

November 2020

Thank you to everyone who sent in updates for this Making Sense of Media November bulletin, a round-up of your initiatives, research, and events.

We have provided points of contact wherever possible, so that members can contact each other, particularly if there is interest in collaboration or sharing of resources.

Each summary is included alphabetically under one of the categories below; please click on one of the quick links if you would like to go directly to this category.

A reminder that these updates are provided by our network members, and reflect the views of the individual members. Inclusion here does not imply endorsement by Ofcom.

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Ofcom activity

Research

Covid-19 news and information survey (week 33, 6-8 November)

The November wave of our online [Covid-19 news and information survey](#) of 2,000 UK participants aged 16 and over was published on Tuesday 17 November. We monitor the consumption of news and information about the pandemic, and people's attitudes towards it. In week 33, nine in ten people (90%) accessed news about Covid-19 at least once a day, although three in ten respondents (31%) said they are *'trying to avoid news about the coronavirus'*. One third (33%) of respondents said they came across information or news about Coronavirus in the last week that they thought was false or misleading.

Making Sense of Media advisory panel meeting

Ofcom's [Making Sense of Media Advisory Panel](#) met for the sixth time on 29 September. Attendees provided updates on recent work; for example next steps for our work to improve Evaluation

following the working group meeting on the 3 September, and plans for the event on news and misinformation held on 30 October to support UNESCO's Global MIL week. The panel also had an update from Facebook on the 'Your Digital Family' initiative that aims to support families online.

The panel comprises 12 expert representatives from across industry, academia and the third sector, who meet regularly to debate and help inform the overall direction of Ofcom's online media literacy programme.

Making Sense of Media event

News: consumption, engagement, and misinformation

To mark UNESCO's Global Media and Information Literacy week, under the theme 'Resisting Disinformation: Media & Information Literacy for everyone and by everyone', we held a Making Sense of Media Network event titled "News: consumption, engagement, and misinformation" on 30 October.

The event had two sessions: in the first session Alison Preston, co-director of the Making Sense of Media programme, shared the findings from our recent research on news consumption and attitudes, followed by a Q&A session chaired by Kate Davies, Director of Strategy. The second session was chaired by Rasmus Nielsen, director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford. A panel of speakers talked about initiatives to improve media literacy in the context of misinformation, and how these initiatives could be evaluated. Panel speakers included Claire Levens from Internet Matters, Katy Minshall from Twitter, Antonio Silvia from the Behavioural Insights Team and Alberto Fernandes from Ofcom's Making Sense of Media team.

We were delighted that so many network members engaged in the discussion via the chat function and Q&A. This enabled a full and vibrant discussion of many of the key issues, as well as providing food for thought for further work.

Keep in touch

If you would like more information on any of Ofcom's Making Sense of Media work, please email us at makingsenseofmedia@ofcom.org.uk

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Latest research

Girlguiding

In September, Girlguiding launched the 12th addition of its [annual survey on girls' and young women's lives](#). It asked over 2,000 girls and young women aged 7-21 in the UK how they felt about many different issues. This year's survey focused on a wide range of topics including media, appearance pressures, community, politics, education, careers, toys and gaming, sport, the environment and much more.

The findings related to media include:

- 71% aged 11-21 feel that newspapers, magazines and influencers on social media need to do more to stop reinforcing gender stereotypes.

- 54% of girls aged 7-16 say they have the skills to understand what is real and not real in the news, media and online, increasing to 67% for young women aged 17 to 21.
- 34% aged 11-21 won't post a photo of themselves unless they change aspects of their appearance first.
- 33% aged 11-21 think gaming companies should do more to make gaming safer and more enjoyable for girls.

Girlguiding's youth panels [produced a report](#) that reviewed broadcast and non-broadcast ads to assess whether they still contained harmful gender stereotypes, following a ban of such ads in 2019. The young women concluded that these ads had decreased slightly, showing that the rule is being enforced. However, they say that there are still a large percentage of ads that aren't considered harmful under the guidance that still have a negative impact, making them feel sad, uncomfortable and self-conscious.

For more information, please contact Leah Widdicombe, External Affairs Officer
Leah.Widdicombe@girlguiding.org.uk.

Internet Commission

Later this year, the [Internet Commission](#) will launch its 2020 annual Accountability Report. This will include insights from an independent evaluation of how five organisations take decisions about content, conduct and contact online.

The report is based on the Internet Commission's [Evaluation Framework for Content Moderation](#), a tool developed in wide consultation with stakeholders, detailed case studies and a benchmarking process between the participating companies.

