Guide on Citizen Journalism for Youth

Jour-You

CITIZEN JOURNALISM ACADEMY FOR YOUTH
ERASMUS-YOUTH-2021-CB-101052000

Jour-You

CITIZEN JOURNALISM ACADEMY FOR YOUTH

ERASMUS-YOUTH-2021-CB-101052000

jour-you.eu

Guide
on
Citizen Journalism
for
Youth

Contents

Foreword

Citizen journalism has become an increasingly important aspect of the media landscape in recent years. With the rise of social media and the democratization of information, more and more individuals are taking on the role of reporters, documenting events and sharing stories that might otherwise go untold. For this reason, we have set out to explore in this guide what is the crux of citizen journalism and brought forward some of its best practices from around the world. Drawing on examples from online magazines, community journalism initiatives, investigative publications, fact-checking platforms, educational initiatives, and online safety and professional support programs, we showcase 21 examples of citizen journalism done right. We have aimed to provide a detailed analysis of each example, answering the three key questions: what makes the example great, how it is making a difference, and how it can be adopted to facilitate a deeper understanding for the reader. The examples are divided into 4 categories for easier readability and better categorization. We believe that this approach will allow the readers to gain insights into the best practices of citizen journalism from around the world and apply them to their work.

Having in mind that citizen journalism has the power to shape public discourse, hold those in power accountable, and give voice to those who might otherwise go unheard, we have decided to embark on the task of guidance not only to familiarize the reader with some of the basic concepts in the field but also to empower and inspire them to hopefully take up this important task themselves. Readers can expect to gain a comprehensive understanding of what citizen journalism is, why it matters, and what some of its principles are, as well as learn about some of the best practices in the field, how have these contributed, and how they can, as aspiring citizen journalists, adopt these practices. In conclusion, whether you are an established journalist, someone who is interested in contributing to the news-making process, someone who works in the field of journalism and wonders how to scale your own project, or simply someone who is curious to know more about the topic of citizen journalism, this guide offers practical advice and inspiration for all.

Introduction

Technological advances in recent years have come to a point where we just need to reach for our pockets or purses if we would like to submit a project for work, discover all sorts of quality entertainment and valuable information or simply check on a friend who's living on the other side of the globe. While rummaging through our emails for that updated project plan version or choosing which video to share as a story, we tend to forget that our capable **smartphones** can also turn into **a tool for transforming our communities and upholding democratic principles**. We only have to point them in the right direction and document incidents and practices that are bothersome, impactful or inspiring. There's even a term for that - **citizen journalism**. Now that **social media** platforms have become the norm for **news** distribution, **citizen reporting and bottom-up editorial** approaches are gaining more and more traction. Twitter updates, Facebook events and YouTube videos were instrumental for the organization of activists during the Arab Spring and attracted much international attention to the protests in North Africa and the Middle East. However, it should be noted that the phenomenon of non-professionals creating media-worthy content was not ushered in by the digital age as exemplified by clothing manufacturer Abraham Zapruder's video of the assassination of John F. Kennedy[1]. Recorded almost 60 years ago, this remarkable footage epitomizes citizen journalism - **a member of the audience, not a trained reporter, employs the press tools at his disposal** (a video camera) **to generate an informative piece and make a contribution to the media**.[2] In order to get a better understanding of the term and the associated practices, we need to go beyond this straightforward definition and look into the below set of characteristics.

Characteristics of Citizen Journalism[3,4,5]

- **Not driven by profit** - most citizen journalist initiatives are self-funded and/or supported with donations. Their aim is not to attract advertisers.

- **No formal training** - news and reports are created by people who do not have degrees in journalism.

- **Decentralized mode of operation, bottom-up process** - citizen journalists are not part of a defined editorial or business structure but organize themselves to circulate information exclusively from their communities and locales.

- **Wide range of viewpoints** - the involvement of average citizens in the process of creating and spreading news leads to the presentation of diverse perspectives, which are not covered by traditional media.

- **No set standards of formation or editing** - citizen journalists do not adhere to standards with regard to grammar, quoting, styling, article word count, sourcing, privacy, etc. Operating outside of the rigid boundaries of traditional reporting and news production opens up room for innovative approaches.

- **High degree of immediacy** - citizen journalists do not need to get an approval from editors or observe certain editorial policies, which enables them to report on the issues they witness right away and sometimes even stream their reports in real time.

- **Uncovering new topics for traditional media** - since most active citizens are free of corporate or other specific agendas, they readily share what they see and experience thus spotlighting community issues, which are overlooked by mainstream media.

- **Contributing to the democratization of society** - reports and livestreams of amateur journalists about various societal and institutional problems quickly reach a wide audience via social media platforms and prompt transparent actions on part of the government. This is crucial in countries where there is censorship. When access to credible sources of information is blocked, citizen journalism practices become a touchstone on the path to restoring democratic rule as they generate trustworthy news and question the tactics of the government.

Enticing as these characteristics may sound, our suggestion is to not step into the shoes of a citizen journalist before you are well familiar with the four principles developed by the Center of Citizen Media.

Principles of Citizen Journalism[6]

- **Accuracy:** Always check all the facts in your story and the credibility of your sources. Make sure to promptly correct any factual errors and update your publication with new and relevant information.

- **Thoroughness:** Acquire as much knowledge as possible on the subject you're covering and list all of your original sources.

- **Fairness:** Consider divergent viewpoints and deliver a balanced report.

- **Transparency & Independence:** Share an independent perspective on the matter explaining all biases and potential conflicts. Any direct connection with an interested party might jeopardize your objectivity.

To observe the above principles is key when practicing citizen journalism. Another vital requirement is to have a **high degree of media literacy**, which entails the ability to **access, critically analyze** and **evaluate** different aspects of **media messages** (quality, veracity, credibility) and also create meaningful **content reflecting personal experiences, ethics fundamentals** and **social responsibility**[7]. Such a long list of requirements naturally begs the question: *Why is it so important for every active citizen to occasionally become a journalist?* Well, the list of good reasons is even longer.

Why does Citizen Journalism Matter?

Citizen journalism refers to the act of non-professional individuals, who are not necessarily journalists, reporting news, events and occurrences in their communities. It is the collection, dissemination and analysis of information by the general public, which, nowadays, is done mostly through the Internet. Citizen journalism has become an important part of the news ecosystem, particularly in times of crisis, where it has shown that it has the edge over conventional media in the presentation of fast, firsthand, personal and diverse perspectives of the observed events. This means that citizen journalism does not only contribute to the democratization of society as it brings more voices into the public arena, which adds to a livelier democracy, but it also gives rise to pluralism in the media, promoting a range of perspectives to the availability of the public. As an important component of the modern media landscape, the importance of citizen journalism has been increasingly growing. Having said that here are some additional points that highlight the significance of the practice:

Draws public attention to the problems of small communities.[5] Mainstream media outlets often do not have the capacity or the editorial freedom to cover niche issues worth reporting on. That's why sometimes it is up to members of the community to publicize their struggles and demands using the resources and platforms at their disposal.

Combats fake news and disinformation. Citizen journalists have valuable inside knowledge about the processes in their communities and can easily dispel false narratives, correct fake news and counter disinformation through earnest, fact-based reporting.

Upholds key democratic principles.[3,5,7] Through their publications, citizen journalists amplify the voices of fellow community members and thus contribute to the plurality of opinions in media and promote transparency.

Champions community causes through emotional coverage. Since citizen journalists do not have to adhere to a certain editorial policy or comply with advertisers' requirements, they are free to produce emotionally-driven reports, which often resonate with a wide audience and attract support for the demands of local communities.

Adds a local perspective to widely covered issues.[5] Good citizen journalists can streamline the views of members of their communities on countrywide issues and increase the reach of fresh local perspectives, which in turn may prompt the adoption of more efficient approaches to solving certain problems.

Breaking the news before others can say "breaking news".[3,5,7] Being mobile and not dependent on production crews, citizen journalists often arrive at hotspots before representatives of mainstream media and broadcast events as they occur.

Teaches you new skills. In the process of becoming an experienced citizen journalist you enhance your critical thinking skills, learn how to recognize resource validity and understand a source's agenda, grow as a storyteller, start discerning fact from opinion, acquire skills for filtering information, learn how to research a topic thoroughly and attribute your sources, master relevant online safety practices, learn how to promote content on social media platforms and boost your audio-visual creativity among other skills and competences.

Having this in mind, it is important to note that citizen journalism is no panacea for the many problems besetting traditional journalism or conventional media outlets. Citizen journalism has its limitations, such as the potential for misinformation, lack of editorial oversight, the risk of endangering citizen journalists, lack of institutional ethic code and so on. Therefore, it is essential for citizen journalists and citizen journalism as a practice to adhere to journalistic standards and ethics, such as fact-checking, source verification and fair reporting, even though there are no strict rules or regulations governing them.

All in all, citizen journalism plays an important role in society not only with its potential to uphold democratic values, inform the public and contribute to the transparency of the media but also with its opportunity to bring local perspectives to diverse events, promote grassroots movements and "break" the breaking news sooner.

So, whether you are an inspiring journalist, a seasoned professional, or simply someone interested in the field, we encourage you to read the quotes below, which have been carefully selected to provide you with a glimpse into the world of journalism, inspire you, and help you gain a deeper understanding of what journalism is all about, be it citizen or conventional.

"Journalism, like democracy, is not something that is achieved. It is a work in progress, and not every day is as good as the last." - **John Maxwell Hamilton**

"There can be no higher law in journalism than to tell the truth and to shame the devil." - **Walter Lippmann**

"Journalism can never be silent: that is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air." **- Henry Anatole Grunwald**

As you can imagine, the world of journalism, whether citizen or conventional, is ever-changing and requires individuals to have a deep sense of what it truly means to be a journalist. Having assisted you in broadening your perspective on the importance and relevance of citizen journalism, you might feel tempted to rush to the street and scout for newsworthy content with your phone. But before you go ahead and do so, make sure to explore the specific ways you can impact as a citizen journalist through the set of best practices that we have compiled from different parts of the world and found within the following chapters.

