

NOT-EQUAL

EPSRC NetworkPlus: Social Justice through the Digital Economy

Project Final Review Form

Please submit this form within one month of completing your project to notequal@ncl.ac.uk.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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Job Title: Senior Lecturer in Psychology (Education)

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Organisation: University of Glasgow

Co-Investigators (names and organisations):

Daniel Jolley Northumbria University

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Project Title: Tackling Fake News via Fake People: Co-creating a toolkit to help young people recognise fake news

Project Reference Number: NE2.003

1. SUMMARY

Please outline the research challenge and question your project aimed to address, in less than 100 words.

Fake news spreads 6 times quicker than the truth and is believed 75% of the time, meaning that it has the power to change our behaviour and impact our society. Project Real aimed to help young people develop the skills and confidence to recognize fake news. To do this, we co-created a 6 week intervention in collaboration with young people, social media influencers and teachers. We then tested the intervention in schools.

Results showed that the project increased young people's confidence and skills in recognizing fake news and was engaging for pupils. The materials are now freely available on our website (www.projectreal.co.uk) and are being used in a variety of settings.

2. APPROACH

Please provide a summary of the approach of your research project, including any deviations from your work plan, the reasons for this and how you addressed any issues.

Our aim was to work with young people, social media influencers, teachers and academics to co-create materials to help young people to recognize fake news and to test these materials to ascertain their efficacy. We have:



- Successfully co-created six interactive sessions on fake news
- Tried the intervention in three Glasgow schools with around 420 young people
- Conducted focus groups to ascertain young people's views of the intervention
- Conducted teacher interviews to ascertain teachers' views of the intervention
- Collected questionnaire data before and after the intervention to ascertain its efficacy
- Used this information to improve the materials
- Created a website to freely share our materials
- Begun trialing the intervention in a further school in England

Our results suggest that our intervention successfully improved knowledge, confidence and skills in recognizing fake news and that the intervention was engaging.

We recruited 3 schools in Glasgow which drew from a diverse group of young people. From these, we recruited around 18 young people and three teachers to assist in the co-creation. We also recruited 5 social media influencers to assist in the co-creation.



Our influencers: *Phoebe, Bushra, Harriotte, Katie, and Carley*

As young people were not in school due to COVID-19 restrictions, we originally delayed the project. However, once it became apparent that the lockdown was not going to ease, we decided to co-create online. This was very challenging, in terms of ensuring that we had a safe platform for young people to engage with us. It was also more difficult to build rapport and ensure that everyone was comfortable to contribute. However, we produced some

excellent materials and learned a lot about online co-creation. We will produce a paper on this to help others learn from our experiences.

We were able to arrange access for ourselves to a secure online site to work safely with the young people. This group met every week over a 6-week period for 1-3 hours per week to design the materials. The young people led on the topics and activities they wanted to see included and each school designed 2 sessions each. The team decided on a name for the project, 'Project Real' and a logo (see below)



We wanted to design six weeks of content as this would fit into a typical term, where each of the sessions would be an hour with lots of discussion, activities and videos from the influencers. We also decided that the government SHARE guidelines (Source, Headline, Analyse, Retouch and Errors) would be the framework we used to tie each week together.

The final topics which the group decided on were:

- Fake News: how to recognize fake news stories
- Fake Photos: why people might edit photos, the impact this could have on others and how to recognize fake photos
- Fake People: how to recognize fake people on social media accounts
- Fake Stories (Conspiracies): What a conspiracy is, how to recognise conspiracies and what impact they might have
- Fake Videos: Why people might create fake videos, the impact this might have and how to recognise them
- Keeping it Real: Bringing it all together and designing materials to help other young people learn more about fake news

Each week has a set of PowerPoint slides which teachers can use to introduce the topic. Each has videos embedded and a range of activities including a starter, main activity and closing activity. These include activities like 'spot the difference' between real and photoshopped videos, watching videos and guessing if they are real, and discussions. There is also a teacher's guide which gives more detail on timings and learning outcomes. We have developed a website and content can be found at <http://www.projectreal.co.uk/>

We trialed the intervention in the three schools. Around 420 young people aged from 11-13 participated in this trial. We intended to collect pre, post and delayed post test data as well as focus groups with pupils and interviews with teachers to allow us to evaluate the intervention. We obtained ethical approval from the University of Glasgow and Glasgow City Council to conduct this research.

