

# FACCTMedia Research Project: How academics can defeat disinformation?

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# FACCTMedia

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

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

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**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 graphic of a red and black shape to the left of the word 'chequeado' in a dark blue sans-serif font.

# Factchecking platforms Map



Source: Duke Reporters Lab



## FACCTMedia References

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**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.

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## **MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY**

**1. Information Transparency**

**2. Media Self-regulation**

**3. Audience Interaction/Responsiveness**





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## **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**.

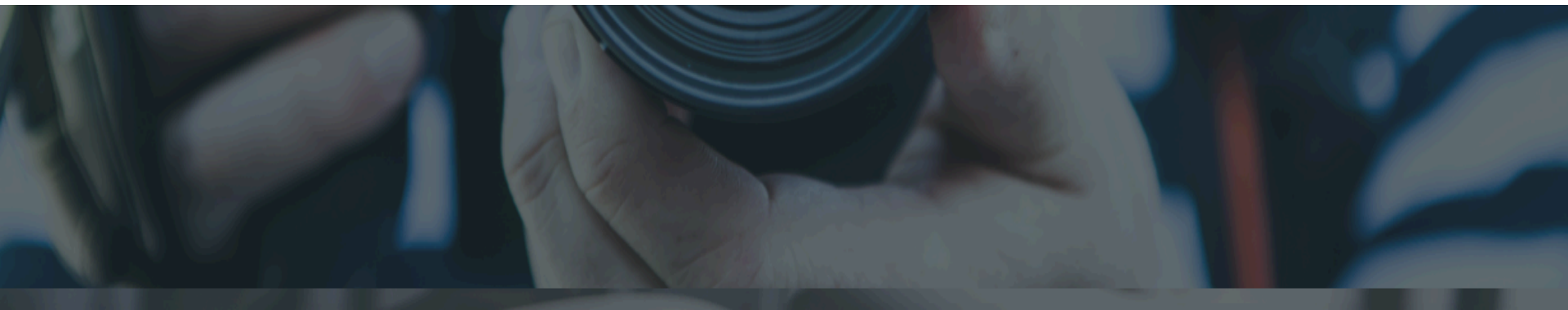
**IV.** Formulate a **methodological and curricular proposal** that allows the introduction of fact-checking courses in journalism degrees.





## 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**



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# FACCTMedia **Research Team**

## **FACTTMedia Team**

**Marian Chaparro Domínguez.** Universidad Complutense de Madrid

**Txema Egaña Osa.** Mondragon Unibertsitatea

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**Susane Fengler.** TU Dortmund University

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**José Luis Rojas Torrijos.** Universidad de Sevilla