Following publication of its 2020 report, the Internet Commission will lead a series of engagements to disseminate and discuss its findings and consult on updating its Evaluation Framework for 2021.

For further information, or enquiries regarding collaboration with the Internet Commission's upcoming events, please contact:

Emma Hoksbergen, Project Lead, Internet Commission: emma.hoksbergen@inetco.org

Juraj Kosturik, Communications Lead, Internet Commission: juraj.kosturik@inetco.org

Patrick Grady, Communications support, Internet Commission: patrick.grady@inetco.org

NewsWise, The Guardian Foundation

[NewsWise](#) published its [2019-20 evaluation report](#) in September. In a climate of misinformation and mistrust, particularly around Covid-19, NewsWise was shown to be strengthening primary pupils' critical literacy skills and increasing their interest and confidence in navigating news. After taking part in the programme:

- twice as many pupils were able to tell whether a news story was real or fake;
- twice as many pupils were interested in the news and more pupils read, watched or listened to the news daily or weekly;

- pupils were more than twice as likely to feel able to tell if a news source was trustworthy; and
- 100% of teachers said their pupils had a better understanding of different aspects of news, such as the difference between fact and opinion.

For further information please contact newswise@theguardianfoundation.org

Which?

Which? undertook a two-stage, [mixed-method research project](#) to build its understanding of how consumers engage with and view scams on social media and inform the development of its scams policy. Stage one comprised a 10-day deliberative online community of 50 Facebook users which employed immersive techniques. Stage two comprised a 15-question nationally representative online survey (c. 2,000 UK adults), with data re-weighted to be representative of Facebook users (effective sample of c. 1,700). Which? opted to focus on Facebook due to its enduring dominance of the social media landscape.

It found that:

- Concerns about scams, though common (65%), were not top of users' minds. Facebook was seen as a social environment and users were not primed to think about the risk of scams.
- High claimed scams awareness disguised gaps in knowledge, with awareness of the risks of data loss especially lacking.
- Users' confidence in their scam-spotting abilities were typically overstated; participants misidentified similar numbers of scams regardless of their self-assessed confidence.
- Participants felt that Facebook could strengthen its systems and processes in relation to scams: awareness (30%) of its flagship scams reporting tool was low. The research identified practical and motivational barriers to reporting; just a third of those who were aware (10% of the total sample) had used the tool.
- While seen as uniquely positioned and as having a leading role in protecting users, participants felt that Facebook shouldn't act alone: regulators, the police and others should work collectively to ensure users are adequately protected.

For more information, please contact Anna.Cordes@which.co.uk

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Events

November

IMPRESS Trust in Journalism Conference 2020: 23-25 November

IMPRESS announces its third annual [Trust in Journalism Conference](#), under the theme 'Building trust in unprecedented times'. The event will take place online in the afternoons of 23, 24 and 25 November and is free to attend.

The programme will cover themes of standards in news: ethics, race and harassment; journalism and mental health; public interest news: unlocking the potential; diversity in the independent news sector; opportunities and pitfalls of reporting and managing feedback in new formats; and the relationship of internet regulation and journalism.

IMPRESS has also recently published its [2019-20 Annual Report](#).

For more information, please contact Clara Aguirre, Communications and Engagement Manager clara@impresreg.org.uk

Voice of the Listener & Viewer

The Voice of the Listener & Viewer will hold its [Autumn Conference](#) online on 24 November between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chairman of ITV, will be a keynote speaker at this event. Peter has over 40 years' media experience having served as Chairman of the Arts Council, President of the Royal Television Society and Chairman and Chief Creative Officer of Endemol UK. In 2017, he led the Independent Review of the Creative Industries for the Government.

At the conference there will also be a panel discussion on affordability of local and regional TV and radio in a global market, as content is increasingly viewed online.

VLV does not charge a fee to attend online events. It is a charity and incurs costs even in running online events, therefore would appreciate a voluntary donation when you register.

For more information, please contact info@vlv.org.uk

February

Safer Internet Day 2021

[Safer Internet Day 2021](#) will be celebrated on Tuesday 9th February 2021 with the theme: 'An internet we trust: exploring reliability in the online world'. Safer Internet Day 2021 celebrates the amazing range of information and opportunities online, and its potential to inform, connect and inspire us, while also looking at how young people can separate fact from fiction.

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre, the campaign focuses on how we can know what to trust online, supporting young people to question, challenge and change the online world. It will explore how influence, persuasion and manipulation can affect young people's decisions, opinions and what they share online. It will also look at the emotional impact that navigating a misleading online world can have on young people and why it is important to create a supportive, critical and questioning culture online that encourages debate and discussion. The UK Safer Internet Centre will also be commissioning research with young people aged 8-17 about their views on online information and disinformation. Its research report will be released on Safer Internet Day 2021.

