

Al-Fanar Media's Guide

Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

An Essential Resource for Media
Students, Educators, and
Professionals in the Arab world



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Chapter One

Introduction - Why Media Literacy Matters?



In today's digital era, where information flows faster than ever, the challenge is no longer accessing information, but discerning its accuracy, intent, and impact. The ability to critically evaluate and interpret media content has become an essential skill. Media and information literacy (MIL) is not only an educational tool but a safeguard for societies, a driver of critical thinking, and a path to empowering individuals to make well-informed decisions.

As a leading media institution dedicated to higher education and scientific research journalism in the Arab world, **Al-Fanar Media** is proud to offer this concise guide. It is designed to support media students, educators, and professionals in deepening their understanding of media literacy concepts and practices. Through this effort, we aim to contribute to building a culture of critical engagement, countering misinformation and harmful narratives, and reinforcing the values of democracy across our societies.

This guide is primarily aimed at:

- **Media and journalism students** seeking a deeper understanding of information sources and the complexities of fact-checking.
- **Educators and academics** looking for practical tools to teach media literacy effectively.
- **Emerging journalists** eager to strengthen their skills in navigating and managing information within today's dynamic and often polarised digital landscape.



Why Do We Need This Guide Now?

- Because **misinformation has become a global issue**, influencing politics, public health, and social cohesion.
- Because **trust in traditional media is eroding**, creating an urgent need to rebuild the relationship between journalists and their audiences.
- Because **today's audiences are both content consumers and creators**, making it essential to raise awareness about the responsibility that comes with publishing and sharing information.

What Is Media?

Media is the transmission of information, knowledge, and cultural or behavioural values through various communication and publishing tools, with the deliberate aim of informing, shaping opinions, and influencing public perception.

What Is Media and Information Literacy?

Media and information literacy (MIL) is a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices that enable individuals to effectively access, analyse, critically evaluate, interpret, use, create, and disseminate information in a creative, legal, and ethical way that upholds human rights. (UNESCO)

MIL involves understanding media messages, critically analysing their content, and recognising their influence on audiences. Media literacy also encompasses the ability to search for information effectively, assess the credibility of sources, and use digital tools responsibly.

By developing these skills, individuals become empowered digital citizens—capable of challenging misinformation, thinking critically, and engaging with media in a constructive and informed manner.

Types of Media

- **Journalism:** Content based on verified information, produced by an independent individual (the journalist) or organisation (the news outlet).
- **Promotional Media:** Content created to serve the interests of a person, group, or organisation, such as advertisements, press releases, and propaganda, often with persuasive intent rather than impartial reporting.
- **Entertainment Media:** Content designed primarily to amuse or engage audiences, where factual accuracy is not the central focus.



Opening Exercise with Students/Trainees:

Invite learners to briefly share (in one minute) a time when they came across information they found questionable. What triggered their skepticism? How did they respond or fact-check the information?



Chapter Two

The Media Landscape in the Arab World



During a university lecture, a group of Arab students was asked to rank their most trusted sources of news from most to least. To the surprise of many, social media topped the list, outranking television, news websites, and even local newspapers.

The students explained why: “It’s faster... it comes directly from people... and we can comment and discuss.” This simple yet revealing response captures the essence of a rapidly evolving media landscape.

1. Key Transformations in the Media Environment

In the past two decades, the media landscape in the Arab world has undergone unprecedented change:

- **From State-Controlled Media to Community-Driven Platforms**

Where once the media was largely dominated by governments and major corporations, via television, radio, and print, today, the power to publish and influence lies in the hands of individuals. With just a mobile phone, anyone can create content, share news, and shape public discourse.



Real-Life Example:

During the Arab Spring uprisings, activists in Egypt and Tunisia used Twitter hashtags to share real-time updates and document events as they unfolded, effectively bypassing state censorship and traditional news channels.

- **From Centralised to Networked Media**

Media production is no longer limited to centralised institutions like newsrooms or television stations. Instead, it has evolved into a decentralised, networked space, powered by users, bloggers, influencers, and independent journalists.

Media: From Centralization to a Boundless Network



From Institutions to Smartphones

In the past, media was limited to institutions. Today, the smartphone is a publishing platform in everyone's hands.



From Centralization to Networking

Media has become an open network where everyone is a publisher, and every platform is a media channel.



Users From Passive to Active

The audience today is no longer a passive consumer. They comment, repost and sometimes create competing content.



A Real-World Example

During the Arab Spring uprisings, activists used hashtags to document events and bypass censorship.

- **From Passive Consumer to Active Participant**

Today's audience is no longer just a passive recipient of information. They engage by commenting, sharing, critiquing, and even creating their own content, often challenging or competing with mainstream narratives.



Group Discussion with Students/Trainees:

Do you view this shift as a positive step toward empowerment, or as a source of information overload and confusion? Why?

2. Challenges Facing Arab Media

A. Politicisation and Censorship

Many media outlets in the Arab world remain under the direct or indirect sway of political powers and influential elites. This often results in:

- Media narratives align closely with official positions.
- Suppression or exclusion of dissenting voices.
- Journalists and editors are practicing self-censorship.



Example:

In certain countries, publishing data or information is restricted to official or government-approved sources, even when such data is outdated.

B. Limited Professional Capacity

The rapid growth of digital media has exposed a significant training gap in the field:

- Many young journalists begin their careers without sufficient professional preparation.
- There is a heavy dependence on official data, often without efforts to independently verify the information.
- Essential skills like investigative journalism and digital fact-checking are rare or underdeveloped.

C. Financial Struggles and Threats to Media Independence

Independent media outlets across the Arab world are facing serious funding challenges, which have led to:

- Downsizing editorial teams and reducing the number of on-the-ground reporters.
- Increased dependence on news agencies rather than producing original reporting.
- In some cases, accepting sponsored content from parties with vested interests.

Example:

Some Arab news platforms publish translated articles from international sources without attribution, compromising transparency and credibility.



D. Misinformation and Hate Speech

Social media platforms have increasingly become channels for spreading rumours, doctored images, and inflammatory language. Without clear regulations or effective mechanisms for accountability, everyday users often find themselves both targets and contributors to this harmful content.





Chapter Three

Reliable Journalism: Principles and Standards



Journalism students at a university were once asked: *What sets a trustworthy journalist apart from an unprofessional one?* One student responded, “A trustworthy journalist never makes me regret believing them.” This candid reply captures the heart of professional journalism: earning and maintaining the audience’s trust.

