

A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO CULTIVATING AN ENGAGED AND INFORMED ELECTORATE IN SCOTLAND AND BEYOND



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Abstract

One of the most urgent and salient challenges facing the modern world is that of developing effective policy to combat increasingly more frequent and severe global crises. Against the backdrop of a “post-fact” world, where it has become harder and harder to distinguish fact from fiction and news from entertainment, characterised by ever increasing political polarisation, dwindling trust in so-called “experts” and establishment figures, and rising reactionary populism, it becomes apparent that such a challenge can have no straight-forward, one-size-fits-all remedy. Questions of such grand scope require versatile, multifaceted solutions. In this proposal, we outline a collection of solutions aimed at empowering individuals with the resources and knowledge required to navigate and participate successfully in the democratic process. We place the emphasis on local action (Scotland) with a view towards versatile expansion.

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Introduction

With the “Big Question” at the centre of this year’s programme being one of such pressing urgency, wide scope, and tortuous depth, we were galvanised when planning our solution to think carefully about the approach we would take. This effect was multiplied by our experience of enduring, with the rest of the world, a global crisis over the course of the project in the form of the ongoing COVID pandemic. Viscerally experiencing first hand such a crisis, seeing the effects it had on those we knew and the world around us, frustratedly watching ours and other governments flounder to adequately address the issue, and witnessing first hand the rise in animosity, confusion, and fear consistently seen online and via other media left us with an unshakable motivation to deliver something we felt had the potential to be genuinely effective at combating and hopefully safeguarding against such outcomes in inevitable future global crises.

At the core of our proposal is the belief that ultimately, effective, timely policy can only be cultivated in democracies in possession of engaged and informed electorates. A country without such a foundation risks empowering leaders who disregard facts in favour of narratives and who place their own ego over the needs of the people they represent. One needn’t look any further than the 2016 American presidential election, which coincided with a peak in the rising prevalence of fake online news (Vosoughi et al, 2018) and the lowest public trust levels in American mass media on record (Swift, 2016), and culminated with the election of Donald Trump, whose government pursued the implementation of irresponsibly dangerous climate policy, and whose catastrophic handling of the coronavirus pandemic resulted in countless preventable deaths (Selby, 2019). The UK’s similarly disastrous response to the Covid pandemic was overseen by a government elected following a time of historically low political engagement among young people (Sloan, 2007) and with whom the public’s current trust has reached a decade low (Sugue, 2020).

It is therefore necessary that any initiative to facilitate the development of evidence-based policy must empower and engage electorates of democracies. In this proposal, we therefore outline a multifaceted approach to cultivating an engaged and informed electorate in Scotland and beyond.

We made the decision to approach this from multiple perspectives as we realised this was the only way of developing a truly effective solution to such a complex task. We adopted a threefold approach, whereby each different area would overlap and complement the outcomes of the others, resulting in a final outcome greater than the sum of its parts. Our proposal has three key goals:

Educate: Provide students with the skills to critically engage with information they are presented with, and evaluate the reliability of news sources.

Inform: Provide individuals with tools and resources to better inform themselves about the democratic process and their elected representatives, with a focus on how this can be achieved online.

Engage: Provide members of the electorate with the tools, understanding, and desire to directly engage in political processes in order to strengthen the link between policy and individuals, thereby rendering the policy-making process more transparent and trustworthy.

Young people engage with online news media more than any other age group (Kalogeropoulos, 2019), so there is a pertinent overlap between the **Inform** and **Educate** goals of our proposal; both seek to improve habits of media and information consumption and both provide a valuable complementary set of resources capable of empowering young people to engage more critically with the media they consume online. Furthermore, our goal to **Inform** overlaps with our goal to **Engage** as both focus explicitly on raising people's awareness of the mechanisms and personnel working in their government, in combination they have the potential to greatly increase an individual's understanding of and engagement with their democratic system. Finally, our **Engage** and **Educate** goals also overlap in a complementary manner. One of the demographics we hope to target most with our **Engage** goal is young people, since our **Educate** goal would involve actively engaging with students in the classroom, it would also provide an opportunity to share the resources developed during the **Engage** stage of the proposal.

These final two sections also overlap as both integrate discussions of climate change into their content. With COP26 being hosted later this year in Glasgow, we foresee an increase in discourse surrounding climate change in Scotland during the lead up to the event. We aim for our **Engage** and **Educate** goals in conjunction to therefore have a positive impact on the quality of this discourse.

