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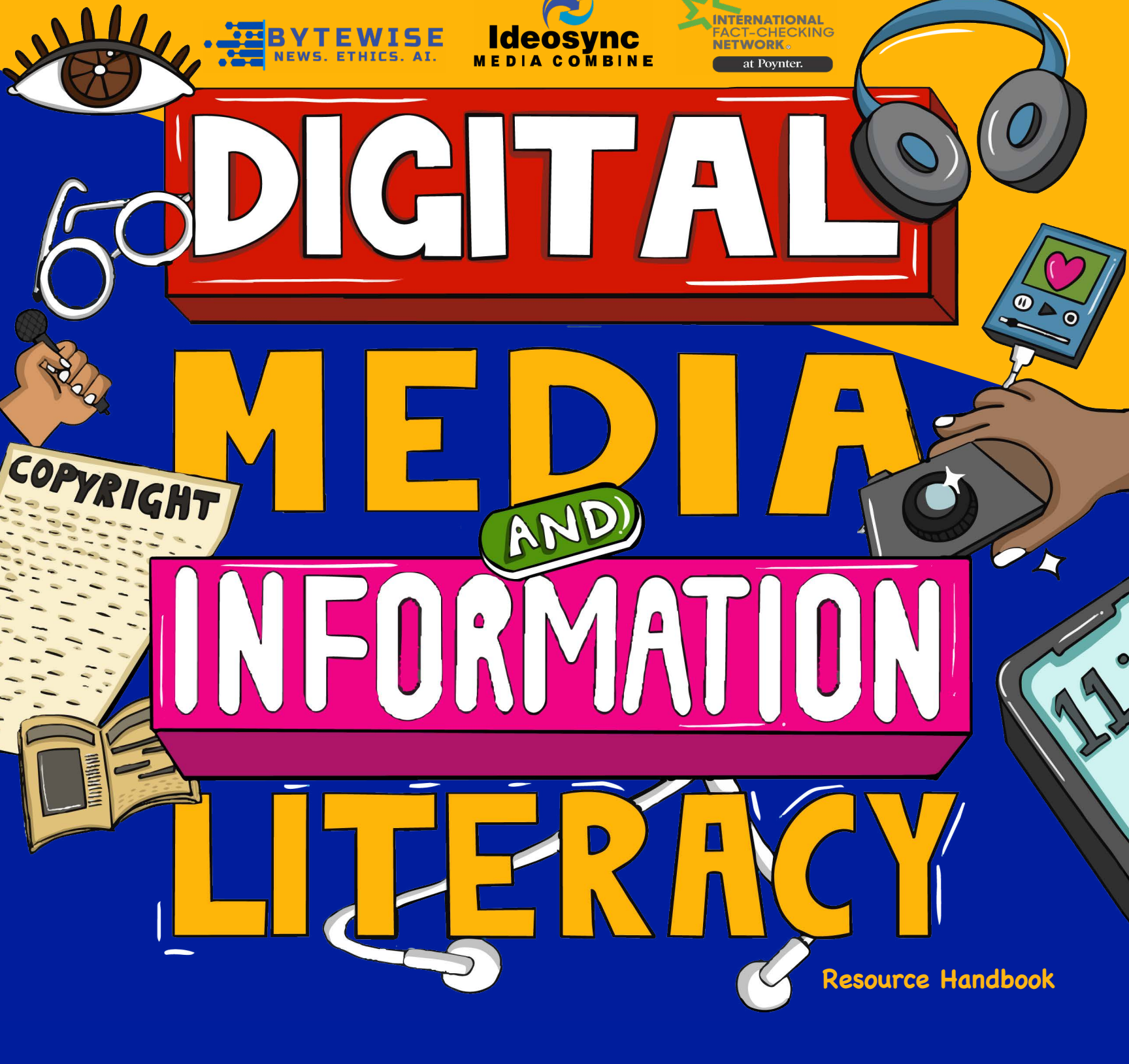
NEWS. ETHICS. AI.

Ideosync
MEDIA COMBINE

INTERNATIONAL FACT-CHECKING NETWORK
at Poynter.



Digital Media and Information Literacy

Resource Handbook

Ideosync Media Combine works at the intersection of communities, communication and social transformation. Our projects are designed to deepen equitable and meaningful access to digital media and technologies, and ensure communication justice for all. Our work is founded on principles of gender and knowledge equity, community participation, and freedom of speech. We work through research, capacity building, training and participatory content creation.

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Preface and Acknowledgement

The advent of technology in South Asia, and particularly India (where access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare continue to be a challenge), has effected a paradigm change in the social, political and economic landscape. While technology such as smartphones - now ubiquitous across the country[1] - revolutionized people's access to goods and services and altered how we communicate in daily life, it also served to widen existing divides in Indian society. Women and girls, for instance, remain among the most digitally marginalized; and the digital divide itself is shaped considerably by barriers of economic class. These barriers significantly dilute the potential of the digital space for bridging divides of class, caste, race, gender and culture by limiting who can participate in shaping it. Moreover, the digital space itself has become fertile ground for rampant misinformation and disinformation, particularly in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Increasingly, we are witness to cyberbullying, online sexual harassment, digital scams, and hate speech. These are the product of poor regulation, and the hegemony of specific social groups in the governance of the digital space. However, beyond that, they are also the product of poor digital & media literacy - a set of linked capacities that are fast becoming core lifeskills in this day and age.

This handbook has been conceptualised and drafted with learnings from digital media information literacy (DMIL) sessions conducted with students and educators from government schools in Delhi and in Uttar Pradesh. It offers information and hands-on activities for both trainers and trainees to better understand the uses of digital media, as well as to understand the risks associated with these technologies.

We are grateful to the educators and trainers who contributed to the DMIL training that we conducted in schools, and from whom we learnt in equal measure. We are particularly grateful to Shri K.S. Upadhyaya, CEO, Delhi Board of School Education & Addl. Director of Education, Govt. of NCT Delhi, for his support and guidance. Our special thanks to Ideosync team members Imran Nazir, Hashim Manzoor, Hazeena T. and Nazneen, for facilitating these training sessions and for their contributions to the text of this handbook; to Nayanshree Hemlani and Abdullah Kazmi for their additional writing inputs; and to Vaishali Soni for her illustrations and design of the handbook.

We are grateful to the Poynter Institute for supporting us as we distilled our vision and practice into this handbook. Our gratitude also to Professors Venu Arora and N. Ramakrishnan from O.P. Jindal Global University for guiding the Ideosync team and providing constant feedback.

Introduction to DMIL

The term 'literacy' is defined as the ability to read and write. However, this definition is rapidly evolving. Today, we consume and share information with people around us on an unprecedented scale, using digital technologies in general, and social media in particular. We are also witnessing a phenomenal rise in fake news and misinformation. Hate speech has fractured the public sphere, and often measures like 'community guidelines' fail to keep it in check. This is coupled with the rapid development of Artifical Intelligence (AI), which is making it easier to generate fake news and falsify previously unquestionable evidence such as videos and photographs. Though recent years have seen users push for greater transparency from big tech companies, there remains little clarity on the regulations needed to control social media algorithms and monitor the creation and spread of fake news online.

In India, millions of users across age groups are part of a rapidly growing digital sphere. Individual privacy and digital footprints remain key considerations - and very few know enough to keep themselves safe. Being conventionally literate is no longer enough. Understanding how information is created, how it circulates, and how to use digital tools responsibly is a critical part of the new age 'literacy'.

Digital Media and Information Literacy (D-MIL) is the ability to create, use and consume media safely and responsibly. Investing in DMIL training empowers young people to better understand and control their digital lives. It equips people with competencies to access media, analyse media content, create new media messages, reflect on existing media content, and use media as a tool for social change. It allows citizens to analyse complex information from newspapers, TV programmes, radio, podcasts, websites, advertisements, and billboards, among others. Being able to fact-check and identify misinformation in online (and offline) spaces helps cultivate more responsible and socially aware citizens the cornerstone of any democratic society.

This handbook orients readers on the fundamentals of media - its history, and its role in society. Through practical exercises in fact-checking and news literacy, readers develop skills to address fake news and misinformation and are equipped to recognise bias and misinformation - and thereby advocate for the creation of better policies and norms.

Note for Facilitators

Around the world, many educational bodies and schools are incorporating digital media & information literacy programmes within their curricula. Educators have found that media and information literacy is an effective and engaging way to instill critical thinking skills and values among students, and can help combat misinformation at its nascent stages.

Drawing on Ideosync Media Combine's work on media and information literacy at the grassroots, within communities and with high school students in schools in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, this handbook incorporates knowledge from existing global media literacy curricula and resources such as the **Media and Information Literacy Guidebook** by Deutsche Welle[2] and provide a succinct time bound curriculum for young people.

The handbook is aimed principally at teachers and facilitators who aspire to conduct Digital Media Literacy workshops with young people in high school settings. However, it can be adapted easily for use in other formal and informal settings by mixing and matching the sessions and the activities provided in the handbook.

The format is designed to help learners become active consumers and creators of media. Since DMIL is a relatively new curriculum within the Indian education system, it is essential that facilitators who conduct these sessions possess a prior understanding of media in general; and digital media and technologies in particular. This handbook should not be seen as a single-point reference, but rather as a starting point. It should ideally be supplemented by additional reading and references that expand and clarify on the activities and points raised here.

Structure of Training

The training structure envisioned in this manual uses a balanced combination of theory and practice. Overall, it is intended to be implemented as 5 two-hour sessions, for 10 hours of instruction in all.

The sessions use a participatory learning approach, where students learn the fundamentals of media, fact-checking, and the internet through practical assignments. By combining theoretical and historical background with games and activities, it allows students to engage with real-world questions and challenges in an engaging and interactive fashion.

We would like to note that a major challenge within most school processes has been to secure enough classroom time for the implementation of the training programme. Facilitators will need to work with the respective school authorities to secure flexible (and adequate) time slots for the sessions.

The training begins by laying a theoretical foundation, by providing a historical overview of mass communication. It then covers news literacy, fact-checking, privacy, and the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) based tools. Finally, it concludes with the concept of digital storytelling.

Each chapter has some theoretical insights and inputs that provide some conceptual clarity on the key topic of the chapter. Each chapter also has two activities. You may like to break up your class into groups or teams and assign these activities to two different groups. Provide a time limit for each activity; and then ask the groups to share their results/findings/ discussions with everyone else.

There are also *Questions to Ponder* and *Did you know?* segments. You may like to undertake an open discussion with the students using these.

Lastly, we have also included a *Voices from the Classroom* section. These sections have been based on actual queries and conversations that we encountered when facilitating the DMIL sessions in schools. As facilitators, these can be used as prompts for in-classroom role plays, or as read aloud activities during the session.


किसकी होगी जीत??
बच्चा है तु मेरा!!!
92.7 BIG FM
POLL
RESULT
PVR
2789
1315
DHURANDAR
Is climate change real??
NAT GEO WILD
NEWS 24
BREAKING NEWS
NETFLIX PRESENTS
THE WHITE TIGER

Session 01

MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Understanding Media and Communication

Humans are social beings, and communication is a social necessity. At its simplest, **communication** is the process of exchanging information, knowledge, or data through various means, in a way where meaning is conveyed to all who are party to that exchange.

Communication can take different forms, including verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual. **Verbal communication**, for example, involves speaking, while **non-verbal communication** includes body language and facial expressions. **Written communication** is represented through text, while **visual communication** includes, but is not limited to, images, videos, and graphics. The term **media** refers to the various tools and technologies that facilitate communication, whether on an interpersonal, group, or mass communication level.

Mass refers to a large, anonymous group of people who are spatially dispersed across a vast geography. Consequently, **mass communication** is the process of sharing information with a large number of people; and the media that facilitate this form of communication are called **mass media**. To understand media, we can classify them based on the kind of content they include, and the technology they use for dissemination.

Types of Media

Print Media

As the name suggests, the term **print media** refers to any printed material that carries written, physically printed text as information, such as newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, flyers, books, brochures, and newsletters. Its characteristics include tangibility and longevity, as it exists in physical printed form. Copies of the first modern printed book, the Gutenberg Bible, printed in the 1450s, continue to exist today, more than five hundred years later.

Audio Media

Audio media include any media that use audio as a form of communication. In a previous era the audio media was disseminated through vinyl records, audio cassettes, CDs and the radio. As technology has shifted we have streaming audio, internet radio and podcasts.

Visual Media

Any media that employs visuals and images to communicate comes under this category, including photography and painting.

Visuals can also be combined with audio, as in the case of video and cinema; or with text, as in the case of comics and graphic novels.

Today, however, most media we encounter incorporate text, audio, and visual components. We refer to them as **multimedia**, which we encounter daily on digital platforms.

Digital Media

Digital media refers to content created, stored, and distributed in digital formats. They are usually accessed via the internet or through computer networks, using electronic devices like laptop computers, mobile phones, or tablet computers.

Digital media enables fast, easy and speedy communication and offers robust interactive features for users. Digital disrupts the older definitions, and supports text, video, audio (or a combination of these). Over the last two decades, the growth and proliferation of digital media have supported a convergence of media and of technologies.

A Brief Overview of Media History

In the prehistoric era, humans used cave carvings and paintings as a form of communication. In 2024, the oldest known cave art was discovered on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, estimated to be at least 51,200 years old, according to scientists. Later, humans used a wide array of methods for long-distance communication and record keeping, such as **stone tablets**, **carrier pigeons**, and **drums**. **Manuscripts** were important tools for storing and communicating information and knowledge in many societies before the advent of printing. This term refers to the process of writing by hand on materials such as palm leaves, cloth, paper, and bark. **Writing**, as an important means of communication, flourished in ancient civilisations, as evidenced by archaeological findings and the existence of ancient libraries.

A watershed moment in communication history was the invention of the movable printing press by German craftsman Johannes Gutenberg in the 1440s. One of the most famous works he printed on his press was the **Gutenberg Bible**. Although different forms of printing existed in other parts of the world for centuries (such as block printing in China), Gutenberg's mechanisation of printing made the process faster and more efficient for the time. This technology enabled the mass production of printed materials, including the newspapers we know today.

If we define a newspaper as a printed publication that regularly informs the public about current affairs, **The Relation** from 17th-century Germany is widely credited as the earliest example of such a publication in Europe. In India, the first newspaper was published by an Irishman, James Augustus Hickey, in Bengal in 1780. The paper was called **The Bengal Gazette**.

The Lumière brothers, Auguste and Louis, are pivotal figures in cinema history, credited with inventing the first practical **motion-picture camera and projector**, the cinématographe. Their first public screening took place on December 28, 1895, at the Grand Café in Paris, where they showcased a series of short films, including the iconic *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*. Dadasaheb Phalke made the first Indian film, *Raja Harishchandra*, in 1913. Since the late 19th century, people have been interested in wireless communication,

which led to the development of radio. The **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)**, the longest-running public radio broadcaster in the world, was established as a company in 1922 by a team of wireless manufacturers, including Guglielmo Marconi, who is widely acknowledged as the first person to successfully demonstrate radio communication in 1897.

The first radio broadcasts in India were experimental transmissions conducted by radio clubs in the early 1920s. In the 1930s, the government took over radio broadcasting in India and set up what would eventually become **All India Radio** (AIR), also known as Akashvani.

Television technology reached significant milestones in the 1920s, especially with the successful demonstrations by Scottish TV pioneer John Logie Baird. He conducted the first successful demonstration of TV broadcasting over a distance of 438 miles in 1927. Television technology came to India in the 1950s, and the national broadcaster **Doordarshan** was established in 1959. Today, we distribute audio and video through satellite services and through internet streaming services like **Netflix** and **Jio Hotstar**.

Computers

Computers are machines designed to calculate data, store, and process vast amounts of information. Interestingly, the term **computer** originally referred to humans, often women, who performed calculations (McLennan and Gainer)[3]. The pursuit of machines capable of handling complex calculations drove early developments in computing. The **abacus**, an ancient device for addition and subtraction, represents the earliest form of such a tool.

The first device resembling a modern computer is Charles Babbage's **Difference Engine**, designed to perform complex mathematical computations. Ada Lovelace, a British mathematician fascinated by Babbage's work, is recognised as the first computer programmer for her notes on the machine's potential beyond simple calculation. It took decades of technological advancement for these early calculating devices to evolve into the sophisticated computers we rely on today.

The Internet

The Internet is a global network that connects computers, enabling them to communicate and share information seamlessly. Its roots trace back to the mid-20th century, when computers were large machines which were difficult to move from one place to another. Scientists and researchers were frustrated by the the lack of an efficient way to share data across these isolated systems. This challenge became even more pressing during the Cold War, when the powerful nations were concerned about secure and reliable channels for communicating information and data. In response, the U.S. Department of Defence funded the development of **ARPANET** in 1969, a pioneering network designed to facilitate communication between computers across different locations, especially universities. ARPANET's success laid the groundwork for the modern Internet, transforming how information is shared and revolutionising communication worldwide.

