

Promoting Smart and Positive News Engagement: News Literacy Education in the Digital Age

From 2019 to 2022, the Center for Child Development conducted a project that aimed to promote news literacy education among adolescents in Hong Kong. The project was supported by the Quality Education Fund and led by Dr Kelly Ku, Associate Professor of the Department of Education Studies at HKBU. Other key members of the project team include Dr Celine Song, Associate Professor of the Department of Journalism at HKBU, and Dr Masato Kajimoto, Associate Professor of Practice of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at The University of Hong Kong.

The three-year interdisciplinary project was conceived as a result of the complicated news environment that adolescents are in today. Growing up as “digital natives” means children and teens are not only dependent on the complex online news environments to global issues and new knowledge about the world, but they will inevitably be at risk from the information turmoil of the digital age. In such environments they will run into alternative news outlets, bots and algorithms, conspiracy groups and fake news profiteers - these information traps call for news literacy skills and critical thinking that children and teens lack.

Fake news, or misinformation, is a multi-layered problem that demands multiple solutions to be implemented simultaneously. News literacy is being repeatedly called upon as a possible solution for the spread of fake news and to empower young people to create a trustworthy and positive information environment in a networked and information-saturated society.

Seeing a growing need for news literacy training in Hong Kong, a textbook entitled ***Teaching News Literacy and Critical Thinking in the Digital Age*** and an interactive learning mobile app called ***“Smart News Rookies”*** were created as part of the project to promote news literacy education among junior secondary students.



The textbook, which has already been distributed to secondary schools, introduces essential news literacy concepts, such as news values, identification of misinformation on social media, critical thinking in news and privacy protection. With a series of real-life examples and interactive exercises, the textbook brings the positive impact of news literacy training to secondary education, and helps teachers and students acquire the necessary skills to navigate and take control of the news they may come across in the complex news environment and digital landscape.

Meanwhile, the “Smart News Rookies” learning mobile app aims to stimulate students’ understanding and interest in learning about news literacy. It features five animated videos on the core concepts of news literacy and various interactive activities such as quizzes and surveys. The app is currently available for free download from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.



Learning App Download Links:

Apple iOS

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/%E6%99%BA%E5%8F%BB%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E5%88%9D%E5%93%A5/id1635118337>

Android

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.hk.openknowledge.smartnewsrookies>