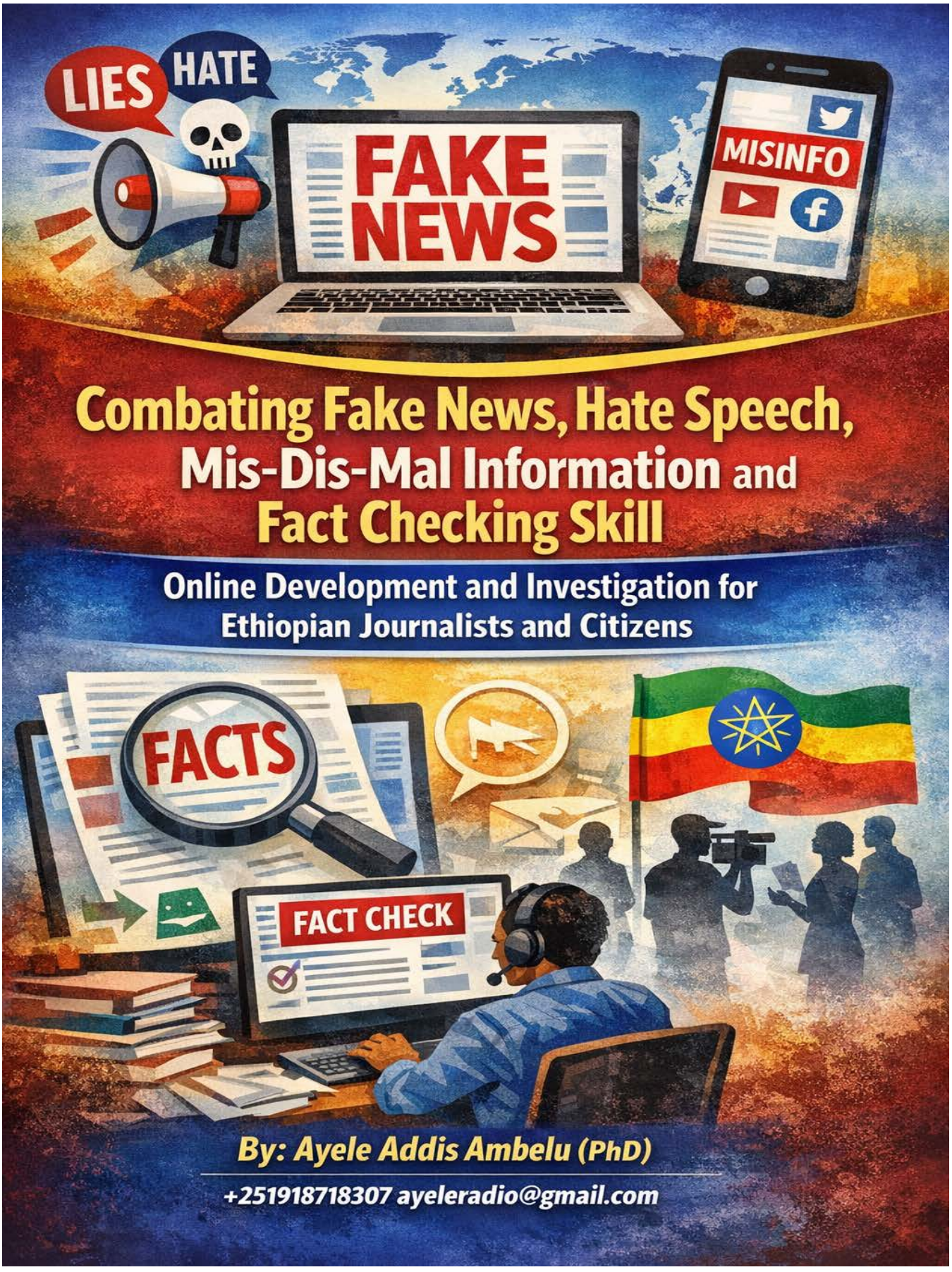


IMS paving the way for good journalism | FOJO: MEDIA INSTITUTE Linnaeus University

Media Literacy

Concepts,Skills& toolkit

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Table of Contents

Detailed Cover Description 5

Introduction 7

What is Media Literacy? 9

What Media Literacy Is NOT 9

Why Media Literacy is Important 9

The influence of media in our central democratic processes. 10

The high rate of media consumption and the saturation of society by media. 10

The media's influence on shaping perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. 10

The increasing importance of visual communication and information. 10

The importance of information in society and the need for lifelong learning. 10

Five Core Concepts 10

Core Concepts & Key Questions for Consumers 11

CORE CONCEPT: 11

All media messages are constructed. 11

CORE CONCEPT: 12

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. 12

CORE CONCEPT: 14

Different people experience the same media message differently. 14

CORE CONCEPT: 14

Media have embedded values and points of view. 14

CORE CONCEPT: 15

Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. 15

Core Concepts & Key Questions for Producers 17

CORE CONCEPT: 17

All media messages are constructed. 17

CORE CONCEPT: 18

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. 18

CORE CONCEPT: 19

Different people experience the same media message differently. 19

CORE CONCEPT: 20

Media have embedded values and points of view. 20

CORE CONCEPT: 21

Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. 21
Media Literacy Process Skills 22
Access 23
Analyse 23
Evaluate 23
Create 24
Participate 24
How to Conduct a 'Close Analysis' of a Media 'Text' 25
Visuals. 26
Sounds. 26
Review Your Insights. 26
Awareness 28
Analysis 28
Reflection 28
Action 29
The Dearth of Media Literacy Knowledge and 30
its Consequences 30
Fake News 31
The Characteristics of Fake News 33
The Contributing factors that drive the sharing/consuming of fake news 34
Disinformation 34
Misinformation 35
Hate Speech 35
The Effects of Hate Speech 36
Ways of identifying false information from the real one 36
Fact checking toolkit from FOJO 39
Fact-checking and why facts matter 39
Tips for sharing (or not sharing) posts on social media 41
Online tools for verifying images 43
Google reverse image search 43
TinEye 43
RevEye 44
InVID Verification Plugin 44

Verifying Twitter Accounts 44
The fact-checking process 45

Detailed Cover Description

The poster is a visually compelling and informative cover designed to promote an **online development and investigation training program** focused on combating **Fake News, Hate Speech, Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-Information**, and strengthening **fact-checking skills** among **Ethiopian journalists and citizens**. The overall design combines strong symbolic imagery, bold typography, and national context to clearly communicate urgency, credibility, and relevance.

Overall Design and Theme

The poster uses a **powerful digital-media theme**, reflecting the modern information ecosystem where misinformation spreads rapidly through online platforms. A textured background with **deep blue, red, and earthy tones** creates contrast and visual depth, symbolizing both the danger of false information and the hope provided by truth and verification. The layout is vertically structured, guiding the viewer's eye from the problem at the top to solutions and capacity building at the bottom.

Top Section – The Problem: Fake News and Hate Speech

At the top of the poster, a **laptop screen prominently displays the words "FAKE NEWS" in bold red capital letters**, immediately capturing attention and signaling the central issue. Surrounding the laptop are **visual symbols of misinformation and hate speech**, including:

- A **megaphone** emitting messages labeled "LIES" and "HATE," representing the amplification of harmful narratives.
- A **smartphone screen** showing social media icons and the word "MISINFO," highlighting how false information spreads rapidly through digital and social media platforms.
- A faint **world map** in the background, emphasizing that misinformation is a global challenge, while still relevant at the national and local level.

These elements collectively illustrate the **chaotic and dangerous nature of the current information environment**, particularly in online spaces.