Participating countries

Best Practices of Citizen Journalism
Online Magazines, Community Journalism & Investigative Publications

1 Citizens Channel: Reporting with the People, not for the People

◆ What's great about it?

Citizens Channel (CC) is a media NGO established in Albania and managed by young professionals, aiming to serve as a **free and uncensored space for developing citizen journalism and responsible voices** promoting **democratic values** and fundamental **human rights** and liberties.

Originally launched as a project in 2016, Citizens Channel has taken an important step of becoming an independent center in July 2018. During these two years CC has implemented **a series of projects and initiatives** focused on engaged and **community journalism**. In terms of production capacities, Citizens Channels' team strives to deliver a weekly minimum of 10 multimedia journalistic products prioritizing videos, long reads and in-depth reporting.

The CC newsroom aims to introduce **a new model** of journalism in Albania that **fills the gap** between **issues faced by regular citizens and marginalized** communities, and the reporting **priorities of mainstream media** in what remains a highly polarized information environment.

As a mission-driven media organization, CC has a manifesto of core values displayed on the homepage of its website, explaining and making transparent a commitment to not only produce high quality reports but also have an active and solution-oriented role on issues related to media freedom, labor rights of young journalists and human rights.

Citizens Channel's motto is: "Every good journalist is an activist of the truth, in favor of transparency and in the name of accountability".

Main activities of the organization include but are not limited to:

● **Digital newsroom** – operated by four journalists, one editor-in-chief and one visual editor;

● **Online capacity-building platform** – offering free e-learning modules on Multimedia, Media Literacy and Creative Activism tools;

● **Research platform** – citizens' Urban Stories aiming to map the villas that make up the cultural heritage of Tirana.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Citizens Channel's content has attracted more than 2.8 million video viewers during the past 12 months. Over 150 videos and more than 200 exclusive articles and investigations have been produced.

As a leading media engaged in community reporting, Citizens Channel is followed by several informal groups, NGOs and professional networks that regularly share and engage with the organization's content, and use it as a source of information.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

If you are to launch an online citizen journalism platform, make sure to **set solid editorial policies** and **adhere** to high **journalistic standards**. Promote **interaction between the audience and the reporters** at all times. Use **innovative approaches** and the **opportunities** that the **digital environment** offers, stay **open to novelty**.

Always keep an **eye on the cybersecurity** status of your platform and be **ready** to **counter cyberattacks**.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Citizens Channel's website

Online capacity-building platform

Urban Stories

Tirana 2031 – series of investigations about urban issues

Lo Spiegone: Bringing Longform Journalism to a Wide Audience

◆ **What's great about it?**

Lo Spiegone is an online magazine publication started by five students from the "International Relations" program at the Sapienza University of Rome with the objective to provide reliable, insightful and quality longform articles on current events and global issues that are not covered by the mainstream Italian press. Sources used in the course of a given investigation and for writing an article are always listed at the end thus building trust with readers and inspiring them to further explore the topic. Special attention is paid to the language, which is accessible to people with different levels of education and facilitates the understanding of global processes and their impact on national affairs. Often referring to their work as "slow journalism", the team behind the magazine consists of experts in the fields of law, international politics, environmental protection and economics, and capable social media specialists. All team members are driven by the principles of intellectual honesty, transparency, editorial independence, impartiality and relevance in their daily journalistic endeavors. Promotional and administrative aspects of running the online publication are managed by the non-profit organization "Lo Spiegone APS", whose stakeholders include the editorial staff and other professionals involved with the project.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Traffic to the website has been increasing constantly and is expected to reach a million visits this year. Many readers shared positive feedback about the quality of the content and were inspired to click on the sources linked at the end of the articles. Lo Spiegone's editors received a lot of invitations to specialized showcases and conferences. The success of the magazine proved to be quite influential and led to the emergence of other slow journalism publications.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Find the right niche for your project, uphold the values of intellectual honesty and integrity, and make sure that communication within the team is smooth and all people involved in the project are rewarded with a sense of ownership and belonging. Creating a community and a safe space is crucial for the construction of a close-knitted and motivated group that will sustain the daily activities of the project and actively participate in its growth and innovation.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Lo Spiegone's website

3 Binario2 Il Giornale: Strengthening the Local Community through Journalism

◆ **What's great about it?**

Binario2 Il Giornale was born within the RacaleCam Social Promotion Association. The organization, which currently operates an urban laboratory in Racale (Le), has intertwined tradition with innovation over the years. Its beginnings can be traced to a patronal feast of the town for which it launched a radio station that brings the amazing story of the local community to the world through interviews with officials, associations' representatives and citizens. The current information project Binario2 consists of an **online publication** updated weekly, **a half-yearly print publication** and **a web radio**, and is run by an **editorial team of several young people** out of Racale's old train station, which now serves as a hub of opportunities in the South. All editors are under 35 years of age and often **feature articles written by** secondary school **students**. The project's goal is to **enhance the local intangible heritage** and document the **experiences of the community in an engaging way** both online and in the newspaper "Binario2 Il Giornale - the voices of the territory".

Considering that many provincial municipalities, like the one on which Binario2 Il Giornale focuses, do not get much coverage in the news of traditional media, a **bottom-up journalistic project** helps disseminate local information and sheds light on events with a positive impact thus strengthening the community.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Binario2 Il Giornale makes local news accessible to everyone free of charge. Its print publication bridges the digital age divide by engaging senior citizens who do not feel confident using smartphone and computer devices. The entire information project stimulates young people to write, exercise their critical thinking abilities in the process of content curation, improve their collaboration skills and seek intergenerational communication to present different discussion points. Research for stories and reports often involves interactions with various members of the community and contributes to a strong sense of belonging. The editorial staff are inspired to become proficient users of digital communication tools and learn how to sustainably manage a multifaceted journalistic project. Last but not least, Binario2 Il Giornale's partnership with schools ensures coverage of educational initiatives and achievements that otherwise would not get the attention they deserve.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

In order to create a bottom-up editorial project, it is essential to **involve various national and regional actors, and professionals in different areas** who will then document and **keep alive the story of the community**. Having a **strong partnership network** will make the project more solid and sustainable.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Fundraising

Binario2 Il Giornale newspaper

About the web radio project

4 Scomodo: Young People's Informed and Engaged Take on Current Events

◆ **What's great about it?**

Scomodo is the **largest independent**, reliable and **freely distributed magazine** and **online platform** for **people under 25** years of age in Italy. Its editorial team is made up of **students** who follow a **bottom-up approach** and occasionally **collaborate with experts and partners** such as Banca Etica and Greenpeace to deliver accessible, critical and **in-depth articles** reflecting the **younger generation'**s points of **view on** topics of **political, social and cultural** relevance. Most journalistic **research** is conducted **on the ground** and includes **interviewing citizens** and personally **verifying claims** of institutions. Special **attention** is paid to environmental issues, gender issues, **psychological, social and housing problems**, discrimination phenomena, **education**, **forms of oppression**, **cultural avant-garde**, and phenomena of change.

Driven by **curiosity, courage, impartiality** and a strong belief in **democratic values** and **equal opportunities**, Scomodo aims to:

● **develop slow and printed journalism** that **fights fake news** and the **infodemic** of digital and fast journalism;

● **promote independent and critical** journalism that selects **themes not covered by mainstream media** and presents them **through a countercultural lens**;

● **encourage youth protagonism** thus challenging the dominant narrative that describes young people as lazy and incapable of shaping the reality around them.

On top of providing reliable information and in-depth analyses of current issues for free, Scomodo **realizes projects** in the fields of **social innovation** and **education**: workshops on **participative journalism**, development of territorial networks of associations, facilitating **access to psychological aid** for young people and school assistance for children.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

So far Scomodo has involved 1000 girls and boys, printed 315 000 copies, distributed almost 280 000 free of charge, opened 2 youth centers, created an ecosystem of more than 20 projects and a stable community of more than 1000 people around Italy.

Plenty of the young members of different communities were given the opportunity to express themselves, socialize with their peers and learn the basics of a vital profession, which is fundamental in times of social atomization and economic depression.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

The **advice** can be divided into **motivational** and **managerial**:

● motivational: **be brave**, have fun, do it with friends and **create a community**;

● managerial: **choose one** or maximum **two initiatives**, **engage people** both on the **design of the ideas** and **on practical tasks**. Doing stuff together creates a movement!

Keep in mind that a good marriage between **ideas, bravery and community** can **change the reality** around you.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Scomodo magazine's website

TED talk by one of Scomodo's founders

Article about Scomodo in la Repubblica

---

5 **La Politica Del Popolo:** Empowering Young People to Make Informed Decisions about Their Future

◆ **What's great about it?**

La Politica del Popolo /The Politics of the People/ is an Italian **news site managed** and **edited** by **young people** who are trying to **bring their peers closer to current events** and present **information** that's **free from any prejudice** or **political conditioning**. Different **informative pieces** are regularly **shared on all major social platforms** in order to **encourage critical thinking** in the **new generations** struggling to **find points of reference** in traditional media outlets that perceive them as yet another demography to be reached rather than as **citizens of tomorrow**. The site **covers** topics from the fields of **national and international politics**, **sports and art**, and **collaborates** with major **publishing houses** and **leading Italian newspapers** and journalists on certain projects such as the podcast "Think Freely".

The idea for the creation of La Politica del Popolo was **conceived behind the desk** of a **high school in Sicily** - the southernmost region of Italy which holds the **school dropout record** with a rate of 21.1%, almost double the national average of 12.7%.

