



Media and information literacy

A practical guidebook for trainers

Supported by the



Imprint

PUBLISHER
Deutsche Welle
53110 Bonn
Germany

RESPONSIBLE
Carsten von Nahmen

EDITOR
Kyle James

AUTHORS
Sylvia Braesel
Thorsten Karg

LAYOUT
Jorge Loureiro

PUBLISHED
January 2021
Third edition

© DW Akademie



PHOTO CREDITS

110 (left), 113 (Portraits), 119–121, 157, 159, 166–167: ©Sylvia Braesel

110 (center and right), 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 168–173: ©Thorsten Karg

113: ©Zottelbilder (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0); ©peasap (CC BY 2.0); ©najeebkhan2009 (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

115 (Flowers): ©Fir0002/Flagstaffotos (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jonquil_flowers_at_f5.jpg);
(commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jonquil_flowers_at_f32.jpg)

The background is a vibrant blue gradient. It features several decorative elements: a yellow circle with diagonal lines in the top right, a pink circle outline on the right side, and a yellow circle outline with pink diagonal lines in the bottom left. There are also various shades of blue and yellow lines and dots scattered across the page.

2. Information and topics

You can download the guidelines and worksheets from this chapter here:
[dw.com/en/media-and-information-literacy-a-practical-guidebook-for-trainers-third-edition/a-56192371](https://www.dw.com/en/media-and-information-literacy-a-practical-guidebook-for-trainers-third-edition/a-56192371)

Terms and phrases used in this guidebook

As you read this guidebook, you will repeatedly encounter some key terms and categories of material:



ESSENTIALS Learning objectives that provide an indication of what trainees should know or be able to do at the end of a training segment, as well as a proposed training schedule.



INTRODUCTION Initial part of the proposed training schedule for each chapter. Designed to familiarize trainees with key terms and issues.



EXERCISE Practical application of knowledge. Exercises help trainees practice skills and process or test what they have just learned.



OUTPUT Creation of a media-related product, such as an interview, photo story, or presentation. An output at the end of a training segment helps trainees summarize the newly learned skills and knowledge and draw conclusions for every-day life.



ENERGIZERS There are group energizers at the beginning of the book that are not directly connected to individual topics. These activities are meant to help trainees relax, laugh, and have fun between more serious training modules.



TOPIC GAMES Energizing games at the beginning of each chapter in the guidebook which are directly connected to the chapter's content and will introduce trainees to the individual topics in a playful way. After playing these games, trainers should make sure trainees see the connection between the game and the media-related topic of that chapter.



WORKSHEETS Handouts, questionnaires, and forms trainers can download and print or photocopy to distribute to trainees. Worksheets help trainees explore topics, practice skills, and build new knowledge.



GUIDELINES Tips and instructions for trainers teaching this topic or conducting the proposed exercises. Trainers can also download and print or photocopy them as handouts for trainees.



CERTIFICATE Incentive for trainees after completing a training segment. An example can be seen in chapter 6 "Internet and social media". Trainers can use this example or create different certificates for their own purposes.

What is information?

Information is anything that informs. It includes such things as knowledge gotten through research or investigation, factual data, or instructions. Information should be timely, accurate, relevant, and increase understanding. Journalists work with information. They analyze and verify it and write it in language that is easy to understand to present their audience with a balanced perspective on a story.

What is an information source?

An information source provides information. Documents, speeches, videos, websites, photographs, and people are all examples of information sources, as are media like newspapers and radio shows. Individual sources of information that journalists might use in researching a story are rarely completely neutral. That's why it is important that the journalist considers where the information is coming from, why it is being shared, and to what extent the information source can be trusted. Because of this, most journalists work with the "two source" principle to check the authenticity of the information they are dealing with. If two sources that are independent of each other provide the same information, it is more likely that the information is true.

When considering the neutrality of media as information sources, it is helpful to look at who provides the information and who owns and controls the media outlet. Is it owned by an entrepreneur, a government, a private company, or is it independent? The owners of private media outlets often have an agenda, such as promoting a political opinion. An independent media outlet can also have its own agenda, such as supporting a political opinion that contrasts with the government's point of view. It can also be useful to consider what motivates an information source. Is the source interested in making money, in pushing through an agenda, or in informing the public?

The rise of social media has made the information landscape more complicated. Social media platforms can be sources of quality information, but also full of disinformation: rumors, lies, hoaxes, propaganda, and clickbait. Users are confronted with a mix of high and low-quality information in their newsfeeds and must individually determine the truthfulness of every post. For this they need basic knowledge about how the platforms work and how to judge if a post is likely to be true or not.

What is news? What is the difference between news and information?

The word news comes from the word "new". News is information that is new, important, and relevant or interesting to a specific audience. The information on social media comes from

a variety of sources: private individuals, groups, professional media organizations, to name just a few. Each of these has a different idea of what is newsworthy and the quality of what they post may differ widely.

In professional journalism, what counts as news depends on various factors, such as the time and location where something happened, the target audience, and an editor or reporter's judgment. The robbery of a shop in a small village, for instance, is important news for a local newspaper because it is relevant to the local community. But the same story is unlikely to be considered newsworthy by the national press or by a reporter in a different country.

What questions should news answer?

News in professional media outlets should inform the audience about **what** happened, **when** and **where** it happened, and **who** was involved. A good news article will also provide information about **how** and **why** something happened. When looking for the answers to these questions, consumers should keep in mind that the answers and the way the news is written might not be neutral. For example, different reporters might have different ideas about why something happened, depending on factors like their political opinions, upbringing, circle of friends, etc. They may also come up with different answers to the key questions depending on whom they interviewed for their news story or how thoroughly they did their research. Good journalists will try to report neutrally and present the different sides of a story. But no one, even the best journalists, is completely neutral. The same piece of information is often seen differently by different people, and can be interpreted or presented in various ways. Media messages reflect the values and points of view of media makers.

What are the ethical standards of journalism?

Journalists are responsible for the accuracy of their work. They must conduct research and consult various sources to verify their story. Journalists also need to be objective when reporting news and should report the facts in a neutral way. It is important that they inform their readers about where they got their information by attributing it to sources or witnesses, for example. This makes their work more transparent and credible. It allows the audience to form its own opinion by seeing where the information came from. Journalists should also strive to present information in a way that their audience will understand. They should avoid using words that sensationalize or evoke strong emotions. They should rather use neutral, factual, clear language. Finally, journalists must think about the effects of their reporting: what will the consequences be for their sources or the people they quote? What feelings or reactions will their writing provoke?

Why is it important for me to be informed?

Being informed about what is happening in your community, your country, and the world is important for understanding society. It also enables you to understand how what happens in other parts of the world can affect you personally. For instance, if there is a bad harvest in one country, the price of certain foods could also increase in your country as people scramble for goods. People who are informed can better identify problems in their societies and take steps to solve them.

How can I become well informed?

There are many ways to become informed. Reading newspapers and news websites, listening to news on the radio, or watching it on TV are all good ways to stay informed about current affairs. It can be a good idea to look at news on a few different media outlets since they will report differently on some news stories. Or one outlet may choose to include news stories that others have ignored. You can also get informed by talking to people and reading posts on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. This will give you an idea of what other people think about what is happening in the news. However, trying to stay informed through social media can be difficult because the platforms contain a lot of false information, rumors, and hearsay. Much of the information on social media comes not from professional journalists, who are trained to fact-check and report objectively, but from individuals who are not trained as reporters.

The job of journalists is to report on significant events. They don't cover a story because they are personally affected or highly emotional about it. Rather, they cover it because they have been trained to understand what topics are relevant for the individual or society. Social media users, however, often spread information for very personal reasons. They might feel very strongly about an issue, even be outraged about it. They could be looking for acknowledgement from others or they might post or share information because they think it will produce a strong reaction or be widely shared. Surprising, sensationalized information often spreads fast and furiously on social media. So, when trying to stay informed, always consider the information source and think about the motivations of the media maker. Do you think you are dealing with facts, personal opinions, or a mixture of both?

What is misinformation, disinformation and, malinformation?

When speaking about false or harmful information, we can be more accurate if we use the terms misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. UNESCO and many others have appealed to journalists, policy makers, and citizens to use these

three terms instead of "fake news". UNESCO avoids "fake news" because the expression has become politicized. Some people in power are using it to discredit the news industry and undermine reporting that they don't like (see below).

