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12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND NEW LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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Diversity Issues
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NEW EDUCATIONAL TRENDS FOR MEDIA LITERACY AND THE PREVENTION OF FAKE NEWS

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Abstract

Introduction: Nowadays, the importance of media, both traditional and internet based, is undeniable. The way they influence society is indisputable. On the one hand, they enable all people to express themselves, while on the other, the explosive development of information and communication technologies provides another opportunity, no less significant though, which is communication between people in real time and anywhere in the world.

Presentation: The age limit of digital technologies users is melting away with each passing day; from an early age, children have available tools and the technologies they need to surf the social networks. In this regard, the provision of media literacy through the application of modern educational methods is closely linked to the development of independent and critical thinking in people, which guarantees their individual skills to sift out useful and reliable information from fake news that surrounds them everywhere in the information space. Fake news can be intentionally false information, but it can also be made up of true information, deliberately taken from the context of the events. Its main task is to activate socio-political tension, create mass and destructive influence over society, and often aim to cause panic among the young population. Faced with the dynamic situations in real social environment, it is necessary for society to overcome the lack of understanding of what is happening around them, to acquire in-depth theoretical, factual and practical knowledge in a broad context.

Methodology: The scientific toolkit of this educational and upbringing process is based on the methodology of change, which is synthesized in the so-called 'architectural approach'.

Conclusion: The university community recognizes as its duty the need to prepare, educate, and pass on to the next generation the information, necessary to form their knowledge and skills. Based on this indisputable fact, informing science is of great importance not only for proper education but also for the upbringing of young people.

Keywords: media literacy, information awareness, informing science, educational trends, fake news.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of over-information and over-consumption, the media play a crucial role in society's life. Journalists are the ones who open the window of the world to people, especially when we are all in isolation, locked away at home. The media is responsible for mental health in quarantine with the idea of returning to normality. Today's agenda is set by an external factor – a disease that is not well known. And the media spread messages about the COVID-19 virus in order to influence people's opinions and behaviour. This way, they play a role in the formation of personality. The vast amount of information requires all of us to be experienced and dedicated consumers who value risk, to be curious and copyright-literate, respecting the work of media content authors, their intellectual property. Such is the European Commission's message regarding the new challenge for the information society: raising literacy in the use of new media. Media literacy creates competent citizens, creative personalities who are ready to ignore fake news, separate misinformation from false information, and be worthy citizens of the new democratic society. The university is the place to educate students in qualities that enable them to differentiate between fact and non-fact, to distinguish truth from lie, fantasy from reality, and not to use the linguistic neologism of "alternative facts" introduced by George Orwell's bestseller "1984", where the quote is: "War is peace; freedom is slavery; ignorance is power" [1].

2 PRESENTATION

Digital technologies are engaging more and more young people in the Internet world, and sharing information on the Web is becoming a tool for influence. Today's users create their own content that is

subjective. The standards of journalism have been neglected and the discussion of what kind of society we want to live in and how to get the truth back is pointless. Therefore, active participation in the creation of a media culture based on media literacy, copyright literacy and information literacy is of key importance in educational models in higher education. The learning process begins with communication as a basic tool in arguing for the best solution in a time of war of words.

The fake news is bombarding us everywhere. They became the new propaganda in the 21st century. Anonymous repeaters forward any "news" to information sites linked to schemes that seek to conceal the author, the owner of the "news" that generated the pseudo news. In the meantime, because of its absurd or incredible content, it collects thousands of likes until it reaches its intended effect. This is how lying becomes an industry. Jestin Coler, publisher of fake news sites and creator of US-based company "Disinfomedia", said in an interview with US-based "NPR" that he initially wanted to iron out gullible Internet users and give them a critical reflex against misinformation. Gradually, however, he saw that especially right-wing Republicans were spreading his "news" as warm bread, and he decided to make the most of the business opportunity that opened up. Today, the person in question owns 25 misinformation sites and says he earns up to $ 30,000 a month and advertisers queue up in front of his office. [2]

