MODULE THREE:

Unuderstanding Information Disorder

MODULE DURATION

3

HOURS

CORE MODULE INFORMATION:

Module Type: Phase 2 – Understanding and responding to information disorder

Module Objective: Understand information disorder and its impact on digital communities

Module Dilemma: “My group members are promoting misinformation and disinformation”

Module Delivery: This module was developed to be delivered physically, but may be converted to a remote module with some customization.

cc BY NC SA

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS MODULE:

- Facilitators should review this Module in detail and customise the content to suit their participants, as needed (including adding case studies/examples relevant to your region or country).

- Facilitators should prepare notes for each activity. While this guide provides some discussion points and explanation as a base, further explanation at times will be needed (and participants may ask clarifying questions, so the facilitator should be well prepared).

- Review Content for Training Activities for a list of general training materials and module-specific activities (this link includes sample questions for Menti questions and Kahoot quizzes and information about how to make them). Before the training, be sure to have these activities prepared.

MATERIALS

- Powerpoint slides (linked to sample PPT slides)
- Links to videos and MP4 files should be downloaded for backup (videos are embedded in PPT slides and linked below, per session).
- Module 3 Specific Materials:
    - Written out examples of World Event headlines (see the Misinformation Activity). Note: If the training is conducted online, these can be individually sent to each breakout group.
    - Printed out "React!" activity. Note: If the training is conducted online, different emojis can be sent via the video conferencing platform chat.

Session 1: Misinformation, Disinformation & Malinformation

SESSION DURATION
60
MINS

Session Objective: Understand misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in digital spaces

5
MINS

65-66

THE DILEMMA – A QUICK RATING

Note for Facilitator: The trainers will present the Module’s Dilemma on Mentimeter/ Menti (instructions for Menti). Make sure you have the presenter’s link and QR code for participants ready to avoid any technical issues.

The trainers will begin the module by dissecting the module dilemma.

The trainers will use a scale on Mentimeter and share the following dilemma: **My group members are promoting false information or fake news.**

Note for Facilitator: when presenting the dilemma, the trainers may provide a very brief explanation about misinformation and disinformation, and how these terms are preferred over ‘fake news’. The following sessions will go more into this for clarity.

Participants will be asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 the situation with their own group, with 1 being ‘the level of misinformation and disinformation in my group is very low’ to 5 being ‘the level of misinformation and disinformation in my group is very high’.
Based on the results from Mentimeter, the trainers will get an average for the group of community stewards. The trainers can also ask a couple of participants what rating they gave their group and why they picked that number. This activity will help us understand how relatable and relevant this dilemma is for the participants.

20 MINS 67

MISINFORMATION

10 MINS 68

ACTIVITY

The trainers will divide the participants into four or five groups. Each group will be given an important ongoing world event. For example, the ongoing public protests in Sri Lanka or Iran (2022). Each group must do their research on the event/incident and prepare a short report. But this report must also contain false information. Participants can change key information, including locations, objectives, dates, individuals, etc., to alter real facts. Once they are done, they must share their briefs (written or digital) with the other groups – who have to identify the false information in each news brief. Participants are encouraged to present this news brief in creative ways. After the identification, the trainers will ask the participants to share their experience in both creating and identifying false information.

Examples to be written in cards and given to participants (**Note**: These examples should be customised depending on your participant profiles, the answers should not be too obvious. These were written for an international cohort).

- Group 1 – Sri Lankan protestors storm the presidential palace in July 2022
- Group 2 – The US Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade, ending the right to abortion in June 202
- Group 3 – WHO Director-General declares the ongoing monkeypox outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in July 2022

5 MINS 69

FACILITATOR EXPLANATION

The trainers will explain the meaning of misinformation to participants.

Definition - Misinformation is false information shared by people - but they don't realise it's false or misleading, often because they're trying to help.