Misinformation and disinformation are nothing new, but they have taken on a new dimension in the era of social media. Throughout history, media have always occasionally reported incorrect information. Sometimes this happened because the journalists made honest mistakes in their research or writing. They are only human after all. We call this misinformation: information that is false, but not intended to cause harm.

Sometimes, however, media, interest groups, and individual social media users aim to manipulate their audience through the spreading of disinformation. They deliberately create one-sided stories, false facts, or half-truths for political, financial, or ideological reasons. Sometimes they also put true facts into the wrong context to create a false impression. Producers of disinformation may want to influence public opinion on certain issues to create public pressure. In other cases, the aim can be to influence people's opinion about a political party or candidate and change the way they vote.

Another form of harmful information is so-called malinformation. This is information that may be true and factual, but that is used to inflict harm on a person, organization, or country. For instance, secret diplomatic documents exchanged between a government and its embassies abroad might be leaked, which can have negative consequences for the government and others. Other forms of malinformation published in order to do harm are hate speech and online harassment.

Social media contains a great deal of mis-, dis- and malinformation, and newsfeeds are generally a mix of high and low-quality information. It often is hard to tell at first which is which. On social media, we must decide for each individual story whether it is quality information or if it falls into the mis-, dis- or malinformation categories. This phenomenon of an unstructured, chaotic supply of information is called information disorder.

Why should we avoid the term "fake news"?

A few years ago, the term "fake news" was a neutral term to describe any kind of made-up or misleading information, especially on social media. Collins Dictionary defined it as "false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting". It encompassed everything from sloppy journalism to satire, hoaxes, clickbait, propaganda, and biased news. In recent years, however, the term has come to mean different things to different people. Some politicians use the term to discredit any kind of information they do not approve of. Former U.S. President Donald Trump, for instance, has called media that are critical of his presidency or any story he does not

like “fake news”. He and many of his supporters see a systematic left-wing bias in the media. Trump includes media organizations like the New York Times, the Washington Post, and CNN in his “fake news” categories. Consequently, trust in these institutions among his followers has fallen.

Politicians in many other countries have followed Trump’s example. They have categorized critical reporting exposing misuse of power or corruption as “fake news”, even using it to justify censorship laws.

Increasingly, the term is being used as a weapon to undermine democratic institutions and independent journalism. It splits societies and therefore, we should avoid it.

Why does disinformation spread so quickly on social media?

In the age of social media, publishing information is not limited to trained professionals. Anyone can post and comment on anything. There are neither fact-checkers nor editors to verify whether a story is true and whether it is ethical to publish it. So, in addition to useful and accurate information, there are a lot of rumors, hearsay, lies, half-truths, satire, and hate speech. People hear something, get emotionally charged or involved, and decide to vent their anger or express their joy by immediately posting or sharing. They often publish or share before checking whether the information is true, having been driven by their hearts, not their heads, to make something public. When other social media users see these highly emotional or sensational stories, they can also get an emotional charge and immediately share the content or comment on it. As emotions build, those comments can become more and more radical.

The more interaction a story or post gets, the more “weight” the social network gives it, meaning it is much more likely to appear on users’ timelines. So, one small false story or allegation with an effective emotional trigger can quickly go viral. It can become an avalanche that buries the truth beneath it.

Some people who are aware of these mechanisms deliberately produce disinformation to make money. They create websites for stories that they know people will get worked up about, comment on, and share. The more exposure these stories get, the higher the revenue is from online advertisements placed on these websites and the more money the creators of the disinformation make.

How do I analyze news written by professional journalists?

As a media consumer, it is important to be able to distinguish between different kinds of content, to understand the differ-

ence between an editorial, for example, and a news article. Editorials express the opinion of an individual, often a journalist or editor, and usually include news and facts to make their case. Professional media clearly separate editorials from news journalism and identify them as opinion pieces so the audience does not get confused. News articles should not include the opinions of journalists or editors. So, when analyzing news, consider whether it is neutral or contains opinion, who wrote the piece, why they are sharing the information, and what might other people think of it. Does it include two sides of the story? Is the audience free to form an opinion after hearing the different sides? Or is the journalist suggesting one way to interpret the facts?

Sometimes what is not reported can be an indicator of manipulation. What stories are not covered? What voices are left out? Another sign of manipulation or biased reporting can be how much time and space the medium gives a certain topic: does the time and space reflect the relevance of the story, or are the media exaggerating the importance of one topic to divert attention from other issues?

What is a topic?

Any subject or issue can be a topic for journalists or social media users to report on. Professional journalists often specialize on specific topic areas that particularly interest them, such as culture, sports, or the environment. Over time, they accumulate expert knowledge in these fields and know where to go to find interesting news in these areas. It is their job to find out whether a certain topic is or is not relevant at a particular time and for a particular media outlet. Topics can become good stories because they are new or contain new facts or ideas that are relevant to media users. Many topics are regularly reported on because they are always of interest to audiences, such as politics, weather, traffic, and crime.

What topics can I find in the news?

Mainstream media outlets (those that don’t specialize in a certain area or produce for a specific target audience) usually cover topic areas like politics, business, culture, and sports. News stories can come from any of these areas, but some topics make the news more often than others. Media makers decide which topics are newsworthy by considering so-called news values.

What are news values?

News must be new, relevant, and interesting. News values are a set of criteria media makers use to determine how important or newsworthy a story is. They can help journalists decide how to report on a topic—for example whether it is so important

that it should fill the front page of a newspaper, or whether it is of lesser relevance and be presented in a smaller column on a page further back in the paper. There are some general news values that help media makers determine how newsworthy a story is. However, individual media also have their own specific news values tailored to their audiences.

- **Timeliness:** Did the story or event just happen? Is it new? Whether a story is new also depends on how often the media outlet is published or broadcast. Media like radio, TV, and websites can update stories live and around the clock. Other media, like newspapers or magazines, only publish once a day or once a week or month. For a weekly medium, a story that happened three days ago may still be timely, whereas media publishing more frequently will consider it old news.
- **Proximity:** Events happening close to the target audience are often the most important to them. A fire or an accident that happened in a nearby town is usually more relevant to the target audience than a conflict or political crisis on the other side of the world.
- **Impact:** The more people are affected, the more important the story is. That's why wars and natural disasters like floods, droughts, and earthquakes are usually big news stories.
- **Consequences:** Events that have an impact on a large number of people or cause other significant events are newsworthy.
- **Conflict:** Conflicts and disagreements disrupt our everyday lives. They often have far-reaching consequences and a major impact. They are often considered newsworthy.
- **Prominence:** Stories involving names that are well-known are newsworthy. Prominence can relate to famous people like politicians or celebrities, but also to well-known companies, like Microsoft, Mercedes, or Mitsubishi.
- **Novelty:** Surprising and unusual stories are interesting because they are out of the ordinary. "Dog bites man" isn't a news story, but "man bites dog" could very well be.
- **Human interest:** People are interested in people and stories they can relate to on a personal level. This can help make stories newsworthy even if they lack some of the other news values.

What is agenda setting?

Agenda setting refers to the way the media affect public opinion and the public's perception of what is important. Media makers try to inform the public about what is going on. But media don't just reflect reality, they also filter it and make decisions about what topics, events and stories they will report on and what they will leave out. Media makers also decide how they will cover topics or individual stories. Do they make a story front-page news or bury it in the back? Do they add a picture or a sensational headline?

Their judgements influence what importance their audience attaches to a topic and how they view an issue. If the audience sees that a certain topic is frequently reported on and in a prom-

inent position, they will consider the topic important. The audience will adopt the agenda that journalists set as their own.

What is human interest?

Human interest refers to the aspect of a story that allows the reader, listener, or viewer to relate to the people involved. A human-interest story focuses on people, their experiences, and emotions in a way that the audience can identify with. Human-interest stories are often about ordinary people who experience something out of the ordinary—for instance, winning the lottery, finding long-lost siblings, or experiencing extreme spells of bad luck. The audience can relate to the drama or joy of these stories. Human-interest stories are often the ones that people remember and talk about more than items from a news bulletin or program.

What topics am I missing in the news?

Media makers choose which topics to report on and how to report on them by considering what is relevant and interesting for their audience. But some topics are not reported on as much as others. Sometimes this is because editorial decision-makers fail to see their relevance. If the editorial team is mostly made up of men, for instance, they might not include as many topics relevant to women as female editors would. Sometimes topics fail to make the headlines for other reasons: journalists might be afraid to report on certain political issues because they fear it could put them in danger. In other cases, they might be under pressure or even receive bribes not to cover certain stories. To some extent, social media have been able to fill a gap here: they offer a platform to voices which might otherwise remain silent or be overheard.

