Workshop IN A BOX

BE MEDIA SMART

STOP I THINK I CHECK

RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS

MEDIA LITERACY IRELAND

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RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS

RF 1 – BE MEDIA SMART CAMPAIGN

Developed and organised by members of Media Literacy Ireland (MLI), the 'Be Media Smart' (BMS) campaign is designed to encourage people of all ages to Stop, Think, and Check when encounter information. The main objective is to help people tell the difference between reliable and accurate information and deliberately false or misleading information.

In 2023, the Stop, Think and Check message will be delivered nationwide across TV, radio, news publications and online during the month of October with tips, guidance and support available online.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **BMS website:** https://www.bemediasmart.ie/
- **MLI website:** https://www.medialiteracyireland.ie/
- **Conference paper about BMS:**
  https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ittsupcon/12/

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RF 2 – MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy refers to a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary to be both a consumer and producer of media content in a critical, creative and responsible manner. It is a lifelong process that aims to empower citizens to make well-informed decisions about the content and information they consume.

As such, media literacy underpins fundamental concepts and values such as democracy, freedom, equity and justice. In relation to the disinformation problem, media literacy can equip people with the knowledge and skills they need to critically evaluate the information they encounter, learn how to identify reliable sources, analyse different types of media content, and use information in a responsible and productive way.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **Center for Media Literacy:** Definitions and more: https://www.medialit.org/media-literacy-definition-and-more

- **National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE):** 10 core principles of media literacy education - https://namle.net/resources/core-principles/

- **Introduction to Media Literacy: Crash Course Media Literacy:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD7N-1Mj-DU&t=12s

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RF 3 – DIFFERENT MEDIA FORMATS

Different media formats convey messages in different ways, which means that the way we engage with these different formats varies considerably. For example, text primarily engages verbal and linguistic processes, such as the way words are arranged to form a sentence and create meaning. Images rely solely on visual processing. They communicate through visual elements such as colours, shapes, symbols, and composition. Videos use a combination of resources and engage multiple senses, such as visual and auditory senses.

The important question here is:

- Do we know how to 'read' or interpret or understand these different formats?
- When we say that we are literate, this usually means that we know how to read and write printed text. But what about these other formats?
- Do we also have the ability to understand images the same way we understand texts?

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **University of Birmingham:** Resources on Visual Literacy: https://libguides.bham.ac.uk/c.php?g=678107&p=4832437

RF 4 – DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION

Recent studies have shown that the way content is delivered via social media seems to encourage passive news consumption, promoting a continuous scrolling behaviour rather than active engagement and careful examination.

This often makes it difficult to evaluate news content, and the blurring of content in social media platforms means that many people struggle to distinguish between news, advertising, social content, and entertainment.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **Scrolling news: The changing face of online news consumption - A report for Ofcom**
  https://revealingreality.co.uk/work/scrolling-news/

- **Reuters Digital News Report:** https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/

- **News Literacy Project: News Goggles: Ad or news?**
  https://newslit.org/educators/resources/news-goggles-ad-or-news/

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RF 5 – DIGITAL PLATFORMS WANT TO KEEP US ENGAGED

Many digital media platforms, such as Alphabet (who owns Google and YouTube) and Meta (who owns Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram), use a business model based on monetization through advertising.

To make this monetization possible, these companies usually offer free services and collect users' data to better understand their behaviour, interests, and demographics. This wealth of data is then used to create a kind of digital profile of users, which is immensely valuable to advertisers looking for targeted and effective ways to reach potential customers.

The more users interact with and spend time on the platforms, the more data can be collected, so this companies use many strategies to keep users connected and engaged, including the use of algorithms to create personalized experiences.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **Childnet: What are social media algorithms?**
  https://www.childnet.com/blog/algorithms/

- **Algo-literacy in 10 points:** https://crossover.social/algo-literacy-for-all-in-10-points/

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- **CNBC: Social media business model** - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKk9to7Zcdg

- **Tactical Tech Glassroom Exhibition:** https://theglassroom.org/en/misinformation-edition/all-exhibits/

RF 6 – BIAS

Confirmation bias refers to the cognitive tendency to interpret information in a way that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and convictions. It's an involuntary act of disregarding information that challenges or contradicts our beliefs, while giving more importance to information that aligns with them. This bias can lead to a distorted perception of reality, as we may unintentionally ignore important facts or evidence simply because we don't like them.

It is important to understand that we all have biases and it's not possible to get rid of them completely. However, we can at least be aware of this tendency to give more importance to information that matches our personal preferences. This is a very good first step and can have many good benefits in our daily lives.