Example - A terror attack on the Champs Elysees in Paris on 20 April 2017 inspired a great deal of misinformation as is the case in almost all breaking news situations. Individuals on social media unwittingly published a number of rumours, including the news that a second policeman had been killed, for example. The people sharing this type of content are rarely doing so to cause harm. Rather, they are caught up in the moment, trying to be helpful, but fail to adequately inspect and verify the information they are sharing. One example was that Muslims in the UK celebrated the attack. This was debunked by the CrossCheck project on April 22, 2017.

However, it must be noted that this information could have been originally created and shared as disinformation by some people and then later shared unknowingly as misinformation – specially since CrossCheck/First Draft News referred to it as a video that was posted by Paul Golding, the leader of Britain First – a far-right British political organisation. It's valuable to explain to participants that false information that was created deliberately (disinformation) often turns into misinformation when people who reshare it don't realise it's false. Trainers can also ask the participants to share more examples from their countries and communities.

15 MINS

70

DISINFORMATION

10 MINS

DISINFORMATION ACTIVITY

The trainers will start this session with an activity, Two truths and a lie:
Participants are invited (one at a time) to come up to the front of the room and share three statements about themselves. Two are two “truths” and one “lie”. The other participants have to guess which statement is false.

5 MINS

71

FACILITATOR EXPLANATION

The trainers will explain the meaning of disinformation to participants.

Definition – Disinformation is false or misleading information that is intentionally created for different reasons, including to make money, have political influence, or maliciously cause trouble or harm. However, not all people do it for the reasons mentioned above. Some deliberately create false information to see how far it would spread or to get more traction/followers on social media.

Example – In India, between 2017 and 2018, rumours of child kidnapping spread through WhatsApp, inciting violence against certain population segments and resulting in at least 33 murders and more than 99 attacks. After this incident, WhatsApp had to limit the number of times a message can be forwarded after it was seen that a spate of mob lynchings was linked to messages that circulated on WhatsApp groups in India. Trainers can ask the participants to share more examples from their countries and communities.

20 MINS

72

MALINFORMATION

10 MINS

ACTIVITY

The trainers will facilitate a quick game: Two Truths and a Lie.

To start, one person has to give three statements about themselves to the rest of the group. Two of these statements must be facts, or "truths," and one must be a lie. Everyone else should guess which statement they think the person made up. Once everyone has made their guess, the individual reveals which statement was the lie. Keep the game going by then choosing someone who guessed correctly to go next and then play as many rounds as you’d like and time permits.

The trainer can begin the game by sharing three statements (including a lie) about themselves. When the participants make their assumptions, ask them why they think the particular statement is a lie. Listen to their theories. This conversation will be useful when we discuss, much later on, why people believe false information.

5
MINS

73

FACILITATOR EXPLANATION

The trainers will explain the meaning of malinformation to participants.

Definition – Genuine information that is shared with an intent to cause harm. This could be personal details, sexual images published without consent, or leaked emails to damage someone's reputation.

Example – In the late 90s and early 2000s, anti-abortion activist Neal Horsley collected names, pictures, and home addresses of abortion providers and published them on a website called the Nuremberg Files. He labelled that list as a "hit list." Eight doctors from Nuremberg's listings have been killed so far. The website celebrated the death of such murders and encouraged pro-life activists to continue killing other doctors from the hit list. Trainers can ask the participants to share more examples from their countries and communities.

5
MINS

74

RECAP AND DISCUSSION

Finally, the trainers will take some time to answer any questions from participants.

If there are no questions, the trainers can ***ask participants if they have an example of Misinformation, Malinformation, or Disinformation from their experience moderating or serving as digital community stewards in their online group.***_They will further be asked to explain how they would categorise each example shared.

This concluding discussion for Session 1 will help cement the information learned through sharing of examples.

Session 2: Types of Information Disorder and Its Impact

SESSION DURATION
60
MINS

Session Objective: Understand different manifestations of information disorder and its impact on digital spaces

Trainers will present the Session 2 objective: "Understand different manifestations of information disorder and its impact on digital spaces."

35
MINS

75+

FORMS OF INFORMATION DISORDER

Trainers will explain the seven main forms of information disorder with specific examples and incidents from around the world.