Inspiration came from the **realization** that most of the **students were not familiar** with leading **political figures** and had very **little idea** about the **workings of the Italian political system**. In an effort to **reverse** this worrying **trend**, the site's founder Paolo Di Falco set out to **create a space** where **young people** can **find reliable information** for decisions regarding their future and get **access to** basic **journalistic training** through **practical challenges.**

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

The old version of the site has been visited more than 500,000 times. Thanks to the project many young people have found their professional paths and high school students are staying informed daily. What's more, articles on the site have attracted the attention of public figures and politicians who agreed to participate in open debates and become familiar with the viewpoints of the young editorial team.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Show initiative and **do not let** yourself be **overtaken by discouragement** or **resignation** in the face of the many difficulties that can arise. "**Union is strength**" may sound like a cliche motto but it's quite relevant when running **a daily news** project that **involves many people scattered** across different cities.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

La Politica del Popolo's website

---

6 **De Re Militari Journal:** Spreading In-Depth Knowledge about International Conflicts

◆ **What's great about it?**

De Re Militari is a Bulgaria-based **group of analysts** who follow the **development of conflicts** and political processes **around the world**. The **purpose** is to **provide** a broad audience in Bulgaria with **an in-depth understanding of the processes shaping international conflicts**. All of the work is **freely available** on the Internet and has been **used by students of political science** worldwide in their academic research, as well as by **specialists** in the field, **NGOs** and **government structures**.

The **De Re Militari Journal** is an **academic journal for conflicts, crisis areas** and **military history** founded in 2016. The journal focuses on political processes in **post-conflict situations** in **regions of importance to world politics** and **economics**, as well as in areas that have the potential to become conflict zones.

The l**eading principles** that drive De Re Militari are:

- **Reducing disinformation** in the field of international relations, security and defense, in particular military and political conflicts;
- **Raising public awareness** by **providing** up-to-date and **reliable information** according to the organization's expertise;
- **Promoting scientific and academic activity** through the publication of scientific works, reports, analyses, studies and other texts on the subject in question;
- **Creating platforms to develop intellectual discussions** by engaging different perspectives and arguments;
- **Encouraging young** talents **with interest in security, political science, and international relations** to develop their knowledge and skills.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

The team of De Re Militari attempts to deliver accurate information confirmed by a variety of sources and believes that understanding the situation on the ground is of utmost importance when trying to make sense of various global processes. A primary aspect of the journal and the brief is the combination of concise texts and precise maps, which complement each other in presenting a clear picture of a given situation. With the help of maps the team attempts to relay particular dynamics, which make a certain conflict easier to comprehend both by specialists and enthusiasts. The map section does not cover only the Middle East and North Africa regions, but also other areas where conflicts arise or are boiling.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Raise public awareness, **create platforms for social** and **political engagement**, and **promote scientific** and **academic activities** among **a broader audience**. By doing so, more regions and people can benefit from **coherent and transparent information**, contributing to the **fight against misinformation** and the **lack of an analytical view** of **international relations** and politics.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

De Re Militari Journal's website

English version of De Re Militari Journal

Interview with one of De Re Militari's founders

What's great about it?

7iber was founded in 2007 as **a citizen journalism blog** to meet a demand for news **outside** of **mainstream media**'s narratives in Jordan. Since then it has **evolved** into a **media site** and an **online magazine** that strives to **uphold** the values of **accountability, rule of law**, **human rights** and **pluralism** through in-depth **multimedia journalism**, **independent reporting**, **critical analysis** and open public **debate**. The team behind the magazine consists of 12 editors, journalists and multimedia producers who adhere to the following **guidelines**:

● **Retain the right to edit** (for spelling, punctuation and style) any work on the site to conform with the style guide;

● **Encourage contributions** of critical but respectful stories that **add value** to aspects of political and cultural debates in Jordan and the Arab world;

● **Encourage a healthy debate** and seek out **opposing opinions** in a constructive and respectful manner;

● **Accept contributions** from persons of **all faiths** and **nationalities**.

A main goal of 7iber's publications is to **help readers understand** the **context** and **dimensions** of different topics and **form opinions** based **on solid evidence** and not influenced by subjective discussions on social media.

How's it making a difference?

An investigation of Ezz Alnatour, a young contributor to 7iber.com, into the ongoing imprisonment of Jordanians who fought in Iraq during the war of 2003 led to the release of one prisoner from an Iraqi jail and inspired an advocacy campaign demanding justice for many others. In addition to producing impactful investigative reports, 7iber conducts research on Internet governance and digital rights, offers consulting and production services, and organizes training workshops on reporting, multimedia journalism and digital security.

How to adopt it?

Support the improvement of the **media landscape** in your country in order to **enable** the creation and development of **independent journalistic projects**. Set yourself **realistic objectives** and adopt a **multifaceted approach** that **engages** a variety of **relevant stakeholders**: target audiences, journalists, photographers, videographers, multimedia producers, fact-checkers, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organizations, media companies and governmental institutions. **Campaign** for the **development of specialized training** programs that aim to **enhance the capabilities** of journalists and help them **navigate** complex **digital information** streams.

Learn more and get involved:

◆ 7iber's website

Interview with 7iber's founder

8   El-Shafra: Covering All Angles to Deliver Truthful and Thought-Provoking Reports

◆ **What's great about it?**

El-Shafra is a **program** that **sheds light on global political**, **military and economic crises, analyzes social processes,** connects past events with present and future trends, and **reviews current developments** on a local, regional and international scale. Specific political, security and intelligence events are **documented using accounts of eyewitnesses** and first-hand sources to **combat** widely-spread **false information**. In-depth **research** and **auditing** of relevant **documentation** are also employed as methods for uncovering the truth about current topics. The program focuses not only on **quality journalism** but also on **content creation** and **political education** in order to **reach a large segment** of the public and **enhance its critical thinking** capabilities. Among the major **challenges** faced by El-Shafra are fighting **restrictions** to the lawful right of **access** to **public information** and finding publishing **platforms** that will effectively **engage** a new audience of **young people** who are often targeted by fake news and misinformation campaigns. Driven by their **passion** for **investigative reporting**, the program's founder, an editor with more than 10 years of **experience** in various Egyptian media outlets, and his team are taking the necessary steps to tackle these challenges as evidenced by the **popularity** and **viewership** of the **reports** they produce.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Facebook and YouTube videos created as part of the program have thousands of views and inspire members of the audience to learn more about certain issues and contact the presenter for further references and sources. At this point the Facebook page hosting El-Shafra's reports has more than 6.9 million followers.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Find out what **your superpower** is - reporting, shooting video, interviewing, managing social media, analyzing - and **team with a group of experts** in all other **fields relevant to the development** of a contemporary, **independent media platform**. Make the most of the **digital tools** at your disposal and do not let the fear of failure get in the way.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

El-Shafra's Facebook video gallery

El-Shafra's YouTube channel

Al Qatiba: Immersing the Audience in the News Production Process

◆ **What's great about it?**

Al Qatiba is a **web magazine** specializing in **investigative journalism**, **data journalism** and storytelling. Its editorial approach has **three major tenets** - **investigation**, **explanation** and **data visualization** - and delivers unique, **immersive** and interactive **content** that is also published in **dialect Tunisian** thus making complex subjects **accessible** to a larger audience. In its daily endeavors the team behind the magazine is supported by a production department, which is responsible for the audio-visual content, and a research department, which provides important strategic insights from the media sector.

Al Qatiba's **articles** and **reports** offer an **alternative perspective** on political and social **issues** in a **culturally diverse** region and aim to **defend** public and individual **freedoms** while **fighting** against **impunity**, **despotism** and corrupt practices. The magazine is managed by the organization "Taqallam for Freedom of Speech and Creativity", whose other activities include:

- **Promoting digital culture** and digital transformation;
- Supporting and **promoting best practices** in **investigative journalism** and data analysis;
- **Training journalists** and specialists in the fields of **interactive storytelling**, **design thinking**, marketing and advocacy;
- Promoting **efforts that ensure free access** to public **documents** and data;
- **Defending** the rights of **minorities**;
- Developing **digital and physical spaces** that encourage various forms of **creative expression** - drama, filmmaking, writing, music, etc.

The organization's current project focuses on the development of a freely accessible digital **platform** providing **data-driven, visually rich** and interactive **explanations** of the **mechanics** of Tunisia's **state administration**, parliament, **economy,** judicial system, **legislation** and political system to help people understand how the country works and identify potential problems.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Al Qatiba puts the public at the heart of the news production process and sheds light on obscure aspects of pressing issues in Tunisian society. Attractive presentations on social media contributed to the reach of investigative reports and helped readers discover the truth and see through misleading narratives on various topics.

Interactive visual tools proved to be quite impactful as they made large pools of government data understandable for wide audiences who were quick to pinpoint problems and plead for changes.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Set yourself the **goal** to provide **credible, engaging** and **accessible information** to the public so that the latter can **understand** how the **country works** and **demand positive changes**.

Practical **insights can be accessed** through **Al Qatiba's website** and during live sessions with members of Al Qatiba's team.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Al Qatiba's website

◆ **What's great about it?**

Nawaat is a Tunisian **independent** online **media platform**, which produces and publishes **news**, **background analyses** and **investigations** in a **variety of formats**. Powered by nearly a thousand **contributors** and a team of **professional journalists** and **bloggers**, it favors **field work** and often relies on contributions from **activists, whistleblowers** and **citizens involved** in public affairs. Nawaat's **public interest journalism** aims to **counter the dominant** narrative and **serve underprivileged** and marginalized communities by focusing on **topics** that **are rarely covered** by mainstream media. Articles and reports offer **rational** and **unbiased takes** on political developments, social phenomena, economic issues, environmental causes and cultural dynamics.

All authors and contributors adhere to the **Editorial Charter** - a document that **acknowledges** the platform's **independence** from state and **commercial interests**, commitment to the **highest editorial standards**, and **engagement** with **social justice** causes. Privacy and right of access to information are championed consistently, while any **sources of funding** are publicly **disclosed** in a timely way. Nawaat's team observes the following **principles** in its daily work:

- **Freedom of expression**, opinion and information;
- **Loyalty** to citizens;
- **Monitoring** of power;
- **Diversity** and inclusion.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Nawaat supports the freedom of expression but takes the utmost care to protect vulnerable groups and avoid causing unnecessary harm. However, the platform's team will still publish materials that illustrate existing prejudices in society as long as the reporting is based on evidence and does not perpetuate stereotypes or stigmas.

