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FACT CHECKING – AS THE COMPETENCE OF THE MEDIA LITERACY OF A MODERN JOURNALIST

The article talks about fact checking as the competence of media information literacy, which a modern journalist should possess. The specifics of fact-checking are analyzed, its place in the system of media and information literacy is determined. Indicates the methods of fact check used by journalists. We need to know that the main purpose of the work is the fact of checking is to educate the critical thinking of the audience against the background of the so-called era of half-truth, when logic, accuracy is not a priority. Emotions, fakes and manipulations begin to rule the information field. Populism, manipulation, unreliability – should be the main objects of this study. The article says how long ago we started the work of the fact of checking, although we all know well that European countries much earlier took up checking false information. The activity of the resource, aimed at countering inaccurate and fake information, manipulation of public opinion, falsification of data and biased resources, will allow our readers to receive only verified factual material from reliable open sources, and public persons will give an incentive to be more careful about their statements. This article also provides accurate recommendations for journalists who want to do validating information.

Key words: fake, fact-check, democracy, range, competence, convergence in the media industry, media literacy, drone-journalism, media hygiene, discrimination, infographic.

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Фактчекинг – қазіргі заманғы журналистің медиа сауаттылық құзыреті

Бұл мақалада соңғы кездері ақпарат саласында жиі айтылып жүрген ақпараттың растығын тексеру, яғни, фактчекинг ұғымы туралы кеңірек жазылады. Жалпы ақпараттың қаншалықты рас екенін тексеру біздің елімізге кейінірек келіп отыр, алайда, Еуропада бұл жұмыс әлдеқайда ертерек қолға алынғанын жоққа шығара алмаймыз. Ақпараттың дұрыс емес екенін дәлелдеу және жалған ақпаратқа жол бермеу. Фактчекинг қоғамдық пікірді немесе деректерді бұрмалап, жалған ақпарат беретін оқшауланған ресурстарға қарсы бағытталған ресурс қызметі. Оқырмандарымызға барынша ашық көздерден тек расталған, нақты материалдарды алуға мүмкіндік беретіні анық. Ақпараттың жиі тексерілуі – қоғамдық тұлғалардың өз мәлімдемелеріне мұқият болуы үшін ынталандыратын бірден-бір таптырмас жол болмақ. Фактчекингтегі негізгі мақсат аудиторияның сыни ойлауын тереңдетіп, жартылай шындық дәуіріндегі ақпараттардың барлығы шындыққа жанаса бермейтініне аудиторияның көзін жеткізу. Өкінішке орай, қазіргі ақпараттық өрісті жалған популизм, манипуляция, сенімсіздік – бұл фактчекингтің басты зерттеу объектісі болып табылуы тиіс. Бұл зерттеуде Отандық фактчекингтің қай кезеңнен қолға алынғаны туралы ақпараттан бастап, шет елдегі ақпарат шындығын тексеру жүйесінің қаншалықты ертеректе басталғаны туралы жалпылама мағлұмат берілген. Сондай-ақ, мақалада фактчекинг саласына арналған нақты ұсыныстар қарастырылады.

Түйін сөздер: фейк, факт-чекинг, демократия, диапазон, компетенция, медиаиндустриядағы конвергенция, медиасауаттылық, дрон-журналистика, медиагигиена, дискриминация, инфографика.

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Фактчекинг как компетенция медиаграмотности современного журналиста

В статье говорится о фактчекинге как компетенции медийно-информационной грамотности, которой должен владеть современный журналист. Анализируется специфика фактчекинга, определяется его место в системе медийно-информационной грамотности. Указываются методы фактчекинга, используемые журналистами. Целью работы является выявление сути фактчекинга как способа воспитания критического мышления аудитории на фоне так называемой эпохи полуправды, когда логика, достоверность – не в приоритете. Эмоции, фейки и манипуляции начинают править информационным полем. Популизм, манипуляции, недостоверность информации являются главными объектами данного исследования. Авторы статьи изучают деятельность ресурса, направленную на противодействие недостоверной и фейковой информации, манипуляциям общественным мнением, фальсификации данных и ангажированным ресурсам, позволяющую читателям получать только проверенный фактический материал из достоверных открытых источников, а публичным персонам даст стимул более внимательно относиться к своим заявлениям. В статье также даются точные рекомендации журналистам, необходимые для проверки достоверной информации.