In today’s world, flooded with endless information streams, trust has become journalism’s most valuable currency. The real challenge isn't the sheer volume of news, but knowing which sources are credible. That’s why understanding the core values of trustworthy or reliable journalism is more important than ever.

First: What Do We Mean by Reliable Journalism?

Reliable journalism is a media practice grounded in professional ethics and values. Its purpose is to deliver accurate, balanced, and responsible information that serves the public interest, rather than promoting the agendas of authorities or powerful groups.

Key Characteristics of Quality Journalism:

- Uses clear, credible, and diverse sources.
- Prioritises fact-checking and verification before publishing.
- Represents a range of perspectives fairly, without bias or exclusion.
- Provides context and background to help audiences fully understand the story.
- Acknowledges mistakes openly and corrects them with transparency.





Practical Example:

An editor-in-chief assigns a journalist to cover the electricity crisis in a specific city. The report is expected to include:

- A background overview explaining when the crisis started and its possible causes
- Quotes from multiple sources: the electricity company, regulatory bodies, energy experts, and local residents
- Recent, verified photographs that visually document the situation
- Timely updates, especially when new official statements or developments emerge

The Six Core Values of The Professional Journalism



Accuracy

Verifying information, using clear language, and ensuring the authenticity of images and dates.



Fairness

Presenting diverse perspectives without bias, avoiding stereotypes & providing the right of reply.



Transparency

Disclosing sources, explaining verification methods & acknowledging corrections.

Balance

Presenting information and opinions from all relevant sources in a balanced manner.



Independence

Resisting political or economic pressure, and disclosing any conflicts of interest.



Accountability

Acknowledging mistakes, publishing corrections, and responding to constructive criticism.

Second: The Six Core Values of Professional Journalism

Value	What It Means in Practice
Accuracy	Verifying every piece of information, using clear and straightforward language, and confirming the accuracy of photos and dates.
Balance/Integrity	Presenting information and perspectives from multiple relevant sources in a fair and impartial way, enabling the audience to form an informed and objective opinion on the topic.
Fairness	Representing a wide range of viewpoints without bias, avoiding stereotypes, and ensuring all parties have the opportunity to respond.
Independence	Maintaining freedom from political or economic pressures and openly disclosing any conflicts of interest.
Transparency	Clarifying the sources of information, explaining how it can be verified, and acknowledging any updates or changes made.
Accountability	Acknowledging errors, publishing corrections, and being open to constructive feedback.



**Practical Exercise with Students/Trainees:
Critical Analysis of a Published News Article**

Suggested Time: 20 minutes

Activity: Small groups of 3-4 students

Steps:

1. Select a news article (either printed or digital).
2. Instruct each group to evaluate the article based on the six core values: accuracy, balance, fairness, independence, transparency, and accountability.
3. Afterward, have the groups discuss their findings: Is the article trustworthy? What are its strengths and weaknesses?



Instructor's Note:

Encourage students to use the table above as a guide for analysing news in their daily reading.

Third: The Challenge of "Balanced Language"

Suggestive or biased language can be misleading, as it often relies on the journalist's context and intent. Below are some examples that show how language can become unfair or biased:

- **Emotive Language**

Words that are used to provoke strong emotions can shift focus away from the actual topic.

Example: "We can't let these ruthless companies steal our jobs."

- **Stereotypes and Generalisations**

Making broad, sweeping statements about entire groups of people, typically based on prejudiced or biased views.

Example: "All politicians are corrupt."

- **Linguistic Suggestion**

Using words with strong emotional connotations to create an impression without offering factual support.

Example: "Radical environmentalists are jeopardising our way of life with their bizarre demands."

- **Biased Language**

Using phrases or words that favour one perspective while undermining another.

Example: "The new law is a sensible, necessary move to secure our borders."

- **Synonyms**

Using softer or less direct terms to downplay a harsh reality.

Example: "The company is streamlining its workforce."

However, synonyms can be misleading if they obscure the truth or downplay the seriousness of a situation.

- **Derogatory Language**

Using language that diminishes or insults a party's arguments or experiences.

Example: "These are merely the complaints of a vocal minority."

Example: "And he started crying like a woman."



It's important to remember that unfair language can be subtle, and with practice, you can learn to identify these tactics. By becoming a critical consumer of information, you'll be able to recognise when language is being used to unfairly sway your opinion.

Fourth: Distinguishing Between Professional and Biased Content

Elements	Professional Content	Biased Content
Sources	Multiple, Clear, Reliable	Anonymous or One-sided
Language	-Precise, Balanced, Non Incendiary	Emotional, Open to ,multiple interpretations Provocative
Context	Provides Background and Analysis	Restricts to Headlines or Superficial Statements
Balance	Presents All Opinions	Highlights Only One Point of View
Dealing with Mistakes	Apologises and Corrects Publicly	Ignores or Deletes Without Explanation



Analytical Example:

- A news article from a reputable, independent website reports on protests against a government decision, including statements from protesters, government representatives, and experts.
- An opinion piece from a non-professional website addresses the same event, using provocative language and labeling one party as a traitor without providing supporting evidence.



Group Discussion with Students/Trainees:

Is complete independence possible for a journalist? What obstacles could hinder this?



Why are these values essential today?

- They help the public distinguish between genuine journalism and propaganda.
- They protect journalists from manipulation and exploitation.
- They contribute to rebuilding trust between the media and society.
- They serve as a foundation for media literacy and critical thinking in educational institutions.



Teaching these values is not about indoctrinating them, but empowering learners to recognise them through practice and apply them critically to the content they consume or create.



Chapter Four

Psychological and Educational Foundations for Grasping Media Impact



Why and how are we influenced by what we watch and read? Why do certain images or stories impact us more than others? To comprehend audience behaviour toward media content, it is essential to understand the psychological and educational principles that shape how we receive, interpret, and retain information.

First: The Impact of Media on Different Age Groups

Research in educational psychology reveals that people of different age groups respond to media content in distinct ways. This can be understood through:

- **Piaget's Theory:** This theory divides cognitive development into stages, explaining that adolescents, unlike children, have the capacity for abstract reasoning. As a result, they are more likely to understand symbolic messages and indirect cues in the media.
- **Erikson's Theory:** According to this theory, young people are in a stage of searching for their identity and a sense of belonging. This makes them more susceptible to influencers, emotional stories, and group biases in media content.



Group Exercise with Students/Trainees:

Analyse a promotional video aimed at young people and discuss its appeal. Ask the students: What elements make it engaging? Does it cater to the need for belonging, individuality, or emotional connection?