Central Section – Title and Purpose

The middle section features the **main title in large, bold, high-contrast text**:

"Combating Fake News, Hate Speech, Mis-Dis-Mal Information and Fact Checking Skill"

The typography is clear and authoritative, reinforcing the seriousness of the topic. Below the main title, a secondary line provides clarity on the scope and target audience:

“Online Development and Investigation for Ethiopian Journalists and Citizens”

This subtitle emphasizes that the program is:

- **Online-based**, increasing accessibility
- Focused on **skills development and investigative approaches**
- Specifically tailored for **Ethiopian journalists and the general public**, highlighting inclusivity and national relevance

Bottom Section – The Solution: Fact-Checking and Journalism

The lower portion of the poster visually represents **solutions and empowerment through knowledge**. Key elements include:

- A **magnifying glass over documents labeled “FACTS”**, symbolizing verification, evidence-based reporting, and critical thinking.
- A **computer screen displaying “FACT CHECK”**, reinforcing the training’s practical focus on verification tools and techniques.
- Stacked books and documents, representing **learning, research, and professional development**.
- A **journalist wearing headphones and working at a desk**, signifying investigative journalism, digital monitoring, and responsible media practice.
- Silhouettes of **media professionals filming and reporting**, highlighting active civic engagement and ethical journalism.

To the right side, the **Ethiopian national flag** is clearly displayed, grounding the initiative in the Ethiopian context and reinforcing national responsibility in protecting information integrity and social cohesion.

Authorship and Contact Information

At the very bottom of the poster, the author and facilitator are clearly credited:

“By: Ayele Addis Ambelu (PhD)”

This attribution adds academic and professional credibility to the program. Beneath the name, clear and accessible contact details are provided:

- **Phone:** +251 918 718 307
- **Email:** ayeleradio@gmail.com

These details encourage direct communication for registration, collaboration, or further inquiries.

Overall Message and Impact

The poster effectively communicates a strong and urgent message: **misinformation, hate speech, and fake news are serious threats**, but they can be addressed through **education, investigation, and fact-**

checking skills. By combining striking visuals with clear text and national symbolism, the poster appeals to journalists, educators, civil society actors, and ordinary citizens, motivating them to engage in responsible information sharing and democratic discourse.

Introduction

"We must prepare young people for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds." UNESCO, 1982

Since the beginning of recorded history, the concept of "literacy" meant having the skill to interpret "squiggles" on a piece of paper as letters which, when put together, formed words that conveyed meaning.

Teaching the young to put the words together to understand (and, in turn, express) as it evolved over the centuries. Today information about the world around us comes to us not only by words on a piece of paper but more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multi-media culture.

Although mediated messages appear to be self-evident, in truth, they use a complex audio/visual "language" which has its own rules (grammar) and which can be used to express many-layered concepts and ideas about the world.

Not everything may be obvious at first; and images go by so fast! If our children are to be able to navigate their lives through this multi-media culture, they need to be fluent in "reading" and "writing" the language of images and sounds just as we have always taught them to "read" and "write" the language of printed communications. Furthermore, they need the skills to interact, to share their ideas and to collaborate constructively ever more complex ideas became the goal of education, making it possible to participate in today's media-driven culture.

In the last 40 years, the field of media literacy education has emerged to organize and promote the importance of teaching this expanded notion of "literacy." At its core are the basic higher-order critical and creative thinking skills—e.g. knowing how to identify key concepts, how to make connections between multiple ideas, how to ask pertinent questions, formulate a response, identify fallacies—that form the very foundation of both intellectual freedom and the exercising of full citizenship in a democratic society.

Indeed in a time when candidates are elected through websites and 30-second commercials, and wars are fought real-time on the internet and television, a unique role of media literacy is to prepare citizens to engage in and contribute to the public debate.

It also expands the concept of "text" to include not just written texts but any message form—verbal, aural or visual (or all three together!)—that is used to create and then pass ideas back and forth between human beings.

What is Media Literacy?

Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education.

It provides a framework to access, analyse, evaluate, create and participate using messages in a variety of forms.

It builds an understanding of the role of media in society, as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Media literacy, put simply, is the ability to identify different types of media and the messages they are sending. When we speak of media, it encompasses print media, such as newspapers, magazines and posters, and theatrical presentations, tweets, radio broadcasts, etc. Being able to understand these various forms of information with an ability to make sense of what is presented is key.

What Media Literacy Is NOT

- Media 'bashing' is NOT media literacy; however media literacy often involves criticizing the media.
- Merely producing media is NOT media literacy, although media literacy should include media production activities and projects.
- Just bringing videos or CD-ROMs or other mediated content into the classroom is NOT media literacy; one must also explore the nature and influence of media and media messages in our culture.
- Simply looking for political agendas, stereotypes or misrepresentations is NOT media literacy; there should also be an exploration of the systems making them appear "normal."
- Looking at a media message or experience from just one perspective is NOT media literacy because media should be examined from multiple positions.
- Media literacy does NOT mean "don't watch;" it means "watch carefully, think critically."

Why Media Literacy is Important

The influence of media in our central democratic processes.

In a global media culture, people need three skills in order to be engaged citizens of a democracy: critical thinking, self-expression and participation. Media literacy instills these core skills, enabling future citizens to sort through political packaging, understand and contribute to public discourse, and, ultimately, make informed decisions in the voting booth.

The high rate of media consumption and the saturation of society by media.

When one considers cell phones, social networking, video games, television, pop music, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, the internet—even T-shirts!—we are exposed to more mediated messages in one day than our great-grandparents were exposed to in a year. Media literacy teaches the skills we need to navigate safely through this sea of images and messages—for all our lives.

The media's influence on shaping perceptions, beliefs and attitudes.

While research disagrees on the extent and type of influence, it is unquestionable that media experiences exert a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act on our world. By helping us understand those influences, media education can help us separate from our dependencies on them.

The increasing importance of visual communication and information.

While schools continue to be dominated by print, our lives are increasingly influenced by visual images—from corporate logos to huge billboards to cell phones to Internet websites. Learning how to "read" the multiple layers of image-based communication is a necessary adjunct to traditional print literacy. We live in a multi-media world.

The importance of information in society and the need for lifelong learning.

Information processing and information services are at the core of our nation's productivity but the growth of global media industries is also challenging independent voices and diverse views. Media education can help both teachers and students understand where information comes from, whose interests may be being served and how to find alternative views.

Five Core Concepts

There are five core concepts in media literacy, which are used both for deconstruction & construction.

1. All media messages are constructed.

2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

3. Different people experience the same media message differently.

4. Media have embedded values and points of view.

5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Core Concepts & Key Questions for Consumers

Media Deconstruction Framework

Five Core Concepts
Five Key Questions **for Consumers**

The 5 core concepts and key questions serve as media deconstruction framework.

CORE CONCEPT:

All media messages are constructed.

KEY QUESTION:

Here, the question that you need to raise for deconstruction is:

- **Who created this message?**

We should not think of media texts (newspaper articles, TV shows, video games, comic books to name just a few) as "natural" things. Media texts are built just as surely as buildings and highways are built. The

building materials involved vary from one kind of text to another. In a magazine, for example, there are words in different sizes and typefonts, photographs, colors, layout and page location.

TV and movies have hundreds of building blocks—from camera angles and lighting to music and sound effects. What this means is that whether we are watching the nightly news or passing a billboard on the street, the media message we experience was written by someone (or probably several people), pictures were taken and a creative designer put it all together. But this is more than a physical process. What happens is that whatever is "constructed" by just a few people then becomes "normalized" for the rest of us; like the air we breathe, it gets taken for granted and usually goes unquestioned. But as the audience, we don't get to see or hear the words, pictures or arrangements that were rejected. We only see, hear or read what was accepted! The success of media texts depends upon their apparent naturalness; we turn off a production that looks "fake." But the truth is, it's all fake—even the news! That doesn't mean we can't still enjoy a movie, watch TV or listen to music. The goal of this question is not to make us cynical but simply to expose the complexities of media's "constructedness" and thus create the critical distance we need to be able to ask other important questions.

