tracing back the **source of information** after the e-learning module delivery?

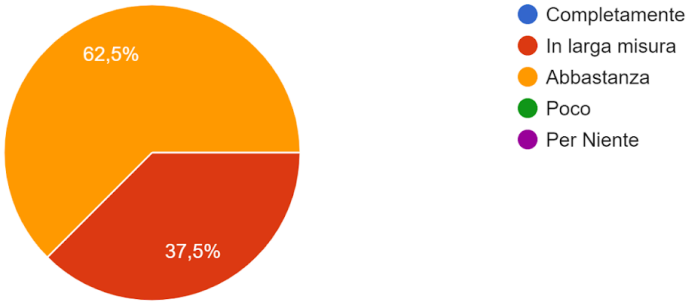
In che misura ti senti più competente nel risalire alla fonte delle informazioni dopo l'esperienza fatta?

8 risposte



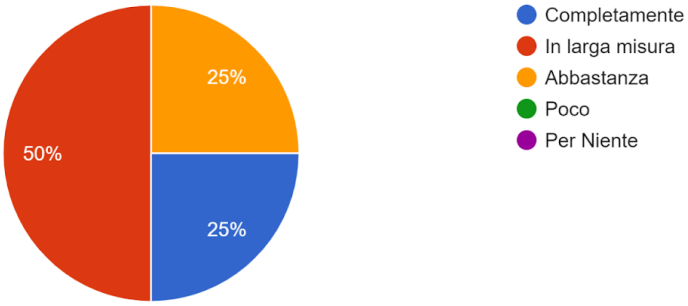
5. To what extent the e-learning made you conscious of the **textual and paratextual markers** able to drive the acknowledgement of the level of sources' reliability?

In che misura l'e-learning ti ha reso consapevole dei marcatori testuali e paratestuali in grado di guidare il riconoscimento del livello di attendibilità delle fonti?
8 risposte



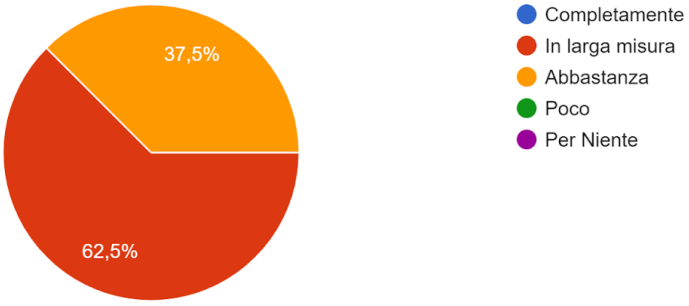
6. To what extent the e-learning made you aware of the different **types of mis/disinformation** dwelling the digital information environment (false context, manipulated content, fabricated content, etc.) ?

In che misura l'e-learning ti ha reso consapevole dei diversi tipi di disinformazione (falso contesto, contenuto manipolato, contenuto impostore, ecc.)?
8 risposte



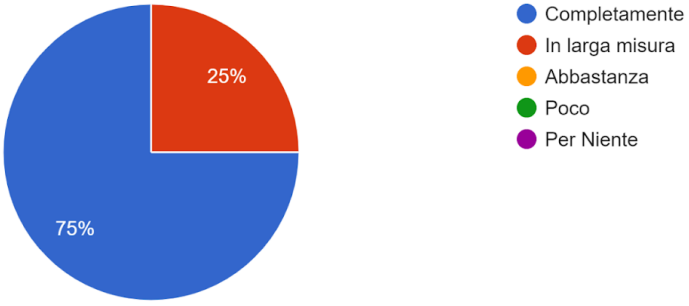
7. To what extent the e-learning made you confident in recognising how the different choices of framing, angles, depth and proportion over the publication of a **photo/picture** can convey a manipulation or distortion of the content?

In che misura l'e-learning ti ha reso consapevole nel riconoscere come le diverse scelte di inquadratura, angolazione, profondità e proporzion...re una manipolazione o distorsione del contenuto?
8 risposte



8. To what extent the e-learning made you reflect on the social impacts and consequences of disinformation exposure?

In che misura l'e-learning ti ha fatto riflettere sugli impatti sociali e sulle conseguenze dell'esposizione alla disinformazione?
8 risposte



- **Conclusion of findings**

- Both groups found the course materials to be engaging and practical;
- Both groups enjoyed the platform structure, the video presentations, and the exercises provided to test the skills learned;
- Participants also found the course content useful for their own activities with students and youth;
- The field in which the participants were more confident about concern question: Q2 (source diversification) & Q6 (impacts of disinformation);
- The field in which the participants were less confident about concern question: Q5 (textual & paratextual markers) & Q3 (lateral reading);
- Participants would recommend the use of the platform to colleagues and other peer organizations;

- The participants highly recommend the platform to anyone interested in expanding the knowledge and skills in disinformation issue;

Local Pilot Report

INCOMA

- Date and Venue: 08/03/2023, INCOMA (Calle Madrid 2. 41001, Seville, Spain).

- Description of Participants

It was a group of 10 low-skill young adults and 2 trainers.

- Delivery methodology and interaction with participants

Firstly, an introduction on disinformation and its main concepts with practical examples was made in order to ensure the understanding of the project.
Secondly, an overview of the project was presented to them.
Then we got into the platform and, after watching the videos, they could access and test the exercises. It was mixed with times for debate to make it more interactive. Regarding the Social Media topic, the participants showed themselves very enthusiastic.
Eventually, the questionnaire was forwarded to them, and we got the different answers.

- Questionnaires findings and outcomes

The questionnaire got a total of 36 answers, as the trainers provided the course to more low-skill logistic students.
These are the most relevant conclusions:

- Most of them are now more conscious about the problems that disinformation can carry out.
- They are now more familiarised with techniques such as source diversification, lateral reading,
- In general, they feel more confident and competent to check the information sources after the training.
- To sum up, most of the respondents feel like, after the training, they have more tools to be aware of disinformation and they consider it useful.

FakeSpotting

2020-1-IT02-KA203-079902

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

UNIVERZITA
MATEJA BELA
V BANSKEJ BYSTRICI

NOVOSADSKA NOVINARSKA ŠKOLA
NOVI SAD SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

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GLOBSEC
IDEAS SHAPING THE WORLD

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UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА
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