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FACT OR FICTION:
PROGRAMS AND REGISTERS TO HELP FACT-CHECKERS AND THEIR USE BY STUDENTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The war is not fought on only one front. Military expansion is accompanied by cultural, informational, and meaningful expansions. Since the full-scale invasion, we have felt an even stronger wave of disinformation from the Kremlin: both directed internally, specifically at the Russian people, and externally (at Ukraine, Europe, and the USA). Only few Ukrainians read openly propagandistic Russian resources, but their fakes and manipulations still seep into our media space through garbage sites, reputable publications, and social networks. Because of this, students, as future journalists, feel even more acutely the need to learn how to work with disinformation and be able to recognize fakes.

Definitions. A *fake* is known to be false information, the purpose of which is to distort a certain fact, point of view and artificially form an attitude in the audience towards a particular phenomenon or event. That is, the false message was created intentionally.

Manipulation is not always a fake. Manipulation is deliberately distorted information that is used to form a certain attitude to some problem, person, or phenomenon. We include in this concept incomplete information, specially shifted accents in the true message, and taking something out of context.

Recently, the abbreviation ***PSYOPS*** is also often used. Literally, these are informational and psychological operations aimed at influencing people's emotions and behavior, as well as shaping the behavior of authorities, organizations, groups, etc.

Disinformation and propaganda are also often used as terms in university classrooms and on the pages of monitoring media. Both are broader terms than fake and manipulation mentioned at the beginning. Propaganda is a form of communication that aims to influence society's attitude to a problem, situation or phenomenon. She uses both fakes and manipulations and true information. Disinformation, as defined by the Center for Countering Disinformation, is a deliberately false, distorted message disseminated to mislead the public. It can be a weapon to achieve political, military, propaganda and other goals.

Often, all these terms are used interchangeably, which may not be scientifically correct, but doesn't mean much to the audience. However, a student as a future specialist should know the difference. Both in order to better understand the relationships between false messages and more effectively refute them, and in order not to confuse your audience. Because "scatter" right and left with the term PSYOPS in an emotionally unstable environment, which is now Ukrainian society, it is also not a good idea, because, for example, it can lead to the spread of conspiratorial thinking and increase the level of anxiety.

Available courses at the faculty. At the Faculty of Journalism of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, students are introduced to the concept of disinformation from the very first courses, in particular within the framework of the discipline "Theory and Methodology of Journalistic Creativity". Here, the definitions that were mentioned at the beginning and general concepts were introduced: reliability and truthfulness of information, sources of information and how to verify them, argumentation and facts.

There is also a separate subject, "Media Literacy", where the basic principles of creating fake news were explained to students: a loud headline, emotionally colored vocabulary, calls for distribution, lack of multiple sources of information, lack of evidence in general, etc.

As part of practical classes, students write their own fake news to understand the principle of their creation and distribution, analyzed resources for fake news, refuted fakes, etc.

Modernization of courses. As part of the courses described above, students are offered a basis for working with information and distinguishing facts from fiction: theoretical knowledge, news writing algorithms, basic manipulative techniques, principles of media literacy and quality journalism. However, fact-checking is a field that develops very quickly, and in order for a competent specialist to graduate from the university after completing the course, it is necessary to constantly update the program. Here you can add technological aspects.

One of them is working with open data and registers. Students should know about the concept of open data, what the main registries are in the country, where they can be found and how to apply them. That is, a Ukrainian student can check the news about public procurement by taking data from Prozorro, the state procurement system, where tenders are held that should save budget funds. The movement of state funds both at the national and local levels can be tracked using Spending.gov.ua or Openbudget. Many data are available on city portals (a list of

communal property objects, reports on provided administrative services, urban cadastres) for sure. The program should also include the information about legal registers (the Unified Register of Debtors, Taxpayers, EUV), weather data, geographic data, etc. All of them are not only a source of stories, but also a means of fact-checking.

Another useful aspect that is worth spending more time on is the use of various programs for in-depth inspection of photo and video information. Because most modern fakes have gone beyond the text format. Skills ranging from the banal reverse image search in Google, to the use of programs that track photo or video editing will help here.