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Media Literacy for Everyone

What we learned by starting with inclusion

Zara Mommerency · Mediawijs / BENEDMO
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The starting question

How can we support vulnerable adults in accessing reliable information and navigating disinformation?

- Language, digital and critical-thinking barriers *often* overlap
- Few tailored ML materials for adults experiencing low literacy and/or have a multilingual background.
- **1 in 6** adults in Belgium and The Netherlands experience low literacy

FOCUS · adults with low literacy skills and/or multilingual backgrounds

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First, we listened

3 round table sessions in Belgium and the Netherlands

40+

professionals and intermediaries shared their knowledge and experience

- Adult education, language development, care, welfare, libraries, community organisations and local government.
- Everyday practice helped identify needs, barriers and gaps in existing ML practices, interventions & resources on (dis)information.





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First, we listened

We spoke directly to people experiencing low literacy. We met them in places they already go

6 visits

3 cities

- Visits to local community centers, neighborhood organisations and adult education classes.
- Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels.
- Hear from them how they use media and social media, how they find and engage with information and news, and what challenges they come across in their everyday lives.

Buurtwerk Posthof vzw

gent:

Klappei

CVO Brussel Volwassenenonderwijs

Ligo Centrum voor Basiseducatie Brusselleer

SAAMO Gent

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What we learned

01 Online safety comes first

Phishing, scam messages and fraudulent emails are immediate concerns.

02 Everyday life is the entry point

Algorithms, disinformation and fact-checking can feel distant.

03 Time and mental space are limited

Housing, work and financial stability often take priority.

04 Language matters

Language barriers can limit access to information and learning resources.

05 Local news is of interest

But it is not always known.

06 Trust and relationships matter

People turn to trusted professionals and personal networks for help.

KEY GAP Many resources assume language proficiency, digital confidence and certain background knowledge on topics like disinformation, factchecking and algorithms.

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From insights to action

A year of collaboration with neighbourhood organisations

1

LISTEN

Explore digital habits, news use and everyday online challenges.

2

PROTOTYPE

Develop early versions and test them in neighbourhood organisations.

3

REFINE

Adjust wording, question order and illustrations; use familiar situations.

4

REVIEW

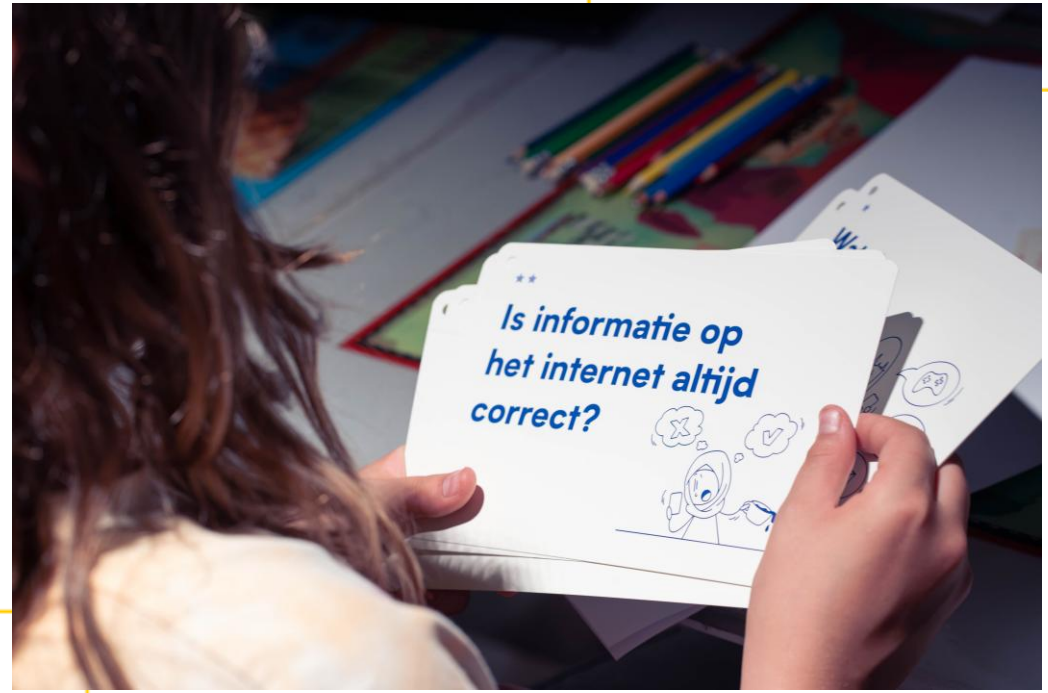
Gather feedback after every testing round.

