Unraveling #fakenews from opinion-making information

A NEWS LITERACY DISCUSSION

7 September 2017 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm | Conference Room 6, UNHQ New York
This panel discussion is the second installment of a series of panels organized by UNAOC at UNHQ on topics relevant to Media and Information Literacy. Following February's discussion “Media and Information Literacy: Educational Strategies for the Prevention of Violent Extremism”, this panel will focus on the “fake news in social media” phenomena from the perspective of News Literacy.

News Literacy is defined as the development of critical thinking skills applied to judge the reliability and credibility of information, whether it comes via print, radio, television or the Internet. The term News Literacy is generally associated with schools of communication and journalism rather than pedagogical schools. Some view it as a sub-sector of the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) field; others as a distinct and unique entity.

UNAOC recognizes the urgency of developing and expanding News Literacy skills in the current political and social state of the world. The onset of so-called “fake news”, widely distributed through social media platforms, has the capacity to twist public opinion and shape individuals’ ideological preferences and visions of the world.

News Literacy is an acutely important skill in the Digital Age as citizens struggle with information overload and the intricacies of determining its authenticity. A citizens’ ability to judge the relevance and reliability of information is a leading indicator of the public health of civil society around the world.

AGENDA

11:00-11:20 am Opening Remarks

Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
@UNAOC
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Maher Nasser
@MaherNasserUN
Acting Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, United Nations

11:20-11:40 pm Keynote speaker

Howard Schneider @NewsLiteracy
Executive Director, Center for News Literacy, Stony Brook University

11:40-12:30 pm Panel Discussion

Alan Miller @alancmiller0926 @TheNewsLP
Founder and CEO, News Literacy Project

Mitra Kalita @mitrakalita
Vice President of Programming, CNN Digital

Aíne Kerr @AineKerr
Manager, Journalism Partnerships, Facebook

Dina Temple-Raston @NPRDina
Counterterrorism Correspondent, National Public Radio (NPR)

Michelle Ciulla Lipkin @ciullalipkin @MediaLiteracyEd
Executive Director, National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE)

Moderator: Jordi Torrent @nycjordi @UNAOC
Project Manager, Media Literacy Initiatives, UNAOC

12:30-1:00 pm Q & A
Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser assumed his position as the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations on 1 March 2013. Throughout his career, he has contributed to advancing the multilateral agenda in the realms of peace and security, sustainable development and South-South cooperation. Prior to that, Mr. Al-Nasser held the position of President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2012. His career as a diplomat spans for more than three decades. Since 1989, he has represented Qatar in the United Nations and has worked on core issues such as security, terrorism, poverty, hunger and natural disasters. Mr. Al-Nasser has received numerous awards and honorary doctorates from various countries and universities for his work on fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Howard Schneider is the Dean of The School of Journalism at Stony Brook University. In 2007, he helped develop the first undergraduate News Literacy course in the US. Since then it has spread to dozens of other universities around the globe including Vietnam, Russia, Poland, India, Australia, Israel and China (Hong Kong). Prior to his post at Stony Brook, Schneider was a reporter and editor at Newsday for more than 35 years. Under his tenure as managing editor and editor, the newspaper won seven Pulitzer Prizes. Schneider has served on the Pulitzer selection committee three times. In 2012, he was awarded the David Carr Reddick Award for outstanding achievement in professional communication by the University of Texas.

Michelle Ciulla-Lipkin is an adjunct lecturer at Brooklyn College where she teaches in the Department of TV/Radio. She began her career in children's television production, in various roles on both corporate and production teams.

Before founding the News Literacy Project in 2008, Miller was a reporter with the Los Angeles Times for 21 years. He spent nearly 19 years in the paper’s Washington bureau, the last 14 as a charter member of its high-profile investigative team. Miller’s work prompted investigations by the Justice Department, Congress and inspector generals in federal agencies. He received more than a dozen national reporting honors, including the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting and the Investigative Reporters and Editors Medal for breaking the 1996 Democratic National Committee campaign finance scandal. His series on the Marine Corps Harrier attack jet won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting.

