CONTENT CREATION #1: TYPES OF INFORMATION

INFORMATION AND DATA LITERACY > 1.2 EVALUATING DATA, INFORMATION AND DIGITAL CONTENT

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
School drop outs, Students (primary school), Students (secondary school)	Children, Teenagers	Level 1	Activity sheet	Creative Commons (BY-SA)	English, French

In this workshop, participants will watch a number of different videos. After each video, a series of questions will be asked and the answers discussed as a group. By comparing the different videos, the group will define together the meaning of information and consider the issue of ‘fake news’.

General Objective	Skillset building
Preparation time for facilitator	less than 1 hour
Competence area	2 - Communication & collaboration
Time needed to complete activity (for learner)	0 - 1 hour
Name of author	Jonathan Smets
Support material needed for training	Projector-Computer-Internet connection-White/blackboard
Resource originally created in	French

WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1 Preparation

- Check that the projector, audio system and internet connection work properly.
- Prepare the different videos in separate windows to avoid needing to enter the URLs during the workshop
- Prepare materials to write the responses of the participants in a visible way (whiteboard, flipchart, etc.)

2 Introduction

Explain to participants that you will watch various videos together and respond to a series of questions.

3 Video: extract from RTE six one news

Show the first two minutes of the most recent video from RTE six one news (link also available above, cf. 'materials used'). In the form of a discussion, ask the questions below. Be encouraging and positive: congratulate the 'right' answers, ask them to explain their arguments, correct the 'wrong' answers. Write down the right answers on the board as they arrive.

- What was this video? Expected answer: televised news broadcast
- What did it contain? Expected answer: news, information on several subject
- What would we expect to see in such a video? expected answer: credits/titles, summarised introduction, reports, interviews, weather…
- Who would we expect to see? Expected answer: journalists, a presenter, experts, interviewees…
- What do the people in this kind of video say? Expected answer: headlines, names of interviewees, questions, answers, stories of events, things that interviewees have seen and experienced…
- To whom is the information addressed? Expected answer: adults who want to keep up to date on current events, learn things…
- Why was this video made? Expected answer: to bring information to the public about what is

happening nationally and in the world.

4 Video: extract from NBC's Nightly News: Kids Edition

As with the previous video, show the first minutes from this edition of NBC's Nightly News: Kids Edition. Alternatively, search on YouTube for 'NBC's Nightly News: Kids Edition' and play the first two minutes from the **most recently posted video**. Lead a discussion based on the questions and note the new answers (for example don't write 'reports' if it's already on the board).

- What was this video? Expected answer: televised news broadcast for kids
- What did it contain? Expected answer: news, information on several subjects
- What would we expect to see in such a video? expected answer: credits/titles, summarised introduction, reports, interviews, weather…
- Who would we expect to see? Expected answer: journalists, a presenter, kids, teens
- What do the people in this kind of video say? Expected answer: keywords, questions, answers, stories of events, things that interviewees have seen and experienced…
- To whom is the video addressed? Expected answer: kids/early teens
- Why was this video made? Expected answer: to educate kids on current affairs

5 Video: National Geographic – Hawaii Botanist

As with the two previous videos, show the first two minutes of this Botany-themed video from National Geographic. Lead a discussion based on the questions and note the new answers (for example don't write 'reports' if it's already on the board).

- What was this video? a report
- What did it contain? information on one subject
- What would we expect to see in such a video? interview, 'field' report, Hawaiian landscapes…
- Who would we expect to see? local plant expert (botanist)

- What do the people in this video talk about? plant life in Hawaii
- To whom is the video addressed? people interested in nature and environment, people interested in Hawaii, people interested in plants
- Why was this video made? to educate people on a specific subject

6 Video: The Onion - New Fad Diet

As with the previous videos, show the first two minutes of this video from The Onion. **Do not go beyond the 2-minute mark, as the second half of the video contains swearing**. Lead a discussion based on the questions and note the new answers (for example don't write 'reports' if it's already on the board).

- What was this video? a sketch
- What did it contain? jokes
- What would we expect to see in such a video? titles, an interview
- Is this person really an expert? No, she's a comedian
- Is what she is saying true? No, she is playing a character and telling jokes
- What are the jokes aimed at? Fad and fashion diets, overeating trends
- Who is this video aimed at? Adults, particularly people familiar with western or US culture
- Why was this video made? To make viewers laugh and to lampoon the issues

If reflection does not come from the discussion, note how the video is in some ways similar to the previous video. There is a similar format – no journalists, just one interviewee speaking on a particular subject. A logo appears in the top right corner of the screen in each case. Explain that this video is a **parody**. It 'pretends' to be serious although it is not a 'real' news channel. Note that it does not intend to deceive the viewer, unlike fake news outlets that do.