~10

field visits and testing sessions

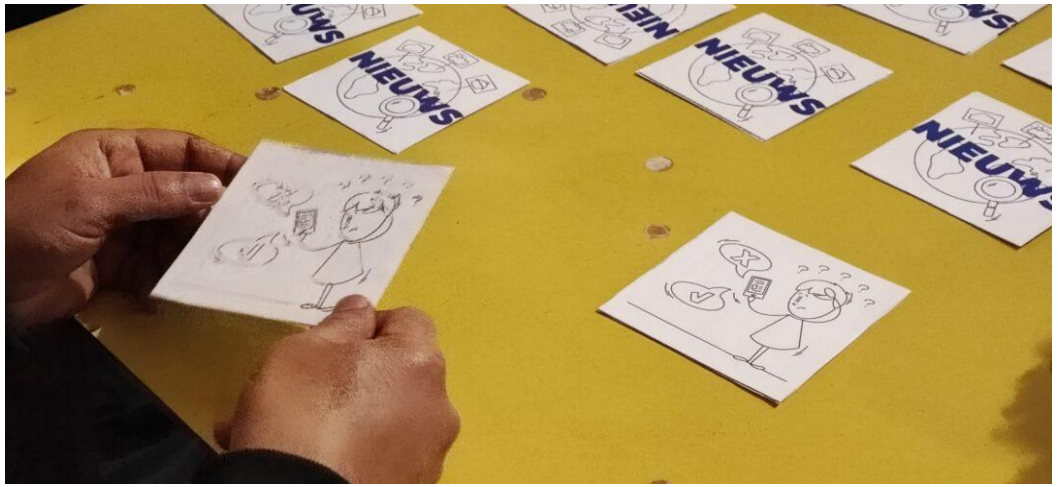
- Small details mattered: the right wording, familiar illustrations and questions that invite people to share their own experiences.
- The neighbourhood setting created a familiar, informal space for conversation and learning.

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Is informatie op het internet altijd correct?




PARTNER
14:30


NIEUWS
NIEUWS
NIEUWS



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A broader BENEDMO toolkit

Complementary resources, from conversation to practical online safety

01 **DIGITAL TALK**

Official title: Digitale praat

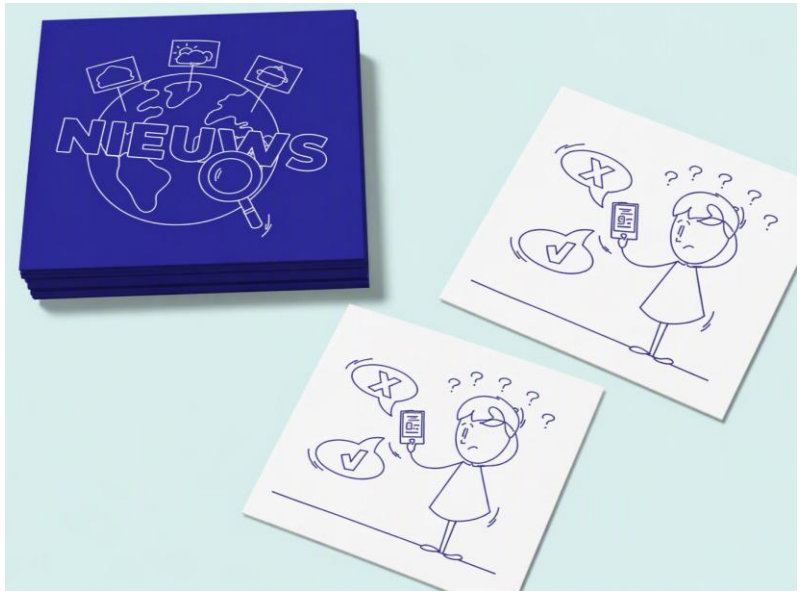
- Illustrated cards about everyday digital life
- Real life scenarios
- Adaptable English Canva template



02 **NEWS IN PICTURES**

Official title: Nieuws in beeld

- A visual memory game
- about news use, information and trust
- Manual in English available