Mitra Kalita is the vice president for programming for CNN Digital and oversees the News & Alerting, Special Projects, and Media Literacy & News Literacy teams. She was previously a senior director for digital strategy at the Los Angeles Times. Kalita is renowned for setting a fast pace for newsroom innovation, establishing herself early on at the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Newsday and the Associated Press, and then as executive editor-at-large and ideas editor at Quartz. She was a founding editor of Mint, a business paper in New Delhi and has written three books related to migration and globalization. A former journalism professor at St. John’s, UMass Amherst, and Columbia University, she has also served as president of the South Asian Journalists Association.

Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser leads the UN Department of Public Information, which has offices in 60 locations worldwide and is responsible for promoting global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations. A veteran of the UN System, Mr. Nasser has worked for over 29 years in various positions in Gaza, Jerusalem, Cairo, Vienna and New York, mainly in the field of communications, advocacy and public information. He served in the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). He joined the DPI in 2006 as Director of the UN Information Centre in Cairo and then served as Director of the UN Information Service in Vienna from 2008 to 2011, before becoming Acting Head of DPI until 2015.

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As Executive Director of NAMLE Ciulla-Lipkin has helped the organization grow to be the preeminent media literacy education association in the U.S. She launched the National News Literacy Week in the U.S. in 2015, developed strategic partnerships with media companies such as Trend Micro, Participant Media, Nickelodeon, and Twitter, and restructured both the governance and membership of the organization. She has also overseen three national conferences and done countless appearances at conferences and in the media regarding the importance of media literacy education. Ciulla-Lipkin is an adjunct lecturer at Brooklyn College where she teaches in the Department of TV/Radio. She began her career in children’s television production, in various roles on both corporate and production teams.

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The Alliance benefits from the political support of the Group of Friends, a community of countries and international organizations, which actively promotes the objectives and work of the Alliance at the global, regional and local levels. The Group is a driving force of UNAOC and plays a vital role in the Alliance's strategic planning and implementation process. Through a broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach, the UNAOC High Representative seeks the input, advice and support of the Group of Friends' members on all key aspects of the Alliance's activities and mandate. UNAOC Group of Friends currently includes 145 Members of which are 119 UN Member States and 26 international organizations. They represent all continents, societies and cultures.

A High-Level Group of experts was formed by the UN Secretary-General to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures and to recommend a practical programme of action to address this issue. In its 2006 report, the High-Level Group identified four priority areas for action namely, Education, Youth, Migration, and Media. UNAOC project activities are fashioned around these four areas, which play a critical role in helping to reduce cross-cultural tensions and to build bridges between communities.

The UNAOC High Representative and Secretariat are based and operating from New York. The Alliance maintains a global network of partners including states, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector to improve cross-cultural relations between diverse nations and communities.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General, has described UNAOC as a soft power tool for bridging divides and promoting understanding between countries or identity groups, all with a view toward preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion.

UNAOC’s Media and Information Literacy Programme

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations’ High Level-Group Report recognizes that “The constant exposure of populations to media presents an educational challenge, which has increased in the electronic and digital age. Evaluating information sources requires skills and critical thinking and is an educational responsibility the importance of which is often underestimated. Separating fact from opinion, evaluating text and image for bias, and constructing and deconstructing a text based on principles of logic are teachable skills. Media literacy instruction is not widely recognized for its importance as an aspect of civic and peace education and therefore few instructional programs have been developed as part of basic modern education.” The Report recommends that “Media literacy programs should be implemented in schools, particularly at the secondary level, to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage by media consumers and to promote media awareness and development of Internet literacy to combat misperceptions, prejudices and hate speech.”

To that end, UNAOC has developed a wide range of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) initiatives:

**MIL Clearinghouse**
Media Literacy clearinghouse, a web-based multi-lingual platform for the dissemination of MIL resources and information developed in partnership with UNESCO. [http://milunesco.unaoc.org/](http://milunesco.unaoc.org/)

**MIL Curriculum for Teachers**
MIL Curriculum for Teachers is the interactive version of UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy curriculum. [http://unesco.mil-for-teachers.unaoc.org/](http://unesco.mil-for-teachers.unaoc.org/)

**PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**
PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival focuses on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion, developed in partnership with IOM. [http://pluralplus.unaoc.org/](http://pluralplus.unaoc.org/)

**PEACEapp**
PEACEapp is a series of projects using ICT, gamified apps, and videogaming for intercultural dialogue. [unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects/peaceapp/](http://unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects/peaceapp/)