You can get involved by using the free educational resources, films, top tips and more designed by the online education experts at the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

Projects and initiatives

BBC

How to be impartial, and the importance of separating facts from opinions, are issues explored in [two new videos](#) produced by [BBC Young Reporter](#), as part of the [BBC Bitesize Fact or Fake](#) online resources collection.

BBC Young Reporter is increasing its delivery of disinformation workshops in secondary schools, colleges and youth groups. These free virtual sessions are led by BBC News staff. For more information or to request a workshop contact youngreporter@bbc.co.uk.

The BBC's Monitoring, [Trending and Reality Check](#) teams are collaborating across the world and engaging big audiences globally. A dedicated anti-disinformation unit continues to be extremely busy challenging misinformation across Covid-19 and US elections. As part of this work there is now a dedicated BBC Africa Covid-19 misinformation hub, working in collaboration with Africa Check. This includes [a database](#) of coronavirus health hoaxes, misinformation, and explainers for global audiences.

Carnegie UK Trust

Since September, the Carnegie UK Trust has been producing a range of new digital materials. In response to the rapid exacerbation of the digital divide as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trust has published a new short paper: '[Learning from Lockdown: 12 Steps to Eliminate Digital Exclusion](#)' setting out a series of 12 recommendations calling for ambitious action from policy makers, practitioners, academics and industry to ensure no one in the UK is left digitally excluded.

The Trust also continues to work actively on the topic of online harms regulation and a statutory duty of care. As part of this ongoing work it has published several blogs. One of these shows designing a system of '[regulatory interlock](#)'; another is on platform design and the spread of misinformation and disinformation: [Addressing the "infodemic" through a focus on online system design](#).

The Trust has launched a regular online harms newsletter, to help those interested in this topic to keep in touch with policy developments, campaigns and new research in the UK and further afield. Individuals can [subscribe to the newsletter](#) or view [past editions](#) of the newsletter. The Trust encourages organisations to get in touch to share their work or upcoming events for inclusion, at info@carnegieuk.org.

Economist Educational Foundation

The Economist Educational Foundation's Burnet News Club has continued to make an impact in non-selective state schools across the UK since students returned in September. The first topic has helped learners explore where the power lies in the US election: who can become president, who can vote and whether some people's votes are more powerful than others'.

To deepen students' understanding of each topic, they asked questions of leading experts:

- [Reggie Love](#), former personal aide to President Barack Obama, took questions about working for almost eight years as the president's 'body-man' and how it felt to witness history in the making.
- [Anita McBride](#), former Chief of Staff to Laura Bush, assistant to President George W. Bush and Director of White House Personnel under President Reagan and President George H.W. Bush, spoke to students about a career spanning two decades and three administrations.
- [Adam Roberts](#), Midwest Correspondent for *The Economist*, took questions about the role of a journalist during an election and what it's like to follow the candidates on the campaign trail.
- [Angie Drobnic Holan](#), Editor-in-Chief of *Politifact*, told students all about debunking fake news during the campaign season.
- [Alicia Sams](#), documentary filmmaker, recalled covering President Obama's successful campaign in 2008 and gave her thoughts on the Supreme Court and the prospect of a female president.
- [Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub](#) of the Federal Election Commission answered questions about how much money is spent on elections, and how this one compares to past races.

[Listen to Learn](#) shares what else students said they learnt from the experts.

For more information, please contact burnetnewsclub@economist.com

Facebook

[Your Digital Family](#) is a nationwide programme, which has been co-developed by Facebook and Instagram, in partnership with The Mix and Parentzone. It will run from September until January and will focus on supporting families build on their experiences and conversations around technology at a time where it plays an increasingly important role in our everyday lives. Your Digital Family will take the form of 250 virtual workshops across the UK led by local community groups. So far over 210 community groups from across the UK have been selected and counting...

This programme is designed to enable families to focus on what they have in common, and help identify how we all can get the best out of technology and the internet - safely and productively. The workshops will help participants learn new skills such as how to run digital events, marketing and facilitation.

A £1000 grant will be awarded to each participating community group, who will each go through specialised training to deliver these workshops.

Once all workshops have been completed, Facebook and Parentzone will be completing a full evaluation and publishing a report on the programme success and findings.