Ключевые слова: фейк, фактчекинг, демократия, диапазон, компетенция, конвергенция в медиаиндустрии, медиаграмотность, дрон-журналистика, медиагигиена, дискриминация, лонгриды, инфографика.

Introduction

The latest research of the media space summarizes the development of a special direction – “paradigm of fake news” (Sukhodolov, AP, Bychkova, A.M. 2017). Against the background of the US election campaign in 2016, fakes were widely distributed, which affected the quality of journalistic publications and the world level of journalism in general. The trend has affected the increase in the requirements for the professionalism of journalists. Since the tasks of the journalist, one way or another, include the study and analysis of news that may be fake, the competence of fact-tracking has become particularly significant. Verification of information in general becomes the main task of journalism. This determines the relevance of this study. We are faced with an important goal – to study factual quoting as a component of media-information literacy (hereinafter – IIL) of a modern journalist. In order to achieve the stated goal, we consider the fact-sharing from two sides: as an independent way of working with information and as the competence of IIL. Fact-checking as a Competence of IIL Media and Information Literacy is a set of specific skills and abilities, as well as a fundamentally new type of thinking in the context of the information society at the same time (Marzak A.S. 2017). What is the position of fact-tracking in the international system of media information literacy? According to the re-

sults of the First Meeting of the international expert group on the problems of developing indicators for media and information literacy, which took place on November 4, 2010, the classification of indicators of the IIL is as follows. (Marzak A.S. 2016.). First level indicators Second level indicators Category 1.1. Context of media and information literacy. Category 2.1. Access / Search media and information. Category 1.2. Accessibility and dissemination of information. Category 2.2. Evaluation / Understanding of media and information. Category 2.3. Use / Create media and information. Table number 1. IIL Indicators In the right column are the competencies of the creators of the information itself, including the journalists who are interested in this work. Fact-checking falls into category 2.2., As it implies assessment and understanding of information, as well as category 2.1., As it implies searching for media and information in order to search for primary sources. We summarize that fact-checking as a competence occupies a special place in the IIL system, covering at once two categories (Categories 2.1. And 2.2.). This indicates, on the one hand, the importance of fact-checking as the competence of a journalist, on the other hand, the difficulty of mastering this competence. Fact-checking as an information processing tool: specifics and methods Let us indicate the causes of the occurrence and distribution of fake news. It is believed that the main factor in the emergence of such content is “the banal

pursuit of sensation”, and their distribution is due to the lack of elementary time for fact-checking: such (fake – author’s note) news (Issers 2014). Ways to combat with fakes can be automated and manual. For example, to identify fake news in the US segment of the Web, a browser extension appeared that allows separating the “truth” from the “fiction”. However, this extension even marks reliable materials from Russian sites as “Russian propaganda” (Solovyov A. 2017). Therefore, this method can not be considered effectively. Just factual billing belongs to the manual methods of dealing with fake news. Consider what methods of fact-checking are offered by the journalists themselves. To do this, list the recommendations in the table and open them.

Recently, has started the first fact-tracking resource in Central Asia. The project, unique for the region, involves verification (validation) of socially important information published in the media, social networks, instant messengers, statements of public figures and organizations.

The project aims to develop media literacy in Kazakhstan. Factcheck.kz is available in kazakh and russian languages. There are plans to add new language versions in a close future. In general, to contribute to the development of fact-tracking in Central Asia very important to our country. (Beinenson V.A. 2017).

The activity of the resource aimed at countering inaccurate and fake information, manipulation of public opinion. Falsification of data and biased resources which will allow our readers to receive only verified factual material from reliable open sources and public persons will give an incentive to be more attentive to their statements.