Guiding Questions:

- What kind of "text" is it?
- What are the various elements (building blocks) that make up the whole?
- How similar or different is it to others of the same genre? • Which technologies are used in its creation?
- How would it be different in a different medium?
- What choices were made that might have been made differently?
- How many people did it take to create this message? What are their various jobs?

CORE CONCEPT:

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the key question that you need to use for deconstruction is:-

- **<u>What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?</u>**

Each form of communication—whether newspapers, TV game shows or horror movies—has its own creative language: scary music heightens fear, camera close-ups convey intimacy, big headlines signal significance. Understanding the grammar, syntax and metaphor system of media language, especially the language of sounds and visuals which can reach beyond the rational to our deepest emotional core, increases our appreciation and enjoyment of media experiences as well as helps us to be less susceptible to manipulation.

One of the best ways to understand how media are put together is to do just that—make a video, create a website, develop an ad campaign about a community issue. The more real world the project is, the better. Digital cameras and computer authoring programs provide easy ways to integrate creative production projects in any subject area. In addition the four major arts disciplines—music, dance, theatre and the visual arts—can also provide a context through which one gains skills of analysis, interpretation and appreciation along with opportunities for self-expression and producing a message for an audience.

Guiding Questions:

- What do you notice…(about the way the message is constructed?)
  - Colors and shapes?
  - Sound effects? Music? Silence? Dialogue or Narration?
  - Props, sets, clothing?
  - Movement?
  - Composition?
  - Lighting?
- Where is the camera?
- What is the viewpoint?
- How is the story told?
- What are people doing?
- Are there any visual symbols or metaphors?
- What's the emotional appeal? Persuasive devices?
- What makes it seem "real"?

CORE CONCEPT:

Different people experience the same media message differently.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the Question that you need to use for deconstruction is:

- **How might different people understand this message differently?**

Audiences play a role in interpreting media texts because each audience member brings to the media text a unique set of life experiences (age, gender, education, cultural upbringing, etc.) which, when applied to the text—or combined with the text—create unique interpretations. A veteran, for example, brings a different set of experiences to a war movie than any other audience member—resulting in a different reaction to the film as well as, perhaps, greater insight. Even parents and children watching TV together do not "see" the same program. This concept turns the tables on the idea of TV viewers or internet users as just passive "couch potatoes." We may not be conscious of it but each of us, even toddlers, are constantly trying to "make sense" of what we see, hear or read. The more questions we can ask about what we are experiencing around us, the more alert we can be about accepting or rejecting messages. Research indicates that, over time, children of all ages can learn age-appropriate skills that give them a new set of glasses with which they can "read" and interpret their media culture.

Guiding Questions:

- Have you ever experienced anything like this?
- How close does it come to what you experienced in real life?
- What did you learn from this media text? What did you learn about yourself from experiencing the media text?
- What did you learn from other people's responses—and their experiences?
- How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?
- How can you explain the different responses?
- Are other viewpoints just as valid as mine?

CORE CONCEPT:

Media have embedded values and points of view.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the Question that you need to use for deconstruction is:

- **<u>What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?</u>**

Media, because they are constructed, carry a subtext of who and what is important—at least to the person or persons creating the construction. Media are also storytellers (even commercials tell a quick and simple story) and stories require characters and settings and a plot that has a beginning, a middle and an end. The choice of a character's age, gender or race mixed in with the lifestyles, attitudes and behaviors that are portrayed, the selection of a setting (urban? rural? affluent? poor?), and the actions and re-actions in the plot are just some of the ways that values become "embedded" in a TV show, a movie or an ad. It is important to learn how to "read" all kinds of media messages in order to discover the points of view that are embedded in them and how to assess them as part of the text rather than merely accepting them as "natural." Only then can we judge whether to accept or reject a message. Being able to recognize and name missing perspectives is also a critical skill as we negotiate our way each day through our mediated environment.

Guiding Questions:

- How is the human person characterized? What kinds of behaviors / consequences are depicted?
- What type of person is the reader / watcher / listener invited to identify with?
- What questions come to mind as you watch / read / listen?
- What ideas or values are being "sold" in this message?
- What political or economic ideas are communicated in the message?
- What judgments or statements are made about how we treat other people?
- What is the overall worldview?
- Are any ideas or perspectives left out? How would you find what's missing?

CORE CONCEPT:

Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the Question that you need to raise for deconstruction is:

➢ Why is this message being sent?

Much of the world's media were developed as money-making enterprises and continue to operate today as commercial businesses. Newspapers and magazines lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most TV watching. What many people do not know is that what's really being sold through commercial media is not just the advertised products to the audience—but also the audience to the advertisers! The real purpose of the programs on television, or the articles in a magazine, is to create an audience (and put them in a receptive mood) so that the network or publisher can sell time or space to sponsors to advertise products—usually in a way that entices us to want what we really don't need! Sponsors pay for the time based on the number of people the producers predict will be watching. And they get a refund if the number of actual viewers or readers turns out to be lower than promised. But the issue of message motivation has changed dramatically since the Internet became an international platform through which groups and organizations—even individuals—can attempt to persuade others to a particular point of view. The Internet provides numerous reasons for users of all ages to be able to interpret rhetorical devices, verify sources and distinguish legitimate online sources from bogus, hate or 'hoax' websites. And with democracy at stake almost everywhere around the world, citizens in every country need to be equipped with the ability to determine both economic and ideological "spin."

Guiding Questions:

- Who's in control of the creation and transmission of this message?
- Why are they sending it? How do you know?
- Who are they sending it to? How do you know?
- Who is served by, profits or benefits from the message? The public? Private interests? Individuals? Institutions?
- Who wins? Who loses? Who decides?
- What economic decisions may have influenced the construction or transmission of the message?

Core Concepts & Key Questions for Producers

Media Construction Framework

Five Core Concepts for Producers

Five Key Questions

The 5 core concepts and key questions serve as media construction framework.

CORE CONCEPT:

All media messages are constructed.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the Question that you need to use for construction is:

- **What am I authoring?**

Certain buildings look certain ways for certain reasons. A church looks differently than a house; an office building looks differently than a retail store. Whether someone tells us what type of building it is or not, we recognize the building for what it is due to the way that it's built or put together; the elements that make up the construction of the building cue us as to how the building is used.

And someone, or a team of people, decided what those construction elements were going to be and then actually put the building together, piece by piece. The same is true of media. When we decide to "manufacture" media, we as authors decide what type of building we will make and what construction elements to use so that the building's purpose is recognizable to others.

Whether it's an advertisement or a logo, a billboard or a webpage, a video game or a novel, all media constructions exemplify certain characteristics that must be present for the construction to be recognized. Then, these elements are carefully put together to meet the author's specifications, whatever they may be.

Authors, designers, developers and producers—however they are labeled—all create their own media environments, just as builders create physical environments. When we enter or create a media world, we leave the real world behind.

Guiding Questions:

- What kind of "text" genre am I creating?
- What various elements (building blocks) make up the whole?
- How similar or different is it to others of the same genre?
- Which technologies am I using to create? What will my medium be?
- How would my construction be different in a different medium?
- What are my choices? What choices might I make differently?
- Have others contributed to this construction? How should they be credited?
- Have I respected copyright, trademarks or other intellectual property that I may have used?

