Building Resilience to Disinformation in a Digital Media Age

8 July 2021

Lie Detectors Data Briefing 2021
www.lie-detectors.org
Key Questions

What momentum is there in classrooms and how can we create multipliers?

How are children and adults changing their use of online information, and how does this impact media literacy and policy debates?

How do kids respond to media literacy work and how can we measure this?
Basic Data

15,101 pupils aged 10 to 15
726 teachers
1,065 classrooms

2017-2020
4 countries DE, BE, AT, LU
3 languages EN, DE, FR
230+ journalists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Datasets</th>
<th>Classroom visits</th>
<th>Schoolchildren</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL DATA 2017 through 2020</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>15101</td>
<td>726 teachers</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
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<td>“Pre-Covid” data 2017- March 2020</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>13119</td>
<td>639</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covid-Era Subset 1 Apr-July2020)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Covid-Era Subset 2 Oct - Dec 2020</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Academic guidance on questionnaire design

Divina Frau-Meigs
Professor, Unesco Chair

Stephan Lewandowsky
Chair in Cognitive Psychology
1. Engagement and Momentum
Do schoolchildren think media literacy is a relevant topic for the classroom?

Question: "Do you think it is important to talk about today's theme (disinformation and journalism) at school?", "Do you think it is important to learn about disinformation or "fake news" at school?" - Y/N answers from 12,102 schoolchildren aged 10-15

All Data (2017-2020)

Yes: 83.5%
No: 14.6%
Do students think media literacy is a relevant topic for the classroom during the pandemic?

Question "Do you think it is important to learn about disinformation or "fake news" at school?" - Y/N answers from 292 schoolchildren aged 10-15

YES 83.5%
NO 14.6%

YES 92.5%
NO 7.5%

Covid-Era Subset 1 04-07/2020
Teachers’ feedback

Question: “Would you recommend the visit of Lie Detectors/the research missions/ our project to other teachers?” Y/N answers from 656 teachers

99.4% of the teachers liked the session

All Data (2017-2020)
Teacher view of media literacy as an important topic

**Pre-Covid**
- YES 77.7%

**Covid-Era**
- YES 98.6%

Questions: "Have you heard from other sources (school authorities, etc.) about the need to teach children to be media literate?" Y/N answers from 523 teachers - Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020

"Do you think critical media literacy and disinformation is an important subject that your class should discuss at school?" Y/N answers from 74 teachers - Covid-Era – 04/2020-12/2020
What teaching subject does this topic belong to?

General Knowledge and Interdisciplinary and Other

First Language Literacy

Social Studies

Digital Media and News Literacy

Religion

Civic Education

History

Geography

Political Science

Economics

Languages

Nature Science

Project Week

Arts

Work Studies and Orientation

Extra Curricular

All Data (2017-2020)

Question: "Into what subject does this lesson fit best?" answers from 622 teachers
Teachers increasingly teach this subject

Questions: “Before the visit of the journalist, did you talk to your class about media literacy?” Y/N answers from 508 teachers - Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020
“Before the research mission, did you talk to your class about media literacy?” Y/N answers from 37 teachers - Covid-Era Subset 1 – 04-07/2020
“Have you spoken with your class about critical media literacy and disinformation before?” Y/N answers from 74 teachers - Covid-Era Subset 2 – 09-12/2020
Unfulfilled potential

Pre-Covid

Covid-Era

In %

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

34pp

Action

Awareness

Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020
Covid-Era – 04/2020-12/2020
**Children respond**

How was this project different from regular school work?

**Comparing information across multiple sources and online media.**

“We had to do a lot of research. At school we usually just get instructions.” 14-year-old, Perl, Germany.

**Deeper, longer and more autonomous research than normally.**

“It challenged us to think outside the box.” 15-year-old, Luxembourg.

“We had to come with our own solutions and ideas.” 13-year-old, Ganshoren, Belgium.

**Unusual to address social media or "fake news" at school.**

“At school we don’t talk much about media or learn to compare fake news and real news.” 14-year-old, Perl, Germany.

“This work is more helpful for life than for school.” 12-year-old, Salzburg, Austria.

**Learning practical tools to use for online searches.**

“We used tablets and phones and learned how to check images with a reverse search.” 10-year-old, Dormagen, Germany.

Question: “How was our news challenge different from other work you do at school?” Most frequently recurring answers arising from 1557 schoolchildren aged 10-15, 1051 (67.5%) said it was different, 409 (26.3%) said it was not different, 97 (6.2%) did not answer the question.
Findings
What do pupils want to know?

