

FACCTMedia Research Project: How academics can defeat disinformation?

Ruth Rodríguez-Martínez

PhD Session

April, 19th 2021

Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (PID2019- 106367GB-I00 /AEI/10.13039/501100011033)



FACCTMedia





Title: How academics can defeat disinformation?

Author: Ruth Rodriguez-Martinez

Context:

19/04/21 - Jornada Doctoral 2020-2021: Conferencia inaugural

Starts: April 19, 2021 10:00:00 AM CEST

Ends: April 19, 2021 11:15:00 AM CEST

Creative Commons License: CC BY-SA 4.0





FACCTMedia

Media accountability instruments against disinformation:
The impact of fact-checking platforms as media accountability
tools and curricular proposal

<https://facctmedia.wordpress.com/>

Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (PID2019- 106367GB-I00 /AEI/10.13039/501100011033)



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE ECONOMÍA
Y COMPETITIVIDAD



UNIÓN EUROPEA
FONDO
EUROPEO DE
DESARROLLO
REGIONAL

"Una manera de hacer Europa"

Index

1. Disinformation
2. Fact-checking platforms
3. Media Accountability
4. FACCTMedia Project
 - 4.1. FACCTMedia Hypothesis
 - 4.2. FACCTMedia Main Goals
 - 4.3. FACCTMedia Members
 - 4.4. FACCTMedia Research Background
 - 4.5. FACCTMedia Methodology
 - 4.6. FACCTMedia Knowledge transfer
 - 4.7. FACCTMedia Networks
 - 4.8. FACCTMedia First Results



When we talk about misinformation we refer to false information is false, inaccurate, or misleading information that is communicated **regardless of an intention** to deceive

When we talk about disinformation we refer to information that is false or misleading information that is spread **intentionally** to deceive





The **rise of disinformation** can be attributed, among other factors, to

- **politicization of media**
- **citizens' distrust** towards institutions and media
- **psychological biases and social rewards** that drive individuals to share fake news



FactChecking platforms

Fact-checking operations serve as **critical interventions** in the fight **against** the expansion of false and/or **misleading news**.

These entities scrutinize the claims of public representatives and **alert citizens** to **online disinformation**. In the process, they attempt to “revitalize the ‘**truth seeking**’ tradition in journalism” (Graves, 2016).



FACCTMedia **Fact-checking platforms models**

The Newsroom model:

This model is very present in the **US and Western Europe**, where national newspapers and broadcasters have incubated the trend and provide its most visible examples. Fact-checkers based in traditional newsrooms have a tremendous natural advantage in terms of **reach and resources**, but they remain dependent on the **editorial interest and financial support** of their media parent.

Examples: The Washington Post's **Fact Checker** (2007); **Désintox** from **Libération** (2008) and **Reality Check** from The Guardian (2011).





FACCTMedia **Fact Checking Platforms models**

The NGO model:

Most permanent fact-checking outlets operate **outside of traditional newsrooms**. These organisations typically partner with news outlets, and most employ some **reporters**, but they lack the dedicated editorial resources and reliable audiences that fact-checkers based in media companies can count on. Independent fact-checking outlets **are free of the editorial and business constraints** of established media firms and many have proved quite durable.

Examples: **PolitiFact.com** created in 2007, from 2018 is operated by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies; **Chequeado** (Argentina, 2010); **Fact Checking Chile** (2013); **Maldita** (Spain, 2014); **Agência Lupa** (Brazil, 2015); **Newtral** (Spain, 2018).

The logo for Newtral, featuring the word 'Newtral' in a blue sans-serif font with a green checkmark integrated into the letter 'v'.

The logo for chequeado, featuring a stylized red and blue geometric shape to the left of the word 'chequeado' in a dark blue sans-serif font.

Factchecking platforms Map



Source: Duke Reporters Lab



FACCTMedia References

Amazeen, Michelle A. (2020). Journalistic interventions: The structural factors affecting the global emergence of fact-checking. *Journalism*, 21(1), 95–111

Graves, Lucas (2018). Boundaries Not Drawn: Mapping the institutional roots of the global fact-checking movement. *Journalism Studies*, 19(5), 613–631.

Palau-Sampio, Dolors (2018). Fact-checking and scrutiny of power: Supervision of public discourses in new media platforms from Latin America. *Communication and Society*, 31(3), 347–365.

Singer, Jane B. (2020). Border patrol: The rise and role of fact-checkers and their challenge to journalists' normative boundaries. *Journalism*.

MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Information Transparency

2. Media Self-regulation

3. Audience Interaction/Responsiveness





FACCTMedia

MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

Traditional media accountability instruments

Innovative media accountability instruments





FACCTMedia **Applying Information Transparency**

Transparency refers to **practices** that aim to **shed light** on the **background to news production**. **Some examples:**

- Information about **the ownership structures of media companies** and also make easily accessible the **in-house ethical guidelines**
- News organizations may allow users to **compare the news items published** to the **original sources of information** by attaching external hyperlinks to the news story.
- **“Actor transparency”** is to tag news items with the by-line and the e-mail address of the responsible author.
- Provide **detailed profiles of journalists’** specific expertise on the themes they are reporting.



Efficient media accountability practices and internal media self-regulation instruments can help media companies to be more responsible and ethical.

Journalistic codes of ethics are the oldest form of journalistic self-regulation instruments and have been adopted in countries all over the world.

Other self-regulation instruments: **Ombudsman, Newsroom blogs** to explain **editorial decisions** or comment on questions arising from the reporting.

Important aspect: The media industry should regularly monitor the **quality of its media self-regulation systems.**



FACCTMedia Audience Interaction/Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to practices whereby media organizations **encourage users to give feedback**

The Internet offers new opportunities and challenges for the responsiveness to audience criticism: **media-critical blogs, correction buttons and interactive complaint systems**

The area which online newsrooms have taken more seriously is **error management** since they are making error management more transparent.

Another form of production transparency and interaction can be introduced by allowing users to **witness editorial meetings** or submit their ideas for editorial decision-making.



FACCTMedia Project

Media accountability instruments against **disinformation**:

The impact of **fact-checking platforms** as media
accountability tools and curricular proposal

(2021-2024)



FACCTMedia_ Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: The traditional and innovative accountability instruments detected so far have a **moderate impact in fighting disinformation.**

Hypothesis 2: Fact-checking and verification platforms are new accountability instruments and they are **effective against disinformation.**

Hypothesis 3: The international and Spanish fact-checking platforms share **professional methodologies, objectives and routines.**



Hypothesis 4: The fact-checking platforms facilitate an **understanding of fake news by citizens** and offer fundamental **media literacy tools** to improve critical thinking in societies.

Hypothesis 5: The study of the impact of disinformation and fact-checking platforms is **not** implemented enough in the Spanish Communication Faculties.



FACCTMedia_ **Main Goals**

I. Examine how **accountability instruments** evolve and adapt to deal with **disinformation**

II. Identify which **accountability mechanisms** have recently been created with the purpose of **fighting disinformation**





FACCTMedia_ **Main Goals**

III. Analyse the innovative **fact-checking methodologies**, editorial criteria and publication strategies being carried out by the media, academia and independent fact-checking platforms at the **Spanish and international level**.

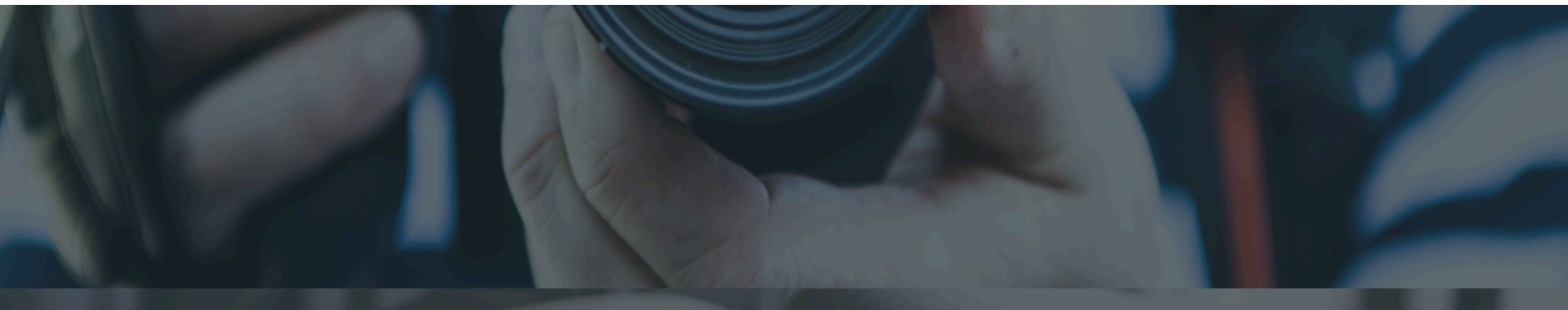
IV. Formulate a **methodological and curricular proposal** that allows the introduction of fact-checking courses in journalism degrees.





