

# Module 7

## Making the Internet a Safer, Fairer, & Honest Space



[www.includemedia.eu](http://www.includemedia.eu)

This resource is licensed  
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Finnish National Agency for Education. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

\* Note to manage waste please print this document in greyscale or black and white rather than in colour. Please print on both sides of the paper (duplex) and if you can print multiple slides or pages on one page.

# Module Overview

This module highlights the collective role of media professionals, educational institutions, and civil society organisations (CSOs) in maintaining ethical digital environments.

It explores media standards, governance frameworks, and the importance of digital literacy in promoting responsible online spaces. Participants will examine challenges and opportunities in promoting credible journalism, multi-stakeholder governance, and digital citizenship in Europe through real-world case studies, policy discussions, and digital tools.

## TOPIC 01

### **Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards**

Examines how media professionals can maintain credibility, combat misinformation, and uphold ethical reporting standards.

## TOPIC 02

### **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Inclusive Digital Governance**

Discusses how governments, CSOs, and tech companies can co-create policies that ensure a safer and more inclusive digital space.

## TOPIC 03

### **Universities and Media Education: Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Europe**

Explores how higher education institutions can equip students with critical media literacy skills to navigate the digital landscape.

## TOPIC 04

### **The Role of Civil Society in Holding Digital Platforms Accountable**

Highlights how activists and watchdog organisations monitor tech giants, advocate for transparency, and push for policy changes.

# Topic 1

## Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards





# Overview

## Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards

**Journalism relies on fact-checking, source validation and context, but the rapid flow of digital news complicates this process, weakens verification, reduces traditional media gatekeeping, and fuels mis-disinformation.**

This section examines how media professionals can maintain credibility, combat misinformation, and uphold ethical reporting standards in the digital era. It explores *European media policies, regulatory frameworks, and initiatives that safeguard journalistic integrity*

# Introduction: What is Media Self-Regulation?

---

A mechanism to **counter digital disinformation** and weakened media gatekeeping, maintaining trust and accuracy in journalism.

It involves voluntary guidelines and ethical standards set by media professionals, rather than government-imposed regulations

## Components of Media Self-regulation:

- a code of conduct
- a body, typically a council and/or an ombudsperson



# Media & Press Councils

A self-regulatory body that upholds press freedom while ensuring ethical journalism and addressing public complaints about journalistic misconduct (Press Council, n.d.). These functions are essential in maintaining public trust and accountability within the media.

- **Journalistic codes of ethics** universally focus on four core principles: **truthfulness**, **independence**, **fair play**, and **respect for privacy and human dignity**.
- These **values** are not just abstract ideals they are vital for **protecting democracy**, **ensuring informed citizenship**, and **preventing** the spread of harmful **disinformation**.

Click 

[Database of Press Councils](#)  
[Online Media Self-Regulation Guidebook](#)

# The case of Misinformation: Channel3Now's Role in UK Riots (2024)

- The attack on a girls' dance school in Southport, UK, which killed three children, **triggered** widespread **unrest** and **riots**.
- The violence was **fueled** by **misinformation falsely claiming** that the attacker was an illegal immigrant, a claim that was later proven false.
- This misinformation incited protests and violence across the country.
- The government warned that foreign actors were exploiting the situation to **deepen societal divisions** through the further spread of misinformation and disinformation.

[Click to View](#)



[Click](#)

[How Did Foreign Actors Exploit the Recent Riots in the UK?](#)

The BBC investigated a website accused of spreading false reports that fueled unrest and riots. The website's management apologised but denied deliberate spread of misinformation



## Focus Area 1

Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards

# Ethical Guidelines and Self-Regulation in Digital Journalism

*Journalism ethics vary due to national media differences, legal frameworks, and societal values (Fidalgo et al., 2022).*

## European Media Councils:

- **Differ in jurisdiction;** some cover all media; others focus only on print & online.
- **Some follow general journalism guidelines;** others specifically address digital journalism.
- **Development of guidelines varies;** some nations update rules faster than others.

Click 

[55 Ethical Codes from 45 Countries](#)

# The European Media Freedom Act (2024)



The Act addresses **fragmented national media regulations**, enhancing the **EU media market**. It complements the Digital Services Act DSA by tackling issues like **disinformation** and **abuse by state-controlled media**, while establishing a binding **framework for national regulators**.

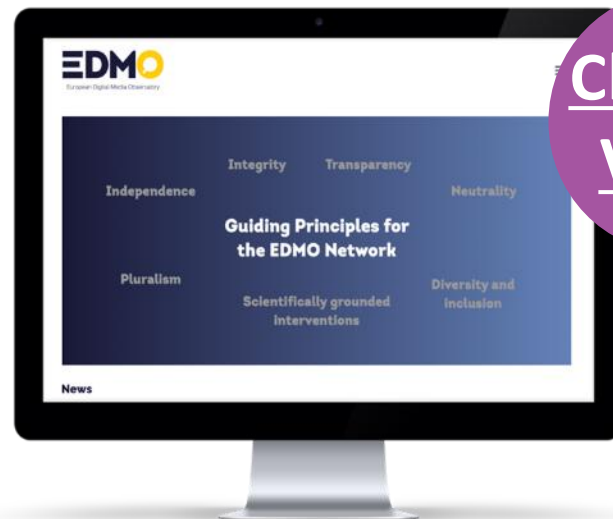
**Key aims** of the Act include safeguarding **editorial independence**, **protecting journalistic sources**, ensuring the independence of **public service media**, introducing **customizable media offers**, and establishing **harmonised rules for online services**.

# European Observatory

**PROMPT** European Narrative Observatory, funded by the European Commission, uses AI tools to detect and track disinformation around divisive issues:

- The war in Ukraine
- LGBTQIA+ rights
- The 2024 European Elections

**European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)** unites fact-checkers, researchers, and media literacy experts in 14 hubs across 27 EU countries and Norway.





## Focus Area 2

---

### Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards

As Europe advances toward a secure, safe, and sustainable digital future, ethical journalism remains a cornerstone for safeguarding democracy, trust, and informed citizenship.

The **European Commission's 2024 vision for digital transformation** outlines six guiding principles to ensure that technology serves people, protects rights, and strengthens democratic values. It provides the **ethical framework** within which European media and journalism are expected to operate.

This vision sets the stage for stronger media standards that **align journalistic integrity with digital innovation** ensuring that freedom of expression, data privacy, and access to trustworthy information are preserved in an increasingly complex media landscape.

# EU's Commitment to a Secure, Safe, & Sustainable Digital Transformation (EU Commission, 2024)



People at the Centre	Freedom of Choice	Safety and Security
Digital technologies should protect people's rights, support democracy, and ensure that all digital players act responsibly and safely. The EU promotes these values across the world.	People should benefit from a fair online environment, be safe from illegal and harmful content, and be empowered when they interact with new and evolving technologies like artificial intelligence.	The digital environment should be <b>safe and secure</b> . All users, from childhood to old age, should be empowered and protected.
Solidarity and Inclusion	Participation	Sustainability
Technology should unite, not divide, people. Everyone should have access to the internet, to digital skills, to digital public services and to fair working conditions.	Citizens should be able to engage in the democratic process at all levels and have control over their own data.	Digital devices should support sustainability and the green transition. People need to know about the environmental impact and energy consumption of their devices.

