

# GO FACT YOUR NEWS

WORKSHOP ON  
HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS  
FOR YOUNGSTERS

Created by Fabio Meazza  
[www.fabiomeazza.com](http://www.fabiomeazza.com)

for Associació Cultura Creativa

There's a quote, usually attributed to the writer Mark Twain, that goes:

*“A lie can travel halfway around the world,  
while the Truth is putting on its shoes.”*

Funny thing about that: there's reason to doubt that Mark Twain ever said this at all, thus ironically proving the point.

And today the quote, whoever said it, is truer than ever before.

## OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness of the difficulty in distinguishing fake news from objective news;
- To recognize what is a fake news made of;
- To discover useful tools to check news and unmask fake ones.

## TARGET GROUP

Suggested for youngsters from 15 to 25 y.o.

## DURATION

3 phases + debriefing;  
approx. 3-4 hours in total

## GROUP SIZE

Max 8 teams composed by max 5 pax each

## MATERIAL NEEDED

- Papers and markers for taking notes;
- Printed news [Annex 1]
- Printed puzzles [Annex 2];
- Investigator and saboteur cards, one for each participant [Annex 3 & 3.1];
- 8 tip cards for each group [Annex 4];

# A DIFFERENT ANGLE, A DIFFERENT TALE

Duration:  
1 hour

Not all news stories can seem the same if they are written from a different angle. They might be telling the same story, but when written from a different point of view they can seem like a different story. It can sometimes be harder to tell if the story is real or fake. Imagine the headlines if the story of Little Red Riding Hood was written by a journalist, the grandmother and the wolf... The journalist might say “Wolf Eats Girl Tragedy”. The Grandmother might say “She was only 10, but she meant the world to me”. The wolf might say “New diet improved my health and fitness”. We’re going to look at how different sources can tell the same story differently.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

- Think up your own well known story. It can be from one of your set texts like Shakespeare, or a favourite book such as Harry Potter. The story should be known by all of your team.
- Now think it as a news story from 3 unusual and different point of view. It could be written by one of the main characters or the villain or as an eye witness report or by an expert. Be as inventive as you like!
- Write some headlines that this people might write.
- Write down the tweet/post that could go with it – remember of description and hashtags!

# FACT OR FAKE?

Duration:  
1,5 hour

What is a fake news made of? Where can I find it? In this game we will discover useful tools for unmasking fake news. Starting from the last question, fake news are spread mainly on internet, designed to be shared on social media. There are 3 types of misleading “news” sites:

1. Hoax sites with completely fake news
2. Hyperpartisan sites with misleading info
3. “Hybrids” with a mix of facts and fiction.

The most similar to reality, the more credible the news is. But there is something deeper than the content itself that can affect our perception of the news. The same groups will play this “escape room”.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATORS

Print out or write down the 8 puzzles. The puzzles could be the same, spread in the surroundings; it is better to have some of these puzzles written down on separate papers for each group. Each group notes down the answers they think are correct after they have reached an agreement. Print out:

- “How to spot fake news” cards. [Annex 4];
- An answer sheet for each group;
- Cards specifying the role for each group member. [Annex 3 & 3.1];
- The puzzles of the next pages and contained in [Annex 2].

In the game environment, place the 8 puzzles that players have to solve. It isn't important to give them numbers and a order: each team can occupy just one place; so if a puzzle place is busy, the team should go elsewhere. Don't promote the game as a competition: it will be interesting to develop the topic in case two or more teams would decide to share information and cooperate. At the facilitators desk, players get one "how to spot fake news" tip card for each puzzle solved successfully, after they'll show correct answers. The investigators and saboteurs cards are revealed just in the debriefing. We strongly suggest to print and give JUST THE INVESTIGATORS CARDS, stimulating suspects in between the team members. It will be another interesting topic for the debriefing session.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

- In the area there are 8 puzzles/riddles that players have to solve. You will write down the solutions in the answer sheet provided for each group.
- The group must solve tasks together.
- After each puzzle, the teams should go to the facilitator's desk and ask if the answer is correct or not; in the positive case they will get the corresponding tip card.
- There are two different characters in the game:
  - Investigators, whose goal is to cooperate with others and help their team.
  - Saboteurs, whose goal is to impair teamwork in a way that other team members don't get suspicious.
- You can't say or show which character you are until facilitators will say so.