Second: The Role of Emotions and Cognitive Biases

Emotions drive engagement: Research indicates that emotional content, such as anger, fear, or empathy, spreads more quickly than rational information. As a result, emotionally charged content, including rumours and fake news, is more likely to gain traction and be shared.

Cognitive Biases:

Type	What It Means	Practical Example
Confirmation Bias	The tendency to accept information that supports our existing beliefs.	Disregarding reports that challenge our personal opinions and beliefs.
In-Group Bias	Adopting the opinions prevalent within our social group.	Spreading a rumour because "everyone else is sharing it."
Repetition Effect	Repeated exposure to information increases its perceived truth, even if it is false.	Believing a widely circulated rumour simply because it's been repeated often.

Practical Activity with Students/Trainees:

Present the same piece of information to students three times, each with a different phrasing. Did their emotional response change? What do you think caused this shift?



Third: The "Name It to Tame It" Skill

This psychological technique helps manage emotional responses to media content.

- When a piece of content triggers fear, anger, or anxiety, try to label the emotion and identify its source.

For example: "I feel anxious because..." Recognising and naming the emotion helps reduce its intensity and gives you space to think more clearly.



Group Activity with Students/Trainees:

Invite students to jot down their emotional reactions to a selected media clip or article. After a 10-minute pause, ask them to revisit and reassess their responses.

The Emotional Journey Through Media Content



TRIGGER

The person is exposed to an external stimulus, such as a shocking news item, an image, or a sensational headline.



REACTION

An immediate emotional response appears—fear, anger, or shock, without deep thinking.



RECOGNITION

The emotion is identified and named clearly: Am I angry? Afraid? Sad?



REFLECTION

Understanding the reason behind the emotional reaction and analyzing content accuracy.



REGULATION

Making a conscious decision on how to respond: ignore, share, or seek out credible sources.

Fourth: Algorithms and How They Influence Beliefs

Digital platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube use algorithms to curate content based on your preferences and the activity of people in your network.

These systems track user behaviour—such as likes, comments, shares, and time spent on posts—to determine what to show you next.



According to a [Pew Research Center study](#), 64% of American users come across news content through social media, rather than actively seeking it out.



The Outcome:

- We tend to consume more content that aligns with our existing beliefs and preferences, while seeing less content that challenges them.
- This creates what's known as a **“filter bubble.”**



Practical Example:

A user who enjoys motivational videos begins receiving similar recommendations from YouTube every day, gradually limiting their exposure to critical or more realistic perspectives.



Practical Activity with Students/Trainees:

Have each participant open their TikTok or YouTube home page and examine the content displayed. Ask them to reflect: Does the content align with their interests? Is there a variety of perspectives, or are similar viewpoints being repeated?



Instructor's Note:

Clarify to students that being exposed repeatedly to the same type of content can subtly shape their thoughts and perceptions—often without their conscious awareness.



Conclusion:

Understanding media isn't just about how it's created—it's also about how it's received. Media influence starts in the mind, where emotions, biases, and past experiences blend together. The more we recognise our own psychological tendencies, the more we can critically engage with the media and resist unconscious influence.



Chapter Five

The Art of Fact-Checking – From Critical Thinking to Combating Misinformation



1. Why Is Fact-Checking Important?

In our fast-paced digital age, information spreads faster than it can be verified. We're constantly exposed to a flood of news, posts, and messages through platforms like social media, WhatsApp, and Telegram—often without knowing whether they're true or not.

This overwhelming mix of accurate and false information is known as **Information Disorder**, and it poses a major challenge for both society and journalism.





But what distinguishes the various forms of false or misleading content?

Key Concepts

To better understand the world of misinformation, it's important to grasp these three key concepts:



Three Types of Misinformation

Misinformation



False or inaccurate information that is shared **without the intent to deceive**.

It often comes from people who believe the information is true.

Disinformation



Deliberately fabricated or false information shared with the **intent to mislead or harm** public opinion.

Malinformation



Information that is **partially true**, but is shared in a misleading context or with **harmful intent**, such as leaking personal data to harm someone.

1. Misinformation:

False or inaccurate information that is shared or published without the intention to deceive. It typically stems from individuals who believe they are spreading helpful or truthful content, but it turns out to be incorrect.

Example:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a message circulated on WhatsApp suggesting that inhaling steam from boiled lemon and garlic could cure the viral infection. Many people shared it in good faith, despite there being no scientific proof.

Analysis:

Although shared with positive intent, this kind of content can mislead the public and cause them to disregard trusted medical guidance.



2. **Disinformation:**

Deliberately fabricated or manipulated information shared with the specific goal of deceiving others or swaying public opinion in a harmful way. It is often used for political gain, commercial benefit, or to incite fear and confusion.



Example:

A fake news article on an anonymous website falsely claims that a specific vaccine causes infertility, aiming to provoke fear and disrupt public trust in vaccination campaigns.

Analysis:

This type of content is especially harmful as it intentionally distorts the truth, manipulates public perception, and can result in dangerous real-world consequences



3. **Malinformation:**

Genuine or partially accurate information that is shared with the intent to cause harm by placing it in a misleading or damaging context. This can include leaks, selective editing, or exposing private facts meant to manipulate perception.



Example:

Releasing authentic photos of a politician in a personal setting, stripped of context, to tarnish their reputation.



Group Exercise with Students/Trainees:

Distribute three different content examples to each group—one representing **misinformation**, one **disinformation**, and one **malinformation** (e.g., printed images, headlines, or social media posts with sources and author names removed). Ask students to analyse and categorise each example using the following table:

Type	Intention/Purpose	Likely Origin	Possible Consequences
Misinformation	Unintentional	Individuals lacking expertise	Moderate – e.g., spreading ineffective health remedies
Disinformation	Deliberate deception	Political actors, fake news sites	Serious – erosion of trust, creation of fear or division
Malinformation	Intentional misuse of truthful info	Hackers, personal vendettas	Personal/Social – reputational damage, targeted attacks

How Do We Analyse News?

When we come across intriguing news or a significant claim, what leads us to accept or dismiss it? Often, our judgments are influenced by emotions or personal biases rather than logical reasoning. To make informed decisions, we need tools that allow us to **objectively evaluate both the source and the content** of the information.

Trust Indicators

These indicators are designed to assist both the public and journalists in evaluating the professionalism and reliability of media outlets and news sources.