# The European Broadcasting Union (EBU)

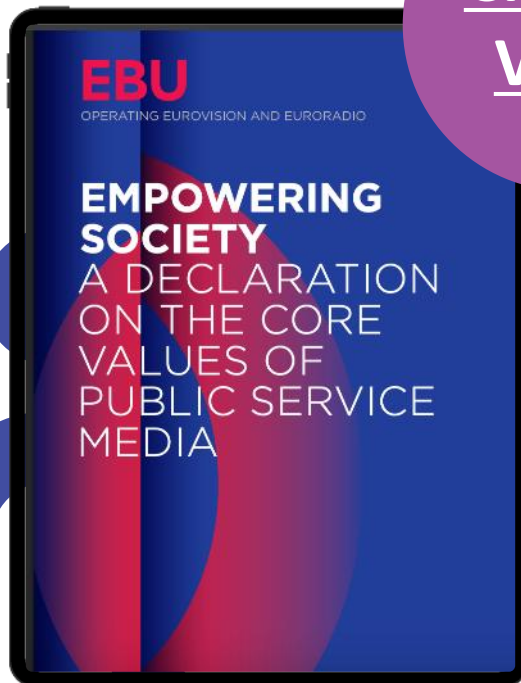
EBU representing over a hundred organisations, is a leading **global alliance of public service media (PSM)**, where broadcasting made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public.

In a media landscape dominated by commercial interests, the EBU promotes solidarity, cooperation, and a trusted space for learning. It supports members in navigating change while upholding core democratic values.

**As public service media, EBU members share the core values:**

- **Universality:** accessible to everyone
- **Independence:** free from political/commercial influence
- **Excellence:** high-quality, trustworthy content
- **Diversity:** inclusive of varied voices
- **Accountability:** responsible to the public
- **Innovation:** using new technologies to improve service

[Click to View](#)



# Joint Podcasts by the Press Councils from Belgium, Finland, & Germany

As the weaponisation of disinformation intensifies, a joint podcast by the press councils of Belgium, Finland, and Germany is a timely initiative that highlights the urgent need for press freedom, adherence to ethical journalistic standards, and international solidarity among journalists. In an era of manipulated truths and shrinking democratic space, the podcast explores how journalism can uphold professional integrity, defend democratic values, and rebuild public trust.

**The joint podcast discussed two cases:**  
Click to listen:

[“I’m not going to live like this”:  
Jessikka Aro's fight against Russian trolls](#)

[A Traffic Accident that Changed  
Reporting Standards](#)





# Challenges of Sensationalism, Misinformation, & Political Bias in Digital Reporting

---

## Focus Area 3

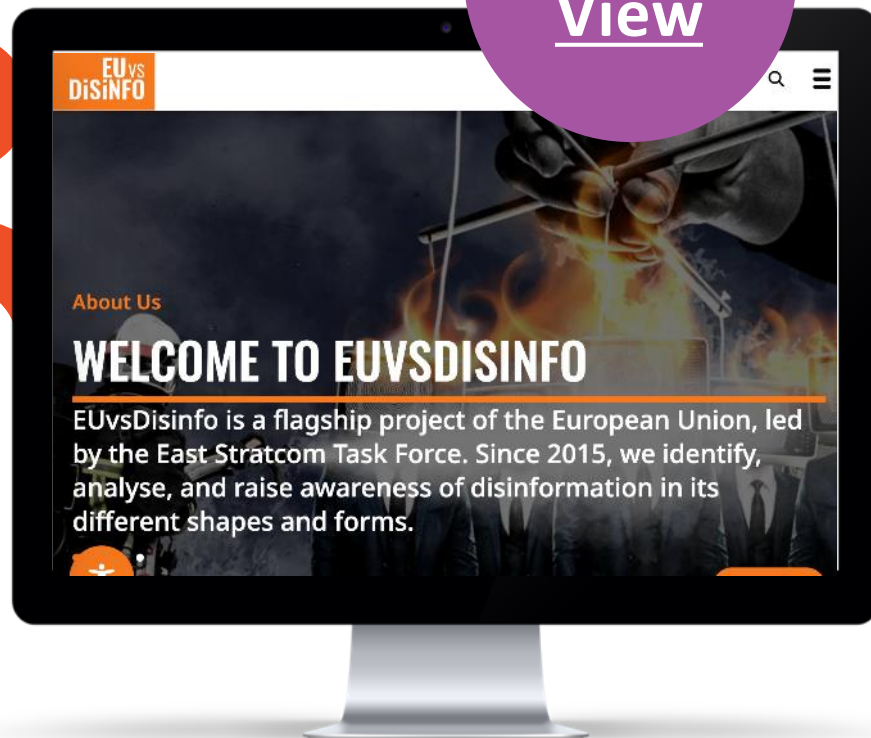
---

Ethical Journalism in the Digital Age: The Role of European Media Standards

- Sensational content (**clickbait**) prioritises **emotional appeal** and engagement **over journalistic integrity**.
- Tools like Google Analytics **encourage click-driven content**, often sacrificing nuanced storytelling
- **Fake news** and sensational headlines **spread faster** than fact-based reporting.
- **Traditional media** outlets are often **left playing catch-up**, trying to correct false narratives.
- **Audiences** often **trust the first information** they encounter, regardless of accuracy (*Youvan, 2024*).

# The European External Action Service (EEAS)

[Click to View](#)



**EUvsDisinfo** is one of the most visible tool of **EEAS**, a **flagship project to counter information manipulation** efforts targeting the EU, its Member States, neighboring countries, and global partners. Its goal is to raise **public awareness** of disinformation and help people build **resilience** against information manipulation.

The **EUvsDisinfo** website includes the **world's largest public archive** of disinformation featuring **articles, interviews, and guest content** published in 13 different languages

[Click](#) 

[DISINFO: The task of the Europeans is to continue the war and use Ukraine to destroy Russia](#)

# European Media Bias in the Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This report analyses UK and international media coverage of the recent Israel-Palestine conflict, highlighting bias in language, framing, and source credibility. It argues that much of the media has underplayed Palestinian suffering and marginalised or misrepresented pro-Palestinian voices.

The report also critiques the amplification of unverified claims and the use of Islamophobic and antisemitism-related tropes.



[Click to View](#)

[Click](#)



[Bias in Western Reporting](#)

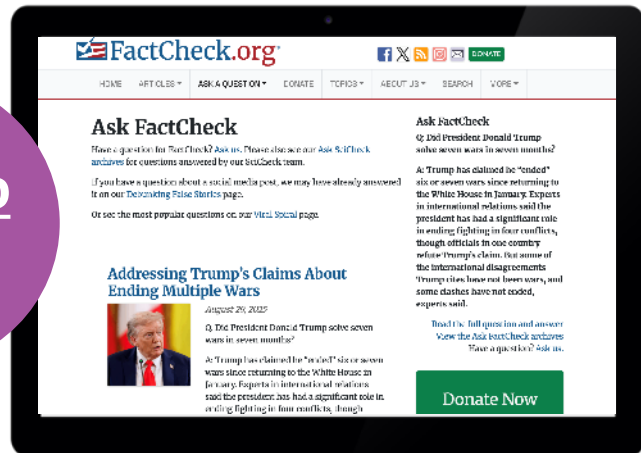


# Resources: Tools



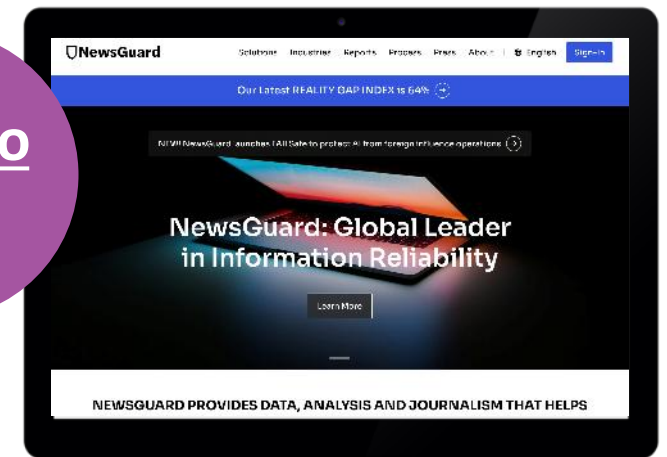
## Ask FactCheck | [factcheck.org](https://factcheck.org)

It allows readers to submit questions about political claims, viral rumours, or potentially misleading information. The FactCheck.org team investigates and publishes answers to selected inquiries. [How to spot fake news](#)



## NewsGuard | [newsguardtech.com](https://newsguardtech.com)

An NGO that analyses the social impact of algorithms. Provides research and advocacy on transparency and fairness in digital platforms.