What are my topics?

Like journalists, average media users also have certain topics that interest them more than others. What topics, pages, or YouTube channels do you subscribe to on social media? What websites do you go to regularly? Or which sections of the newspaper do you read first: sports, culture, politics, business? Many media outlets, such as magazines, blogs, and TV programs, are created to focus on certain topics. But media makers also think about other factors when considering topics that are relevant to their audience, such as where their readers, listeners, or viewers live, or how old they are. Media makers usually try to identify the topics that are relevant and interesting to a large part of their audience. However, this may mean that established media neglect topics that are only relevant to a small segment of the audience.

On social media, users influence the choice of topics they see on their newsfeed by who they are friends with or what pages they

subscribe to. If they “like” certain topics or kinds of information, or engage by commenting or sharing social media posts, platforms like Facebook register this, interpreting it as special interest in those topics. The platform will then deliver more of these kinds of stories to the user while hiding others. The results of this can be a so-called “filter bubble,” where users only see posts about similar issues or with similar points of view and are not exposed to different opinions and perspectives.

How can I find my topics in the media?

Media makers are always on the lookout for interesting stories. If you are interested in a topic that is not being covered by the professional media, consider whether it meets any of the criteria from the general news values. If not, why not? How can you make your topic relevant? If the topic does have many of the factors that make it newsworthy, it might be worth posting it on social media or suggesting it to professional media makers. If you want to report on a topic, cover it in a way that emphasizes the news values to ensure it is relevant to others. Perhaps you can place your story in a local media outlet. The more established national media outlets usually keep close track of what local or regional media cover, and if a local story gets a lot of coverage or response, it gradually becomes interesting to bigger media outlets. The same is true for social media: if you post about your topic or story on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube, it may catch on, be shared, and gain a wider audience. In the end, even the established media may pick it up.

What is important to know when writing news?

News stories should have the most important information at the very beginning. Background information should come later in the story, after the most important questions—**who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why** and **how**—have been addressed.

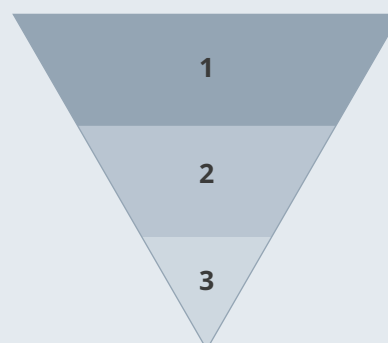
News stories should be clear and factual. They often contain quotations from people who were present at the event (eye-witnesses and those directly involved). News stories also often include statements or reactions from experts or stakeholders, who give their take on the event or issue. If these statements reflect all sides of the topic, the audience can form their own opinion about who they agree with. News stories should not contain the opinion of the journalist. Journalists report the facts but should be very careful with interpreting them and voicing their own opinion so as not to manipulate their audience.

What is important to know when conducting an interview?

Research the person you will be interviewing as well as the topic you want to ask them about. Define the goal of your interview in one sentence. This will help focus your interview and ensure that your questions are relevant. Come up with some short, clear questions so your interviewee will understand what you want to know. Use mostly open questions, questions that cannot be answered with just a “yes” or “no.” Instead, use “how” or “why” questions to elicit longer answers from your interviewee. It helps to have the most central questions prepared in advance but you should stay flexible when conducting the interview. Always listen carefully and repeat or rephrase a question if your interviewee has not answered it properly or ask a follow-up question if they have said something interesting or unexpected and you want to know more. If you do not understand an answer or find it unclear, always try to clarify. As far as the atmosphere of the interview is concerned, it is vital to make your interviewee feel comfortable and ensure that he or she feels taken seriously—otherwise they will not give you good answers.

The inverted pyramid is a popular model for news writing

1. Most important or interesting information: the lead should answer the questions **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why**, and **how**.
2. Details or additional information that explains the lead. Sometimes **why** and **how** are answered here, instead of in the lead.
3. Supporting information: context and background.





ESSENTIALS

Learning objectives

Knowledge

All media messages are constructed using creative language with its own rules; the same media message can be interpreted differently by different people at different times; individual interpretations can be connected to values, lifestyles, and points of view; media organizations may have embedded values, agendas, and points of view; many media messages are produced to make a profit or gain power.

Skills

Experiencing the role of news editor; defining factors that go into news judgment; exploring the constructed nature of news media; becoming aware of the way subjective choices influence the news that gets reported; analyzing, reflecting, discussing, expressing an opinion; analyzing different viewpoints; online research; pair and group work; active media work; interviewing; presenting.

Schedule

As a trainer, you can choose from a variety of topics, specific approaches, and training methods for educating young people in MIL and training important skills. Before you choose, reflect on the learning objectives you want to achieve, the time available for training, and trainees' prior knowledge and motivation.

This collection of materials offers a range of exercises and worksheets to complement your training sessions. Feel free to choose the exercises you consider suitable and adapt them for your trainees. The exercises are divided into an introductory exercise, practical exercises, and an output exercise.

INTRODUCTION | 1 HOUR

Word of mouth

Have fun passing on information and seeing how it changes.

EXERCISE | 3 HOURS

Up to date? Information sources

Reflecting on personal information channels and examining the quality and objectivity of different sources of information; online research for alternative sources of information.

EXERCISE | 2 HOURS

Wall newspaper—headlines

Exploring typical media topics and reflecting on the text and the subtext. What topics are missing? What topics are unusual? What topics are important to me? Creating different wall newspapers with headlines.

EXERCISE | 2 + 2 HOURS

Editorial meeting and news

Exploring and evaluating different categories of news in the media; researching and organizing news reports; decision-making in editorial meetings; training journalistic skills.

OUTPUT | 1 HOUR

Presenting my topic



TOPIC GAMES

Information and topics

INFORMATION: CREDIBILITY

“Truth or tall tale?”

This game raises awareness that the information someone presents isn't always the truth. Ask trainees to write down two truths and one lie about themselves. Everyone then presents the three “facts” to the rest of the group. The group tries to guess which “fact” is a lie. Afterwards, reflect with the group on approaches that help distinguish between truths and lies.

INVESTIGATION: ASKING QUESTIONS

“Find the person”

Give each trainee three to five small slips of paper and ask them to write something about themselves on each piece of paper (e.g. “I have a brother named Jules.” “My favorite movie is Avatar.”) These facts should be specific, such as the brothers' names instead of “I have three brothers.” When everybody has finished, trainees fold their slips and place them in a hat.

trainees then pick out the same number of slips as they put in, taking care not to pick their own. Each trainee then has to find the people who wrote the slips in their possession by asking good questions. Each time they find a person, the trainee should ask additional open questions to learn more. The group then reflects on the information they have learned about each other.

INVESTIGATION: TYPES OF QUESTIONS

“Who am I?”

This game trains the skill of asking questions and motivates trainees to investigate. Have trainees divide into two groups and form competing journalist teams. Each group chooses a famous person or figure, writes the name down, and designates one member to represent that person, who then steps out of the group. Now, each group has to investigate the identity of the unknown person from the other group by asking yes or no questions. One group starts and is allowed to ask questions as long as they get a “yes” answer. If the answer is “no,” the other group begins asking questions. The first group to identify the famous person is the winner. Encourage reflection on “closed, yes-or-no questions,” how hard they make it to investigate, and how much easier the game would be if open questions were allowed. Have the groups play again with open questions, alternating after each question. Groups are not allowed to ask the person's name. Then compare the investigations from both games with the group.

TELLING STORIES: CREATIVITY

“Fortunately, unfortunately”

This is a storytelling game. With a ball in your hand, begin a story using “fortunately” or “unfortunately,” then toss the ball to a trainee who has to continue the story. Each trainee must add a phrase or a sentence and flip the central characteristic of the story. If one sentence begins with “fortunately,” for example, the next has to continue with “unfortunately.” “Fortunately, the farmer had a horse.” “Unfortunately, the horse was wild.” “Fortunately, the farmer's son could tame wild horses.” “Unfortunately, he fell down and broke his leg.” “Fortunately, that meant he had more time to read books.” And so on.

INFORMATION: BASIC COMPONENTS

“Report on information”

This energizer calls on trainees to creatively develop information based on their awareness of the basic components of information. Have all trainees form a circle and ask them to come up with and report on a piece of fictional information. Remind them that information should contain the answers to the questions who, what, when, where, why and how. These questions can be written on cards and placed in the middle of the circle.