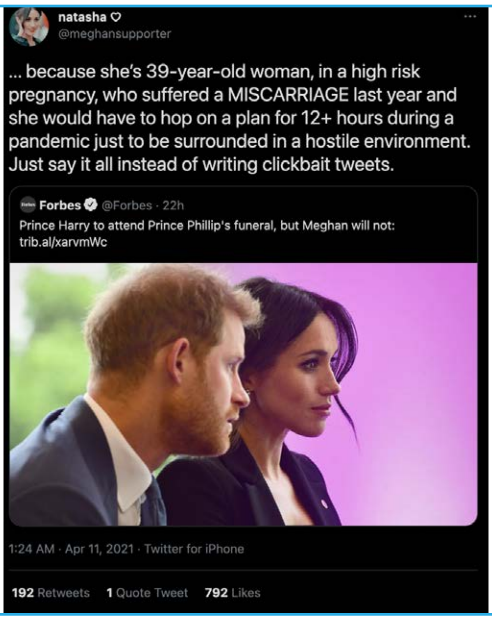
Within the three overarching types of information disorder (mis-, dis- and malinformation), we also refer to seven main categories. These help us understand the complexity of this ecosystem and the shades of grey that exist between true and false. They live along a spectrum, and more than one category can apply to a specific type of content.

Note: the trainer should give the definition and example and always leave a minute or two for questions or comments from the participants.

BIRDS AREN'T REAL
WAKE UP
LIES
birds charge on power lines
RESEARCH BIRD SURVEILANCE

Satire – Satire is a literary technique that employs humour, irony, or exaggeration to expose flaws and criticise individuals, governments, or society itself. Although satirical pieces are meant to be humorous, their greater purpose is often constructive social criticism. For example, you might be aware of The Onion, a very popular satirical site in the United States. El Deforma, Mexico's version of The Onion, News Curry from Sri Lanka, and Revista Barcelona from Argentina are similar publications. The problem is when satire is used to strategically spread rumours and conspiracies. When challenged, it can be simply shrugged off "as a joke", something not meant to be taken seriously. Furthermore, satire can also be dangerous when from its original source, it gets spread online and turned into screenshots or memes, losing its original context in the process.

The trainers can show this video about 'Birds Aren't Real' to further explain how satirical misinformation works.



natasha ♡
@meghansupporter

... because she's 39-year-old woman, in a high risk pregnancy, who suffered a MISCARRIAGE last year and she would have to hop on a plan for 12+ hours during a pandemic just to be surrounded in a hostile environment. Just say it all instead of writing clickbait tweets.

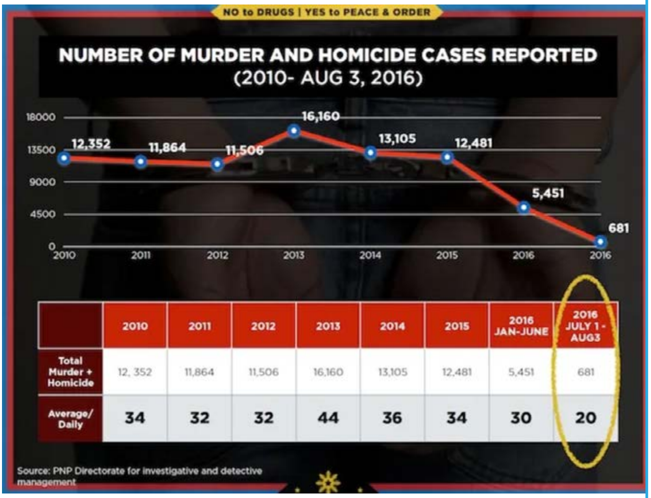
Forbes @Forbes · 22h
Prince Harry to attend Prince Phillip's funeral, but Meghan will not: trib.al/xarvmWc

1:24 AM · Apr 11, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

192 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 792 Likes

False Connection – When headlines, visuals, or captions do not support the content, this is an example of a false connection. The most common example of this type of content is clickbait headlines. With the increased competition for audience attention, editors increasingly have to write headlines to attract clicks, even if when people read the article, they feel that they have been deceived. This can also happen when visuals or captions are used, particularly on sites like Facebook, to give a certain impression, which is not backed up by the text. For example, the satirical news website The Science Post published an article titled 'Study: 70% of Facebook users only read the headline of science stories before commenting'. The body of the article didn't have any actual text, just paragraphs of "lorem ipsum" as a placeholder. But you'd only know that if you clicked through to read it. It was shared more than 46,000 times and proved the point of the headline.