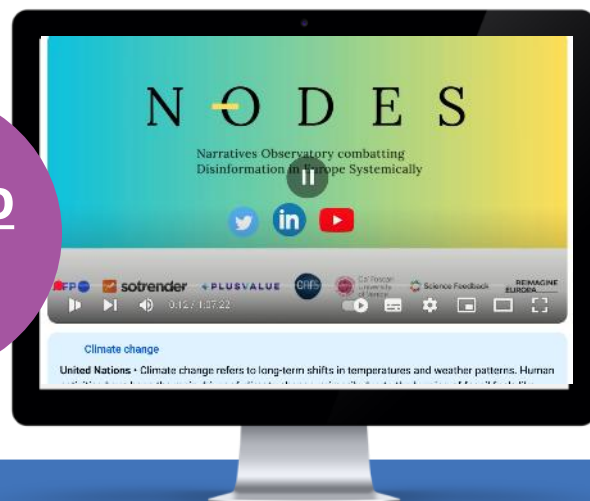


# Resources: Video & Case Studies

## Narratives that Shape Our World

The video presents key findings from the NODES project, which analyses how public discourse around critical issues, such as climate change, COVID-19, and migration, is shaped by prevailing narratives. Understanding these narratives helps reveal how information spreads, influences public opinion, and affects social cohesion in a rapidly changing digital media environment.

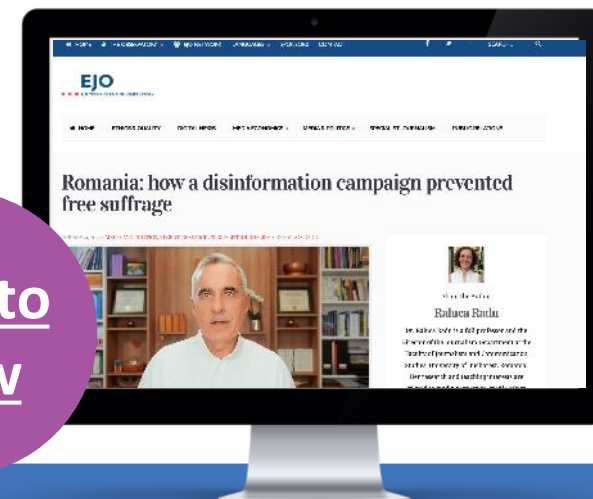
[Click to View](#)



## Romania: How a disinformation campaign prevented free suffrage

This document from the European Narrative Observatory provides an in-depth analysis of the disinformation campaign during Romania's 2024 presidential elections. It details how social media influencers and viral content on platforms like TikTok manipulated public opinion, affecting voter choices and election integrity. The report underscores the urgent need for monitoring digital narratives to safeguard democratic processes.

[Click to View](#)





# Activity

## Task:

Analyse how Journalism Ethics outlined in Council of Europe's **Resolution 1003(1993)** are applied to digital news on wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

Assess news articles for accuracy, impartiality, accuracy, & reflect on their role in shaping public understanding.



## Discussion:

"Did the article cite sources?" "Is the headline misleading?" "Can you identify any siding or bias toward one party in the conflict?" "Are images or language emotionally charged?"



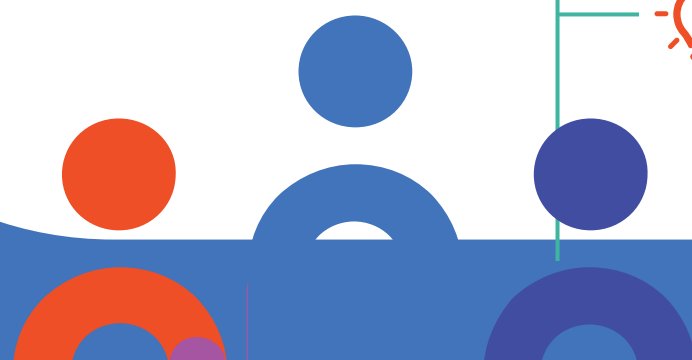
## Goal:

Promotes **critical thinking** on the real-world application of media ethics. Encourages collaborative analysis of bias, misinformation, and accountability in news narratives



## Tips:

**Assign rotating roles within groups:** facilitator, note-taker, ethics analyst. Wrap up with group presentations or a shared board of suggested improvements to regulations



# Topic 2

## Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Inclusive Digital Governance





# Overview

## Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Inclusive Digital Governance

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, no single actor can ensure safety, trust, and inclusivity alone.

Governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and technology companies must work together to address complex digital challenges. This section explores how **multi-stakeholder collaboration** shapes effective **policy-making**, focusing on **co-regulation approaches** and the vital role of **civil society** in digital governance.



## Focus Area 1

Multi-Stakeholder  
Collaboration for  
Inclusive Digital  
Governance

# The role of CSOs in Advocating for Ethical Digital Practices

*Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in advocating for transparency, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights in digital environments.*

They act as independent **watchdogs, policy influencers, and public educators**—pushing platforms and governments to uphold **ethical standards, respect users' rights**, and ensure a **safer, fairer digital space for all**.

# The European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCASN)

- It is a civil society initiative **promoting common standards for fact-checking** across Europe.
- Developed by independent European fact-checkers to ensure ethical, transparent, and professional practices.
- **Fights disinformation** through methodologies and high editorial standards.
- **Encourages collaboration** to strengthen the integrity of public information.
- Members **commit to transparency, impartiality, and accuracy**.
- Plays a significant role in strengthening independent journalism and media credibility



[Click to View](#)

Click



[The European Fact-Checking Standards Network](#)

# Case Example: Matilda.es Exposed a Viral Hoax

## Fact-Check by Matilda.es Verdict:

*It is a hoax! a misleading interpretation of what Gates said; rethinking how we use our time with AI.*

**No call for a literal religion, nor any mention of a “globalist agenda.”**

**Claim Circulating Online from a podcast with LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman.**

*"Bill Gates said we need to create a new religion focused on Artificial Intelligence to push the globalist agenda".*

**Gates used the phrase metaphorically:**

*"...It could almost be called a new religion or philosophy of how to connect with one another."*

Click



[The Case of Misinformation](#)



## Focus Area 2

Multi-Stakeholder  
Collaboration for  
Inclusive Digital  
Governance

# Public-Private Partnerships for Combating Online Misinformation and Hate Speech

Combatting false and misleading information online is critical to safeguarding democratic institutions and public confidence. The 2022 Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation represents a collaborative effort to combat disinformation through measures including **demonetisation, ad transparency, fact-checking, and data access for researchers.**

It has been integrated into the Digital Services Act (DSA) as a Code of Conduct on Disinformation, reinforcing efforts for a safer and more transparent online environment. Adhering to codes of conduct under **Article 45** of the DSA is a **voluntary** act.

