

## Articles

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# Stop, Think, Check: Ireland's Be Media Smart Campaign

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# BE MEDIA SMART



**IFLA Fake News Lecture Series  
Philip Russell  
Technological University of Dublin  
October 30<sup>th</sup> 2020**

**A national media literacy campaign  
for Ireland**





# WHY?



**Increase in number of Irish media consumers concerned about fake news**

**Enhancing digital literacy** is critical in dealing with the challenges of the evolving media landscape

Reuters Digital News Report 2019 (Ireland)



# The 'Be Media Smart' campaign launched

A NEW public awareness campaign launched to coincide with European Media Literacy Week has been unveiled which will encourage people of all ages to 'Stop, Think, and Check' that information they see, read or hear on the media is reliable.

The 'Be Media Smart' campaign, devised by **Media Literacy Ireland** (MLI), is designed to help people identify sources of information that may be unreliable, as well as deliberately false or misleading.

It will enhance people's understanding of, and engagement with, media, while also empowering them with the skills to evaluate content across all platforms. Evidence supports the necessity for a media liter-

support for the campaign from your local paper, *The Southern Star*.

The formation of the network facilitated by the **Broadcasting Authority of Ireland**. A total of 68% Europeans say they come across false news at least once a week.

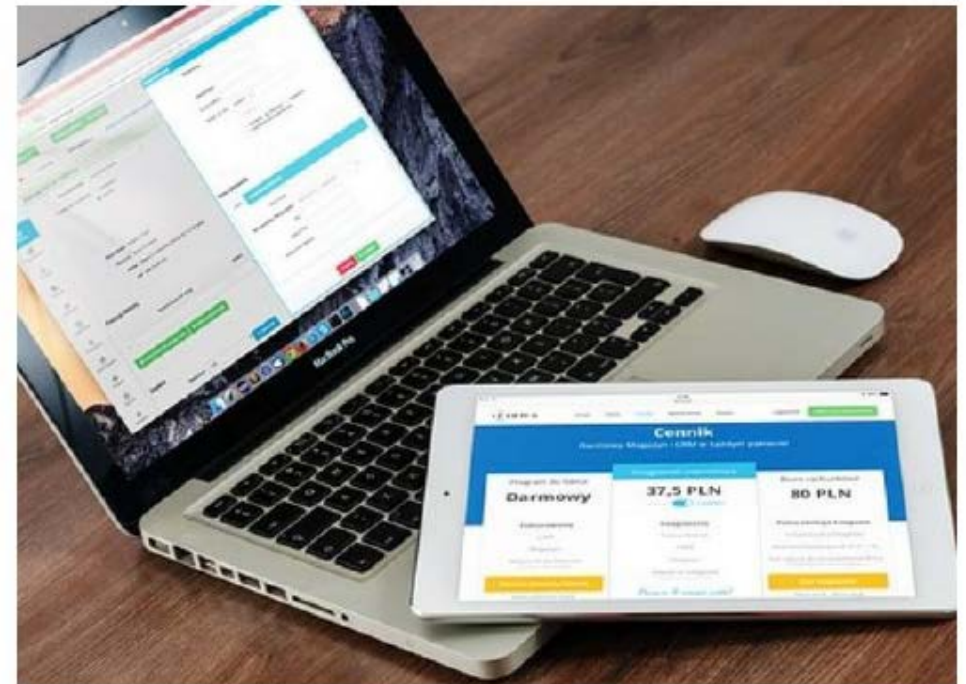
Speaking about the campaign Prof Brian O'Neill, TU Dublin's chair of the MLI Steering Group said: 'Media literacy – our capacity to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with the media – has never been as important as it is today. In a time when we are faced with a huge volume of information from a variety of sources, this campaign is a timely reminder of how important it is that people are aware of where

## 'Be Media Smart' campaign launched to coincide with European Media Literacy Week



by **Brian Keyes** 19 Mar 2019

0 comments



ing Irish online news consumers as part of a references.

tates runaway lunacies. On this page yesterday Fergus Flinlay pointed out that in the aftermath of Christchurch a prom-

cognise information that might not be



# WHAT?



Be Media Smart is an **Irish public awareness campaign** calling on people of all ages to **Be Media Smart** and **Stop, Think, and Check** that information they see, read or hear across any media platform is accurate and reliable.





# WHO?



It's an initiative from **Media Literacy Ireland (MLI)**, a network of volunteer members facilitated by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, working together to empower people to make informed media choices about the media content and services that they consume, create, and disseminate across all platforms.



# WHAT IF?



Modern consumers care about where their food comes from. What if we could spark the same thought or consideration regarding where their information comes from?

The campaign was built on this simple idea.



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AUTHORITY  
OF IRELAND



facebook

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HOW?



TG4



The LIBRARY ASSOCIATION of IRELAND  
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## TV / RADIO AD

RTE



Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) – responsible for the creative brief & overseeing production

Campaign launched on St Patrick's day 2019

TV ad also reversioned in the Irish language

Radio ads created & distributed widely



## PRINT AD

It's important to you to know where your food comes from.  
Isn't it just as important to know where your information comes from?