Trainers can also share the example of a clickbait headline about Prince Harry and Meghan Markle that intends to sensationalise the news and midsrect the audience, instead of presenting objective facts.

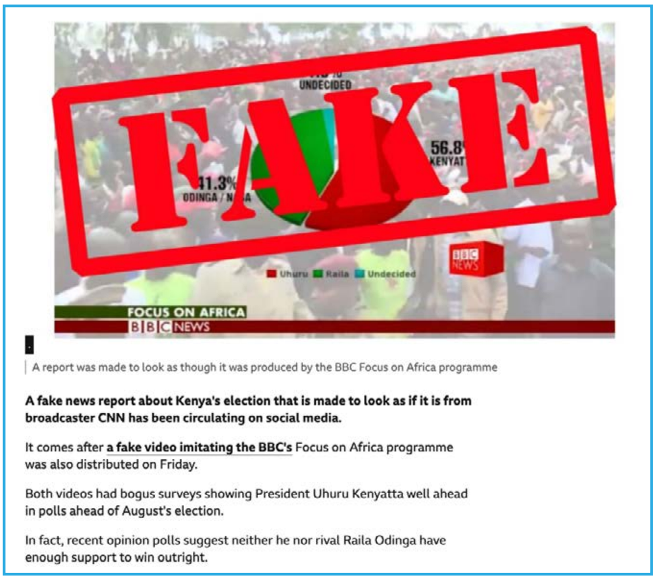


	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 JAN-JUNE	2016 JULY 1 - AUG3
Total Murder + Homicide	12, 352	11,864	11,506	16,160	13,105	12,481	5,451	681
Average/ Daily	34	32	32	44	36	34	30	20

Source: PNP Directorate for investigative and detective management

Misleading Content – What counts as 'misleading' can be varied and hard to define, but it usually involves omitting pieces of information to tell a story in a certain way (i.e. cropping photos to change its message, choosing statistics selectively). This is also called 'framing'. Even the most advanced technology cannot easily detect misleading use of information because it involves contextualization and nuance. This means it requires our brains to analyse the whole story or the bigger picture to judge whether the content intentionally misleads or not.

On August 22, 2016, during the first Senate hearing on extrajudicial killings, then-senator Alan Peter Cayetano showed a line graph (Figure 1) that purports to show the declining number of murder and homicide cases reported since President Duterte assumed office. But the line graph dipped at the end mainly because the data for 2016 was split into two periods: January to June and July 1 to August 3.



A report was made to look as though it was produced by the BBC Focus on Africa programme

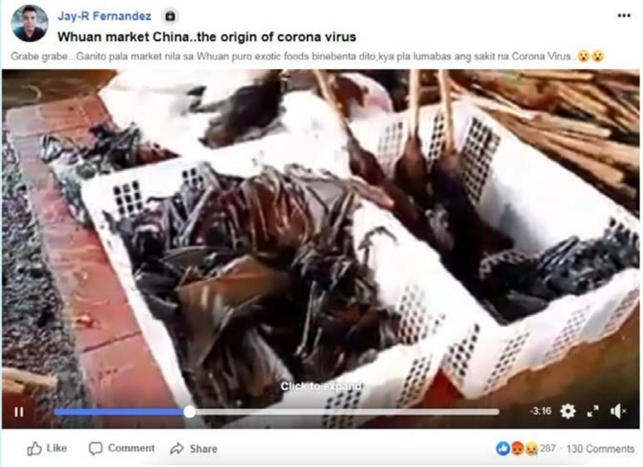
A fake news report about Kenya's election that is made to look as if it is from broadcaster CNN has been circulating on social media.

It comes after **a fake video imitating the BBC's** Focus on Africa programme was also distributed on Friday.