How the Internet works

The internet uses a series of processes that permit different computers connected to the network to communicate with each other and share information. It uses systems like **POP** (Post Office Protocol) and **TCP/IP** (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) to achieve this.

Imagine you are sending an email to your friend. Your digital device converts the text you have typed into a **binary code** of 0s and 1s. Sets of this digital information, called **packets,** include a header indicating their source and destination, along with other details. Your device then transmits these packets to your **WiFi router**, using radio waves. Your router in turn transmits these packets over the cabling provided by your **Internet Service Provider (ISP)** which takes them to an Internet hub or node. An **Internet hub** is where communications from different ISPs are connected. The headers on each 'packet' are read by other computers on the network, which then forward them to their destination system. At the destination system, the packets are re-assembled into their original form. If you are sending messages across continents, fibre-optic undersea cables help transmit information from one continent to another.

You must have heard the term CLOUD used to describe data stored on the Internet, making it seem like it's floating up in the sky. It is called the 'cloud' because it represents a complex and somewhat loosely defined remote network of data centers accessible anywhere via the internet.

Did you know?

The first e-mail was sent in 1971 by Ray Tomlinson on ARPANET. The message was a simple test text (often described as "QWERTYUIOP"), and he introduced the "@" symbol to separate the user name from the host, a format still used in email addresses today. (Guinness World Records)[4]

Functions of Media

The basic functions of media in societies are to **inform, educate,** and **entertain**. While doing so, the media also influence people's opinions and worldviews. Media is one of the largest business sectors in the world, with revenue expected to reach US$ 3.5 trillion by 2029, according to PwC's Annual Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2025-29(PwC)[5]. In other words, people make money from creating media, and from distributed content.

Consider the case of a social media influencer who creates cooking videos. These videos can be entertaining or informative. At the same time, this influencer could make money through monetising their social media accounts, partnering with businesses for paid collaborations; and promoting and selling their brands and products to their audience. This illustrates how media can serve multiple functions and individuals simultaneously.

All media content and messages are created or constructed by people. According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education, there are three parts to understanding media content critically (NAMLE).[6] Let us examine these in detail.

Authors and Audience

Authorship (Who made this? Who was and wasn't involved in the creation? When was it made?

Purpose (Why was this made? What does it want me to do? Whom is it addressed to?)

Economics (Who makes money out of this?)

Messages and Meanings

Content (What does it want me to think? What could someone learn from this?

What meanings, values, and perspectives are obvious, and what are implied? What is left out that might be important to know?)

Techniques and Format (How does the format or method of communication impact my experience with the media? Where or how was it shared with the public? What techniques are used to communicate meaning, and why? How do those techniques communicate this message?)

Reflections and Evaluations

Interpretation (What is my interpretation? What can I learn about myself by reflecting on my interpretation of this? How might different people understand this message differently?)

Responses (How does this make me feel? How do my emotions influence my interpretation of this? If I feel the need to respond, what actions could I take that would feel productive?)

Credibility (Is this a fact, opinion, or something else? What are the sources of information, ideas, or assertions? How credible is this (and how do you know?) How do I know I can trust this source to give me credible information about this topic?)

FRAMING is a concept that refers to the way media highlight specific aspects of events or issues. This shapes the audience's perception, guiding them to interpret the information in a particular way, often in line with the media's intentions. So WHO makes the message and WHY they make it, and WHO BENEFITS from the content are very critical questions!

Activity 1.1

Think Aloud

In a small village, residents are protesting the actions of a large chemical manufacturing company. The villagers accuse the company of dumping toxic waste into a nearby river, which serves as their main water source. The protest has sparked widespread media coverage, but each outlet presents the story differently. Media A, B, and C each report the issue as follows.

Media A headline: "Chemical Giant's Contributions to National Economy Undermined by Unfounded Protest Claims"

Media B headline: "Villagers Fight for Their Right to Clean Water: Protests Against Pollution Intensify"

Media C headline: "Chemical Waste Contaminates Water Source, Poses Serious Environmental and Health Risks"

What is being highlighted about the protest in the news headlines of A, B, and C?

If you were the audience for A, B, and C, what would you tend to think about the issue in each case?

Questions to Ponder

- **What is your favourite media content, and where do you get it from?**
- **How have media formats and content changed as you grew older?**
- **What function does media serve in a society?**

How Media Shapes Society

The media play a pivotal role in shaping opinions and beliefs, promoting awareness, and challenging social norms. Reading a newspaper article, watching an informative YouTube video, or a vlog about a historical place broadens our understanding of the world around us. The media has regularly been used to raise awareness about diverse social issues. For example, in 2002, on UNICEF's request, Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan starred in the national campaign to #EndPolio and promoted the use of the polio vaccine. The campaign had a positive effect, encouraging families to vaccinate their children. Advertisements, films, audio and TV programs - and all other forms of media - use different ways to present ideas and tell stories that shape our understanding of the world around us. What stories get told; how they are told; and who tells these stories matter in how society understands itself and the issues that face us.

Diversity and Representation in Media

The media content we consume regularly is not really representative of the diversity of a country like India. Typically, all groups that are discriminated against in society (women, queer, economically poor, persons with disability, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes) get pushed to the margins in terms of visibility and prominence in different media. While there have been some improvements in how the media represents marginalised people, much work remains to be done.

When people tell their own stories, they get to present themselves more accurately. This means that when more members of marginalised social groups take up leadership and functional roles in the news-making process, news-making is likely to become more representative and sensitive.

For example, **Khabar Lahariya** is a Dalit, OBC, and Adivasi women-led and -run news collective which focues on the everyday lives of women, politics, and social issues in the Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions of north India. The women in *Khabar Lahariya* decide what will make the news: What is important and how the people involved will be represented in their news stories. This means issues and information that are more relevant to these marginalised groups can be highlighted in a way that mainstream publications cannot (or will not). Such independent initiatives highlight how media can positively influence society, promoting diversity in storytelling and social change. They allow different perspectives and viewpoints to co-exist.

Digital Media in Our Everyday Lives

Nowadays, you can read newspapers digitally, as many publishers provide e-newspapers. Similarly, programs broadcast on television are often available on dedicated apps or digital platforms like YouTube. This demonstrates how advancements in digital technology allow us to consume multiple media forms through a single device, such as a computer or smartphone. Technically, this process is called **media convergence**. A simple way to understand media convergence is through smartphones. Today, smartphones have subsumed the roles of a camera, a video camera, a radio, music streaming, and much more. **Media convergence** and **multiplatform compatibility** are the two foundational features of digital media.

Digital media has transformed how people create, share, and enjoy music, films, artworks, and more. Previously, artists needed expensive tools (like film cameras or recording studios) and the support of large companies and platforms to share their work. Now, anyone with a smartphone can make a movie, produce music, or design graphics using digital apps. There are social media platforms that let creators reach millions of followers instantly. Today, digital media allows content creators to earn money through brand promotions and regular content creation.

Digital media has also reshaped how we discuss ideas, share news, and engage in public life. Before, conversations were limited to physical spaces (like town halls or newspapers, letters to the editor) or one-way broadcasts (TV/Radio). Now, social media, comment sections, and viral posts let users share their opinions instantly through tweets, posts, and live streams. Now, information and news travel faster than ever because of digital media.

Another major influence of digital media is on how people conduct monetary transactions. Digital financial transactions are growing due to their convenience and the strong support of financial institutions, companies, and governments.

However, not everyone has equal access to digital media and communication technologies. The term 'digital divide' refers to this gap, which is both rooted in and worsens existing social and economic inequalities in areas such as education, income, and gender.

Oxfam's India Inequality Report[7] highlights how digitalisation in India is unequal, favouring the elite and the digitally connected while excluding the rest (Oxfam).

Activity 1.2

Unlock Media History

W	V	F	G	F	C	W	P	H	A	L	K	E	E	B
T	E	L	E	G	R	A	P	H	N	P	L	G	L	K
S	C	D	A	W	S	X	T	E	N	S	B	U	O	W
U	J	O	Q	K	O	P	R	T	A	U	Q	T	R	T
C	Y	Q	Y	A	A	C	R	B	S	N	L	E	A	O
M	L	C	P	O	R	S	O	U	A	I	N	N	X	T
O	I	M	H	P	K	P	H	I	R	V	T	B	C	K
T	R	F	J	I	W	N	A	V	O	A	F	E	D	K
O	B	G	Q	M	N	Y	C	N	A	C	V	R	W	V
R	F	G	K	P	F	A	O	J	E	N	F	G	S	X
O	F	A	L	P	H	A	B	E	T	T	I	I	R	O
L	K	K	I	N	E	T	O	S	C	O	P	E	R	R
A	X	M	K	L	M	A	F	R	D	C	I	T	B	K
U	A	L	U	M	I	E	R	E	A	Y	E	F	Q	U
U	A	O	O	H	F	A	B	A	C	U	S	G	I	T

ABACUS
AKASHVANI
ALPHABET
ARPANET
CHINA
ELORA
GUTENBERG
KINETOSCOPE
LUMIERE
MOTOROLA
NASA
ORKUT
PHALKE
TELEGRAPH
UNIVAC

The puzzle hides words related to media history.
Can you spot them?

Get extra points if you can guess how these words are connected to the history.

Further Resources

1. The Ultimate Timeline Of Communication Technology, Ooma Blog by Diane Balogh[8]
2. Who Tells Our Stories Matters, in Oxfam India by Omprakash Mahato[9]


NEWS ARTICLE
UNESCO declares Indian national anthem the "best in the world."