The three aspects of our approach can also be seen as building on each other in a constructive, hierarchical manner, especially when considering young people. The **Educate** section of our proposal casts a wide net, engaging young people of all predispositions and helping them to establish the essential tools required to navigate modern media in a "post-fact" society. **Inform** pertains chiefly to enhancing our ability to consume information via the internet, with almost all (99%) young teenagers (12-15 years old) in the uk spending over 20 hours a week online (OFCOM, 2018), this has the potential to specifically resonate with the younger generation, building resolutely on the groundwork already laid and further enhancing the abilities of young people to consume media and engage with the democratic process in a productive, healthy way. Finally, **Engage** focuses on transforming political savviness and an ability to engage with contemporary issues, attributes we foresee being cultivated by the tandem influences of the **Educate** and **Inform** initiatives, into more direct, substantial political action. This hierarchical relationship is illustrated in the figure below.

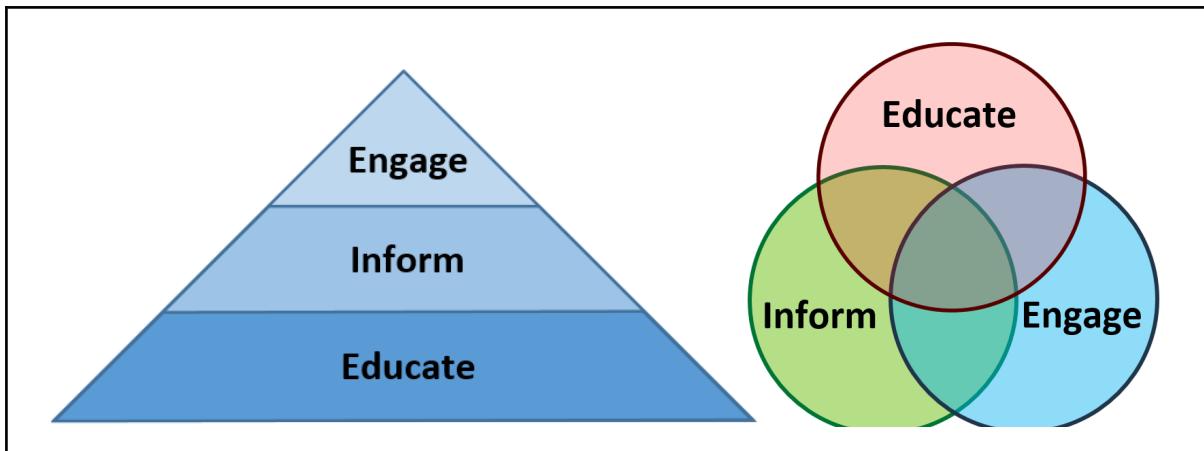


Fig 1: The triad of approaches within the proposal can be seen as building on one another hierarchically and also as complementing one another like the sections of a Venn diagram

Throughout this proposal, we discuss our solutions within the context of Scotland and Scottish politics, however we also discuss and emphasise the extensibility of the resources and tools we describe, exploring the potential they have to be expanded to truly global solutions.

Part 1: Educate

The problem

In a world where living prioritises getting things done rapidly, young adults are seeking alternative methods to consume information about what is happening in the world, rather than sitting down to read a traditional newspaper or watching the 10 o'clock news. A 2016 study conducted by the PEW research centre found that 50% of 18 to 29 year-old Americans and 49% of those aged 30-49 turn to online platforms for news. Of those who consume news online, 56% prefer using a mobile device (Mitchell et al., 2016). Therefore, accessing news is not solely about the information it presents, but the rapidity with which it is consumed. Furthermore, news has taken the form of infotainment wherein forecasting factual information is traded for attention-grabbing, heart-reacting entertainment (Thussu, 2008). Infotainment is problematic because it satisfies our bias to consume and experts are not the producers of this source of information (Nace, 2017). The exhibition of information is no longer reliant on reliability or fact, it prioritises shareability and intends for the material to be consumed as quickly as possible, allowing the hungry user to feast on more material.

Misinformation leads people to form false opinions about social issues, such as climate change, thus influencing our decision-making ability (Pennycook, et al., 2020).

Misinformation is blatantly an affront to democracy, overtly stated by the estimation that the average American adult viewed between one and three fake news stories on social media in the month leading to the 2016 election (Barthelet et al. 2016). Misinformation becomes particularly problematic in the case of climate change, often fake news suggests it is not occurring, that humans have not contributed to its causation, and that it does not pose a threat (Kuthe et al. 2020).