The first person in the circle sets the topic (sports, politics, economy, health, entertainment, weather) and the next person starts the “reporting” by saying a word or a whole sentence about the topic. The next person continues the report where their neighbor left off and so on, until the report is complete. Reflect on the questions and have the group try again with a different topic.



INTRODUCTION

Word of mouth

Targets	Introducing and defining the concept of information; finding attributes; having fun exchanging information; examining what gets lost when messages get more complex; the structure and speed of information exchange
Duration	1 hour
Preparation	Download and print or copy the worksheet
Materials	"Word of mouth" worksheet, index cards, tape, pens
Methods	Group work, competition, open discussion
Technology	—

DEFINING INFORMATION | 20 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

Welcome trainees and ask them to describe the word "information" and think of adjectives they associate with information (personal, public, official, important, useless, etc.) Write the adjectives down on index cards and pin or tape them to a wall.

Discuss the question:

- How important is it for me to have access to information and why?

TASK: WORD OF MOUTH GAME | 20 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP, COMPETITION

Explain how the game works. trainees practice it, exchanging different kinds of information. Use either the information given in the worksheet or have trainees prepare their own information.

Standard: Have trainees stand behind each other in a circle and cover their ears. The sender chooses a message and delivers it by whispering it into the next person's ear. After the information has gone full circle, the groups compare the original and the final delivered message. The circle is mixed and reformed after each round.

Variations: (1) Play loud music to distract trainees while they pass on the message. (2) Speed up the game as fast as possible and use a stopwatch (smartphone) to compare times. (3) Have trainees form two rows. Both rows try to pass on the same message. Which group is fastest? Assess how accurate the information is at the end and keep score.

DISCUSSION | 20 MIN., OPEN DISCUSSION

After trainees have sent and received a handful of messages, open a discussion about their experience. Ask leading questions such as:

- What was easy, what was difficult for you?
- How did the type and complexity of the message impact the accuracy of delivery?
- How did the pressure of speed and loud music influence things?
- What conclusions can you draw about everyday information from the game?



WORKSHEET

Word of mouth (blank)

TASK

Write a piece of information that you want to pass on in each square. It can be a name, a sentence, a tongue twister, or an interesting fact. Vary the length, complexity, and how emotional or personal the information is. Cut out and fold the slips of paper in half and let the trainees pick the information they'll quietly tell someone else.





WORKSHEET

Word of mouth

TASK

Cut out and fold the slips of paper in half and let the trainees pick the information they'll quietly tell someone else.



Chilean earthquake characteristics do not meet conditions necessary to generate a tsunami.

Protesters burned an American flag in front of the U.S. Embassy yesterday.

The nation grieves for five children who died in a traffic accident while on their way to school.

Youth should be in touch with their cultural roots.

Unbelievable! Justin Bieber lost 12 kilos in 15 days after he changed his diet completely.

Color of the Year: Blue.
Click here to buy the latest blue jeans!

Facebook has more than 2 billion users all over the world. Each user profile is worth money.

Teachers' salaries should be high enough so they aren't tempted to accept bribes.

In December 2004, a tsunami killed thousands in Southeast Asia.



EXERCISE

Up to date? Information sources

Targets	Introducing and defining the concept of information; finding attributes; having fun exchanging information; examining what gets lost when messages get more complex; the structure and speed of information exchange
Duration	1 hour
Preparation	Download and print or copy the worksheet
Materials	“Weighing information” guidelines, “Weighing information: quality criteria”, “Channels of information” 1-6, “Preparing a press conference” worksheets, index cards, tape, pens
Methods	Group work, competition, open discussion
Technology	—

CHANNELS OF INFORMATION | 15 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

Ask trainees about the channel(s) of information they use for current affairs. Write them down on index cards, adding the number of trainees who use a particular channel to the card, and pin or tape them to a wall. If you like, ask trainees to think of other ways to get information on current affairs. Write these down as well and pin or tape the cards to the wall. Have trainees consider the question: “Who provides us with this information?” Work with trainees to develop a general overview of the sources of information.

Radio	Social media and blogs
Television	Internet/websites
Newspapers/magazines	Talking to people

TASK: QUALITY OF INFORMATION | 30 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

Transition to the next topic by asking, “How can we judge the

quality of information?” Ask trainees to evaluate different criteria concerning the quality of information using the “Weighing information” guidelines and corresponding worksheet.

TASK: UP TO DATE? GET INFORMED | 90 MIN., GROUP WORK, COMPLETING A RESEARCH CIRCUIT

Ask trainees to do online research and examine some examples of different sources of information as discussed in step 1. trainees then divide into subgroups and work through a research circuit of online stations, each representing one source of information. Before you begin, put a list of links to examples at each station, and give each group worksheets for all six stations. trainees have 15 minutes to do their research and fill out the worksheet for that station before moving on to the next one. Each group assesses each information source to get to know and reflect on the wide range of possible sources for gathering information.

PRESS CONFERENCE | 45 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

trainees discuss the results and experience of their research and reflect these in a “press conference”. For this role-play, each group chooses an information source to represent:

Radio	Social media and blogs
Television	Internet/websites
Newspapers/magazines	Talking to people

Explain that all the groups will take turns being journalists who ask questions, and being representatives of their information source. To prepare, each group develops questions they will ask the representatives of other information sources in their role as journalists. They also prepare data for responding to the journalists’ questions in their second role as representatives of their own information source. The worksheet can be helpful here. Walk around as the groups work, offering individual support, encouraging trainees to ask questions and be persistent in asking follow-up questions if the initial answer is not satisfactory.

Everyone then helps set up the room for a press conference. The first group takes the podium, ready to answer the journalists’ questions. Act as the press conference host, giving the opening remarks, introducing the respective groups, and deciding when to end each conference. The groups then switch roles.



GUIDELINES

Weighing information

The “weighing information” method helps raise awareness for the quality of information. It makes trainees think about what quality criteria are important to them when dealing with information.

PREPARATION

Divide the classroom itself into three sections, marked 1, 2, and 3. Explain that each section represents an opinion regarding a criterion for information quality:

1. I consider this somewhat important.

2. I consider this very important.

3. I consider this essential.

You can use the criteria mentioned in the following worksheet, have the trainees think of other quality criteria, or use a combination of both.



WORKSHEET

Weighing information: Quality criteria

TASK

Read the quality criteria aloud. If you prefer to have trainees read the criteria aloud, cut out slips of paper or use cards for the different criteria, fold them in half and let trainees draw the one they will read.

Once a quality criterion is read aloud, trainees decide how important it is to them personally. They rate each criterion by physically going to section 1, 2, or 3 of the room.

On individual index cards, write down a key word for each criterion and the number of points it received, and pin or tape the cards to the wall.

Add up the points for each criterion (i.e. the number of trainees in that section) to show how important this criterion is to the group.

The group then briefly reflects on and discusses the various ratings and the degree of personal importance:

- Why did you rate this quality criterion the way you did?
- Can you give an example from national media to support your rating?

At the end, sort the index cards according to the number of points each criterion received, going from the least important to the most important. If you like, analyze and discuss the results with the group.

The information answers the question:
What has happened to **whom**?

The information answers the question:
Why has something happened?

The information answers the question:
Where has it happened and **when**?

The information answers the question:
What will the **consequences** be?

The information is delivered in **simple** and **comprehensible language**.

The information describes the **reality** as accurately as possible.

The information describes something that has **relevance** for me and my life.

The information refers to a **current event**.

The information cites **reliable sources**.

The information doesn't include **advertising**.

The information doesn't try to **influence** my **point of view**.

The information provides an overview of **several perspectives**.

The information provides an **objective** account of what has happened.

The information doesn't contain **falsehoods** and **prejudices**.



WORKSHEET

Channels of information 1 – radio

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?

**WORKSHEET****Channels of information 2 – television**

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?



WORKSHEET

Channels of information 3 — newspapers/magazines

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?

**WORKSHEET****Channels of information 4 – social media and blogs**

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?



WORKSHEET

Channels of information 5 – internet/websites

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?

**WORKSHEET****Channels of information 6 – talking to people (firsthand)**

Examples: _____

1. What kind of information can you find there?

2. What are typical issues? Mark those that are important to you.

3. How is the information produced?

4. How likely is it that this medium spreads mis-, dis- or malinformation? What would be the reasons?



WORKSHEET

Preparing a press conference

This group represents: _____

TASK

Prepare for the press conference in two steps.