# Signatories of the 2022 Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation

Addressing the complex challenge of disinformation requires coordinated efforts from a wide range of stakeholders across the digital ecosystem.

The **Code of Practice on Disinformation** brings together over 40 key players—from global tech giants and advertisers to fact-checking networks and civil society groups—to collectively commit to concrete actions that reduce harmful content online. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures shared responsibility and greater transparency in tackling disinformation.



[Click to View](#)



# The Counter Disinformation Network (CDN)

---



Disinformation poses a serious threat to the integrity of democratic elections by spreading false narratives and undermining public trust. In response, diverse stakeholders across Europe, including civil society, academia, journalists, researchers, think tanks, and fact-checkers, have joined forces in collaborative initiatives to strengthen election resilience.

These partnerships enhance information verification, promote media literacy, and support fact-based public discourse, playing a vital role in protecting democratic processes and fostering informed citizen participation

**Partners (click links to explore)** 

[Alliance4Europe](#), [Check First](#), [Science Feedback](#), [ISD](#), [Info Ops Polska](#), [GLOBSEC](#), [DISARM Foundation](#), [Fakenews.pl](#), [Clash Digital](#), [AI Forensics](#), [CEE Digital Democracy Watch](#), [Political Accountability Foundation](#), [Logically Facts](#) and more.

# Case Study

## Uncovering the Cases of Disinformation

[Click to View](#)



## Case - Pro-Russian Ads Campaigns Approved by Meta:

Researchers from AI Forensics and CheckFirst uncovered over 275 pro-Russian ads approved by Meta between May 1–27, 2024, targeting users from Italy, France, Germany, and Poland. Ads reached over 3 million users and bypassed Meta’s moderation. The case highlights Meta’s failure to enforce political ad policies and suggests a broader systemic issue

[Click](#)



[Detailed Report](#)

*The European Commission launched formal proceedings against Meta for potential breaches of the Digital Services Act.*

# The EU's Approach to Digital Rights, Content Moderation, and Platform Accountability



## Focus Area 3

Multi-Stakeholder  
Collaboration for  
Inclusive Digital  
Governance

The lack of a safe and transparent digital environment for Europeans erodes their public right to privacy, autonomy, and informed participation in democratic life. Without these protections :

- Personal data can lead to surveillance, manipulation, and exploitation not only by private companies but also by authoritarian actors. Additionally, unchecked hate speech and disinformation can fuel polarisation, undermine trust, and destabilise peace and democratic institutions.
- To address these growing challenges, the Digital Services Act (DSA) was introduced to create a safer, more accountable digital space in the EU. To address these growing challenges, **the Digital Services Act (DSA)** was introduced to create a safer, more accountable digital space in the EU.

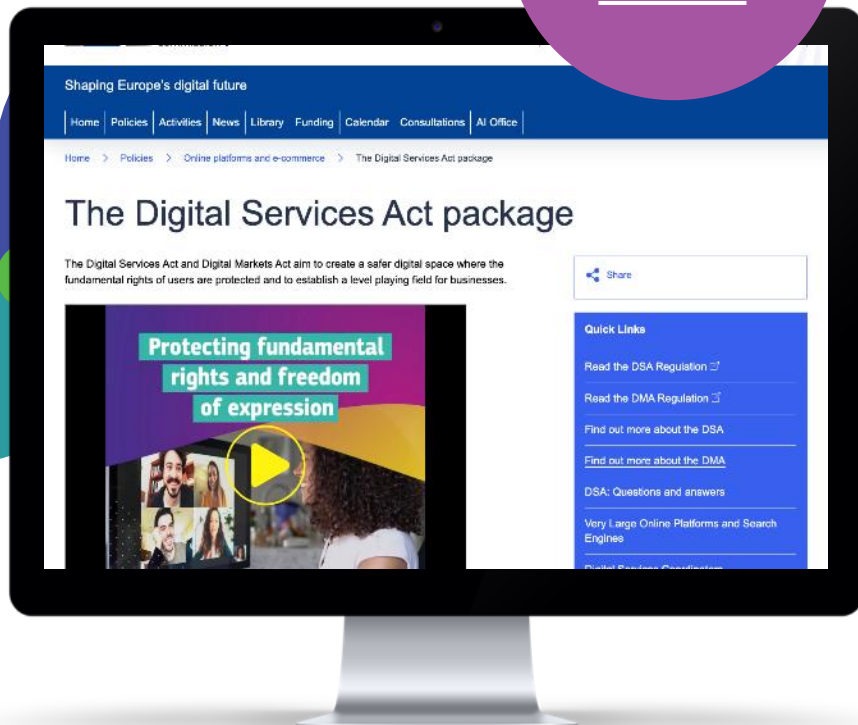
# The Digital Services Act (DSA)

The **Digital Services Act (DSA)** tackles illegal content, hate speech, and disinformation while ensuring platform accountability through:

## Key Provisions

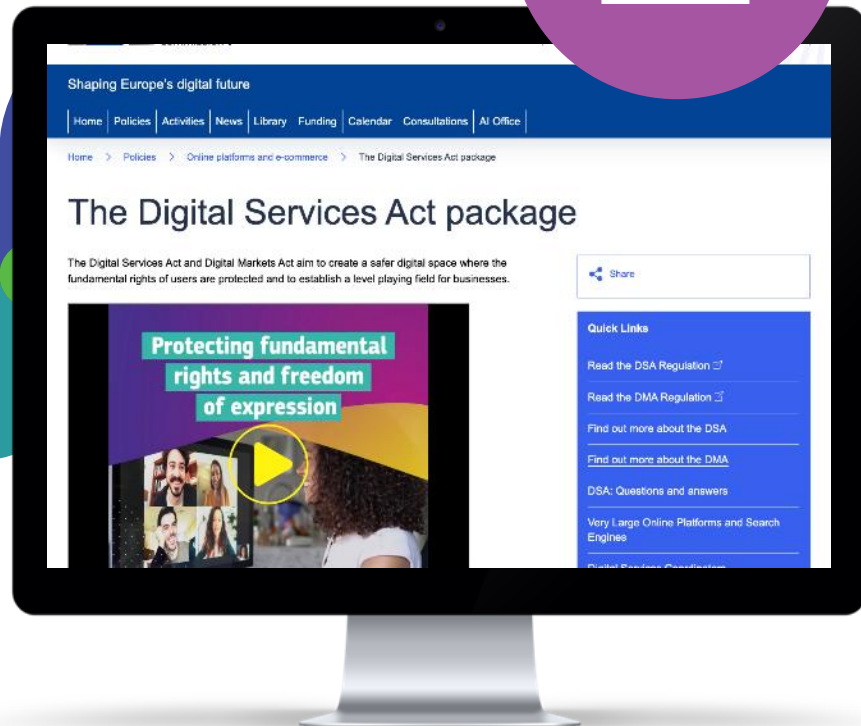
- 1. Improved Removal of Illegal Content:**  
Easier reporting tools and collaboration with trusted flaggers (e.g., X, Facebook, TikTok) to tackle illegal content, hate speech, and disinformation.
- 2. Transparency & User Rights:**
  - Platforms must provide clear explanations for content removal or restrictions.
  - Users have the right to appeal decisions through out-of-court dispute resolution mechanisms. The DSA Transparency Database makes content moderation decisions publicly accessible.