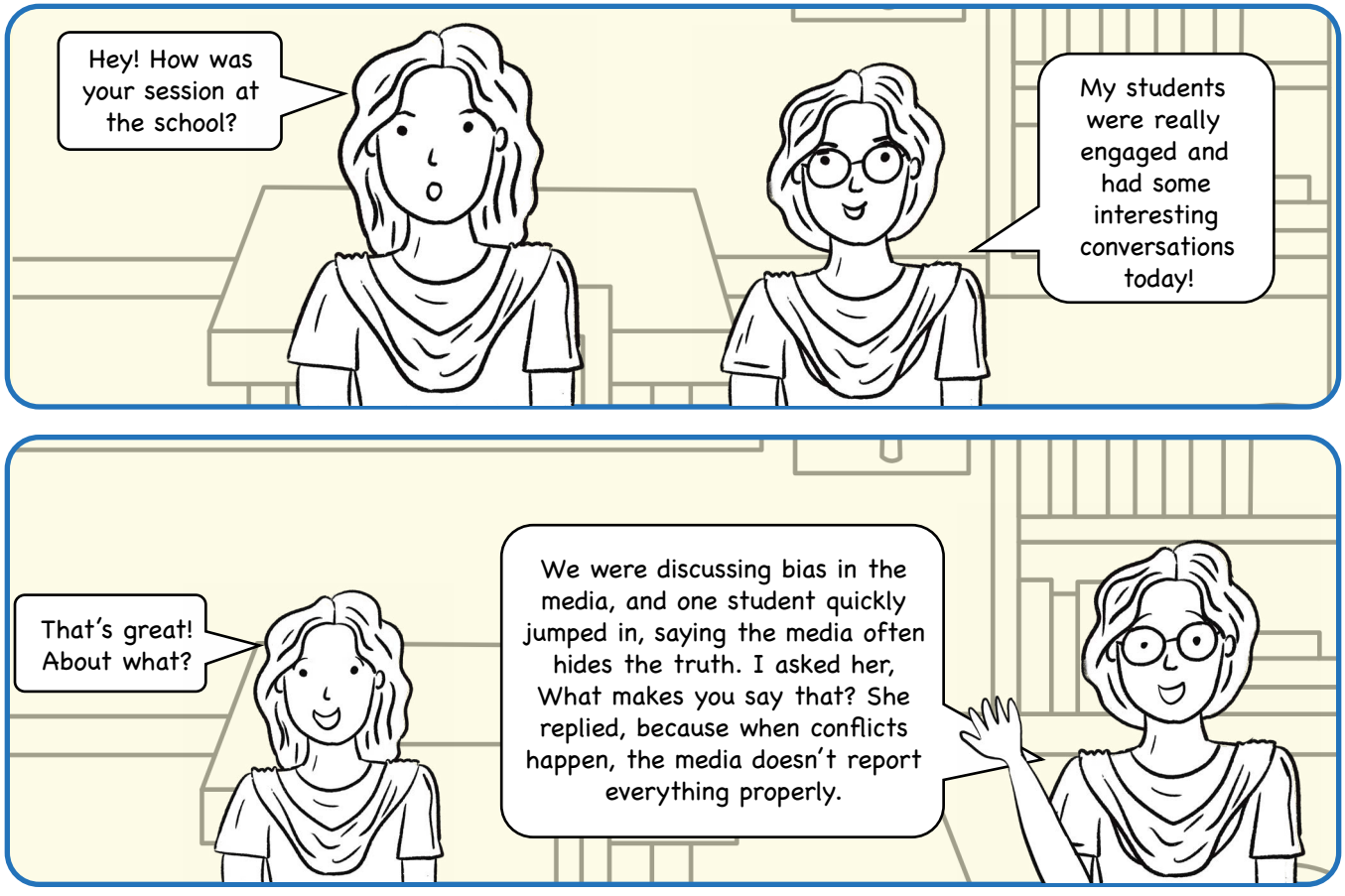
Session 02

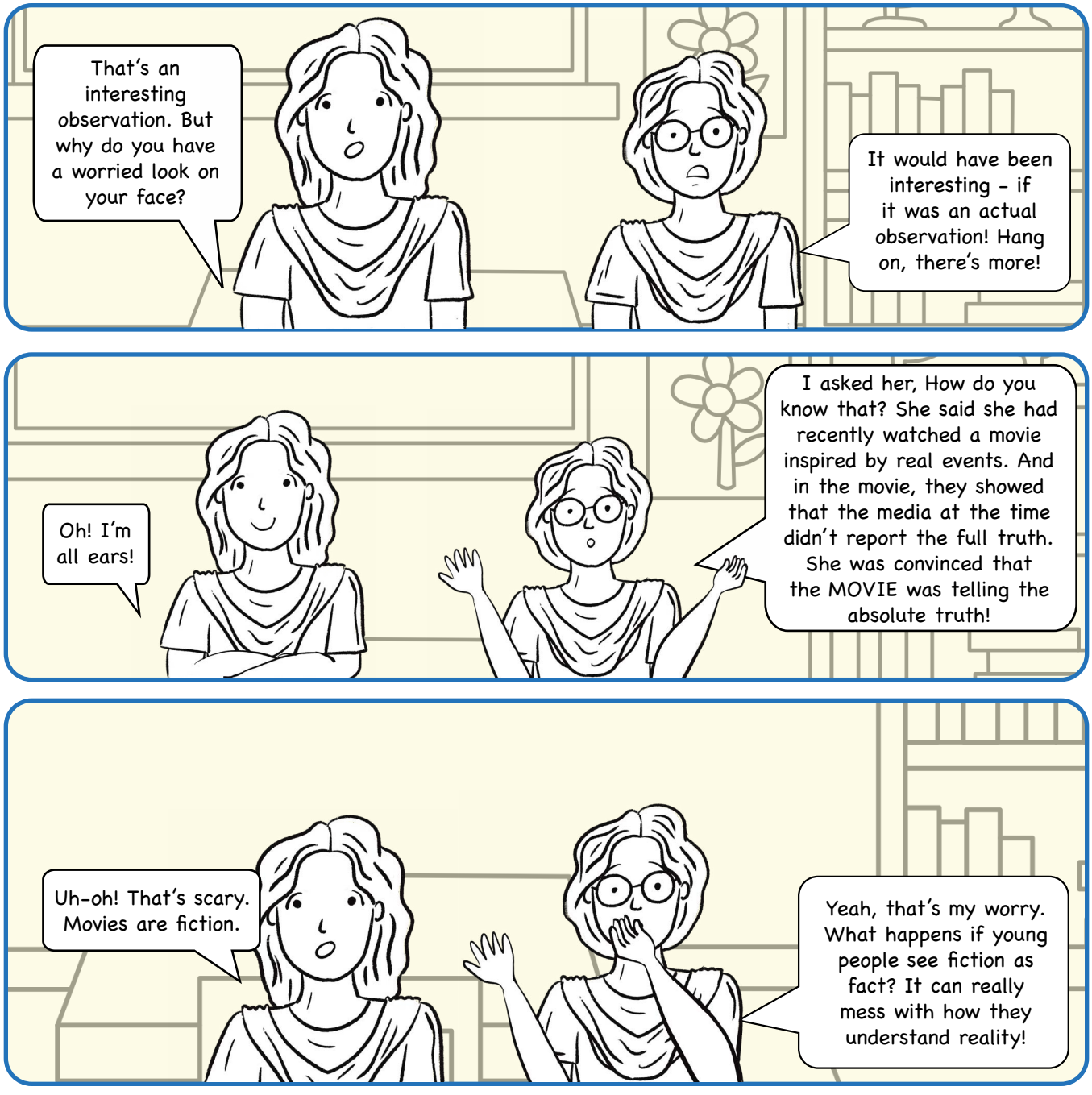
NEWS LITERACY AND FACT-CHECKING

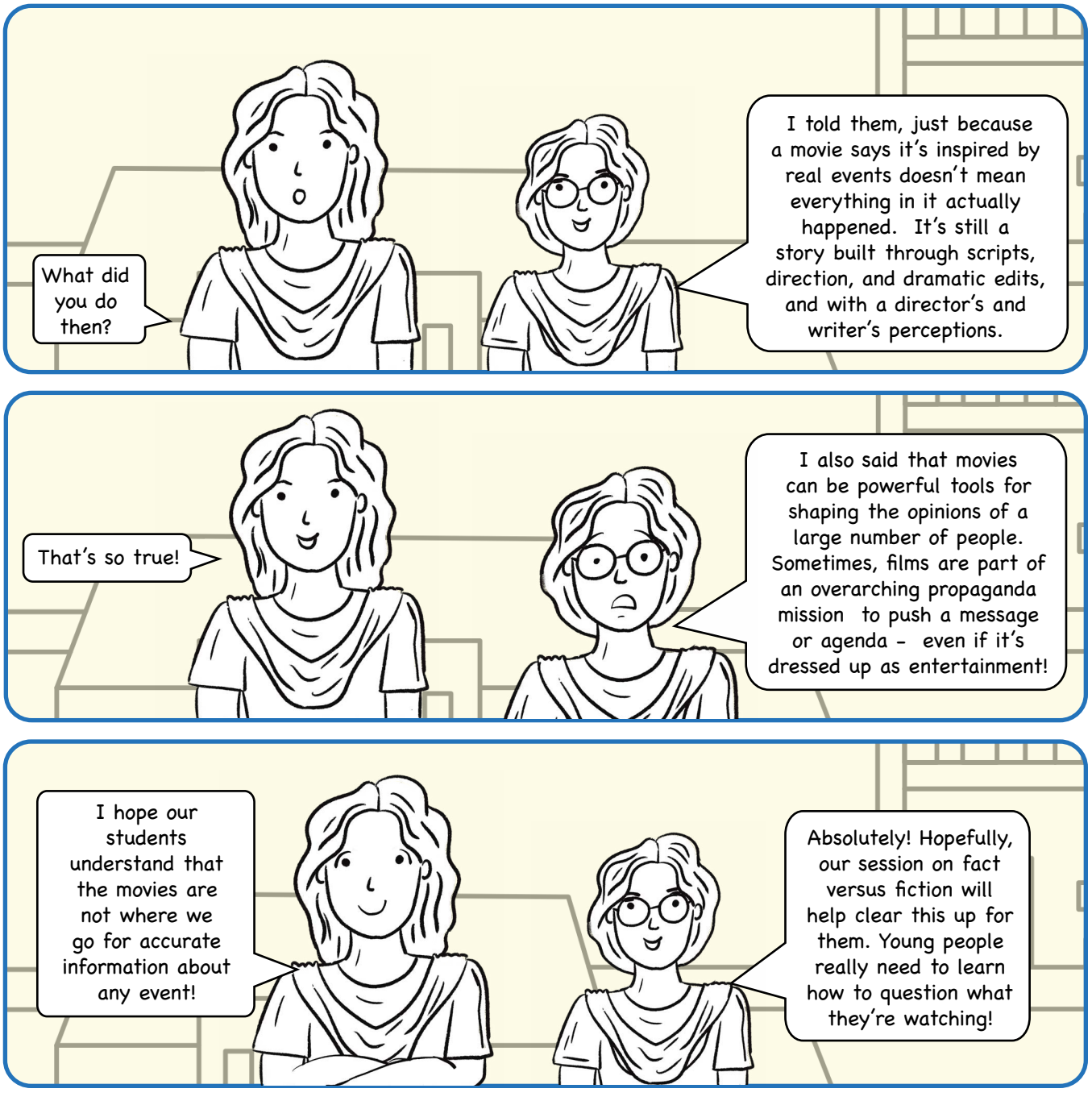
In today's world, where we are surrounded by all kinds of information on our smartphones and other digital devices, news, opinions, and advertisements are juxtaposed and shared with us through our media devices, gradually influencing, shaping, and manipulating our opinions. But have you ever considered whose opinions we are really being influenced by, and who owns the media we consume?

Voices from the Classroom

Sara and Anika are educators at a school and have been conducting digital media literacy sessions.




That's an interesting observation. But why do you have a worried look on your face?
It would have been interesting – if it was an actual observation! Hang on, there's more!
Oh! I'm all ears!
I asked her, How do you know that? She said she had recently watched a movie inspired by real events. And in the movie, they showed that the media at the time didn't report the full truth. She was convinced that the MOVIE was telling the absolute truth!
Uh-oh! That's scary. Movies are fiction.
Yeah, that's my worry. What happens if young people see fiction as fact? It can really mess with how they understand reality!


What did you do then?
I told them, just because a movie says it's inspired by real events doesn't mean everything in it actually happened. It's still a story built through scripts, direction, and dramatic edits, and with a director's and writer's perceptions.
That's so true!
I also said that movies can be powerful tools for shaping the opinions of a large number of people. Sometimes, films are part of an overarching propaganda mission to push a message or agenda - even if it's dressed up as entertainment!
I hope our students understand that the movies are not where we go for accurate information about any event!
Absolutely! Hopefully, our session on fact versus fiction will help clear this up for them. Young people really need to learn how to question what they're watching!

Kinds of Information

News

News is factual, verified reports on recent events. News rooms are mandated to ensure **accuracy** and **objectivity**, and to **fact-check their sources**. News should follow the rule of 5Ws and 1H, i.e. providing information about the Who, What, When, Why, Where and How with regard to every event that is reported. If news is accurately reported, anyone should be able to independently verify the information it contains; and meet the people who have featured in the news article, or about whom the news article or news story tells us.

Opinion

Opinions are personal or institutional viewpoints, based on interpretation and analysis. Opinions may be presented as **editorials** or **op-eds**. **Editorials** represent the official stance of a publication on important issues, while **op-eds** express the individual opinions of experts.

Advertisements and Sponsored content

An **advertisement** is promotional content that is designed to persuade its audience to buy something, or subscribe to a service, or create belief in something. **Sponsored content** is a form of advertising in which brands collaborate with content creators or publishers to produce and distribute content that aligns with the brand's messaging. Though sponsored content should be labelled clearly, they can sometimes be presented misleadingly as part of the publication or channel's primary content.

Activity 2.1

Guess what I am?

We come across these different kinds of information – news, opinions, and advertisements - through different media platforms all the time. Can you tell which of these three statements below is an example of what?

INFORMATION 1: "In the last month, the Environment Ministry held three meetings to discuss Delhi's air pollution crisis."

INFORMATION 2: "Infinity's air purifier uses a 3-stage filtration system with a pre-filter, HEPA filter, and activated carbon filter for clean air; and is the best in the market."

INFORMATION 3: "Farmers burning fields after harvest is the most important reason for poor air quality in Delhi.

Questions to Ponder

- **How do we differentiate between fact and fiction?**
- **How is the media responsible for cultivating this knowledge?**
- **Can you think of any media platforms we can use to gather factual information?**

Private & Commercial Media

Public media or public broadcasting

The public media are comprised of radio, television, and other electronic media whose primary mission is to disseminate information and raise public awareness, without any commercial or profit motive. Public media are typically autonomous, independently managed, and have an independent editorial board that works to serve the public interest. It is often funded by taxes, donations and state grants; and its funding does not influence what it reports on or covers. Examples include the UK's British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); and the National Public Radio (NPR) service in the United States.

Private media

Private media are owned by individuals or corporations, and are funded by advertising or subscriptions. It serves market interests and its primary goal is profit making. Examples include Star Plus, ESPN, Fox News, CNN-News 18 and the Disney channel.

Some privately owned media have historically maintained extremely high standards of integrity; but this is changing fast globally with increasing corporatization, consolidation and cross media ownership.

Community media

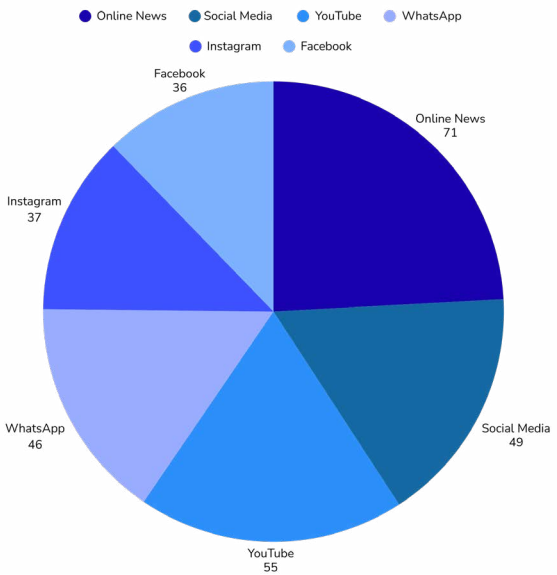
Community media are local media, usually run by specific communities and funded by grants, donations, and local advertisements. It represents the issues and voices of the local community. Examples include local publications like Khabar Lahariya, and community radio stations like Gurgaon Ki Awaaz CR (India) and 3CR (Australia).

Let's reflect

Lets look up the history of privatization of media in India. In 1995, in a case about broadcasting rights to a cricket match, the Supreme Court of India mentioned that the airwaves were public property (India Together)[10]. Research and discuss how this judgement changed the media ownership landscape in India.

Disinformation, Misinformation & Malinformation

In our daily interactions with the media, we consume large chunks of information. Some of it may be true; but much of it is not. According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024, 71% of Indians prefer online news, with 49% relying on social media. YouTube is a news source for 55%, WhatsApp for 46%, Instagram 37% and Facebook for 36% (Newman et al 2025)[11]. However, in accessing news from digital platforms, particularly through social media, we often come across information which is fabricated or information that has certain in-built assumptions. This leads to the spread of rumours. During COVID-19,



we saw several such instances, like the rumour of specific religious communities spreading COVID-19 in India, leading to a wave of hate speech and against that community.

Sometimes media use clickbait titles and headlines to increase people's activity on their digital platforms, such as was the case after demonetisation in 2016: Many people believed that the new currency notes had radioactive ink; or hidden tracking chips.

This 'fake' news is created by platforms which outwardly look legitimate, but actually leverage people's fears and prejudices. This leads to the spread of wrong information, causing harm, violence, and discrimination - often against marginalised identities and communities.

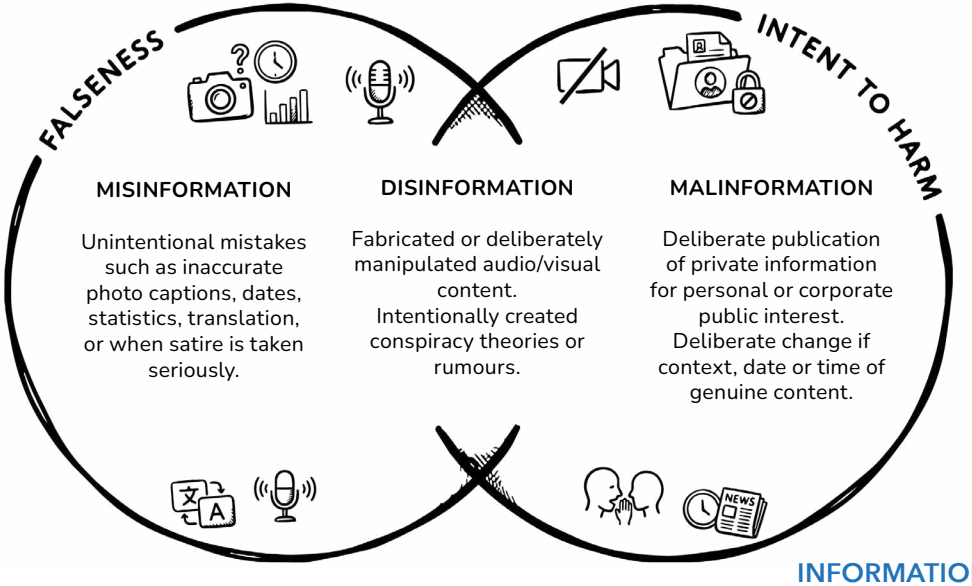
According to First Draft news, the false information spectrum is made up of a variety of different categories of false information, each with its own characteristics and markers.

Disinformation is content that is intentionally false and is designed to cause harm. It is motivated by three factors: making money, gaining political influence, and causing trouble for the sake of it. When disinformation is shared, it often turns to misinformation. Disinformation is often maliciously used in order to smear political or business rivals.

Misinformation refers to false or misleading content, but the person sharing it does not know it is false or misleading. The sharing of misinformation is driven by people's motivations, beliefs, identities, and interests. Misinformation can lead to public misconceptions, the erosion of trust, polarisation, and the spread of fear and panic.

Malinformation refers to information that is based on truth but is shared with the intent to attack an idea, individual, organisation, group, country or other entity (Wardle)[12]. In order to achieve this, it may be exaggerated or deliberately presented out of context.

MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION & MALINFORMATION



INFORMATION DISORDER

As misinformation and disinformation proliferate on our digital platforms, DEEPFAKES - a form of synthetic media created using artificial intelligence (AI) - are rapidly being used to manipulate or generate highly realistic images, videos, or audio content. This technology enables the creation of fake media that can convincingly replicate a person's appearance, voice, or actions. The term "deepfake" combines the words "deep learning" (from the neural network models used to create this kind of media) and "fake." It was first used by a Reddit user in 2017, who shared manipulated AI-generated videos.

Questions to Ponder

- **What kind of fake news have you encountered recently?**
- **Do you think fake news produces biases and prejudices? Why?**

Protecting yourself from Fake Information

Use the **SIFT** (Stop/Investigate/Find better coverage/Trace claims, quotes and media to their original context) method to protect yourself from misinformation, disinformation and malinformation (Caulfield)[13.]

Stop

Before you share any information, news or a WhatsApp forward, stop and think of what you know about the topic and what you know about its source. News and media headlines are often used to get more clicks, and they do so by sometimes making false claims.

Investigate

Take a moment to look up the author and investigate the source of the information. Go beyond the 'about us' section on the website and know what their purpose is for publishing this information, and whether they are operating with any bias.

Find Better Coverage

Find other sources which affirm or refute the claim made by the original source.

Trace claims, quotes and media to their original context

Often, the information you receive from different social media is sourced from somewhere else. Some media organizations also extract information from sources like research reports, websites and public records. Re-posting the information may result in narrating only certain parts of the story; or in biased interpretations; or even a lack of contextual understanding.

Fact Checking

Fact-checking is another way to save yourself from the harms of misinformation. Fact checking is the process of verifying the accuracy of information, claims, or statements presented in the media or public discourse. It involves assessing whether the information is correct, reliable, and supported by evidence. News organizations do this as a matter of course for everything that they report, because their credibility as a source of information rests on the accuracy and validity of the information they provide. But private individuals may not have the training and the tenacity to conduct complete and thorough fact-checks - leading to the unwitting dissemination of misinformation.

Steps to Fact-Check Information

1. Identify the claim
Break the statement down into key facts to determine which need verification. Understanding the exact claim helps in searching for relevant sources and evidence.

2. Find reliable sources
Look for information from trusted news organisations, government websites, and research and academic institutions. Avoid sources with a history of spreading misinformation or clickbait content.

3. Cross-check Facts
Verify the claim by comparing it with multiple credible sources. If only one source reports the information, it may not be reliable.

4. Analyse the context
Ensure the claim has not been taken out of context, as misleading edits or partial information can distort the original meaning.

5. Evaluate the Evidence
Check whether the claim is backed by data, research, or expert statements. Unsupported claims or those relying on anonymous sources should be treated with caution.

6. Review for Bias
Consider whether the source has a political, ideological, or commercial agenda. Emotional language or exaggerated claims often indicate an attempt to manipulate opinions.

