

# Research findings! How does Google help people with their media literacy... and what could they do better?

## A research summary for children and young people

October 2024

### About the research




The research aimed to find out **how Google helps people to make sense of the media and to stay safe online.**

Knowing how to search for news information and to check facts is called 'media literacy'. This covers everything from TV and newspapers to websites and social media.

### What does Google do and why?

Google has a responsibility to help people with media literacy because it also owns some of the world's largest search engines and apps (e.g., Google.com, YouTube, Gemini, and Gemini for Teens).

The types of media literacy projects funded and supported by Google include:

-  Fact-checking tools, to help find out where information comes from (e.g. **About this Result**).
-  Videos to give people tips on what to trust, and how to spot fake news (e.g. **Hit Pause**).
-  Resources and educational games for schools and communities (e.g. **Be Internet Awesome**).



### Who carried out the research?

Google asked a research company called **Ecorys** to find out whether their projects are working, and to see how they might be improved. They were supported by experts from the LSE Communications Department. The research was independent, which means that it was done fairly and without bias.

The researchers mostly looked at Google's media literacy projects in Europe, but they also examined what's happening in other parts of the world, like India and the USA.

## What did the researchers find?

Overall, the researchers concluded that Google has done a lot of important work across Europe to support organisations and citizens to use media information safely and confidently.



Things that have worked well include:

-  **Catching people 'in the moment'** when they are using websites or apps, to encourage them to stop and think whether they are using trustworthy sources of information.
-  **Working with community organisations** in different countries, to develop projects that are relevant to their language and culture.
-  **Raising awareness about media literacy through multiple channels**, so that as many people as possible benefit: from schools, to community groups, to online videos.
-  **Making media literacy relevant** for people at all stages of their life.

## What could be improved?

Google has gathered feedback that shows their projects often made people feel more confident to spot fake news, and to know where to go for help. But even so, some things could be improved:



**More follow-up is needed, to know whether people continue to feel confident over time.**

This is important to understand which types of projects work best, and whether the effects last.



**There is a need to do more to build trust in the news among whole communities.**

As well as helping individuals to check facts.



**Some people wanted Google to be much clearer about what types of personal information are gathered about them, and how algorithms work.**

They also wanted more reassurance that tech companies are doing everything they can to tackle online harms, and to clean-up their platforms.

## Some key statistics

**>140,000**

**journalists trained in media literacy**

Google's support to the European Media Information Fund (EMIF)

**>180,000,000**

The number of impressions from the Hit Pause media literacy campaign (2023)

**88%**

**of students**

felt better able to stay safe online after taking part in Be Internet Awesome (BIA)

# What should Google do in the future?

The researchers said that Google should continue to...



## Share their tech expertise

to help fight misinformation online.



## Work together

with governments, researchers and other tech companies, so that everyone in society has the skills they need, and to improve the quality of media information.



## Fund community organisations

across Europe to reach people who might not trust the media, and those who are vulnerable to being exploited online.

The researchers told Google that it will be important to measure whether their projects are making a difference.

In particular, they should:



## Listen and gather feedback

from people of all ages and backgrounds, and publish what they find so that everyone knows what works and what doesn't.



## Share information about what happens on Google's platforms such as YouTube.

This is important to help researchers and the public understand whether Google are doing everything they should to keep people safe online and to get the best out of the media for play, learning and life.



## Most of all

The researchers said that media literacy is important for being citizens, and that government, tech companies and communities have a shared responsibility to take it seriously.

## More information

You can learn more about the research and download the reports here:

[www.ecorys.com/case-studies/european-media-literacy-policy-study](http://www.ecorys.com/case-studies/european-media-literacy-policy-study)



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