For more information, please contact sophieengland@fb.com

Guardian Foundation Education Centre

The Guardian Foundation Education Centre team is delivering free virtual workshops: [News](#), [Features](#) and [Fake or for real?](#) to secondary schools from across the UK, as well as news and media literacy training for teachers and PGCE students. There is an extensive range of news and media resources, materials and activities for [primary](#) and [secondary](#) school teachers, students and families on the Foundation's website. To find out more about its work, [sign up to the monthly newsletter](#).

Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

In three years [Be Internet Citizens](#) (BIC) has reached over 55,000 students and 650 educators, been recognised by experts at the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and engaged MPs including Education Secretary Gavin Williamson and former DCMS Parliamentary Chair Damian Collins. According to [impact reporting](#):

- 92% participating students felt they had gained new knowledge on digital citizenship and media literacy topics;
- 71% felt they would behave differently online;
- 97% of participating teachers were 'very likely' to deliver the curriculum going forward

ISD are launching new resources for teachers and youth workers. It draws on ISD's [vast digital research](#) and the curriculum is [free to download](#) from mid-November. Materials have been accredited by the PSHE Association and cover topics including: Identifying mis- and disinformation online; Understanding Bias; Analysing 'us vs. them' narratives; Responding effectively to hate speech and abuse online; and Creating online content to champion causes.

Registration is open for a series of Be Internet Citizens teacher trainings on the following dates:

- [Thursday 19th November](#): 15.30 – 18.30
- [Thursday 26 November](#): 15:30 – 18:30
- [Friday 4th December](#): 09.30 – 12.30

ISD wants to understand the challenges teachers face in delivering digital citizenship education and how they could benefit most from programmes like BIC, given other constraints. Insights will help to build a new teacher training model for 2021 and beyond, making use of face-to-face, digital and blended learning options. The session will last an hour and all participants will receive a £20 book voucher as thanks. Please sign up [here](#). ISD hopes to capture a range of geographies, demographics, school types and experiences in its outreach.

For more information, please contact jp@isdglobal.org

Internet Matters

In November, Internet Matters, in partnership with Google, launched the '[Tackling fake news and misinformation](#)' advice hub, to help inform and educate parents and carers with strategies to empower children and young people to recognise and report misinformation online.

New research by Internet Matters, found that whilst three-quarters (75%) of parents are concerned about fake news, only 16% have had a conversation with their children about how to identify it in recent months. The new hub directly addresses these concerns by providing families with the advice and guidance on how to make sense of what they see online and separate fact from fiction.

The online hub offers top tips, resources and expert advice, including content from one of the organisation's experts Professor William Watkin, on the issue.

As part of Internet Matters' regular programme of content evaluation, the hub's performance will be tracked both by their in-house analytics team and also through regular waves of parental research, conducted by an independent research house. Once we understand the engagement and reaction metrics we'll refine as required.

For more information, please contact claire.levens@internetmatters.org

NewsWise, The Guardian Foundation

This month, NewsWise launched its latest project to help primary pupils and teachers learn even more about the world of journalism. Student journalist volunteers from institutions across the country are being trained as NewsWise Ambassadors and will work (virtually) with schools taking part in the wider programme over the course of a school term. The November series of the NewsWise [news literacy webinars](#) is fully booked and virtual workshops are taking place in schools across the UK.

For further information please contact newswise@theguardianfoundation.org

NI Cyber Security Centre

The new '[CyberFirst Schools](#)' initiative from NCSC, in partnership with NI Cyber Security Centre, certifies schools and further education colleges committed to developing young people's cyber skills. [EmPower Cyber Week](#) was held in November to inspire and empower 12-13 year-olds for a future career in cybersecurity and learn about cybersecurity from industry and government experts.

NI Cyber Security Centre, along with NCSC, is working hard to get more girls interested in a career in cybersecurity. [The CyberFirst Girls Competition](#) provides a fun yet challenging environment to inspire the next generation of young women to consider a career in cybersecurity. The competition is open to year 9 girls in NI and will open for entries on 30th November.

For more information, please contact Info@nicybersecuritycentre.gov.uk

Public Interest News Foundation

The Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) has been [awarded charitable](#) status by the Charity Commission. This decision is a significant development for journalism and journalistic charities, the charity sector and the news-reading public.

Jonathan Heawood, Executive Director of PINF: *“This decision means we can ensure the public have access to high-quality, independent news, by supporting public interest publishers with grants, training and resources. We have already awarded emergency grants to publishers who were struggling during lockdown, and now we can support more public interest news organisations across the UK.”*

For further information, please contact: Jonathan Heawood, Executive Director
jonathan@publicinterestnews.org.uk

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International

Events

EAVI

The Brussels-based international civil society organisation EAVI, which focuses on media literacy and full citizenship, hosted the [EAVI Conversations](#) online this year from 27 October to 18 November 2020.