CORE CONCEPT:

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the Question that you need to use for construction is:

- **Does my message reflect understanding in format, creativity and technology?**

Marshall McLuhan famously said the "media is the message." Often, the media determines a great deal about the message. If you using a cell phone, you message had better be short and compact! If you want you message to resonate with powerful emotions or with compelling facts, you had better be the master of crafting a particular form of message, whether it's entertaining, informing, persuading or participating.

Having a deep knowledge of the arts is also helpful in mastering the creative languages of media construction. Theatre requires knowledge of writing and storytelling techniques; dance and motion demand understanding of choreography; music involves knowledge of tempo and instruments and orchestration; visual arts require knowledge of perspective and line and form and colour.

And technology plays a role, too, because the technology provides the tools and also the environmental constraints in which the tools can be used. In cases like video games or search engines the technology often

dictates the form of the message. Before making or breaking the rules, I must first know what the rules are and thoroughly understand the rules.

KEYWORD: The key word that can elucidate the above key concepts in a succinct way is **FORMAT**.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What do I want people to notice…or not…(about the way I am constructing my message)?
- What technologies am I using?
- How is my message structure affected?
- What techniques stand out the most? Colour and shapes? Sound? Silence? Dialogue or Narration? Movement? Composition? Lighting? Texture? Scent?
- How am I telling the story? Do I know the storytelling conventions available to me? What storytelling conventions am I using?
- When does my message take place? What is the setting or timing of my message? What impact might the setting or timing of my message have on other choices I make?
- What visual or verbal, musical or visual symbols or metaphors am I using?
- What emotional appeal am I using?
- What persuasive devices am I employing? Am I being ethical?
- What factual information am I presenting? Are my facts and information accurate? How do I know?
- Does my message seem "real?" Why?

CORE CONCEPT:

Different people experience the same media message differently.

1. **KEY QUESTION:** Here, the question that you need to use for construction is:
   - **Is my message engaging and compelling for my target audience?**

Creative techniques alone are not enough to attract the attention of an audience, because each audience and indeed, each individual is different. The more you know about the audience you are appealing to, the better chance you have of engaging that audience, whether the audience is one person or many.

And if the audience is engaged, the audience will feel compelled to take in my message and possibly even view or hear or interact with my entire message, from start to finish. When you go to see a movie, you never "see" the same movie as youneighbor or friend. You can only see through your own eyes. Yet media

appeals to life experiences that we have in common, or otherwise we would have no interest in the message.

It is for this reason that advertisers "target" audiences, sometimes to reach the widest audience possible, and sometimes to reach only a select few. But in either case, knowledge of the audience and data about the audience helps provide understanding in reaching the audience efficiently and effectively, hopefully for mutual benefit.

KEYWORD: The key word that can elucidate the above key concepts in a succinct way is **AUDIENCE.**

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Who is the target audience for my message?
- What do I know about this person or people? What are some important characteristics about them I should know?
- How wide an audience do I want to appeal to? Or how narrow?
- Have I respected the need for privacy or confidentiality on the part of my audience?
- Have I taken into consideration the appropriateness of my message for special or vulnerable audiences, such as very young children or youth or those disabled?
- How might my audience interpret my message and respond to it?
- What effect might I anticipate my message having on my audience? Positive, negative, neutral?
- Why should my audience care about my message?

CORE CONCEPT:

Media have embedded values and points of view.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the question that you need to use for construction is:

- **Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my content?**

Because you are you, you always bring yourself—your values, your life experience and your points of view—to your message. Yes, you can represent other voices and other viewpoints to the best of your ability, but there is never a way for you to represent all other voices; necessarily, someone or something is always left out.

Because you are human, you can only aim to be fair and balanced, or admittedly biased in your viewpoint, but you can never be truly objective or provide perfect information. Instead, when you present your message to your audience, you are selecting and framing the content that you are presenting according to your own priorities.

Perhaps you consider the needs of the audience or perhaps not. The more clearly and consistently you frame and select your content, the more readily your audience can identify the values, lifestyles and points of view you are presenting, and determine whether that frame suits them or not.

KEYWORD: The key word that can elucidate the above key concepts in a succinct way is **Content.**

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What is my main message?
- How am I supporting my main message? What information am I including? What am I leaving out? Why?
- Who or what do I invite my audience to identify with through my message? What lifestyles, values and points of view are overt? What are implied?
- Have I represented other voices or social groups? Are these representations nuanced or are they stereotypical?
- What might the opposition to my message say? Have I treated my opposition with respect?
- Have I made appropriate disclosures about conflicts of interest or assumptions? • Have I considered the needs of the "whole" person that I'm relating the message to? If not, are my reasons ethical?
- Does my message convey real-life behaviors or consequences? If not, why not?
- What is the overall worldview depicted in my message?

CORE CONCEPT:

Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

KEY QUESTION: Here, the question that you need to use for construction is:

- **Have I communicated my purpose effectively?**

If you are going to send a message, you must have a reason or a purpose. Generally, there are three reasons: you want to persuade or influence or inform someone of something, and as a result, you have a power motive (defining power as neutral and in its broadest sense!).

Or you want them to buy something that you are selling, and so you have a profit motive.

Or perhaps you have a mix of both a profit and a power motive, where you want to sell the world on a new idea and a new product at the same time.

These motives are not necessarily good nor bad, but purpose is always present. Behind media messages there is always intent. Inherently, there is nothing wrong with profit or power; they can be honourable and serve the public good. Isyou intent to make the world a better place? Does your message provide mutual benefit for individuals and for the social good, as well? These are questions you must ask of yourself.

KEYWORD: The key word that can elucidate the above key concepts in a succinct way is **PURPOSE.**

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What is my intent? Whose needs am I trying to satisfy with my message?
- Am I primarily entertaining, persuading, informing, or encouraging action and participation as the form of my message?
- Who is paying for this message to be constructed and sent? Should I disclose this underwriting for any reason?
- Do I want my audience to feel, think or do anything specific as a result of engaging with my message?
- How is the audience served by my message? How do I profit or benefit? How does the audience profit by or benefit from my message?
- Who wins? Who loses? Who decides?
- What economic decisions may have influenced my message and how I constructed or transmitted it?
- Have I considered ethical, social and/or legal constraints on achieving my purpose?

Media Literacy Process Skills

The processing skill is very significant in media literacy. To have the processing skill of media literacy you need to access, analyse, Evaluate, Create and participate.

Access

Analyse

Evaluate **processing skill**

Create

participate

Access

When people access messages, they are able to collect relevant and useful information and comprehend its meaning effectively.

They can:

- Recognize and understand a rich vocabulary of words, symbols and techniques of communication.
- Develop strategies for locating information from a wide variety of sources.
- Select an assortment of types of information relevant to the purpose of a task.

Analyse

When people analyse messages, they are able to examine the design of the message's form, structure and sequence. They can make use of artistic, literary, social, political and economic concepts to understand the context in which the message occurs.

For example,

- Use prior knowledge and experiences to predict outcomes.
- Interpret a message using concepts such as purpose, audience, point of view, format, genre, character, plot, theme, mood, setting, context. Use strategies including compare/contrast, fact/opinion, cause/effect, listing and sequencing.

Evaluate

When people evaluate messages, they are able to relate messages to their own experience and make judgments about the veracity, quality and relevance of messages.

This includes being able to:

- Appreciate and take pleasure in interpreting messages in different genres and forms.

- Evaluate the quality of a message based on its content and form.
- Judge the value of a message based on one's ethical, religious or democratic principles.
- Respond orally, in print, or electronically to messages of varying complexity and content.