[Click to View](#)



# The Digital Services Act (DSA)

[Click to View](#)



## Key Provisions (cont.)

### 3. Protection of Minors & Sensitive Data:

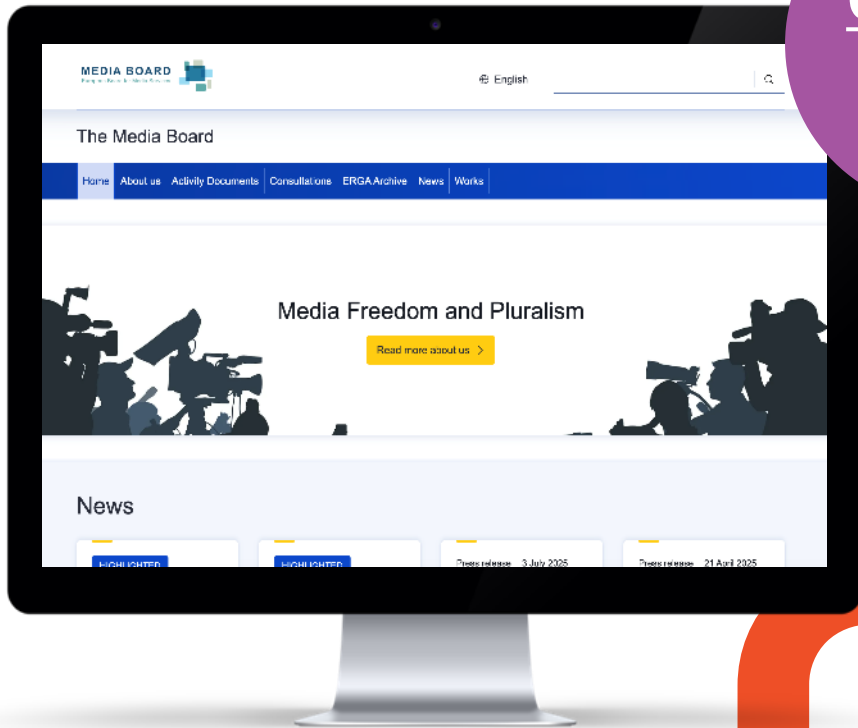
- Children and teens are often unable to critically assess persuasive, targeted content, making them vulnerable to manipulation. The DSA provisions
- Bans targeted ads to minors to prevent exploitation and protect mental health and development
- Prohibits use of sensitive data (e.g., ethnicity, sexual orientation) to avoid discriminatory targeting and misuse
- Encourages age verification and parental controls to strengthen online safeguards for young users.

# The European Board for Media Services (2025)

The Media Board (2025), which replaces the European Regulators' Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA, 2014) aims to support a European media framework that is free, pluralistic, trusted, and competitive.

It promotes cultural diversity, protects fundamental rights, and empowers citizens to form informed opinions and engage in democratic debate.

[Click to View](#)



# Case Study

## Indian Chronicles: Targeting the EU and UN to Serve Indian Interests

[Click to  
View](#)



**EU DisinfoLab** uncovered a vast and long-running disinformation campaign dubbed Indian Chronicles, which operated for 15+ years.

- Over 750 fake media outlets across 119 countries were found spreading anti-Pakistan and pro-India narratives.
- The campaign targeted at international institutions like the UN and the EU, undermining diplomatic processes and fuelling regional tensions.
- The operation blurred the line between activism and information warfare, manipulating public opinion and potentially inflaming geopolitical conflict.
- The case exposed how information disorder can erode trust in institutions, and how disinformation can directly impact international peace and diplomacy.

# OSINT Toolkit to Detect and Analyse IBD-focused FIMI

[Click to View](#)



## The toolkit includes tools for:

- Archiving evidence
- Verifying content & actors
- Tracing disinformation sources
- Assessing coordination & impact

This toolkit empowers researchers, policymakers, and civil society to better detect, analyse, and respond to identity-based disinformation, reinforcing societal resilience and democratic integrity.

[Click To Watch Video](#)



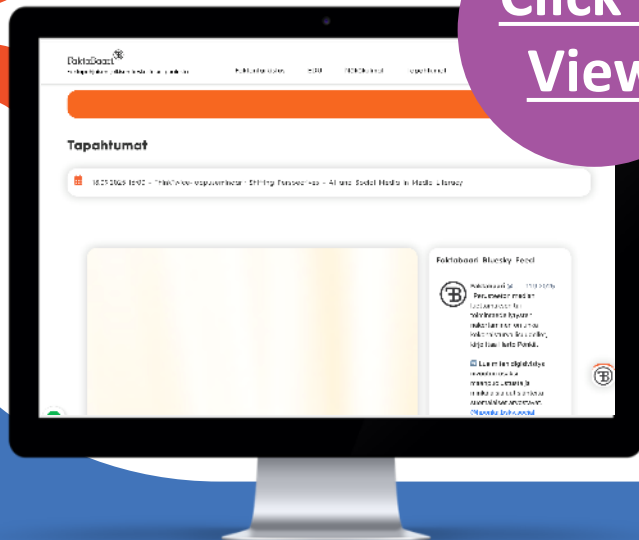


# Resources: Tools

## FaktaBaari (Fact Bar):

A Finnish fact-checking service with tools designed for media literacy education ([PDF](#)).

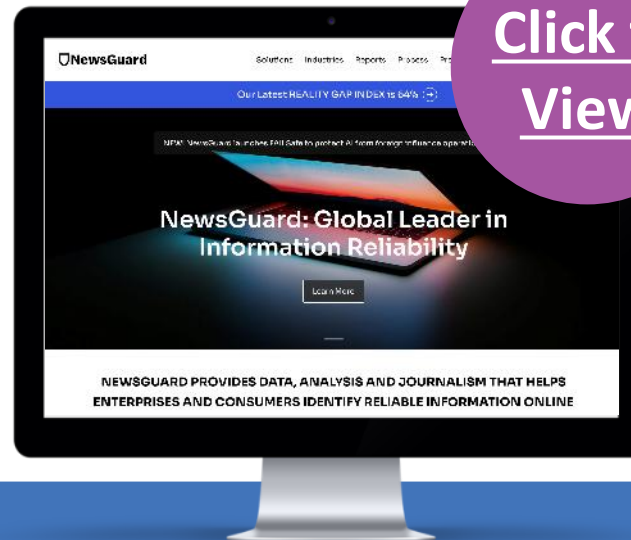
[Click to View](#)



## NewsGuard:

Provides trust ratings for news websites based on credibility and transparency

[Click to View](#)



## Hoaxy:

Visualizes how false information spreads online and tracks sources of disinformation

[Click to View](#)





## Activity

### Task:

Analyse the content of a trending digital news story or viral post and investigate its accuracy using fact-checking tools and multiple source verification.

## Fact-Checking Exercise: Verifying Online Content (News Stories)

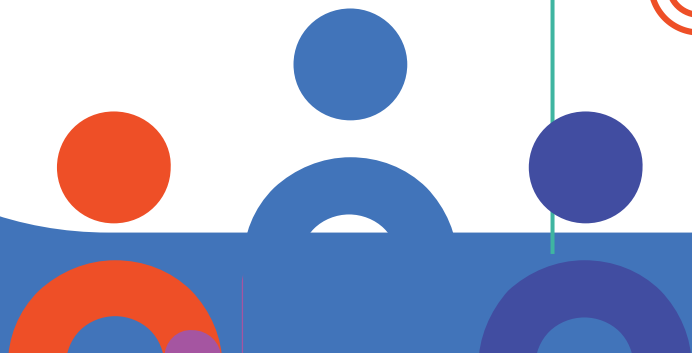
### Discussion:

*“Who published this content?”*

*“Are any claims backed by verified sources?”*

### Goal:

Boosts skills in using fact-checking tools and spotting misinformation.