7. Summarise the Findings
Based on the gathered evidence, determine whether the claim is true, false, or misleading before accepting or sharing it.

8. Use Fact-Checking Websites
If verifying independently is difficult, websites like Snopes, FactCheck.org, Alt News, Boom Live, and Factly can help. These platforms conduct thorough investigations to confirm or debunk claims, providing a reliable way to fact-check information.

Did you know?

Since 2017, April 2 is recognized as International Fact-Checking Day. Since April 1 is traditionally celebrated as All-Fools Day, and as a day for spreading tall stories, April 2 was proposed as a day for facts and truth!

See Poynter's statement on Fact Checking Day[14]

Also see FactWatch Nigeria's note on the history of Factchecking Day[15]

Fact-checking tools

Use the following fact-checking tools to verify the credibility of your information.

TinEye: A reverse image search engine that scans over 74 billion images to help users trace the origin and usage of a specific image online.

InVID Verification Plugin: A browser extension designed to assist in verifying videos and images on social media platforms. It offers features like reverse image search across multiple engines (Google, Bing, TinEye, Yandex), video fragmentation into keyframes, and metadata analysis.

Google Reverse Image Search: Allows users to 'search by image' to find related content across the web, aiding in identifying the origin and context of images.

Yandex Reverse Image Search: A tool similar to Google's, particularly effective for searching for images within Russian domains, and can yield a different result from Google's search, due to its unique indexing structure.

Google Fact Check Tools: Google offers resources such as the Fact Check Explorer, which allows users to search for and explore global fact checks to verify news and claims.

Originality.ai's Automated Fact-Checker: This tool provides real-time fact-checking assistance to reduce the spread of false information and mitigate the risk of publishing inaccurate content.

How to do a Google Reverse Image Search?

With advances in technology and information processing systems, AI-generated visuals and texts are increasing the spread of misinformation. To protect yourself from misinformation, you can conduct a simple Google Reverse Image search on your mobile phone.

1. Open the Google App: Launch the Google app on your Android phone or tablet.

2. Use Google Lens: Tap the camera icon in the search bar to open Google Lens.

3. Capture or Upload Image: Choose one of the following methods to capture an image.
Take a Photo: Capture a new photo with your camera to use for your search.
Upload from Device: Select an existing image from your device's gallery.

4. Select Search Area: Adjust the portion of the image you want to search for (you may want to select only one small portion of a larger image - a single item out of many items.)

5. View Results: Google will display information related to the image, including visually similar images and related content.

Activity 2.2

True or False? Let's Find Out!

Look around on your social media, news website, or even something a friend said. Did you come across a fact that seems a little... suspicious?

It's time to put your fact-checking skills to work!

Can you prove if it's true, false, or just exaggerated? Give it a try with one or more of the fact-checking tool suggested above, and let's discuss what you find!

Indian Fact-Checking Websites

A 2024 study by the Indian School of Business (ISB) and CyberPeace found that social media is the main source of misinformation (77.4%), while mainstream media accounts for 23%. Twitter accounts for 61% and Facebook 34% of fake news (ISB Insights)[16].

To make sure you don't get caught in the web of fake news, tune into the following trusted news channels and websites:

1. AltNews

AltNews is an Indian non-profit fact-checking website founded in 2017. It operates in English and Hindi, aiming to combat misinformation by scrutinising social and mainstream media for inaccuracies. The platform employs a systematic methodology that includes monitoring speeches, tweets, and viral content to identify and debunk false information.

2. Factly

Factly is a prominent Indian data journalism and fact-checking platform dedicated to making public data meaningful and accessible to citizens. Established in 2015, Factly focuses on simplifying complex government data, policies, and public information to promote transparency and encourage informed civic participation. The platform employs various methods, including data journalism, fact-checking, and the development of innovative technological tools, to enhance public understanding of important issues. Factly's content is available in multiple languages, primarily English and Telugu, catering to a diverse audience.

3. Vishvas News

Vishvas News, a fact-checking initiative of Jagran New Media, operates in multiple Indian languages, including Hindi, English, Urdu, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Marathi, to combat misinformation across diverse communities. Certified by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), it upholds rigorous standards of accuracy and impartiality. Beyond fact-checking, Vishvas News runs media literacy campaigns and offers training programs to empower individuals and journalists to identify and counter misinformation.

4. The Quint's WebQoof

The Quint's WebQoof is an IFCN-certified fact-checking initiative dedicated to delivering accurate news and combating misinformation. It encourages public participation by inviting readers to submit queries via WhatsApp at 9540511818. WebQoof focuses on political and health-related fact-checking, aiming to debunk false narratives and promote media literacy. The platform operates in both English and Hindi, catering to a diverse audience. Through its efforts, WebQoof strives to foster a well-informed and discerning readership.

5. BOOM Live

BOOM Live is an IFCN-certified fact-checking platform in India, dedicated to combating misinformation by verifying viral claims and providing transparent analyses. Established in 2014, BOOM operates in multiple languages, including English, Hindi, and Bengali, with teams in India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The platform collaborates with social media companies to fact-check content in regional languages like Kannada and Malayalam.

6. The Lallantop

The Lallantop, a Hindi news and opinion website under the India Today Group, features a dedicated fact-checking section called "पड़ताल" ("verification"). This section focuses on verifying claims and debunking misinformation across various topics, providing readers with accurate and reliable information. Since 2018, The Lallantop has produced over 500 fact-check videos, demonstrating its commitment to factual reporting.

7. NewsLaundry

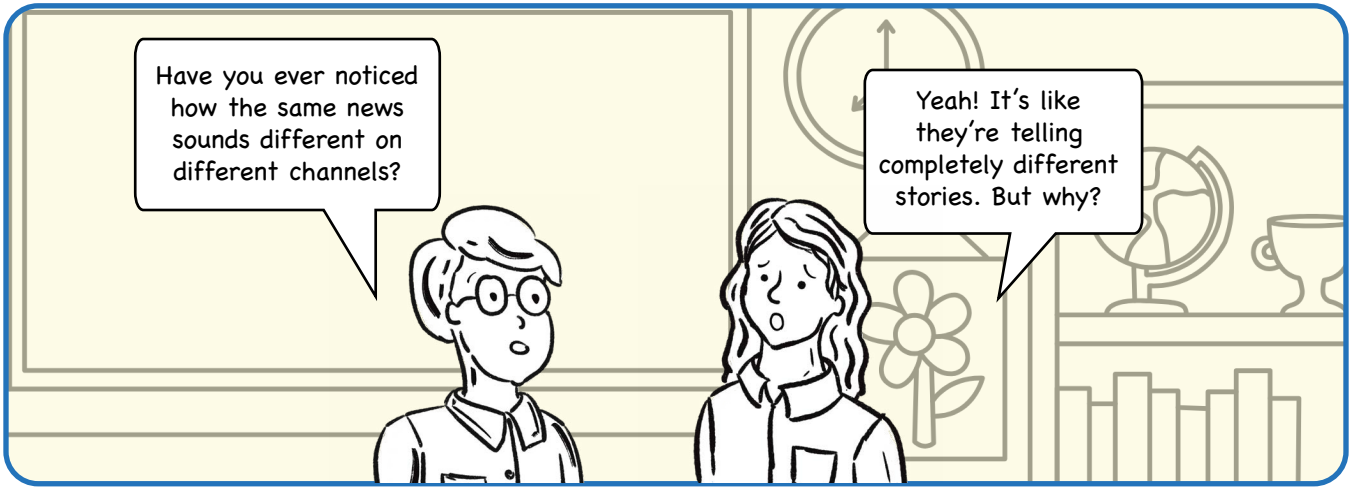
Newslaundry is an independent Indian media organisation that critiques media practices and addresses misinformation. It features a dedicated "Fact Check" section that evaluates the accuracy of various claims and reports. By analysing media biases and debunking false information, Newslaundry aims to promote accountability and transparency in journalism.

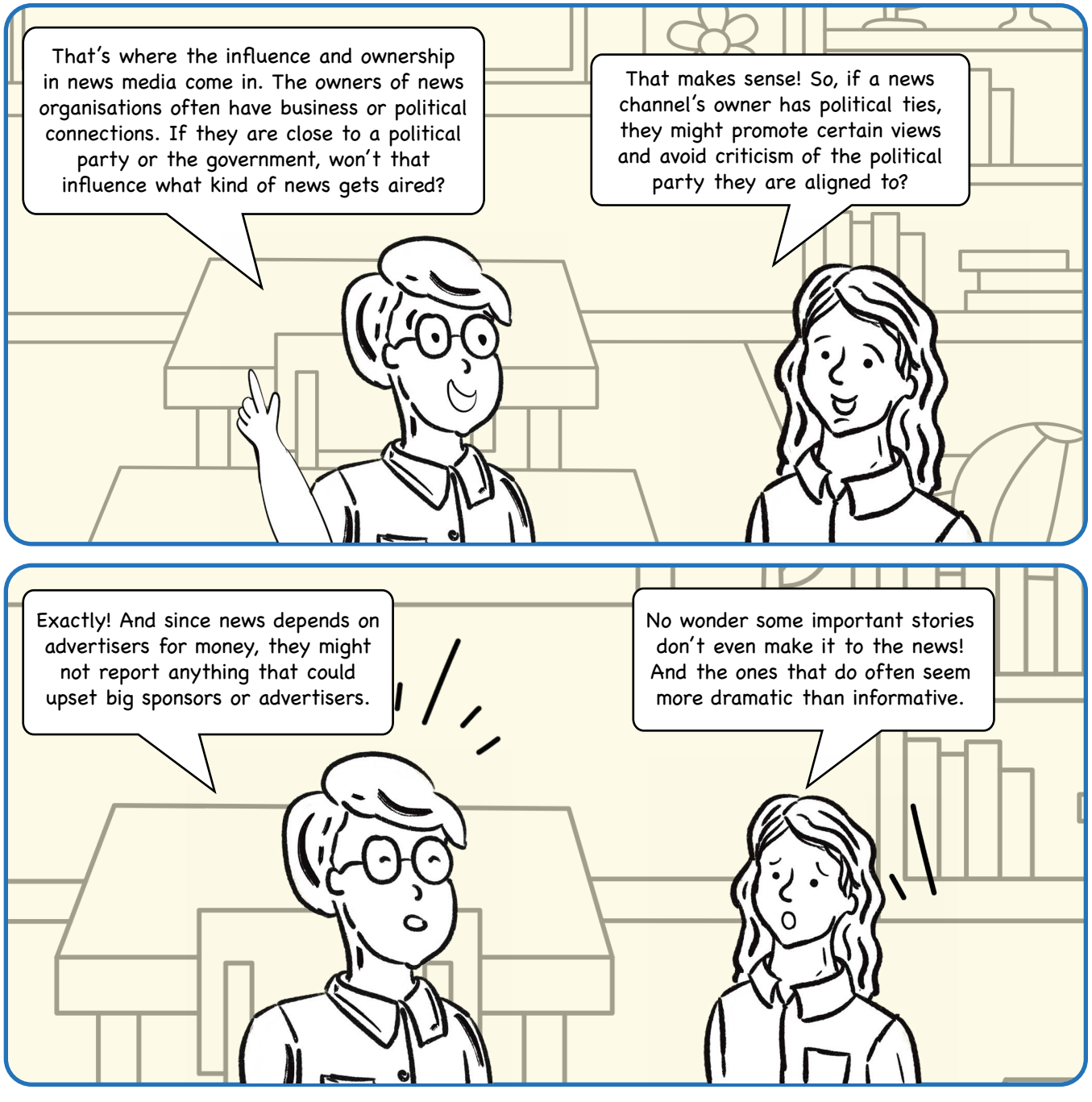
8. The Logical Indian

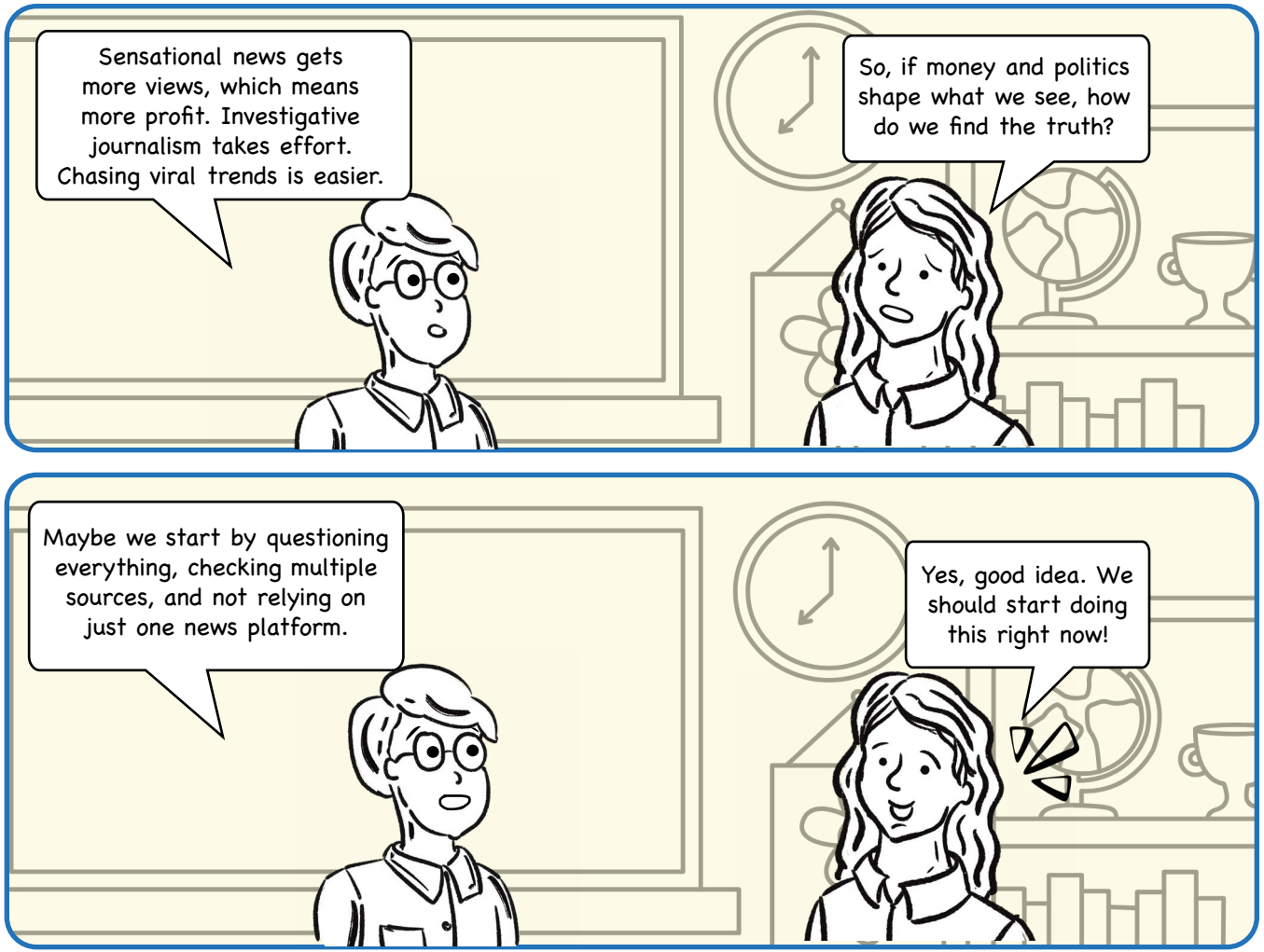
The Logical Indian's FAKT initiative is an IFCN-certified program dedicated to fact-checking, media literacy, and proactive campaigns against misinformation. Through FAKT, The Logical Indian aims to build public resilience against fake news by providing verified information and educational resources.

Voices from the Classroom

Two students named Aarav and Meera are having a conversation about influence and ownership in news media.




That's where the influence and ownership in news media come in. The owners of news organisations often have business or political connections. If they are close to a political party or the government, won't that influence what kind of news gets aired?
That makes sense! So, if a news channel's owner has political ties, they might promote certain views and avoid criticism of the political party they are aligned to?
Exactly! And since news depends on advertisers for money, they might not report anything that could upset big sponsors or advertisers.
No wonder some important stories don't even make it to the news! And the ones that do often seem more dramatic than informative.