Create

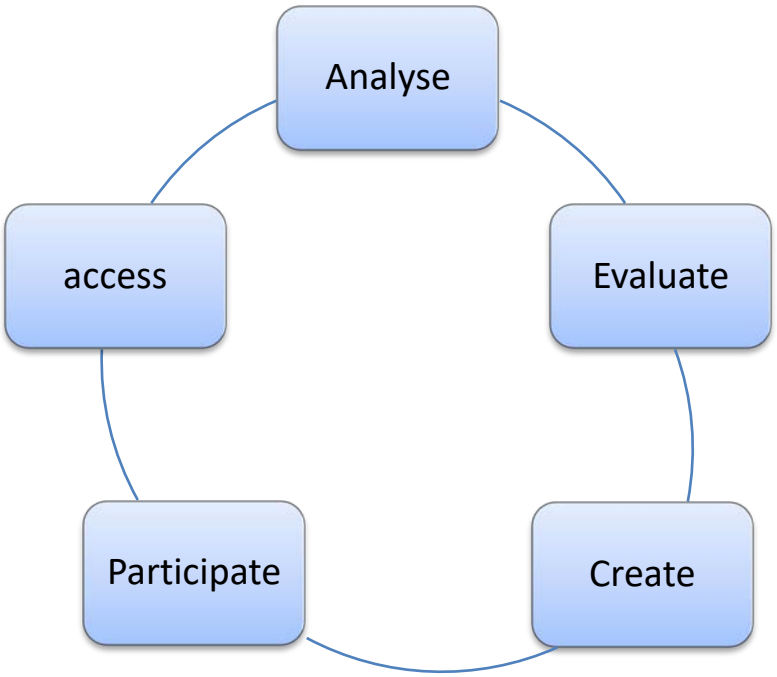
When people create (or communicate) messages, they are able to "write" their ideas, using words, sounds and/or images effectively for a variety of purposes, and they are able to make use of various technologies of communication to create, edit and disseminate their message.

- Make use of brainstorming, planning, composing and revising processes.
- Use writing and oral language effectively with mastery of rules of language usage. • Create and select images effectively to achieve various goals.
- Use technologies of communication in the construction of messages.

Participate

When people participate in constructing messages, they are in a constant process of engagement and interaction which results in sometimes exponential dissemination, circulation, connections and collaboration.

- Require interaction and engagement with others.
- Interplay between media users and usages, calling for consumption of messages at virtually the same time as production, since the interaction may happen so quickly.
- Use the work of others to create new forms and new expressions, building on the ideas of productions such as remixes, mashups, wikis, gaming.
- Interact responsibly and ethically, based on Shakespeare's idea: Love all, trust a few, harm no one.



How to Conduct a 'Close Analysis' of a Media 'Text'

While getting "caught up" in a storytelling experience has been the essence of entertainment since our ancestors told tales around the fire, the relentless pace of entertainment media today requires that at least once in a while, we should stop and look, really look, at how a media message is put together and the many interpretations that can derive from it. The method for this is called "close analysis."

To learn to conduct this basic media literacy exercise, try it first yourself; then introduce it to a group or class using tips at the end of this section. Any media message can be used for a close analysis but commercials are often good choices because they are short and tightly packed with powerful words and images, music and sounds.

Find a commercial to analyze by recording, not the programs but just the commercials, during an hour or two of TV watching. Play the tape and look for a commercial that seems to have a lot of layers—interesting visuals and sound track, memorable words or taglines, multiple messages that call out for exploration.

Replay your selection several times as you go through the following steps:

Visuals.

After the first viewing, write down everything you can remember about the visuals—lighting, camera angles, how the pictures are edited together.

Describe any people—

- what do they look like? what are they doing? wearing?
- What scenes or images do you remember clearly?

Focus only on what is actually on the screen, not your interpretation of what you saw on the screen. If necessary, play it again but with the sound off. Keep adding to your list of visuals.

Sounds.

Replay again with the picture off. Listen to the sound track. Write down all the words that are spoken.

- Who says them? What kind of music is used? Does it change in the course of the commercial? How? Are there other sounds?
- What is their purpose? Who is being spoken to—directly or indirectly? (That is, who is the audience addressed by the commercial?)

1. Apply Key Questions for Deconstruction

With the third viewing, begin to apply the Five Key Questions and the Guiding Questions that lead to them. Identify the author(s) and how the specific "construction" techniques you identified in steps 1 and 2 influence what the commercial is "saying"—values expressed and unexpressed; lifestyles endorsed or rejected; points of view proposed or assumed. Explore what's left out of the message and how different people might react differently to it. What is the message "selling"? Is it the same as the product being advertised?

Review Your Insights.

Summarize how the text is constructed and how various elements of the construction trigger our own unique response—which may be very different than how others interpret the text. Try this exercise with other kinds of messages— a story from a newscast, a key scene from a movie, a print advertisement, a website. Are different questions important for different kinds of messages?

Doing a close analysis with a class or group can be exhilarating, with insights coming fast and furiously. After the first showing, start the group exercise with the simple question: “What did you notice?”

Different people will remember different things so accept all answers and keep asking, “What else did you notice?” If the group is having a hard time, show the clip again and invite them to look for something that stands out for them.

Continue the brainstorming until you have at least 15 or 20 answers to the question: “What did you notice?” Challenge any attempt to assign interpretation too early. Keep the group focused on identifying only what was actually on screen or heard on the soundtrack.

The key to success with this exercise is for the teacher/leader to keep asking questions. Refrain from contributing too many answers yourself. While no one has the time to subject every media message to this kind of analysis, it takes only two or three experiences with close analysis to give us the insight to “see” through other media messages as we encounter them. It’s like having a new set of glasses that brings the whole media world into focus.

A. The Empowerment Spiral

Awareness
Analyse
Empowerment Spiral
Reflection
Action

Often when dealing with media issues or topics, we can sometimes be intimidated by the complex technological and institutional structures that dominate our media culture. We can feel powerless against the psychological sophistication of advertising messages and pop culture icons.

The Empowerment Spiral, based on the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, outlines how to break complex topics or concepts into four short term learning steps that stimulate different aspects of the brain and enhance our ability to evolve new knowledge from past experience.

Awareness

In the Awareness step, students participate in an activity that leads to observations and personal connections for potential insight: “Oh! I never thought of that before.” For example youngsters might compare whether their action toys perform like the ones in commercials; teens might time the length of stories on the nightly news to uncover how much is really news; a class might keep a media journal just one day (from waking up to falling asleep) to become aware of how many different media they experience in their lives. Awareness activities provide the “ah-ha” moments that unlock a spiral of critical inquiry and exploration that is the foundation of media literacy pedagogy.

Analysis

The next step, Analysis, provides time for students to figure out “how” an issue came to be. Applying the Five Key Questions and conducting a close analysis are two techniques that can be used to better understand the complexity of the selected issue. Creative production experiences could also help the group understand “how” and “what” happens in the exchange between a media producer and the audience.

It’s important that analysis go deeper than just trying to identify some “meaning” in an ad, a song or an episode of a sitcom. Indeed, try to avoid “why” questions; they too often lead to speculation, personal interpretation and circular debate which can stop the critical process of inquiry, exploration and discovery.

Instead ask “what” and “how”:

- How does the camera angle make us feel about the product being advertised?
- What difference would it make if the car in the ad were blue instead of red?
- What do we know about a character from her dress, make-up and jewelry?
- How does the music contribute to the mood of the story being told?

The power of media literacy lies in figuring out how the construction of any media product influences and contributes to the meaning we make of it.

Reflection

In the Reflection step, the group looks deeper to ask “So what?” or “What ought we to do or think?” Depending on the group, they may want to also consider philosophical or religious traditions, ethical

values, social justice or democratic principles that are accepted as guides for individual and collective decision-making.

- Is it right for news programs to only interview government experts?
- Does the First Amendment protect advertising?
- How about the advertising of dangerous products, like cigarettes?
- What are other ways an action hero could have solved the problem?

