Appendix 5 - Bad News Game and Factitious

Bad News Game (DROG, 2021)

https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro

This game was used so that the learners could further explore the motivations behind why people create and spread misinformation and learn more about how that process works online. It is currently being used as part of digital literacy training in schools, and it was trialled with the learners as part of the misinformation workshop to evaluate it as an 'off the peg' option for use with groups in adult learning.

The learners found the game very accessible, but they found the premise made them feel "uncomfortable". This was somewhat surprising given it was a 'game', however it highlighted the effectiveness of role play in this area. There are seven badges to achieve in total within the game, and having completed the first badge, the group as a whole voted not to continue onto the next section. They said that, while it did give them a better understanding, they did not enjoy the experience knowing the implications of how it is affecting the world right now. In addition, one learner commented that she felt the game was not how things worked in the real world.
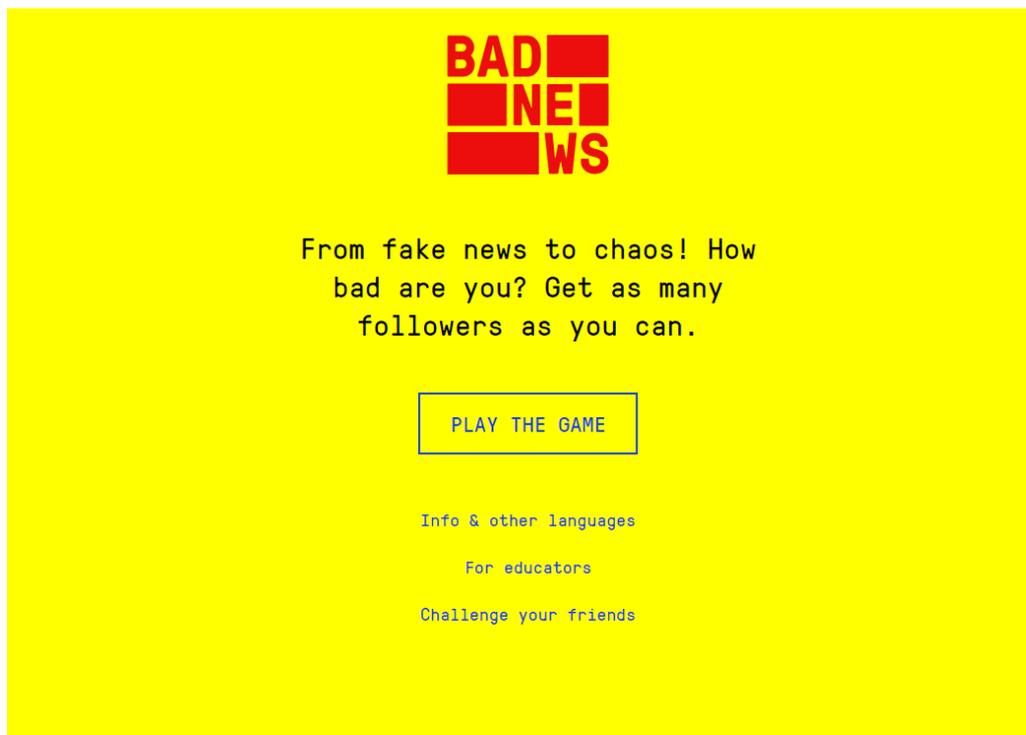
The content of both the Dutch and the English-language version of Bad News was written by DROG a Dutch organisation working against the spread of disinformation, in collaboration with researchers at Cambridge University.

The Bad News Game confers resistance against disinformation by putting players in the position of the people who create it, and as such gain insight into the various

tactics and methods used by 'real' fake news-mongers to spread their message. This, in turn, builds up resistance. The game works in a simple and straightforward way: players are shown a short text or image (such as a meme or article headline) and can react to them in a variety of ways. There are two ways in which their score is measured: 'followers' and 'credibility'. Choosing an option that is in line with what a 'real' producer of disinformation would choose gets them more followers and credibility. If, however, they lie too blatantly to their followers, choose an option that is overtly ridiculous or act too much in line with journalistic best practices, the game either takes followers away or lowers their credibility. The aim of the game is to gather as many followers as possible without losing too much credibility.

Factitious

http://factitious.augamestudio.com/#/

This Factitious Project is a production of the AU Game Lab and the JoLT program. It is an online game that teaches digital literacy by presenting a series of articles and the player must guess if they believe the story is real or fake. The developers sourced all of the news stories from the internet, but they have been edited for game, education and commentary purposes.

Players can use several tools to help them assess each article. Checking the headline, the language of the article, looking out for bad spelling, and checking the source to see if they are a trustworthy news site.

The learners trialled this game in advance of the first workshop and it was very popular with the group. This was successful in that it gave learners prompts to check whether a site was real or fake. This proved a useful follow up to a 'Fake news checklist' provided, re-enforcing learning:

CHECK LIST FOR FAKE NEWS

1. Do a Visual Assessment:
Does the news article and website seem high quality?
Does the website look professional?
Are there lots of annoying ads?

2. Identify the News Outlet:
Is it well-known, respected and trustworthy?
The BBC, The Times, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Independent are examples of news outlets here in the UK. If you haven't heard of the news outlet, look online for more information.

3. Check the Web Domain:
Does the URL look legitimate?
Watch out for URLs that look odd or end with, ".com.co" or ".io"

4. Check the "About Us" Section:
Detailed background information and contacts?
Trustworthy news outlets have detailed background information, policy statements and email contacts in this section.

5. Identify the Author:
Is the author well-known and respected?
Fake news articles often don't include author names, but if they do you can search online to find out more about who wrote it.

6. Does it Have an Agenda?
Fake news articles often have only one viewpoint, make outrageous claims, and use an angry tone.

7. Assess Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation
Look out for misspelled words, words in ALL CAPS, poor grammar and lots of '!!!!!!!!!'

8. Does the Article include Reliable Sources?
Fake news articles often cite anonymous sources, unreliable sources, or no sources at all.

9. Check Other News Sites
Search the internet for more stories on the same topic.

We felt that it was very helpful to use a range of different methods to help learners interact with the topic area in ways that incorporated a range of learning styles and encouraged critical thinking.