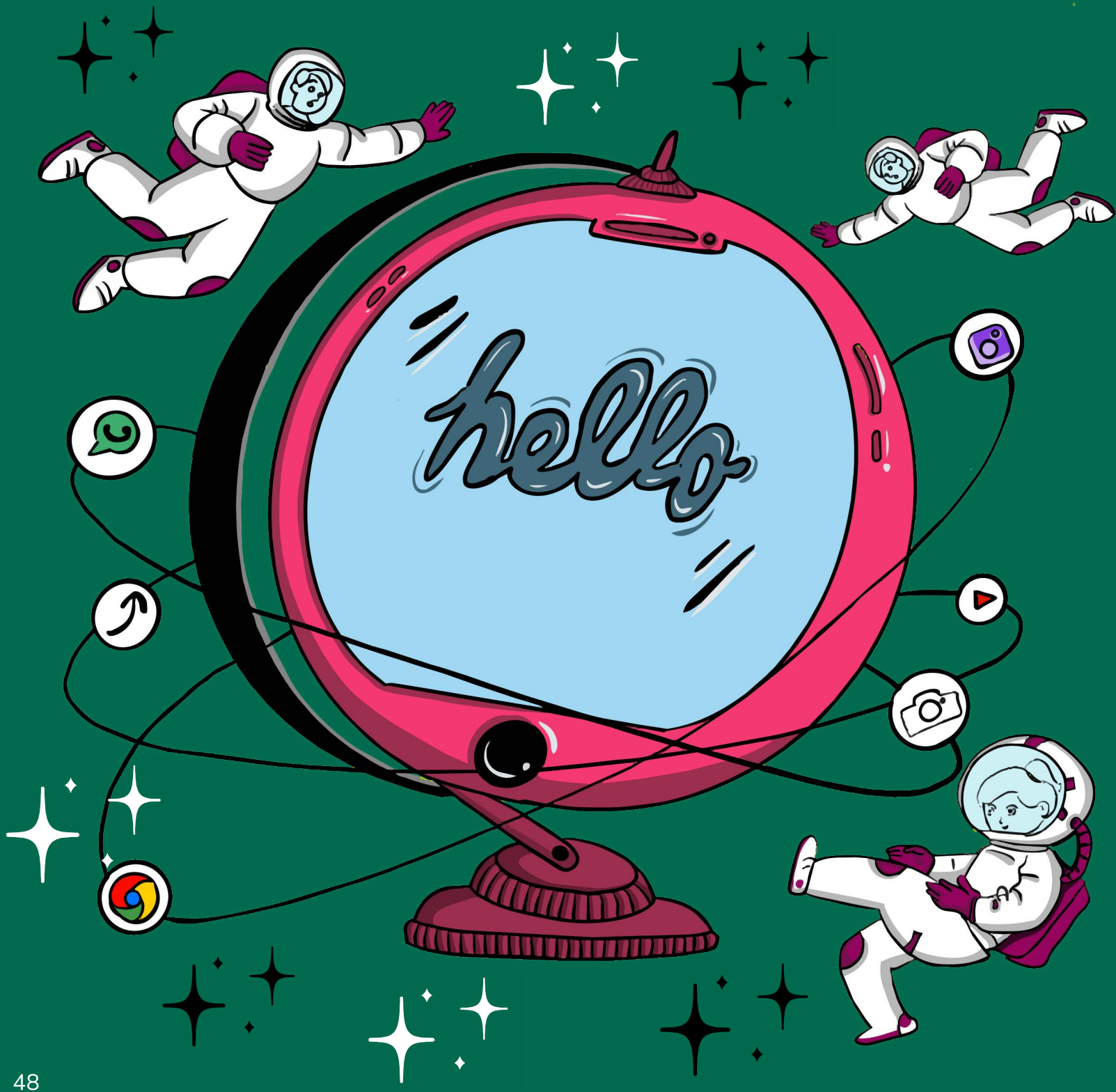
Further Resources

1. Bihar's Library Classrooms Are Teaching Kids To Spot Fake News. Should Others Follow?, in India Today by Princy Shukla[17]

2. WhatsApp Vigilantes: An Exploration Of Citizen Reception And Circulation Of WhatsApp Misinformation Linked To Mob Violence In India, in The London School of Economics and Political Science, by Shakuntala Banaji and Ram Bhat[18]

Tell me and I forget; teach me and I may remember; involve me, and I learn.

- Benjamin Franklin


hello

Session 03

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND OUR WORLD

As discussed in previous sessions, the evolution of digital technology has enabled fast and efficient mass communication. Digital convergence and multi-platform compatibility have increased users' reliance on smartphones, computers, smartwatches, etc. A smartphone can be used for texting a friend, writing an email, reading a newspaper, watching a film, or doing an assignment. However, the omnipresence of digital technology in our everyday lives has also sparked debates about how these digital technologies use the data generated by the users. In this regard, it is essential to know about privacy and surveillance in the digital age.

What is Online Privacy?

What is Digital Privacy?

Digital privacy means the right to control your digital personal information: What you share, with whom, and how that information is used.

In a digital world, privacy is essential to protect our identities, maintain freedom, and avoid online harm. Our online identities are just a few bits of data - and someone could maliciously take over or hijack our identity for malicious purposes. Similarly, there may be sensitive personal data online that could help someone identify us in situations where we prefer to remain anonymous online.

Over 65% of teenagers are unsure or believe that they have been compromised multiple times in the world of the internet. (Express Computer)[19]

Why Does Online Privacy Matter?

- **Security:** Stops identity theft, financial fraud, and cyberstalking. Example: If your Aadhaar number, phone, or address is leaked, it can be misused for scams.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Helps you speak without fear of judgment or punishment. Example: Journalists and activists rely on encrypted platforms to report safely.

- **Mental Health:** Protects from harassment, trolling, and doxxing. Example: If your photos are taken and edited without permission, it can cause serious distress.
- **Data Control:** Empowers users to decide which apps and websites can track or share their data. Example: E-commerce sites track your search behaviour to push targeted ads.

Threats to Online Privacy

1. Data Breaches
When hackers break into databases and leak personal information.
Example: In the 2018 Aadhaar breach, over 1 billion records were exposed, including addresses and fingerprints.

2. Tracking & Cookies
Sites and apps track your behaviour to personalise ads that are customised to your needs and preferences - and subliminally nudging you to buy a specific product or service which you may not even need!

3. Phishing Attacks
Fake emails or messages that trick you into sharing your data or identity.
Example: Emails pretending to be your bank or school asking for OTPs.

4. Oversharing on Social Media
Sharing sensitive personal information, such as live locations or travel plans could be an open invitation for a clever burglar to burgle your house while you are away!

Did you know?

A white paper by The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Academy found that 94% of India's top 50 websites lack proper cookie consent mechanisms (Tiwari)[20].

Questions to Ponder

Anisha lives alone in Delhi; and to ensure that her friends can know that she reached home on time, she shares her live location on Instagram daily. She recently received a message from a stranger saying he was waiting at a restaurant near her house.

- **What is the privacy risk caused by Anisha's sharing her live location?**
- **What should she do next?**

How to Protect Your Privacy Online

1. Use Strong Passwords

Use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols/special characters. Change your password regularly.

2. Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

2FA adds a second layer of protection, which is harder to bypass. (For example, OTPs or One Time Passwords on mobile or email that allow that you to confirm a transaction).

3. Adjust Privacy Settings

Make profiles private. Control who can see your posts, location, and contact details.

4. Think Before You Share

Don't post your school name, or your address, phone number, or travel plans online.

5. Use Secure Networks

Avoid using public Wi-Fi for banking or personal work. Use a VPN or Virtual Private Network, which is a kind of secure passage through which you transmit your data.

4. Encrypted Messaging

Use apps like Signal, WhatsApp, or Telegram that encrypt your conversations and make them unreadable by hackers or casual electronic eavesdroppers.

Activity 3.1

Spot the Leak!

- **Priya** posted a story from her school fest and tagged the school location.
- **Amit** shared a screenshot of his COVID vaccine certificate on X (Twitter)
- **Zoya** added a friend on Facebook she didn't know in real life.

What are the risks to online privacy that Priya, Amit and Zoya have just taken? Discuss and explain to the others in your group.

Do you know how to open the settings on your favourite social media app and review its privacy settings? Who can see your stories? Is your location sharing on?

Surveillance and You

What is Surveillance?

Surveillance means watching, tracking, or recording someone's behaviour or actions, often without them knowing. In the digital world, this refers to monitoring what people do online, such as the websites they visit, what they search for, who they talk to, and where they go, using their location data and other information. A lot of the time, we are not aware when we are being surveilled. Government agencies, or malicious actors can plant spyware on your device, that secretly sends information about you back to someone.

Types of Surveillance

Types of Surveillance	Who Does It	Purpose	Risk
State Surveillance	Police, Investigation Agencies, Armed Forces	National Security	May misuse and affect personal liberty
Social Media Companies and Digital Platforms	Digital Applications, Websites	Targeted Advertisement, Revenue and Profit Generation	Loss of individual control and privacy violation
Cyber Surveillance	Hackers and Cyber Criminals	Fraud, Blackmail and Data Breach	Dangerous

Over the last few decades, surveillance has raised genuine concerns ranging from the loss of individual freedom of speech to constant self-censorship over what you can say on the internet. These days, personal data is also being misused for political manipulation by political parties and by corporate houses. A total of 5.3 million Indian online accounts faced data breaches in 2023, according to an annual report released in 2024 by the private virtual network provider Surfshark (Scroll).[21]

Why is this important?

Every time you go online, scrolling social media, using Google Maps, watching videos, you leave digital footprints. These can be tracked, stored, misused, manipulated and used to harass you. Journalists could be targeted for investigating powerful interests.

Violence on Digital Platforms

Digital platforms replicate the inequalities and violence perpetuated against women, girls, marginalised groups and religious identities of the physical world. As the violence against women and girls increases with rapidly developing technologies, the 2024 UN Report on Violence Against Women and Girls identified three emerging challenges: A backlash against women's rights; the rapid rise of artificial intelligence; and the expansion of the manosphere – an ecosystem of misogynistic content seeping into mainstream culture (UN Women).[22] It is ironic that AI mirrors the biases and hate found in the materials it is being trained on.

Stalking, **sexual harassment**, and **hate speech** are the most commonly reported forms of technology-facilitated gender based violence. However, the digital revolution has exacerbated and given rise to other forms of abuse, including **hacking**; **astroturfing**; and video and image-based abuse, including **deepfakes**, **doxxing**, **cyberbullying** and **online grooming**.

Check the glossary at the end to know what these words mean, and how they expand our concept of online violence.

Data Protection Laws in India & the World

India's Journey: The IT Act of 2000 was India's first legislative framework for electronic governance, recognising electronic records and digital signatures. It defined cybercrimes and prescribed penalties for civil wrongs. The act paved the way for technological innovation in the Indian Digital ecosystem.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP) Act 2023: The new law applies exclusively to digital personal data, ensuring consent-based data use. This new law includes the right to access, correct, and erase personal data; as well as heavy penalties for data leaks. However, it has been criticised for not mandating an independent regulatory body for data protection. The law also weakens the hard-won transparency rights and safeguards for journalists. It is instructive to do a comparison between information technology legislations across India, EU and Australia (Manupatra Academy)[23.]

Feature	India (DPDP 2023)[24]	EU (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR)[25]	Australia (Privacy Act) (OAIC)[26]
Consent	Clear, informed and voluntary	Clear, informed and voluntary	Implied + Explicit
Scope	Digital personal data; applies extraterritorially if offering goods/ services in India	Applies to EU + extraterritorial processing of EU residents' data	Entities > AUD 3M
Penalties	Up to ₹250 crore (no % of global turnover)	4% of global revenue	Enforced by the Information Commissioner

Regulator	Data Protection Board of India	Independent Supervisory Authorities (DPAs)	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)
Cross-Border Rules	Allowed except to restricted countries notified by government	Allowed with adequacy decisions or safeguards	Allowed if recipient upholds equivalent protections

Let's Reflect

Form small groups and write down all the things that we do online. Now think of which actions require you to share your data in some form. List down all the places you would like your data privacy to be protected, and discuss why.

Social Media, Digital Apps, and Privacy in the Age of AI

The Role of Social Media in Privacy Risks

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat collect and store vast amounts of personal data. This includes browsing behaviour, location data, search history, and user-generated content. While these platforms provide connection and creativity, they can also expose users to privacy breaches and targeted surveillance. People can create false accounts that look very similar to yours in order to befriend your existing followers. More importantly, accessing all this personal data will allow others to build a frighteningly accurate profile of you, your thought patterns, and your life preferences.

AI and Surveillance

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) powers algorithms that predict your interests and behaviour based on your activity.
- Facial recognition software, emotion detection, and behaviour tracking are increasingly used for targeting advertising, policing, and content moderation.
- In the wrong hands, AI tools can automate surveillance and magnify harm (e.g., deepfakes, targeted disinformation).

Privacy Features & Tools for Protection

In order to protect yourself from such AI related digital harm, it is critical to educate oneself of the different tools that you can use. Here are some ways in which you can protect your online data and identity:

1. Incognito/Private Browsing Mode

- Using this mode prevents your browser from saving your history, cookies, or website login data in the browser's memory. Note: Using private browsing mode does not make you or the sites you are visiting anonymous to websites or ISPs!

2. Cookies and Consent

- **Cookies** track user activity to personalise ads. Always review cookie permissions when visiting new websites. Don't accept all cookies. Look at which cookies are essential to your activity and accept only those cookies. Avoid sites where 'accept all' is default.
- Use **browser extensions** to block third-party trackers (e.g., Privacy Badger or uBlock Origin).

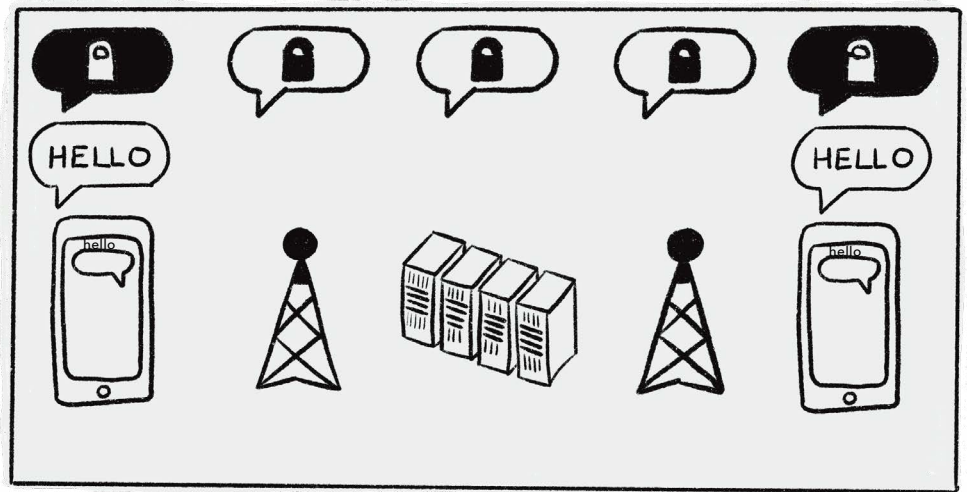
3. End-to-End Encryption (E2EE)

- This ensures that only the sender and receiver can read a message. Apps like Signal and WhatsApp offer E2EE by default for chats.
- When using a new application, check all settings to ensure that you do not allow your messages to be read or data to be used by the application.
- **Transport-layer encryption**, most commonly implemented using the protocol known as Transport Layer Security (TLS), protects messages as they travel from your device to the app's servers, and then from the app's servers to your recipient's device. When you use

TLS, your messaging service provider—or the website you are browsing, or the app you are using—may be able see the actual information in your messages.

If you inspect the URL bar in your browser, you might see a lock icon, or a menu icon you can click to get a dropdown that shows a lock with a message like, "Connection Secure." This means the website uses **HTTPS** or Hypertext Transport Protocol Secure, an example of transport-layer ecryption that we encounter frequently on the web. It provides more security than unencrypted HTTP, which used to be the old standard. In HTTP, the information shared by you could be read by anybody in the middle. But when you use HTTPS, the servers of the website can see the data you enter while on their site (for example, messages, searches, credit card numbers, and logins), but this information is unreadable to eavesdroppers on the network.

We have also referred previously to **VPN or Virtual Private Networks**. With a VPN, your traffic still travels over your ISP's connection, but is encrypted between you and your VPN provider; and while anyone surveilling your data will see that you are working with a VPN, they will not be able to see what websites you are visiting. Of course, in order to ensure complete safety, you need to encrypt data at rest as well as when it is in transit!



The diagram shows end to end encryption. On the left, a smartphone sends an un-encrypted message: "Hello." That message is encrypted, and then passed along to a cellphone tower, then the company servers , and then the next cellphone tower. No one in the middle can see what the encrypted message contains. At the other end, the other smartphone receives the encrypted message, and decrypts it to read "Hello."