Action

Finally the Action step gives participants an opportunity to formulate constructive action ideas, to "learn by doing, individually or collectively." It's important to remember that, in this context, action doesn't necessarily imply activism nor does it have to be life-changing or earth-shattering. In fact, deciding not to act is an action.

The most long-lasting actions are often simple activities that symbolize or ritualize increased internal awareness. (Examples:)

a) After discovering and reflecting on the amount of violence they saw in one week of children's cartoons, one second grade class wrote a "Declaration of Independence" from violence on TV. Each child signed his/her name just like the Founding Fathers and they posted their declaration on the bulletin board in the school lobby for all to read, and wrote emails to their Congressional representatives.
b) A group of teens in a church youth group created their own website to share their exploration, insights and reflection on popular music and movies.
c) While studying the health effects of tobacco, a fifth grade class wrote and performed a play for other students about the techniques of persuasion that tobacco companies use to sell their products.
d) High school students concerned about school board budget cuts interviewed their parents and neighbors on video and produced short video about various perspectives on what the cuts might mean. It was shown every night for a week on the district's closed circuit cable channel and website.

These actions all involve interacting and connecting with classmates and others, with circulating ideas and collaborating on identifying problems and solutions, and in creating media and disseminating it.

The Dearth of Media Literacy Knowledge and its Consequences

This section of the manual gives theoretical briefings on the concepts related with lack of media literacy knowledge and its consequence.

Due to the advancement of communication technology, the growth of the internet has been remarkable in every field of modern society. The effect of the media revolution is both positive and negative. Consumers are producers and can directly address a large number of potential users. However, availability of large volumes of data on the internet and the possibility to spread information worldwide has also negative consequences. The internet can give to spin doctors and various types of manipulators the opportunity to disseminate worthless opinions as well as fake information. Besides, due to this chance, employing an offensive language against opponents has grown and people found in social links a new means to spread around their anger and violence.

As a consequence, nowadays, media literacy cannot ignore two main issues that are often closely connected: online misinformation and online hate. Misinformation and hate are old questions, but the internet gives them a new and troubling relevance. Internet technology allows individuals/organizations keep anonymous. It has succeeded in getting communities to participate in generating communication news and information locally and across national borders. Anyone with a small amount of money and I-Phone can now create and share content online as long as he/she accepts the terms of use, making it easy to disseminate unfiltered information. Depending on its nature and purpose, such information may be entertaining, distracting or may have devastating consequences to the sender and receiver.

In the age of social media, information distribution through ‘trust networks’ (users and peers), inaccurate, false, hateful and propagandistic content masked as news found increased purchase. Researchers have discovered that both emotive content, and content shared by a friend or family member is more likely to be redistributed on social media

The 21st century, powerful new technology makes the manipulation and fabrication of content simple and social networks radically intensifies untruths pushed by states, populist politicians, and dishonest corporate entities which are shared by uncritical publics.

Lack of online media literacy would indicate citizens' lack of the ability to select and distribute messages that promote their nation. Hence, in this information age, low media literate /illiterate cannot understand how 'reality' is constructed through the media in general and social media platforms in particular.

In general, the wide spread of social media results

- The low level of media and information literacy and verification skills within broader society. This means that in many cases, general social media users are ill-equipped to determine if content is authentic before sharing it. In the new media era, people who are ignorant of critically evaluating media messages are huge in number.
- The demand to publish instantly on social platforms leads to the unintentional sharing of disinformation and misinformation or material from unauthentic sources
- The amplification of homophily by allowing users to alter their social network structures through following, unfriending, sharing, and liking is high. The result is that people become segregated into large, dense and increasingly misinformed communities commonly described as echo chambers.

Lack of media literacy knowledge (a knowledge that is required to produce, and consume news) is highly prevalent in this web based world. It is clear that news production and dissemination is a professional task which needs knowledge and skill. However , regardless of being media literate or illiterate, everybody is producing, disseminating and consuming distorted messages especially through and/ from the news media/social media to build relationships, to share ones political ideology, to be famous, to be entertained etc. The distribution of such a media message in a low media literacy ability is accelerating misconceptions, hatred, media distrust, social and political instability, violence etc.

Limited media literacy knowledge gives the birth of and highly prevalence of information distortion which includes trends like fake news, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.

Fake News

The rapid propagation of fake news started since the Trump presidential campaign in the US and the Brexit campaign in the UK. Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow are among the numerous academicians who have brought due attention to define and classify the phenomenon of fake news. The authors state that fake news is information that is intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers". The term "fake

news" incorporates misinformation (when false information is shared with no intended harm), disinformation (when false information is shared with the intention to cause harm), and mal-information (when genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere).

Individuals/institutions create fake news having three reasons in mind:

Material motive: People create fake news to make money as online publications on social networks could bring substantial income when users visit certain online pages. The second reason is **ideological,** because of the support political candidates, political parties, and their programs might receive. In other words, fake news is created for the sake of getting supporters of one's political ideology. The third motive that causes for the production of fake news is to cause trouble. Fake news is produced, disseminated and consumed so as to create a Social and political troubles.

Fake news has a deep effect on interpersonal and third-person relationships and implications for deceptive media literacy. It has the elements of fiction and deception. Publications with an anonymous author; excessive exclamation points, capital letters, and misspellings are among the alarming signs the content could be fake. Fake news is capable of entertaining its users because it contains at least one of the following elements: gossip, rumor, tittle-tattle, scandal. Fake news is a sign of intolerant and hypersensitive attitudes, and leads only to the spread of arrogance and hatred. Fake news is a significant fabric in our society so much that significant world figures are publicly discussing its impact on the community. Fake news reporting also has ironic nature. While it provides people the luxury of receiving news items within a short period of time, they are overwhelmed with a lot of delicacies and unable to process or assess its content. The negative impact of fake news is higher in people with lower levels of cognitive ability. It is assumed that individuals with lower levels of cognitive ability are less equipped to adjust to existing schemes and initial judgments when confronted with new, more reliable information. Information has more perseverant influence on social impressions for those individuals with lower (versus higher) levels of cognitive ability.

Currently, the creation, dissemination and consumption fake news is highly prevalent because:

- The exchange of information is now democratized because of which anyone is able to produce credible "noise" that is difficult to distinguish from high-quality information.

- Gatekeepers now are more likely to view news production and dissemination as a business enterprise than as providing a public service.
- Ownership of news distribution has shifted from traditional content creators to digital distributors. Digital distribution allows for highly efficient micro-targeting and limited exposure of users to challenging content.
- New respected and trusted gatekeepers have yet to be established.

Several elements taken into account by the producers of fake news, such as simple and impressive messages, with attractive headlines that appeal to the feelings of the public, through click baiting, are essential for repeated disclosure. These factors make the story not only more attractive, but also more persuasive. Fake news can be distinguished from real news by their lexical coherence. “Real news articles are significantly longer than fake news articles and fake news articles use fewer technical words, smaller words, less punctuation, fewer quotes, and more lexical redundancy”. The authors report that fake news needs lower levels of education to be interpreted. The concern of the creators of fake news in making the publication viral or popular starts right away with the choice of the theme to be addressed, in the language they use throughout the text, in the title they attribute to the publication and in the image they use.

The Characteristics of Fake News

Fake news has the following attributes.

- **Emotional content**: a content that is produced by using a language that evokes strong feelings positive/negative). Example: unusual, impressive and shocking crimes, tragedies, exaggerated and dramatic stories are an attribute of fake news.
- **Heuristic persuasion:** informal, exaggerated, simple and persuasive language is used.
- **Imitation of journalistic format:** To assimilate the fake news with its counter, a false legitimacy and credibility is attempted to be assured.
- **Click bait:** fake news is characterized by titles that are designed with the objective of attracting the attention of the reader to click on content of “doubtful value or interest.
- **Image:** impressive, extremely visual, manipulated and exaggerated images are used by the creator of fake news which helps them get audiences’ attention.