However, during this period, researchers were not allowed to enter schools (due to Covid-19) and we had also been approved to use opt in parental consent rather than opt out. Because of this, we were only able to gather pre and post test data from around 65 students. We also were unable to collect data from the control group. Nevertheless, the questionnaire included items exploring knowledge about fake news, confidence in recognizing fake news and ability to recognize fake news (by providing some real and fake examples and asking students whether they knew which were real) and our analyses had enough power to allow us to make inferences.

Our results suggested that the intervention successfully improved these variables in our participants.

Focus groups with young people showed that they found the intervention engaging and exciting and feel better able to recognize fake news:

- 'Yeah I think now we look more aware of how you can spot fake news. And like, it encourages me to like double check or do a lot of research into what I've just read.'
- 'Yeah, it (Project Real) definitely made me more confident myself. Like I said before, I know what to do now. Like usually now, when I look at the news, I'll like double check things to see if any other news, like website has wrote the same thing and like read beyond the headlines.'
- 'I feel like I can like when I see it I'd be able to tell if it's fake news or like fake picture easier than before.'

Interviews with teachers also showed that they believed that the intervention was engaging, and had fit well with the curriculum and that they wanted to use it again:

- 'the videos from the Instagram influencers. That was really good to relate it to the real world, um especially when this is becoming a quite an aspiring career to get into.'
- 'I think having pupils involved is the way forward. Yeah. It's really, it's designing it with them.'
- 'it's interesting, because young people just think that they know, everything, but then the examples that you had given, it was quite kind of thought provoking and things like that. So it was it was really useful.'
- 'I genuinely think that when I could see lightbulb moments when we were chatting about things, and they were understanding it at the time.'
- 'I've already had staff saying they thought it should be delivered to all year groups. Someone else who didn't deliver it, but heard about it said has said, asked me if we could use it again next year'

There was clearly a large appetite for this sort of intervention, and we intend to work on evaluating it with a larger number of participants in the coming year.

3. ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS



Please list any outputs from your project to be entered in the Not-Equal Researchfish submission. These include events, publications, workshops, webinars, invited talks, media coverage and tools (please include links to open source, git-hubs if relevant) that have resulted from your project.

Please include the following for each entry:

(Our project github link is: <https://github.com/equalityTime/projectreal>)

Title: Project Real Spotting Fake News during Cop 26 (School) ESRC Festival of Social Science

Date: 11/11

Type of Event: Workshop

Number of People Reached: Presentation - 360

Primary Audience: School Children

Key Outcomes/Impact: Positive feedback from teachers on Project Real and an intention to use the materials in future

URL: <https://twitter.com/YvonneSkipper/status/1438831348165251076>

Title: Project Real Spotting Fake News (Parents and Children) during Cop 26

Date: 3/11

Type of Event: Online workshop on fake news for parents and children as part of Cop26

Number of People Reached: 15

Primary Audience: parents and children

Key Outcomes/Impact:

URL:

Title: Project Real Spotting Fake News (Scottish Researchers Festival)

Date: 17/11

Type of Event: Online video sharing event

Number of People Reached: Presentation - 853

Primary Audience: Twitter users

Key Outcomes/Impact:

URL: <https://twitter.com/YvonneSkipper/status/1438831348165251076>

Title: Project Real Spotting Fake News (Parents and Children)

Date: 22/09

Type of Event: Online workshop on fake news for parents and children

Number of People Reached: 20

Primary Audience: parents and children

Key Outcomes/Impact:

URL:

Title: Project Real Project website

Date: Ongoing

Number of People Reached:



Primary Audience: Teachers/ those working with young people

URL: <http://www.projectreal.co.uk/>

Title: Presentation at the British Psychological Society (Developmental section, Social Section and Education Section annual conference)

Date: September 2021

Type of Event: Conference

Number of People Reached: Around 30 audience members at each presentation

Primary Audience: Academics

Key Outcomes/Impact:

URL:

Title: Times Education Supplement Article

Date: Upcoming

Number of People Reached: National newspaper

Primary Audience: teachers/parents/those who work with young people

Key Outcomes/Impact:

URL:

Title: Sharing materials in collaboration with Education Scotland/Higher Horizons/National Teaching Forum

Date: Upcoming

Number of People Reached: National level organisations

Primary Audience: teachers/those who work with young people

Key Outcomes/Impact: TBC

URL:

Title: International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development conference presentations.