**Francesc Salgado de Dios.** Universitat Pompeu Fabra

**Pilar Suárez López.** Universitat Pompeu Fabra

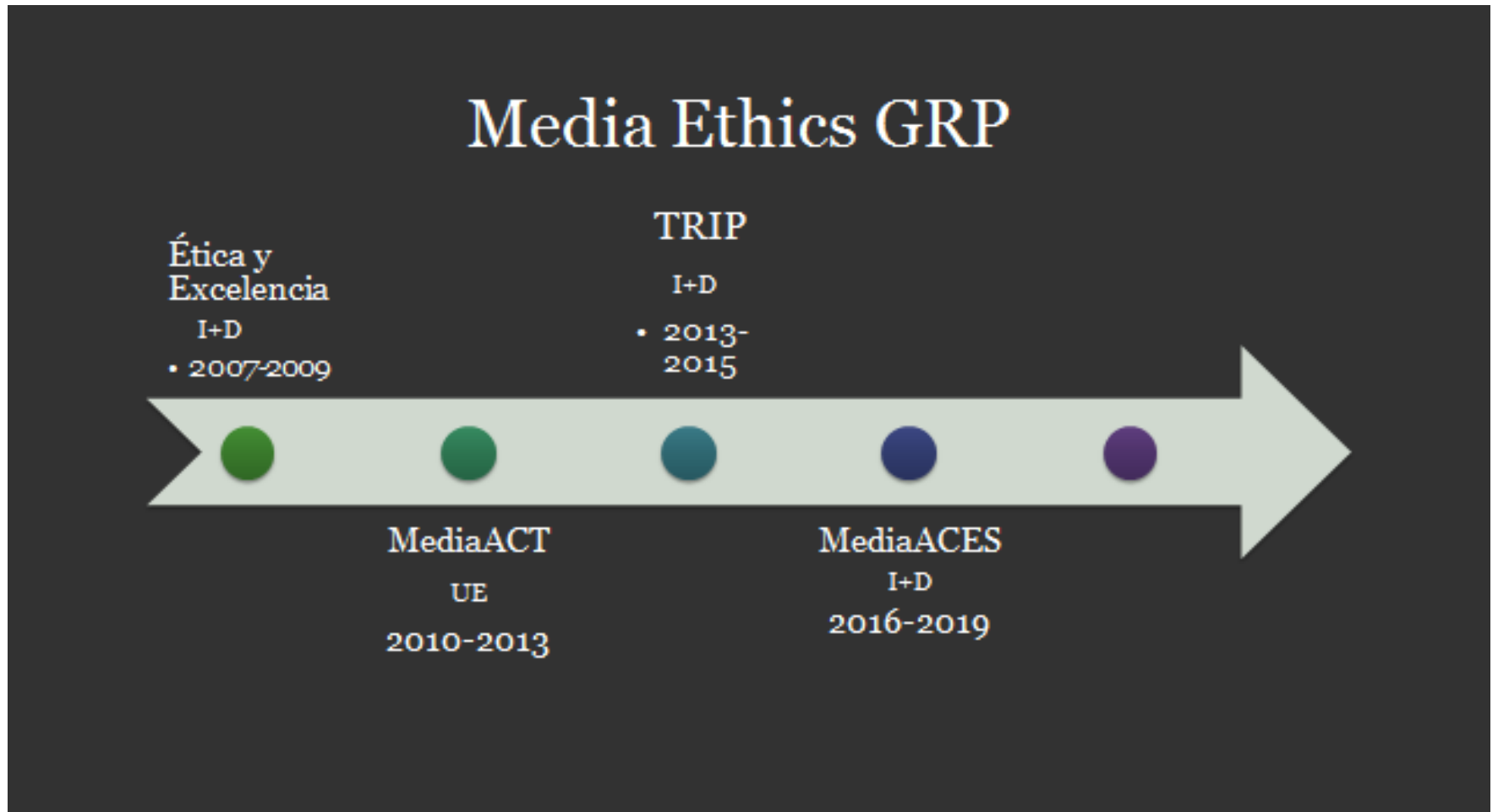
**Christopher Tulloch.** Universitat Pompeu Fabra

**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**



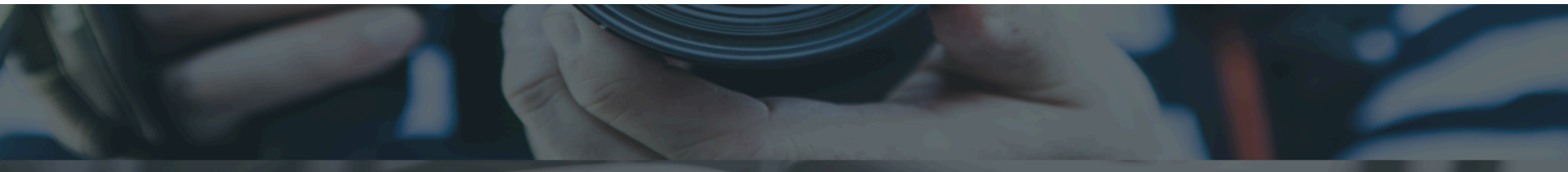


## FACCTMedia **First Results**

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## 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**  
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Thanks for your attention

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