

ENHANCING DIGITAL READINESS BY OVERCOMING FAKE NEWS, INFORMATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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UnfakeSoMe Games

Social Media Simulation PLATFORM PARADOX

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Table of Contents

- 1) **About the Game**
- 2) **Instruction Guide** (*Game Flow*)
- 3) **Scoring System**
- 4) **Answer Key** (*If applicable*)
- 5) **Reflection & Discussion Questions**
- 6) **Learning Outcomes**
- 7) **Materials Required**

Name of the Game	The Platform Paradox – How Misinformation Spreads Across Social Media
About the Game	Players track how a small piece of misinformation mutates over time into a conspiracy theory, influenced by different social media platforms. Each round, the story spreads through different digital spaces like Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube, changing in format and audience reach. The goal is to recognize platform-specific misinformation tactics and understand how narratives spiral out of control.
Number of Players	4-8 players (can be played in teams or individually). Encourages discussion and critical thinking.
Recommended Age	14+ years. Designed for teenagers and adults to strengthen media literacy skills.
Game Duration	30-45 minutes. Each round takes about 5-10 minutes, depending on discussions.
Objective	Players must track the evolution of a news story across different social media platforms, identifying where facts are distorted, what misinformation tactics are used, and how public perception shifts over time. The player/team that accurately maps out the story's transformation wins.
Game Setup	
1. Prepare Story Evolution Chains	The facilitator selects 4-6 evolving versions of a news story, each representing how it changes as it spreads across different platforms.
2. Assign Player Roles	Players can act as Fact-Checkers, Social Media Users, Influencers, or Journalists, each approaching the story differently.
3. Distribute Story Versions	Players receive different "versions" of the same story in a randomized order and must reconstruct its evolution.
4. Provide Fact-Checking Tools	Teams receive a list of fact-checking techniques (reverse image search, lateral reading, source credibility checks) to help them analyse changes.
5. Set a Time Limit	Players must arrange the story's versions chronologically from factual report → misinformation → conspiracy theory before time runs out.
Game Flow	
1. Receive the Initial News Story	The game starts with a real news event or claim.
2. Misinformation Evolves Across Platforms	Players receive modified versions of the same story, each spreading differently on various social media platforms.
3. Platform-Specific Analysis	Players must analyse how the story changes based on the platform it's shared on, considering factors like:
4. Identify Manipulation Tactics	Players analyse how each version shifts the narrative, using fear-mongering, clickbait, false experts, or conspiracy logic.
5. Build the Spiral Timeline	Teams reconstruct the order in which misinformation developed, tracking how the original news mutated into a full-blown conspiracy.
6. Scoring & Reflection	The facilitator reveals the correct order and discusses the misinformation tactics used. Teams earn points based on accuracy and analysis.

Outcome	Players develop fact-checking skills, pattern recognition, and awareness of misinformation tactics, learning how narratives are manipulated to create viral falsehoods.
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Instruction Guide

Step	Instructions	Outlined Instructions
1. Setup	"Hello everyone! Please gather all your materials: printed news story snippets showing different stages of the story's evolution, score sheets, pens, and any fact-checking tools provided. We'll also assign roles—each team will work together to reconstruct the evolution of the news story. I'll now shuffle the snippets and distribute them to your teams."	• Gather materials: printed news snippets, score sheets, pens, and fact-checking tools. • Assign roles: each team collaborates to reconstruct the timeline of the story's evolution. • Shuffle and distribute the snippets to each team.
2. Introduction	"Your task is to track how a news story has changed as it spread across different social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. You will arrange the snippets in chronological order—from the initial factual report, through the stages of misinformation, to the eventual corrections or clarifications."	• Explain that the goal is to reconstruct the timeline of a news story as it evolves. • Emphasize that the snippets reflect how the story changes across various social media platforms.
3. Gameplay Flow	"Now, work together to analyse your snippets and determine the correct order. Discuss the changes in language, tone, and content that occur as the story spreads. Consider how different platforms influence the narrative—think about hashtags on Twitter, emotional appeals on TikTok, echo chambers on Facebook, and longer, in-depth analyses on YouTube."	• Teams review and analyse each snippet. • Discuss how the narrative changes across platforms, considering factors like hashtags, emotional content, echo chambers, and in-depth analysis. • Arrange the snippets in what you believe is the correct chronological order.
4. Fact-Checking and Analysis	"Take a moment to note down any misinformation tactics you see—whether it's fear-mongering, clickbait, or exaggerated claims. Use the fact-checking tools if needed, but remember, you have a limited time to decide!"	• Identify the manipulation techniques used in each snippet. • Optionally use the provided fact-checking tools to verify details, keeping in mind the time limit.
5. Presentation & Scoring	"Time's up! Now, each team, please present your reconstructed timeline and explain your reasoning. I'll reveal the correct order and	• Each team presents their final timeline and explanation.

	discuss the misinformation tactics used. Points will be awarded for accurate sequencing, identification of manipulation tactics, and insightful analysis."	Facilitator reveals the correct order, explains the evolution of misinformation, and awards points according to the scoring system.
6. Post-Game Reflection	"Great job, everyone! Let's reflect on what we've learned. Which stage of the evolution was most surprising? How did the platform influence the way the story changed? And what can we do in real life to spot and stop misinformation before it goes viral?"	Facilitate a discussion on the learning outcomes: identify surprising elements, discuss platform influence, and share strategies for real-world fact-checking.