1. Pretend to be journalists and prepare some questions to assess the quality and topics covered by the information sources represented by the other groups.

2. Prepare some answers for when you represent an information source yourself and have to answer questions from the journalists.



EXERCISE

Wall newspaper: Headlines

Targets	Exploring typical media topics; reflecting on topics that are important to the individual trainees; creating a collage; expressing topics that are important to trainees
Duration	2 hours
Preparation	Ask trainees to bring in old newspapers and magazines, bring some yourself as well; download and print or copy worksheet
Materials	Large pieces of paper (e.g. newsprint, kraft paper, flip chart paper), old newspapers and magazines, scissors, glue, pens, "Creating a collage" worksheet
Methods	Group work, presentation, open discussion
Technology	Optional: computer with printer for headlines from the Internet

TYPICAL TOPICS | 10 MIN., GROUP WORK

Ask trainees to choose a headline from a typical story in an old magazine or newspaper, then read their headlines aloud. Summarize the typical topics covered by the mainstream media and transition to the next task.

TASK: CREATING A COLLAGE | 80 MIN., GROUP WORK

Divide trainees into teams of two or three. Each team creates a collage in the form of a wall newspaper that contains only topics and stories that are relevant to the members of that team. They can use the "Creating a collage" worksheet for support. Remind trainees to consider the following questions as they work:

- What topics do you feel strongly about?
- What kind of stories and information would you like the professional media (print, radio, TV) to cover more?
- What topics are missing entirely?

PRESENTING, COMPARING, DISCUSSING THE RESULTS | 30 MIN., OPEN DISCUSSION

Trainees present their collages. The other groups provide feedback and ask questions. Following the final presentation, discuss the following questions with trainees:

- What are the similarities and the differences between the topics the professional media cover and the topics you are interested in?
- Why are some topics not covered by the professional media?
- Where can you find information about the topics you care about?
- How can you introduce these topics into the public discussion and make your voice heard?

If they like, trainees can photograph their collages or wall newspapers and post them on Facebook or Instagram.



EXERCISE

Editorial meeting and news

Targets	Exploring and evaluating typical categories of news in the media; researching and organizing news reports; decision-making in editorial meetings; training journalistic skills
Duration	2 hours + 2 hours
Preparation	Ask trainees to bring in current newspapers and magazines, also bring in some yourself; download and print or copy worksheets
Materials	“News and categories”, “News: brief, initial inquiry”, “Research and news writing” worksheets, “Broadcast structure” guidelines, flip chart
Methods	Group work, input, research, open discussion
Technology	Computer, smart phones (apps for TV/radio), radio (if possible)

**KICK-OFF MEETING |
30 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP, INPUT**

Trainees will act as presenters and journalists for an imaginary new TV channel or YouTube channel. Young people are the target audience of this channel, whose main objective is to provide its audience with high-quality news and information. You are the editor-in-chief who welcomes colleagues to the kickoff meeting. Introduce the tasks by asking these questions:

- What is news and what are its characteristics?
- What conditions must we fulfill to create high-quality news for a young audience?

Focus on news as a media message that communicates information on selected current events. Use examples to explain the terms *information*, *selected*, and *current events* to make sure trainees understand them. The answer to the second question above should contain the keywords *understandable*, *descriptive*, *credible*. It should also express the need for both important topics for a general audience and specific youth-related topics.

- What categories of news should be included in broadcasts?

Either have trainees work alone using the corresponding worksheet or write the categories on a flip chart, such as important events, international affairs, national affairs, politics, economy, entertainment, romance and relationships, society, culture, science, technology, sports, and weather. Then ask trainees to find examples for each category and vote for the importance of broadcasting news and information from each category. Each trainee can vote for a total of five categories to be included in the broadcast. Organize the categories according to the number of votes, selecting the most popular, then compare these to news from real TV channels and discuss trainees' choices. Then, the group picks out what they consider the five to ten most important categories (depending on the number of trainees) when it comes to investigating current events and topics.

**INITIAL INQUIRY INTO TOPICS |
45 MIN., GROUP WORK**

Set the length of time for the news broadcast that all trainees will be working on (e.g. five minutes). To shorten the time needed, all items will take the form of spoken reports (voicers). There should be anywhere from five to ten or more reports, depending on the size of the group. The first step is for each trainee to conduct research into topics and current events for the chosen categories. Split trainees into smaller groups and have each group work on one or more categories. Two different groups can work on the same category (e.g. international events and politics). The aim is to gather information and prepare a brief overview of the events taking place in a particular category. trainees should (if possible) use different sources of information (different TV channels, newspapers, radio broadcasts). The time available should be limited, since news journalists often have to research quickly to remain up-to-date and have their reports ready when the program goes on air. Encourage trainees to “scan” the news, not go into too much detail at this point, and choose events that seem important (using the corresponding worksheet).

While the groups do their research, prepare a flip chart with an empty schedule for the news broadcast. The length of the broadcast and the number of items it contains will depend on the number of trainees.

CHOOSE TOPICS AND STRUCTURE BROADCAST | 45 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP, EDITORIAL MEETING

Each group presents the results of their research in each category, providing the others with a brief overview of the events by answering the following questions:

- Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- This topic is important because ... (e.g. expected consequences)

Write all the topics down on index cards and mark those with the greatest significance. After the groups have presented their topics, discuss the broadcast itself:

- What topics will definitely be part of the broadcast because they are relevant and interesting to young people?
- How much time do we allot for each topic?
- Which topic should be the opener?
- What order should the other topics be broadcast in?
- What else is needed to create an interesting broadcast?

By the end of the meeting, the broadcast should have a clear structure showing the sequence of reports as well as the time allotted to each report (between 15 and 60 seconds).

Reflect on this structure by asking trainees questions like:

- How do you feel about the structure of the broadcast?
- Looking back on the process to this point, what have you learned about how news broadcasts are put together?

Discuss the characteristics of news:

- Journalists mainly use other media (or news agencies) to get information. This is why many media offer the same stories although there are many more stories happening in the world.
- News media cannot cover all topics and categories in a given broadcast.
- Individuals working in the media influence the choice of topics and the way they are reported in the news.
- The opener should be a strong, interesting topic so the channel does not lose its audience.

The decision to offer several different categories of news adds color to the broadcast, but also has disadvantages. For example, if there always has to be a culture story, a sports story or a business story, events of minor importance in these categories might be included just to fulfil the requirement. As a result, there might not be room in the broadcast for important topics from other categories.

INPUT: RESEARCH AND NEWS WRITING | 30 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

To introduce the new tasks, present a very poor example of research and news writing, such as:

A young and inexperienced journalist is on the way to the office and sees a shared message on Facebook. This message alerts the public to stay home because a bank robber with a gun is on the loose and police haven't been able to arrest him. The journalist runs into the office and immediately types the headline:

"Public panics as police fail to protect citizens."

Talk about the journalist's behavior in order to motivate trainees to think about the ethics of journalistic research, writing, and publishing. Write down the essentials of journalistic behavior. Make sure that trainees understand them and can also provide positive and negative examples.

Essentials of news

A journalist is free to use various means of research. These include research interviews, public records, reports by the government, NGOs, and institutes, as well as news reports published by other media like newspapers, radio and television, apps, the Internet, even social networks and blogs.

But: journalists should never rely on just one source. Information must be checked and compared among various sources.

News should never express the journalist's opinion; it should always be objective in describing a fact or event.

News about controversial issues should offer more than one point of view.

News writing should as neutral as possible, avoiding loaded or highly emotional words.

After research on various sources and viewpoints is complete, the information has to be structured and organized.

News consists of two parts: the lead and the body.

- The first part—the lead—provides brief information about an event that has happened, is happening, or is about to happen. This information addresses the main “who, what, when, where, why and how” questions.
- The second part—the body—contains additional information and explanations, and addresses the consequences of the event.

News writing requires simple, easy-to-understand language as well as specific topic-related vocabulary.

RESEARCH AND NEWS WRITING | 60 MIN., GROUP WORK

After the input phase, have trainees split into smaller groups. Each group chooses a topic from the structured broadcast they want to investigate. trainees should use half of their time to do research and the other half to write up their reports. Move around the room and offer individual support. In your role as editor-in-chief, check the news reports once they have been written.

THE BROADCAST: PREPARING AND GOING ON AIR | 30 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

Now it is time to prepare the broadcast. The entire program should be recorded on audio or video with a smartphone.

Each group designates a presenter who will read the group's report, and a partner to help him or her rehearse his or her presentation.

