EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS: TACKLING MISINFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION AND COLLABORATION

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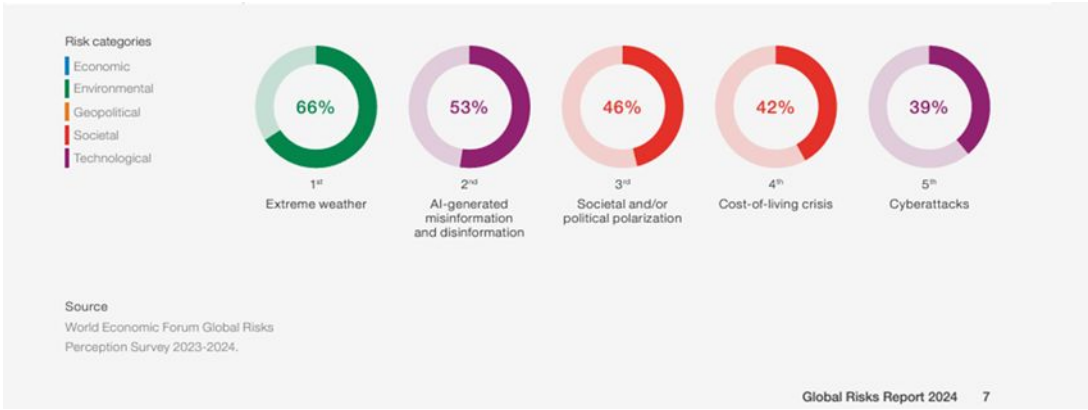
- The World Economic Forum ranked the spread of misinformation as one of the top risks facing the world today.



- ‘Fake news pandemic’ (Rajan, 2020) impacts beliefs and behaviour around key topics like healthcare and the environment
- Undermine science, democracy and society (Lewandowsky et al., 2017)

Quiz

- How much do you know about fake news?

If you were to rank yourself on your personal ability to recognise fake news, would you say you were in the:

- Top 75% of people
- Top 50% of people
- Top 25% of people
- Top 1% of people

What percentage of people can systematically accurately tell true from fake news?

- 4%
- 10%
- 50%
- 75%

Which of the following statements is true?

- True news spreads quicker than fake news
- Fake news and true news spread at around the same speed
- Fake news spreads two times faster than the truth
- Fake news spreads six times faster than the truth

Roughly how often do people believe fake news?

- 10% of the time
- 25% of the time
- 75% of the time
- 90% of the time

How many seconds of audio recording of your voice would be needed to create an audio clip of you?

- 3
- 10
- 30
- 60

On TikTok, how long does it take people to see harmful content (even when they are not looking for it)?

- Less than 30 minutes
- A day
- A week
- They didn't see any

Impact of Misinformation

Misinformation can be entertaining!

Misinformation can be dangerous

- When it affects our behaviour, opinions and choices.
- It can:
  - Fuel political polarization (Lee, 2016)
  - Threaten democracy (Piazza, 2022)
  - Impact our voting behaviours (Gunther et al., 2018)
  - Impact our health behaviours (Lewandowsky, 2017)

Misinformation spreads fast

According to Social Media Today (2024) every minute:

16,000 videos on Tiktok

3.3 million Snaps are sent on Snapchat

More than 3 million videos are watched on Youtube

Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles

Fact checkers (both manual and AI) can help stop the spread but education is key

Systematic and Heuristic Processing

Systematic route: deeply considered

Heuristic route: cognitive short cuts

Encourage more critical evaluation of online information

Project Real

- Most interventions have been designed for adults
- The few which exist for young people have been designed by adults
- Existing interventions often focus on a specific topic
- Co-create interventions focussed on skills. Work with and for young people

Co-creation

- Academics and partners working together to design solutions
- Brings together the real-world and academic experience and therefore are more engaging and impactful (Skipper & Pepler, 2020)

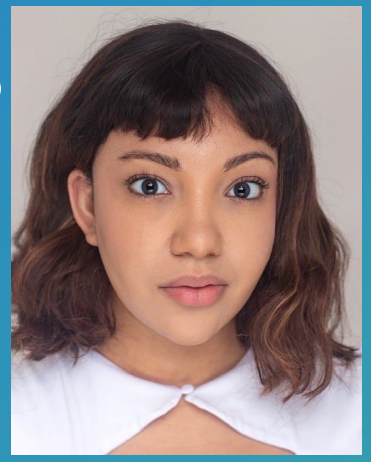
- In all of our projects, we work with young people to explore the things which they are concerned about and how they want to learn new skills. They help develop the questions and materials.