For reliability, the project editors regularly monitor and verify socially significant and high-profile news, facts, figures and conclusions voiced in the media. According to the results of the inspection, the conclusion is published – “false”, “truth”, “half-truth”, “manipulation”, “without verdict” – with a description of the verification methodology and the provision of evidence.

“The peculiarity of the project is that everyone can become to be as a participant. You can send us your suggestions, comments and comments by clicking on the “Feedback” button. We are ready for dialogue, cooperation and self-improvement,” said project manager Adil Jalilov. (Gottfried J., Shearer E. 2016).

“Testing the facts for authenticity is especially relevant now – in the era of post-truth, fakes and information manipulations. I am sure that Factcheck.kz will contribute to the development of critical information perception skills of the Kazakh audience” says Anton Artemyev. He is a Chairman of the

Board of the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan. Factcheck.kz is a fundamentally independent factual project, equidistant from political and other “camps”. The priority in the work is always the preservation of objectivity and impartiality. The reliability of the published information can be checked by any person, media and organization. The object of the study are only voiced facts, but not judgments, assumptions and forecasts. In its assessment, the editors adhere to the principles of the International Billings Network (IFCN), (Kornev M. 2017). Which based on transparency of sources, impartiality, openness of methodology and financing.

In case of disputable situations, Factcheck.kz is ready to consider counter-arguments, as well as the possibility of creating an expert working group to recheck the verdict.

The project Factcheck.kz is implemented by the International Center for Journalism MediaNet with the support of the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan. (<https://factcheck.kz/glavnoe/startoval-pervyj-faktcheking-resurs-v-centralnoj-azii/>).

Methods

Check names

If you at least once make a mistake with the name of a well-known (and not so) person, then your credit of trust will very quickly run out – both from potential sources and from the reader, not to mention your editor. Therefore, here are a few tips, thanks to which the chance to fool with the name can be reduced to zero.

Ask the source to spell his / her name. Each time communicating with the source or hero whose name will be used in the material, ask them to spell their name and surname. If this seems too stupid to you, or if the spelling seems obvious, you can laugh it off that you are too pedantic about the correct spelling of words. If you are recording a conversation with the speaker on a voice recorder, duplicate the spelling of the speaker’s name in a notebook or phone – you never know if the audio recording will not let you down in the wrong place.

Ask the hero to write their own name. Draw a notepad to the hero and ask him to write his name on his own. Then look at the recording and make sure that you correctly reproduce the name in the editorial when you sit behind the material. If a letter can be mistaken for another, ask again. And better ask the hero for a business card. (<https://www.slide-share.net/jonesapollo/watchdog-journalism>).

Recheck the name again. Do not allow yourself to think that the name on the business card is 100% correct. I had a roommate on whose name

plate made a mistake. And he noticed it only after I told him about it. An acquaintance of mine from Oregon once received a business card from a person who often works with Asian clients, so he wrote a “simplified” version of his name on the card to help his clients pronounce it correctly. You may have a document on your hands on which the correct name is supposedly written, but don’t believe it 100% – there is always a chance of error.

Check out the public information. Check out various Internet sites that may indicate the spelling of the source name – its pages on social networks, the website of the company for which it works. But just assume that there may be a mistake there too. (Редакция Meduza).

Get ready If you are covering an event, it is best to take care of getting the program and the list of participants in advance. Try to meet with key speakers and clarify whether the program spelled their name. If someone whose name you do not know is saying or doing something interesting, then specify his name immediately after the speech. If this is not possible, then ask someone who knows for sure. Then try to contact the person by e-mail or phone to double-check the spelling of his name and the quotes you want to use.

Get contacts for clarification. After the interview, be sure to get as many contacts as possible from the speaker – mobile and work phone, e-mail, accounts in social networks. Check if you recorded everything correctly. This is necessary in order to be able to clarify the facts and figures with the speaker if the quality of the audio recording fails you.