Meanwhile, the other trainees prepare a “studio”—a table, props as desired, and a place for a person to stand and film or record the broadcast.

When everyone is ready, the broadcast starts and trainees take turns reading their reports.

The editor-in-chief or a designated trainee makes sure the broadcast runs smoothly during the recording session.

When the program is over, the group reflects on the overall experience and the broadcast.

- How did you experience your role?
- What were the challenges?
- What was fun?
- Do you consider this a high-quality broadcast that would interest a young audience?
- Compare all aspects of your broadcast (quality, topics, language) with those you have seen on TV or heard on the radio.



WORKSHEET

News and categories

TASK

Read the definition and discuss the most important words from the definition:

News is information on current events that is selected and communicated by the media.

Media makers often categorize and structure the information they want to publish in newspapers, on TV and the radio (e.g. politics, sports, entertainment).

TASK

Think of different categories and write them in the empty blocks. Mark your five favorite categories with a star. Next to each block you've filled in, write down one example of news that fits the category.



WORKSHEET

News: Brief, initial inquiry

Now it's time for the initial inquiry: basic research into current national or international events in various categories.

TASK

Research different media sources if they are available. Use newspapers, TV news (apps on smartphones), radio news (apps on smartphones), websites, and social media. Scan the media for current events and select those that are considered significant.

Don't forget the target audience. Don't get too detailed; basic information is enough. Take notes and write the information sources down in the table as well.

Category	Basic information	Sources
	What: Who: Where: When:	
	What: Who: Where: When:	
	What: Who: Where: When:	
	What: Who: Where: When:	



GUIDELINES

Broadcast structure

TASK

Hold an editorial meeting to determine the topics to be covered. Real media organizations have at least one person who works only on the time schedule, structure, and organization of the broadcast.

How the broadcast in this exercise is structured depends on the number of trainees and groups. There should be at least five different topics from the various news categories, and the total broadcast should last from five to ten minutes. Set a fixed length for each report.

VISUALIZATION

Draw the structure of the broadcast on a flip chart and visualize the number of reports, the sequence, the topics and categories, the duration of each report, and the names of the presenters. Also write down other responsibilities as needed.

PRESENTATION

You can choose to have an additional presenter to introduce the reports or just let the groups read their reports out loud like in a radio broadcast. Record just audio or with video using a camera or smartphone.

Example for a broadcast structure

#	Topic	Category	Presenter	Duration	Time
1	Protests in Hong Kong	International, Top!	Sarah	45 s	00'00" – 00'45"
2	President's speech	National, Politics	Tabea	30 s	00'46" – 01'15"
3	Increasing salaries	Economy	Thomas	30 s	01'16" – 01'45"
4	Homeless monkey	Entertainment	Michael	15 s	01'46" – 02'00"
5	New movie theater	Culture	Mariam	45 s	02'01" – 02'45"
6	Death of a famous actor	Entertainment	Michael	15 s	02'46" – 03'00"
7	International soccer	Sports	Mohamed	30 s	03'01" – 03'30"
8	Results of other sports	Sports	Mohamed	30 s	03'30" – 04'00"
9	Weather report	Weather	Sofia	15 s	04'00" – 04'15"



WORKSHEET

Research and news writing

TASK

Research your current event and write down key words. Use different sources of information, compare, and verify them. In addition to collecting basic information, find information about

different viewpoints as well as the causes and possible consequences of the event. Remember to stay objective and investigate various points of view and sources.

TASK

Now write your news report in your own words. First, structure your information. Keep the two parts in mind, the lead (who, what, where, when, why, and how) and the body with additional information, explanations, and statements.

Measure the time that you need to read the report aloud and keep to the allotted time. Try to figure out how many sentences are possible and report as much information as possible in the given amount of time.



OUTPUT

Presenting my topic

Targets	Working on different information sources when presenting a topic; learning to explain a topic; getting to know useful online presentation tools
Duration	Introduction: 1 hour; active media work: 1 to 2 weeks; output: 1 hour
Preparation	Familiarize yourself with a useful online presentation tool, e.g. pinterest.com, padlet.com
Materials	—
Methods	Group work, input, research, open discussion
Technology	Smartphones

CHOOSING A TOPIC | 15 MIN., GROUP WORK, ENTIRE GROUP

Trainees divide into small groups and each group thinks about a topic that they want to research and present online. The groups should choose a topic they can gather information on by talking to people in the vicinity.

Possible topics include: “daily life in our hometown,” “opportunities for the future,” “young people’s dreams,” “the significance of money,” “education in our country,” “family life,” etc. Encourage trainees to choose a topic that is important to them for testing research and online presentation options. Offer individual support and advice.

BRIEFING: INVESTIGATION AND ONLINE PRESENTATION | 45 MIN., ENTIRE GROUP

Present an overview of the various sources of information. Encourage trainees to investigate directly by interviewing people or taking photos. Demonstrate how to use software or an app that makes it easy to present their research online. Use an app or software you are familiar with, such as Padlet, Pinterest, or a closed Facebook group, and help trainees learn how to use it.

INVESTIGATION AND ONLINE PRESENTATION | 1–2 WEEKS, GROUP WORK, ACTIVE MEDIA WORK, PRESENTATION

Trainees research their chosen topic, using a variety of information sources (print, internet, etc.) and conduct research interviews. They are free to use their cell phones for interviewing people and taking photos. Ask them to create posts or an online wall where they present the results of their research (specifying the sources of information).

Glossary



5W-1H

5W-1H stands for six essential journalistic questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? And How? If journalists have researched and answered these six questions in their news items, stories or reports, they have covered the basic facts. The audience can use the 5W-1H questions to evaluate whether a journalistic product is complete. If it leaves important questions unanswered, it is missing crucial information. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Advertisement

Advertisements promote products or services to persuade customers to buy them. Advertisements contain information, but they are not balanced or objective. They only highlight the positive sides or the supposed benefits of the product or service for the customer. (See chapters 1 “Media and information literacy” and 6 “Internet and social media”)

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting refers to the way the media affect public opinion and the public’s perception of what is important. For example, if media frequently report on a certain topic or place it prominently, the audience will consider this topic more important than others. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Algorithm

An algorithm is a fixed series of steps that a computer performs in order to solve a problem. Social media platforms use algorithms to filter and prioritize content for each individual user. They determine what the user gets to see based on various indicators, such as their viewing behavior and content preferences. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Analog

Analog is the opposite of digital. Analog signals are represented by a physical quantity that is continuously variable, for instance sound waves or light. Examples of analog systems include old radios, record or cassette tape players, or old telephones. (also see > digital) (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Background (picture)

The part of the picture that appears farthest from the viewer and serves as a setting for the camera subject. The background can be an indicator where the picture was taken, e.g., in a town, in nature, or in a room. Professional photographers often choose a simple background if they want the viewer to focus on what is in the foreground of the picture. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Bias

Bias means not being impartial or balanced. It can result from a tendency or prejudice for or against a specific issue, person, or group. In journalism, bias can affect the selection of stories that are reported and how they are covered. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Blog

A blog is a regularly updated website or web page, often run by an individual or small group. Bloggers often publish about their specific interests, like food, travel, or the environment. They usually provide written information in an informal or conversational style. Their aim is mostly to express themselves and establish a relationship with their audience. (See chapters 1 “Media and information literacy” and 2 “Information and topics”)

Body (news)

In a news item the body comes after the lead. The body gives the audience additional information, more details or reactions about the topic. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

CC license

A Creative Commons copyright license (CC license) enables people to use, publish, and distribute original material without violating copyright. The person who created the material can choose among different types of CC licenses. Should others be able to use the material commercially or just for private purposes? Should they be able to edit, change, or build upon the content or can they only use and distribute it in the form it was originally created? (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Channel of communication

People use media to communicate: to send or receive information. Communication channels can be one-way or two way. One-way channels include newspapers, radio or TV stations, where an information provider sends out messages that the public receives. In two-way communication, both sides can produce messages and interact. Two-way communication channels include telephones and social media. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Collage

A collage is a piece of art that is assembled from fragments of other works. These can include photos, newspaper headlines, or other art works and materials. The word “collage” comes from the French word “coller”, which means to glue. So, in a collage, you assemble and glue together diverse objects on a large piece of paper or canvas to create something new. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Commercial use

Using material for commercial or financial gain. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Communication