The Real Deal:

Helping young people uncover the truth in a world of misinformation

- *N*= 3 schools in Glasgow
- *N*= 18 young people (aged 13)
- *N*= 3 teachers
- *N*= 5 influencers
- *N*= 4 academics

- **6 weeks to create materials**
- **SHARE checklist**



- 6 hour-long sessions

- Young people aged 11-13

- Delivered by teachers
- Lesson plans with embedded videos and activities

- Fake news
- Fake photos
- Fake people
- Fake stories
- Fake videos
- Keeping it Real

- Is this **real** or **fake** news?
- How do you know?
- What did you look for to know if it was real or fake? (SHARE guidelines)

Canadian Lawmaker Caught Naked During Video Conference

William Amos, who has represented the Quebec district of Pontiac since 2015, appeared on the screens of his fellow lawmakers completely naked Wednesday.

AP

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — A Canadian Parliament member was caught stark naked in a

WATCH THEIR STORIES NOW
MAKERS

TRENDING

GOP White House Hopefuls Make Moves As Trump Mulls Run

6 Shot At Child's Birthday

Fake Photos

Is this photo real?

No

Impact

- Project Real increased participants' confidence in recognizing fake news
- It increased the number of checks they intended to make before sharing news.

- More work on this.

Stay Real:

Empowering young people to navigate the online world responsibly.

- Police Scotland Youth Volunteering Group
- *N*= 14 young people (aged 13-16)
- *N*= 5 police officers
- *N*= 2 academics

- **4 weeks to create materials**

- Focus on safety online

The Real Me

Explores digital footprints and information about you which is available online

How can you keep your information safe?

Activities: Look at social media profiles to see how much information is available and how it could be used. Password guessing game.

Madlad2329

3 posts **42** followers **99** following

Follow

I'm NOT telling you!

The Real Information

Explores how you can spot true and false information online

How can you spot misinformation?

Activities: Create misinformation and learn about how different techniques can impact the spread.

The Real Connection

Explores how you know who you are speaking to online

How can you check if people are who they say they are?

Activities: Choose your own adventure!

Someone new comments on your post, complimenting your fashion style. You start chatting to them in a friendly way. After a few weeks, suggest meeting up in person at a shopping centre. What do you do?

Say yes and agree to meet them alone.

You don't tell anyone and arrange to meet them in a shopping centre.

When you arrive, you notice they look older than they said they were.

You feel like something isn't right, but you're already here.

Next step: what do you do now?

Stay and go ahead with the meeting.

You convince yourself you're overreacting. They seem nice enough, so you start chatting.

After a while, they suggest going somewhere quieter, away from the crowd.

😬 **Now you feel uncomfortable. You don't want to leave the public shopping centre with them. You make up an excuse and leave.**

🤔 **Lesson:** Meeting alone was a risky decision. If something feels off, it probably is. Never be afraid to leave a situation that makes you uncomfortable.

Agree to meet but tell a trusted adult and bring someone with you.

You ask a trusted adult like a parent or older sibling if it's okay to meet up.

They suggest a safer approach: bringing someone with you and meeting in a public café instead of a quiet part of the shopping centre.

Your older sibling comes with you, and when you meet the person, they seem cool and just like their profile. The meetup goes great! Now they ask to hang out again – this time, just the two of you.

Next step: what do you do now?

Say no nicely and suggest meeting in a group again.

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You say you'd rather keep meeting in a group.

If they respect that, great! But if they push you to meet alone, you say no.

🤔 **Lesson:** If someone is pushing you to do something you aren't comfortable with, that's a 🚨 **red flag.** Real friends respect your boundaries.

Next step: what do you do now?

Video for parents

The young people wanted to create a video for their parents entitled: "*What I wish my parents knew about my online life*"

They asked their friends this question and then we worked with them to create responses

We recorded their voices and animated a video

Behind the Screen:

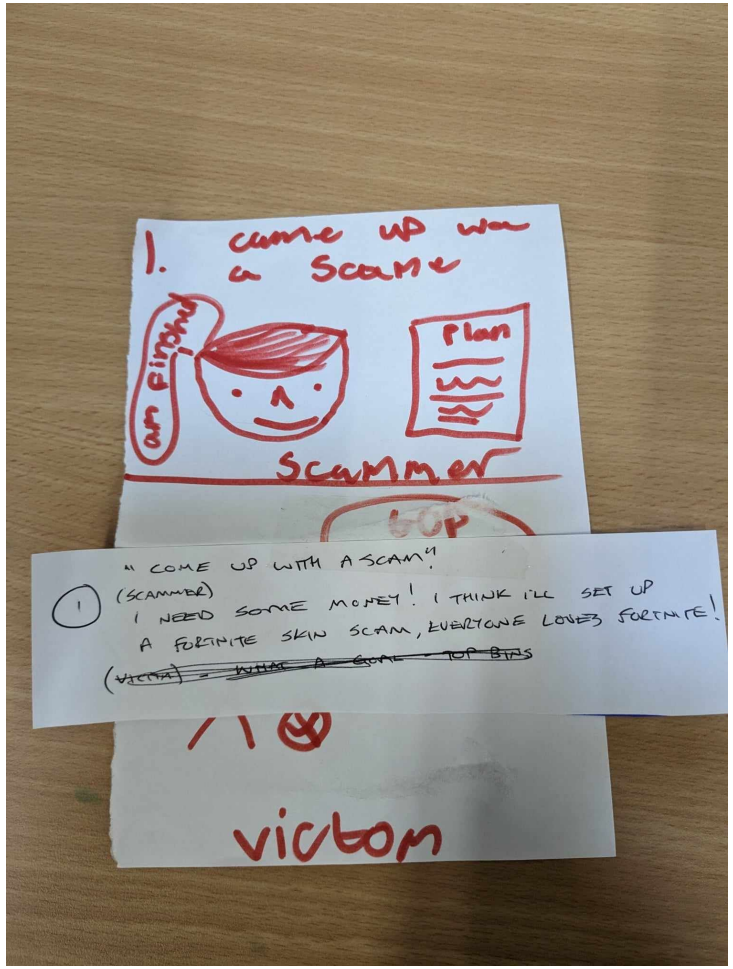
Exploring cyber security, scam prevention and digital wellbeing

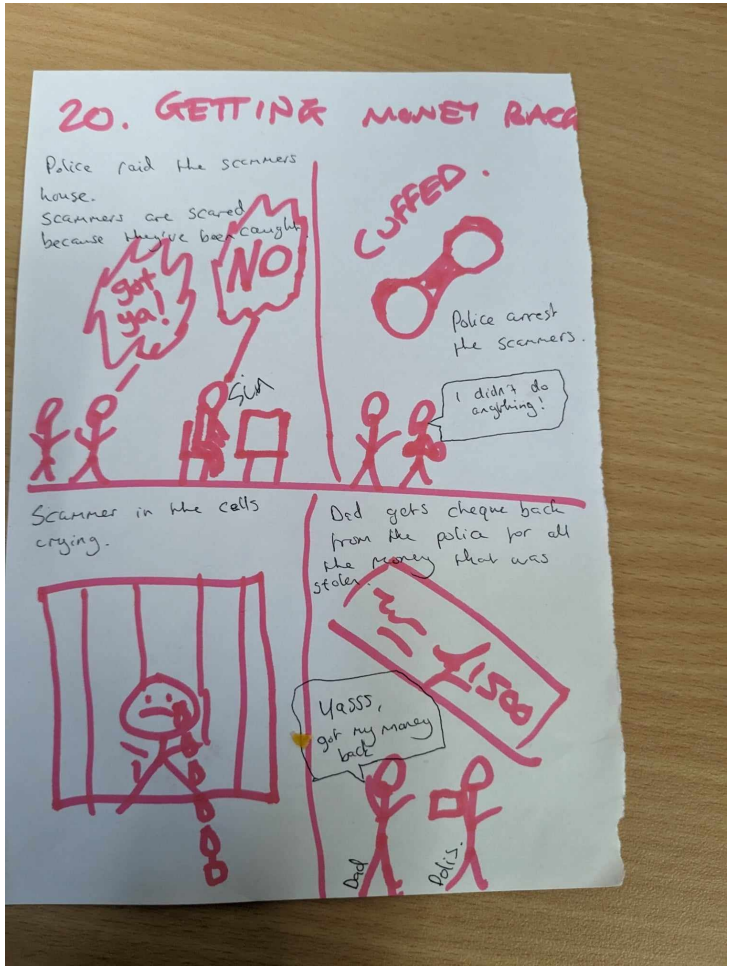
- Worked with pupils for 3 full days:
  - School group N=6
  - Out of school group N=6
  - N=2 teachers
  - N=5 youth workers
  - N=2 Education Scotland
  - N=2 academics

- What worries you/people your age the most online?

