



IN MEDIA WE TRUST

Creating a tool that can help rise the transparency of the Media

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Description of the proposal:

We were thinking about what the main issue regarding Media and Web in our society is, and by using the brainstorming method on a group of 30 different individuals aged between 18-30, we found out that Fake News leading to Propaganda and Manipulation is the “Magic Trio”.

Fake news is a tool that a lot of people are using, especially public figures. This data used by “influencers” is usually manipulated in order to make a statement which may not be the truth. This problem exists due to the lack of education of the reader when selecting their news source.

Fake news is the most effective way to attract readers (for example click bait, breaking news etc). Communities are affected by the lack of transparency of the media they are using, and this can lead to scatters in the general sense of community. *Divide et impera* in this case means that the masses are easily manipulated by the general use of fake news. Propaganda can work better when there is a group of readers, rather than individuals.

Speaking of how these problems are affecting people’s lives, the best example we can give is the “Facebook-Cambridge Analytica” case. For instance, manipulation was used in this case, collecting data from Facebook accounts of the users in order to determinate their perspective via Brexit. So, for the EU Fans, the algorithm was sending ads showing different non-related refugees and Muslims disasters. At a subliminal level, the people were manipulated, thinking that if they didn’t leave the EU, they would be forced to accept large masses of refugees that would destroy their country.

Another problem is that most of the media are sponsored by political parties. For the sake of transparency, we propose a clearer communication with the users, by making statements about political sponsorship.

In order to sensitise the masses, you must raise the overall awareness of the readers, to tell them that fake news and propaganda is easily spread around the web. In order to solve this



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problem, we are creating a tool that will help raise the transparency of media; a seal of approval awarded by the EU.

The public are the biggest contributors to this change. With the necessary knowledge they will be able to filter the information they are reading on the internet, reducing the gap between nations and securing the future of the European union.

Regarding who has the power to create the change, we think that the European Commission through the EACEA International Agency, and later by the national agencies, can agree on a general framework regulating the way the seal of approval is awarded, and who can apply for it.

The concept is of an international/national seal of approval/certificate appearing as a quality mark, which interested media can simply apply for by submitting the necessary application papers to the relevant National Audio-Visual Agency. So as not to infringe upon freedom of speech, this type of seal is not mandatory; it is a sought-after certification of quality of the presented data. After reviewing each case, the Agency can give either a positive or negative response, depending the case. The timeframe the Agency has available to evaluate the practices of the media is 12 months. If, in this timeframe, the respective media does not publish fake news or propaganda material, exercising a high degree of neutrality and, as best as possible, providing only the facts, they will be awarded the quality mark. After this award has been granted, the Agency can pursue at any time to withdraw the certificate if standards are not maintained.

The Agency can hand out three different types of seal of approvals: to newspapers and digital newspapers, journalists (freelancers or not) and then to single articles.