

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Universidad de Jaén (Spain)
PIC number:	999849423
Project name and acronym:	Media Literacy for Democracy (MLFD)

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP 4		
Event name:	MLFD FOCUS GROUP - SPAIN		
Type:	3-day focus group		
In situ/online:	In-situ		
Location:	Spain, Jaén		
Date(s):	16 February; 2, 16 March 2023		
Website(s) (if any):	https://fidu.it/language/en/media-literacy-for-democracy-cerv-program-me/		
Participants			
Female:	23		
Male:	14		
Non-binary:	/		
From country 1 [Spain]:	37		
Total number of participants:	37	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
The activities were conducted on 16th February, 2nd March, 16th March in the University of Jaén.			
<p>The purpose the event was to make young people aware of how false news affects the democracy and the fundamental right to receive truthful information and to listen to their opinion on the matter, what is their perception of this issue, if they are aware that fake news is increasingly widespread, especially on social networks, as well as the risks that this type of news entails.</p> <p>The discussion among participants followed on what would be the main instruments to limit the effects of fake news and how they think a digital literacy system could be implemented.</p> <p>To do this, 3-days Focus Group were organized with the intention of analyzing all these issues from a different but complementary point of view. The first day, three university professors expert in these matters presented key elements of disinformation and how to recognise it. In the second day, there were two content creators who spread news through their channels on YouTube and other social networks; to complement the panel, a reporter from the press, radio and television was also present to</p>			

discuss perspectives from the media creators. The third day focused on journalism and the role that journalists should have in tackling disinformation issues.

Each Focus Group event was divided into two parts. The first one in which the experts raised their points of view on these issues, and a second part in which a debate was held with the participants to find out their opinion on the matter and take note of their contributions.

<p>Workshop 1 February 16th <u>Facilitator:</u> <i>M. Dolores Pérez Jaraba</i> Lecturer in Philosophy of Law University of Jaén</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u> <i>F. Javier Ansuátegui Roig</i> Professor of Philosophy of Law Universidad Carlos III de Madrid <i>Olga Sánchez Martínez</i> Ass. Professor of Philosophy of Law Universidad de Cantabria <i>Ramón Ruiz Ruiz</i> Professor of Philosophy of Law Universidad de Jaén</p>	<p>Workshop 2 March 2nd <u>Facilitator:</u> <i>Ramón Ruiz Ruiz</i> Professor of Philosophy of Law Universidad de Jaén</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u> <i>Lechero Fett</i> Content Creator <i>Karim Hallal Peche</i> Content Creator <i>Beatriz Díaz Gil</i> Journalist and reporter</p>	<p>Workshop 3 March 16th <u>Facilitator:</u> <i>Mercedes García Serrano</i> Person in charge of the website and social networks of the Provincial Government of Jaén</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u> <i>Raúl Betrán</i> Journalist <i>Esperanza Calzado</i> Journalist <i>Fernando Díaz Villanueva</i> Journalist</p>
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Participants

The information about the focus group was disseminated through emails, social networks and press releases sent to national and local agencies and mass media.

37 European citizens between 18 and 35 years old participated at the event.

The average age of participants was 19; As for gender balance, there were 23 female and 14 male participants (60%-40%).

The participants were students from the University of Jaén, coming from different geographical areas and with different social backgrounds.

Objectives:

The purpose was to make young people aware of how false news affects the democracy and the fundamental right to receive truthful information as well as to listen to their opinions on the matter, what is their perception of this issue, if they are aware that fake news is increasingly widespread, especially on social networks, and the risks that this type of news entails.

Main instruments to limit the effects of fake news were also discussed, together with possible approaches to digital literacy systems that can be implemented to tackle the issue in the long term.

Results:

The results have been very positive because many of the participants claimed to be unaware of the great extent of fake news today, as well as the dangerous risks it implies for our democratic societies and the difficulty of ending it without affecting the rights to freedom of expression and information.

Another difficulty in combating disinformation is that it is a multifaceted problem, with many different participants and varied causes. For this reason, it has not a simple solution, but the measures to combat it should be taken in a coordinated way among the different agents involved: governments, technological platforms, the media, educational institutions and also the users themselves.

In this sense, many of the participants complained that the administration is not acting forcefully enough against disinformation, so they were explained that measures of this type have to be taken cautiously and proportionately so that they do not affect the aforementioned rights that represent a fundamental basis of any democratic system.

One of the dangers of the existence of fake news is that it creates a general environment of distrust towards the media, not only the new ones and social networks but also towards the traditional ones, which in turn generates a distrust in the democratic system because many citizens think that the decisions and elections made by the people have been made, at least in part, based on erroneous information and data.

An added problem is that according to some studies and individual experience, fake news spreads faster and more widely than true news.

Furthermore, certain mainstream media are adopting forms of action similar to those of the new media, partly due to the immediacy of the information that is expected nowadays, which means that this type of news is not always fully verified.

However, despite the fact that the problem caused by misinformation is very relevant, we cannot be wary of all the media, most of which carry out their work professionally and accurately, and we must not get carried away by the multiple conspiracy theories that are appearing nowadays. In addition, we must distinguish between false news and biased news or different interpretations of the same facts.

Young people are even more affected by the spread of misinformation than adult people for various reasons. On the one hand, because they tend to consult the news exclusively on social networks and not in the traditional media where the level of false news is much lower. Furthermore, because adult people tend to have more experience and knowledge about political matters, therefore it is easier for them to find inconsistencies in the news they receive and to try to corroborate its veracity in other media.

The spread of false news is everyone's responsibility, including users, who must avoid forwarding information that seems doubtful to them or contribute to discrediting people.

All the participants agreed that media literacy is an essential tool to prevent misinformation, both because it is a measure that does not violate individual liberties, and because it is one of the few approaches that would be effective in the long term, because instead of preventing misinformation from reaching the individual (an objective whose full implementation is materially impossible), enables and trains the subject to critically evaluate the content received.

Feedback:

According to the final questionnaire for the evaluation of the event, all the participants valued the focus group very positively.

They especially appreciated the fact that the experts were from different backgrounds and fields (their vision of this subject is broader), as well as the time dedicated to the active discussion between experts and participants.

They have found it interesting to know the different strategies to detect fake news and the possible solutions to this phenomenon from the point of view of different fields such as academic, journalistic or political.

Many are willing to apply what they have learned in the Focus Group in the future, especially to check the news they hear or read more, and some say that from now on they will resort more to the traditional media.

However, they have also realized that new technologies should not be vilified, since it ultimately depends on ourselves and the use we give to these technologies.

They all stated that they would be very interested in participating in activities of this type in the future.