Fact-check it!

Educator Instructions

Summary

In this classroom activity, students join an "expert" group to learn one specific digital verification skill, then reorganize and join a "jigsaw" group to share what they learned with their classmates and to fact-check and analyze one example (or more) of viral rumors. "Jigsaw" groups will work as a team to answer a series of questions about the authenticity and origins of visual examples (photos and videos) and the accuracy of any claims made (in an accompanying social media post or meme, for instance), then extend their skills to explore each example further.

Essential questions

- What different types of misinformation exist?
- Why do people believe misinformation?
- What skills and tools do people need to effectively debunk misinformation?

Key terms

Misinformation
Viral rumor
User-generated content
Reverse image search
Critical observation
Geolocation

Preparation

- (Suggested) Complete the "Misinformation" lesson on NLP's Checkology® virtual classroom with your students (educator registration required).
- (Suggested) Display the "Types of misinformation" poster in your classroom.
- Review the five skills tutorials (critical observation, reverse image search, geolocation, "lateral reading" and magnifiers) linked below, under "Activity."
- Review this example of misinformation: http://archive.is/CcgWI.
- For more examples of misinformation, head to the Checkology virtual classroom's "Content" tab (www.checkology.org), and then scroll down to "Fact-check."
- Plan to divide your class into two groups ("expert" and "jigsaw"), according to the lesson plan (ensuring that each "jigsaw" group will have at least one "expert" in each of the five fact-checking skills). Each student will be a member of two groups.

Duration

30-45 minutes

Learning objective

I can...

1. apply one digital verification skill.
2. explain a digital verification skill to others.
3. synthesize a variety of fact-checking skills and tools to evaluate an example of viral content.

Materials needed

- (Suggested) "Five types of misinformation" poster.
- "Fact-check it!" worksheet — one copy per student.
- Internet access and projector or smartboard.
- At least one internet-enabled device per student group.

  (Note: The first part of this activity requires multiple students to listen to a short video tutorial together as a group.)

Suggested grade level(s):

7-12

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Activity

1. Break students into "expert" groups in which they will learn one of five digital verification skills by watching a short tutorial, taking notes and asking clarifying questions of others in their group. The skills (with tutorials linked) are:
    - **Critical observation:** https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/31e49f060996665d0abbec688d571cb59de6478a
    - **Reverse image search:** https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/57c6341ff954b8e0fa89d95a9f262f112eb0e0ea
    - **Geolocation:** https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/d1379776c0895b8f6a48bd743a0b1e4f98fa080b
    - **"Lateral reading":** https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/b2e21c9dc664ded6b5213e33db45297a33ce8251
    - **Magnifiers:** https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/379b01f13fb708bb1aa00ad0e9bd011d60295c56
2. Break students into "jigsaw" groups in which each of the five skills is represented. For example, you might have the class count off by five while they are still assembled in their "expert" groups, then use those numbers as the basis for the new "jigsaw" groups.
3. Once students are in their "jigsaw" groups, explain that you will be sharing an example for them to fact-check as a team using the attached worksheet. If you want to give this activity a competitive aspect, you can also tell them that groups will be rewarded for speed and accuracy, but that accuracy is more important than speed.
4. Share the misinformation example (http://archive.is/CcgWI) with each group. It also helps to display the example using a projector or smartboard.
5. If you feel that it's necessary, briefly elicit discussion about the example (what it is claiming and why someone might want to make or amplify this claim.)
6. Ask students to complete the attached worksheet individually or to fill out one as a group.

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Digital Verification Skill Worksheet

Name of digital verification skill:

Summarize this skill:
(What does it involve and what does it allow you do to?)

List of free tools available online to practice this skill:

What questions do you have?

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Student Activity Worksheet

Is this image proof of the Twitter user's claim that "Mexicans have turned Trump's wall into a tourist attraction & are playing a game to see who can climb it the fastest, no ladders or ropes needed. The record is 45 seconds"?

Where does the Twitter user imply that the photograph was taken?

Where was the photograph taken?

When was the photograph taken?

Were the people in the image playing a game? If not, what were they doing?

What type of misinformation is this?

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Answer Key

Is this image proof of the Twitter user's claim that "Mexicans have turned Trump's wall into a tourist attraction & are playing a game to see who can climb it the fastest, no ladders or ropes needed. The record is 45 seconds"?

A: No — this image could have been taken anywhere. It is not proof of the claim.

Where does the Twitter user imply that the photograph was taken?

A: The San Diego, California, neighborhood of Otay Mesa, on the U.S.-Mexico border — the same place that President Donald Trump visited on Sept. 18, 2019 (three days before the tweet) and spoke about the "anti-climb" features of a newly completed replacement section of the border wall.

Where was the photograph taken?

A: Border Field State Park in Imperial Beach, California, about 10 miles west of Otay Mesa.

When was the photograph taken?

A: Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2018.

Were the people in the image playing a game? If not, what were they doing?

A: No. According to NBC News, people in a caravan of migrants from Central America were celebrating that they had reached Mexico's border with the United States.

(https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/stunning-images-show-migrant-caravan-reaching-border-fence-san-diego/50832/)

What type of misinformation is this?

A: False context.