FACCTMedia **Key Aspects**

- 1. Interdisciplinary team**
- 2. Media Accountability Research Background**
- 3. International networks:** academics and professionals
- 4. Business and Industry involvement:** press councils, fact-checking platforms, media outlets.





FACCTMedia **Research Team**

Who are we?

17 Journalism scholars specialized in media accountability, media ethics, journalism history and media in democratic transitions from 8 Universities



**MONDRAGON
UNIBERTSITATEA**



**UNIVERSIDAD
NEBRIJA**





FACCTMedia **Research Team**

FACTTMedia Team

Marian Chaparro Domínguez. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Txema Egaña Osa. Mondragon Unibertsitatea

Laura Fanals Gubau. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Susane Fengler. TU Dortmund University

Susana Herrera Damas. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Montse Morata Santos. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Victoria Moreno Gil. Universidad Nebrija

Maria Luengo Cruz. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Gemma Palà Navarro. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Marta Pérez Pereiro. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

Xavier Ramon Vegas. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

José Luis Requejo Alemán. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

José Luis Rojas Torrijos. Universidad de Sevilla

Francesc Salgado de Dios. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

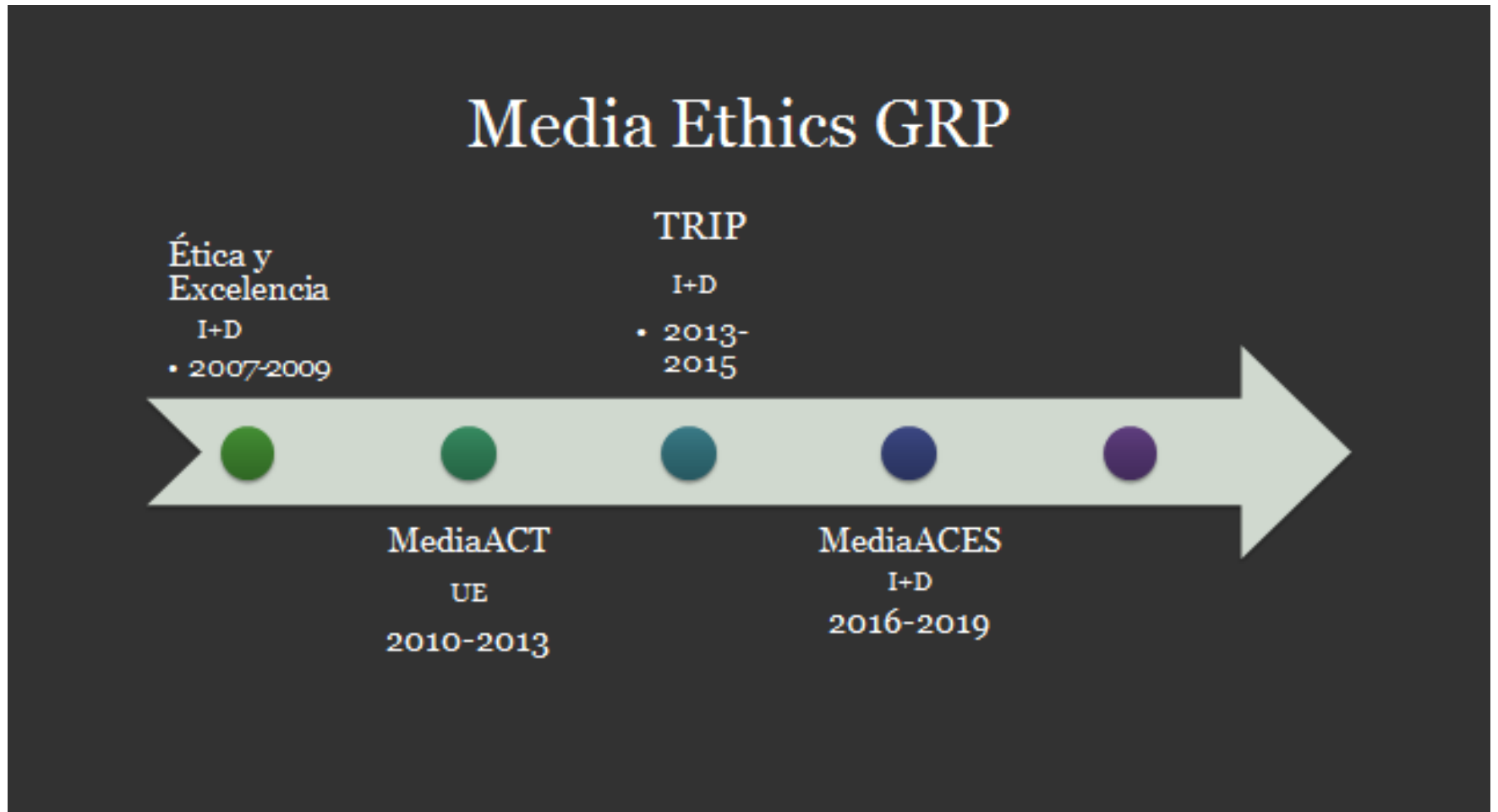
Pilar Suárez López. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Christopher Tulloch. Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Aitor Zuberogoitia Espilla. Mondragon Unibertsitatea