Platform-Specific Misinformation Tactics

Platform	Common Tactics Used to Spread Misinformation
Twitter (X)	Rapid viral debates, trending hashtags, and character limits affecting context.
TikTok	Short-form videos with emotional appeals and influencer amplification.
Facebook	Echo chambers, private groups, and targeted misinformation.
YouTube	Long-form content, algorithm-driven radicalization, and "documentary-style" misinformation.

Misinformation Scenarios

Story Theme	Version 1 (Original Report)	Version 2 (Slightly Misleading - Twitter)	Version 3 (Clickbait & Fear-Mongering - TikTok)	Version 4 (Conspiracy Theory - Facebook/YouTube)
"New Planet Discovered"	NASA confirms the discovery of an exoplanet that could have conditions for life.	"Scientists Find Earth 2.0 – Are We Moving Soon?" (Trending hashtag: #NewEarth)	Viral TikTok: "NASA HIDING ALIEN CONTACT?!" (Shaky video with dramatic music)	Facebook post: "The government has been secretly preparing for an evacuation to another planet!"
"Artificial Sweeteners & Health"	A study finds some artificial sweeteners may affect gut bacteria.	"Artificial sweeteners linked to health risks!" (Vague study reference)	TikTok influencer: "STOP DRINKING DIET SODA – IT'S POISON!" (Fear-mongering tone)	YouTube conspiracy doc: "The food industry has been controlling our brains for decades!"
"Power Outage in Major Cities"	A regional power outage affects multiple	"Unexplained blackout leaves thousands in the	Viral TikTok: "GOVERNMENT TESTING SECRET	YouTube conspiracy: "5G towers are causing city-wide

	cities due to storms.	dark!" (#BlackoutMystery)	ENERGY WEAPONS?!"	blackouts as part of a global experiment!"
"Mysterious Object in the Sky"	Astronomers report an unusual but explainable meteor event.	"UFO sighting stuns experts – what was that in the sky?" (Speculative tweets)	TikTok video: "Leaked documents PROVE aliens are real!" (Green-tinted footage)	Facebook group: "The New World Order is using UFOs as a distraction for mass control!"
"New Medical Study on Aging"	Scientists find a protein that might slow aging in lab tests.	"Breakthrough discovery – the secret to immortality?"	TikTok health guru: "Big Pharma SUPPRESSING LIFE-EXTENDING DRUGS!"	YouTube conspiracy: "Elites have been hiding the real anti-aging cure for decades!"
"Celebrity Endorses New Health Trend"	A celebrity posts about trying a new herbal supplement.	"Is this the SECRET to staying young?" (#WellnessHack)	Viral TikTok: "Doctors DON'T want you to know about this life-changing herb!"	YouTube conspiracy: "Big Pharma is actively suppressing natural cures!"
"Tech Company Develops Brain-Enhancing Chip"	A company announces a new brain-computer interface.	"Will this chip make us superhuman?" (#MindTech)	TikTok hype: "This chip can READ YOUR THOUGHTS!"	Facebook fear-mongering: "Governments will use this to control the population!"

Scoring

Category	Criteria	Points
Correct Timeline Order	Players correctly arrange the misinformation progression.	+5 points
Identifying Misinformation Tactics	Teams correctly identify which manipulation techniques were used in each version.	+3 points
Fact-Checking Insights	Teams explain how misinformation could have been prevented.	+2 points
Bonus: Spotting the Viral Trigger	Teams correctly identify which version made the story "go viral."	+1 point

Scoring Sheet

Round	Team Name	Correct Timeline Order (5 pts)	Misinformation Tactics Identified (3 pts)	Fact-Checking Insights (2 pts)	Viral Trigger Bonus (1 pt)	Total Score
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Game-End Reflection Round (Post-Game Discussion)

Reflection Question	Purpose
Which misinformation tactic was the most convincing? Why?	Helps players recognize the most deceptive manipulation strategies.
Did any versions seem believable at first but turned out to be false?	Encourages deeper analysis of how misinformation blends truth with distortion.
How does misinformation change as it spreads?	Explores how social media accelerates the viral spread of false narratives.
What can we do to stop misinformation from going viral?	Promotes responsible media consumption and fact-checking habits.