Throughout the years Nawaat's work has received numerous awards:

- The Netizen Prize, 2011;
- The EFF Pioneer Award, 2011;
- Arab eContent Award, 2012;
- OpenGovTn Media Award, 2012;
- National Union of Tunisian Journalists Award for Best Interactive Site, 2015;
- Najiba Hamrouni Maghreb Award for Journalism Ethics, 2020.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Encourage collaborations between different actors and aim to **work not only** with **journalists**, but also with **bloggers, activists** and citizens. **Take inspiration** from them about topics that should be addressed. **Establishing guidance** for authors and participants in the initiative, in the form of an Editorial Charter or a similar document, is **essential for** maintaining **integrity**. Such **guidelines** should also be **revisited** often to **ensure** they are **in line with** the current **objectives** of the organization.

Practical **insights can be accessed** through **Nawaat's website** and during live sessions with members of Nawaat's team.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:** Nawaat's website

Inkyfada:
Engaging Online Delivery
of Quality Investigative
Journalism

inkyfada

◆ **What's great about it?**

Inkyfada is an **independent, nonprofit media group** founded in 2014 and based in Tunis, Tunisia. It was created by **a team of journalists, developers, and graphic designers**, with the goal of **supporting the public interest through innovative journalistic content**. The team's efforts address the growing need for articles and news that focus on issues affecting people's lives following the Tunisian Revolution in 2011, which brought free expression to the fore but also a surplus of talk shows and unscripted opinions.

Inkyfada assumed a role as a **counter-power against injustices** that flow from the **corruption and impunity of the powers** that be. It strives to set the **standard for high-quality and justice-oriented reporting** in a media landscape inundated with incomplete and biased narratives. Committed to unearthing information concealed from the general public, Inkyfada's team places new findings against the backdrops that matter and presents them in **easy-to-consume and often interactive visual or audio forms.** Journalistic content is created through an **ongoing collaboration** across the editorial, research and development, and design departments. Diverse media and technology tools are used to **share individual stories and investigative reports** in a forward-thinking, **understandable, and empowering way**. As a result, the audience can choose from long-form exposés, explanatory articles, illustrated narratives, interactive maps, audio and video documentaries, photo essays, podcasts, and more.

With a particular focus on investigation, contextualization, and data visualization, Inkyfada's content **helps people understand** and engage in the **politics that impact** their lives. Moreover, Inkyfada promotes freedom of the press and freedom of expression, provides independent and useful information to citizens, and contributes to the **reinvention of the relationship between creators** of informative content and **citizens**. On top of that, the group develops technological tools facilitating citizen participation and access to educational materials about media and techniques for producing informative content.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Inkyfada uses technology, innovation and creativity to produce news in an engaging way. The organization carries out investigations and publishes stories under multiple socially relevant topics: borders and migration, Tunisia's politics, gender-based violence, agriculture and food, rights and freedoms, access to healthcare and environmental challenges. Also shared are explanatory or contextualization articles providing simpler answers on different questions.

Additionally, as an advocate of inclusive storytelling, Inkyfada was the first media group in Tunisia to write exclusively with gender-sensitive language on the French version of its platform.

The editorial staff and R&D department (InkyLab) co-designed **the inku.be tool** - a publishing platform that enables journalists to independently integrate multimedia content onto their online outlets. It is built to accommodate diverse and ever-evolving types of journalistic content. Inku.be has become an integral component of Inkyfada's business model and has been adopted by online editors around the world.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

In brief - **utilize all creative and technological resources** at your disposal. Providing news and investigations in an attractive way makes it easier for readers to consume the information on their screens. So, if you are to start an online publication, make sure to **assemble an agile team of professionals with expertise in different fields** - graphic designers, developers, researchers, data analysts, video editors, motion designers.

Practical **insights can be accessed** through **Inkyfada's website** and during live sessions with members of Inkyfada's team.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Inkyfada's website

Insights about the practice

Best Practices of Citizen Journalism
Fact-checking Platforms

| 1 | **Faktoje:** Fact-Checking as Means of Combating Disinformation | Faktoje.al |

◆ What's great about it?

Faktoje is an Albanian **fact-checking media service** that promotes **accountability** based on the **right to information and transparency**. Fact-checking or fact verification is a **modern, identifiable category of journalism**. It aims at ensuring an accurate and unbiased analysis of public statements in order to **correct misconceptions and increase public knowledge** of important matters. Social media has broadened the sources of information and thus the construction of narratives, and also undermined the role of journalists as truth-tellers. That's why fact-checking is very important for it can influence the public and mobilize political opinions. Faktoje's **team** is composed of **editors and journalists**, who focus on **verifying statements, promises and actions** of public officials and major institutions in the country. In their daily work all team members adhere to the following principles:

● **Impartiality and Integrity:** Neither the staff, nor the contributors are affiliated with any political parties, officials or candidates. Editors do not take sides in political debates on any issues except for transparency, accuracy and information integrity. Statements and promises of politicians, public officials and entities benefiting from public funds to be fact-checked are selected based on the impact they have on citizens' life. Fact-checking is carried out according to a methodology, which is outlined in the "About Us'' section of the platform's official website. Faktoje aims at maintaining a balance and verifying statements and promises of the political sphere (government and opposition) representatives and other public institutions. The conclusions drawn are based on evidence at all times. From its foundation onwards, current and future staffers of Faktoje are required not to engage in political activities.

● **Editorial Independence:** Funders play no role in the choice of claims the platform checks and have no influence over how the work is done. Faktoje.al alone has full responsibility for all editorial decisions. The team verifies every claim equally - regardless of whether or not they may overlap or conflict with the interests of our funders.

Faktoje has been part of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) as a signatory member since January 2020 and part of the Anti-Disinformation Network in

the Balkans since April 2020. The organization is also Albania's trusted partner for a fake news verification program of Meta Platforms.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

The impact of the work is not only on the Albanian public, but also that of the Western Balkans, as Faktoje is involved with several regional projects that focus on the fight against disinformation and fake news. On top of that, members of the organization's team have trained 300 young people in 9 areas of the country on media literacy, fact-checking methodologies and techniques to distinguish fake news, and participated in the Fact-Checking course at the Department of Journalism of the University of Tirana. Faktoje trains a network of over 30 local journalists in 15 cities every year.
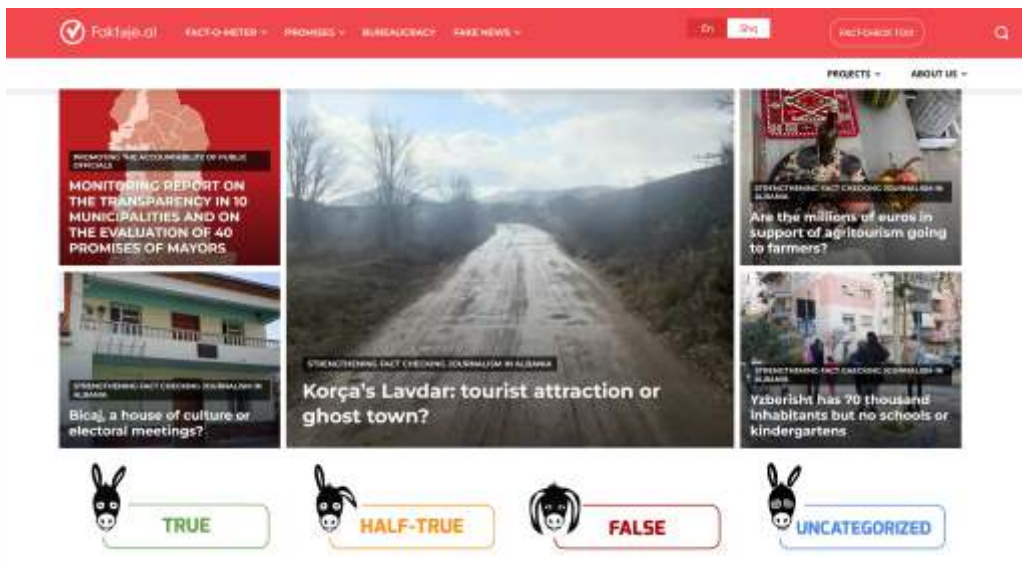
◆ **How to adopt it?**

Before starting a fact-checking service/website, it is better to **explore** their **modes of operation and methodology** on the ICFN website. One of the **procedures Faktoje's** team **follows** in its operations is presented below:

All potential claims are considered first in editorial meetings. The discussion includes probable conflicts, best journalistic approaches to the issue, finding information and assigning a journalist to work on the topic. The reporter discusses with the editor the sources, experts, visual materials and general structure of the article. Once the journalist completes the article, the editor reviews the text for clarity and accuracy before giving a green light for publication.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

[Faktoje's official website in English](#)

2 Faktograf: Fostering International Fact-Checking Partnerships to Reach a Wider Audience

FAKTOGRAF.HR

◆ **What's great about it?**

[Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public](#) is the publisher of the Faktograf.hr portal, the only medium in Croatia that **specializes in fact-checking**. The purpose of Faktograf.hr is to **evaluate the accuracy and validity** of the **statements** of Croatian politicians, as well as other **publicly relevant political actors**, and to **prevent an unfounded position** stated enough times in public discourse from **gaining the status of fact**. The team behind the portal strives to **counter misinformation** in the public space and develop a relevant non-profit media space where **political life** in Croatia is **covered by professional and ethical journalism**, **devoid of the influence** of various particular interests.

Faktograf signed the strengthened [Code of Practice on Disinformation](#) in June 2022 and is a member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), The European Fact-Checking Standards Network ([EFCSN](#)) and Meta's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program. On a regional level the association is one of the founding members of [SEE Check](#) – network of 6 organizations from 5 countries in South-Eastern Europe that work on the promotion of media accountability, improving media literacy and fighting misinformation and disinformation.