The solution

Education can give young people the critical thinking skills to analyse whether the information presented to them is accurate, reputable and supported by evidence. It is imperative to start education at a young age, given that young adults are those most likely to interact with social media. While social media has become a space in which users have access to endless amounts of information, it is largely an unmonitored, uncensored space (Kuthe et al. 2020). Typically, social media providers do not monitor the accuracy or the sources of content posted to their platforms. It is a space where actors who hold opposing beliefs battle for debate. Polarized activists and sceptic groups contend against one another which only furthers confusion due to their extreme difference in opinion, and specifically heightens confusion around climate change (Treen et al. 2020). Interactions are contained in a liberated space so it then becomes the users' own responsibility to identify misinformation.

Education on misinformation must take place at the point where people begin consumption of misinformation. Education on this issue must start with 12-15 year olds who are at the starting point of an online-driven lifestyle.

We propose an educational lesson plan pack, which is tailored to the Scottish S1-S3 groups, chosen as this age group is targeted by the Scottish Government curriculum levels 3 and 4.

We intend for this material to be presented in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons because it develops the ability to critically engage with material found in everyday social activities. During the expansion of the teaching materials, we continuously liaised with a University of St Andrews' Public Engagement Officer, who not only agrees this lesson plan is a valuable resource, but further wishes to showcase it as part of the COP26 lesson series, 'explorathon'. During a consultation, the Officer stated that this material could also be used to educate additional groups, such as prisoners, signifying the wide reach of the potential audience of the product. Thus, this demonstrates that the idea to educate young people on misinformation is imperative and that our proposed resources reflect effective application of the material. Our teaching materials were designed in accordance with teaching points outlined in the Scottish 'curriculum for excellence'. They target points from across the curriculum, with the purpose of being tailored to improve complete student understanding and aid teachers with meeting learning standards. The improvement of literacy and technological skills, as well as knowledge of social sciences specifically aims at the following teaching targets: TCH 4-02a, to manage info responsibly using digital technologies; LIT 4-08a, LIT 4-16a, LIT 4-18a, to evaluate sources and their intention, acknowledge what techniques may be used to influence my opinion, make informed judgments about information; SOC 4-01a, SOC 4-17b, SOC 4-18c, to educate about how and why the media influences public opinion on topics. Regarding the SOC teaching targets, the educational materials focus on climate change as a case study.

The format of the lesson plan (Appendix 3) uses a variety of learning materials, consisting of group discussions, videos, interactive activities and games, though no additional classroom resources are required, making the educational pack accessible. The variety of resources entertains and conserves engagement of the students. Within the presentation (Appendix 1), the images reflect a diverse range of students, making the material inclusive. The lesson on misinformation begins with a definition of misinformation and where it can frequently appear, such as on social media and in the realm of fake news. It then expands on misinformation and why it is important and suggestions of steps required to tackle it. Then, it presents the students with video content that reiterates ideas discussed and develops advice on how you can ensure you surround yourself with information, not misinformation. A group discussion on why it spreads so quickly and the steps individual students would themselves employ follows and means the students reflect on the material presented previously. Next, there is a more interactive element where students are presented with statements and move to one side of the room if they consider the statement to be true, the other if false. The majority of examples which appear are about climate change. Students are tasked with a review of the challenges of detecting misinformation and what techniques are used to deceive the consumer, such as biased sources made to look informative, catchy headlines, close to preconceived knowledge of a topic or clickbait titles. Then, the lesson highlights the need to think critically when engaging with sources, especially if they appear on your social media feed. After this, students participate in a cluedo-esque game. Like the board game, students must work together in teams to locate the culprit, but this time it is a culprit who has 'murdered' the truth, the person who is spreading misinformation to your team. Groups will be formed of 4-6 students. They must select job roles from a hat, various roles surrounding the spread of information, from a blogger, social media activist, tabloid journalist, TikTok star, social media influencer or rapid news journalist (see Appendix 2). They must also select persuasive literary devices from a hat and a source of media from a hat. A player will make a claim over who is the spreader of misinformation and will pitch the information in the way

they think it is being presented by the 'misinformer'. The player to their left must reveal to them whether they have any of the qualities mentioned (role, device and source). The winner is either the 'misinformer' who can successfully convince you that their deceptive story is true, or the rest of the team who identify the 'misinformer'. The lesson concludes with a summary of key comprehension points, aimed to leave the students reflecting on how they can employ strategies they have learned to tackle misinformation in the real world.