Key trust indicators include:

- **Editorial Transparency:** Does the media outlet clearly outline its editorial policy?
- **Source Disclosure:** Are the sources of information properly cited?
- **Evidence:** Does the report provide supporting evidence for its claims?
- **Completeness:** Does the report address essential questions such as who, what, where, when, and how?
- **Fairness:** Is the information presented impartially, including viewpoints from all relevant sources?
- **Authority:** Is the author of the report identified and qualified?
- **Error Correction Policy:** Is there a clear process for reporting and correcting errors?



Example:

A reputable news website that includes the journalist's name, the publication date, links to original sources, and a section for submitting corrections.

negative example:

A Facebook page that publishes a dramatic headline like “Environmental disaster strikes the region!” without mentioning the source, author, or publication date.



Key Reminder:

Even popular or established platforms can make mistakes. Trust indicators don't guarantee accuracy, but they help you assess credibility and decide whether to trust or question the information.



Exercise with Students/Trainees:

Have the trainees examine the same news story from two different outlets and evaluate which source aligns more closely with established trust indicators.

Seven Steps to Evaluating News Reliability

In an era where information spreads rapidly, it's crucial for readers to have practical tools to assess the trustworthiness of news content. Here are seven essential steps to guide your evaluation of any media piece:

1. Check for Supporting Evidence

Does the report include solid evidence? Or are there missing details that might shift the meaning? Look for data, eyewitness accounts, or documents that back up the claims being made.

2. Assess the Source's Credibility

Use the I-M-A-I-N tool (Identity, Motive, Access, Independence, Expertise) to analyse:

- Who is providing the information?
- Do they have a vested interest in the topic?
- Are they close to the event?
- Do they demonstrate credibility and relevant expertise?



We'll explore the IMAIN tool in more depth in the next section

3. Level of Transparency

Evaluate how openly the report explains how the information was collected:

- Are the sources clearly identified?
- Does it acknowledge any gaps or uncertainties in the information?
- Are any potential conflicts of interest disclosed?

4. Contextualisation

Context adds depth and meaning to a story. Ask yourself:

- Does the report situate the event within a broader social, historical, or political framework?
- Does it explain the timing and relevance of the event?

5. Completeness of Key Information

Make sure the report includes the six core questions every reliable news story should answer: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

If any of these are missing, it may indicate that the report is either incomplete or slanted.

6. Balance and Fair Representation

Does the article include multiple perspectives? Fairness isn't about being neutral—it's about giving all relevant sides a voice and accurately representing viewpoints.

7. Editorial Language and Presentation

Make sure the report includes the six Pay attention to the headline, word choice, and visuals. Are they designed to inform, or to provoke and sensationalise? Look for signs of exaggeration or misleading suggestions.



Conclusion:

Following these steps consistently helps readers, students, and even professional journalists sharpen their critical thinking and better distinguish trustworthy journalism from biased or misleading reporting.



Group Activity for Students/Trainees:

Provide the trainees with a printed news article and divide them into two groups. Each group should analyse the article using the seven-step evaluation method discussed earlier.

After completing their analysis, have both groups present their assessments to the class.

Conclude the activity by offering your own observations and constructive feedback on their evaluations.

IMAIN Method for Analysing Human Sources

IMAIN is a straightforward and practical tool designed to help evaluate any human source sharing information—whether it appears in a news article, video, social media post, or even a tweet.

Element	What to Look For	Evaluation Question
Independent	Whether the source is unbiased and not personally benefiting or losing from the story	Is the identity verifiable? Do they have a credible journalistic or professional background?
Multiple	If the information is supported by other sources or evidence	Is the source trying to impress, gain popularity, or push a specific agenda?
Authoritative	Whether the source has deep knowledge or expertise on the topic	Are they speaking from direct experience, or are they relaying secondhand information?
Informed	The source's direct access to the subject or event	Do they belong to any institution or have an interest that could affect their perspective?
Named	Whether the source is identified or remains anonymous	Has the journalist explained why and provided enough context to judge the source's reliability if unnamed?



Practice Exercise:

Evaluate a Blogger’s Post Criticising a New Vaccine:

Consider the following questions:

- Is the blogger a medical professional or an expert in the field?
- Does the blogger have any ties to competing pharmaceutical companies?
- Does the post provide credible evidence or references to support its claims?



Group Exercise for Students/Trainees:

Instruct students to gather three different sources covering the same event (such as an earthquake or political crisis) and analyse them in groups using the IMAIN method.