The question for the society is how to get the truth back in the media and stop the degradation of values, although for whole groups of people – today's online users, the facts are boring and uninteresting, generate no traffic and therefore have no cash success. Therefore, the role of university education is to impose such patterns of behaviour on the Internet that stimulate continuity, the experience of generations, traditions and to nurture a respected modern consumer with respect for them and intolerance of aggression, commercialization and fake news. Sociology argues that the negative and aggressive media presentation of information can largely speculate and influence even erudite and highly literate people, precisely because they are part of society and not some isolated conservative system. That's way, it is crucial that the post-communication learning process focuses on the media users' selective ability. In other words, young people build identity on the basis of their own culture and knowledge, on personal characteristics, rather than being guided by the habit and mass models imposed by environmental media realities, impregnated with aggression and piquancy. [18]

The fact is that the European Union is not indifferent to the fight against misinformation. In 2018, the European Commission proposed specific measures to tackle misinformation, including the establishment of a rapid alert system, as well as strict control on the implementation of the code of conduct on misinformation signed by online platforms. The High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini said: "It is our duty to protect this space and not allow anybody to spread disinformation that fuels hatred, division and mistrust in democracy. As the European Union, we've decided to act together and reinforce our response, to promote our principles, to support the resilience of our societies, within our borders and in the neighbourhood. This is the European way of responding to one of the major challenges of our time." The Commission alarmed in April 2018, and in December of the same year presented a report on the progress made in combating online disinformation. [5]

Moreover, in 2016, a Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats was adopted [6], followed by a Joint Communication entitled "Increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats" in 2018 [7]. In April 2018, the Commission presented a European approach and self-regulation tools to combat misinformation online, including an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation, support for an independent network of fact-checkers and tools to promote quality journalism. On October 16, the Code of Practice on Disinformation [8] was signed by Facebook, Google, Twitter and Mozilla, as well as by trade associations representing online platforms, the advertising industry and advertisers. In May 2019, Microsoft subscribed to the Code of Practice and also presented its roadmap.

On the other hand, in today's extremely abundant amount of information, it is quite difficult to find reliable and accurate information. Concerning coronavirus disinformation, days ago, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, issued a statement saying: "However, while many people are sharing information about the virus and how to protect against it, only some of that information is useful or reliable. Misinformation during times of a health crisis can spread paranoia, fear, and stigmatization. It can also result in people being left unprotected or more vulnerable to the virus. For example, a recent erroneous online message circulating in several languages around the world and purporting to be a UNICEF communication appears to indicate, among other things, that avoiding ice cream and other cold foods can help prevent the onset of the disease. This is, of course, wholly untrue." [9] She urges everyone "to seek for accurate information, to trust only verified sources." This is how the professional institution reacted, announcing that it is taking steps to provide

accurate and reliable information about the virus and will work with the World Health Organization, governments and online partners such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok to provide accurate and relevant information.

3   METHODOLOGY

A team of ULSIT won a competition of the Bulgarian National Science Fund at the Ministry of Education and Science in the Republic of Bulgaria for financial support for projects of junior basic researchers and postdocs on the topic "Model for Research and Increase Copyright Literacy at the Media in University Environment". The main task of the project is to identify the existing student-media-intellectual-property/copyright dependencies and relations and to create an appropriate training course model that works in the ULSIT curriculum and prepares educated copyright professionals in the media in the aforementioned field 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences. All participants – university, students, media content authors, journalists, Internet users – are involved in this process.