The Contributing factors that drive the sharing/consuming of fake news

There are factors that contribute for the selection and consumption of fake news. The major ones are:

a) **Lower education or digital literacy:** It is proved that more educated people, especially young people, are less likely to share false information. Most of the time, people who have low level of media literacy unable to recognize manipulation and propaganda are the actors of fake news dissemination.

b) **Political Ideology/Partisanship**: the belief in fake news is related to motivational factors generally related to people's parties or ideological attachments. People are more likely to accept or reject certain arguments, news or information depending on their political beliefs. Fake news reaches a user through the testimony of another person, who shared and accepted it as being true. The testimony is transmitted, especially on social media, often in a biased way, since it comes from someone who has just shared an ideology or expressed a party attachment.

c) **Low cognitive ability:** people who have a good cognitive ability are not subject to consume fake

d) **Spending long time on social media:** The time spent on Facebook and Google is positively correlated with the consumption of fake news

e) **Being Young:** often times, the young generation is vulnerable to share/consume fake news than people in other age categories.

f) **Media distrust:** people who do not trust the mainstream media tend to use the social media which has open access to share/consume fake news.

In general, the production, dissemination and consumption of fake news impends democracies, civic participation, and efficient governance. It jeopardizes the right of the public to be well informed and to discuss societal issues based on reliable, high-quality, accurate information based on the public interest.

Disinformation

Disinformation refers to information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country. Disinformation problem has a multitude of conceptual frames. It has been characterized as information disorder, information manipulation and coordinated false behavior. What

these frames share in common is an understanding that disinformation in today's new media environment is not only a problem of false information; it is a distortion of and an attack on our entire information ecosystem. It makes the free exchange of ideas much more difficult, if not impossible, in some contexts, undermining an essential element of any functioning democracy.

Disinformation has a considerable consequence on individuals, governments, and companies. When individuals believe deceptive information, it can influence their actions and decisions. It can negatively affect a business, damage a company's reputation may be due to a competitor, market speculators, or industry-wide struggles.

Misinformation

Misinformation is false/misleading information that is disseminated by the one who does not have an intention to do so. Misinformation happens often in our everyday lives. We may make mistakes; we mishear or misremember details. For example, we may tell our friends something we heard on TV or saw on social media that wasn't really true. If someone is spreading around information that is wrong but he/she doesn't know it is wrong, then he or she is technically, dissemination false information. Citizens are misinformed because they are unable to examine and critically evaluate information in the emerging (social) media environments. There is no doubt that low levels of media literacy among citizens are part of the problem. Misinformation is problematic largely because it can create confusion and mistrust among receivers, and can make information difficult to use. For example, receivers may feel uncertain about the information, and therefore, uncertain about whether they can take action or make a decision.

Hate Speech

Hate speech refers to a communication to polarize expression that criticizes, degrades or promotes intolerance and violence against groups of persons by explicit or indirect reference to their race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or other shared identity. It is an effort to marginalize individuals based on their membership in a group. Using expression that exposes the group to hatred, hate speech seeks to delegitimize group members in the eyes of the majority, reducing their social standing and acceptance within society. Hate speech, therefore, rises beyond causing distress to individual group members as it has a societal impact too. Hate speech lays the groundwork for later, broad attacks on

the vulnerable that can range from discrimination, to isolation, segregation, deportation, violence and, in the most extreme cases, to genocide. It can have insidious consequences, ranging from emotional harm caused to the individuals and groups targeted, to the incitement of mass violence. The shocking corollaries of hate speech are evident in the examples of genocide or 'ethnic cleansing' in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Hate speech also impacts a protected group's ability to respond to the substantive ideas under debate, thereby placing a serious barrier to their full participation in democracy.

As it is being observed in the Ethiopian case, the impact and probable consequences of hate speech are context dependent; they occur within a particular historical and social nexus, which has often led to the promotion of one group over another, and resulted in structural inequalities that persist today. The prevalence of hate speech is high in deeply divided societies in which identity politics dominates and determines access to resources

The Effects of Hate Speech

Hate speech is a trend that has disastrous results which is evidently shown by the examples below.

• For the occurrence of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda it is widely believed that hate speech played a significant role in the massacre of 800,000 Tutsis and Hutus.

• In the aftermath of the December 2007 presidential elections in Kenya, violence erupted, mainly between Kenya's three largest ethnic groups. More than 1,100 people were killed. A popular radio broadcaster, Joshua Arap Sang, was accused of using his position to encourage ethnic attacks. Text messages were widely circulated calling on one group or another to "exterminate" ethnic opponents. Since then, Kenya has passed new laws prohibiting hate speech.

Ways of identifying false information from the real one

Following ways are used to avoid believing in and sharing of fake news and disinformation.

- Develop good media literacy skill and knowledge: knowing more about and being critical of what, how and why to consume a particular media message is seriously important to identify whether news is false or true (Shen, 2019). Now a day, because of media illiteracy, people like, share and

post what they viewed and read. Example, I have seen a number of likes for a post related with the death of a person.

- Consider the author of the source: people who disseminate fake news and/ dis information may have web pages that look authorized, but not. Hence, if you get doubtful information that looks like, example from Addis Ababa University, check for the University's site to validate that it is really from there.
- View multiple points of view of the same historical event: try to see the news from different perspectives can help us being deceived by a fabricated media information
- Read/view skeptically and critically: do not read on bird's eye view and believe in all the things you have seen/read/heard. Instead being skeptical and critical of a media message helps to take time before sharing/believing in it.
- Verify evidence by cross-checking with other sources: before consuming, it is possible to get verifications through making use of different media.
- Applying reverse image search: searching the image that one found in a social media or mainstream media is a strategy to be sure whether the image is used out of context to get acceptance by the viewers. Let's see the image below.



Source:https://www.ena.et/en/?p=22587) retrieved on April 8/2013 E.C. at 4:15 AM

Thispicture shared on Facebook claiming to show the bodies of victims massacred in Aksum, Tigray region of Ethiopia. Through reverse image search on Google, the picture was taken in November 2020, in Nigeria. Thus it did not happen in Ethiopia.



“It's not from Tigray.” (source: BBC)

Fact checking toolkit from FOJO

Fact-checking and why facts matter

Journalists are arguably under more pressure than ever before and are competing against non-traditional “reporters” too. Anyone with access to a mobile phone and the internet can share information, images and videos without checking the veracity of the content. Unverified information can quickly find its way onto social media platforms and WhatsApp messages, potentially adding to a flood of false information. Misinformation often spreads faster than factual information.

If you're a journalist or fact-checker, you have a responsibility to be extra careful and verify claims. If you don't, you're adding to the information disorder. Social media encourages the sharing of videos and images. Unverified, dodgy and outright fake images and videos can quickly go viral. Fact-checking methodology teaches us to spend time verifying the origin of images and videos and establishing the context in which they should be used to ensure we don't become part of a chain of misinformation.