In their daily work Faktograf.hr's journalists and editors adhere to the following principles and policies:

- **Non-partisanship and Fairness**
- **Standards and Transparency of Sources**
- **Transparency of Funding and Organization**
- **Standard and Transparency of Methodology**
- **Open and Honest Corrections Policy**

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Faktograf selects topics by following media reports and public discussions on social networks and tries to respond to its readers' queries as much as possible. Prioritized are topics of public interest and misinformation campaigns endangering public health or serving to manipulate electoral processes. When checking and assessing accuracy, Faktograf.hr's team uses the following types of sources: official sources (data and announcements of public institutions and other public authorities), scientific research, data from civil society and international organizations, opinions of relevant experts and media sources. Digital tools to track sources and verify data are also being used. Information from anonymous and untraceable sources is not considered.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Start by looking at other already **established fact-checking websites** - PolitiFact, FactCheck and The Washington Post's Fact Checker were role models for Faktograf's initiative. A **review of best practices** will help creators **assess what is needed** to provide **objective and ethical information** to the public. Additionally, seeking **help from fact-checking organizations** around the region would ease the implementation process. Finally, remaining **transparent with the readers** is a key factor for success.

For example, newsrooms that make up the regional SEE Check network have been informing the public daily about the latest disinformation in the region since the beginning of the Russian invasion using a joint Live blog about the war in Ukraine. **Cross-border cooperation** and **knowledge sharing** is key to our success as a network.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Faktograf's portal

IFCN's Code of Principles

---

3 **Demagog:** Fact-Checking to Protect the Public from Harmful Disinformation

))) DEMAGOG

◆ **What's great about it?**

The Demagog Association is the first **fact-checking organization** in Poland and a member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFN). The Association's primary goal is to **improve the quality of public debate** by providing **citizens** with **impartial and reliable information**. Guided by the principles of **openness, apoliticality, objectivity and professionalism**, the team behind Demagog has been **verifying statements and promises** of politicians on their website since 2014.

The Association also spreads the idea of fact-checking in Poland. As part of the fight against fake news, Demagog **conducts workshops** and implements **educational projects** aimed at **young people**, such as the **Fact-Checking Academy**.

Demagog's **mission** is to provide **citizens** with **access to reliable, variable and unbiased information** about **politics, journalism and science**. The association aspires to **fight fake news** and **disinformation** and increase the quality of public debate. In doing so, Demagog also facilitates the creation of a society that makes **decisions based on facts**.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Demagog employees use various tools to monitor publicly shared information.

Statements made by politicians are verified using a qualitative approach split into four steps: sampling statements, checking information using publicly available sources, rating every statement, and, if relevant, correcting mistakes after publishing. Therefore, Demagog does not only correct politicians but also shows their own mistakes and teaches citizens how to be critical when informing themselves through the media. Other activities include supporting and educating citizens about the potential involvement in local movements and international organizations like the EU. Additionally, Demagog is further developing fact-checking methods, establishing watchdog activities and facilitating the protection of civil liberties. The Fact-Checking Academy has a goal of educating more than 4000 people on the issues of disinformation and fake news through various workshops.

Overall, The Demagog Association and its projects have had a visible impact on Poland. This became especially evident during elections, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war on Ukraine. Besides, Demagog has joined Facebook's fact-checking program alongside more than 50 other independent organizations, which made it easier for the team to track and debunk misinformation spread around social media.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Combating the dangerous influence of fake news and providing citizens with access to facts is something that every country should focus on. Demagog's team uses **public resources** to accomplish these goals. The same type of information is most likely **freely available** in other countries, making it easy to adopt the model. **Creating a community** that **holds** itself and others **accountable** is the key to the success of such a non-profit, as it **sets higher standards about news** in the minds of citizens.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Demagog's website

Interview with one of Demagog's editors

Article about Demagog's inclusion in Facebook's fact-checking program

4 Factcheck.Bg: Supporting Journalists and the Public with Verified Information on Key Issues

factcheck.bg

◆ **What's great about it?**

Factcheck.bg is the only **web platform** in Bulgaria **dedicated solely to fact-checking**, an initiative of the Association of European Journalists-Bulgaria (AEJ). In May 2021 the Association assembled **a team of non-partisan professional journalists** to **counter** the increasing pollution of Bulgaria's information environment by **misinformation and disinformation**. The project's objective is to **check claims** about **topics of public interest** with significant potential **social impact** according to the highest **standards of professional journalism**. To maximize impact, the project focuses on **helping Bulgarian journalists** differentiate **facts from falsehoods** on **social media**, traditional media, **public statements** by officials and other information sources. The **articles** on the site are also meant to **inform Bulgarian citizens** who are interested in **news and public affairs** and seeking answers to other **questions of social significance**.

Factcheck.bg aims to **help** the public make their own **informed choices on pressing issues** such as the **elections** of political leaders, **public health** during a global pandemic and upholding **human rights** obligations. **Decisions** about which claims to check, how they are checked and how the fact checks are written **are made jointly** by the **journalists** and the **editor**.

The leading principles that drive Fackcheck.bg are:

● **Impartiality and Integrity:** The team is completely non-partisan and neither staff, nor contributors are affiliated with any political parties, officials or candidates. They employ constant vigilance to maintain awareness of bias and avoid favoring any side of any issue.

● **Editorial Independence:** Factcheck.bg alone has full responsibility for all editorial decisions. The team verifies every claim equally - regardless of whether or not they may overlap or conflict with the interests of funders.

● **Transparency of Methodology:** The team prioritizes the claims they check based on a combination of three factors: appearing dubious on the surface; having a potential significant social impact because of the subject matter or the speaker's public position or influence; reaching a wide audience based on the number of engagements on social media or size of the television, radio or print media market.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Factcheck.bg supports the efforts of Bulgarian journalists to offer media audiences quality information by checking claims made in social media, traditional media, public statements by officials and elsewhere. By providing verified, reliable

information on topics which are frequent targets of disinformation campaigns, the platform also acts as a source of information for citizens interested in news and public affairs, and those seeking answers to other questions of social significance.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Within the framework of the **"Fact Check: Creating the Community" project**, implemented by the Association of European Journalists-Bulgaria, **a guide to fact-checking** in the **digital environment** was created and **can be accessed** here

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Factcheck.bg's platform

Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria's website

---

5 | **Ellinika Hoaxes:** Communal Action against Fake News and Manipuated Content Online

◆ **What's great about it?**

Ellinika Hoaxes /Hellenic Hoaxes/ was founded in 2013 in Greece as the first **web portal coordinating efforts to verify** the truthfulness of **news** and **claims in** the **media** and **social networks**. The editorial team behind the project consists of **professionals** with experience in **identifying and debunking myths**, fake news, **fake videos, manipulated photos** and **other hoaxes** spread **online**. Main **tools** employed by the team include **research**, **data collection from reliable sources** and data **evaluation.** Given that a particular task can range from checking an image to find out if it's edited or not, to checking pseudo-medical claims, or even checking and explaining a draft law, there is no single methodology that is appropriate in all cases. On a weekly basis, a **few dozen to hundreds** of **requests** are received **for fact-checking**, either through messages on the Facebook page or in a dedicated Facebook group. The latter has been set up with the main purpose of **educating users on ways to check claims** and is run by the team members. Some claims cannot be verified immediately or are verified in the future once the necessary evidence becomes available. **Priority** is given to **requests from followers** of the page, widely **circulated misinformation** pieces on **sensitive topics**, and **claims targeting** specific individuals and **vulnerable groups**.

Ellinika Hoaxes is subject to annual **transparency, impartiality and sponsorship audits**, has **no affiliation** with any media and **contributes** regularly to **Meta's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program**. In addition to that the portal is a **member** of the **European Digital Media Observatory** and the **International Fact-Checking Network**.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Ellinika Hoaxes is often a reference point in domestic writing because of the portal's reliability in cross-referencing news. Members of Ellinika Hoaxes' team have been invited many times to TV and radio shows to talk about the phenomenon of fake news and ways of dealing with it. Certain publications on the website have even been discussed in parliament.

Currently Ellinika Hoaxes is taking the next big step in the fight against fake news by creating the first Greek browser extension, which alerts readers in real time how credible the site they're visiting is. It displays a specific warning depending on the reliability category the website falls in: satire, conspiracy theories, pseudoscience, misinformation, clickbait and hate rhetoric.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

When developing a fact-checking portal, **onboard experts** in **as many fields as possible** and **prioritize reader's suggestions** for claims to be investigated. Proactively **analyze viral statements** and information **pieces that can have harmful consequences**, **concern public health** and pressing **current affairs**, and **undermine democratic processes** and human values.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

[Ellinika Hoaxes' website](#)

6	**Fatabyyano:** Fighting Disinformation In The Middle East Through Online Engagement

◆ **What's great about it?**

Fatabyyano is an **independent** Arabian **fact-checking platform** founded by the 25-year-old YouTuber and medical student Dr. Moath Al Taher with the purpose of **fighting fake news** and misinformation, and **educating a new generation** of active citizens with **heightened critical consciousness**. The platform **covers 20 countries** in the **conflict-ridden Middle East**, where Internet users are exposed to **big waves of news** daily, and provides **reliable information** in **6 different languages** besides Arabic. The latter is possible thanks to the efforts of an **expert team** of **researchers**, **academics**, **media professionals** and **web developers** among others. Fatabyyano's employees and interns have **no political affiliations** and observe the **following principles**:

● Fairness and Impartiality;

● High Professional Standards and Transparency of Sources;

● Transparency of Funding and Organization;

- Standard and Transparency of Methodology;
- Open and Honest Corrections Policy.