**STOP / THINK / CHECK\_**



# BE MEDIA SMART

[www.bemediasmart.ie](http://www.bemediasmart.ie)

Brought to you by **Media Literacy Ireland**. Supported by



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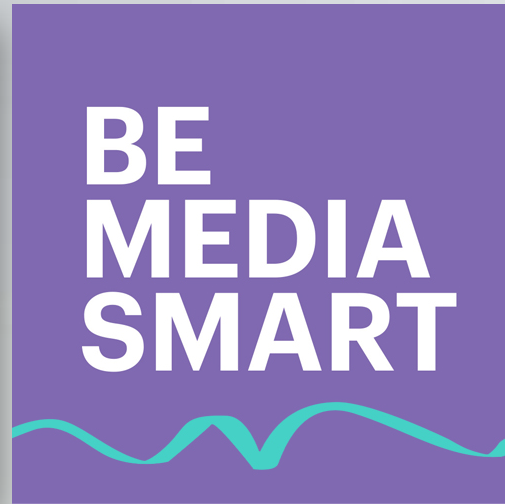


**NewsBrands**  
Ireland

The Herald  
The Irish Daily Mail  
The Irish Examiner  
The Irish Sun  
The Irish Times  
The Sunday Business Post  
The Sunday Independent  
The Sunday Times  
The Sunday World  
The Times (Ireland edition)



## DIGITAL ADS



EDITORIAL







Campaign urges public to be 'media smart'

By Dan Buckley

# Public urged to be smarter in recognising fake news

Shauna Bowers

The public should check the source of the media content they consume in the same way they would check a car's history before buying it, a campaign to raise awareness of fake news says

Recognising reliable media

## Fake news is a toxic threat

# It's time to redefine media literacy skills and include digital

**A**s a gangly schoolgoing teenager, sometime back in the pre-digital 20th century, a number of different daily newspapers would appear on a regular basis in the games room of the school I attended in Monaghan. As a boarder, the daily newspapers provided a much-valued link to the outside world beyond the Colditz-like confines of a 1970s establishment that was run by priests.

Reading newspapers, we were told, was an important activity that would broaden our minds and opinions, help us stay informed about what was going on in the world and, in general, develop our overall media literacy skills.

What we didn't know at the time was that these newspapers didn't appear miraculously by osmosis, but were part of a much wider initiative called Newspapers in the Classroom which was overseen by the Irish newspaper industry.

A marketing-led initiative that was aimed at hooking the reader of tomorrow, it was also rolled

**JOHN  
McGEE**



Media literacy skills in those days were a lot simpler and trust in the media was, more or less, implicit. If stories were inaccurate or fake, the authors, publishers or broadcasters were quickly rumbled and, if necessary, acknowledgements and apologies were duly published or broadcast.

While Newspapers in the Classroom is no longer, NewsBrands Ireland has replaced it with Press Pass, a student journalism competition rolled into a media literacy initiative that aims to equip students — mainly in transition year —

the veracity of content that people read and hear online or offline and help them to identify sources of information that may be unreliable, deliberately false or misleading.

Set against a backdrop of so-called fake news, the deliberate manipulation of social media algorithms and alleged interference from state-sponsored organisations to influence elections, the campaign is a worthy initiative and comes at an important juncture for society and democracy.

The Irish end of the campaign is overseen by Media Literacy Ireland (MLI), a volunteer network made up of key stakeholders in the media industry ranging from NewsBrands Ireland, RTE, the Association of Advertisers in Ireland (AAI) right through to companies like Google and Facebook.

To back up its case, MLI published details of a Eurobarometer survey which noted that 83pc of Europeans think fake news is a threat to

fake advertising, but also the more sinister role they have played in fostering genuine addictive behaviours, whether by design or default. And there's no shortage of science, expert medical opinion and, speaking from experience, parental anecdotes to back this up.

When the CEO of Salesforce, Marc Benioff, stood up at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2018 and likened social media addiction to smoking, he wasn't joking. But so far social media platforms have refused to take responsibility for that power they have on their users and regulators seem incapable of dealing with the consequences of all of this.

I could of course add to this, their contribution the overall dumbing down of society to one where a video of a cute cat dancing in a bath, a celebrity showing off her new Versace handbag or a woman popping somebody's pimple is often deemed to be more important or interesting than, well, the real world around us.