5 Criteria for Evaluating Sources

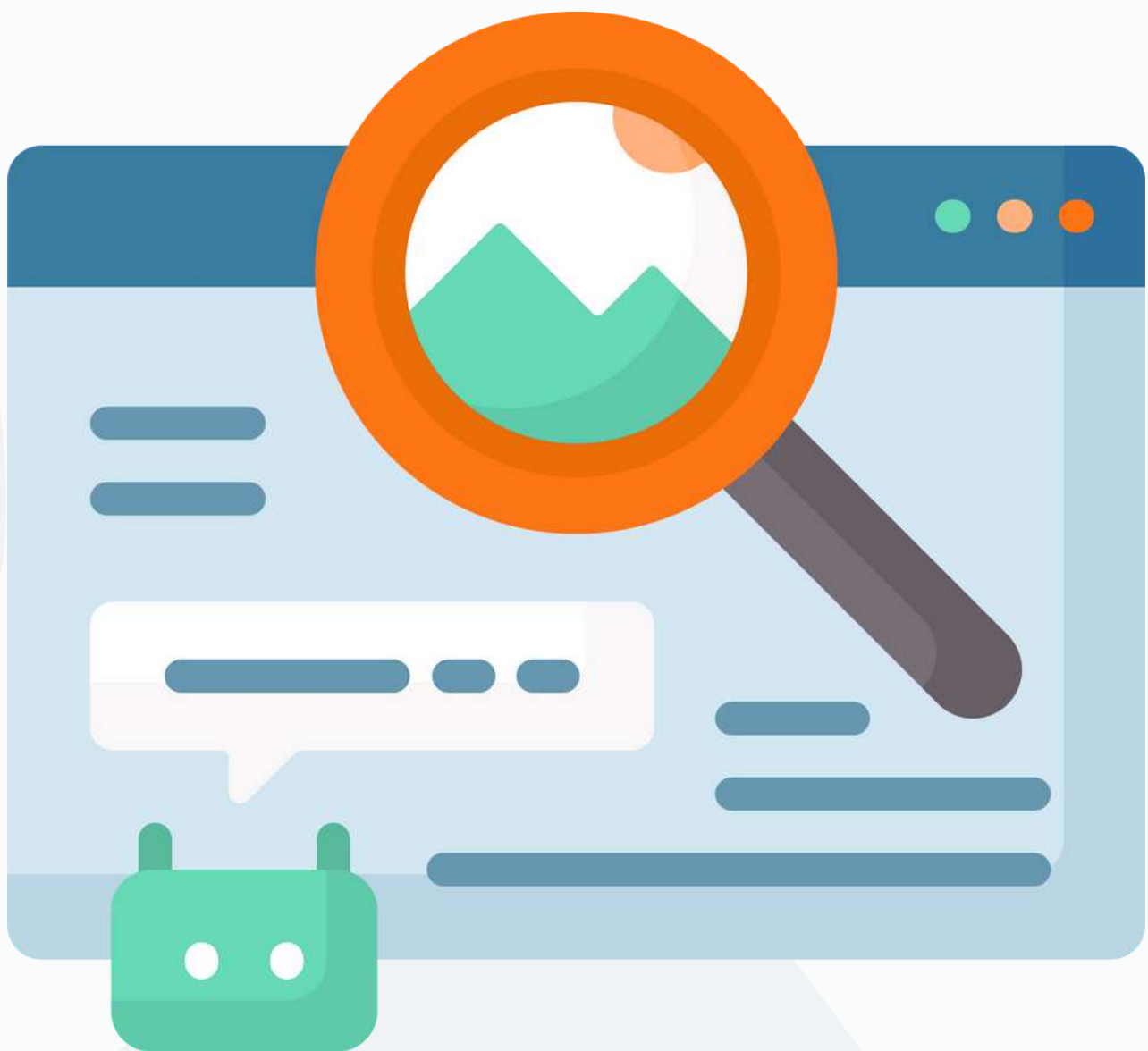
IMAIN Tool



Named	Informed	Authoritative	Multiple	Independent
Is the source named, or is it anonymous or unclear?	Does the source have direct access to the event or issue being reported?	Does the source have sufficient knowledge to be considered an expert on the subject?	Are there other sources that support what this source is saying?	Is the source neutral, or do they have a vested interest in the topic?

3. Image and Video Verification Tools

Often, misleading information isn't limited to text; it can also be conveyed through images or videos that have been taken out of context or subtly altered, making them hard to spot. Therefore, it is crucial to master **tools for verifying visual content**.





First: When Should We Question the Authenticity of a Photo or Video?

Questions to consider:

- Does the photo appear inconsistent with the event or date?
- Are there unusual details in the lighting, shadows, language, or clothing?
- Does the video provoke intense emotions without a clear source?



Real-life Example:

A photo circulating online showed a snow-covered street, supposedly from an Arab city in winter. However, it was actually taken in a European country five years earlier.



Suggested Exercise with Students/Trainees:

Provide a selection of photos and ask students to determine whether they are real, old, or altered.

Second: Tools for Verifying Images

Here are some key tools to help verify the authenticity and origins of images:

1. Google Reverse Image Search

Upload an image or paste its URL to trace its origin and see where it first appeared.

[!\[\]\(beadafdc0beb7d8dd0a09f518e768281_img.jpg\) Google Images](#)

2. TinEye

A dedicated reverse image search engine that shows where an image has appeared online and when.

[!\[\]\(34543dd4ff7f078317aba2ea094681a5_img.jpg\) TinEye](#)

3. RevEye

A browser extension that enables reverse image searches across multiple search engines simultaneously.

[!\[\]\(9cbf1bb4a206d9681b6d411f6f46a945_img.jpg\) RevEye Extension](#)

4. Photo Forensics

This tool analyses images using error-level analysis to reveal hidden edits or manipulations that are not visible to the eye.

[!\[\]\(4b405757c230db049e58f47a9672bc64_img.jpg\) FotoForensics](#)

5. Exif Data Viewer

Reveals metadata embedded in images, such as camera model, date, location, and more.

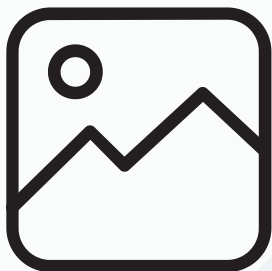
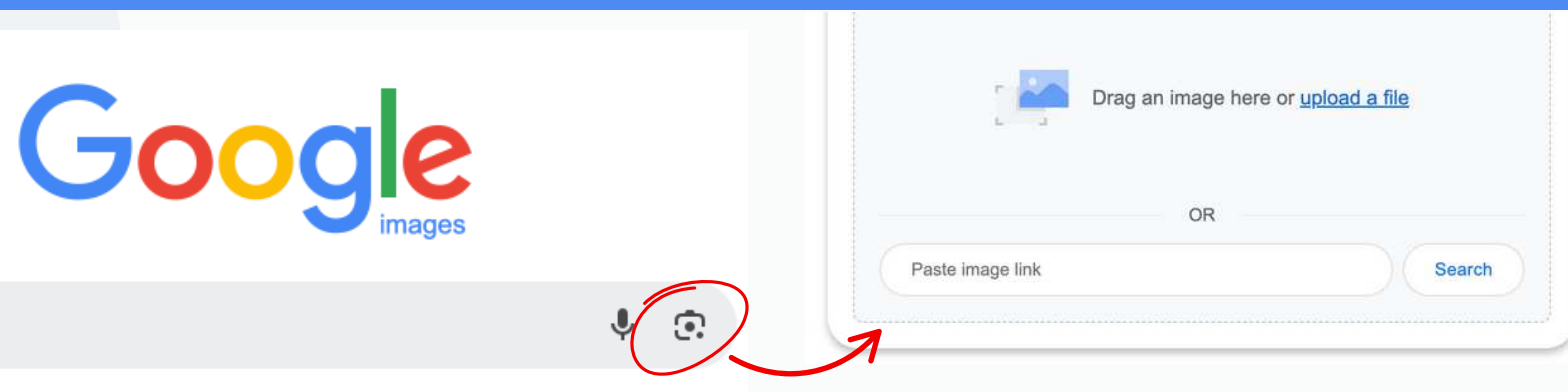
[EXIF Viewer](#)

6. AI Or Not

Upload images to determine whether they were created using artificial intelligence.

[AI or Not](#)

Reverse Image Search on Google



Give it an image



It will show you the similar ones on the internet



Third: Tools for Verifying Videos

1. InVID

<https://www.invid-project.eu/>

An advanced tool for verifying videos shared on social media. It breaks videos into individual frames for reverse image searches, helping detect edits or misleading context.

2. YouTube DataViewer (by Amnesty International)

<https://citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org/>

Displays upload timestamps and technical metadata, aiding in tracking a video's origin and authenticity.