Regardless of the political and socio-economic context, the platform aims to highlight the **dangerous consequences of fake news** (hate speech, partisan violence) and the importance of developing a **critical thinking mindset** and **checking the truthfulness** of content **before sharing** it. Fatabyyano is an **esteemed regional partner** of Meta's **Third-Party Fact-Checking Program** and works to **improve the quality** of **news on Facebook** by implementing steps to **review and** rate the accuracy of stories, including photos and videos that appear in users' news feeds.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Fatabyyano has a total of more than 1 000 000 Arabic-speaking followers across various social media channels. The platform's video show has been translated into 6 languages, is followed by 500 000 people and has generated 4 000 000 views so far. Currently, the editorial team is producing a new show called Fatabyyano TOON, which caters to younger audiences and has more than 10 episodes.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Creating an **interactive community** of **professionals** (researchers, data analysts, developers, journalists, social media managers) plays **a key role** when it comes to **transferring** and spreading **good fact-checking practices** and **designing user-friendly guidelines** and **tools** for **verifying** the authenticity and truthfulness of widely-distributed pieces of information and news.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Fatabyyano's website

Conseils de journalistes feature on Fatabyyano

Article about Fatabyyano in Daily News Egypt
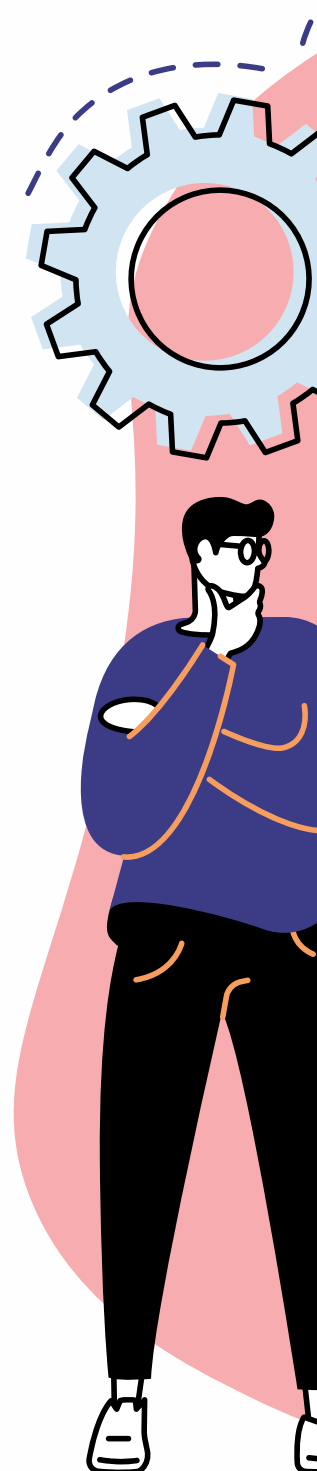
Best Practices of Citizen Journalism
EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

1 **Media and Information Literacy:**
Educating a Responsible and
Critical Young Audience

◆ What's great about it?

The aim of the project is to **enhance youth's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) skills** through introduction of MIL in the **formal educational system** in Albania. To make that happen a step-by-step, comprehensive process was followed. The process resulted in **curricula adaptation in 20 schools and the design of teacher training modules**; training of trainers; teacher's training; mentors training and the piloting of MIL modules in all the subjects in pre-university education.

240 teachers have been trained to use MIL curriculum in the classroom in three stages: a) as a **methodology to access information**; b) as a methodology to **improve critical thinking** skills amongst students; c) as a methodology to **stimulate content creation** and expression amongst students.

The project came about as a **response to** the rapid digital transformation and the thriving of information disorders characterized by a decline in the observance of journalistic standards, the **spread of disinformation**, and a **decline in** civil society's **trust in media**. Guiding principles throughout the project's execution in Albania are **inclusiveness and diversity** - stakeholders at regional, national and international level are involved, and a wide range of topics are covered.

◆ How's it making a difference?

Around 9,828 students from 20 schools in Tirana, Durres, Elbasan and Lezha have benefited from the Project and have gained more knowledge in the MIL field. The results of an external evaluation by independent researchers indicate the following:

● **97.1%** of the teachers acknowledge that mentoring has been helpful to better understand the integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the curriculum;

● **50.6%** of the teachers confirm MIL trainings should be offered to all teachers;

● **52%** of students find MIL very important for their education;

● **46%** of students confirm MIL has helped them in everyday life, and **38%** - in academic subjects.

Educational Initiatives

Utilizing technology in the classroom is an incentive for students to be involved and engage more compared to the cases where traditional forms of teaching/learning are used (textbooks and explanations on a chalkboard).

◆ **How to adopt it?**

First and foremost, know the **local context**, **evaluate the needs of the target-group** and try to **design the intervention** having those needs in mind. **Involve beneficiaries** in every step of the process. **Engage** as many **stakeholders relevant** to the initiative as possible. Keep in mind that long-term **investments in school infrastructure** and **media laboratories** (equipped with computers, projectors, internet access, a library of relevant titles, audio and video aids, etc.) are a must. **Maintain a network of trained educators** so that project **knowledge** and experience can be **easily transferred** to new **partners**.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

[Project website](#) (contains position paper on MIL, training modules for teachers, MIL-related resources and online courses from IREX and CFI among other materials)

[Framework initiative](#)

[AMI article on integrating MIL in educational programs](#)

◆ **2** **Open Source Handbook:**
Empowering Journalists to
Produce Amazing Content

Open Source Handbook
For Journalists

◆ **What's great about it?**

The project focuses on **supporting and enhancing the capabilities** of journalists and the media from a **technical** and **technological standpoint**, in which significant shortcomings have been detected over the past years in the Arab region. These shortcomings have affected the growth of media organizations, the development of journalists and their competitiveness at the international level. Also negatively impacted has been the quality of media content.

Therefore, the main goal was to create a new **opportunity for media professionals** and **institutions** to **benefit from technologies** in development and **content improvement** in order to achieve sustainability and enhance the income of Arab journalists. All activities of the project serve the following vision: "Make journalists and Arab institutions able to **compete globally** in terms of **development, creativity and quality of content**."

In addition to organizing advanced **training workshops** that directly **support**

journalists and institutions and **provide them with innovative solutions** to various problems, the project's team adapts **useful tools and databases into Arabic**, and cooperates with private companies to **grant journalists free access to paid versions** of relevant **software**. Special **attention** is dedicated to approaches and instruments for **strengthening digital security** and **safeguarding privacy online.**

Future initiatives include building a fact-checking search engine and creating a new toolkit that will help journalists obtain valuable data and track movements of suspicious funds and shell companies.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

More than 100 free training sessions have been conducted for male and female journalists, and institutions in the Arab region. These sessions focused on modern technological tools and obtaining information through open sources.

A series of 10 trainings was organized in partnership with the Google News Initiative, the Humanitarian Journalism Foundation in Yemen, the Iraqi Network for Social Media, the Faculty of Mass Communication at Ahram Canadian University, and the Bernays Media Company in Bahrain.

About 800 journalists were equipped with various software applications for free, and a digital literacy initiative for media professionals was launched covering topics such as techniques for media development, automated management of social media, product marketing and digital security tools.

The project won the Innovation Challenge at Google in the Middle East, Africa and Turkey in competition with 435 other entries, which inspired the team for 14 new undertakings that utilize proprietary AI solutions to facilitate the work of journalists.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Carefully **review the media system** in your country with **a team of experts** and **identify problem areas**. **Partner** with public institutions, international organizations, media companies, professional associations and other stakeholders **to design a comprehensive program** that addresses the most pressing issues. **Engage with journalists** to get an in-depth understanding of their **needs and grievances** so that you can find the right remediation and transformation solutions.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Open Source Handbook's Facebook page

3 **Media Literacy Coalition:** Integrating Media Literacy into Educational Programs through Targeted Campaigns

◆ **What's great about it?**

The **Media Literacy Days campaign** is organized by the Media Literacy Coalition in Bulgaria and has had five editions up to 2022. The 2022 edition of the campaign focused mainly on **the role of teachers**, **formal and informal education** and lifelong learning.

Usually, Media Literacy Days starts on the International Safer Internet Day. The campaign **lasts about 5 months** and includes **online training and courses for mentors**, **teachers and students** as well as for **elderly people in small settlements**; competitions for teachers; **webinars** for parents; **disinformation and fact-checking initiatives**; presentation of **new educational content** and the **first national testing of students' digital media literacy skills** following a methodology developed by the Media Literacy Coalition (in 2022). Schools and other organizations are free to join at any time and can use **ready-made programs on media literacy** to create their own events or promote the campaign. A primary goal of the campaign is **integrating media literacy into the educational process** and **improving the media literacy** of society as a whole. The latter contributes to the **development of critical thinking skills** and **creativity** not only among **children and young people** growing up in the digital age but also **among other age groups** across Bulgaria.

Currently, The Media Literacy Days campaign is **supported by a wide range of organizations, institutions and media outlets** - Bulgarian Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, United States Embassy, Lachezar Tsotsorkov Foundation, UNICEF, America for Bulgaria Foundation, Municipality of Sofia and OFFNews.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

The impact of Media Literacy Days is nationwide. It includes events in many Bulgarian cities and rural areas targeting students, teachers, mentors, journalists and the elderly. Through the campaign, the Media Literacy Coalition manages to improve digital and media literacy skills and knowledge within the educational system, thus, the whole Bulgarian society. A large pool of resources is made available to educational institutions and organizations who are willing to take part in the campaign.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Transferring practices from the Media Literacy Days initiative to other countries and regions requires **support from government institutions** regulating the field of **education, media partners** and **journalists**. The **format** of such campaigns may vary from **digital media literacy classes** and **training courses** for teachers, students and mentors to **workshops and practical sessions** with **elderly** populations or **disadvantaged** groups.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Media Literacy Coalition's website
Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria's website

4 Psaloroco: Promoting Media Literacy through Film

◆ **What's great about it?**

The Psaroloco Media Literacy Project was launched in Greece in 2010 and is managed by the non-profit organization KYKLOS. It features an expertly curated program of **cinema screenings** aimed at **children and teenagers** as well as a series of group **workshops** in which children **create short films** (fiction, documentary, stop motion animation, etc.). Another initiative of the project is the **Psaroloco Ed. classroom**, whose curriculum is designed to provide **meaningful engagement with the arts, support media literacy, and improve critical thinking skills**. As a whole, the project promotes **enhancement of critical thinking** and **the ability to deconstruct images** by familiarizing novice and vulnerable audiences with the basic **terms of the cinematic experience** through a showcase of films, seminars, audiovisual experiences, exhibitions and workshops at The Psaloroco International Film Festival for Children & Young People and other events. **School teachers** are integrated in the process and utilize specially prepared **educational resources** and programs to act as **primary agents of audiovisual literacy**.

