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COMPETENCE AREAS FOR NEWS LITERACY

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Definition of News Literacy

News literacy addresses the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary to become a mindful and sceptical news consumer. News literacy requires an understanding of both the news production and the news consumption, including the role of social media platforms and users in the news ecosystem, and the ways in which consumers' beliefs affect their selection and interpretation of news (Vraga & Tully, 2021, p. 151)

News literacy includes an understanding of the role news plays in society; the motivation to seek out news (having a sense of the importance of following news and understanding the consequences of ignoring the news); the ability to find, identify and recognize news (distinguish it from other media content); the ability to critically evaluate and verify news; and the ability to create news (Malik, Cortesi & Gasser, 2013, p. 8-9).

Competence Areas



Within NEED Project, the main components of News Literacy Competence are identified in 3 dimensions and in total eight building blocks which are summarised below:

1. Understanding the News Landscape

Includes understanding the information pollution, understanding the intent and motivation behind information pollution, understanding psychology of misinformation, distinguishing

news from other media content and understanding new journalism practices and the new newsmaking habitat. Consists of three building blocks:

1.1. Information pollution and its reasons

- understanding fake news, post-truth and information disorder
- defining, identifying and distinguishing main categories of information disorder (misinformation, disinformation and malinformation)
- defining, identifying and distinguishing common types of information disorder (such as manipulated content, imposter content, false context)
- understanding the intent and motivation behind information pollution

1.2. The psychology of misinformation

- understanding of the cognitive mechanisms which make people vulnerable to misinformation (such as cognitive miserliness, heuristics, cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias, motivated reasoning)
- understanding of the cognitive mechanisms which make misinformation persistent and difficult to correct (the continued influence effect, mental models, the implied truth effect, repetition)
- understanding of one's cognitive mechanisms which can be used to prevent the influence as well as the spread of misinformation (scepticism, alertness, analytic thinking, friction, inoculation, nudges)

1.3. New media and new journalism practices

- understanding the characteristics of new media
- defining journalism, its aims and characteristics
- understanding news, changing characteristics of news and the effects of journalism on democracy
- understanding new journalism practices
- understanding the new newsmaking habitat and its effects on people

2. Recognizing News and Finding Reliable Information

Includes identifying the most appropriate and reliable information sources as well as constructing the most effective search strategies. Consists of three building blocks:

2.1. Recognizing News

- identifying news and its main characteristics (verification, independence, and accountability)
- changing characteristics of news
- identifying other media content and distinguishing news from other media content

2.2 Information sources

- identifying and distinguishing different categories of information sources (e.g. primary, secondary, or tertiary sources)
- identifying and distinguishing different types of information sources (e.g. reference sources, books, serials, databases)

2.3. Search strategies

- understanding why an effective search strategy is important
- understanding Boolean logic and defining Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT),
- understanding importance of controlled vocabularies
- understanding field searching and define basic fields
- defining proximity operators and distinguishing adjacency and nearby operators
- understanding why and how to use truncation and wildcards

3. Verifying News

Includes understanding how algorithms, personalization and filtering mechanisms work as well as how to avoid them, recognizing verification methods and techniques and executing verification processes, and understanding how fact-checking platforms work. Consists of three building blocks:

3.1. Algorithms

- understanding of what algorithms are and how they work
- understanding of pros and cons of algorithms
- understanding of filter bubbles and echo chambers
- understanding of personalization and its types
- understanding the effects of personalization and filtering
- understanding what users can do to avoid filter bubbles
- understanding what platforms can do to avoid filter bubbles

3.2. Verification

- understanding the importance of verification
- understanding the key elements that need to be addressed in verification
- recognizing image and video verification methods and tools
- recognizing location verification methods and tools
- verifying social media accounts
- verifying websites
- defining and detecting trolls, bots, and cyborgs

3.3. Fact-checking platforms

- understanding the fact-checking platforms and their operations
- understanding the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)
- understanding the “Code of Principles”
- understanding the corporations on fact-checking
- understanding the automated fact-checking

References

- Malik, M., Cortesi, S., & Gasser, U. (2013). The challenges of defining ‘news literacy’. Berkman Center for Internet & Society.
- Vraga, E. K. & Tully, M. (2021). News literacy, social media behaviours, and scepticism toward information on social media, *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(2), 150-166, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637445