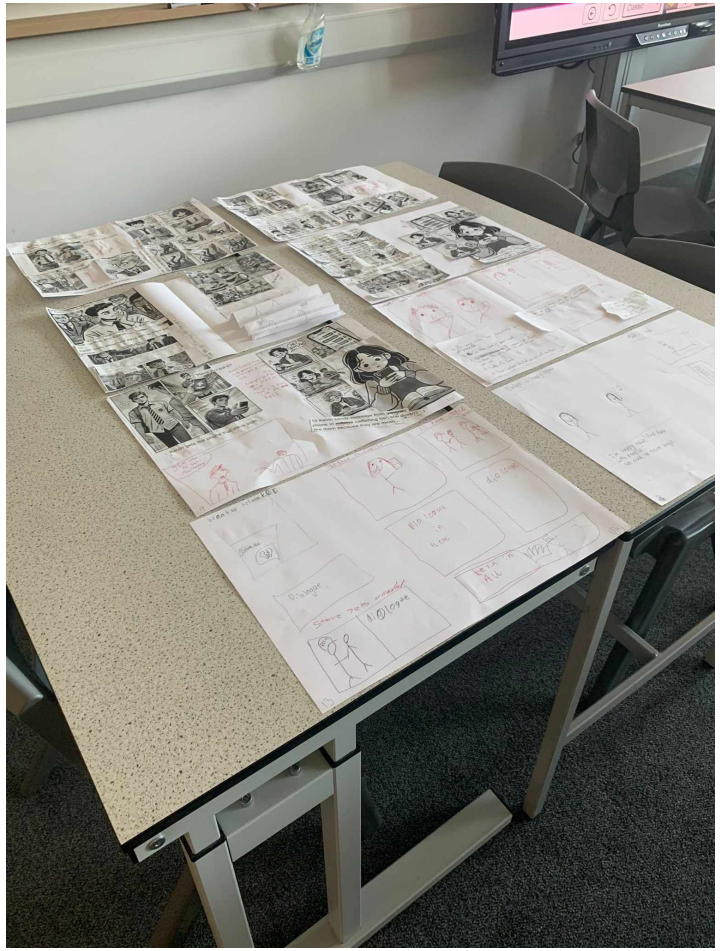
- Format was a comic

Co-creating a comic





9 Kevin has evil plan:
"If i can steal bob's phone then i can break up Bob and Evalyn..."
10.
Kevin finds steve and pays him to steal the phone...
JAMES..
COMPLETELY MISSES...
"I'm so bad"
Bob
Steve
I'm not an - No Phones in this area
K-Hey, can you do me a favour? I'll
S-Sure thing
K-Can you steal Bob's Phone?
S-Yes
STEVE KNEW EXACTLY KEVIN TROUBLE.



Meanwhile...
Bob is trying to find a quick way to finish all his homework.
Maybe I can just find an app to write this essay for me...
SIGH
AI Essay writer :
Please accept ALL cookies to use this site.
WARNING:
Virus Detected!
Ring our Tech Support
Now: 0800-SCAM
Ach, I'd better ring them right away...
Thank you for contacting Tech Support. How can I assist you today?
I've had an alert about a virus on my computer!
Page 4 / 22

Oh! That password Dad uses is really good!
Password: ******|
TAP TAP TAP
"Thank you for your submission!"
Great! Can't wait for my new skins!
PING!
!!!
Account found
Gotcha! Let's see what we can do with these...
Hmm... Nothing for that email... how about similar 'Duval' accounts?

Two Comics

- Social elements of online safety: cyberbullying, catfishing, disposing of technology, digital wellbeing
- Cyber Security/scams: spotting scams, responding to scams, sending money, digital footprint.

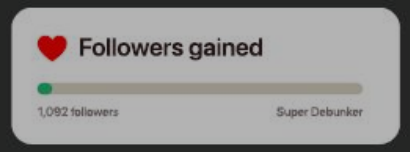
- Lesson plans co-created with teachers
- Cross-age teaching to enhance learning

Fake news

Player 2

Player 3

Player 1



Card deck

- What materials/techniques have you used to teach media literacy and critical thinking?
- How effective do you think they were? Why?
- What could we do to make interventions more effective?

- If you have previously tried co-creation, what were your experiences? If you have not used co-creation, what support might you need to engage in this?

- For more information or to get involved, please contact me
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- Materials can be found on our website www.projectreal.co.uk