# Case Study

## Uncovering the Cases of Disinformation

[Click to View](#)



## Case - Pro-Russian Ads Campaigns Approved by Meta:

Researchers from AI Forensics and CheckFirst uncovered over 275 pro-Russian ads approved by Meta between May 1–27, 2024, targeting users from Italy, France, Germany, and Poland. Ads reached over 3 million users and bypassed Meta’s moderation. The case highlights Meta’s failure to enforce political ad policies and suggests a broader systemic issue

[Click](#)



[Detailed Report](#)

*The European Commission launched formal proceedings against Meta for potential breaches of the Digital Services Act.*

# Topic 3

## Universities and Media Education: Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Europe





# Overview

## Universities and Media Education: Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Europe

This section explores how higher education institutions equip students with digital media literacy skills and prepare them to critically engage with online information. It highlights academic programs, initiatives, and best practices for facilitating digital citizenship.



# Media Education

---

**Media education** is a contemporary educational discipline focused on helping individuals understand how media and technology shape society and culture.

It emphasizes core principles such as media awareness, critical thinking, analytical skills, and the responsible and effective use of digital tools and platforms.

(Almaani, 2024)





## Focus Area 1

The role of universities in promoting media literacy and critical thinking

# The role of universities in promoting media literacy and critical thinking

In an increasingly digital society, universities hold a unique position as both educators and civic institutions. This focus area explores how higher education contributes to digital literacy and responsible media consumption among students and the wider public. It also guides learners in developing strategies to integrate critical media education into curricula, empowering individuals to become active, ethical digital citizens.



# University-led Examples

## Mohyla School of Journalism in Kiev, Ukraine

They offer courses on media ethics, disinformation, and constructive reporting. They Train journalism students to cover stories with social responsibility and nuance. In 2014 they launched the Stopfake.org fact checking site, together with the KMA Digital Future of Journalism project, as well as journalists, editors, IT specialists, and translators. Initially the goal of the project was to verify and refute disinformation and propaganda about events in Ukraine being circulated in the media is now an information hub where they examine and analyze all aspects of Kremlin propaganda.

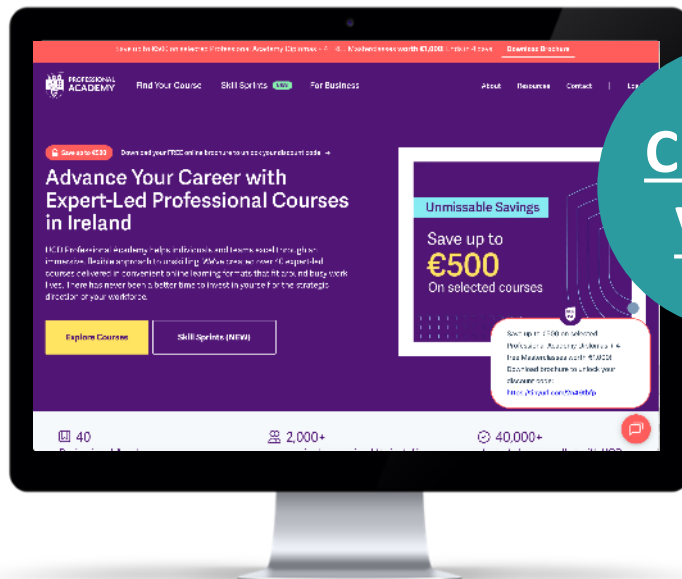
Today the team of media professionals fact-check, debunk, edit, translate, research and disseminate information in 14 languages: Ukrainian, Russian, English, Spanish, Serbian, Turkish, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Czech, German and Polish, Bulgarian.



# University-led Examples

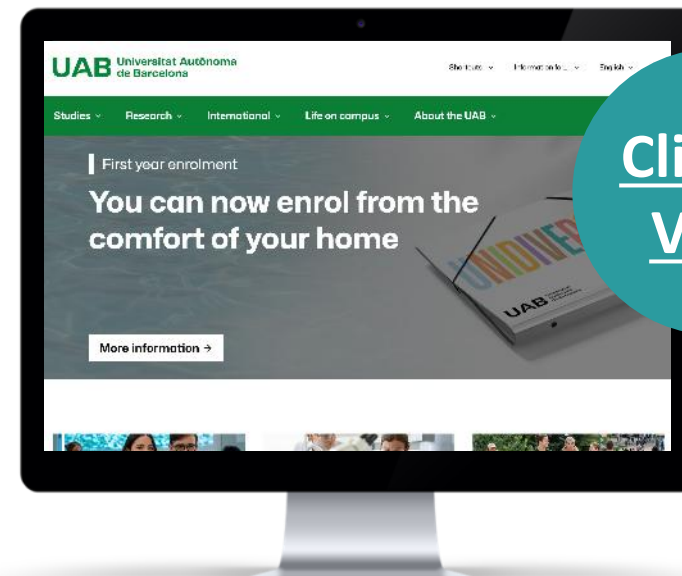
## Dublin City University, Ireland

- Through its Institute for Future Media, explores media narratives in conflict zones.
- Collaborates with NGOs to develop workshops on conflict-sensitive reporting.



## Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona & UNESCO, Spain

- Offers online courses in Media and Information Literacy for journalists and policymakers, focusing on human rights-based and peace-centered narratives.



# Integrating Critical Media Education into Curricula

---

Critical media education goes beyond teaching students how to use digital tools—it encourages them to question how media shapes perceptions, influences behavior, and affects democracy.

## Effective integration strategies include:

- Embedding media literacy modules into existing courses
- Using case studies and simulations to explore real-world issues
- Encouraging project-based learning and digital storytelling
- Collaborating across departments to ensure diverse perspectives
- Educators can also draw on European frameworks such as DigCompEdu and UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Toolkit to align learning outcomes with broader policy goals.





# Ethical Journalism Principles and Digital Education

---

## Focus Area 2

---

Integrating ethical journalism principles into digital education

Ethical journalism is essential not only in traditional media but also in digital education, especially as universities increasingly engage with digital platforms and train future communicators. Universities collaborate with media organizations and others to teach principles such as accuracy, fairness, accountability, and respect for privacy.



# What are the core ethical journalism principles?



[Click to View](#)



# European Journalism Training Association (EJTA)

The EJTA is currently working on several international project of which one is the **Eurofactcheck**. This developed a specific methodology for verifying information.

Another project is **Inclusive Journalism**, which is aimed at journalism that takes all the voices in conflicts into account, and assumes its social responsibility. “What are the most striking needs for journalism educators working with inclusive journalism in 2025?”

A working group on artificial intelligence and training for journalists has also been launched, providing recommendations for intergrating AI in journalism teaching. Have a look here: [EJTA-Recommendations-for-AI-version-1.0-VDEF.pdf](#)



# Understanding Digital Media Influence and Misinformation through Research

---



## Focus Area 3

---

Academic research on digital media influence and misinformation trends

Another important role of the universities is that of academic research. Research is important for understanding the trends and effects of digital media on society, including:

- Identifying trends in misinformation, disinformation and digital behavior
- Evaluating media literacy programs
- Informing policy and curriculum design
- Exploring ethical dimensions of digital participation

# The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, for instance, is part of the University of Oxford. It conducts in-depth studies on misinformation and digital news consumption. The Institute is committed to shaping the future of journalism through global research, debate, and engagement. By bridging practice and research, the Institute fosters international dialogue and equips journalists, editors, and media leaders to navigate a rapidly evolving media landscape. Its goal is to support the development of sustainable, high-quality journalism.

## Core Programmes

- Journalist Fellowship offers mid-career journalists a research-focused sabbatical in Oxford.
- Leadership programmes facilitate confidential peer exchange among media leaders.
- Research programmes produce timely, evidence-based analysis of global media challenges.



