**ACTIVITY DESIGN**

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| **Title: Get Bad News Game** |

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| **Grades (age of students)** | 9th-12th grades |
| **Materials:** | Computer/ WIFI/mobile phones |
| **Duration:** | 30 minutes |
| **Skills:** | Critical thinking |

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| **Objectives:**  At the end of this short learning session, participants will be able to:   * Understand that media messages are manipulating * De(construct) the elements of media message/ news * Identify impersonation, emotions, polarization, discredit, conspiracy, trolling as the most effective ways to manipulate people through media messages |

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| **LESSON MOMENTS** | **INFO POINTS** |
| **Introduction**- teacher announces that students will play an educative game, GET BAD NEWS and explains the context in which the game was created and the rules to play.  He/ She informs students that in Get Bad News, they take on the role of fake news-monger, they will have to drop all pretense of ethics and choose a path that builds their persona as an unscrupulous media magnate; that they have to keep an eye on their ‘followers’ and ‘credibility’ meters as their main task during the game is to get as many followers as possible | The game is available here  [https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro](about:blank#intro)  Note: the link leads to game, an info sheet for teachers which will provide all necessary info that teachers need to deliver to students before starting playing the game.  The content of the English-language version of Bad News was written by DROG (www.aboutbadnews.com), a Dutch organization working against the spread of disinformation, in collaboration with researchers at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. The Bad News Game confers resistance against disinformation by putting players in the position of the people who create it, and as such gain insight into the various tactics and methods used by ‘real’ fake news-mongers to spread their message.  This, in turn, builds up resistance. The game works in a simple and straightforward way: players are shown a short text or image (such as a meme or article headline) and can react to them in a variety of ways. There are two ways in which their score is measured: ‘followers’ and ‘credibility’. Choosing an option that is in line with what a ‘real’ producer of disinformation would choose gets them more followers and |
|  | credibility. If, however, they lie too blatantly to their followers, choose an option that is overtly ridiculous or act too much in line with journalistic best practices, the game either takes followers away or lowers their credibility. The aim of the game is to gather as many followers as possible without losing too much credibility. |
| **Playing the game**  **Activity**  - Students play the online game (15-20 minutes, according to their choices during the game, time may vary).  When all students end the game, teacher introduces a PowerPoint presentation which synthesizes the 6 main ways in which media messages manipulate a media consumer:   * impersonation * emotions * polarization * conspiracy * discredit * trolling | **Impersonation**  It’s very easy to start a website and publish content that looks entirely legitimate. Since there’s almost no entry barrier in terms of costs, pretty much anyone can do it.  - Impersonating a real person or organization by mimicking their appearance, for example by using a slightly different username.  - Posing as a legitimate news website or blog without the usual journalistic credentials and guidelines.  **Emotions**  Emotional content is content that is not necessarily ‘fake’ or ‘real’ but deliberately plays into people’s basic emotions such as fear, anger or empathy. Emotional skepticism can be a weapon against fake news/ emotional stories/. It involves realizing that a certain message is trying to manipulate us through our emotions. False or misleading news is distributed on social networks under the rule of emotions, especially negative ones (anger, dissatisfaction, fear, anxiety, fury, frustration but positive emotions like enthusiasm, empathy can work as well). Experiments in psychology show that people who feel stronger emotions are more tempted to believe the misinformation that triggers them, compared to those who keep their emotional reactions under control. Unfortunately, emotions do not have a similar impact on true information.  **Polarization**  Polarization involves deliberate attempts to expand the gap between the political left and the political right. In order to gain followers, young news websites often use polarization as a way to stake out a niche  in the media landscape. Polarization also covers the concept of ‘false amplification’, the idea that you don’t have to tell a completely fake story in order to get a point across. Instead, you can also amplify existing grievances and make them look more important or popular than they really are.  **Conspiracy**  Conspiracy theories are part and parcel of fringe online news sites. Conspiracies can be defined as the belief that unexplained events are orchestrated by a covert group or organization.  **Discredit**  Discrediting your opponents is an important part of disinformation. When disinformative news sites are accused of bad journalism, they tend to deflect attention away from the accusation by attacking the source of the criticism or denying that the problem exists.  Trolling  Trolling is a term that originally means ‘slowly dragging a lure or baited hook from the back of a fishing boat’. In the field of disinformation, it means deliberately evoking an emotional response by using bait. |

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| **5. Feedback and evaluation**  Teacher gives each student a worksheet which contains 2 exercises:  **1.** Complete each column with characteristics/actions that you consider that characterize/ that usually do a bad or good journalist.  **Bad journalist Good journalist**  **2.** Create your own list of advices in order to resist media manipulation. |

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