THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FACT-CHECKING TOOLS IN JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

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Annotation. *This thesis analyzes the spread of fake news in the modern information environment and evaluates the effectiveness of fact-checking tools in combating it. In addition, the views of both local and foreign researchers on the subject are summarized, and relevant recommendations are provided.*

Keywords: *Fact-checking, information, social network, reliability, data, fake news.*

The internet and the news available on it are becoming a part of our daily lives. Social media is reducing the need to get information from traditional sources like newspapers, magazines, and television. Everything we read and see seems to be true. In recent years, the spread of false information on the internet has increased significantly, and this trend has accelerated with the rise of social media. In the era of distributing various information and news through the internet and social networks, the issues of credibility and truthfulness are becoming more problematic. The number of news articles, blog posts, and facts appearing online is increasing every day. Fact-checking helps to build a positive image on the internet and increases credibility. But what is fact-checking, really? The term comes from the English phrase "fact-checking"[75]. It refers to verifying facts and identifying inconsistencies between available facts and topics. The main principles of fact-checking are: impartiality, independence, and accuracy. The responsibility for verifying facts lies with the author and the editor responsible for publishing the material. However, every reader should also verify the authenticity of the news they consume. This is a tool that helps to detect and prevent the spread of incorrect information, false claims, and fake news.

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[75] Ireton, Cherilyn; Posetti, Julie. *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*. UNESCO, 2018. - Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265552

Fact-checking plays a crucial role in modern society[76]. The primary reason for the necessity of fact-checking is to ensure credibility. Fact-checking is significant in fields such as education, law, politics, marketing, and advertising, but its role in journalism is particularly vital. Fact-checking in marketing, for instance, provides great opportunities for growth. Verifying facts also helps to build a reliable relationship with the audience and maintain a good reputation online. Given how frequently we encounter fake news today, fact-checking is essential to protect ourselves from false information.

According to Lizaveta Dubovik, to distinguish facts from factoids, it is necessary to evaluate sources carefully. If it is a scientific article, it is important to check the authors and the content. Scholars should work at independent research centers, hold academic titles, and have a history of prior publications. Furthermore, such articles should be published in high-ranking international journals, which can be verified using tools like *SciMago*[77].

If the source consists of expert opinions or statements from the mass media, the reliability of these should also be verified. For example, investigate and analyze any conflicts of interest in the sources. Additionally, it is essential to avoid cognitive biases during the evaluation process. This ensures that the information is analyzed based solely on factual evidence. There are several steps to fact-checking. The first step is to confirm whether the news item in question is suspicious or not and to search for the original source. For instance, if the article links to another material instead of the original source, it is better to verify and find the primary origin of the information. The original source can often be found through multiple references, such as government portals, original scientific articles, or major news agencies. Consulting the expert directly is also helpful. Sometimes, an expert's commentary can clarify the material and confirm or reject certain facts[78].

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[76] Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists. - Available at: https://www.iq.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists.html

[77] https://trends.rbc.ru/trends/social/645b68429a7947bf577e4986?from=copy

[78] Mark Stencel, Joel Luther. *U.S. fact-checkers gear up for 2020 campaign.* - Available at: https://reporter-slab.org/latest-news/

Images and videos can also be verified. Often, news stories are built around photos or videos, but they are not always fact-checked. There are several websites that allow you to verify the publishing date of visual content online. These tools help identify when old photos or videos are falsely presented as new ones. Searching in different languages is another useful strategy. If an article is about another country, checking that information in another language increases its reliability. Social media is one of the most important tools that make this process easier.

Lizaveta Dubovik's opinion also highlights the risks involved in analyzing facts and expert statements from news sources when trying to determine objective truth. She emphasizes the danger of interpreting news and data based on personal opinions, emotions, or pre-existing beliefs. According to Dubovik, when consuming news, people often make wrong decisions by trusting information that confirms their existing beliefs or emotional reactions, instead of striving for objective truth.

Fact-checking is extremely important in ensuring the truthfulness of information in modern society. The spread of fake information on the internet and social networks has made it necessary to protect ourselves from false news. Fact-checking helps verify the reliability of data and determine whether news content aligns with the truth. This process is essential not only for professionals but for every user. Therefore, fact-checking contributes not only to making news reliable but also to improving overall media literacy and the culture of information consumption.

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