Reuters Institute  
Digital News Report 2024

[Click to  
View](#)



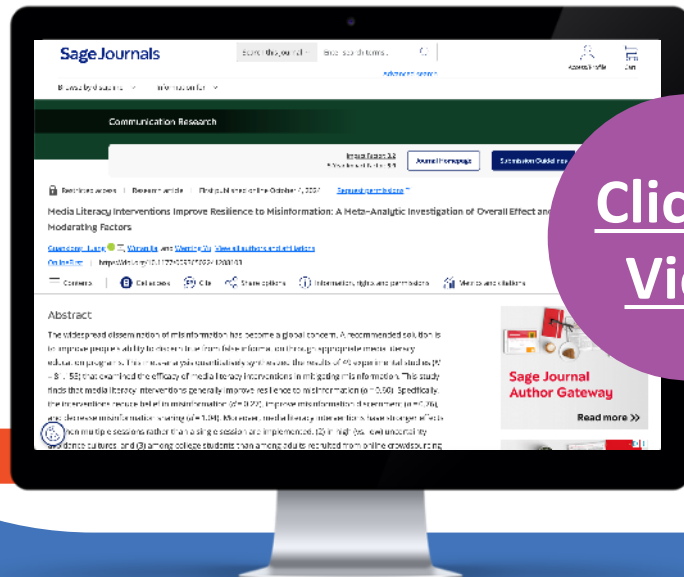


## Insight from Recent Research

# Media Literacy Interventions Improve Resilience to Misinformation

This research article presents meta-analysis of 49 experimental studies on whether and how media literacy interventions improve resilience to misinformation. The researchers found that interventions significantly reduced belief in misinformation and improved discernment.

They also found that the observed effects were stronger in multi-session programs and among college students. Huang, G., Jia, W., & Yu, W. (2024). *Media Literacy Interventions Improve Resilience to Misinformation: A Meta-Analytic Investigation of Overall Effect and Moderating Factors*. *Communication Research*, 0(0).



# Case Study

One university under the microscope – examine media literacy and critical thinking in practice

Critically examine how Tampere universities in Finland promote media education, media literacy, and critical thinking in practice.

## Instructions:

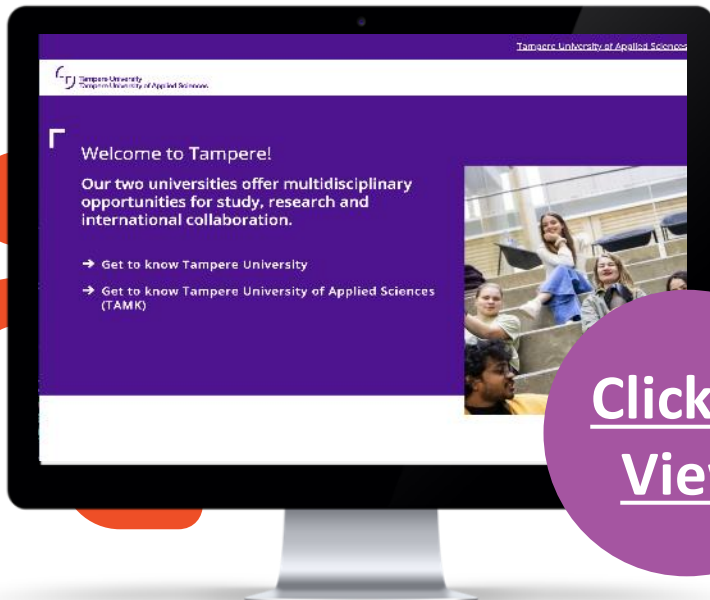
### 1. Investigate the university's:

- Curriculum - Are media literacy and critical thinking explicitly taught? In which programs or courses?
- Institutional Initiatives - Are there campaigns, workshops, or centers focused on media literacy or misinformation?
- Research - Are research conducted on media education and media literacy?
- Partnerships - Does the university collaborate with media organizations, NGOs, or government bodies on these issues?

### 3. Analyse and Reflect

- Compare with similar initiatives in your home country or institution.

### 4. Present a summary of findings



[Click to View](#)



## Resources: Tools

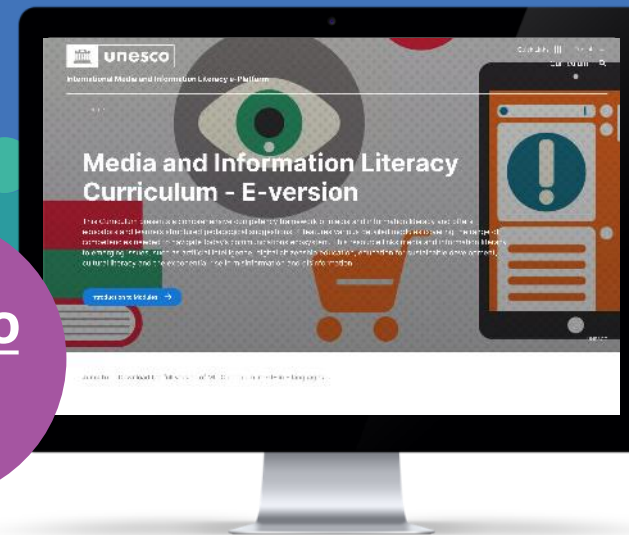
### How to spot and fight disinformation

This toolkit helps teachers spark classroom discussions on the impact of false and misleading information - especially disinformation - on health, democracy, the environment, and societal norms. The toolkit is available in several languages

[Click to View](#)



[Click to View](#)



### Media and Information Literacy Curriculum - E-version | International Media and Information Literacy e-Platform

This Curriculum presents a comprehensive competency framework of media and information literacy and offers educators and learners structured pedagogical suggestions. It features various detailed modules covering the range of competencies needed to navigate today's communications ecosystem. This resource links media and information literacy to emerging issues, such as artificial intelligence, digital citizenship education, education for sustainable development, cultural literacy and the exponential rise in misinformation and disinformation

# Topic 4

## The Role of Civil Society in Holding Digital Platforms Accountable





# Overview

## The Role of Civil Society in Holding Digital Platforms Accountable

**In the digital age, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical practices across digital platforms.**

From fighting misinformation and algorithmic discrimination to advocating for stronger data privacy protections, CSOs act as **watchdogs, policy influencers, and public educators**. Using advocacy, litigation, research, and public campaigns, they pressure tech companies to uphold democratic values and protect **users' rights** in the digital space.

# Explains Key Definitions and Concepts

---



## Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Non-governmental, non-profit entities that represent citizens' interests and advocate for public good, often through activism, policy engagement, and legal action.

## Platform Accountability

The principle that digital platforms - such as Facebook, Google, and X - should be transparent and responsible in their practices, including content moderation, data handling, and algorithm design.

## Digital Rights

Fundamental rights applied to the online environment, including freedom of expression, privacy, access to information, and protection from discrimination.

## Algorithmic Bias

Systematic and unfair discrimination embedded in automated decision-making systems, often due to flawed data or opaque algorithm design.