The three-week long event reflected on the digital environment we inhabit, and on the skills people should develop to consider its human dimension. The conversations were hosted live online via Zoom every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 16:00 (CET) and consisted of a series of interviews conducted by EAVI founder and Secretary-General Paolo Celot. The concluding webinar will aim to discover experts' unique views on media, media literacy and digital citizenship.

You can [register for the final webinar online](#) and find the [recordings of their previous webinars](#) for this event on their website.

Media and Learning Association

[Nordicom](#) and the Media & Learning Association organised a webinar on media literacy in Belgium (Flanders), held on 4 November. This was the first in the new monthly Media Literacy in Europe series that will continue until June 2020. The [December webinar](#) will cover media literacy in the Baltic States. These hour-long webinars are aimed at researchers, practitioners and policy makers generally interested in the topic of media literacy. Each month the spotlight will be on a different country or region to highlight media literacy activities aimed at younger people, including the school-going population. During the webinars, we aim to provide a helicopter view of what's happening in terms of policy, sharing best practice and learning more about how media literacy is supported in a particular region or country. We will also include a more general round-up each month of media literacy news and announcements.

The sessions are open to everyone. Check out the dates and register on the [Media & Learning events page](#).

UNESCO'S Global Media and Information Literacy week

The theme for UNESCO's Global MIL Week 2020 highlighted how to look at addressing disinformation and technological competency divides by improving everyone's competencies to engage with the opportunities and risks in today's landscape of communication, technology, and information. This year the conference was live streamed from Korea. The sessions centred around disinformation and the Covid-19 pandemic.

This conference highlighted the need for organisations and governments to promote media literacy education. Specifically, how critical thinking skills can stop the spread of disinformation relating to COVID-19. The conference covered research and existing projects focussing on media literacy across the globe. You can watch the sessions back by [registering on the website](#).

- Session 1: Tackling Disinformation in Democratic Societies: Social Network Services and MIL Communities
- Session 2: MIL for Equality: Racial Discrimination, Women, Refugees, Persons with Disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples
- Session 3: Implementation and Evaluation of MIL Policies and Curricula: Long-term Defences Against Disinformation
- Session 4: Korea in Focus
- Session 5: Participation in Society by Media and Information Literate Youth in the Face of Disinformation
- Session 6: Media and Information Literacy by Design: Can AI, Journalism, and Libraries help?
- Session 7: Lifelong Learning: MIL Education for Everyone and by Everyone

The conference resulted in the Seoul declaration which is to be published later this month.

Co-operation and networks

European Platform Regulatory Authorities

During September and October, EPRA conducted a series of roundtables that focused on sharing best practice. Each of these virtual meetings covered a different aspect of setting up and running a MIL network, from creation to evaluation. They provided an opportunity for the exchange of best practices between EPRA members and other organisations active within a media literacy network. The links to the recordings can be found here: [How to create a MIL network](#), [The structure & functions of MIL networks](#) and [The evaluation of MIL networks & activities](#).

Media Literacy Ireland

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions, Media Literacy Ireland will not be hosting its annual MLI conference this year. Instead, it will host a series of five '[Media Literacy Monday](#)' webinars.

With an overarching theme of 'the Power of Collaboration', these webinars will explore how the media literacy community can continue to work collaboratively and remain relevant and effective in the future. Each webinar will be between 60 and 90 minutes in duration and will be recorded and made accessible online in the future.

Each webinar is open to non-MLI members, so if you have friends or colleagues who might like to attend, please feel free to share this information and keep an eye on the [Media Literacy Ireland website](#) for details. If you would like to become an MLI member and be the first to receive notifications about these webinars and other MLI activity, you can sign up for free on the [MLI website](#).

- Webinar 1: **MIL without Borders** was held on Monday November 2.
- Webinar 2: **Who’s influencing who? A look at social media influencing in Ireland** was held on Monday November 9.
- Webinar 3: **News Literacy Now** was held on Monday November 16.
- Webinar 4: **MIL evaluation: Test, Iterate, Improve** is co-hosted between MLI in Ireland and Ofcom’s Making Sense of Media in the UK, and will explore different approaches to MIL research and evaluation. The event will be held on Monday November 23, 2020.
- Webinar 5: **The next chapter for ML: AI, Data and Ethics** on Monday November 30, 2020 at 4pm. This webinar will discuss what is AI and what new MIL skills might be required by citizens in order to make fully informed choices in relation to digital products and services.

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