Previous Media Accountability Research projects





FACCTMedia **Methodological approach**

- 1. Expert panels and in depth interviews** with academics and professionals. State of the art and identify particularities in different geographical contexts.
- 2. Ethnographic analysis:** US, Latin America and European fact-checking platforms. Methodological proposal
- 3. Netnography:** participant observation (users). Media Literacy actions
- 4. Focus groups** with Journalism degree students. Curricular proposal

Disinformation affects society today and in the future

Identify **necessities** and provide results with **social return and impact**:

- Creating **media literacy tools** to **teach citizens** how to identify and fight disinformation
- **Curricular proposal** to teach **journalism students** how they can fight disinformation





FACCTMedia **Knowledge Transfer**

Curricular proposal (Education Community)

Articles and conferences (Research Community)

Media Literacy seminars and workshops (Business and Industry
- Civil society)

Social media actions (Business and Industry - Civil society)





FACCTMedia International Networks

EUFactCheck (European Journalism Training Association) intends to build a curriculum unit on fact-checking within a European network of Journalism schools.

MediaACT – EHOMA Worldwide network of academics specialized in Media Accountability

IAMCR “Ethics of Society and Ethics of Communication” working group

Euromedia Research Group is a network of European researchers to describe and analyse developments in media structure and policy in the European region

Wellbeing Network is a network of European and Latin American researchers to describe the media accountability context in the Latin America and European region



FACCTMedia **Business and Industry networks**



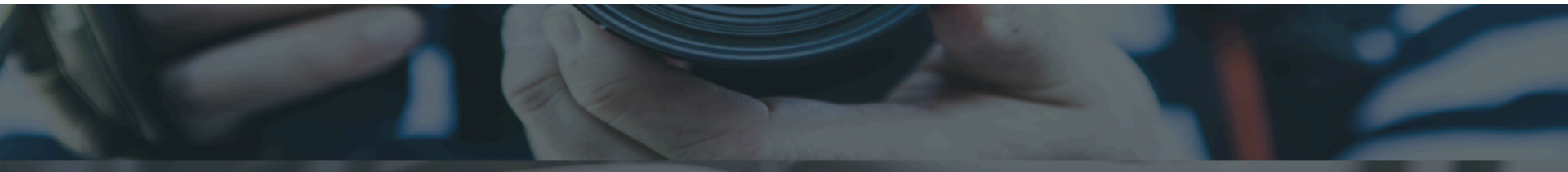


FACCTMedia **First Results**

Moreno-Gil, V., Ramon, X., & Rodríguez-Martínez, R. (2021). **Fact-Checking Interventions as Counteroffensives to Disinformation Growth: Standards, Values, and Practices in Latin America and Spain.** *Media and Communication*, 9(1), 251-263.

Ramon, X., Mauri-Ríos, M., & Rodríguez-Martínez, R. (2020). **Redes sociales y plataformas de fact-checking contra la desinformación sobre la COVID-19.** *Hipertext.net. Revista Académica sobre Documentación Digital y Comunicación Interactiva*, 21, 79-92.

Mauri-Ríos, M., Ramon, X., & Rodríguez-Martínez, R. (2020). **Media coverage of the Covid-19 crisis: recommendations and proposals for self-regulation.** *Profesional De La Información*, 29(6).





FACCTMedia **First Results**

- **VI Congreso Internacional de Ética de la comunicación**
Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- **International Conference IAMCR.**
Ethics of Society and Ethics of Communication Working Group



Madrid, 18, 19 y 20 de mayo de 2021

Organizadores
Grupo de investigación
RESIIP

Colaboradores



IAMCR
NAIROBI 2021



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE ECONOMÍA
Y COMPETITIVIDAD



UNIÓN EUROPEA
FONDO
EUROPEO DE
DESARROLLO
REGIONAL

"Una manera de hacer Europa"

Thanks for your attention

marcel.mauri@upf.edu

xavier.ramon@upf.edu

ruth.rodriguez@upf.edu

<https://facctmedia.wordpress.com/>