

# OFFLINE WORKSHOP: MAKING FAKE NEWS

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

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
All	All	Level 1	Activity sheet	Creative Commons (BY-SA)	English, French

In this workshop participants will understand how easy it is to create false information by tweaking content slightly. By being allowed to create their own fake news from modifying information in newspapers they will get a first hand view of how damaging it can be

**General Objective** Awareness building

**Preparation time for facilitator** less than 1 hour

**Competence area** 1 - Information and data literacy

**Time needed to complete activity (for learner)** 0 - 1 hour

**Name of author** Caroline Fohrer

**Support material needed for training** Newspapers, magazines, Scissors (blunt), Glue or sticky tape, Post-its (optional), Paper (optional)

**Resource originally created in** French

## WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

### 1 Introduction

The goal of this activity is to have participants invent false information based on information they will select from newspapers and magazines. The workshop will consist of three phases:

- An introduction outlining the themes and turns
- ‘Information distortion’ – snipping exercise
- Discussion and conclusion

### 2 What is information?

**Ask the question:** Do you sometimes use the internet? Determine whether yes or no.

**Ask the question:** When you are looking for information, what sites do you use? Write the different responses on post-its. Responses to be expected: · Wikipedia · Google, Bing, Yahoo... · Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox... · Windows, Android... If these responses ensue, offer some definitions:

- A **website** is a group of **webpages** housed on a particular server. The totality of all websites constitutes the **World Wide Web** (www).
- To execute an internet search, we open a **browser** (Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox...) and we refer to a **search engine** (Google, Bing, Yahoo...).
- A computer works is managed by an **operating system** (OS) such as Linux, Ubuntu, Windows. A phone will usually run on Android, IOS or Windows Phone.

To elaborate on these ideas, sort the post-its into broad categories based on what has been said (sites, search engines, browsers, operating systems, applications...). The goal will be to construct a system that makes clear the hierarchy of the elements that have been outlined (for example, OS -> Navigateur -> Website -> Webpage). If participants suggest Wikipedia, ask if they know who the authors are of wiki articles and explain that it’s a collaborative site for which anyone can write articles. The content can be modified by anyone and there are constant attempts to abuse the system. Some professors have, for example, caught their students copy/pasting material from Wikipedia for their homework. It is in trying ourselves that we realise how easy it is to modify information found online. In order to talk about this to

the group without showing them directly how to distribute false information online, you can direct them to write the exercise on paper.

### 3 Snipping exercise

Participants should be divided into groups depending on the number present and choose whichever newspapers or magazines they like. They will now be able to cut works and paste them over articles to change their meaning in order to create false information. There can be several ways of doing this:

- Take a blank sheet and paste on it headlines and paragraphs that aren't meant to go together.

OR

- Take an article and completely change its meaning by pasting words over it. The more coherent and/or funny the narrative is, the more the exercise will have succeeded.

### 4 Conclusion

Participants can each in turn read their article and discuss it. Hopefully the others will laugh at the results. You can then encourage them to question the information found on the internet and to realise that it is not always true. 'Real' fake news is not as funny because there is nothing innocent about spreading false information. Finally, you can discuss **disinformation**. This will be the workshop's key word. For more information on this subject you can refer to the workshop plan 'Fake News'.

### 5 Going further

Fake news is ubiquitous online. The subject can be explored offline as well as in front of a computer.