Specify the position. (Закон РФ 25.11.2017). After you have made sure that you have correctly recorded the name, ask the speaker for his official position, membership in public organizations and other titles. Check if you recorded them correctly. When you write again about this person, assume that his position may change – people are fired and promoted, they change jobs, their contracts can be terminated, people are elected and lose elections. Therefore, always check with the speaker his current position.

How did you find out about this? Former New York Times journalist Judith Miller, accused of unverified reporting on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, wrote: “If your sources are wrong, then you are wrong, too.” Never use a source error as an excuse. The material is signed by your name you are responsible for it. Do your best to confirm and double-check the information.

Find the main source. When the hero gives you some facts in an interview, get used to asking

“Where did you get this from?” This will give you the answer to the question about the main source of information. The hero of your material may be mistaken, lie, or just not remember the whole story. Asking the question of where the speaker got the information from, gives you the opportunity to find a more reliable source. If you hear the story in the retelling of second and third par (Памятка «Простые приемы факт-чекинга»). ties, try to reach the main character of the story. If someone quotes you statistics, ask for a report in which the hero saw this data. Then you can double-check the information, add context and find even *more interesting statistics*.

Rate source. Feel free to ask the speaker questions to check his reliability as a source of information. Does the hero have official access to the information being announced? Does the speaker have enough data to claim that the unofficially received information is correct? Did the source give confirmed information before? What is the hero’s motivation to disclose information?

Rate information. Ask questions that will verify the reliability of the information. Does the source know, are the given data a theory, an assumption, a rumor or a fact? If information is a fact, how relevant is it today?

Question it. Who would not believe this information? Check the information received from a source that could refute it. If the information cannot be refuted, then it may be true, but this is not accurate. If there are opposing data, doubt both. Try to get to the truth. In the extreme case, it is possible to present in the material two opposing points of view.

Check social networks. Ask people from the network to help you get first-hand information – perhaps someone was an eyewitness or knows someone whose contacts will help you understand the history thoroughly.

Write carefully. Do not write down everything – you are not a stenographer, but a journalist. Look for interesting data and facts. Do not waste paper and force on passing information.

Write data, not quotes. When your goal is to gather information, do not focus on providing an accurate quote. Exact words are not important; concentrate on the facts and data that the speaker gives.

Write loud quotes. But to record exactly the quotes that express someone’s authoritative opinion or an interesting emotion, you need with pedantic clarity. Scroll through the words of the speaker in your head until you write them down on paper.

Stop the speaker. If the source gives you information, stop it and ask where it came from, specify,

ask a question about the details. How did you find out about this? Are you sure? How do you spell it? Is this an approximate or exact figure? Do you have any supporting documents? Did you say a million or a billion? Feel free to stop the speaker to be able to record something for sure. (Поствфейсбук Андрея Мирошниченко).

To paraphrase. Not all interesting opinions of the speaker can be adapted for printing. In this case, make sure you understand the words of the hero correctly and ask again: “Did I understand you correctly? You said, that ...?”. This will allow you to receive confirmation and gives you a little time to make notes. And, perhaps, in this way you will get a more interesting quote.

Review your notes. Immediately after the event or interview, review your notes. If some words are written crookedly or incomprehensibly, immediately rewrite them to clean, while they are still fresh in memory.

Verify through other sources. Who else might know this? Look for other people who might know something about the event. They can confirm or deny what another source has just told you. They can shed light on some points. But, of course, ask them where they know it from.

Search for documents. Find official data, reports and records that can confirm, deny or supplement the information that you have been informed. Photos and videos will help confirm some details. If you are writing about a court where you were not, find the official transcript.

Try to understand. Before you start writing, make sure you understand the topic. Immerse yourself in the context. Look for explanations. Look at the story from the other side. Ask stupid questions, so you do not make a stupid mistake in the material.

Check the facts

After you have finished a draft of a material, check out the facts.