7 Video: BBC made an error...

Show this video from the BBC. Note: the subject matter is quite violent, **to avoid a reference to bodies being buried in concrete, stop the video at 0:13**. Discuss the questions as before.

- What was this video? report extract

- What did it contain? brief news, information on an arrest
- What would we expect to see in such a video? photos, subtitles, titles
- Who is speaking? A presenter
- What is she saying? That someone was arrested for suspected murder. The authorities think it was Xavier Dupont de Ligonnès.
- Who is this video aimed at? People interested in the investigation
- Is it true?

In theory, participants will not have the answer to the last question. Ask them how we can find out? By looking online, looking at other news outlets, etc. Give them the answer: no. The information is wrong, this is not the right person that was arrested. How did the journalists get it wrong? They did not **verify** well enough what their sources were telling them.

8 Concept: information

Tell participants that they just came up against an important characteristic of information: it has to be **verified**. Now, try to find other characteristics together by grouping the answers on the board that go together and naming those groups. Guide the discussion with questions and clues to group the words and lead them to the characteristics below:

- Kids, adults, people who want to stay informed of current affairs, people interested in a particular subject, basically: people interested in information, this is the **audience**. Information always interests a lot of people. Make the distinction with *anecdote*: what you eat for breakfast, what you like doing — these are anecdotes. Whereas something like the completion of a new bridge, a big event or an election — things that interest many people — this is information.
- Report, interviews, presenter: these are **formats**, the way information is presented.
- Things that people have seen, experienced, stories about what happened: these are **facts**. Make the distinction with *opinion*: if you say 'I think it's a good film', you are giving your opinion — this is not fact. Whereas if you say 'in this film, there are three superheroes', you are stating a fact.
- Ask if we can find factual information in places other than on television. They will tell you on the internet, instagram, tiktok, conventional radio. Add, if needs be, ads, newspapers, etc. Add these words and group them: these are the **conduits** of information, the way information is distributed to audiences.
- Fake news. Sometimes people distort facts to manipulate people, or invent false information to damage people's reputation. This is why we need to be careful to not believe everything we see,

hear or read. We can check if information is true by searching for other sources and comparing their information.

9 Going further

Fake news We have seen that the term fake news can cover several areas. The categories can vary depending on the sources, with adolescents you can add more detail to the following categories.

1. satire or parody (“no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool”)
2. false connection (“when headlines, visuals or captions don’t support the content”)
3. misleading content (“misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual”)
4. false context (“when genuine content is shared with false contextual information”)
5. impostor content (“when genuine sources are impersonated” with false, made-up sources)
6. manipulated content (“when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive”, as with a “doctored” photo)
7. fabricated content (“new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm”)

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. The manipulation of information has been going on for a very long time. The term was popularised during the 2016 US presidential election campaign, aiming to denounce some of the practices listed above, and evolved rapidly to include others. Certain politicians have also accused traditional media of being ‘fake news’ when those platforms have published facts to their — the politician’s — disadvantage. Different types of fake news can spread easily because with the internet, information moves much faster than it did before to an ever-growing audience. This information flow will inevitably contain fake news. The ‘viral’ effect of information, which reaches individuals and spreads from one media platform (traditional, social, etc.) to another, can have both positive effects (e.g. environmental advocacy) and negative (e.g. influencing an election illegitimately). It is therefore crucial that children and adolescents know to **verify** information before sharing it, before succumbing to the ease, convenience, and carelessness of sharing everything, all the time to everyone.

How to verify information before sharing*:* The first tool to useis your own faculty for critical thought, then to do some research. Here are some recommendations from the International Federation of Library Associations.

- Consider the Source (click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info)
- Read Beyond (Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What’s the whole story?)
- Check the author (Do a quick search on the author. Are the credible? Are they real?)

- Supporting sources? (Click on those links. Determine if the information given actually supports the story.)
- Check the date (Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.)
- Is it a joke? (If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.)
- Check your biases (Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.)
- Ask the experts (Consult a fact-checking site.)

Here are various fact-checking tools available online.

- Snopes.com
- Fact-check.org
- fullfact.org
- BBC Reality Check
- YouTube video verification tool from Amnesty International