Communication is the process of exchanging information either between people or machines. It involves a sender and a receiver. Communication among people can happen directly face-to-face and by using a medium to transport the information. In direct conversation, on the telephone or in social media, people constantly switch roles between sender and receiver. In traditional mass media like newspapers, radio, and TV, the audience are receivers. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Composition rules

Composition rules concerning photos are guidelines that can be applied to enhance the photo’s impact. Examples include the rule of thirds, perspective, contrast, depth of field, patterns, leading lines, symmetry, framing, and cropping. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Copyright

The exclusive right to use or publish copies of original material like photos, videos or texts. The person who created the material usually holds the copyright. People who reproduce or share protected content and violate copyright can be punished by law. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Creative Commons (CC)

A non-profit organization that defined simple rules and license models for users to legally edit and share material on the internet without infringing on copyright laws. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Critical thinking

Critical thinking involves the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue to form an independent judgement. Strengthening critical thinking skills towards media and information products is one of the key objectives of media and information literacy (MIL). (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying (e.g. intimidation, persecution, defamation) that takes place online, for instance on social media. Cyberbullies target individuals and attack their victims repeatedly with the intention to cause harm. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Deepfakes

Deepfakes are media products, for example videos, that are produced using artificial intelligence (AI). With the help of AI, it has become relatively easy to synthesize different elements of existing video or audio files. In the newly created content, individuals appear to say and do things that are not based on reality. Deepfakes are sometimes used as propaganda tools or to discredit political opponents. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Digital

Digital technology breaks down information into a series of ones and zeroes. This information can then be stored or transmitted using digital technology: modern electronic products like computers and smartphones. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Digital editing, digital manipulation

Using software to change the appearance of photos, videos, and audio files. We speak of editing when the software is used to improve the quality of the work (e.g. brightness, contrast, volume) without changing its message. We speak of manipulation if the message of the work is changed, for instance if relevant parts of a picture are cropped out, or an interview is digitally edited to falsify the message. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Disinformation

Disinformation is false or partly-false information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the explicit purpose to harm. Producers of disinformation make up one-sided stories for political, financial, or ideological reasons, e.g., to influence public opinion on certain issues to create public pressure. (See chapters 2 “Information and topics” and 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Digital footprint

A digital footprint describes all data traces that someone leaves behind when using digital technology. This can include personal data, data about search histories, and metadata. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Digital safety/cyber safety

Digital safety means being protected from outside threats on the internet, particularly on social media. These threats can include cyber bullying, sexting or online harassment. It requires ethical behavior online, knowledge about the safety risks and safety skills to protect oneself and others. Digital safety focuses on the well-being of people, whereas digital security refers to devices and computer systems (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Digital security/cyber security

Digital security involves the protection of digital devices, digital accounts, and digital data from intrusion by outsiders. Sample features are security settings on social media, anti-virus software, firewalls, protection against spyware, two-factor authentication, as well as pin, pattern, and secure passwords. Digital security refers to gadgets and devices, whereas digital safety concerns the well-being of people. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Dynamic media

Media that can be constantly updated and changed, such as websites or social media posts.

Echo chamber

An echo chamber describes a closed communication system: beliefs are amplified or reinforced by repetition without being questioned by contrary messages from the outside. Such a closed system can be the result of social media algorithms. They select which posts will show up on a news feed and give preference to ones that are in line with personal beliefs and will not be perceived as disruptive or disturbing. The individual ends up in a filter bubble, surrounded by an echo chamber. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Editor/Editor-in-chief

An editor or editor-in-chief holds a senior position in professional news media, e.g. a newspaper, a radio or TV station. The editor-in-chief is responsible for the quality, truthfulness and relevance of the information that is published. He or she has the final say about what is published and what is not. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Editorial meeting

At editorial meetings, journalists and editors discuss story ideas for upcoming broadcasts (TV, radio) or editions (newspapers, magazines). They determine which topics are relevant for their audience and sometimes also select a specific angle, focus, or approach that the journalist should take in covering a story. To prepare for an editorial meeting, all parties must have researched possible topics and stories. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Fake follower

Fake followers are anonymous or imposter social media accounts. They are created to make specific posts or accounts look more popular than they really are. Social media users can pay for fake followers as well as fake likes, views, and shares to give the appearance of having a larger audience. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Field size (also camera field size, shot size)

The field size is usually determined by the distance between the camera and the subject. Each field size, e.g., wide shot, medium shot, close-up, or detail, serves different purposes, determining what the viewer will be able to see and how. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Filter bubble (also information bubble)

A filter bubble describes the effect that social media users may become blind to alternative issues or viewpoints because their news feed only displays selected information that reflects their interests. What appears on a user’s news feed is determined by the choices the user consciously makes (clicks, likes, shares) as well as by the algorithms tracking the user’s online behavior. These algorithms select the posts that the user will see on their news feed, giving preference to those the user might engage with most. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Five core concepts

The five core concepts of media messages result out of five key questions to analyze media products or messages. These questions help users evaluate the authorship, the format, the audience, the content, and the purpose of a specific media message. The five key questions and core concepts were developed by the Center for Media Literacy (medialit.org). (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Five-shot rule/five-shot sequence

The five-shot rule is used in video recording. It helps condense actions by breaking them down into a few key shots. The five shots use different angles and camera field sizes to depict key moments, such as a wide shot, a close-up of the face and a close-up of the hands doing something. Recording these different shots helps getting enough footage to illustrate a scene and edit it in a meaningful order so viewers can follow. (See chapter 5 “Video”)

Foreground (picture)

The foreground are people or objects in the front of a picture. The elements in the foreground are often the key part of the image. In a portrait, the person is usually in the foreground. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Framing

In journalism, framing means that journalists or authors make choices regarding which aspects of a topic to cover and how, and which to leave out. They may make these choices consciously or subconsciously. In this way, they create the frame through which the audience sees a topic.

GIF animation

GIF stands for Graphics Interchange Format, a format that can be used to display animated images. GIFs are usually made up of a succession of photos. Seen in rapid succession, they create the effect of movement or animation. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Government media (state media, state-owned media)

Media that are controlled, owned, and/or funded by the government. (See chapters 1 “Media and information literacy” and 2 “Information and topics”)

Hate speech

Hate speech attacks people or a group of people based on attributes like race, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. It appears both on- and offline, and takes on different forms of expressions, including insults, defamation, degradation, and threats. (See chapter 6 “Internet and social media”)

Independent media

Media that are free from government or corporate influence. (See chapters 1 “Media and information literacy” and 2 “Information and topics”)

Information

Anything that provides knowledge and answers questions. Information can come in the form of facts or data transmitted through figures, text, pictures, audio, or video. Information can sometimes be one-sided or include content that is not true. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Information disorder

Information disorder describes the chaotic, unstructured supply of information, particularly on social media. Posts on a news feed differ widely regarding relevance, quality, truthfulness, or harmfulness. True information of high quality can be found next to false or manipulated content, harassment, hoaxes, jokes, or irrelevant content. This disorder is unlike what we see in traditional media, where journalists order the information for the audience according to professional criteria. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Information source

An information source is a person, organization, place, or thing which sends out information or from where we can get information. On social media, everybody who creates posts, or shares information becomes an information source for others. Knowing who the information source is helps us evaluate the credibility and the quality of the information it provides. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Interpersonal communication

The opposite of mass communication. Messages are sent and received by two or more people who can all react and communicate directly with one another. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Interview

Interviews primarily appear in newspapers, radio, and TV. They resemble a conversation, but with clear roles: While the interviewer’s role is to ask questions, the role of the interviewee is to give answers. That is why the interviewees are often experts, celebrities, or political leaders who have something to say. Interviews can serve different purposes: There are research interviews for the journalist to find out facts. These interviews are not made to be broadcast. Other interviews are recorded only to get short statements for other stories, and still other interviews are intended to be aired in their entirety. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Journalist

A journalist is a media professional who researches, verifies, writes, and publishes news or other current information for the public. Most journalists specialize in specific fields of work, e.g., sports journalism, political journalism, business journalism. Photojournalists document what is happening through photos instead of words. TV journalists use video and words to explain events. Online journalists use multimedia technology. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Journalistic standards

The purpose of journalism is to inform the public. Throughout the world, there are different standards and codes of ethics concerning how journalists should do this. Most agree that the information journalists provide should be relevant to the audience, factual, complete, and neutral. Journalists should be independent in their reporting, balance different viewpoints, and be as transparent and objective as possible. They should present information in a way that is easy for the audience to understand. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Lead (news)

