

Vital that users verify accuracy before hitting 'Share' button, UN meeting on combatting #fakenews told

7 September 2017 – Amid the increasing proliferation of fake news and the resulting challenges in discerning accurate information from false ones, a United Nations forum today discussed ways to tackle the complex issue as well as equipping the consumers of information with the necessary skills and tools to assess the credibility of any media message and news source.

“Today’s world is the most connected [one] through [the use of] social media and technology; we are oversaturated with news,” said Maher Nasser, the Director of the Outreach Division at the UN Department of Public Information, at the event *Unravelling #FakeNews from opinion-making information*, [organized](#) by the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC).

In his remarks, Mr. Nasser spoke of the complexities in distinguishing accurate news from non-accurate ones, especially in an environment when algorithms, employed by social media platforms to present content to users, often depend on the users’ interactions with their circles and thereby create bubbles of existence.

Furthermore, the ease of sharing of information in today’s interlinked world adds a new dimension to these complex challenges, he added, underscoring the importance of users verifying the information – by looking through trusted sources and ascertaining their accuracy – before passing it on to their networks of friends and followers.

The event also included discussion on news literacy that saw the participation of Alan Miller, the Founder and CEO of News Literacy Project; Mitra Kalita, the Vice President of Programming at CNN Digital; Áine Kerr, Manager of Journalism Partnerships at Facebook; Dina Temple-Raston, Counterterrorism Correspondent at National Public Radio; and Michelle Ciulla Lipkin, Executive Director at the National Association for Media Literacy Education.

The discussion was moderated by Jordi Torrent, Project Manager of the Media Literacy Initiative at UNAOC.

Also on the subject of fake news, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) yesterday presented options to the Members of the European Parliament to counter the growing problem and its impact.

Highlighting the seriousness of disinformation and the deliberate discrediting of professional media, Guy Berger, the Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO, urged better protection of journalists and called for [investigation and prosecution in instances when purveyors of fake news are involved in fraud](#), such as misusing the names of

reputable news brands.

He also called on the media to boost its credibility, through highlighting reliable brands and public service broadcasting, and to avoid advertising that has links to fake stories as well as to be more transparent about ownership and political leanings.

“In addition, journalists should do more to follow, debunk and tell the stories about the fake news phenomenon,” said Mr. Berger.