Next steps

Instructions for the lesson plan would be devised to equip other facilitators with the knowledge to run the lesson. We would also expand our educational material to create additional lessons on what leads us to form opinions about the world, how we are led to think in a certain way, and how we can critically engage with this. Ideas for further lessons include media literacy (understanding the intentions of entertainment shows, celeb interviews, documentaries, reality shows etc), how to fact check, who can you trust, how to analyse data and infographics and how algorithms work. University students are encouraged to develop a critical thinking mindset when analysing information or data, therefore as these skills are applied in the university setting, university students could share their skills to help the next generation and further accessibility. We are excited to continue working with the Public Engagement Officer who has expressed great enthusiasm for this aspect of the project and who has suggested bringing it into schools in the local area as soon as next year. Since the programme outlined in this section is not limited to Scotland, these lesson plans can be applied across multiple contexts.

Part 2: Inform

The Problem

As the chief instigators of social change within a liberal democracy, it is the role of citizens to remain informed about contemporary issues, their representatives, and the parliament (or corresponding body) which represents them (Hochschild, 2010). Be it voting in periodic elections for the politicians who will represent them, or voting directly in referendums to decide the actions a government will take, it is essential for any government hoping to successfully tackle contemporary issues that their electorate remains well informed and engaged in the democratic process.

The internet provides boundless potential and resources for helping people to develop well-informed opinions about issues and their representative lawmakers but is not without shortcomings; we have already discussed misinformation earlier in this proposal but there are several further detrimental aspects of the modern internet we seek to address the consequences of:

1. *Disorganised/Overwhelming*: With an estimated roughly half a million new websites being created every day and over a billion websites in total (Huss, 2021) the internet is a constantly shifting, colossal, decentralised compendium of resources. This can make it extremely difficult to find valuable information without having to wade through swathes of irrelevant sites or can be so overwhelming as to make it difficult to know what exactly it is one should be searching for in the first place.
2. *Shortened attention span*: It is well documented that consistent daily internet use has a significant negative effect on a user's short term attention span (Filmore, 2015; Firth et al., 2019), making it more difficult for users to engage with resources not imminently available to them.
3. *De-individualisation*: Research has consistently shown de-individualisation to impair one's ability to empathise with others. Psychologist Paul Slovic demonstrated that volunteers tended to act more charitably when shown a picture of a orphan than when they only knew the orphan's name (Slovic et al, 2013), and de-individualisation of individuals induced by computer communication can hinder one's ability to reach a common ground (or to "[conform] to a group norm") (Spears et al., 1990) when involved in arguments.

The Solution

To address these issues, we propose a small set of tools. The first being a browser addon (called "*Who is...?*") designed to provide essential information and a bite-sized profile about Scottish Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) whenever they are mentioned and discussed online. The second being a pair of live Twitter and Facebook pages providing close to real time updates on votes held in the Scottish Parliament. This pair of tools is aimed at enhancing the abilities of computer literate, politically engaged individuals to use

the internet to stay informed about contemporary issues by helping to address the internet's pitfalls outlined above.

Our proposed browser addon hopes to address all the issues laid out above to some degree. By making it as straightforward as possible to see the resources it provides, we aim to encourage users who would otherwise not seek out this information to explore and build more informed pictures about who their representatives are. By packaging a concise and immediately accessible selection of information about MSPs available literally a single click away, we mitigate the risk of users becoming distracted by other stimuli when looking for more information about their representatives. Similarly, we also combat the decision paralysis inherent to searching for information on the internet by providing a concise set of reputable external resources as jumping-off points (specifically: the MSPs Facebook and Twitter pages, their official Scottish Parliament page, and their Wikipedia page). By providing images of all MSPs, the addon seeks to establish an 'even playing field' whereby it is not the case, as it is now, that more well-known MSPs (e.g. Nicola Sturgeon, Douglas Ross, etc.) are de-individualised less due to having more well-known likenesses and their pictures being more frequently included in the body of articles than other MSPs.



