EUFACHECK

The fact-checking project of EJTA

WJEC5, Paris, July 11th 2019

WWW.EJTA.EU
This is EUfactcheck!
What are the biggest problems for journalism?*

- Opinion and false information on the internet
- The economic model for news
- Media owners focused too much on profits
- The public doesn't care about quality journalism
- Media owners don't believe quality will sell
- Traditional media need to adapt to technology
- Journalism education isn't preparing people for the future
- Technology monopolies control the Internet
- Pressures of a 24 hour news cycle

DIDACTIC PROJECT:

EUfactcheck is the fact-checking project of EJTA that builds a sustainable curriculum unit on fact-checking within a pan-European network of Journalism schools.

Before and during the EP elections 2019, we publish fact-checks and blogposts on www.eufactcheck.eu to train our students of Journalism in a common methodology.
MISINFORMATION:

Through factchecking European political claims and trying to tackle misinformation, we want our students and our public to grow a deeper insight and interest in democratic processes, both on national and European level.

EUfactcheck wishes to motivate fact-based debate in the EU and to stimulate media and information literacy.
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<td>Fact-checking projects in J-schools</td>
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<td>Start publication on pan-EU platform</td>
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<td>ACTION!! <a href="http://www.EUfactcheck.eu">www.EUfactcheck.eu</a></td>
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Project management

**Journalism students:**
- publication fact checks and blogs + social media posts
- use of resources from Google Drive
- follow formats and styleguide strictly

** Responsible editor/student:**
- first check-up and follow-up of publication by (fellow-)students
- follow-up social media

** Staff / national coach J-school:**
- responsible for content and form of final publications on www.eufactcheck.eu
- follow deadlines publication schedule: factchecks, blogs and visualisations
- communication with social media, visualisation and website team
- communication with coordinator and production team
- coaching and input students
- final responsibility for publications of own students
- coordinating participation in Crosscheck
- IT help for students
- Wordpress role= author

** Coordinator and production team:**
- final responsibility for project evolution and website
- overall coordination and communication
- communication with teams
- communication with and between participants
- external communication
- Wordpress role= administrator
- monitoring publications
- monitoring website
- follow-up info mailbox (info@eufactcheck.eu)

** Social media team:**
- follow up +
- coordination
- social media

** Visualisation team:**
- production of visuals
- and graphics following
- ‘orders’ of participants

** Website team:**
- webmaster
- webmanagment
- it-helpdesk for staff
Project management

- Different teams and workflows
- Publication schedule: different tracks for participants
Project management

Project communication: Slack / different channels

Slack needs your permission to enable desktop notifications.

Thursday, May 16th

- **Nadia Vissers** 11:44 AM
  Do I understand you have two fact-checks anyway? It would be great if you could publish them both, together with a blog post. Earlier than 20 May, you say, is that for instance today? Then you could maybe fill Zwolle's gap 😊 today?

- **Anne Leppajarvi, Haaga-Helia** 12:35 PM
  Haaga-Helia has one more extra check: The claim: "According to studies the majority of Germans, French, and Brits do not even want to defend their own country" (said by Finnish candidate Aseel Khinnunen). It will be ready to publish next week. Could it be added to the publication schedule to 24.5. or is there some other day when extra check would be needed @Nadia Vissers? (edited)

- **Nadia Vissers** 12:42 PM
  Dear Anne and all, it is really good to have extra checks and posts for next week, so we can finish with a 'grand finale'. So please put extra material in draft and let us know! We'll add them to the publication schedule. We are also thinking about a good final publication (for now) / concluding text with reference to possible future steps. More about that on Monday!

1 reply 2 months ago

- **Lieve Roegiers** 12:44 PM
  Yep, today or surely tomorrow! A blog post we don't have anymore, unfortunately.

- **Nadia Vissers** 12:46 PM
  @Guinie Eggink @Erik van Schaik: One very big beer for the full production team is more like it... 😎
Project management

- Google Drive: resources for staff and students:
  - Formats for fact-checks and blogs
  - Flowchart and examples
  - Info on EU databases
  - Styleguide and publication manual
  - Inspiring publications
  - Archives
  - Output reports

- Bootcamp: everybody on the same wavelength to get started
Curriculum unit and methodology
Common methodology

Analyse claim

Analyse author / source

Fact check
1. Analyse the message/claim:
   a. Focus on facts (not opinions or predictions)
   b. Focus on precise claims (not vague claims)

2. Analyse the sender/source:
   a. Focus on the sender (organisation, interests)?
   b. Find the original place of publication.

3. Check the facts:
   a. Does the original source confirm the claim?
   b. Does a second expert confirm the claim?
Flowchart

(© Frederik Marain + Wouter Frateur)
The flowchart is a unique tool.

Did the flowchart help your students to analyse a claim?