Training Example:

A viral video claims to show a fire in an Arab country, but using InVID reveals it is an old clip of a factory fire in South Korea.

3. Reality Defender

<https://www.realitydefender.com/industry/media>

Utilises AI to detect deepfake images and videos, helping identify manipulated media content with high accuracy.

4. Frame by Frame

<http://www.watchframebyframe.com/>

It allows users to examine YouTube and Vimeo videos one frame at a time, which is useful for spotting subtle edits, inconsistencies, or manipulated elements.

Fourth: Tools for Verifying Geolocation and Context

1. Google Maps / Street View

 <https://www.google.com/maps>

Compare landmarks, signs, and building features in images with those on the map to verify the location.

2. SunCalc

 <https://www.suncalc.org/>

Analyses the position of the sun and shadows at a specific time and location to verify if the lighting matches the claimed timestamp.



Tip:

Look for clues like car models, languages on street signs, architectural styles, or store names—each can help confirm or disprove a photo's origin.

3. NASA Earth Observatory

 <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>

Provides satellite images and environmental data. Most content is publicly available and can be used to verify environmental conditions or geographic details.

4. Weather Underground

 <https://www.wunderground.com/>

Allows you to search weather conditions in any part of the world at a specific date and time to validate events or environmental claims.

5. PimEyes – Facial Recognition

<https://pimeyes.com/en>

A search engine that detects faces in images and links them to their online presence—useful in verifying identities when evaluating the credibility of sources.



Group Activity for Students/Trainees:

Provide students with a viral video that has been shared on Facebook. Ask them to:

- **Examine the Visual Clues:** Look closely at elements like clothing, weather, spoken dialect, and background details to infer the possible location and timing.
- **Apply Verification Tools** to investigate the accuracy and authenticity of the video's content.



Instructor's Note:

Plan a full hands-on session focused on practicing with InVID or Google Image Search. Encourage students to bring and use their mobile phones or laptops to explore and apply these tools in real time.

4. Misinformation on Social Media

Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok provide a fast and accessible space where misinformation can easily thrive. The speed of sharing, lack of fact-checking, and widespread anonymous content make it difficult for users to distinguish between reliable and misleading information. Since much of the content consumed on these platforms doesn't come from professional journalists but from individuals or unverified pages, it's crucial to recognise the common patterns through which misinformation spreads.



First: Types of Accounts That Spread Misinformation

- **Bots:** Automated accounts that are designed to share specific content, often as part of coordinated campaigns.
- **Sockpuppets:** Accounts controlled by individuals or organisations to sway public opinion while concealing their true identity.
- **Trolls:** Individuals who provoke controversy, derail conversations, and use insults to cause chaos in the media.

Example:

A Twitter campaign attacking a journalistic investigation with repetitive, hostile comments from anonymous accounts, later revealing a coordinated effort.



Tip:

If you observe identical messages being shared across various accounts in a short timeframe, it's likely part of an automated campaign.



Second: Mechanisms for Spreading Disinformation on Social Media

- **Amplification:** Reposting false content across various accounts to expand its reach.
- **Content Manipulation:** Altering images or cropping videos to mislead viewers.
- **Emotional Arousal:** Sharing distressing images or provocative language to prompt an emotional response and spur quick, unthinking reactions.

Example:

A post featuring an image of a crying child with the caption: "Save the children from war now!" lacking any source, only for it to later be revealed as from an entirely unrelated event.



3 Mechanisms for Spreading Disinformation on Social Media



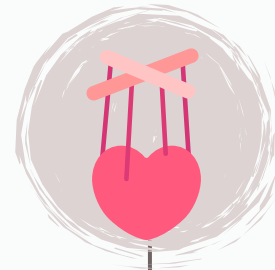
Amplification

Resharing false posts from multiple accounts to maximize reach and visibility



Content Manipulation

Altering images or editing video clips in misleading ways to deceive viewers



Emotional Provocation

Using distressing images or provocative language to trigger quick, emotional reactions and boost engagement

Third: How to Combat Misinformation on Social Media Platforms

Check:

- **Publishing Date and Context.**
- **Account Identity:** Examine the account's creation date, the nature of its posts, and whether it typically shares authentic or misleading content.
- **Type of Engagement:** Look for suspicious or repetitive comments and identify patterns in how the content spreads.



Practice Exercise:

Provide students with a series of tweets and ask them to identify:

- Whether there is a recurring pattern in the responses.
- Which accounts seem suspicious and why?



Instructor's Note:

Assign each group in the class to analyse a fake campaign (which could be sourced from a fact-checking platform's archive) and have them present their findings on how to deconstruct it.

5. Traffic Light Protocol for Safe Sharing

While people are frequently urged to verify news before sharing, there are often no clear guidelines or tools for making quick decisions. The "traffic light system" offers a simple visual approach to help both the general public and journalists make informed choices about reposting information.

This model uses the three familiar traffic light colours:




Colour	Description	Suggested Action
Red	False, harmful, or unreliable content	Do not share under any circumstances
Yellow	Unverified or questionable content	Pause, verify before sharing
Green	Verified and reliable content	Feel confident to share

How to Apply This Model in Practice

Ask yourself:

- Do I know who created or published this content?
- Can I verify the source or publication date?
- Does the content seem excessively emotional or sensational?

Practical Example:

- A post showing a violent event with no source →  Red.
- News from an unknown source with unverified figures →  Yellow
- A news article from a trusted agency, verified with credible sources → 
Green



Group Exercise:

Distribute a set of handouts (physical or digital) to students and have them categorise each item into one of the three colour categories. Encourage a discussion about the reasons behind their classification.



6. How Do We Teach Others to Fact-Check?

One of the most crucial skills we can pass on to others, whether we are journalists, trainers, or educators, is the ability to verify information independently. This involves not just providing fact-checking tools but also fostering critical thinking, curiosity, and the capacity for healthy skepticism.

First: Pedagogical Principles for Teaching Fact-Checking

Make the training:

- **Interactive:** Incorporate group activities and realistic scenarios.
- **Contextual:** Use examples relevant to the trainees' environment (local, linguistic, cultural).
- **Gradual:** Begin with simple concepts and build up to more advanced fact-checking techniques.

Example:

Instead of explaining the technical aspects of the InVID tool right away, start by discussing a misleading image and then demonstrate how to use the tool to verify it.



Second: Suggested Activities

1. Fake News Challenge

Organise a team-based game where a news story is presented, and trainees must verify it. The team that offers the fastest, well-documented analysis wins.