Fig 2: Examples of the prototype browser addon in use in a BBC article and Twitter page

The chief issue tackled by the live update pages is the disorganised and convoluted nature of the internet. While the Scottish Parliament does keep a live record of all motions voted on, it is located in a secluded branch of the parliament website; by transposing this information to a medium like Twitter, the same resources are situated in far more accessible environment and users can piggyback off features native to Facebook and Twitter to provide a far more valuable experience (push notifications alerting users when new votes are held, retweeting/sharing to raise awareness about a specific vote, replying/commenting to initiate discussion of the vote, etc.). With demand for such a resource evidenced by similar profiles implemented in the USA for the senate and house floor (<https://twitter.com/HouseFloor>, <https://twitter.com/SenateFloor>) totalling roughly a million followers between them and approval from both Facebook and Twitter to access their system APIs (see Appendix 4) to implement these pages, we are excited to fully realise this aspect of our proposal beyond the functional demo developed as part of this proposal (which is currently running live as a trial to verify functionality and can be found at: <https://twitter.com/WHIScoParl>, <https://www.facebook.com/WHIScoParl>).

Next steps

As part of our proposal, we provide functional, mature proof of concept prototypes for the technologies proposed (for more information including how to try out the browser addon, see Appendix 4). These prototypes demonstrate the feasibility of these technologies. These implementations are sufficiently agnostic of the specific government they are tied to such that they can be straightforwardly repurposed to function equally successfully in a wide number of other democracies throughout the world. For the addon for example, we include as part of our proposal a guide aimed at those with basic knowledge of computer programming, describing how exactly it can be repurposed to function equally successfully within different democracies (as an example this guide discusses how someone interested in extending the addon's coverage could gather the necessary data to include information about members of the UK Parliament), this guide can be found on the addon's Github page (Github being the chief website used for sharing and collaboration on open source projects such as this) (see Appendix 4 for a link to this page).

Our addon currently supports Chrome and Firefox browsers, covering over two thirds of the global browser market share (NetMarketShare, 2021). We are excited to undergo the process of having our addon approved by the Chrome and Firefox store in order to have them easily accessible to all users. And with our prototype parliamentary update pages running live, we are looking forward to being able to conclude verifying their functionality and begin exploring bringing them to a wide audience.

Part 3: Engage

The Problem

The fracturing relationship between politicians and voters is becoming increasingly obvious: in 2019, just fourteen per cent of the British public said that they trust politicians to tell the truth (Ipsos Mori, 2019). Some authors such as Liaropoulos (2020) have speculated that this represents an erosion of the social contract; as many citizens no longer believe that their governments act to protect their best interests, the legitimacy of their governments to rule is being called into question (OECD, 2013).

In order to address this issue, alongside other solutions, the social contract between a government and its voters arguably needs to be strengthened. The OECD monitor the erosion of public trust in political authorities and argue that “governments need to be more inclusive, more transparent, more receptive and more efficient” and further that governments need to “listen, consult, engage, and explain to citizens” (OECD, 2013, 36; OECD.org, 2020). Their report findings indicate that ordinary voters need to be incorporated, involved, and included in the policy-making process. Not only will this strengthen democratic ideals and arguably lead to better policy-making, as politicians will be more accountable to an engaged voter base, but having more opportunities for engagement, and reflecting that engagement, will arguably improve trust in political establishments among voters.

This is not a new idea; indeed, it is an axiomatic founding principle of democracy, to the extent that today it is practically a platitude. Governments like the Scottish Government use consultations to allow members of the public to provide their opinions on salient issues which will then be incorporated into policy-making; governments publish information to clarify the policy-making process and governmental mechanisms (e.g., see the www.gov.scot website); and, of course, members of the public have the ability to contact and lobby their local representatives. However, what is missing from this process is a simple and effective way of linking voters to these opportunities for political engagement. To even the most politically engaged voters the policy-making process is complicated and opaque. Information about public consultations is buried in the depths of the Scottish government’s website - indeed, of the three most recently closed public consultations run by the Scottish Parliament the one with the most responses, which concerned Scotland’s Land Use Strategy 2021 – 2026, had only been responded to by 86 individuals and organisations (Scottish Government Consultations, 2021). Importantly, opportunities for public engagement and the benefits of doing so are arguably a neglected element of democratic discourse (Stewart, 2009); political participation should not begin and end at the ballot box.

Some resources such as the Scottish Policy and Research Exchange (SPRE) and the Centre for Energy Ethics at the University of St Andrews’ Policy Engagement Practice seminar series intend to bridge the gap between policy-makers and researchers in order to facilitate evidence-driven policy-making. These are laudable programmes, but other schemes are needed to encourage and facilitate similar levels of engagement from other segments of the population. In particular, young people need to be supported in directly engaging in the political process in Scotland.

The Solution

This element of our project will aim to help young people to engage with the political process in Scotland. To do this, we propose to create a resource pack that will be published online to boost engagement in consultative political processes, with a particular focus on helping young people to engage with issues regarding climate change.

