

Written Representation 166

Name: Media Literacy Council

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WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON DELIBERATE ONLINE FALSEHOODS

Since 2017, the Media Literacy Council has stepped up its efforts to counter the effects of the spread of false information online through the annual Better Internet Campaign. This year, decoding and debunking fake news will feature prominently again in the campaign programming.

Over the next few years, the programmes and measures that the Council will undertake will target different groups, including students, adults, seniors, parents, and the general public, to both pro-actively create a culture of fact-checking in the national consciousness, and reactively prevent the further spread of falsehoods online. The Council will continue placing emphasis on raising awareness and providing instructional content to the public through an integrated multi-media, multi-platform approach that reaches out to the community.

The Council's plan for the next few years includes:

A. Enhanced Focus on Fake News and Fact-checking

Given the increasing importance of the issue, the Council intends to incorporate an enhanced focus on fake news and fact-checking in our upcoming campaigns. In the coming years, the Better Internet Campaign will raise public awareness and education on how best to detect, decode, and debunk fake news.

To better understand the specific media literacy challenges faced in Singapore, particularly relating to the topic of fake news, the Council will organise and facilitate partnerships between practitioners and academics to identify and articulate key concerns for the purposes of research and public education. Using these points, the Council will share both research and best practices to the public for their edification and practise.

B. Targeted Approach to Stakeholders

Although media literacy is necessary to learn how to discern fake news, the exact skills required vary across the different groups targeted, and thus require specific programs for specific groups. As such, tips on critical thinking and fact-checking will be pushed out through our social media and Council website to reach out to youths and adults. The social media content will raise awareness of fake news, and systematically introduce fact-checking advice through videos, online influencers, infographics, and articles through the Council's digital channels. The Council intends to leverage influential publishing platforms to expand its awareness and engagement efforts. To

ensure that the content reaches mature adults and seniors, it will also be produced in print.

For mature adults and seniors, a fake news module will be included into the Silver Infocomm Curriculum and the Basic Digital Skills curriculum, to benefit up to 50,000 mature adults and seniors over the next few years. Critical thinking and discernment will also be considered one aspect of the Basic Digital Skills that Singaporeans need to learn in order to reap the benefits that technology can bring to their daily lives.

C. Increased Support for Community Initiatives to Raise Awareness of Fake News

The *Better Internet x Youth Call-for-Proposal (CFP)* was launched in 2017 to support projects conceptualised and implemented by youths to create a positive online space. The Council has leveraged the CFP to spark authentic ground-up initiatives to impact Singaporeans. In the coming years, raising awareness of fake news and its consequences will be a key topic for the CFP. Depending on the projects submitted for support, potentially, up to 30 projects may be supported.

D. Partnering Like-Minded Organisations to Amplify and Raise Awareness of Fake News

Beyond the Better Internet Campaign, the Council will also partner and align with organisations with a similar mandate to enhance the critical thinking skills of Singaporeans. Existing partnerships with companies such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter will be built on to hold and promote various media literacy programmes. Also in the pipeline are collaborations with the DQ Institute and the Singapore Science Centre to hold a range of activities, such as workshops, exhibitions, and seminars, to equip the public with fact-checking skills.

The Council will also continue and expand its work with different stakeholder groups in Singapore to equip the public with the necessary fact-checking skills to critically evaluate information on media platforms, make wise choices about the information they create and share online, take responsibility for their online interactions, as well as recognise the potential consequences of sharing fake news on their families, workplaces, and nation.

In line with its mandate to advise and be consulted by the Government on media literacy issues and related regulations, the Council, comprising of 30 members from academia, industry, schools, and the community, avails itself for future consultation on the legislation on fake news.