# PUZZLES

Find the meaning of this Ottendorf cipher.

Everything I touch  
with tenderness, alas,  
pricks like a bramble.

word 1: 01.01.04, 01.01.03, 03.04.03, 02.02.04  
word 2: 03.04.01, 02.02.08, 01.01.05, 01.03.02,  
01.01.09, 02.02.04  
word 3: 02.01.04, 01.01.01, 02.03.01, 02.02.04,  
03.04.06, 01.02.01, 01.01.09, 03.04.07,  
02.03.04

Solution/Card: Read beyond headlines (3 digit  
cipher: line, word, letter)

Decipher the following binary code.

```
01000011 01101100 01101001 01100011  
01101011 00100000 01101111 01101110  
00100000 01110100 01101000 01100101  
00100000 01110011 01110101 01110000  
01110000 01101111 01110010 01110100  
01101001 01101110 01100111 00100000  
01110011 01101111 01110101 01110010  
01100011 01100101 01110011 00100001
```

Solution/Card: Click on the supporting sources!

Find out the word behind this morse code.

<http://bit.ly/32QMkfS>

Solution/Card: Consider the source

Decipher the following code.

word 1: 04 , 15

word 2: 25 , 15 , 21

word 3: 08 , 01 , 22 , 05

word 4: 02 , 09 , 01 , 19 , 05 , 19

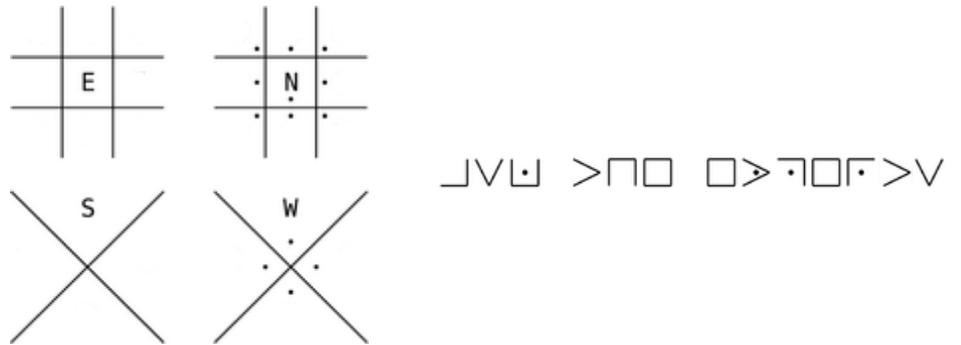
Solution/Card: Do you have biases? (each number is corresponding to each letter in the in English alphabet)

Compose and solve the puzzle.

Print an image and write on the back the solution. Cut it like a puzzle. One Image for each group.

Solution/Card (What to write behind): Is it a joke?

Decrypt and solve.



Solution/Card: Ask the experts (each space is a letter of the English alphabet, in order)

Solve this rebus.