For the Trainer: Fake News Challenge Game Instructions



Objective:

To teach trainees how to verify news, enhance critical thinking, and foster teamwork under time pressure.



Advance Preparation:

1. Prepare the News:

- Select 4-6 short news items, a mix of fake and true stories.
- The stories can be sourced from the internet or carefully crafted, covering various topics (e.g., politics, health, education, celebrities).
- Include images, headlines, or links (either printed or digital) to make the game more engaging.

2. Divide the Teams:

- Divide the trainees into small teams (2-4 people per team, depending on the total number of participants).
- Allow teams to choose a name for added fun and competitiveness.

3. Required Equipment:

- Paper and pens or computers/mobile phones for research.
- Timer (clock or timer app).
- A simple evaluation form for each team to track their fact-checking process (e.g., source? evidence? date? bias?).

How to Play:

1. Present the Challenge:

- Display the stories (either one at a time or all at once) on a screen or printed paper.
- Explain that the objective is to verify the reliability of each story and provide a documented analysis, addressing:
 - Is the story true or false?
 - What is the source of the verification? (Link/Name of a reliable source)
 - What evidence or indicators were used to make the decision?

2. Start the Challenge:

- Start the timer (e.g., 15–20 minutes for all stories).
- Teams immediately begin researching, fact-checking, and preparing their responses.

3. Present the Answers:

- When the time is up, each team presents their findings to the group.
- The jurist panel (trainer or the trainees themselves) evaluates each team's answers based on the following criteria:
 - Accuracy of the judgment (true/false)
 - Strength of the evidence used
 - Clarity of the analysis
 - Speed of completion



Winning Team:

The team that delivers the **most accurate, evidence-based verifications** in the shortest time will be crowned

"Debunking Champions"

or

"Truth Guardians"



Trainer Tips:

- Add a Twist: Include a story that seems entirely credible but is actually fabricated. This helps trainees stay alert and skeptical, even with well-crafted content.
- Promote Tool Use: Encourage participants to consult fact-checking platforms like Fatabyyano, Snopes, AFP Fact Check, and Google Fact Check Explorer as part of their fact-checking process.
- Debrief Discussion: After the game, discuss recent fake news circulating on a social media platform.



Suggested Activities:

2. Fact-Checking Role Play

- Divide trainees into small groups where each member takes on a role: a journalist, an expert, a government spokesperson, or an independent fact-checker.
- Each group stages a simulated live discussion about a viral piece of information.

3. Rumour Spread Mapping

- Pick a real rumour that once went viral.
- Ask trainees to draw a **visual timeline or map** showing:
 - **Who initiated the rumor?**
 - **How did it spread?** (platforms, influencers, audiences)
 - **Who intervened to correct it?**

Teaching Tip:

Encourage mistakes. Real understanding and learning come when trainees can trace their missteps and see what led them astray.



Third: Simplified Approaches for Teaching Non-Specialists

- Prioritise **real-life stories or examples** over theoretical definitions.
- Create **brochures or quick-reference cards** summarising key fact-checking steps.
- Showcase **local instances** of misleading news that were later debunked, making them relatable to the audience



Instructor's Tip:

Some students may feel embarrassed after realising they've shared false information. Foster an environment where mistakes are welcomed as opportunities for learning and growth.



7. Additional Resources and Tools

This section offers a curated selection of tools, platforms, and educational materials designed to support trainees, educators, and journalists in fact-checking and countering misinformation. These resources are available in both Arabic and English, with many accessible free of charge.

First: Arab Fact-Checking Platforms

Here are some notable platforms in the Arab world that specialise in fact-checking and verifying news content in Arabic:

Misbar – An independent fact-checking platform that categorises Arabic news content as “fake,” “inaccurate,” or “true.”

-  Website: <https://misbar.com>

Chayyek - Originally launched as a Facebook page in Lebanon in 2021, Chayyek has grown into a regional fact-checking platform for Arabic news.

-  Website: <https://www.chayyek.com/>

Fatabyyano – Specialises in verifying Arabic content related to health, religion, and social issues.

-  Website: <https://fatabyyano.net>

Akeed – A Jordanian media observatory that monitors and evaluates the credibility of news published in Arab media outlets.

- [Website: https://akeed.jo](https://akeed.jo)

The Arab Fact-Checking Network (AFCN) - Aims to uphold transparency and neutrality in Arabic-language fact-checking practices.

- [Website: https://arabfcn.net/](https://arabfcn.net/)

Arabi Facts Hub - A non-profit research initiative focused on analysing and understanding the spread of misinformation and fake news in Arabic digital spaces.

- [Website: https://arabifactshub.com/](https://arabifactshub.com/)

Second: Open-Access Guides and Training Courses

Verification Handbook (Arabic Version)

- An in-depth manual designed for journalists and content creators, covering how to verify all types of digital content.
- https://bit.ly/VerificationHandbook3_AR

Learn to Discern – IREX

- A comprehensive educational programme that focuses on building critical thinking and fact-checking skills.
- <https://www.irex.org/project/learn-discern-l2d> (English)

Africa Check – Fact-Checking Guide

- A practical and accessible resource for fact-checking public statements and news content.
- [🔗 https://africacheck.org/fact-checking-guide](https://africacheck.org/fact-checking-guide)

Crash Course: Navigating Digital Information

- A YouTube video series offering concise lessons on media literacy and how to assess digital content critically.
- [🔗 https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtN07XYqqWSKpPrtNDiCHTzU](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtN07XYqqWSKpPrtNDiCHTzU)

Edraak & Coursera – Media Literacy Courses

- These platforms offer a range of free Arabic and international courses focused on digital literacy and news verification.
- [🔗 https://www.edraak.org/](https://www.edraak.org/) - <https://www.coursera.org>

Third: Recommended YouTube and TikTok Educational Channels

- **Al-Daheeh Channel (Da7ee7)** – Presents information and debunks rumors in a humorous, accessible style, making complex topics easy to understand.
- **Misbar YouTube Channel** – Features verification videos analysing trending stories and viral claims, tailored for Arabic-speaking audiences.
- **FactCheck.org YouTube Channel** – English-language channel offering reliable fact-checking content.

Extra Tools for Trainers

These platforms can help you turn your training sessions into interactive, competitive game-like learning experiences:

Jotform Quiz Maker

<https://www.jotform.com/quiz-maker>

Create engaging quizzes and surveys that trainees can complete collaboratively online.

