



Activity n°12: Information hooligans

Analysis
Belgium

Key words: *Internet / Reception / Discrimination*



Target groups:

- Journalism students
- Professional journalists
- Media literacy trainers

Duration: 60 minutes

Context: Passion, rage, aggression, inappropriate comments: the posting of articles or reports may sometimes give rise to controversy or discriminatory language among Internet users making comments. What triggers this? Who is responsible? This analysis and discussion activity encourages participants to find out who are the “information hooligans”.

Objectives:

- To examine how information is received in on-line forums
- To identify the elements that trigger discriminatory or racist remarks
- To reflect upon the idea of responsibility for remarks made

Equipment: Computers, tablets or smart phones connected to the Internet.

Media Resources: A list of news media (print, web or audio-visual) websites that allow comments from Readers.

Observations: The activity could also be carried out using a set of media materials relating solely to sport.

Organisation:

Class configuration	Time in minutes	Sequence of activities
GR	5'	Introduce the activity, present the objectives of the exercise and ask participants to get together in twos or threes around a computer or tablet.
PRS	10'	Find among news websites (print, audio-visual or other) an article that has generated several comments from users.
PRS	10'	Identify the dynamics of the comments and their links with the original report/article: <i>Are there any discriminatory or racist arguments or remarks? Which elements triggered these: the content of the report/article, the angle chosen by the journalist, a comment by a user?</i>
GR	15'	Pool the observations by asking each sub-group to present the selected article, the types of comments noted and the elements that triggered these.
GR	20'	Extend the analysis with a collective discussion on the dynamics of the comments, editorial responsibility for the remarks (of the journalist, the Internet users) and the restraint of on-line articles.

Variants: The articles could be found by the trainer beforehand. If used for media education, this activity could explore in more detail the idea of citizen journalism and the concept and dynamics of digital identities.

Suggested follow-up activities:

Journalism's our job Unit: Activity n°13. Keep an eye on it!