A key priority of Psaroloco is **reaching geographic areas** of Greece with **limited** or no contact with media and information literacy. The creation of close and organic relationships with people in these communities is being worked on year by year and the aim is to strengthen it.

Since its establishment Psaroloco has **collaborated** with the **SOS Children's Village** of Greece and the **non-profit Tandem** NGO for experiential workshops at the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities of Attica (K.A.A.A.P.A.A.A., formerly P.I.K.P.A.A. Voula).

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Access to the educational program is open to all through the official website, which enables young and old alike to search and explore it. The positive impact on educators, parents, film clubs, library staff and young filmmakers is visible from the invitations and enquiries received from all over the world. Implementation of the program increased student participation and mutual understanding in the classroom. There was a marked improvement in critical thinking skills, observation-attention skills, search for meaning and ability to distinguish relationships between different domains. On top of that, the Psaloroco Media Literacy Project was among the winners at UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Awards 2021.

Activities of the project raised awareness about Sustainable Development issues and put them on the agenda of teachers while promoting free thinking, participation in the democratic process, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights including the rights of minorities.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

The Psaroloco Media Literacy Project **provides all the educational resources** in English **free of charge** through the official project page. Collaboration with institutions, organizations, academics and creators from other regions through **joint training and research programs** helps to develop thematic approaches and new techniques.

● Educational kit based on the animated film "For Mother" by Dina Velikovskaya with themes: mother, family, love, mutual support, interculturalism. Suggested age: 10-12+

Link: https://www.psaroloco.org/about-a-mother

● Educational kit based on the film "Fox" by Jacqueline Lentzou with themes: adulthood, family, childhood, conflict. Suggested age: 14+

Link: https://www.psaroloco.org/education-kit-fox

● Educational kit based on the film "Thermost 6" by Maya Av-Ron & Marion Coudert & Mylene Cominotti & Sixtine Dano with themes: climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals. Suggested age: 12+

Link: https://www.psaroloco.org/thermostat-6-climate-change-sdgs

● Educational kit "Let's get real" with the theme: the exploration of documentary filmmaking. The educational kit allows students to learn the visual language required to tell a story through this form and understand the selection process involved in telling a story. Suggested age: 12-16+

Link: https://www.psaroloco.org/memory-%CE%B9-let-s-get-real

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Films by themes / age groups

Psaloroco's film festival

◆ **What's great about it?**

Netwerk Mediawijsheid (The Dutch Media Literacy Network) is a **network** consisting of **more than a thousand organizations** working **together to create a media-literate** Dutch **society**. These are educational institutions, cultural institutions, researchers, ICT companies, media platforms, etc. All of them bring something different, a new perspective to the dialogue. Established as an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the network **facilitates sharing of knowledge** and **collaboration** to implement activities that **promote media literacy**. Providing such education is crucial for a well-functional democratic society. It exposes people to the **opportunity media** can offer as well as the **risk associated** with it.

The network launched a multi-year plan in 2019 with the mission 'Everyone media literate'. To achieve this, the organization focuses on **three main activities**: raising **awareness and pointing the way**, anchoring in **practice and policy**, and building a **reinforcement and activation** network. Using its biggest strength, the **shared knowledge**, **expertise and resources**, awareness of the **importance of media literacy** is brought through **campaigns**, initiatives, projects, **tools** and **models**.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

In 2010, the Media Literacy Week campaign was launched. Every year the theme is different: the media education of young people (2011), influence of media on people's lives (2012), the rights to media literacy (2014), distinguishing between facts, fake news, and misinformation (2016), digital balance (2020). The campaign targets young adults and provides tips and information on different topics, with the 2022 discussion being on the simulation of online social behavior.

The public website Mediawijsheid.nl provides information about the safe and smart use of digital media. It has multiple sections from which a person can navigate and choose, including how to deal with problems arising from social media usage, disinformation and how to be safe online. The website has more than 450,000 visitors every year.

The network has also focused on the growing problem of disinformation. As such the website Isdaechtzo.nl was developed to inform users about the spread of fake news, how it works and how to indicate whether the information is reliable or not.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Most young adults have grown up around the digital world yet are unaware of

how to seize such opportunities or protect themselves. Such initiatives on improving media literacy are the key to a well-functioning society. Netwerk Mediaijsheid, as a **best practice**, relies on **collaboration**. Trying to **meet, work and connect** with as **many partners**, with a **similar desire for media education**, as possible. The **larger** the **network** is, the **bigger** the **impact** that can be achieved is.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Netwerk Mediawijsheid's website

Web portal dedicated to the safe and smart use of digital media

Initiative targeting fake news and disinformation

Best Practices of Citizen Journalism
ON-LINE SAFETY
& PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

1 Digital Citizenship and Cyber Extortion Prevention: Learning How Stay Informed and Safe Online

◆ **What's great about it?**

The initiative was launched in 2021 by the Arabic Network for Digital Media and Human Rights **in response** to quite a few **worrying trends**: the spread of **fake news**, the emergence of **a suicide phenomenon** among young girls **extorted online**, and the decline in the **credibility of some news** websites in Egypt.

Self-financed by members of the Network, it consists of a series of **online training seminars** for journalists, media professionals and media students **on the usage of fact-checking tools** and the multiple **facets of digital citizenship**. In addition to that, the initiative raised **awareness about cyberbullying and cyber extortion** with **dedicated videos** presenting ways to **support victims** of these malicious practices.

The organization behind the initiative - the Arabic Network for Digital Media and Human Rights, was founded by a **journalist** with **20 years of experience** and two **university professors**, and has been dedicated to **promoting human rights**, supporting the freedom of expression and **educating** the public about the **benefits of digital citizenship** tools since 2019.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

A large number of followers of the Network's accounts on social media requested to attend seminars and workshops so that they can learn more about the types of cyber extortion and the means of providing help to victims. Members of the Network's team evaluate the salience of their practices on a regular basis by reviewing feedback from participants in the initiative. Based on the results from every review improvements are made and new approaches are introduced.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Pinpoint the **role of social media in spreading rumors** and **incorrect information**, and **tackle certain aspects** of the problem by **onboarding influencers** who are popular among young people, **innovative** and **willing to employ professional journalistic practices** in the **production of content** for the purposes of your project. Always **consider**

the **opinions of Gen Z** and do not overlook the **unconventional solutions** they offer as these often prove **very effective** in addressing **wrongful media practices** online.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

Boosting digital literacy

Prevention of cyberbullying and cyber extortion

---

2 | **International Media Support:** Helping Journalists In Countries Hit By Conflicts And Political Crises

IMS

◆ **What's great about it?**

International Media Support (IMS) is an international non-profit organization that **supports local media** in **countries** affected by **armed conflict, authoritarian rule and political transition**. IMS is committed to **safeguarding freedom of expression** and international **human rights** standards endorsed by the international community. It acts as a **support** mechanism for **professional peers**, **independent media**, and other **media-related institutions**. The organization **encourages press freedom**, **saves journalists' lives** and paves the way for **good journalism** and reliable information for everyone.

Today, IMS **operates in more than 30 countries**, where there is **a risk for sustaining independent media** due to humanitarian or political crises, authoritarian regimes and armed conflicts. As the motto of IMS states *Good journalism. Better societies*, IMS pushes for **quality journalism**, **challenges repressive** laws and **keeps media workers** of all genders **safe** so that they can do their jobs. The organization has adopted **several guiding principles**:

● IMS shall act **in the public interest** and maintain its **independence** from governments, for-profit corporations, donors and political organizations;

● IMS shall be **sensitive to the moral values**, religion, customs, traditions, and culture of the communities it works in.

● IMS aims to **work beyond the borders of politics**, religion, culture, race and ethnicity and **with organizations** and individuals that **share common values** and objectives.

● IMS strives to ensure that media development **initiatives are shaped by** both international **human rights** standards and **the priorities of every country** where the organization operates.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Good Journalism

IMS seek to support local media and the content it provides by:

● Providing training in good reporting and journalism genres such as investigative journalism;

● Developing training materials, including handbooks and trainers' guides on best practices models;

● Developing the media business structures through capacity building of staff, income generation through advertisement and sales, and development of intelligent distribution techniques;

● Strengthening the links between media, civil society, humanitarian organizations and academia to expand media's access to information;

● Supporting the production of documentary film as an alternative platform for marginalized voices and views upon issues seldom covered in mainstream media.

Safety of Journalists

As part of IMS's work to support the building of national safety mechanisms for journalists with buy-in from local, national and international partners, the approach to safety for journalists combines specialist training with practical safety measures and advocacy for safer media working environments.

Press Freedom

In countries where press freedom is restricted, IMS collaborates with local media partners to promote laws that ensure better working conditions for journalists by advocating for freedom of expression on traditional and digital platforms and pushing for the adoption of improved media laws.

Global Agenda

IMS also addresses global issues that influence the development of free media, such as poverty, corruption, migration, and radicalisation.