End-to-end encryption (Source: Electronic Frontier Foundation)[27]

4. Setting Social Media Privacy Settings

- Set your profile to 'Private'.
- Turn off location sharing for posts.
- Disable facial recognition tagging (e.g. on Facebook).
- Avoid using social media logins for third-party apps.

5. App Permissions Management

- Regularly review which apps have access to your camera, microphone, location, and contacts and revoke unnecessary access.

6. AI and Predictive Algorithms

- Be aware that the content you like, watch, or share trains algorithms about your preferences. Engage critically with content recommendations and ads. This will also ensure that you are not limited to your own information bubbles.

Social Media Ethics For The Digital Age

As we spend more and more time on the internet, gaining information about the world, it is important to follow responsible behaviour and help make the internet a safe space for everyone. Some of the key principles of social media ethics are:

1. Transparency: Individuals and organisations should disclose their identities, affiliations, and interests when engaging with others on social media platforms.

2. Mutual Respect: Users of social media platforms should respect the privacy, dignity, and rights of others; and avoid behaviour that is derogatory, abusive, or offensive to others.

3. Responsibility: Users of social media platforms should take responsibility for the content they share and ensure that it is accurate, truthful, and not misleading. If you are not sure, don't share till you are.

4. Authenticity: Users of social media platforms should be authentic and avoid deceitful or manipulative behaviour towards others, especially in online communities.

5. Accountability: Users of social media platforms should be accountable for their actions and should be prepared to accept the consequences of their behaviour with grace, dignity and humility.

Questions to Ponder

- **Have you ever noticed the same advertisement following you across platforms after you search for something?**
- **What do you think the application learned about you?**
- **What steps can you take to ensure your data privacy?**

Further Resources

1. An Infographic Guide To Technology- Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, a report published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)[28]

2. Sharenting: Pause Before You Post Infographic, published by The Data Protection Commission[29]


YOUR WISH, IS MY COMMAND!!
LIST OF TASKS
1. Research the essay
2. Write the assignment
3. Make notes for class
4. Physics notes
5. History assignment
GPT

Session 04

AI AND SCHOOL

Fair Use of Internet Resources and AI

Let's first start with a thought experiment. Imagine a person is in a room with no windows or doors. This person is given detailed instructions in English which explain how to reply to messages in Chinese, even though the person doesn't know the language.

Messages in Chinese are passed through a small opening in the room. The person follows the instructions and writes back in Chinese. From the outside, it looks like the person is having a conversation in Chinese with whoever is outside. To an observer, it might look like the person inside understands Chinese, but is this really the case? Would you say the person inside actually "knows" Chinese?

This thought experiment, created by philosopher John Searle in 1980, is meant to challenge the idea that machines (like computers) can truly "understand" things. The key question is this: Can a machine that can give the right answers - like the person inside the room - actually "think"? Or is it just processing information without understanding?

In 1943, Warren S. McCulloch, a neurophysiologist from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and Walter Pitts, a logician, published a research paper titled *A Logical Calculus of the Ideas Immanent in Nervous Activity*, which was seminal in the history of Artificial Intelligence. They put forth the idea that the human brain could be understood in computational terms, and conceptualised the term **artificial neural networks**, which was critical for the AI development that followed (McCulloch and Pitts, 1943)[30]. Artificial neural networks (ANNs) are computer systems

inspired by the way our brains work. They're designed to recognise patterns, classify, and make predictions by mimicking how neurons in our brains work. Think of them as a way for machines to "learn" from data, just like how we learn from experience.

So what is **Artificial Intelligence** (AI)? In simple terms, it is a technology that allows machines to mimic human actions, such as comprehension, problem-solving, and decision-making. In a 1950 article, the mathematician Alan Turing devised a test to measure the ability of machines to mimic human comprehension and thinking. It goes like this: A person communicates with both a human and a computer, but they can't see or hear them. They can only see the responses they get through text. If the person can't tell which one is the human and which one is the computer, then the computer is said to have "passed" the Turing Test.

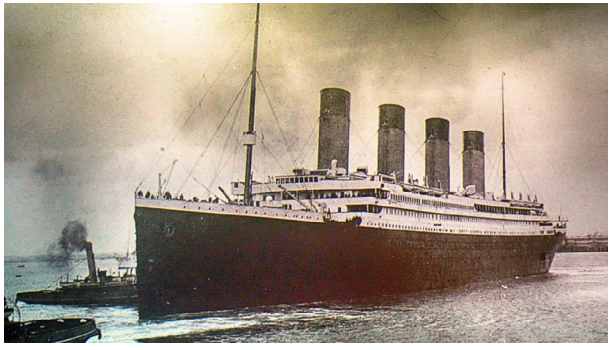
Turing's contributions set the stage for the research, innovation, and development of AI that followed. It eventually gave rise to the generative AIs we see today, like ChatGPT and DeepSeek. **Generative AI** is a type of artificial intelligence that uses deep learning to create new content based on patterns it has learned from large amounts of data. It does this through 'Deep Learning' machine learning models that use neural networks with multiple layers to learn complex patterns from data. One example of this are computer systems running **Large Language Models** or

In our everyday lives, we encounter AI technologies in the form of voice assistants (like Siri and Alexa); chatbots (such as ChatGPT and Claude); and in the form of helpful suggestions for your next purchase or next film from e-commerce websites (like Amazon) and Over-The-Top (OTT) media platforms (like Netflix).

Activity 4.1

The Turing Test

Prepare sets of real and AI generated images of the same item or place, and ask the participants to guess which is which. What are the clues they use to decide?



Source: (Britannica Education)[31]

Questions to Ponder

How do we differentiate between reality and AI-generated reality? What remains human and non-human? How is the blurring of this boundary affecting employment, creativity, as well as removing anything of historical significance? Whose reality are we witnessing through our interactions with media? When did we become so reliant on technology? Discuss.

LLMs, which means they are essentially able to process large quantities of words, because they have been 'fed' large proportions of whatever written material is available in digital form. Similarly, suppose you're teaching a machine to recognise pictures of cats. You show it thousands of pictures of cats and non-cats, and the deep learning system starts to notice patterns, like the shape of ears or fur. Each layer of the neural network in deep learning examines the data from a different angle, becoming more focused on the details as it goes deeper. Over time, the computer gets really good at recognising cats in pictures. And this results in all kinds of useful things: Enhancing efficiency and productivity, for one. Easy content creation and modification, for another. Customized learning, and the high-speed analysis of large chunks of data is another benefit. What's not to like, right?

But there is a downside. To do all this, AI servers are large consumers of scarce fresh water. They rely on critical minerals and rare elements, which are often mined unsustainably. And they use massive amounts of electricity, contributing heavily to the emission of planet-warming greenhouse gases.

And eventually, we will keep returning to the same question: Is this really 'intelligence'? Or are the machines just mixing-and-matching existing words and images without actually 'thinking' of something novel and new?

Social Media Algorithms

A social media algorithm is a set of rules or instructions that decides what content you see in your social media feeds. It looks at things like your past interactions (what you've liked, shared, or commented on), the popularity of posts, and other factors

to make sure you're shown content that's most relevant to you. The goal is to keep you continuously engaged with the platform by giving you more of what you like and are interested in.

But the same algorithms also dictate what you don't see. Safiya Noble, in her book *Algorithms of Oppression*, addresses the Google search engine's racial bias and discrimination against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour). She shares that searching the term 'black girls' on the Google search engine yielded pornographic results, and after writing about this discrimination, Google immediately removed it. However, it continued to show pornographic results for 'asian girls' (Noble 2018)[32]. Such biases in content feed into existing biases in our perceptions of identities of gender, race, caste, ethnicity and sexuality.

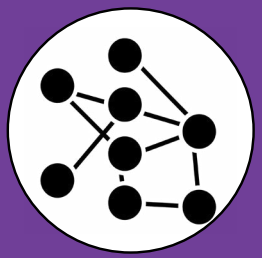
But here's food for thought: If these algorithms perpetuate discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, why are social media so much a part of our daily lives? Recent research suggests that many social media platforms, in an attempt to build a loyal customer base, may actually have built in addictive behaviours, which are as addictive as alcohol or substance abuse. The feel-good boost of making a post that goes viral, or that is liked by many people only heightens that addiction, leaving us helpless. This is an issue that is being adjudicated by courts right now.

Is AI the magic formula then? While AI tools have many benefits, they are also fraught with challenges and risks. Some of them are as follows:

- **It reproduces and amplifies the biases in the dataset it was trained on.**
- **Lack of transparency: In other words, some deep learning AI models are so complex that they are difficult (and even impossible) to fully understand.**
- **Fears about job displacement ("Will AI replace me at work?")**
- **Misuse of AI in surveillance, criminal justice, and warfare by powerful entities like governments.**
- **Copyright and privacy violations, as AI 'remixes' work.**

Activity 4.2

Stuck in Algorithms



Ask the participants to use the Google search engine on their smartphones and do searches starting with the following prompts:

How do.....
What is.....
How to do.....

What kind of auto-completion suggestions does the search engine throw up?

Now give the participants a link to an Instagram Reel or a YouTube Short. Ask them to scroll through the content for a few minutes, and observe the types of videos the platforms recommended to them next. Ask everyone to reflect on how quickly similar themes, viewpoints, or content formats emerge, limiting access to diverse information.

Did you know?

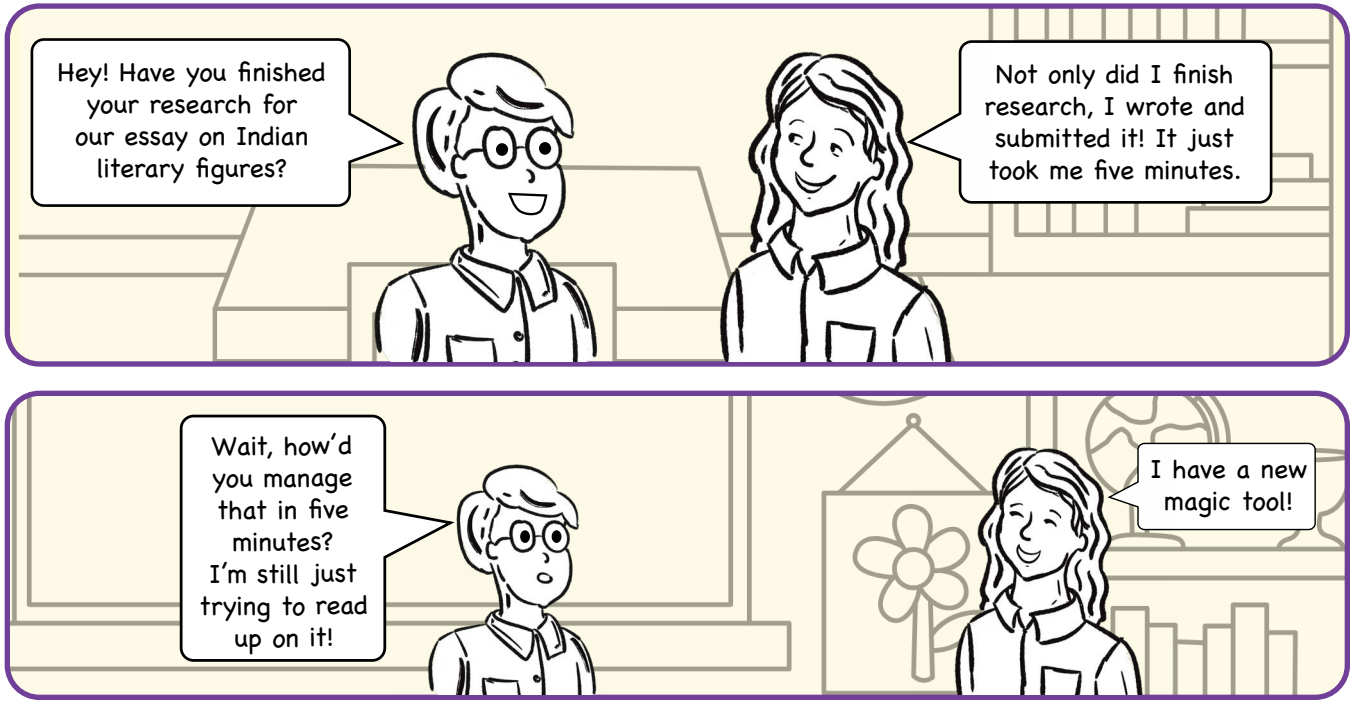
The Algorithmic Justice League (AJL)[33] is an organisation founded in 2018 by Joy Buolamwini, a computer scientist, to raise awareness about the social implications of artificial intelligence, particularly its biases. Joy, a researcher at the MIT Media Lab, found through her own work that facial recognition systems often performed poorly at identifying darker-skinned faces, especially those of women.

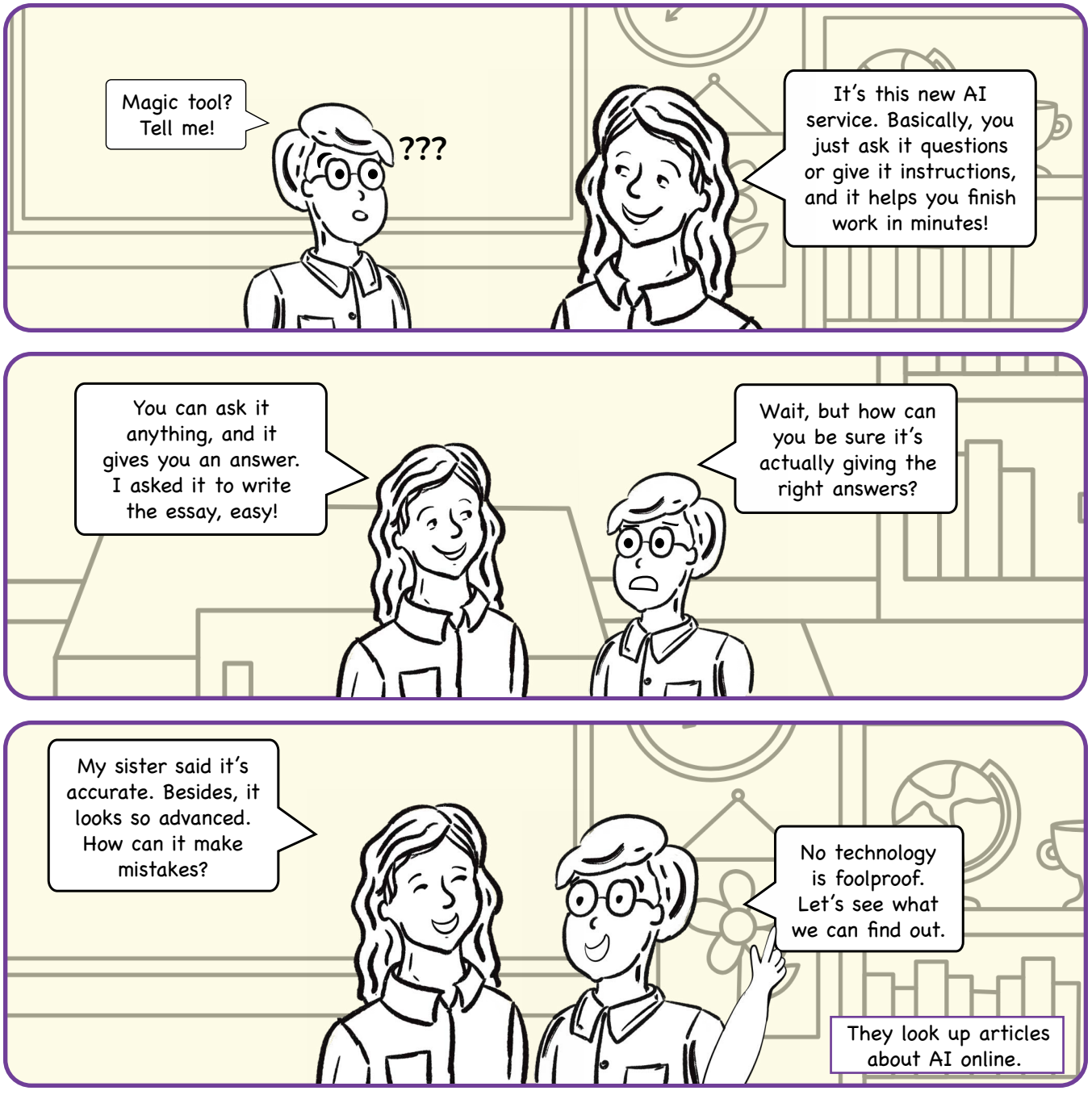
Did you know?