Both videos had bogus surveys showing President Uhuru Kenyatta well ahead in polls ahead of August's election.

In fact, recent opinion polls suggest neither he nor rival Raila Odinga have enough support to win outright.

Imposter Content – We always like to employ mental shortcuts to help us understand information. One very powerful shortcut is seeing a brand or person we already know and trust. When we get information coming from trusted brands or people, we are not as doubtful. But the problem is, it is very easy to make fake accounts and pretend to be someone else online. Imposter content is false or misleading content that claims to be from established brands, organisations, or personalities. For example, ahead of the Kenyan elections in 2017, BBC Africa found out that someone had created a video with a photoshopped BBC logo and strapline, and it was circulating on WhatsApp. They, therefore, had to make a video that they shared on social media, warning people not to be fooled by the fabricated video.

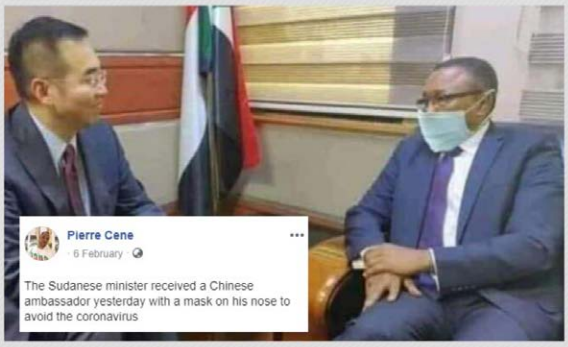


Whuan market China..the origin of corona virus

Grabe grabe...Ganito pala market nila sa Whuan puro exotic foods binebenta dito,kya pla lumabas ang sakit na Corona Virus..😮😮

False Context – When genuine information is shared out of its original context, such as when old news stories are re-shared in the present time, it can be very dangerous. Sharing information in its proper context is very important because the context (i.e., the time, place, and situation) within which an event or news story existed helps explain the event. Sometimes, it is only a plain case of misinformation where a person mistakenly re-shares an old story. Other times, the purpose is more deliberate: to mislead people by sharing information in a different context.

One of the first viral videos after the Coronavirus outbreak in January 2020 showed a market selling bats, rats, snakes, and other animal meat products. Different versions of the video were shared online, claiming to be from the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the new virus was first reported. However, the video was originally uploaded in July 2019, and it was shot in Langowan Market in Indonesia. It was shared widely online because it played on people's anti-Chinese sentiments and preconceptions.

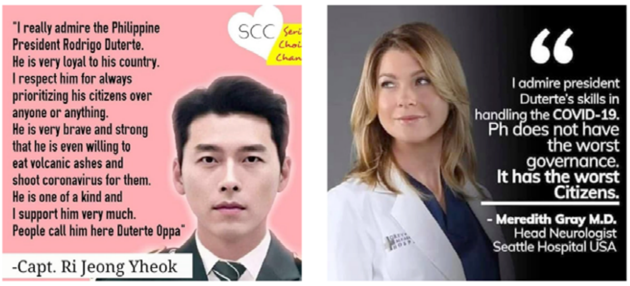


Pierre Cene
6 February

The Sudanese minister received a Chinese ambassador yesterday with a mask on his nose to avoid the coronavirus

Manipulated Content – Manipulated content is genuine content that is altered or edited to change the message. It is not completely made up or fabricated. This is most often done with photographs and images. This kind of manipulation relies on the fact that most of us look at images while quickly scrolling through content on small phone screens.

On February 3, 2020, the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Ambassador to Sudan met to discuss the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak. In the next couple of weeks, the photographs of that meeting were photoshopped to show the Sudanese Minister wearing a face mask. The images were shared widely on social media, including comments like "Africans don't want to take chances with the Chinese".



"I really admire the Philippine
President Rodrigo Duterte.
He is very loyal to his country.
I respect him for always
prioritizing his citizens over
anyone or anything.
He is very brave and strong
that he is even willing to
eat volcanic ashes and
shoot coronavirus for them.
He is one of a kind and
I support him very much.
People call him here Duterte Oppa"

-Capt. Ri Jeong Yheok

I admire president
Duterte's skills in
handling the **COVID-19.**
Ph does not have
the worst
governance.
It has the worst
Citizens.