In the context of today's vast and diverse media landscape, where many different narratives and perspectives coexist, it's particularly easy to fall

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into the trap of consuming content that only aligns with our pre-existing beliefs. If we don't check our biases, we risk becoming passive consumers of information rather than active and critical ones. Besides, unchecked biases can also affect our interactions and discussions with other people, leading to polarized dialogues and reducing our capacity for empathy and understanding.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **Confirmation bias and how to cut through it:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyioZODhKbE

- **The effects of confirmation bias on decision making:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bou4oyvr2gM

- **Biases and disinformation:**
  https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biases-make-people-vulnerable-to-misinformation-spread-by-social-media/

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RF 7 – MEDIA MESSAGES ARE CONSTRUCTED

Media representation refers to how the media represents individuals, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular perspective. It involves the use of language, imagery, and different forms of categorisation to convey specific meanings and viewpoints.

Media messages are constructed through a complex process of selection and combination of various elements, influenced by the creators' perspectives, biases, and intentions, as well as the socio-cultural context within which these messages are created. Every element in media content, from the words chosen to the images used, is selected, edited and constructed with the aim to represent a particular idea.

These messages are not neutral or unbiased reflections of reality; instead, they are the result of choices made during the creation process, and the selection what to include, emphasize, and omit. Each decision in this process is guided by a set of norms, values, and commercial considerations, further contributing to the way the final media message represents people, events, or issues. For this reason, media representation plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, understanding, and beliefs about the world.

Understanding that all media messages are constructed is very important for developing media literacy. This awareness allows us to engage critically with media content, questioning and analysing the intentions, implications, and influences behind media representations.

Recognizing the constructed nature of media messages is essential for understanding the underlying power dynamics, biases, and ideologies embedded in media content, so that we can navigate the media landscape with a more discerning and critical attitude. In this way, we become better equipped to challenge and resist harmful or misleading content and advocate for more accurate, inclusive, and fair media representation.

Resources To Explore This Topic:

- **Media representation:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOecpti7Qf8

- **Media representation and diversity:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVAztNx0rHQ&t=153s

- **Teaching about representation:**
  https://davidbuckingham.net/2018/03/26/teaching-social-media-3-representation/

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RF 8 – MANIPULATION OF CONTENT

Propaganda

Propaganda refers to the systematic dissemination of information, ideas, or rumours, often biased or misleading in nature, aimed at influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behaviour of a target audience. It is a strategic approach designed to promote a particular political, ideological, or organizational agenda, often by simplifying complex issues and presenting one side of the argument as indisputable or superior to others.

The techniques employed in propaganda often appeal to people's emotions using powerful imagery, slogans, and narratives to evoke strong reactions and create a sense of urgency and curiosity among the audience.

Disinformation / Misinformation

Disinformation is *intentionally* false or misleading information created and spread to deceive or mislead people. Misinformation also refers to false or misleading information, but it is not created or spread with the intention of causing harm.

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For example, if you receive a fake story on WhatsApp, believe in its authenticity, and share it with others, you did not have the intension of causing any harm because you thought the story was real. However, even though misinformation lacks the intention to deceive, its consequences are as harmful as the ones caused by disinformation.

False / Wrong Context

False or wrong context refers to situations where genuine content, such as images, videos, or quotes, is presented with incorrect or misleading context to deceive the audience.

This form of manipulation is especially problematic because it uses authentic content that is taken out of its original context to change its meaning, making it difficult for people to spot the trickery. For example, a real photograph from a past event might be shared on social media with a caption falsely claiming it depicts a recent event.

Clickbait

Clickbait is any form of content designed to attract the attention of users and persuade them to click on a link or access a page, mainly to drive traffic and increase advertising revenue.

Clickbait typically uses sensationalist headlines, misleading imagery, false promises or exaggerated claims to spark curiosity and exploit users' emotions, encouraging them to engage with the content.

Parody And Satire

Parody and satire are related but different humorous forms of expression. Whereas parody imitates and exaggerates the characteristics of a particular work, genre, or individual, satire usually has a broader scope, making fun of human behaviours, societal norms, politics, and cultural tendencies.

Even though parody and satire are genuine forms of art and expression, in the context of digital media and information disorder they sometimes can be problematic as not everyone has the knowledge and skills to understand them. Parody and satire have been mistaken as real news or stories, causing confusion among users that can't understand its comic intensions.

Deceptive Editing

Deceptive editing refers to the manipulation or modification of any form of media, such as video, audio, or image, with the intension to mislead,

manipulate, or dishonestly influence the audience's perception and interpretation of the content.

This type of manipulation can be done in many different ways, such as removing or adding parts to a scene; combining pieces from different sources; or changing the speed to misrepresent the sequence of events.

Deepfakes

Deepfakes are videos or audios that have been manipulated using advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning techniques. The technology involved in creating deepfakes is becoming more sophisticated and more easily available, which poses a big challenge as they are capable of creating highly convincing false content.

For example, in some deepfake videos, the appearance, voice, and actions of individuals can be completely modified to convey different messages.