Unravelling and addressing
CONSPIRACY THEORIES

How to spot
FALSE POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

How do
JOURNALISTS WORK

How to react to
CHAIN LETTERS

Why does
FAKE NEWS EXIST

How to do a
REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

How is
NEWS PRODUCED

Questions: Trends of questions by approx 300 pupils to journalists during video calls, and 319 pupil responses to “Which of the following topics would you like to know about more?” with multiple answers permitted.

Covid-Era Subset 1 04-07/2020
“The parents say they love we’re doing this. They say it’s important their children get these tools.”

Anne Scheunemann, primary school teacher, Berlin, April 2020
2. Data usage & generational gap
Online sources of information for schoolchildren

Questions: "What social media do you use to inform yourself?" - answers from 1.856 schoolchildren, 100 teachers - Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020
Online sources of information for schoolchildren and teachers

Questions: "What social media do you use to inform yourself?" - answers from 1.856 schoolchildren, 100 teachers - Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020

Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020
Schoolchildren social media use progression

Questions: "What social media do you use?" - answers from 12,344 schoolchildren - Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020
"What social media platforms do you use to inform yourself?" answers from 1,856 schoolchildren - Covid-Era – 04/2020-12/2020
Schoolchildren social media use progression

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Developments in social media use: growing gaps

Question: “What social media do you use?” - answers from 12,344 schoolchildren, 543 teachers - Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020

Pre-Covid - 2017-03/2020

Students
Teachers

Snapchat
Facebook
TikTok
Instagram
YouTube
Twitch/Discord
WhatsApp
Signal
Twitter
Reddit
Fortnite
Telegram

In %: 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Developments in social media use: growing gaps

Questions: "What social media do you use?" - answers from 1,856 schoolchildren, 100 teachers - Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020


Students: Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitch/Discord, WhatsApp, Signal, Twitter, Reddit, Fortnite, Telegram.

Teachers: Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitch/Discord, WhatsApp, Signal, Twitter, Reddit, Fortnite, Telegram.

In %: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100
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Students

Teachers

Snapchat
Facebook
TikTok
Instagram
YouTube
Twitch/Discord
WhatsApp
Signal
Twitter
Reddit
Fortnite
Telegram

In %
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
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Questions: "What social media do you use to inform yourself?" - answers from 1,856 schoolchildren, 100 teachers - Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020
Developments in social media use: growing gaps during COVID

Questions: "What social media do you use to inform yourself?" - answers from 1,856 schoolchildren, 100 teachers - Covid-Era - 04/2020-12/2020
Findings
Teacher interest

"I’ve learned how rapidly habits change and that my generation consumes information online in a very different way than the younger generation."

C. Foulds, teacher, European Schools, Belgium

"I hadn’t realised how much social media my 10-year-old pupils use. We will be discussing this also with the parents."

B. DobBELaERE, teacher, Brussels, Belgium

"I’d like to know more about how journalism works. What is a journalist? What is a populist? Why does fake news exist?"

N. Zantke, teacher, Hamburg, Germany

"I was surprised at the critical spirit of the children. I think we often take them to be more naive than they are."

P. Brauweiler, teacher, Cologne, Germany

“What did you learn about media literacy and disinformation during this project? What else would you like to tell us?”
3. Measuring media literacy
Measuring impact

Question: "Have you started checking the sources of your online messages since taking our news challenge?" Y/N/Checked Before answers from 1378 students

Covid-Era Subset 2 - 09 -12/2020

Self-reported behavioural change

Unchanged behaviour

Changed behaviour

In %

69.9%

30.1%
Media Literacy has an impact

Did Kids change their behaviour?

69.9% 30.1%

Question: "Have you started checking the sources of your online messages since taking our news challenge?" Y/N/Checked Before answers from 1378 students

Covid-Era Subset 2 - 09 - 12/2020
Media Literacy has an impact

Did Kids change their behaviour?

Covid-Era Subset 2 - 09 -12/2020

Question: "Have you started checking the sources of your online messages since taking our news challenge?" Y/N/Checked Before answers from 1378 students

- Preteens: 69.9% not checking, 52% checked before, 30% started checking
- Teens: 46.4% not checking, 27.4% checked before, 28.7% started checking
4. Recommendations
**Steps to take**

**Recommendations**

- Focus on inquiry-based learning models.
- Back measures that go beyond fact-checking and that consider safety on unmoderated platforms.
- Back OECD in adding critical literacy to school rankings worldwide.
- Invest in training teachers and incentivise teachers.
- Integrate media literacy into school and teacher-training curricula.
- Devise funding to ensure the independence of media literacy teaching and journalism.
Thank you.

For more information, contact info@lie-detectors.org