Firstly, it will help young people understand how to contact their MSP. Youth engagement in politics is declining, and this trend is evident in the relative scarcity of young people who contact their representatives (Print, 2007, 325). Giving young people the tools to contact their MSPs, thereby giving them the opportunity to voice their views and concerns, strengthens the democratic process and can help to build transparency and trust in politics. To do this, we have created a draft guide that explains the process and provides a template that students can use (Appendix 5). The template relates to the Scottish Government's net-zero targets, as climate change is increasingly relevant to younger generations (Gibbons, 2014).

Secondly, this resource pack will introduce young people to participating in public consultations. Consultations are a particularly impactful way of engaging in politics as the Government is directly requesting to hear how policies might impact people and communities, and how voters may respond to these. Additionally, as many consultations do not receive a high proportion of responses, respondents' views are arguably further likely to have a relatively high impact (see Scottish Government Consultations, 2021). Supporting young people to engage with these consultations can raise the political salience of issues relevant to young people and build trust in political institutions by involving young people in the decision-making process. This proposal has submitted a draft poster that can be shared online, used in a classroom setting, or showcased physically, which seeks to clarify the consultation process and make young people aware of opportunities for engagement (Appendix 6).

Thirdly, the resource pack will demystify the policy-making process by providing an overview of how laws are made, including information such as who proposes a bill, who sponsors it, and the stages that it has to go through before it becomes law. It will further include a roadmap of the policy-making process with a case study relating to climate change with emphasis on elements that young people can get involved in. This is important as youth engagement in politics is stymied by a lack of understanding of some of the complexities of politics and policy-making (Levy et al., 2016, 491). This section will seek to be interactive and participative, and will include interviews from politicians and political pressure groups about how young people can get involved in policy-making and the political process and why it is important that they do so.

Next steps

This project has outlined how it will help young people to engage with the political process in Scotland, and provided draft guides which can be compiled into a resource pack. The resource pack needs to be further developed, and in particular the section that aims to demystify the policy-making process requires further work. Importantly, the resource pack will also undergo regular evaluation by asking users of the pack to provide feedback after its

use, which will ensure that the pack is consistently providing young people with the best tools to support their engagement in the policy-making process. Further, these resources are also transferable to other governmental systems. Whilst the policy-making processes and opportunities for student engagement will differ from government to government, the resource pack can easily be used as a template and guide for the development of similar tools in other countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this project outlined a portfolio of interconnected resources that work together to empower individuals and equip them with the resources to navigate and participate successfully in the democratic process. We decided to focus on Scottish politics to demonstrate how these solutions can work together to develop a more politically active and knowledgeable voter base. However, we would stress that these tools are versatile, and, providing that the tools we develop are effective, we would aim to develop similar tools for the British political system and support the development of a similar set of tools elsewhere.

Our project outlined a set of solutions that collectively educate, inform, and engage members of the Scottish public. Firstly, we proposed an educational lesson plan pack that will develop the ability of secondary school children to critically engage with material found in everyday social activities. Next, we proposed the creation of a suite of online tools, including a browser addon and Twitter and Facebook pages, that would inform members of the public about contemporary political issues and personalities. Finally, we proposed the creation of a resource pack that would give students and potentially other members of the public the basic tools and information that they need to engage in these processes. These solutions work together to cultivate an engaged and informed electorate in Scotland, thereby improving accountability mechanisms for policy-makers and building trust in political systems.

We are confident the proposal outlined in this report showcases the potential and feasibility of these solutions and are thankful to the judges for taking the time to consider our proposal. We are excited by the prospect of further developing this project and grateful for the opportunity granted to us by taking part in this programme to be part of the movement working to combat these salient and urgent global challenges.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Misinformation presentation slides

Presentation slides for lesson on misinformation, presented from left to right

The image displays a 4x2 grid of presentation slides, each with a red header and footer. The slides are arranged in four rows and two columns.

