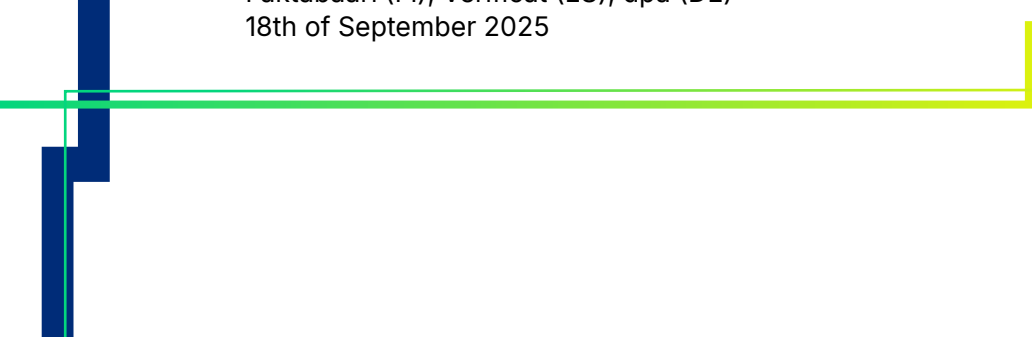# HOW TO

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EU Project: "Think Twice: Media Literacy for Gen Z"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The Think Twice project was a two-year European initiative aimed at combating online disinformation by empowering young people aged 14 to 19. It brought together fact-checking organizations, media educators, and civil society partners to develop a co-creative, youth-centered approach.

The primary goal was to equip digital natives with the skills and tools needed to critically assess online content and build resilience against the spread of false information. The project's core output was a comprehensive media literacy toolkit, featuring professionally produced videos and teaching materials, complemented by content created by the young participants themselves.

KEY OBJEKTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The project's strategy was built on three main pillars:

- **Toolkit Development**
  Creating a multilingual package of professional explainer videos and flexible teaching resources.

- **Community-led Content**
  Engaging young people as co-creators of short, peer-to-peer fact-checking videos for social media.

- **Iterative Feedback Loops**
  Establishing structured workshops and "Community Calls" to continually refine content and methods based on direct input from young participants.

This participatory approach aimed to move beyond traditional top-down education by encouraging young people to become active creators and debunkers of misinformation.

One of the core ideas of the project and this white paper is: How to engage Gen Z to think twice? Many fact-checkers, such as Faktabaari, have summarized the necessary actions as STOP, THINK, CHECK, while the Think Twice project has encouraged even more action, communication, and engagement from youth through a bottom-up approach.

IMAGINE A YOUNG PERSON
TAKING THE DEBATE ON
BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE
INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM
INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?
WHAT CAN WE LEARN BY HELPING THEM FIND THEIR VOICE?

While this paper reflects on lessons learned for the future, it also raises a debate about what additional measures are needed in the age of generative AI - a technology that has made significant advances since the design and start of the project.

Since 2022, generative AI has gradually become accessible on the mobile devices of Gen Z, competing for their screen time. From an information disorder perspective, this adds an extra challenge, particularly regarding content authenticity, on top of social media platforms that already amplify content through opaque algorithms. Although the impact of generative AI on Gen Z requires further study, it is already clear that future media literacy approaches urgently need to include AI awareness and AI literacy - concepts touched upon in the EU AI Act but still lacking extensive educational content.

This dimension was not fully covered during the project, but some materials have been developed, and several initiatives addressing these skills will be referenced for the future. AI literacy cannot be neglected in any upcoming empowerment projects.

This white paper is primarily aimed at:

1. Educators and teachers
2. Fact-checkers and media literacy organizations
3. Youth workers and NGOs

Secondary audiences include media policy-makers, decision-makers, trainers, and facilitators.

MAIN FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Think Twice project successfully demonstrated that a youth-centered, co-creative model is effective in media literacy. Key findings include:

Authenticity and Reach

Peer-produced content, while less polished than professional materials, proved highly authentic and engaging for young audiences on platforms like TikTo

Effectiveness of Hybrid Models

Combining professional content for foundational knowledge with peer-created videos for relatable examples created a powerful and comprehensive learning exper

Communication and Structure

Successful project implementation, especially with young people, requires a clear and flexible communication strategy, whether through school platforms, instant messaging, or face-to-face interaction.

Importance of Psychological Safety

Providing a safe environment for young participants is crucial. This includes careful moderation during workshops and offering support to prevent them from feeling overwhelmed by the scale of online disinfor

Incentives for Participation

For long-term projects, particularly outside of school contexts, some form of reward or incentive is often necessary to ensure consistent, high-quality participation from young creators.

Technology is not neutral

Human agency must be emphasized: Ethical considerations regarding digital content creation, especially given the power and lack of accountability of technology companies, social media platforms, and generative AI models, need to be clearly explained. The scale and speed of their impact represent an unprecedented challenge to human cognition. EU-level action and the promotion of human agency in using AI as a tool are essential.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, we recommend that future media literacy initiatives targeting young audiences:

- **Prioritize a Hybrid Content Strategy**
  Use professional videos to establish core concepts and community-led videos to make them relevant and relatable.

- **Build Strong Feedback Loops**
  Involve young people directly in the project's development and iteration to ensure the content remains authentic and effective.

- **Focus on Mental Safety**
  Integrate practices that protect participants from the emotional burden of engaging with disinformation, such as content moderation and open discussion.

- **Leverage Existing Structures**
  Collaborate closely with educators and utilize established communication channels to seamlessly integrate media literacy into both formal and informal learning environments.

- **Address Challenges Posed by Generative AI**
  Incorporate recommendations such as those outlined in the upcoming EU DigComp 3.0 (due end of 2025) on the skills needed for lifelong learning, within protective EU regulatory frameworks.