Date: July 2022

Number of People Reached: Upcoming

Primary Audience: Academics from across the world

Key Outcomes/Impact: TBC

URL:

4. INSIGHTS & IMPACT

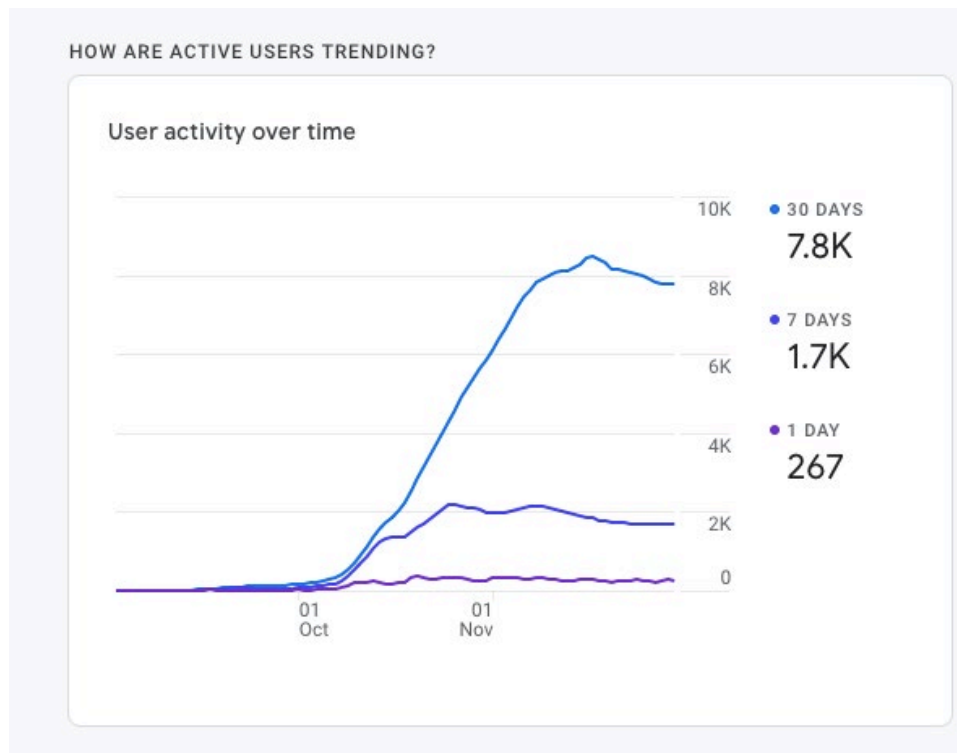
Please describe the findings of your project and their significance in relation to potential or actual social impact.

We have had a large reach in our initial study, as while three schools participated, they used the materials in all of their S1-S3 classes.

We have also engaged with a school in England which is currently using the intervention with their Year 9 pupils (and assisting with the evaluation).



In future we will be working with Education Scotland, Higher Horizons and the National Teaching Forum to advertise our materials. This is in addition to the targeted advertising which has brought around 13,000 visitors to our website since launch in July.



This means that the project will have reach across the UK and internationally and will help young people develop the skills to recognize fake news.

5. REFLECTIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Please list the key highlights from your project, summarize any lessons learned from this work and outline any future directions or plans to continue activities beyond this project.

Highlights

- Co-created a series of 6 hour-long sessions
- Evaluated the efficacy of the intervention
- Developed a Project Real website
- Disseminated our work at national conferences
- Run various workshops for schools and families

Lessons learned

We have learned a lot about how to successfully co-create online and intend to publish a paper on this to help others who are considering online co-creation.

We have also learned a lot about what schools are looking for in terms of interventions and this will help us in future work. The relationships developed with schools and teachers will be invaluable for this work.

Future Directions

We also intend to follow up the project, working with parents and pupils together to help parents learn more about fake news. Our workshops have shown that often parents' understanding of fake news, especially photo and video editing is weaker than that of their children and working with parents and children together may help engage them in these skills and help parents and children learn together.

We will also continue to disseminate our materials with help from our partners.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this form, please contact notequal@ncl.ac.uk