Documentary Film

IMS works with independent filmmakers from around the world to develop new projects, connect with the film industries and enable collaborative storytelling that creates impact and contributes to social, political and cultural developments.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

For adopting a similar practice, the **most important elements of good journalism** should be **evident**. Those include providing **content that is ethical, topical, critical** and **of public interest,** ensuring unbiased and **objective reporting**. Citizens need accurate information to make decisions about themselves and their communities.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

International Media Support's website

3 Sophism: Combating Hate Speech Through Awareness and Education

SOpHiSM

◆ **What's great about it?**

The Centre for European Constitutional Law (CECL) along with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), EDEX – Educational Excellence Corporation Ltd (University of Nicosia) and the Hellenic League for Human Rights are implementing the project entitled SOpHiSM as a **response to online hate speech** - a **growing problem** in Greece and Cyprus which can be attributed to societal attitudes towards specific groups, the evolution of online media and lack of awareness and of appropriate tools to counter hate speech. Professional and citizen journalists are **producing content** containing **hate speech** both **intentionally**, to gain visibility, and **unintentionally**, because they are **not in a position** to effectively **recognize** it. The project aims to **support high quality** journalism in Greece and Cyprus through the **enhancement of media literacy skills** of **professional** and **citizen journalists** (bloggers, social media influencers), and **help journalists** promptly **recognize** online **hate speech patterns** and **produce anti-hate** speech **journalism**. It also aims to **increase awareness** of the general **public** about online hate speech features via an online campaign following a **bottom-up and participatory approach** through the establishment of a **youth-led alliance** consisting of citizen and professional journalists. Among the other objectives of the project are **building a digital library** on online hate speech in Greece and Cyprus, and development of **tools** that will **target specific** instances of hate speech.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

Participants in the training activities and members of the youth-led alliance benefited from high quality, targeted learning materials and tools, and gained practical experience on the topic of online hate speech, which constitutes a relatively new challenge not adequately addressed in the curricula of Greek and Cypriot schools of journalism.

Almost 400 journalism students, young journalists and citizen journalists participated in online seminars (including theoretical and practical sessions) in Greece and Cyprus, focusing on hate speech and discussing the deep social roots of the phenomenon, its articulation in the public sphere and ways of avoiding to articulate hate speech. The activity's mid- and long-term impact is tied to its sustainable elements and concerns the availability of the learning materials and tools to journalists, students of journalism, citizen journalists and other interested persons in Greece and Cyprus beyond the project's conclusion and for the foreseeable future.

Approximately half of the participants have been involved in the "anti-hate speech alliance", through which they produced texts currently available in the portal

section of SOpHiSM's website. These texts discuss various aspects of hate speech, both on- and offline. The production and uploading of content carries on even after the completion of the program, since hate speech has been introduced as a theme in two undergraduate courses in the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the NKUA and the Department of Communication and Digital Media of the UoWM.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Identify the most **prevalent instances** of hate speech **in online media** and **social networks**, and **explore** the social **contexts**, **prejudices** and **misconceptions** behind them in order to **design an effective educational** campaign **reflecting cultural**, technological and **language specifics**.

SOpHiSM's offerings are **relevant to other EU countries** beyond the partnership. The **methodology** employed, in particular as regards to the **anti-hate speech online news** portal, is **transferable** into different national contexts. Transferability is aided by rendering many of the **project outputs** available **in English**.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

SOpHiSM's website

4	**Digital Legal Clinic:** Combating Misinformation and Making the Internet a Safer Place

◆ **What's great about it?**

Digital Legal Clinic is a **female-led initiative** dedicated to providing tools for **protection from online harassment** and **e-crimes**, **enhancing** the **digital skills** of **young** people and raising **awareness** about the **effects of misinformation**, the **interplay between technology** and **legal** frameworks and the principles of **responsible online behavior**. The aim of the initiative is to **create a safe cyberspace** and **transform** digital **challenges into** job **opportunities**. At this point the Clinic has several departments to address a wide range of people's needs and adheres to **strict privacy policies** in its undertakings as many of these involve helping young victims in sensitive cases of extortion and cyberbullying. **Educational** and **capacity-building programs** are designed to include **extensive** digital skills and legal **curricula** so that participants can be better prepared for the demands of the labor market. In addition to that, members of the Digital Legal Clinic's team hold **online seminars** covering **criminal law**, **social media principles** and **fake news campaigns** in ways that make these topics interesting to young audiences.

The whole initiative was established during the **COVID-19 pandemic** and ensuing **lockdown** as a result of the founders' urge to adequately **address the grievances** of an **increasing number** of girls and boys who were **exposed to digital violence** and online **harassment tactics** ranging from cyberbullying to racism and extortion.

◆ **How's it making a difference?**

The Digital Legal Clinic solved nearly 4000 cybercrimes technically and handed them over to qualified legal teams and relevant state authorities. What's more, increased awareness about the country's legal framework and various cyber regulations among former victims proved crucial for building online defense strategies and fending off violent attacks. About 5000 participants in various educational programs improved their digital knowledge and acquired valuable new skills. As part of the initiative, a network offering young girls career opportunities in the field of game development was created.

The initiative attracted financial support from 10 000 benefactors from Jordan and the Middle East thus securing the resources needed for its long term operations.

◆ **How to adopt it?**

Identify the most common **tactics used for cyberbullying** and **spreading disinformation online** and **devise** efficient **strategies** to counter them together with **professionals** from the fields of **media, IT and law**.

Partner with digital **marketing specialists** to create **campaigns highlighting** the dangerous **effects of fake news** and raising **awareness about means of protection** from online harassment.

◆ **Learn more and get involved:**

[Digital Legal Clinic's Facebook page](#)

Digital Legal Clinic

CONCLUSION

This inspirational guide on citizen journalism has introduced 21 good practices that encapsulate the essence of the field by providing valuable insights and ideas for aspiring citizen journalists like yourselves. With a deeper understanding of the importance of citizen journalism, we hope that this guide has empowered, inspired and assisted you in engaging deeper with your community so that you can report on the issues that matter. This guide has also aimed to encourage responsible and ethical journalism and foster accountability and transparency in the field. By following the examples of the introduced practices and the principles outlined in this guide, we believe that you can make a significant contribution not only to the field of citizen journalism but also to the context of your community.

The range of best practices presented in the previous sections highlights quite a few **fields** in which you can **direct your efforts** as a **citizen journalist**. It is by no means imperative to be crafty with the video functionalities of your smartphone or turn into an expert photographer in order to produce impressive content and help your audience find the truth about current events. **Good research**, **analytical**, **programming**, **design**, **management** and **writing** skills are just as **valuable** for launching an **engaging** and **beneficial** citizen journalist **project** but, above all, you have to be **dedicated**, **media literate**, **curious** and on the lookout for issues relevant to your community. Always **seek collaborations** with other skillful enthusiasts so that you can conduct thorough investigations, maximize the reach of your publications, create educational programs or ensure the security and usability of your fact-checking platform or online magazine. Whatever way to pursue **citizen journalism** you choose, **stay true** to yourself, be **brave** and observe the following **code of ethics**[5,8]:

- Fight for press freedom;
- Be committed to finding the truth even if this goes against your political beliefs or involves challenging the status quo;
- Don't participate in associations and activities that may compromise your independence and journalistic integrity in the eyes of the public;
- Investigate all sides of a story and gather input from all impacted parties;
- Make attribution a top priority;
- Respect people from all walks of life;
- Assume responsibility for your mistakes and correct them immediately;

● Avoid plagiarism like the plague;

● Don't succumb to any bias, be it confirmation (looking for information that supports your beliefs), false memories, law of closure (the urge to create a coherent story even when you're missing some of the facts), blind-spot, anchoring (relying too much on the first fact you uncover), a false consensus effect (overestimating the popularity of your beliefs among other people) or a misinformation effect.

By adhering to these ethical principles, you will not only earn the trust of your audience, while demonstrating your full commitment to truth, but you will also promote professionalism, transparency, accountability and responsibility among your community and peers. We also hope that the nine bullet points we have listed above will aid you in communicating high-impact reporting and meaningful journalism.

Well, now is the time to go out there, interact with members of your community, discover an exciting story and **make a difference** with your **reporting**. If you're ever in doubt about a certain aspect of media production, reach out to us via the contact form on our website: https://jour-you.eu/contacts/. We will gladly help you!

And always remember that a truthful, evidence-based and objective report can debunk a multitude of false narratives and change people's lives for the better.

Good luck!

REFERENCES

1. Rose, S. (2013, Nov. 14). *Abraham Zapruder: the man behind history's most infamous home movie.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/nov/14/abraham-zapruder-film-kennedy-killing-parkland

2. Rosen, J. (2014, July 14). A Most Useful Definition of Citizen Journalism. Retrieved June 3, 2022, from A Most Useful Definition of Citizen Journalism: http://archive.pressthink.org/2008/07/14/a_most_useful_d.html

3. Mare, A., Keith, H., Marimbe, S., & Mukundu, R. (2018). *Citizen Journalism Guidelines on electoral reporting in Zimbabwe.* Denmark: International Media Support (IMS).

4. Riaz, S., & Pasha, S. A. (2011). Role of citizen journalism in strengthening societies. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(1), 88-103.

5. Ross, R., & Cormier, S. C. (2010). *Handbook For Citizen Journalists.* Denver: National Association of Citizen Journalists.

6. Knight Citizen News Network. (2014). *Principles of Community Journalism*. http://kcnn.org/learning-modules/principles-of-citizen-journalism/

7. Hobbs, R. (2010). *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action.* Queenstown: The Aspen Institute.

8. Citizen Journalism Academy for Youth. (2022) *T 2.3 Methodology for Creating Training Materials.* JOUR-YOU Project Team (produced by Elisavet Vasileiou /EKO Greece/ and consulted with the project partners).

Guide on Citizen Journalism for Youth
Version 1.01 15 May 2023
Copyright: Mihail Minchev
Editors: Nevena Dobreva and Mariya Rachinska
Design & Layout: Stanislav Evstatiev / 4 FRIENDS STUDIO
Vector art: Vecteezy.com
Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023

Jour-You