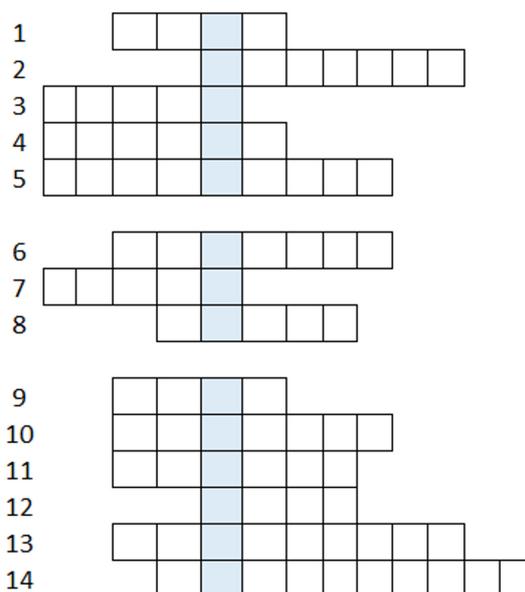


T  
H  
E



Solution/Card: Check the date

## Solve this Crosswords puzzle.



1. A thing that is known or proved to be true.
2. The quality of being honest.
3. The name of a book, composition or article.
4. Someone or something from which you obtain information.
5. (on the Internet) Content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page.
6. A person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place.
7. Opposite of "lie".
8. The main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet) regarded collectively.
9. Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.
10. A newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity.
11. The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.
12. A trick in which someone tells people a lie, for example that there is a bomb somewhere when there is not, or that a picture (or a news) is genuine when it is not.
13. Facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.
14. The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.

# YOUR TURN!

The final part. Now the groups have the right tools to discover which news are real and which are fake. Facilitators will give them printed news, composed by real and fake ones. Teams will have to debate and decide which news are fake.

Duration:  
30 minutes

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATORS

Print the news [Annex 1] and give them to all the teams. You can give those to the teams as they are finishing the previous game, so they will have more time; give the news minimum 15 minutes before the end to the teams that haven't finished yet the puzzles: they will have the opportunity to guess the fake ones like the other teams, but with less time and tips. Another interesting prompt for the next debriefing session.

Remember the participants that in each group there can be a saboteur; then pay attention to the groups in order to avoid conflicts. The number of news depends on the time you have, the depth of the news found and how much time we would leave for the debriefing.

# DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

Suggested:  
30 minutes

- How did you feel in the first phase?
- How does your story differ from the original when written this way?
- Does it change the way you perceive the story when it is written from a new point of view?
- Did you believe that there was a saboteur in your group? Who did you think was the saboteur in your group and why? What were your feelings?
- How to spot fake information? What people do want out of spreading fake news? How to fight against fake news in the future?
- What mechanisms/elements could you identify in the news provided?
- What is the difference between disinformation and misinformation?
- What did you learn from this experience?

## USEFUL TOOLS TO GIVE TO THE PARTICIPANTS

[www.Politicifact.com](http://www.Politicifact.com) - Pulitzer Prize winner  
curated by editors of the Tampa Bay Times

[www.Factcheck.org](http://www.Factcheck.org) - curated by Annenberg  
Public Policy Center at Univ Pennsylvania

[www.Opensecrets.org](http://www.Opensecrets.org) - by Center for Responsive  
Politics, financial arm of Center for Public Integrity

[www.Snopes.com](http://www.Snopes.com) - site curated by academic  
folklorists and scholars

# HOW TO CREATE THE PUZZLES

You can easily find useful tools on internet for creating the codes: here we suggest you some that was used for this workshop.

<https://morsecode.scphillips.com/translator.html>

<https://www.convertbinary.com/text-to-binary>

## THANKS TO

This workshop was created by Fabio Meazza for the Youth Exchange "We are all Nomads", organized by **Associació Cultura Creativa** during October 2019 in Alicante, where 35 youngsters from 7 European countries have been exchanging knowledge on interesting topics such as immigration, social inclusion and prejudices: it was not possible to avoid to talk about this modern plague called fake news. And we did it!

The main idea comes from one of the results of the Training Course "Play Station", hosted and developed by **Swira vzw** and **Youth Association DRONI** during October 2018 in Bruxelles.

The first activity is based on an exercise about how to spot fake news made by the "**BBC - Young Reporter**" project.

Info, questions and suggestions:  
[fabiomeazza.com](http://fabiomeazza.com) / [meazza.fabio@gmail.com](mailto:meazza.fabio@gmail.com)