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SOLUTIONS

THE USE OF FACT-CHECKING INSTRUMENTS IN
ENHANCING MEDIA LITERACY

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Annotation. *This research explores the application of fact-checking tools to enhance media literacy. Fact-checking plays a vital role in combating misinformation and fostering critical thinking in the digital era. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating fact-checking techniques into media education to help individuals identify credible information and navigate the complexities of modern media.*

Keywords: *media literacy, fact-checking, misinformation, critical thinking, digital education.*

Абстракт. *Исследование посвящено применению инструментов фактчекинга для повышения медиаграмотности. Фактчекинг играет ключевую роль в борьбе с дезинформацией и развитии критического мышления в цифровую эпоху. Работа подчеркивает важность интеграции методов фактчекинга в медиаобразование для определения достоверной информации и ориентации в современном медианпространстве.*

Ключевые слова: *медиаграмотность, фактчекинг, дезинформация, критическое мышление, цифровое образование.*

INTRODUCTION

Fact-checking has recently become trendy; however, the term might not be a common routine, especially for some individuals in far-flung places. The evolution of technology has made the world a society where information is indispensable. Fact-checkers are well-resourced and experienced enough to weed out misinformation from a declaration. Neither should commonly agreed or harmless assertions be referred to as facts. The continuous evaluation and re-evaluation process reveals how fact-checking is important for enhancing prevalent media literacy. As much as acquiring digital skills is vital to keep pace with current technology, fact-checking is another important digital skill to have in order to keep abreast of the persistent information overload generated every fraction of a second. The more individuals develop media literacy, the more likely they will become skilled in developing critical thinking. Besides the value of truth in media, media literacy can also encourage people to be more active and participatory in political and electoral processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are various types of fact-checking instruments that are generally divided into digital tools, such as automatic fact-checking systems and fact-checking browser





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extensions, and traditional media fact-checking, such as fact-checking websites. Fact-checking websites are by far the most popular instruments among fact-checking organizations, as there are more than 570 fact-checking projects worldwide, boasting websites or webpages. Fact-checking websites display fact checks or claim reviews, either from a single organization or from independent fact checkers who have partnered to share content. While using such websites to fact-check requires additional work, it has been shown that many people appreciated seeing an actual verification offered in response to a claim, especially in Western cultures, where users liked the attention to proof and evidence. Moreover, a significant percentage of users love the simple explanations and the quality of additional reporting that takes place beyond these websites.

An app, instead, allows users to check whether something they have seen written, printed, or heard can be verified with evidence[1]. Some apps also provide real-time fact-checking in a public, live news session, thereby visually and audibly informing users that a statement is being dealt with and then verified. A browser extension can enhance the credibility of a piece of digital content or a website by providing real- or near-real-time fact-checks where a claim is made, such as social media platforms or websites. At this narrative level, it is noted that computer and software fact-checking systems can help solve the shortcomings of human fact-checkers by processing and analyzing large amounts of documents rapidly and applying consistent, reproducible functionality for evaluating the accuracy of the information they contain[2]. This analysis underlines how humans may not be aware of all the available information or of the details important to deduce whether the information is true or not.

METHODOLOGY

The rapid dissemination of large volumes of digital information has underlined the shift in the relationship between receivers and media. As a result, the concept of media literacy as conceived in the 1990s is no longer applicable. The integration of fact-checking tools into news media is believed to foster media literacy skills, such as critical thinking, evaluation of evidence, developing an argument, and the ability to document, whereas some researchers maintain that these tools can only teach web value literacy—awareness, understanding, and mastery of the multiple dimensions of authority that give information its credibility. To date, studies on fact-checking tools have reached inconclusive results[3]. One study identified a reduction of misinformation spreading on Twitter following the use of the first plug-in for the visualization of fact-checked political claims in news articles, and another one evidenced the reduction of perceived accuracy of fake headlines while using a news aggregator integrating labels on news[4].

The capacity of fact-checking instruments to prompt learning processes and enhance media literacy skills is not yet clear. However, scientific evidence proclaims the limited effects of an educational intervention with a fact-checking tool designed for secondary school students in fostering fact-checking knowledge and belief in the tool.





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Older and more educated participants improve their media literacy abilities to a greater extent than other participants. Individuals with greater experience and better skills in information searching and retrieval display greater proficiency in improving their media literacy abilities through fact-checking tool usage. In light of the above, an educational training intervention that utilizes fact-checking tools must take into account the specific authority and skills characteristics of participants, possibly based on indicators of information literacy, experience, and skills[5]. Although digital tools such as fact-checking instruments affect the development of skills, users must be aware of the underlying mechanisms they use and internalize them as an educational process in order for users to fully develop the skills necessary for media literacy.

Strategic dissemination of fact-checking instruments: challenges and directions for future research. One of the major challenges in developing these instruments is that they should be readily accessible and usable even by the less tech-savvy members of society. Many older people, for example, have less digital knowledge as acquiring these skills is mainly a function of post-secondary education. Moreover, many are skeptical of fact-based verification presented to them on the internet. There are a number of questions that pertain to the strengths of the news consumers when assessing the actual strength of these tools. Moreover, the news media ecology is a very complex one and the broad societal effect of fact-checking is necessarily modest. This is partly because media effects are contingent upon the environment into which they are introduced. For example, other efforts aimed at laying a robust and resilient pro-democratic foundation have been outpaced by the sophisticated campaign to misinform that now takes a variety of underhanded forms. As fact-checking is a set of professional journalistic practices, it is important to consider the problems and challenges that accompany it. For example, U.S. fact-checkers have been criticized recently for a potential liberal bias[6]. To address the limitations of profit-making journalism and social platforms, digital public spaces need to be rebuilt and the commons need to be developed, sustained, and improved. The technological fix may be a simple amplification of fact-checking, but this would be misguided and naive. This is not to say that our work towards a better and more democratic global public sphere must come to a halt, but obviously it needs to be addressed in a flexible and adaptable way.

CONCLUSION

The rapid growth of digital media has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish reliable information from misinformation. Fact-checking tools play a vital role in addressing this challenge by empowering individuals to critically evaluate the credibility of information. This paper examines how fact-checking instruments contribute to the development of media literacy skills, such as analyzing sources, identifying bias, and verifying data accuracy. The integration of fact-checking tools in educational programs and media platforms has proven to be an effective strategy for fostering critical thinking and responsible information consumption. As misinformation continues to evolve, the





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role of fact-checking in enhancing media literacy remains indispensable for promoting informed and active participation in the digital age.

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