The scientific toolkit of this educational and schooling process is based on the methodology of change, which is synthesized in the so-called "architectural approach". The architectural approach makes it possible to present an accurate picture of students' information literacy in the field 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences, in particular their copyright literacy and intellectual property literacy in the media. Then systematize and fix the model that functions in the mode of educational course in higher education as a critical factor. The architectural approach is also a means of increasing the efficiency of existing educational processes, of developing and implementing new educational systems. The implementation is carried out in three steps: historical aspects that determine the development of the media; terminology that clarifies the status of copyright and information literacy in the media in a university environment; and a practical module that implements the "Learning by doing" philosophy of the American scientist and reformer in education, one of the founders of the pragmatist movement, John Dewey. [3]

The description of the status of the problem is created on the basis of a survey among students learning in the specialties journalism, media, communications, PR, and more in professional field "Social Communications and Information Sciences" at Bulgarian Universities. A survey toolkit and technology for conducting the survey and gathering the results is structured. This is a basic research on which the subsequent analysis of the current state of affairs relies. The level of awareness is established, good practices related to the teaching of copyright literacy in the media are discovered, trends in intellectual property training, and in particular copyright and related rights, are identified as a basis for the creation of educational content related to the studied topics. The architectural process provides sound and effective management of the findings, conclusions and recommendations [19]. All this is necessary for the creation and functioning of the new educational model, in which mission, strategy, and rules are fundamental. And analysis is a key factor resulting in fixing the relevance of the study, as well as the interaction between the different components of the chain under study. The goals and objectives of the new educational model are specified.

Accordingly, feedback is being implemented to synchronize educational needs with the implementation of information and media literacy and intellectual property in the media in a university environment, identifying key factors for the success of the created new discipline and training course in higher education and planning initiatives for development in the future.

It is important for every media user to acquire the ability to recognize disinformation from false information and to sift out fake news from the truth. With the definition of "fake news" is also called factual errors in journalistic material and sensational news, but also consciously published false information for the purpose of manipulating people. All this is happening on the Internet, where useful knowledge is right next to a lie. Today, any user could be a reporter, i.e. to create content and to share freely. Therefore, the dissemination of any information is a matter of personal responsibility to both the person who publishes it and the one who consumes it. [16]

The step from reasonableness to unhealthy curiosity is just one click away. Especially when the title contains emotional words and expressions that attract attention, or fictitious information is hidden behind terms such as "world-renowned scientists", "experts in the field", "researchers", "world media", "familiar". That is why it is so imperative for students to be competent in the discovery and proofing of information, verifying it from independent sources, until everyone finds their trusted source. And last

but not least the most important and valuable is the critical thinking of everyone based on the knowledge of research issues, to have a thinking and debate.

The aim of intellectual property literacy courses in the media is to provoke students to think critically about what they hear and see – from a conversation between two people to top news stories in the media stream. Work is needed to effectively filter information in our media-rich environment, which takes time and skills. A study by EAVI, the European Association for Viewers Interests, an international non-profit organization registered in Brussels which advocates media literacy and full citizenship, shows that the more content we consume, the more our ability to make credibility decisions is impaired. And today, 80% of people live online. [19]

EAVI identifies 10 types of potentially misleading news, though it makes the point that there are two types of news: true and false. [11] Of course, none of the ten species can be considered in isolation from the rest. Propaganda, conspiracy pseudo theories lure the audience into clicking. Money and power, as well as climate change, health problems, diets, serve as motivation. Depending on the levels of impact, some users think of conspiracy theories as fun, but others believe unquestionably. That is why a healthy discussion among young people at the university is important. They need to know that journalism should always check, to ask the question: is it true? Because news based on untested facts or are a result of negligence, do not deserve respect, but they could also be deliberately created and therefore deceptive. There are also computer programs that use artificial intelligence to discredit people, nourish populist rhetoric, and increase web toxicity. They are not the object of this research because they do not meet the journalism standards that students need to master in their education. And to be prepared to make effective and correct decisions on the basis of critical thinking, which, according to Peter A. Facione, PhD, in "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts" [12] includes: Curiosity; desire to know; caution; trust; confidence; openness to a different worldview; flexibility in alternative opinions; understanding the opinions of others; impartiality in the assessment of disputes; recognizing and honestly opposing one's own prejudices, stereotypes and self-centered tendencies; prudence; willingness to review the views; when it involves honest reflection.