- Meredith Gray M.D.
Head Neurologist
Seattle Hospital USA

Various edited quote cards or graphics showing famous personalities and fictional characters praising President Duterte have been circulating online. These quotes are completely made up with no source or other news report verifying these personalities' statements.

Fabricated Content – Fabricated content is anything that is 100% false. This is the only type of content that we can really consider purely 'fake'. Staged videos, made-up quotes, and fake websites fall under this category. 'Deepfakes' or 'synthetic media' are fabricated media produced using Artificial Intelligence (AI), which usually combines different elements of video and audio to create 'new' content that never actually happened.

Examples of spreading made-up quotes of nationalist messages, or praising President Duterte on handling COVID-19 are displayed in this image. Facilitators can also find more examples here of Preisdent Rodrigo Duterte using fabricated content and many other forms of false information during his 2016 election campaign. This is also a good place for the facilitators to emphasise that misinformation and disinformation can amplify during election campaigns.

Trainers can also use this video that uses fabricated content (deep fake) to emphasise the dangers of fabricated content.

25 MINS

84-85

INFORMATION DISORDER ACTIVITY

Setup: The trainers will divide the participants into 7 groups. Each group will be assigned a “type” of information disorder as described above.

For this activity, participants will be asked to create an example of a Meme, GIF, Post, or Article that exemplifies their assigned type of information disorder.

Participants will be given 10 minutes to discuss with their group and create an example. This example can be sent to the trainer directly (e.g. via email or WhatsApp).

Each group will be given a minute to present, and the rest of the participants have to guess what type of information disorder is being displayed.

Note for Facilitator: If this activity is taking place online, participants need to be broken into small groups and given a 10-minute timer. Once the group re-assembles, they can send their examples one by one (either over the chat or share their screens) to present.

Trainers will conclude the session by emphasising the fact that these seven (7) types exist in a spectrum, and therefore more than one type can apply to a specific piece of content. For example, a clickbait article that employs a false connection may also be considered fabricated content if it is 100% false. Moreover, if it is created and uploaded by a fake account of an established brand, then you can also call it imposter content.

Session 3: Practising Healthy Scepticism

SESSION DURATION
60
MINS

Session Objective: To foster healthy scepticism towards the self and the information environment

Trainers will introduce Session 3 and its objective (as described above).

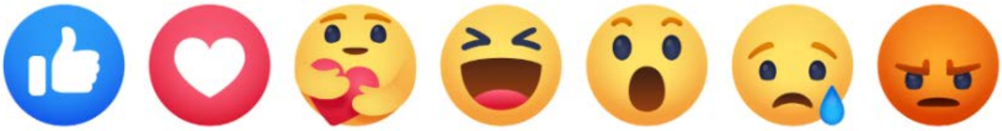
10
MINS

86-93

ACTIVITY: REACT!

Note to Facilitator: To the left you will see some examples, but it would be best if the trainer updated these news headlines to newer stories (especially those that are relevant to your context.

The trainers will start this session with an activity. The participants will be given a set of cut-out emojis with the six popular Facebook reactions (see below).



Then the trainers will show the participants a range of current headlines and news articles. The participants must view this information as if they are viewing it on a social media platform and react accordingly.

The purpose of this activity is to help participants understand how they react to various news they see online – and how sometimes these reactions can be different from one to another.

During this activity, it would also be valuable to also ask participants to think about which posts requires them to go beyond simply ‘reacting’ and share with others based on how strong the emotions are they feel when looking at the post.

In this session, trainers will help the participants understand why people share misinformation and disinformation online – and why this is a widespread global issue.