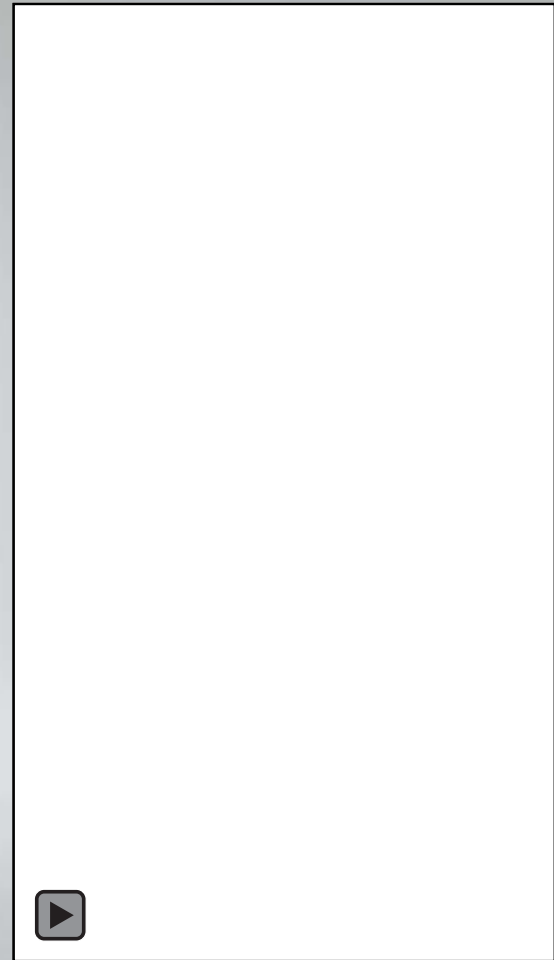
# WEB AND MOBILE

The screenshot displays the BemediaSmart website interface. At the top, there are navigation menus with links for [Help](#), [Resources](#), [Supporting Members](#), [Media Literacy in Europe](#), and [Media Literacy Ireland](#). The main content area is titled "Ways to BE MEDIA SMART" and features three colored boxes:

- STOP\_** (Red box): "Use these quick tips to help you judge whether information is accurate and reliable." Includes a [Help](#) button.
- THINK\_** (Teal box): "BE MEDIA SMART using these resources from around the web." Includes a [Resources](#) button.
- CHECK\_** (Pink box): "It's always good to check where your information comes from. Find out who is supporting this campaign." Includes a [Supporting Members](#) button.

Below this is a "Join the conversation" section with three tweet cards:

- Tweets by @MediaIreland**: A tweet from Brian O'Neill (@BONeillTU Dublin) about the Reuters Digital News Report.
- Tweets by @EU\_MediaLit**: A tweet from media.eu (@MediaEu) about digital news consumption insights.
- Tweets by @AllDigitalEU**: A tweet from ALL DIGITAL (@DSMeu) about the Digital Single Market and the Digital Assembly 2019.



Bemediasmart.ie –  
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views





# LIBRARIES



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20  
MAR

**'Be Media Smart' campaign**

NEWS



- Library Association of Ireland (LAI) approached by MLI in December 2018
- LAI Literacies Committee
- All library sectors in Ireland supported the campaign
- Be Media Smart support - posters, social media, website
- Fundamental role



# LIBRARIES

## HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

**CONSIDER THE SOURCE**  
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.

**READ BEYOND**  
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?

**CHECK THE AUTHOR**  
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?

**SUPPORTING SOURCES?**  
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.

**CHECK THE DATE**  
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.

**IS IT A JOKE?**  
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.

**CHECK YOUR BIASES**  
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

**ASK THE EXPERTS**  
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

IFLA  
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions  
www.ifla.org



'Critical thinking is a key skill in media and information literacy and the mission of libraries is to educate and advocate its importance. Discussions about fake news has led to a new focus on media literacy ... and the role of libraries and other education institutions in providing this' (IFLA, 2020)



SO?



Significant nationwide campaign / international attention

Estimated 140 DAYS of voluntary effort by over 30 MLI members

Limited funding



# LESSONS



- Longer planning period required
- Earlier coordination with key partners
- More coordination of social media activity
- Evaluation framework and activity capture mechanism
- Develop a 'campaign tool-kit'
- Joined-up approach crucial
- Next campaign – Spring 2020



# BMS COVID19

BE MEDIA SMART\_ [Help](#) [Resources](#) [Supporti](#)

## COVID19 Resources

- **The World Health Organisation**

The coronavirus outbreak has sparked what the World Health Organization is calling an "infodemic" which prompted the WHO to develop the [EPI-WIN](#) programme to make sure the facts about COVID 19 are communicated to the public.

[WHO Resources](#)

The World Health Organisation [@WHO](#) have partnered with WhatsApp to create a new information resource for covid-19. Add the number +41 79 893 18 92 to your phone and message it on whatsapp saying "Hi". The Q&A section is particularly useful.
- **Countering false information**

We all want to do our bit when it comes to countering false information, but what if it is someone we know who is sharing false information? Media Literacy Ireland have put together some helpful tips for addressing the spreading of false information even if it comes from those close to us.

[View tips](#)

- Campaign rerun on TV, radio & online
- Promoting the importance of reliable information
- Support from MLI members
- Ongoing – 'misinformation costs lives' (World Health Organisation, 2020)



**THANK  
YOU**



'Media literacy ... addresses the needs of all ages. Media literacy is also a tool empowering citizens as well as raising their awareness and helping counter the effects of disinformation campaigns and fake news spreading through digital media' (European Commission, 2019)





# CONTACT US



Web:

[medialiteracyireland.ie](http://medialiteracyireland.ie)

[bemediasmart.ie](http://bemediasmart.ie)

[libraryassociation.ie](http://libraryassociation.ie)

Twitter:

@MedialitIreland

@LALonline

@philrusty

#bemediasmart



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