

FI.DO: Fighting fake news and DisinfOrmation- A Serious Game and New Methodologies for Training Senior Citizens

“Fake news” and disinformation are not contemporary phenomena, (Burkhardt, 2017), they are though phenomena whose possibility to spread all over the world has multiplied exponentially (Del Vicario et.al, 2016) due to the ease with which anyone can access and disseminate information through the Internet, true and false, all over the world. The Internet has not only vastly increased the volume and variety of news available to citizens but has also profoundly changed the ways citizens access and engage with news (Hoffmann & Lutz, 2021). The ease of availability of diverse quality information has the potential to make democratic processes more participatory and inclusive, yet exposing citizens to large-scale disinformation, including misleading or blatantly false information, is a major challenge for Europe.

With a constantly aging European population (Eurostat, 2022), and the opportunities that universal access to health care has provided, senior citizens are now more than ever a growing and essential part of participatory processes, but in great risk of disinformation due to the lack of deeper education on digital media literacy (Brashier & Schacter, 2020). As such the project FIDO – Fighting fake news and DisinfOrmation aims to improve the level of digital skills of seniors regarding the use of internet-based communication platforms, including the social media, through creating thorough methodological material and gamification techniques for adult educators and senior citizens. Alongside creating a serious game, with an overarching goal of quality access to information that foster informed decisions for oneself and their community.

The concept of gamification starts from the idea of making a necessary process potentially fun and accessible, by applying theories and models of gaming to layers of social life that are not necessarily playful (Delgado-Algara, 2022). Gamification represents the intent to introduce common dynamics to the games without the user necessarily having to notice it, but in a way, who can perceive the benefits.

The complex theme of accessing fake news and disinformation becomes more evident and understandable if a direct experience capable to show the steps (De Croon et.al, 2021), of the manipulatory process, is made. In this, playful and gamification models have shown extreme effectiveness, being used as safe simulation environments that lead the experience towards moments of growth.

Starting from this last consideration, the FI.DO project proceeded, expanding the playful learning perspectives promoted by Resnick's research and theory of playful learning (Resnik, 2003) and applying them to an adult audience, through the Creation of the FI.DO serious game app.

This paper has been completed by the project consortium of the Erasmus+ KA2 " FIDO – Fighting fake news and DisinfOrmation ". The project consortium is activated in 4 European participating countries, Italy, Greece, Poland and Slovenia. The results and conclusions shared in our paper where the conscious and researched outcomes of the implementation processes of the project, aiming to provide a more complete overview of the framework under which the tools created can aid us in more consistently advocating for the education of senior adults towards making conscious decisions upon critically reviewing, accepting and spreading information.

Keywords: fake news, disinformation, serious game, training methodology, European consortium, information. access, senior citizens, journalism, education,

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