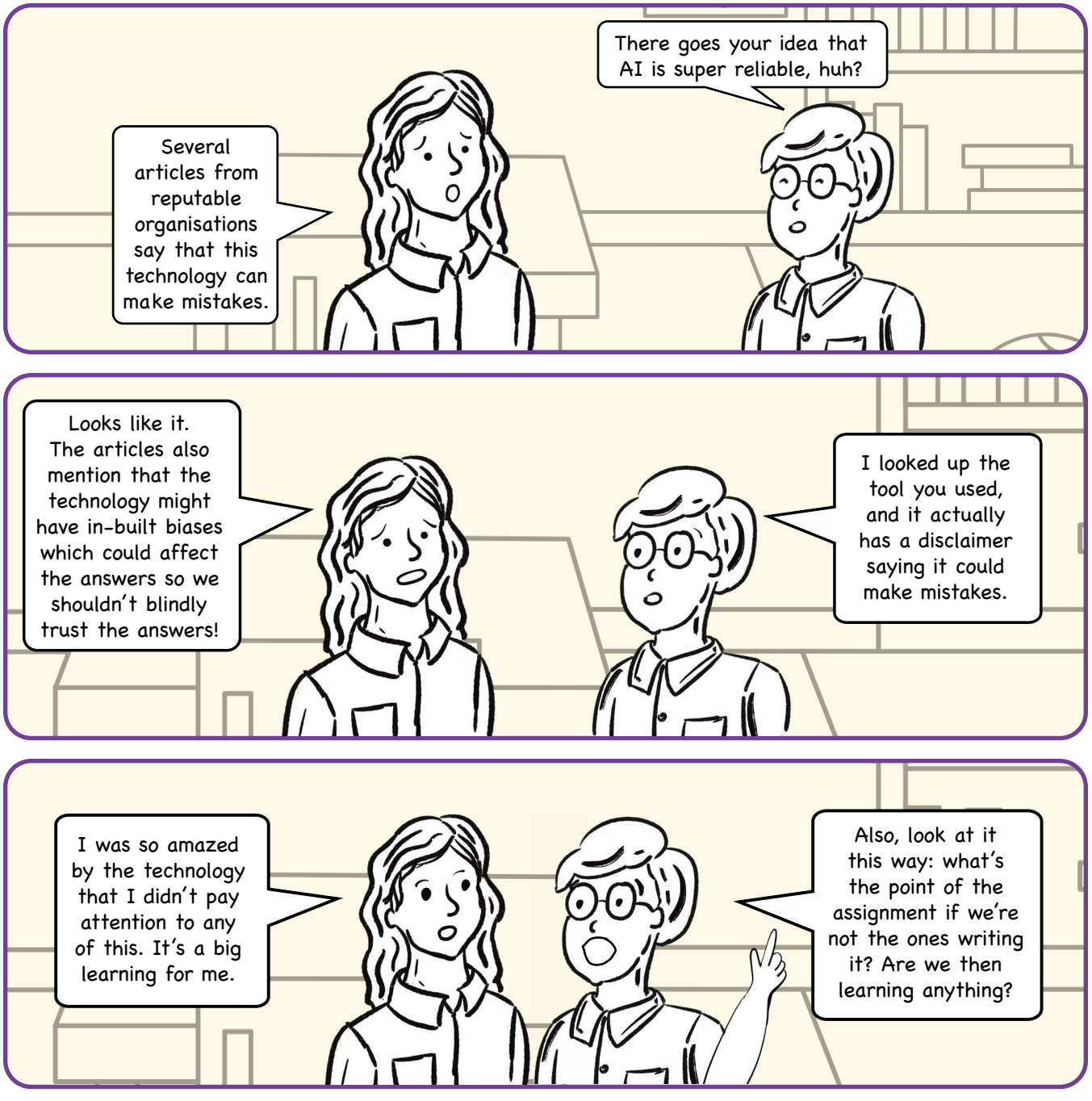
AI and its data centers require fresh water to cool servers and produce the electricity that powers them. In 2022, Google, Microsoft, and Meta used an estimated 580 billion gallons of water to provide power and cooling to data centers and AI servers. That's enough water to meet the annual needs of 15 million households (Murray and DiFelice)[34].

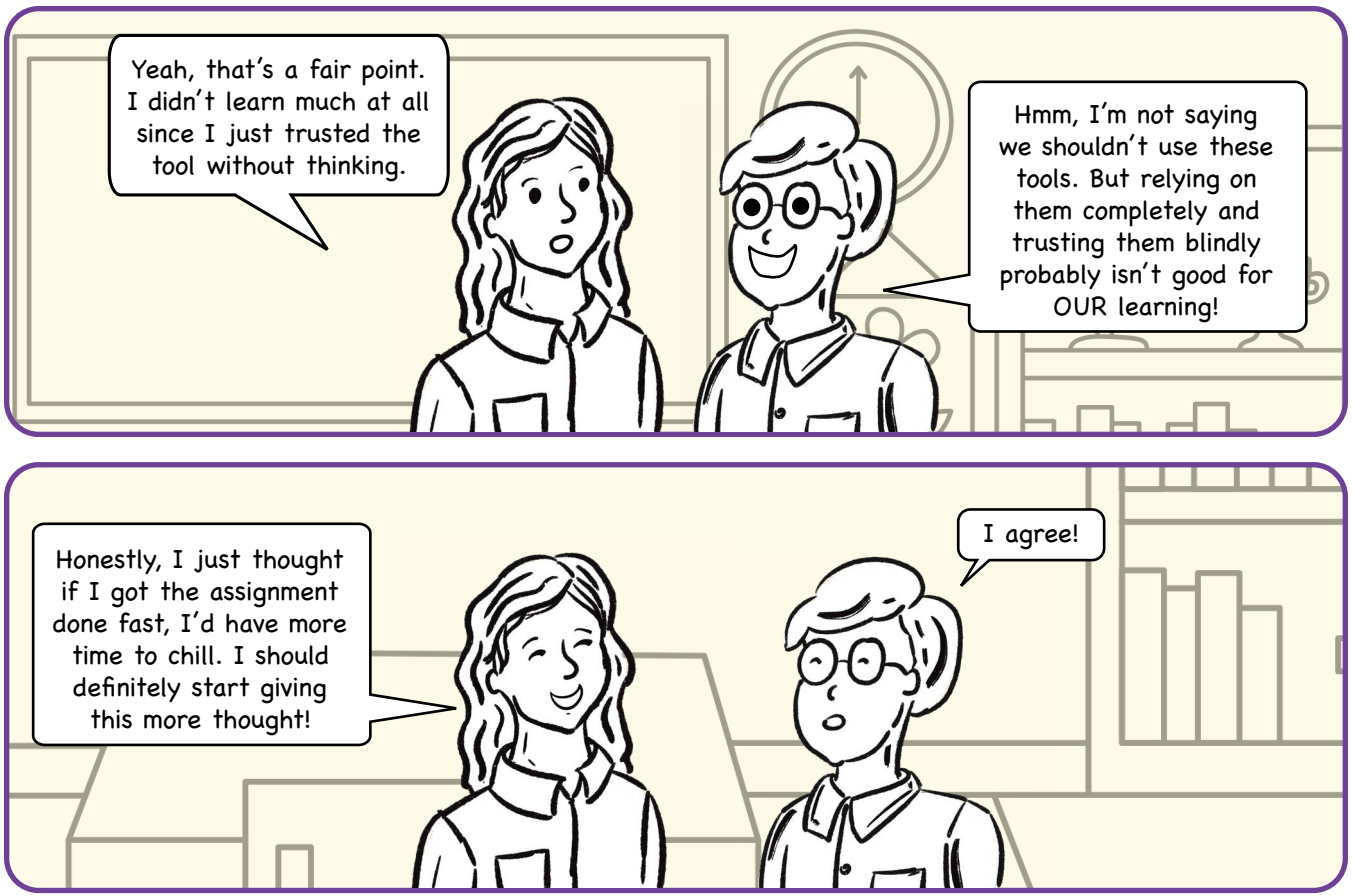
Voices from the Classroom

AI and Homework: Two students named Aarav and Meera are having a conversation about the use of AI in school.




Magic tool? Tell me!
???
It's this new AI service. Basically, you just ask it questions or give it instructions, and it helps you finish work in minutes!
You can ask it anything, and it gives you an answer. I asked it to write the essay, easy!
Wait, but how can you be sure it's actually giving the right answers?
My sister said it's accurate. Besides, it looks so advanced. How can it make mistakes?
No technology is foolproof. Let's see what we can find out.
They look up articles about AI online.


There goes your idea that AI is super reliable, huh?
Several articles from reputable organisations say that this technology can make mistakes.
Looks like it. The articles also mention that the technology might have in-built biases which could affect the answers so we shouldn't blindly trust the answers!
I looked up the tool you used, and it actually has a disclaimer saying it could make mistakes.
I was so amazed by the technology that I didn't pay attention to any of this. It's a big learning for me.
Also, look at it this way: what's the point of the assignment if we're not the ones writing it? Are we then learning anything?


Yeah, that's a fair point. I didn't learn much at all since I just trusted the tool without thinking.
Hmm, I'm not saying we shouldn't use these tools. But relying on them completely and trusting them blindly probably isn't good for OUR learning!
Honestly, I just thought if I got the assignment done fast, I'd have more time to chill. I should definitely start giving this more thought!
I agree!

AI in Classrooms

Sourcing Accurate Information

According to a 2020 study published in Science Daily, students often do not critically assess online information and are easily influenced by unreliable sources. Sourcing accurate information involves gathering reliable, credible, and correct information from a variety of sources (ScienceDaily)[35]. It involves critical evaluation of the information's credibility, relevance, timeliness, and authority.

Always evaluate the accuracy, reliability and trustworthiness of the data by:

- Identifying reliable sources (e.g., academic journals, official reports, expert-authored articles).
- Cross-referencing multiple sources to see if they are in agreement with each other
- Ensuring the information is up-to-date
- Assessing the credentials of the authors and sources quoted
- Questioning why the information exists: the purpose driving the information creation tells you a lot about how it may be biased!
- Using your common sense!

How to do Accurate Keyword Searches?

Accurate keyword searches involve selecting precise, relevant words or phrases to efficiently find specific information online. By using search strategies like **phrase matching**, **boolean operators**, **exclusions**, and **modifiers**, users can refine their results and access reliable content that closely matches their intent.

1. Use Specific Keywords: The more precise the keywords, the better the search results. (Example: "Diwali celebrations in Varanasi 2026" instead of "Indian festivals.")

2. Phrase Searching (" "): Quotation marks ensure exact phrase matches. (Example: "Digital India campaign 2024")

3. Add Modifiers: Including location, time, or target audience improves search relevance. (Example: "Impact of NEP 2020 on higher education in India")

4. Exclude Unwanted Terms (-): Use the minus sign to filter out irrelevant results. (Example: "Traditional Indian cuisine -fast food")

5. Boolean Operators (AND/OR): Combine keywords for precise control over search results. (Example: "Organic farming AND subsidies in India")

6. Wildcard Search (*): Use an asterisk for flexible searches. (Example: "Top * universities in India", for different kinds of top universities)

Plagiarism and Attribution

Plagiarism is when you use someone else's ideas, work, or creations without giving them credit for it. **Attribution** refers to the practice of giving proper credit to the original creator of a piece of content, whether it be text, images, videos, or other forms of media. Proper attribution acknowledges intellectual property rights, maintains ethical integrity, and prevents plagiarism. It is also socially respectful of the act of thought and creation.

AI and Attribution

In digital media, attribution is particularly important in the context of AI-generated content, copyright laws, Creative Commons licensing, and open-source materials.

AI is increasingly used in content creation, generating text, images, music, and even deepfake videos. However, since AI models are trained on vast datasets - often without the explicit consent of their original creators - questions arise about who owns AI-generated content, and how attribution should be assigned. This raises ethical and legal concerns regarding attribution. Some AI tools even allow users to modify existing work, blurring the lines between originality and derivative content. The ethical approach is to disclose AI involvement in content creation, and give credit where applicable, ensuring transparent authorship.

In India, the Copyright Act, 1957, predates AI - so it doesn't clearly define who owns AI-generated content. So, if you're using tools like ChatGPT or DALL·E in your school projects, it's important to mention that AI was involved because AI can't be considered a legal author or owner!

Have you heard the word "copyright"?

Copyright is a law that protects original works by granting creators exclusive rights to their use. In digital media, giving credit means mentioning the creator's name, linking to the source, and stating the terms under which they are sharing their work.

Copyright Terms usually tell you:

- Who owns the content (the creator or copyright holder).
- What you're allowed to do with it (like use, share, remix, or adapt).
- Whether you need to give credit (most of the time, yes!), or pay for using it
- Whether you can use it for commercial purposes or only for non-commercial use.
- Whether you can make changes to the original work or not.

With AI tools creating or modifying content, it's harder to track original ownership. This is why many experts believe that copyright laws need to be urgently updated to address new technologies as they appear.

What is Creative Commons?

Creative Commons (CC) is a licensing system that allows creators to share their work with specific permissions while ensuring they receive proper credit

Using Creative Commons-licensed content requires adherence to the specified terms, including proper attribution to the creator, source, and license type. CC licenses range from **Attribution Only** (CC-BY), which permits free use with proper credit; to more restrictive options like **Non-Commercial** (CC-BY-NC); **No Derivatives** (CC-BY-ND); and **ShareAlike** (CC-BY-SA), under which you have to allow your own work to be licensed under the same terms as the original you adapted from.

Creative Commons promotes the ethical use of content by creative individuals, while enabling accessibility and collaboration. Many people therefore see this as less restrictive than the copyright- based system.

Open Source and Its Role in Content Creation

Open Source refers to content and tools that are freely available to use, modify, and share under specific licenses. In content creation, it allows creators to access editable media, templates, and powerful software like GIMP, Blender, Audacity, and OpenShot, all of which support image editing, 3D modelling, audio, and video production. Platforms like Unsplash, Wikimedia Commons, and Pexels provide free-to-use images; while open source music, fonts, and design assets expand creative possibilities. As long as creators follow the license terms, such as giving proper attribution, open source encourages ethical, collaborative, and inclusive content creation. However, it is important to note that 'open source' does not always mean 'free'!

Further Resources

1. India's Advance on AI Regulation, in Carnegie India by Amlan Mohanty and Shatakraty Sahu[36]
2. The Social Dilemma (2020), Available on Netflix, directed by Jeff Orlowski[37]


DIRECTOR
PRESENTS
MOVIE OF THE DECADE
STARRING
BADSHAH
KING OF HEARTS!!!

Session 05

TELLING DIGITAL STORIES

What is Digital Storytelling?

Digital storytelling is the art of using multimedia tools such as text, images, audio, and video to tell compelling stories. It blends traditional storytelling techniques with digital media to create engaging narratives that can be shared across platforms like YouTube, Instagram, podcasts, and blogs.

Types of Digital Storytelling

Educational stories inform and teach by simplifying complex concepts through animations, graphics, and narration. They enhance learning in online courses, explainer videos, and documentaries.

Interview-based stories share different perspectives through conversations with experts, eyewitnesses, or individuals, adding credibility to podcasts, documentaries, and news content.

Narrative stories use a clear structure to share personal, fictional, or real-life experiences in an engaging way. They may contain characters, emotions, and events.

Entertaining stories captivate the audience through humour, drama, or suspense, using fiction, animation, or visuals to deliver a message or provide an emotional high.

Here are some videos you can watch to better understand different types of stories:

- **Sonder (2014)**, Available on YouTube, directed by John Koeing[38]
- **This Is How Social Media Is Destroying Your Life (2019)**, Available on YouTube, by MotivationGrid[39]
- **Climate Change: What Can We Do? Quick Learner (2021),** Available on YouTube, by Duke University[40]

What is Content Creation?

Content creation, a form of digital storytelling, refers to the process of generating and sharing information, stories, or media in various formats, including text, audio, video, and images. It serves different purposes, such as education, entertainment, marketing, and advocacy. The digital era has democratised content creation, allowing individuals and organisations to produce and distribute material globally through social media, websites, and streaming platforms.

However, ethical considerations, including authenticity, accuracy, and responsible messaging, are crucial to ensure that the impact of content remains primarily positive and constructive.

Types of Content

Informational Content includes news articles, research papers, and educational blogs designed to inform and educate audiences.

Marketing & Promotional Content includes advertisements, brand storytelling, influencer marketing, and corporate blogs designed to sell products or services.

Interactive Content includes quizzes, polls, games, and live-streaming sessions that encourage audience participation.

Entertainment Content encompasses films, TV shows, memes, music, and online videos created primarily for amusement and engagement.

User-Generated Content consists of social media posts, customer reviews, vlogs, and testimonials created by individual users rather than professional entities.