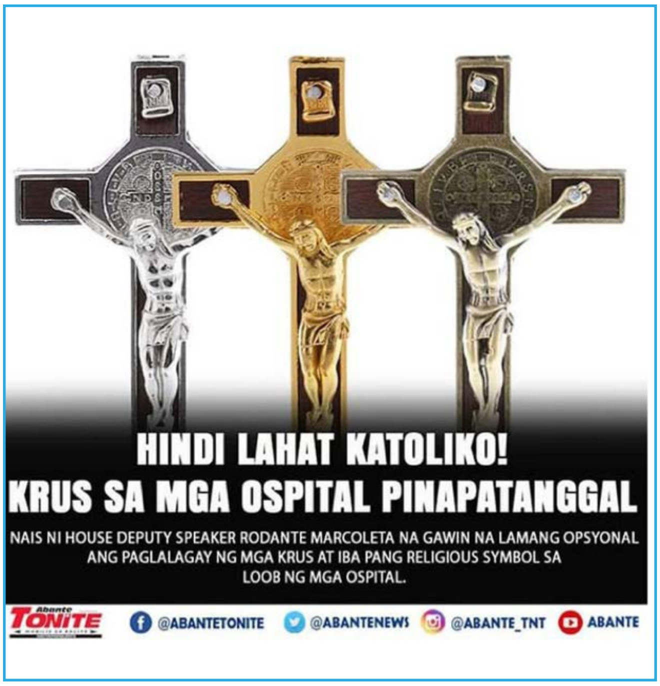
Note for Facilitator: Link to React! Printout (these printouts should be cut out in advance if the activity is taking place in person).If the training is conducted online, different emojis can be sent via Zoom’s chat function or another preferred group chat platform.

15
MINS

94-95

WHY DO PEOPLE BELIEVE MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION?

People believe mis- and disinformation because of two major reasons:



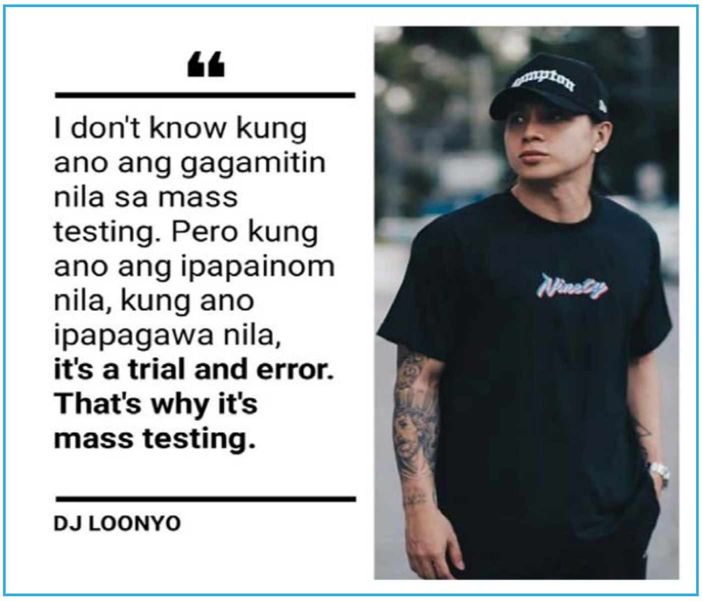
HINDI LAHAT KATOLIKO!
KRUS SA MGA OSPITAL PINAPATANGGAL

NAIS NI HOUSE DEPUTY SPEAKER RODANTE MARCOLETA NA GAWIN NA LAMANG OPSYONAL ANG PAGLALAGAY NG MGA KRUS AT IBA PANG RELIGIOUS SYMBOL SA LOOB NG MGA OSPITAL.

1. **Information appeals to our emotions** – Studies show that people remember information better when they appeal to their emotions. These are stories that make people angry, scared, anxious or make them jump for joy.

One perfect example of misinformation that banked on people's fear is when Philippines social media personality DJ Loonyo hinted about the alleged 'dangers' of coronavirus mass testing. Through a Facebook Livestream, he expressed fears over what one might be asked to drink or ingest in a 'trial-and-error' process for mass testing. His statement went viral and drew flak for spreading fear and misinformation about COVID-19 testing, which does not require ingestion nor is a trial-and-error process.

