

News Verification/Fact checking



Course outline

Course Tutor:

James Doherty

Course Content:

This one-day course delves into the post-truth age, where mis/disinformation is rife and trust in facts, let alone newsgathering is in freefall. This course will help you reinforce your skills in an ever-evolving media and AI-driven landscape, because facts matter. Trust matters and reporting something approaching the truth has never mattered more. There will be frequent screen breaks throughout. The course will look at how to spot fake news, check images and videos, and use online investigation tools.

Programme

Fundamentals and Source Checking

- **Introduction to Mis/Disinformation:** Learn the difference between misinformation (false by mistake) and disinformation (false on purpose).
- **Anatomy of a Fake Story:** Study common emotional triggers, clickbait, and fake domains.
- **Evaluating Sources:** Use the **SIFT method** (Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, Trace claims).
- **Lateral Reading:** Leaving the 'source' an open multiple tabs to see what other reliable sites say about the story.

Visual and Digital Forensics

- **Reverse Image Search:** Practice using tools like Google Lens or TinEye to find where and when a photo was first posted.
- **Exif Data and Metadata:** Look at the hidden data in files, like the date and location a photo was taken.
- **Video Verification:** Learn how to check keyframes from videos to see if old footage is recycled for a new, unrelated event.
- **Mapping and Geolocation:** Use satellite tools to match landmarks, street signs, and weather to a disputed video or photo.

Advanced Tools and Practical Application

- **Advanced Search Operators:** Use specific search commands on search engines to find exact dates, file types, or specific words.
- **Social Media Analysis:** Check account creation dates, follower ratios, and bot behaviour on platforms.
- **Live Practice Exercise**
- **Debrief and Ethics:** Why people fall for fake news and the ethics of digital investigations.

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Participant feedback:

“Any journalist would benefit from James' training sessions. His experience of working in newsrooms and comms teams means he brings a depth of first-hand knowledge that some trainers lack. You will come away with lots of practical skills that you can apply in the real world. Excellent.”

“James Doherty was a most engaging, and knowledgeable, trainer who brought much of his own professional experience to the sessions. He delivered this alongside a welcoming, humorous, positive, and inclusive style.”