If you are uncertain about the accuracy of information? Keep this in mind:

- Use your common sense. If something sounds too good, shocking or strange to be true, it probably is.
- Always be critical. Ask yourself why someone would have created the content you're looking at.
- Another dead giveaway that information might be false is grammatical and spelling errors.
- If you hear rumours that something is happening, for example a violent protest, and you're not sure it is accurate, do a Google News search (news.google.com). If it's a big story and it has happened, it's likely that a reputable news organisation has started covering it already.
- Have a close look at the addresses (URLs) of websites or the handles of social media pages. Websites containing false information or fake social media accounts often have a URL or social media handle that looks similar to that of a credible news source to deceive their audiences.
- Check links within the story. Does the story link back to the actual content or source that it's referring to?
- If you suspect you're looking at false information, have a look at other stories, photos and videos on the website. Do they seem credible? Do Look at the "About us" page for a disclaimer to make sure you're not looking at a satirical site. Uncertain about the accuracy of information? Keep this in mind: a search for other content produced by the same person to see if it seems legit.
- Look at the "About us" page for a disclaimer to make sure you're not looking at a satirical site.

Tips for sharing (or not sharing) posts on social media

First:

- Think twice before you (re)tweet, (re)post, or share a message via WhatsApp.
- When citing social media sources, always keep a record, e.g. screenshots.

Second, verify the source of the content:

- Check the social media handle and verify that the account exists.
- Look at the user's history on social media and see who they have interacted with in the past, the kind of content or material they post and if it seems legit. Find out how long the user has been on social media to rule out that the account was created for a specific purpose.
- See if you can triangulate their social media posts through checking other usergenerated content sites. Are they on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and/or LinkedIn and do the accounts and content match up?

Third, verify the content:

- Find the original post – never rely on links, retweets, screenshots or reposts.
- Cross-check the information against other independent sources.
- Always verify images before reposting.
- Before sharing a video or image you see on social media, read the replies or comments to see if there are questions about its authenticity.
- Check the time, date and location of posts, and see that these match up to the user/content's description.
- When you see a quote attributed to someone, do a comprehensive Google search to make sure it was said by that person.

When looking at an image or video, ask yourself:

- Was it taken at the mentioned time and location? Look closely at the following:

a. Any form of writing, signage or language (for example on billboards)
b. Flags
c. What vehicle licence/number plates look like
d. The side of the road people drive on
e. Geographical and architectural landmarks (such as skyscrapers, bridges and mountains)
f. Weather

- What languages are spoken in a video?
- Do you see time-specific advertising campaigns or does the style of clothing give anything away?
- Can you see whether the photo or video material has been altered in any way to exclude information? Does it look enhanced in any way? Look for blurry lines, differences in visual quality and colours that fade out, etc.
- Cross-check visuals with other imagery or footage of the same event or location – do they appear similar?

Fact-checking and verification tools

Social media encourages the sharing of images and videos, and a photograph is much more likely to spread than a longer text article. Fact-checking methodology teaches us to spend time checking the content of images and videos, treating them as sources on their own, to ensure we don't become part of a chain of misinformation.

Many images and videos are shared and re-shared online so many times that their original context and information are lost. Remember that verifying images and videos is not necessarily about whether the content was tampered with or altered in some way. It's often about finding out if the image has appeared before and, if so, when and in what context.

Online tools for verifying images

Google reverse image search

This is similar to an ordinary Google search, but instead of searching for words or phrases, you search for an image.

- Save or download the image you want to check, or copy the web address (URL) and go to **images.google.com**.
- Click on the camera icon in the search bar to give you the option of pasting the URL or uploading the image to be searched. You can also drag and drop the image into the search bar.

Your results should give you an idea of how long the image has been shared online and will often give you other data like location and context.

TinEye

Go to **tineye.com** and follow the same steps as with a Google reverse image search. TinEye gives you the option of sorting your search results. Should you choose to sort them according to "oldest" or "newest" you will easily get an idea of when, where and in what context an image was uploaded on the internet. When you sort your results according to "most changed" you might discover that the image you're looking for has been manipulated.

RevEye

RevEyeReverse Image Search is an extension you can add to the Chrome browser on your computer for verifying images you've found online. Once you've installed it, right-click on a picture and choose the "all search engines" option to do a search on multiple image search engines at once.

Reverse image search

Use a screenshot or thumbnail from a video and do a reverse image search to find the video online.

Amnesty International's YouTube DataViewer

Go to **citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org** and paste the web address (URL) of a YouTube video into the search bar. Your results should include the first time the video was uploaded, as well as the original description, if any. It will also provide you with thumbnails from the video.

InVID Verification Plugin

This plugin is an all-in-one tool for video and image verification you can download (invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin) if you use Chrome or Firefox as browser.

Verifying Twitter Accounts

- If there's a blue tick next to the Twitter name, the account has been verified.
- Use **Foller.me** to inspect a Twitter account's history.
- Determine whether an account is likely to be a bot with Botometer (**botometer.osome.iu.edu**).
- Advanced Twitter Search (**twitter.com/search-advanced**) lets you search for people, subjects and images on Twitter.

Verifying Location

- Do a Google search for images (**images.google.com**) to get an idea of what a location, city or town looks like.
- Google Earth (**google.com/earth**) and Google Maps (**google.com/maps**), especially the Street View function, are easy to use and valuable to establish what a certain location looks like.

Determining possible crowd size

- This is an online resource to help you check the number of people at a crowd by estimating the capacity of the location. Next time a politician claims a certain number of people attended a rally, go to **mapchecking.com**, search for and outline the location (a square or public park, for example) and establish the maximum crowd density and size.

The fact-checking process

Finding credible data online

These sources can serve as a good starting point for trying to find the best data. Keep in mind, however, that you can't merely take any statement and assume it's the best and latest data about a topic. Get in touch with the source to find out if you are looking at the latest research results, cross-check the information against other sources, or contact an expert who can help you put the data into perspective.

Sources of information

- Statistical agencies
- International organisations, e.g. United Nations and the World Bank
- Leading universities and research institutions
- Governments
- Professional bodies
- Reputable peer-reviewed journals
- Experts
- Fact-checking organisations like Africa Check

Africa Check's Info Finder Tool

On Africa Check's website, you'll find factsheets and guides (**africacheck.org/how-to-fact-check/factsheets-and-guides**) on how to understand, research and report on health and other topics. Info Finder (**africacheck.org/infofinder**), a repository of data sources and facts from Africa, now also includes a section that focuses on Covid-19 information.

Fact vs opinion: what can be fact-checked?

Not every statement can be fact-checked. The first question you should ask yourself before trying to fact-check a claim is whether it is verifiable, or "fact-checkable", or not.

What can be fact-checked?	What can't be fact-checked?
➢ **A claim that can be verified with evidence and proof**	➢ **Opinions** ➢ **Promises or predictions about what's going to happen in future**

Fact vsOpinion

Proof and evidence are the cornerstones of facts. A **fact** can be checked and backed up with evidence.

Opinions are based on beliefs or points of view, which often display bias as they fit our worldview and own experience. Thinking something is true because we agree with it, doesn't make it a fact. Two people might be in the same room, one saying it's hot and the other that it's cold. These opinions can't be fact-checked. What can be fact-checked, however, is the exact temperature in the room.

A **prediction**, which can also not be fact-checked, is a statement predicting or promising that something will happen in the future. A fact-checker can, however, take note of what a politician promises or a medical expert predicts will happen in the future and then at a later stage fact-check whether these promises were kept or the predictions were accurate. Fact-checking organisations, such as Africa Check, often do this by using a **promise-tracker tool**

Fact-checkable or not?

For a statement to be fact-checkable, you have to be able to verify it by using publicly available data. Look at the examples below:

Statement:	No Ethiopian will have a reason to go outside of the country for medical treatment.
Can I fact-check it?	No, it's a prediction (and someone's opinion).
Statement:	The World Health Organization is doing the best it can in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.
Can I fact-check it?	No, it's someone's opinion and different people will have different

	perceptions of “the best it can do”.
Statement:	Covid-19 is caused by a strain of the coronavirus.
Can I fact-check it?	Yes, it can be verified using publicly available scientific evidence.

References

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