Names. Check the spelling of each name. Check the records, refer to public sources, look at the business card, official document, address book, company website. If you find an alternative spelling of the name, it is better to ask the hero of the material again. Similarly check the post.

Numbers. Double check each digit. Only your entries are not enough. Check with documents, reports, databases, web sites. Do it yourself. Then count again, especially if mathematics is not your strong point. If you do not understand the numbers, you will not be able to verify them. Ask the source or someone who understands the numbers to explain them to you or recalculate them.

Quotes. Check the correctness of the quotes on their records. Read quotes several times out loud – it helps to notice a missing or incorrectly written word.

Ask if not sure. If there is something in your notes that you did not fully understand or something that you doubt, do not be lazy to call the speaker again. “I was sure you said it, but I just wanted to make sure.” The speaker can confirm, deny or correct the information. In addition, the speaker may add something that I wanted to say to you after the interview, but forgot.

Technical details. If you are writing about engineering, science or law, you may want to simplify this information for the reader. Show the material to the expert to make sure that you understand everything correctly and do not mislead the reader.

Components. Modern material can be layered. It may include videos, text, tables, charts, audio recordings, callouts with quotes, and much more. Check each of these layers – maybe somewhere in the table lies an error.

Be open

You will not always have the opportunity to verify every fact. In this case, it may be worthwhile to involve living people in checking the facts – for example, your friends on Facebook. After you have posted the material, invite people to openly inform you about inaccuracies and errors – if you work in online media, then you can easily correct the mistake by thanking the attentive reader. (Morgan Marietta, David C. Barker, Todd Bowser 2015).

Recommendation

(Michelle.A 2016). Comment “Look for the source or confirmation of information from several independent sources.” The source refers, in fact, to the newsmaker or the person “from whom the original utterance or action originates”. If for certain reasons, it is not possible to obtain information from the original source, it is worth analyzing data from several secondary sources. “Ask the opposite side.” A one-sided view of the situation does not seem acceptable for a quality journalistic publication. “Learn to recognize fakes” The author recommends attentively to every detail of the news: from the correctness of the spelling of names, the profession, and so on to the verification of the authenticity of the source. So, in modern media space there are special projects practicing the dissemination of fake news (“LITERFAX”, “RIA Fognews, etc.). “Remember: the accuracy of the facts is more important than the sensation.” As mentioned earlier, the main factor in the spread of fakes is the desire to give a sensation. The author of the recommendations calls for a criti-

cal approach to the analysis of this or that information, since ordinary news may lie behind the sensational news. “Use social networks with caution” According to statistics, 62% of adult Americans use social networks as a source of news (Michelle A. 2015). Journalists also often resort to searching for information through social networks. You need to consider the authenticity and relevance of the account before using the information in the social network. Table number 2. Methods of virtual cash from a journalist (Kenney, Patrick J. & Wintersieck, Amanda 2015) and their analysis. We summarize, factchecking as an information processing tool has its own specifics. As a rule, this is a manual method of verifying the reliability of information, involving the skills of finding the necessary information on the Web, the ability to work with both primary and secondary sources of information. In addition, the journalist must possess critical thinking, as well as be attentive to every detail of a text.

The Results

On May 11, the Factcheck.kz fact-finding project, the first in Central Asia, was launched by the International Center for MediaNet Journalism with the support of the Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation. Summing up the first results of the work. In September, Factcheck.kz became a partner of Project Syndicate, thanks to which our readers have access to the unique content of Project Syndicate related to fact-checking, debunking and problems of information verification, analytical materials in the field of the global economy. Actually, the editorial year was no less interesting, we checked for plausibility public statements: Health: FALSE | Methadone is banned by the UN convention for medical use – Kazbekov. Education: TRUTH | In Kazakhstan, it is possible to get a grant by typing a low score on the UNT. Economy: MANIPULATION AND FALSE | Akishev: The accumulative pension system has taken place. Defense: TRUTH | Sending the military of Kazakhstan is possible in any country. Politics: TRUTH | Kelimbetov: The current chairman of the National Bank Akishev voted for investments in the IBA. Debunked by established myths: The main Kazakhstan myth of Genghis Khan: The universe shaker – Kazakh. Rumors denied: Disabled and poorly educated Kazakhs relocate to Kazakhstan. The editorial staff also shared the news of the international factbook and the main tools for checking information in the cognitive section “Digest”. Statistics of the verdicts – the leader is “FALSE” So, your attention is the statistics of the verdicts made, the selection of the loudest revelations of the year and plans for the future. A