- Row 1:**
 - Misinformation Online**: A slide titled "Misinformation Online" with a "Global Challenge Project" button. It features an illustration of a person sitting at a desk with a laptop.
 - Learning Objectives**: A slide titled "Learning Objectives" listing three goals: "Gain an in-depth understanding of what misinformation is", "Learn how to detect misinformation", and "Evaluate sources of information".
- Row 2:**
 - Lesson Outline**: A slide titled "Lesson Outline" with a list of topics: "What is misinformation?", "Why does misinformation matter?", "How to detect misinformation", "True or False activity", "Evaluating sources of information", and "Cluedo activity". It features an illustration of a person at a desk with a laptop.
 - What is misinformation?**: A slide with a large info icon. It defines misinformation as false, inaccurate or misleading information spread regardless of intent. It also defines fake news as false stories created to be widely spread for revenue or discredit public figures.
- Row 3:**
 - Why does misinformation matter?**: A slide with a brain icon. It explains that misinformation can trick people into believing something is true when it's not, leading to incorrect opinions. It includes a section on how to detect misinformation.
 - SOCIAL MEDIA**: A slide titled "SOCIAL MEDIA" showing a video player interface for a course on navigating digital information. It includes a play button and a timestamp "watch from 3:50 - 11:11".
- Row 4:**
 - Why does misinformation spread so quickly?**: A slide with a person at a desk. It includes a newspaper icon and a section on strategies to avoid consuming misinformation.
 - True or False?**: A slide titled "True or False?" with two large buttons: "TRUE" (green) and "FALSE" (red). It includes a statement about climate change and a note that statements will be presented for evaluation.

1. Global Warming

2. Trump Slammed For Mocking Reporter's Disability

3. Harambe for president? Thousands reportedly vote for dead gorilla

4. Breitbart - DELINPOL: NOW 400 SCIENTIFIC PAPERS IN 2017 SAY GLOBAL WARMING IS A MYTH

5. Natural News - NASA confirms: Sea levels have been FALLING across the planet for two years... media SILENT

6. Climate Change: How Do We Know?

7. 56% of Facebook users can't recognize fake news - SSRN

Quote from Kelley School of Business Research Paper

8. What are the challenges of detecting misinformation?

How to get informed consent from people you will be using photographs, sound recordings, or videos of

9. Evaluating sources

A discussion on the proper way of referencing all elements of your digital story that are not your own, including ideas, data, images, video, and audio

10. Cluedo

Like the board game, you must work together in teams to locate the culprit who is spreading misinformation to your team. The winner is either the 'misinformer' who can successfully convince you that their descriptive story is true, or the rest of the team who identify the 'misinformer'

- Get into groups of 4-6
- Select job roles from a hat – various roles surrounding the spread of information e.g. twitter blogger, social media activist, tabloid journalist, TikTok advocate etc
- Select persuasive literary devices from a hat
- Select a source of media from a hat
- A player will make a claim over who is the spreader of misinformation and will pitch the information in the way they think it is being presented by the 'misinformer'
- The player to their left must reveal to them whether they have any of the qualities mentioned (role, device, source)
- The game continues until you have a winner!

11. Summary

What have you learned today?

- How are people convinced that misinformation is actually true?
- How will you interact with online sources?
- How will you know the information is reputable?
- What strategies can be employed to avoid misinformation?
- What are 'good' sources?
- How and why will you critique sources?

Appendix 2: Cluedo roles



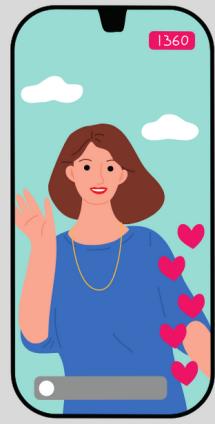
**Social media
activist**

**Tabloid
journalist**



**Rapid news
journalist**

**TikTok
star**



Blogger



Influencer

Appendix 3: Teaching Plan for lesson on misinformation

Tackling misinformation Lesson Plan: Lesson One		
Class:	Date:	Third and Fourth Level
Topic Materials	Lesson outline / experience	Resources
TCH: 4-02a LIT: 4-08a 4-16a 4-18a SOC: 4-01a 4-17b 4-18c	<p>Introduction to misinformation – Whole Group Discussion - What is misinformation? Where does it appear?</p> <p>Why is misinformation important? - Whole Group Discussion - How does false information spread so quickly? Why does that matter to me? How can I detect it?</p> <p>Overview about misinformation – Whole Group Discussion - crash course video of misinformation and where you may come across it. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5YKW6fhss</p> <p>True or False – Whole Group Activity - Which of statements are examples of <u>factual information</u> or misinformation?</p> <p>How to evaluate sources and information online – whole group discussion - What thinking strategies can we use to overcome deceiving sources of misinformation? How can we ensure the information we consume online is correct?</p> <p>Climate Cluedo – small group activity, groups of 5-6 pupils – students select job roles from a hat, one person is given the role of ‘misinformation journalist’ and must attempt to deceive the remaining pupils. The pupils must guess what tool they use to spread misinformation and the source of misinformation in order to win.</p> <p>Plenary</p>	Smart Board PP Misinformation Lesson 1 Cards for ‘Cluedo: Fake News on Climate Change edition’ activity Reward for winner of activity (sweets) Pencils / pens
Learning intention: I know about misinformation and the dangers it causes. I can distinguish between a reputable source of information and when a source is spreading misinformation.		
Assessment / Success criteria: I can work with my group to understand how information may be perceived as factual but is misinformation. I can evaluate sources of information and understand which ones are more reputable. I can observe how misinformation is spread so rapidly, the techniques used and <u>utilise</u> strategies to overcome this.		
Skills: I can identify what techniques are used to trick me into believing a source is true and I can assess the value of my sources. I can evaluate the role of the media in presenting information and evaluate my consumption of online information. With increasing confidence, I can use analytical thinking skills (<u>analysing, synthesising, evaluating, reasoning and reflecting</u>) in more complex contexts where the credibility of information is less obvious.		
KU: I know that misinformation is important, which can deceive many people about important world issues, such as climate change.		