4 RESULTS

Today's media content consumer is increasingly challenged when it comes to assessing the credibility of the news. Journalists have their own practical issues that are not covered by this paper. But they are required, as professionals, to reflect potentially useful and accurate information.

Charlie Beckett, journalist, media expert and lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), believes that "journalism is making a huge effort these days to explain the world around us, but often forgets its true mission: to understand." [4] I.e. it is no coincidence that a television news viewer, radio listener, or online media reader, is often disturbed and quite confused. Comments on hot issues and various topics of the day are gaining in popularity, attracting interest and generating traffic, but often they are flooded within a sea of fake news and poor journalism. Traditional print media are an alternative where the truth triumphs, but their circulation stacks up with each passing day. And the new media does not rely on communication with its audience, and this is proving to be a problem in the modern world. This is the place to raise the issue of paying for information, copyright for media content authors, and decent consumer behaviour in relation to the work done by journalists. Beckett is adamant: "Journalism first has to convince the public that it is relevant and useful. It must make the case that it knows what is really going on. Only then has it got the right to present the bill."

In this way, media and information literacy training, in particular copyright literacy in the media, should focus on understanding, better listening and promoting more ingenuity and imagination about the media product being created, as well as objectivity, impartiality, human values and normal communication between people.

In May 2018, Facebook launched its own campaign and published its own strategy against fake news [10]. This plan consists of three points: Removing accounts and content that violate rules or advertising policies; Reduce the spread of untrue news and content like clickbait; Informing. In other words, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg relies on people and technology to combat fake news.

People today receive information through mobile applications, chat, social networks and sometimes from traditional media, blogs, print editions. Many of them, especially young people, do not wonder whether there is a difference between authoritative professional journalism and amateur reporting, not to mention disinformation. In other words, the user does not rely on the social network, does not rely

on the Google filter and does not consume the information encountered there, and build their own criteria for sifting the information that falls into his mobile device. As a result of the educational courses in intellectual property and information literacy in the media, students will be able to distinguish facts from fiction, determine the legitimacy of publishing in media stories, know the methods of creating faithful content and true presenting the reality, use the language of truth. There will be built individuals who are competent in handling information and communication and will know its importance in the sea of disinformation, falsehood, distortions covered as news. This will lighten / soften the blow of disinformation, fake news, false information, misleading material, and users will be taught to perceive every bit of content with great scepticism. [20]

Libraries can also be involved in the formation of media literacy in seeking and evaluating information as a resource in the learning process to prevent the negative impact of fraudulent news, lies. [17] As Rouba El Helou-Sensenig, a media researcher at the Notre Dame University-Louaize [13] says: *"The constant battles of teachers, journalists, university teachers are to teach people the skills to decode different messages.*" But already learned, they will question every issue in the search for a balance between trust and suspicion, display a healthy scepticism in regard the reliability of all information across the spectrum of media – in papers, messages, news feeds, photos, videos, audio content, information graphics and statistics.

5   CONCLUSIONS

Good journalism seeks to separate the reliable information from lies and mostly the outspoken propaganda, present facts and evidence, not manipulations. Today, it faces a new challenge – to teach its readers, media content users, to value it properly. In this way, "unpacking" the media content signs in journalism are revealed, interpreted the elements in the questions of who, what, where, when, how, why, consumers become specialists in finding expert opinions from authoritative sources, strengths and weaknesses of the media today. In other words, dealing with the negative effects of fake news is in the "return to the main things" approach, restoring public trust and confidence in the media as guardians of information – challenges in the new era of innovation, technical achievements. The experts are adamant: people have to be taught how to think critically about the flow of information they are facing in our digital age. [14] And while everything on the Web is subject to immediate reaction, the processes of dealing with fake news, disinformation, false news and its consequences are a matter of long-term strategy and systematic implementation of educational approaches as a kind of vaccine against the fake in the media.

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