The first part of a news item or report, which briefly details the most important or newest information about a topic. The lead is followed by the body. The body provides more detailed facts about the topic, and adds quotes, reactions, or background information. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Malinformation

Malinformation is information that may be true and factual, but that is not meant for publication and that is leaked to cause harm—for instance secret diplomatic documents exchanged between a government and its embassies abroad. Other forms of malinformation published to do harm are hate speech and online harassment. (See chapters 2 “Information and topics” and 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Mass communication

The publication of information on a large scale. A medium, for example a radio or TV station, broadcasts information to an unspecified mass of people. Everyone who can receive that radio or TV station’s signal gets the same information. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Mass media

Any means of communication that is created to reach a large audience, e.g. newspapers, radio or TV stations, books, or billboards. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Media and information literacy

A set of competencies that enable a person to fully use many types of media. A media literate person will be able to access, analyze, and reflect on media content. They will also be able to use media to participate in public discourse and make their voices heard. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Media maker

A person, organization, or company that produces the messages conveyed through a medium. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Media messages

Messages that are created by a media maker and transmitted via a medium, for example newspaper articles, TV programs, or social media posts. Media messages often have multiple layers that the recipient has to understand and make sense of. A newspaper article or Facebook post, for instance, is made up of text and subtext: What is written and what is expressed between the lines. A photo also has multiple layers: what is shown in the picture and the emotions it evokes, the stories it conjures up or how it can be interpreted. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Media monopoly

A situation where control of the media, or the market for a particular type of media, lies with one person or organization, preventing competition.

Medium

A medium is a channel or device to store and transmit information, for example a book, a newspaper, radio, or the internet. Media can serve different purposes, including general communication, information, or entertainment. Media are mostly used to transmit messages when direct face-to-face communication is not possible. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Misinformation

Misinformation is information that is false but not intended to harm. Misinformation can happen accidentally when journalists do not research accurately or make mistakes in their writing, for example inserting an incorrect date or figure into a story. (See chapters 2 “Information and topics” and 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

News

Information about recent, current or up-and-coming events; new information that is currently relevant. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Newsmaker

A person, thing, or event that features heavily in the news at a particular time.

News values

News values or news factors are a set of criteria news journalists use to determine how relevant and newsworthy a story is. Common news values are timeliness, proximity, impact, consequences, conflict, prominence, and novelty. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Non-commercial use

Using material for personal or altruistic purposes and not for commercial or financial gain. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Non-verbal communication

Communication using wordless cues, for instance intonation, gestures, or facial expressions. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Online disinhibition effect

The online disinhibition effect refers to instances where social media users lose their inhibitions online and behave immorally or in ways they would not behave in real life, or when face-to-face with another person. They can become uninhibited online because they can act anonymously or hide behind technology. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Opener

The first story or report in a radio or TV program. The opener in a news program is usually the most important story of that broadcast. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Persuasion techniques

Persuasion techniques are techniques used to persuade other people, change their attitudes or behavior. Common persuasion techniques include simplifying information and ideas, triggering strong emotions, and responding to audience needs or values. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Press conference

When institutions like government ministries, companies or NGOs want to inform the public about new developments, they often invite the media to a press conference. During the first few minutes of the press conference, they usually give a statement or hand out a written press release to the journalists. The media representatives then have a chance to ask questions and get more detailed information. Most press conferences last between 15 and 60 minutes. In some societies, the organizers of the press conference pay the journalists for their attendance, in the hope that the coverage will be favorable. This is unethical. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Privacy

Privacy refers to people’s ability to seclude themselves as well as some information about themselves. On social media, privacy is a key concern. The more information you post on social media, the more time you spend on it, the less private you are and the more data about yourself you give away to the social media platforms and companies or institutions that they share the data with. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Private media, commercial media

Media that are owned by private individuals or groups and provide communication, information, and entertainment to generate profit. (See chapter 2 “Information and topics”)

Product placement

Companies, manufacturers of goods or providers of a service pay media producers to feature their products in films, radio, or TV programs. For example, BMW pays the producers of a James Bond movie so that Bond drives a BMW in the film. The car company hopes this will create a positive image of their cars in the minds of viewers. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Propaganda

Propaganda is true or false information spread to persuade an audience using persuasion techniques. Propaganda often has a political connotation and is produced by governments or political groups and their supporters. Propaganda often oversimplifies and paints the world in black and white, rather than in shades of gray. (See chapter 6 “Internet and social media”)

Sexting

Sexting is the intentional sharing of sexually explicit texts, images, or videos between individuals. This is often done by mutual consent, but it is not without risks. For example, if people send explicit content without having gotten prior consent of the receiver, this can count as sexual harassment. (See chapter 6.1 “Internet safety and privacy”)

Social bot

Social bots are social media accounts that are operated entirely by computer programs. Social bots are designed to generate posts and/or engage with content. In disinformation campaigns, bots can be used to draw attention to misleading narratives, to hijack platforms’ trending lists, and to create the illusion of public discussion and support. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Social media

Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in social networking. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. (See chapters 1 “Media and information literacy” and 6 “Internet and social media”)

Source image file

The original version of an image file. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Static media

Media that cannot be altered once the message has been generated and the medium has been published, e.g. newspapers, printed books. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Subtext

The subtext of a message is everything that is not immediately obvious on the surface of verbal or non-verbal communication. Subtext is what you discover when you read “between the lines.” Everyone interprets subtext individually. Our different interpretations are influenced by factors like society and culture, our sensibility and training, but also our mood. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy” and chapter 3 “Photography”)

Thumbnail

A reduced-size version of a larger image. Websites and social media often display photos as thumbnails – for instance in the Facebook friends list. (See chapter 3 “Photography”)

Time-based media

Media that transport a message within a specific amount of time, e.g. TV and radio. Time-based media are also referred to as linear media because they broadcast messages one after the other, as though they were on a line (e.g. the stories of a news bulletin). In contrast, media like newspapers, books, and websites arrange the information they transmit on a page or screen. The audience can jump from one story to another and skip or re-read individual pieces of information. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Verbal communication

Communication using spoken or written words and phrases. (See chapter 1 “Media and information literacy”)

Verification

Verification means determining whether information that was published or posted is authentic and truthful. Verification skills are not only important for journalists, but for anyone using media and especially social media. (See chapter 6.2 “Disinformation and filter bubbles”)

Vlog

A vlog, or a video blog, is like a video diary, where a person produces and publishes video material on a regular basis. A vlogger shares their personal experiences and ideas via video. (See chapter 5 “Video”)

Vox pop

A vox pop consists of short interviews done with members of the public. For a vox pop, a journalist asks many people the same question to get diverse opinions, outlooks, or experiences. A vox pop can consist of texts, photos, recorded audio, or video. (See chapter 4 “Audio”)

Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 stands for significant developments in internet technology at the beginning of the 21st century. Technological advances made it easy for individual users to create, upload, and share content on the web. Users turned from passive receivers into active content creators. Web 2.0 platforms make use of collective intelligence (Wikipedia), collect user-generated content (YouTube, Flickr, blogs), or create the possibility of social interaction (social media like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or Instagram). (See chapter 6 “Internet and social media”)

Authors





Sylvia Braesel

is a freelance media literacy educator and a developer of media-related training materials.

Sylvia has a degree in culture and media education from the Merseburg University of Applied Sciences. She was part of the well-known German media literacy agency 'medienblau' for 13 years. Sylvia has developed and conducted numerous media literacy projects for students, teachers, and parents. She has also authored educational media for the classroom.

In 2014, Sylvia started working for DW Akademie as a media literacy consultant, trainer, and developer of training materials. She has contributed to DW Akademie media literacy projects in many different countries, such as Cambodia, Namibia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Moldova, Lebanon, and the Palestine Territories.



Thorsten Karg

is a media trainer and project manager with DW Akademie. He teaches workshops on media and information literacy, on radio and online journalism, and to train future trainers.

He began his career as a reporter and presenter for various German radio stations. He joined Deutsche Welle (DW) in the early 1990s as an editor with the German and English-language radio services. Thorsten later went on to become the head of DW's English language website before he joined DW Akademie in 2002. He has worked in media development in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Arab world.

Thorsten also co-authored DW Akademie's "Manual for Radio Journalists," which has been published in English, German, Russian, Indonesian and Mongolian. He holds a master's degree in journalism and communications.

 DWAkademie

 @dw_akademie

 DWAkademie

 dw.com/newsletter-registration

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue.

DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in approximately 50 developing countries and emerging economies.



Made for minds.