Xperificify

<https://xperificify.com/>

A gamified learning platform that leverages psychological triggers like urgency and social proof to boost trainee engagement.

Brainscape

<https://www.brainscape.com/>

Uses spaced repetition and flashcards to reinforce key concepts, helping trainees retain information more effectively.

Edmodo

<https://new.edmodo.com/>

A free social learning platform that allows instructors to send messages, assign tasks, and share resources in a secure, classroom-like environment.

Classcraft

<https://www.classcraft.com/>

A gamified mobile application for promoting teamwork and social-emotional learning (SEL), where students create avatars and complete learning quests together.

Kahoot!

<https://kahoot.com/>

An interactive quiz platform that turns lessons into fun competitions to boost motivation and knowledge retention.



Instructor's Tip:

Build a collaborative online library with your students—update it regularly and use it as an ongoing hub for self-directed learning.



Chapter six

After Fact-Checking – Correcting Errors and Rebuilding Trust



The process of fact-checking doesn't stop once false or misleading content is identified. What follows is even more crucial: How do we communicate the correction? How can we prevent similar mistakes in the future? And most importantly, how do we rebuild and maintain public trust?

This chapter explores the responsibilities of both journalists and everyday users of news and social media platforms after spotting an error. It also offers actionable strategies for addressing misinformation with openness and integrity.



First: Why Do We Correct Misinformation?

- Making corrections strengthens credibility and reinforces trust with the audience.
- Because people tend to remember the original error more vividly than the correction, so correcting requires extra clarity and effort.
- Because in today's fast-moving information landscape, delaying a correction allows falsehoods to spread unchecked.



Example:

A news agency posted a photo claiming it showed flooding in an Arab country in 2024. It was later revealed that the image was from 2016. The agency responded by updating the story and placing a correction note prominently at the beginning.

Group Discussion:

How do you view media outlets that simply delete inaccurate content without providing an explanation? Is deletion enough? Why or why not?



Second: Professional Correction Steps

Step	Description
Acknowledge the Mistake	Openly recognise the mistake without making excuses
Provide a Clear Explanation	Clarify what went wrong, how it occurred, and when the correction was made
Ensure Transparency	Keep the original content accessible, adding a visible note or edit for clarity
Apologise if Needed	Issue a sincere apology, especially when the error caused harm or reputational damage
Reflect and Improve	Review the root cause of the mistake and implement steps to prevent future errors

Group Activity for Students/Trainees:

Analyse a real-life correction issued by an Arab media organisation.

- Was the correction adequate?
- Did the explanation provide enough clarity?
- What aspects could have been handled better or made more transparent?



Third: Rebuilding Trust After a Mistake

Trust doesn't come from being flawless—it comes from being transparent and consistent. Owning up to mistakes reflects professionalism, not weakness.



Actionable Strategies for Regaining Trust:

- Take the initiative to correct misinformation promptly.
- Set up a dedicated corrections page on your platform.
- Share your editorial guidelines and fact-checking process publicly.
- Engage openly with audience comments and feedback related to accuracy.



Real-Life Example:

An Arabic news site regularly updates and publishes corrections when any reporting errors are discovered.

4 Practical Tips for Building Trust with Your Audience



Instructor's Tip:

Ask students to create a visual template for issuing corrections, including:

Title – Description of the Error – Original Source Link – Updated Information/Correction.



Fourth: The public Is Responsible Too

Users are responsible for the information they share. When false information is identified, it's not enough to simply stop spreading it. They must:

- Remove it from their personal accounts.
- Clarify the truth to others.
- Share accurate content instead.



Practical Activity:

Have each student research a recent rumour, create a small plan to correct it, and share their approach.





Chapter Seven

Rumours and Misinformation in Times of Crisis



During times of crisis—whether epidemics, natural disasters, political turmoil, or conflicts—social tensions rise, and the demand for information intensifies. In such high-pressure climates, rumours spread rapidly, and misinformation poses a significant risk to public safety, mental well-being, and decision-making.



Real-Life Example:

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, false "cures" circulated widely, such as drinking bleach or consuming excessive garlic. Some of these recommendations led to serious health issues.



Class Opening Question:

Why are societies more inclined to believe rumours during times of crisis?

First: Characteristics of Rumours During Crises

Characteristic	What It Means
Rapid Spread	People, driven by anxiety and the desire for reassurance, quickly share information.
Lack of Fact-Checking	There is little time for fact-checking, and official sources may be slow to respond.
Highly Emotional Tone	Rumours are often conveyed using language that triggers fear or false hope.
Visual Manipulation	Fake images or videos are employed to enhance the perceived authenticity of the rumour.



Group Activity for Students/Trainees:

Provide students with three rumours that circulated during various crises (health, political, natural). Have them analyse the traits of each rumour.

Second: How Can We Counter Rumours During Crises?

HOW TO COMBAT RUMORS DURING CRISES



Report false content on the platform
Use built-in reporting features



Avoid resharing until verification
Don't repost unless you're certain it's accurate



Use real-time verification tools
reverse image search, metadata analysis, etc



Rely only on official sources
Government, Intl. Organizations, etc



Applied Example:

During an earthquake in an Arab country, a photo showing a child trapped under rubble circulated. After verification, it was revealed that the image was from a previous earthquake in a different country.



Third: Journalists' Role During a Crisis

In times of crisis, a journalist shifts from being just a reporter to becoming a responsible communicator:

- They must proactively address rumours with accurate information.
- They must use reassuring language, avoiding trivialisation or exaggeration.
- They must depend solely on experts and avoid rushing to conclusions.



Instructor's Note:

Ask students to craft a brief journalistic tweet about a disaster that includes:

- Verified information
- A link to a reliable source
- Avoidance of sensational language



Group Activity with Students/Trainees:

Compare two different media coverages of the same crisis. Which one demonstrates more professionalism?

Fourth: Real-life Arab Examples

- Beirut 2020: Following the seaport blast, numerous fake images and old videos from other events began circulating.
- Sudan 2023: During the conflict, false reports about the fall of areas or unverified assassinations spread.
- Gaza and Palestine: Old or misattributed images from other countries were used to provoke public opinion without proper documentation.



Applied Activity:

Have students trace one of these rumours and analyse its trajectory: Who was the first to spread it? How did it spread? Who debunked it?



Conclusion:

During crises, neutrality regarding misinformation is not an option. We must be a source of calm, not chaos. Media literacy, in these situations, is crucial for the protection of all.

Golden Rule:

If the information triggers fear or intense anger, take a moment to pause and ask:
Who stands to benefit from this?



About This Guide

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