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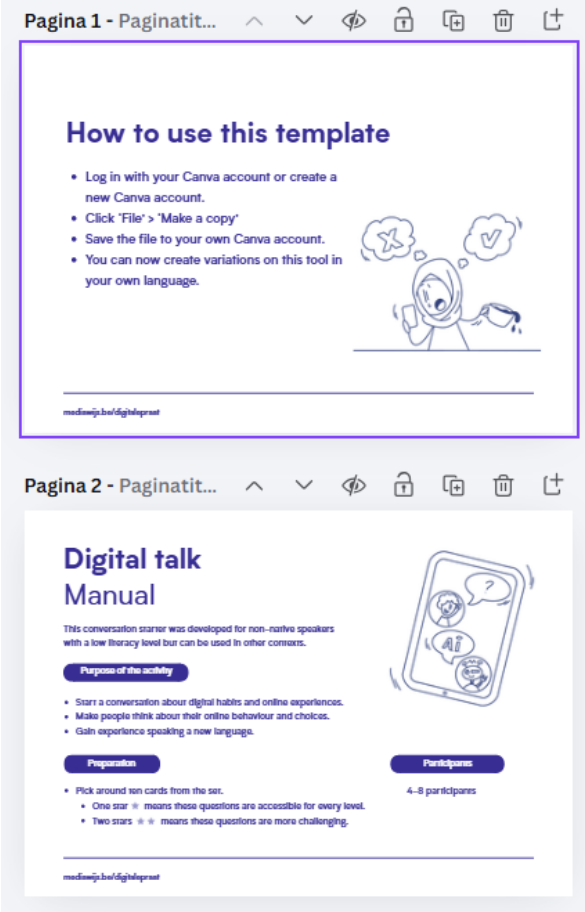
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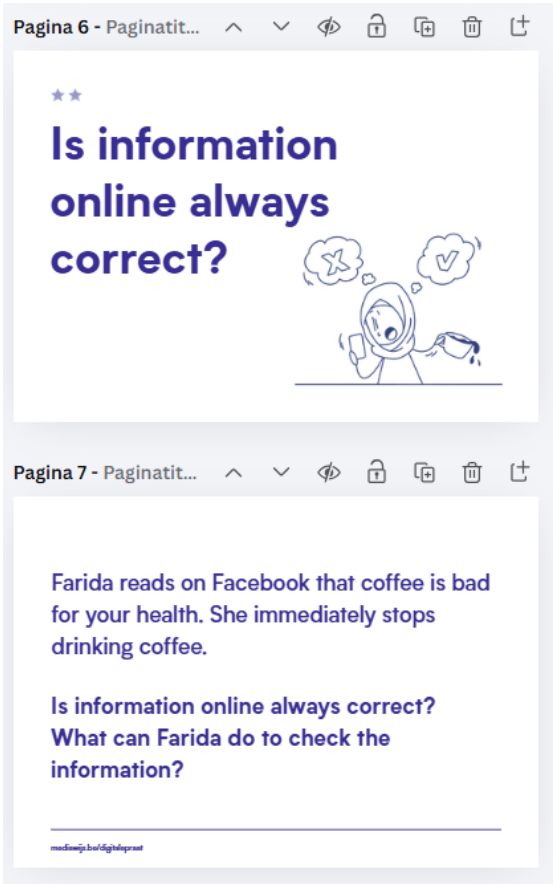
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News Flash
Manual

This conversation starter was developed for non-native speakers with a low literacy level but can be used in other contexts.

Participants

4-6 participants

Purpose of the activity

- Talk about news and information.
- Discover where people get their news.
- Make people think about their trust in news.
- Support people in finding reliable information.
- Practice speaking English or a new language.

Preparation and materials

- Have a look at the questions in advance (see back of page).
- Shuffle the cards.
- Put the cards on the table, white side face down.

Gameplay

- Explore the topic by discussing the drawing on the blue side of the cards first.
- Let a participant turn over two cards.
- Are both cards the same?
  - **No** → turn the cards back over and let the next player try.
  - **Yes** → players describe what they see. Use the questions to get them talking about how they experience news.
- Ask additional questions depending on answers and experiences.
- Encourage participants to memorise cards and help each other.

Tips

Make sure all participants get to talk. Address them directly and ask additional questions.

Illustrations by **Hanneb**

mediawijs imec Vlaanderen

mediawijs.be/nieuwsinbeeld

Questions

Blue side	Potential questions
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. What is **news**? 3. What does news mean **to you**?

White side	Potential questions
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. **What** do you use to follow the news? 3. **How** do you follow the news?
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. **What** information do you see online? 3. **Where do you search** for information about: • the bus • your neighbourhood • sports • your home country • recipes for cooking 4. Do you use a **translation app** when you look for information?
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. Have you encountered **fake news**? 3. How do you know if information is **correct** or **incorrect**? 4. Do you sometimes **doubt** the news?
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. Is there news that makes you **happy**? 3. Is there news that makes you **angry**? 4. Is there news that makes you **sad**?
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. Who do you **talk to** about the news? 3. **What kind of news** do you discuss with others? 4. **How** do you follow the news?
	1. What do you see on the drawing? 2. Do you follow the news from your **home country**? 3. Do you want to know what happens in **this country**? 4. Do you want to know what happens in **your neighbourhood**?

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A broader BENEDMO toolkit

Complementary resources, from conversation to practical online safety

03 FALSE MESSAGE CHECKLIST

Official title: Hoe herken je een vals bericht?

- Simple checks for recognising potentially fraudulent messages.



04 CAUGHT IN THE ONLINE TRAP

Official title: In de val gelokt

- A mobile-friendly scrollytelling resource
- with the basics on online scams
- Videotestimonials with victims of online scams







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Strong demand signals a real need

400+

copies of each conversation tool distributed

50+

Organisations + local authorities reached or showing interest

750

additional copies planned

Adapt for accessibility

Materials for multilingual adults with low literacy skills.

Equip professionals = trusted intermediaries

Practical tools that work in their own settings.

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The key lesson: inclusion comes first

People are more likely to engage critically with information when they feel seen, heard and represented.

Media literacy is not just about recognising disinformation.

It is also about creating the conditions for people to participate, share experiences and build confidence.

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