Fiction and Nonfiction

Fiction is imaginative storytelling in novels, films, web series, and short stories. It allows creativity; but must avoid stereotypes, bias, misinformation, and misrepresentation.

Nonfiction presents real-life facts in news, biographies, documentaries, and academic writing. It demands research, objectivity, and ethical sourcing to ensure credibility; but is capable of providing as much drama as fiction.

Activity 5.1

Let's play a game!

Read each statement carefully and choose whether it is fiction or non-fiction:

- A boy discovers he has magical powers and goes on a quest.
- A journalist writes an article about climate change based on real scientific research.
- A sci-fi web series about time-travelling teenagers.
- A vlog about a person's real-life travels to different countries.

Visual storytelling

We use a camera to capture fiction or non fiction, to tell visual stories. In order to tell an effective visual story, we need to understand how the grammar of visuals is constructed. Shots and sequences make up the basic fundamental structures for a visual story, which has its own grammar and syntax, as it were.

Did you know?

The word PODCAST comes from a combination of "iPod" (a type of music player made by Apple) and "broadcast." It was coined in 2004 by journalist Ben Hammersley in an article for The Guardian while describing this new form of digital audio content. (Podmuse)[41]

Types of Shots & Camera Movements

Camera movements and shots help tell a story by guiding the audience's attention and making scenes more impactful.

A **pan shot** moves the camera horizontally from a fixed position to follow a subject, reveal a scene, or show an object in motion.

A **tilt shot** moves the camera up or down on an axis, revealing scale or adding drama. Slow tilts build suspense, while fast tilts may add urgency to the scene.

Zooming requires the lens to be adjusted in order to make objects seem to approach the viewer or go further away. **Zooming in** highlights details or emotions. **Zooming out** reveals context. A slow zoom adds intensity, while a fast zoom can surprise or shock.

Tracking shots and dolly shots, moves the camera smoothly through space, laterally or towards or away from the subject. This creates an immersive and dynamic viewing experience for the viewer.

Camera Shots

Each shot type enhances storytelling by guiding attention and deepening audience engagement.

1. Long Shot (LS): Captures the full subject and background, establishing setting and scale.

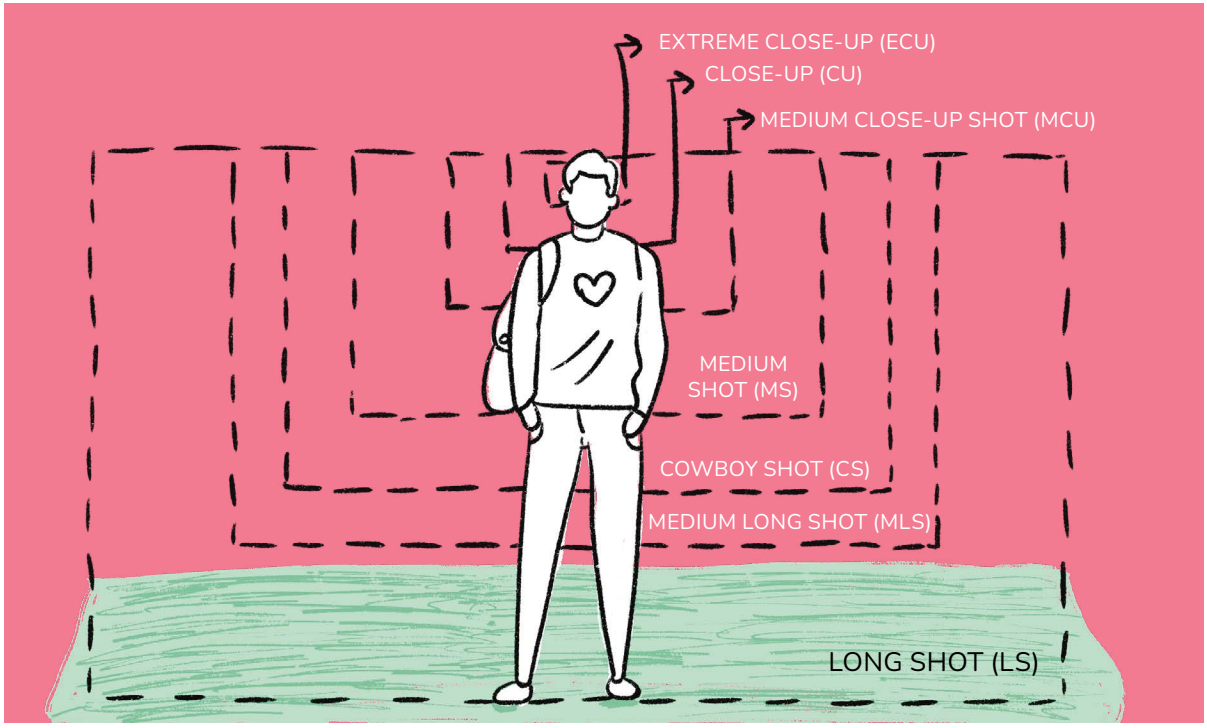
2. Medium Long Shot (MLS): Frames the subject from mid-thigh up, often used in action scenes to show weapons or stance.

3. Medium Shot (MS): Frames from the waist up, balancing character and surroundings.

4. Medium Close-Up (MCU): Frames from the chest up, emphasizing facial expressions.

5. Close-Up (CU): Focuses on the subject's face, highlighting emotions and reactions.

6. Extreme Close-Up (ECU): Magnifies details like eyes or hands, creating intensity and focus. Used sparingly, as it can be too intense.



7. Over The Shoulder (OTS): The "over-the-shoulder shot" is a classic framing technique used in conversations to establish perspective. It places the camera behind one character, showing part of their shoulder while focusing on the person they're speaking to. This shot helps the audience feel immersed in the dialogue, as if they're part of the scene.

The **Rule of Thirds** is a photography trick that makes pictures look better. Imagine your photo is divided into nine equal parts by two horizontal and two vertical lines. Instead of placing your subject in the centre, you put it where the lines intersect. This makes the image more balanced, interesting, and easier for the viewer's eyes to follow.

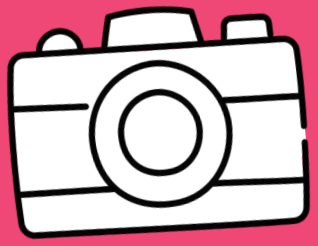
A farmer stands amid his ruined crops, devastated by the 2025 Punjab floods. Image Credits: Gagandeep Singh

Questions to Ponder

- **Should digital editing be allowed in photojournalism?**
- **If yes, what should the rules and limitations be?**
- **When does digital editing become digital manipulation?**

Activity 5.2

Stories from My Surroundings



Step out into your locality and identify a theme or topic that interests you—this could be everyday life, people at work, street culture, public spaces, nature, or any issue you observe around you. Take a series of photographs related to your chosen theme, experimenting with different camera angles (close-ups, wide shots, high or low angles) and perspectives.

Elements of Storytelling

Audio-visual storytelling uses sound, music, visuals, and lighting to make stories more engaging.

Sound enhances storytelling by setting the mood and adding realism. **Dialogue** builds emotions, ambient sounds create immersion, and effects make scenes more engaging.

Music shapes mood and emotions in storytelling. Suspenseful tunes build tension, soft melodies evoke warmth, and fast beats add excitement.

Visuals (images and videos) use framing, and angles to shape the narrative. Framing, or composition, decides what the viewer focuses on at a given moment. Still images capture key moments and emotions, while videos add movement and depth. Close-ups show emotions, while wide shots set the scene, making stories more engaging.

Lighting shapes a scene's mood and tone. Bright, natural light creates warmth and openness, while dim or high-contrast lighting adds mystery or tension. Shadows and highlights guide the audience's attention, enhancing storytelling.

Recording/Shooting

High-quality audio and video make content more engaging and professional. Simple techniques can greatly improve storytelling, podcasts, and interviews.

Audio Recording: Clear audio ensures effective communication and engagement. Background noise, volume issues, or poor mic placement can be distracting.

While recording, keep these things in mind:

- Record in a quiet environment
- Use a stable microphone position
- Use earphones with a built-in-mic
- Choose a suitable recording app

Video Recording: A well-shot video strengthens storytelling by capturing attention and visually enhancing the narrative. Framing, lighting, and stability are key to a professional look.

Framing and Composition: Recording in landscape mode gives a wider view. Placing the subject in the centre or following the rule of thirds makes the shot more balanced and visually appealing. Using a diversity of shot sizes makes the narrative visually interesting, and allows you to direct the viewer's attention appropriately.

Proper Lighting: Natural light is ideal, but positioning the light source in front of the subject prevents unwanted shadows. Soft lighting can be used indoors to avoid harsh contrasts and shadows.

Steady Camera Handling: A shaky visual is distracting. Hold the camera with both hands, use a tripod, or rest your elbows on a firm surface for better stability.

Formats

Horizontal Format: Used in films, TV, and YouTube, it offers a wider frame for detailed scenes, interviews, and immersive storytelling, adding context and depth. This is also known as Landscape Format.

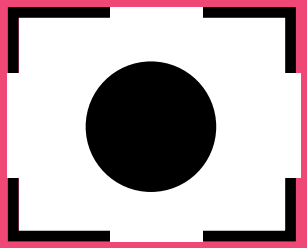
Vertical Format: Ideal for mobile-first platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and Snapchat, it enhances engagement and suits vlogs, social media, and quick storytelling. This is also known as Portrait Format.

According to Google's Q1 2024 earnings call, YouTube Shorts have seen over 70 billion daily views globally, highlighting their massive reach and popularity for short-form content.

Storytelling, at its core, is not just about creating content - but about how stories are framed, whose voices are represented, and how truth and context are maintained in a digital space.
It also involves making thoughtful choices about format, platform, and audience, while ensuring that the story remains responsible, ethical, and authentic.

Activity 5.3

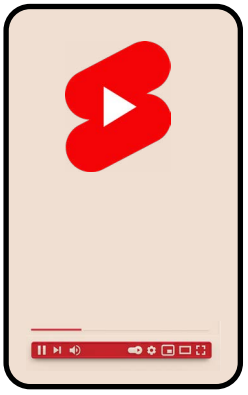
Guess the Frame

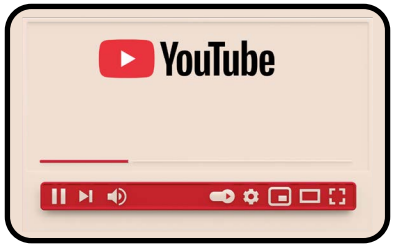


Instructions:

- Read the scenario.
- Guess if the best format is Vertical or Horizontal.
- Share your answers and discuss your choices

VERTICAL





HORIZONTAL

1. An interview for a YouTube documentary.
2. A dance performance for Instagram Reels.
3. A landscape shot of mountains for a travel blog.
4. A food review video for Instagram Stories.
5. A wide shot of a football match.

Editing for Audio and Video

Editing refers to the act of ordering and refining our shots, so that we create a smooth narrative. It enhances the quality of our content by refining recordings, improving sound, and adding visual effects.

Audio Editing apps like **Lexis Audio Editor** allow basic trimming and noise reduction, while **BandLab** offers multi-track layering for music and narration. **WaveEditor** provides precise editing with support for multiple file formats.

Video Editing

For simple edits, **InShot** lets us trim, add text, and overlay music, while **KineMaster** offers advanced features such as multi-layer editing and transitions for professional-quality videos.

Publishing and Sharing

Podcasts can be uploaded using **Anchor**, which distributes them to platforms like **Spotify** and **Apple Podcasts**. Digital stories can be shared on **YouTube** and **Instagram**, using hashtags and engaging titles to reach a wider audience. They can also be published on websites that use content management systems like **WordPress**, **Joomla** and **Drupal** and **personal blogs** for better accessibility and long-term visibility.

Points to Remember

Storytelling Basics: Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. A strong narrative keeps the audience engaged and immersed in the world you have created.

Authenticity Matters: Your story should be genuine and relatable to create a lasting impact.

Visuals & Audio: Use images, videos, and sound effectively to enhance storytelling.

Ethical Responsibility: Always verify facts, respect privacy, and avoid spreading misinformation.

Consent is Key: Always seek permission before sharing someone's story, image, or voice to ensure ethical and respectful storytelling.

Further Resources

1. Project Dastaan - A digital storytelling initiative that uses immersive VR to reconnect Partition survivors with their lost homes. It serves as a compelling case study in digital narrative, multimedia storytelling, and the use of technology in preserving lived histories[42].

2. ChalChitra Abhiyaan - A media collective that trains rural communities in filmmaking and documentary production to amplify civic voices. Its work demonstrates participatory media practices and grassroots digital storytelling[43].

Glossary

A

Algorithm: An algorithm is a fixed series of steps that a computer forms in order to solve a problem. Social media platforms use algorithms to filter and prioritise content for each individual user. They determine what the user gets to see based on various indicators, such as their viewing behaviour and content preferences.

Artificial Intelligence: Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, and autonomy. Once the stuff of science fiction, we are beginning to see some hints of what can happen if machines begin to outstrip humans at tasks once considered impossible for machines.

Artificial Neural Networks (ANN): A neural network is a method in artificial intelligence (AI) that trains computers to process data in a way inspired by the human brain, by using self-reflexive and reinforcing processes.

B

Bias: A lack of impartiality or balance. It can result from a tendency or prejudice toward a specific issue, person, or group. In journalism, bias can affect the selection of stories that are reported and how they are covered.

C

Creative Commons: A non-profit organisation that defined simple rules and license models for users to legally edit and share material on the internet without infringing on copyright laws.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online, for instance on social media. Cyberbullies target individuals and attack their victims repeatedly with the intention to cause harm.

Cyberstalking: Persistent, unwanted or threatening surveillance and/or contact by pursuit by technological means.

D

Deepfakes: Media products, such as videos, produced using artificial intelligence (AI). With the help of AI, it has become relatively easy to synthesise different elements of existing video or audio files. In the newly created content, individuals appear to say and do things that are not based on reality. Deepfakes are sometimes used as propaganda tools or to discredit political opponents.

Digital Footprint: The digital footprint is the data traces left by someone when using digital technology. This can include personal data, search history data, and metadata.

Disinformation: Disinformation is false or partly false information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the explicit purpose of harming. Producers of disinformation create one-sided stories for political, financial, or ideological reasons. For example, to influence public opinion on certain issues or to create public pressure.

Doxxing: Doxxing refers to the collection of a user's private information across multiple platforms (including social media) by an unauthorised individual, who then publishes the information in an attempt to shame or embarrass the user - or in order to reveal their identity to the public at large.

G

Generative AI: Generative AI, sometimes called Gen-AI, is artificial intelligence (AI) that can create original content such as text, images, video, audio or software code in response to a user's prompt or request.

H

Hate Speech: Hate speech attacks people or a group of people based on attributes like race, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. It appears both online and offline and takes many forms, including insults, defamation, degradation, and threats.

I

Image-based Abuse: Involves the taking, sharing or threatening to share sexually explicit images without consent. It involves the non-consensual sharing of intimate images commonly referred to as "revenge porn", deepfakes, or cyberflashing.

Information: Anything that provides knowledge and answers questions. Information can take the form of facts or data conveyed through figures, text, pictures, audio, or video. Information can sometimes be one-sided or include content that is not true.

M

Malinformation: Information that may be true and factual but is not intended for publication, and is leaked to cause harm. For instance, secret diplomatic documents exchanged between a government and its embassies abroad. Other forms of malinformation published to do harm are hate speech and online harassment.

Mass Media: Any means of communication that is created to reach a large audience, e.g. newspapers, radio or TV stations, books, or billboards. A form of one-to-many communication.

Misinformation: Misinformation is information that is false but not intended to harm. Misinformation can occur accidentally when journalists do not research thoroughly or make mistakes in their writing, for example, by inserting an incorrect date or figure into a story.

O

Online harassment: Repeated conduct that threatens, pesters, scares, or abuses someone by sending someone degrading, offensive or insulting comments or images. It is a closely connected concept to **cyberbullying**. Online harassment should not be tolerated, and must be caled out unequivocally to preserve the open and democratic nature of the internet.

P

Privacy: The ability to seclude oneself and control information about oneself. On social media, privacy is a key concern. The more information you post on social media, the more time you spend on it, the less private you are, and the more data about yourself you give away to the social media platforms, companies, or institutions that share it with you.

S

Social Media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in social networking. Examples include Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube.

T

Technology facilitated gender based violence: Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, or TFGBV, is an act of violence perpetrated by one or more individuals that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in part or fully by the use of information and communication technologies or digital media against a person on the basis of their gender. Increasingly common on social media.

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I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.

- Pablo Picasso

The best teachers are those who show you where to look but don't tell you what to see.

- Alexandra K. Tenfor