total of 143 unique materials were published (each is available in Russian and in Kazakh). Of these, 99 are verified by the Pravdomer. (Nyhan, Brendan & Reifler, Jason 2015).

Conclusion

Fact-checking as a journalistic method of work involves a manual way to verify the accuracy of information. Given this competence, given the sharp spread of fake news, it is important to have a modern journalist who claims to create high-quality publications. (Wintersieck, Amanda L. 2017). Fact-checking is part of the media information literacy system, as it is one of the skills that information creators should possess. Journalists have already identified effective methods of checking, which are the ability to determine the reliability of the source of information and the facts they broadcast. To master the competence of fact-checking, you must be attentive to the quality of the news offered, analyze its authorship and literacy level of writing, and also have critical thinking. (L. Zalesky, T.N. Dasayeva. 2017).

The main task of the online resource Factcheck.kz will be to check the accuracy of information published in the media, social networks, as well as statements of public figures. The creators of the portal are determined to bring up a critical view of things in Kazakhstan. (The Forum 2016).

“We sincerely believe that the appearance of the first fact-finding resource in Kazakhstan will allow readers to receive verified independent information from a reliable source, and those making loud statements will give an incentive to be more attentive to the information being issued,” the website said. (Journal of Political MarketingT).

The team of Factcheck.kz is professional journalists with experience in covering social issues, economics, culture and politics. (<http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-socialmediaplatforms-2016/>). The project involves both full-time and freelance authors, including journalists from leading information resources, experts from various fields. Articles on the site are published in two language versions – Kazakh and Russian. In the future, the language range of materials will be expanded, they promise in the editorial.

Director of the International Center for Journalism MediaNet, which launched the portal, Adil Jalilov explains that the bilingual nature of the site has become “a very serious challenge.” “It was categorically important for us to synchronize two audiences, who often live in two different “worlds,” he

noted. (<https://factcheck.kz/glavnoe/faktcheking-v-kazaxstane-itogi-2017-goda/>).

The head of the center also emphasizes that the site team will check both photo fakes and serious financial news. “We are mentally prepared for the fact that the project may cause irritation,” says Jalilov. (Media and information literacy 2012).

(Media and information literacy 2012). “According to my data, this is the first such resource in Central Asia. Strategically, we intend to become a kind of hub for the development of fact-tracking in the region,” he said, drawing attention to the fact that the project could indirectly reduce the level of xenophobia and hatred.

The main goal is to nurture the critical thinking of the audience against the background of the so-called era of half-truth, when logic, credibility is not a priority. (Layla Akhmetova, Aigul Niyazgu-

lova, Dmitry Sholokhov 2015). Emotions, fakes and manipulations begin to rule the information field. Populism, manipulation, unreliability – this is our object of study.

(Lang, Carol 2015). The editors categorically reject offers of placement in articles of information of an illegal nature, or with elements of propaganda and advertising. “Our project is in no way connected with contractual or verbal obligations with government agencies, companies of the quasi-public sector and commercial organizations,” the portal said.

In its work, Factcheck.kz focuses on the principles of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). (Anderson C. 2009). The project was developed by the International Center for Journalism MediaNet with the support of the Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation.

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Perejti↑ Redakciya Meduza.

Perejti↑ Zakon RF № 2124-1 ot 27.12.1991 «O sredstvah massovoj informacii» (red. ot 25.11.2017)

Perejti↑ Pamyatka «Prostye priemy fakt-chekinga».

Post v fejsbuk Andreya Miroshnichenko.