## Focus Area 1

Advocacy and  
Coalition Building  
How Civil Society  
Creates Public  
Pressure for Platform  
Accountability

# CSOs create public pressure and policy momentum by:

- Forming alliances (e.g. Access Now, EDRI, Digital Rights Watch)
- Publishing open letters, manifestos, and watchdog reports
- Engaging directly with policymakers and tech companies

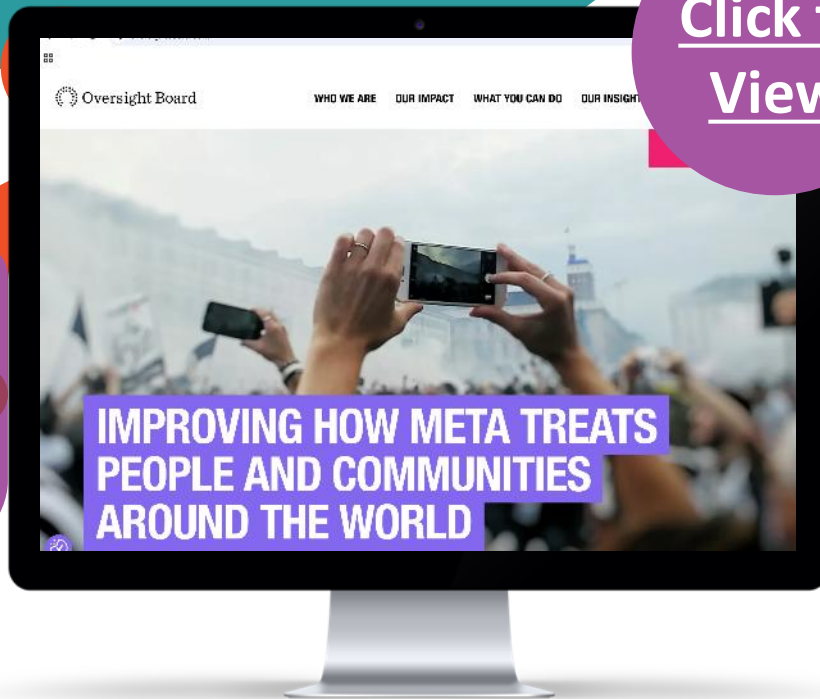
**Example:** The Real Facebook Oversight Board - an independent group of experts challenging Meta's policies through public scrutiny.



# Case Study

## The Real Facebook Oversight Board (RFOB)

[Click to View](#)



## Independent Civil Society Oversight of Meta Platforms

### Overview:

- Established in 2020, the Real Facebook Oversight Board is an independent coalition of academics, journalists, and civil rights leaders.
- It was formed to scrutinize Meta's (formerly Facebook) content moderation policies and advocate for greater transparency and accountability.

### Key Actions:

- Publicly challenged Meta's decisions on content moderation, especially concerning misinformation and hate speech.
- Released reports and held briefings to highlight platform shortcomings and their societal impacts.
- Collaborated with other civil society organizations to amplify calls for ethical governance in digital platforms.



## Focus Area 2

Legal Action and  
Strategic Litigation  
Using the Law to Hold  
Digital Platforms  
Accountable

# Civil society uses legal mechanisms to enforce accountability:

- Filing lawsuits under GDPR, Digital Services Act (DSA), and national laws
- Challenging violations of privacy, freedom of expression, and anti-discrimination principles



# Legal Action and Strategic Litigation

---



## What It Is

Civil society organizations (CSOs) use legal mechanisms to challenge unethical or unlawful practices by tech companies. This includes violations of privacy rights, algorithmic discrimination, lack of transparency, and failure to protect users from harmful content.

## Key Tools

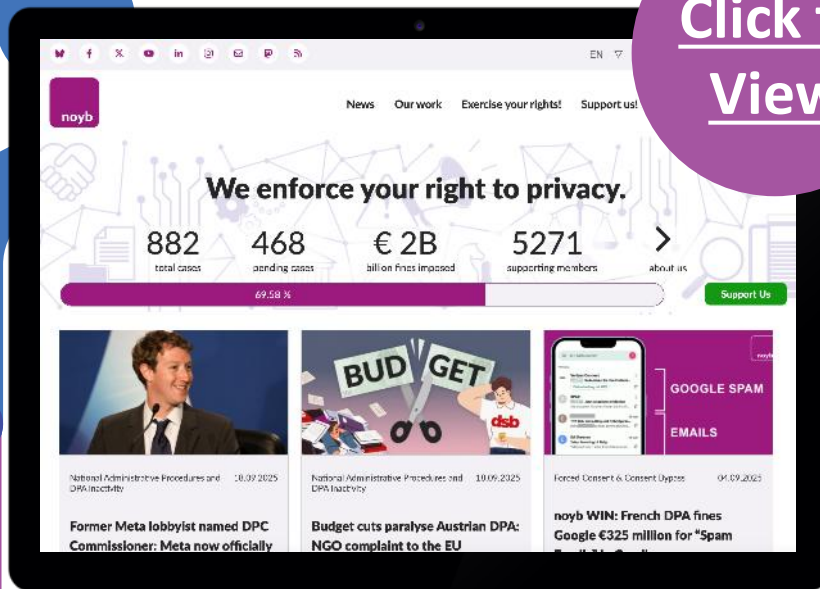
- **GDPR (EU)** – to demand data protection and consent
- **Digital Services Act (DSA)** – to ensure transparency and content accountability
- **National laws** – e.g., consumer rights, anti-discrimination, freedom of expression

# Legal Action and Strategic Litigation

## Notable Cases

- **NOYB (None of Your Business):** Founded by Max Schrems, it has filed dozens of GDPR complaints against Meta, Google, and others, leading to multimillion-euro fines and improved privacy standards.
- **La Quadrature du Net (France):** Successfully litigated against government surveillance and AI-based predictive policing tools.
- **Privacy International:** Challenged mass data collection practices and won cases at national and international levels.

[Click to View](#)





## Digital Tool

### NewsFeed Defenders

**Description:** media literacy game teaches players how to detect and disregard disinformation and misinformation in today's chaotic environment

**Apply to Topic 3:** Universities and Media Education: Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Europe.



[Click to View](#)



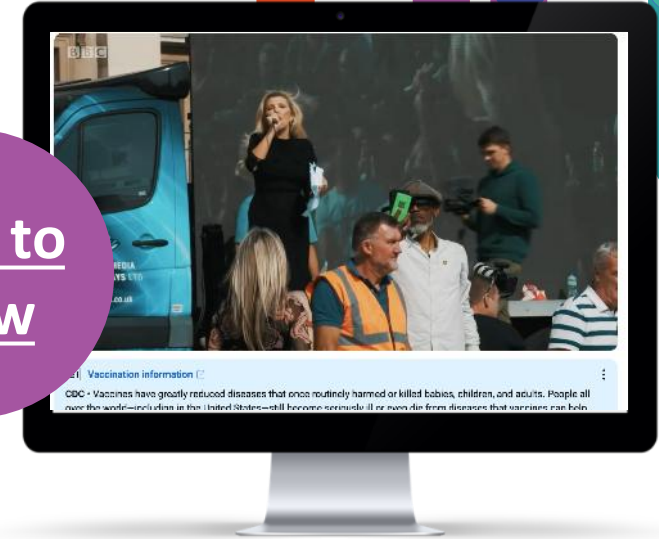
# Resources

## A UNESCO Report

**Platform Problems and Regulatory Solutions - Findings from a comprehensive review of existing studies and investigations**



[Click to View](#)



[Click to View](#)

## BBC Panorama: Anti-Vaccine Movement (2019) - (Documentary)

**Panorama Vaccines The Disinformation War - The BBC Panorama programme/documentary was criticised for spreading misinformation and contributing to public confusion around COVID-19 vaccines**

# Module 7: Making the Internet a Safer, Fairer, & Honest Space

## You have completed Module 7

Making the Internet a Safer,  
Fairer & Honest Space



This resource is licensed  
under CC BY 4.0



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Finnish National Agency for Education. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

\* Note to manage waste please print this document in greyscale or black and white rather than in colour. Please print on both sides of the paper (duplex) and if you can print multiple slides or pages on one page.