

The Hague Fact Checking Factory; towards civic literacy

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Introduction

Information literacy is essential for the operation of a civic society in which all people may participate (Catts & Lau, 2008). The aim of the Fact Checking Factory (FCF) is to accomplish cooperation between students and local citizens. We aim to create an agenda for local decision-makers with the project objectives of fact-checking local news.

Objectives

During 2017 the FCF project was implemented for the City of The Hague in the Duindorp district. We worked together with local citizens to set up an information center where news and online social media messages relating to the neighborhood were collected and checked for accuracy. At the same time, the FCF was set up online while the layout and the sufficiency of the working method were both being studied.

The students gained the following learning outcomes with this project;

- The student investigated the role of journalism of truth finding in our society by how professional journalists and content creators, using IT, collect news reports and rumors and check on their truthfulness.
- The students built a digital environment where research on the neighborhood news is presented to a general audience.
- The students used the working method of professional journalists and content creators when checking news and facts relating to the neighborhood.

Methodology

To obtain sound information in the physical and digital realm, we explored and selected variations, initiatives and tooling of the journalism fact-checking process by conducting desk research and platform selection. Next, for each fact check the same standard procedure is followed in a lab setting; the Fact-Checking online platform. Findings are checked and verified by the student and local citizens through examining sources and claims online. When a fact check is performed the fact-checking procedure are outlined to provide insight into how the fact check is conducted to warrant transparency.

Results

The research outcomes resulted in local community platforms that have the potential to increase young people's information literacy, as stated by Montagni & Tzourio (2017). We involved local citizens by ambassadorship in increasing civic prevalence within the gathering, conforming and revising of local news online as well in local meet ups where the most suitable online environment was presented resulting in knowledge exchange between the students and local citizens. As well the citizens' writing, products can be reviewed in the information platform and improvements can be suggested. The FCF can therefore make a positive contribution towards civic information literacy by stimulating collaboration and gaining public awareness in the public spheres (Van Helvoort, 2018).

References:

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