18 antwoorden

- 61.1%: To a great extent
- 27.8%: Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all
• Fixed formats for fact-checks and blog posts
• EU theme
• Political claims from mainstream (social) media
• Categories:
Outcome

130 articles

79 fact-checks

51 posts blog

6  28  22  13  10
Uncheckable: “Yearly, 825 billion euros in tax payments are being evaded in the European Union”
Fact-check, Uncheckable • By Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, BE • May 17, 2019

Mostly False: The YES! survey is representative of the European youth
Fact-check, Mostly false • By Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona, ES • May 17, 2019
YES! (Young European Survey) is a project created by the youths of different political parties. It was born

False: “Small and medium-sized enterprises employ 90 percent of the workforce in the EU area”
Fact-check, False • By Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, FI • May 16, 2019
Member of the European Parliament Petri Sarvamaa
Blog: Make us better!

Blogpost • By AP University College, BE • February 14, 2019 • Leave a comment

We, as journalism students, love the fact that we can fact-check news and claims. A good article or news item stands or falls by its fact-check. But if you want to do a good check, it is quite difficult to get involved with the right people and the right reports. Certainly for a journalism student....

Read more

Blog: Berlusconi and the European union: a story of ambivalence

Blogpost • By Catholic University of Milan, IT • February 13, 2019 • Leave a comment
Impact: visitors and visits

Unique visitors:

- February: 1,064
- March: 2,419
- April: 3,115
- May: 4,467
Impact: social media
• Media coverage: national and international
• Cooperations: Crosscheck, EDJNet, EUdisinfolab...
• Downloads of flowchart
• Comments from public (comment-box with each FC + ‘Suggest a Fact-check’)

Social impact
The claim was investigated by Eufactcheck.eu. The project, run by the European Journalism Training Association, is fact-checking political claims with the help of more than 150 students and staff from 20 journalism schools across Europe.

The group looked at several research reports but could find no data to support Baudet's claims about immigration and increased homophobia.

After reviewing recent LGBT studies, they concluded Baudet's remark that homophobia had increased in the Netherlands was "generally untrue."

The group also cited a 2015 police study on homophobic crimes in the Netherlands that found 61.8% of homophobic crime suspects had Dutch nationality. The fact-checkers said the police did not differentiate between immigrant and non-immigrant suspects.

Baudet had not responded to CNN's request for comment at time of publishing.

Baudet's tweet pits the liberal attitudes of Dutch people -- encapsulated in their acceptance of homosexuality -- as under attack by immigration, said Claes de Vreese.
** Breakout 9: Citizens vs trolls – securing free and fair elections in Europe / 11:45-13:15
Lessons learned: staff

- Unique project in quantity and quality
- Unity in diversity: common curriculum development in a diverse Europe
- General theme EU is still a ‘gap’ in J-schools
- Category ‘uncheckable’= very interesting
- Factchecking is a time-consuming but rewarding process
Lessons learned: students

- Students develop critical approach towards news
- Students have higher interest and insight in EU policies and reporting
- Students realise that they do need to think analytically
- Students recognise the importance of context
- Students realise they need to find a concrete source
"In times of information overload, it is good to learn how to select what is important and what is correct."

"The project has changed my perception of news. Today, I always ask for an independent source to back up a claim."

"It was interesting to see how some politicians construct a false reality out of correct bits of information."

"The project has raised my awareness of facts."

+ CHECK THE BLOG POSTS!
Lessons learned: project management

- You need a flexible production team
- Slack = great tool for project communication
- Different roles, different profiles
- Participants need different tracks and approaches
- Time and daily engagement
Lessons learned: project management

“one month on track”

- Interesting, relevant topics
- Publications show different journalistic approaches, intercultural differences, and still the project is coherent
- Deadlines of the publication schedule
- Use of banners (false-true claims)
- 8 Students will participate in the CrossCheck summits
  - Flowchart is used
  - Fact-checks have a clear structure
  - Use of visuals

- What to check: fact, prediction?
- Non-consistent use of genres (fact-check or blog?)
- Absence on Slack
- Low turn-out on Slack meeting
- Facebook and Twitter shares

Tips
- Use formats and flowchart in Student Resources (Drive)
- Use Slack: #general
- For visuals: #visualisation
- Promote on Social Media
- Communicate with production team

#productionteam track record 101
Some challenges and reflections

- How much have we changed our students’ attitudes?
- How to make the project permanent/sustainable?
- How to motivate more social media participation?
- Difficult to define claims and assess their relevance
- Development of new, visual formats?
- Cooperation with (national) fact-checking media?
- Crossnational cooperation between students?
False: EUfactcheck stops

Fact-check, False  •  By EUfactcheck team  •  May 28, 2019

Rumours have it that the EJTA project EUfactcheck is definitely going to stop after 26 May 2019. The political debates died down, the EU elections are all over. However, we consider the rumours to be false.
• ‘NEW’ participants welcome
• Manual / Lessons learned: publication in autumn 2019
• Train the Trainer in CEE: February 2020
• With funding from Evens Foundation and CoE
Thank you!

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