Another example is this clickbait story from the tabloid Abante Tonite about a bill making religious mementoes in hospitals optional. Its misleading headline states, "Hindi lahat Katoliko! Krus sa mga ospital pinapatanggal". The story was shared on Facebook in multiple pages and groups, garnering "angry" reactions from many Facebook users. The headline purposefully misled the readers to think that the bill intends to ban religious mementoes instead of simply making them optional.



"

I don't know kung ano ang gagamitin nila sa mass testing. Pero kung ano ang ipapainom nila, kung ano ipapagawa nila, **it's a trial and error. That's why it's mass testing.**

DJ LOONYO

2. **We carry many biases within us** – Aside from our emotions, we also tend to accept information faster and easier when they confirm our existing views. This is called '**confirmation bias'.** The danger here is when we think something is true when we feel that it must be true. This is most applicable to misleading content -- information that has some amount of truth to it rather than being entirely made up. If an online post is 'partly true' and you are already convinced by half of it, you may disregard that that post is also 'partly false' or, at the very least, incomplete.

Aside from confirmation bias, there are many other hidden biases that influence one's way of thinking. It is useful to be aware of these, too.

- Implicit bias: we associate two different things, which in our minds, are usually linked
- Sunk-cost fallacy: the more time or emotions we invest into something, the more we want to keep investing in it
- Anchoring bias: the first piece of information we hear tends to have more influence on us
- Bandwagon effect: if a lot of people act or think in a certain way, we tend to act or think the same

The trainers can ***ask the participants to share examples of the above from their own experience.***

If we encounter a post online that feels right to us and triggers our emotions, our tendency is to share it with others. So, the very first step is crucial: pause, calm down, and recognise your emotional response. This is called 'emotional scepticism' or questioning your own emotional reactions to the messages around you.

15
MINS

THE BALANCE BETWEEN TRUSTING AND DOUBTING

EXPLANATION:

The trainer can explain that finding the balance between Trusting and Doubting is a crucial task for digital community stewards. One of the main challenges in dealing with information disorder is finding trustworthy sources amidst the information overload about the coronavirus pandemic. As a rule of thumb, stewards must act with caution.

Healthy Scepticism Vs Cynicism:

To be sceptical means to have an attitude of doubt, to be always questioning. This is a really important skill for dealing with information disorder, but too much of it can be unhealthy too. It can quickly slide into cynicism which is an attitude of scorn, negativity, and general distrust in people's motives and integrity. When you see too much disinformation everywhere, it is easy to be disheartened and develop hatred, and this is what we must strive to avoid. Remember that not all information is designed to deceive or manipulate. Our goal is to maintain the right amount of scepticism of the news we consume without sliding into the idea that good journalism does not exist.

An important strategy so that you can avoid cynicism is to learn to ask questions about ALL media messages, not just those with which you may disagree. We must be aware of and open to questioning not only the biases of media producers but also our own biases. This way, we find the right balance between trusting and doubting.

5 MINS

ACTIVITY – ONLINE QUIZ (TIME PERMITTING)

The trainers can finish the session by sharing this link with the participants, who have to complete an online quiz to distinguish disinformation from satire and simply unbelievable facts.

10 MINS

MODULE 3 CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Next, the Trainer will facilitate a Q&A session.

The module will end with a Pop Quiz on Kahoot (this is an optional activity; however, this is a great way to energise the participants at the end of the module).

Note: See Content for Training Activities for quiz content and instructions on how to make a Kahoot).

The PPT slide can be linked to the Kahoot quiz for ease of access and presentability. Trainers can encourage participation by handing out chocolates to the pop quiz winners.

Finally, the Trainer will ask the participants to complete a short feedback form. This can be optional and created according to the organiser and facilitator’s needs, therefore a sample is not shared.

The content of this module was adopted and inspired by the following resources:

- Understanding Information Disorder: An Online Course from First Draft News
- Online Course on Misinformation and Disinformation: BBC Media Action
- Navigating Disinformation: An Online Course by UN Women
- Online Course on Journalism: ‘Fake News’ & Misinformation: UNESCO
- Remote Learning Course on Dealing with Disinformation Amidst the Infodemic: Out of The Box Media Literacy Initiative