

[NO] Norwegian Media Authority publishes survey on fake news

IRIS 2017-7:1/27

*Marie Therese Lilleborge
Norwegian Media Authority*

By request from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture, the Norwegian Media Authority (NMA) carried out a survey on fake news in March 2017, and the results were published on 3 April 2017. The survey was designed by the NMA, and based on similar studies on fake news which were carried out in the United States and Sweden (see also IRIS 2017-5/21). A representative sample of 1 000 people aged between 18-80 were asked questions about the sharing and spreading of fake news, the ability to detect such news, and who they thought was responsible for preventing its dissemination and for increasing media literacy among the population. The survey was carried out by a polling institute in March 2017. The survey shows that over half (55%) of the respondents suspected that they, weekly or more often, read news that they considered to be inaccurate; 45% reported reading news, weekly or more often, that they considered to be deliberately falsified; nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said they had shared a news story that they later realised was fake on at least one occasion; and 15% reported that they had shared a news story they knew or suspected to be fake on at least one occasion.

When asked where they most often read false information presented as news, a fairly large majority of the respondents pointed to the Internet and social media: 62% mentioned Facebook, 15% search engines, 14% YouTube, 12% alternative news websites, and 21% pointed to traditional media. Following on from this, it is interesting that the survey shows that for almost 90% of respondents, traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television have a very big responsibility (68%) or quite a big responsibility (21%) for preventing the spreading of fake news. The expectations towards social media's responsibility is a bit lower, with 49% expressing the view that social media has a very big responsibility and 33% asserting that social media has quite a big responsibility. Only a little over a quarter (27%) considered that the population has a substantial responsibility in preventing the spreading of fake news. When asked what they do when they come across a news story that they suspect is false, a little over a third (37%) of respondents stated that they did not do anything. At the same time, 35% answered that they checked via web search; 24% checked via traditional media, and 18% checked "fact check services" (see IRIS 2017-3/14); 4% stated that they contacted the editor or journalist; and 13% stated that they addressed fake news in the comments field or in social media.

To be able to detect fake news and know what to do about it, it is vital to have a variety of media literacy skills and knowledge about source criticism. The survey shows that Norwegians believe that increasing media literacy and source criticism is primarily the responsibility of traditional media (50%), closely followed by schools and education (47%) and public authorities (46 %); 38% stated that social media has a very large responsibility and 26 percent that the responsibility rests with the population. The NMA is amongst those who work actively to increase media literacy skills in the Norwegian population. After the NMA presented the survey on fake news, the Ministry of Culture asked the NMA to prioritise the work on media literacy this year. One of the planned measures is to conduct a similar survey on fake news aimed at young people between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. This survey will be carried out through the Norwegian Safer Internet Centre, which is part of the European Connecting Europe Facility Programme, and coordinated by the NMA. The findings will form the foundation for developing a new educational resource aimed at this age group.

Falske nyheter - En webundersøkelse utført av Sentio Research for Medietilsynet, 3/4/2017

http://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/2017/falske_nyheter_undersokelse_hovedfunn.pdf

Norwegian Media Authority, Fake News, 3 April 2017