Appendix 4: Twitter and Facebook granting of access confirmation and Github links

Github repositories containing source code for prototypes of solutions discussed:

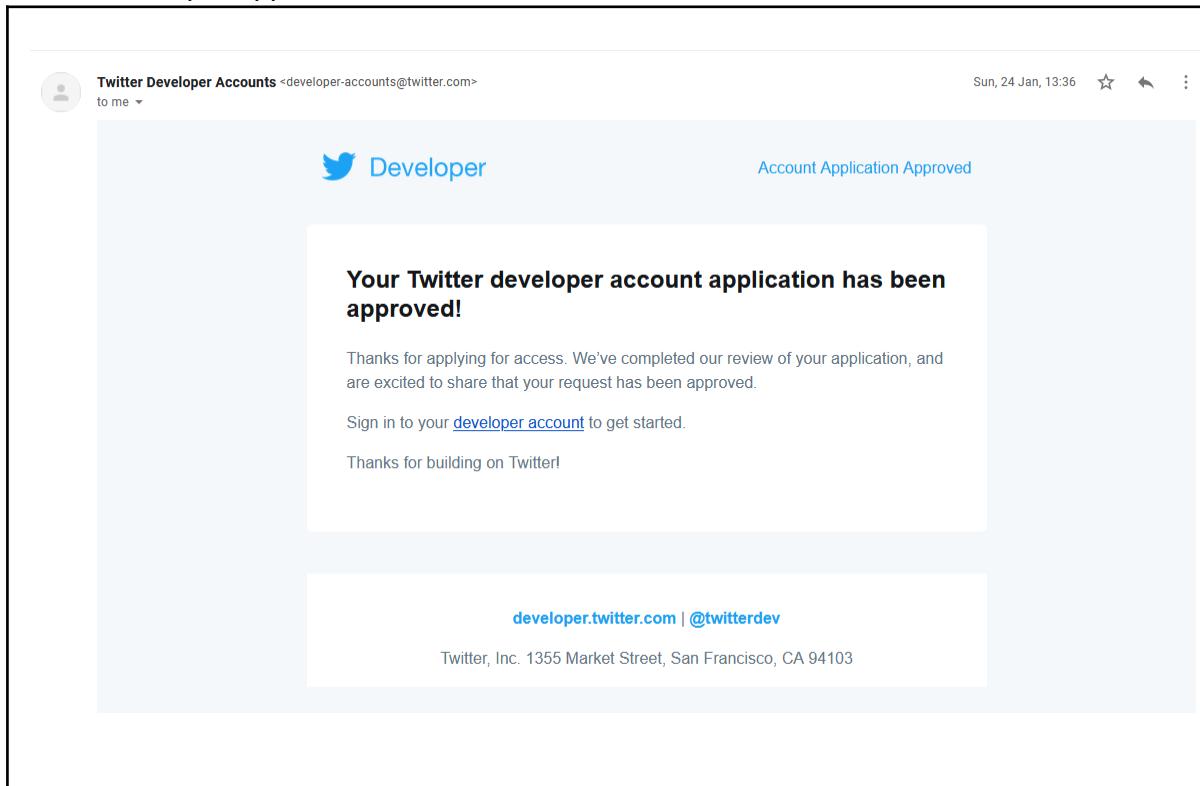
Browser addon (Including instructions on how to download):

<https://github.com/Kaz-W/lawmaker-addon>

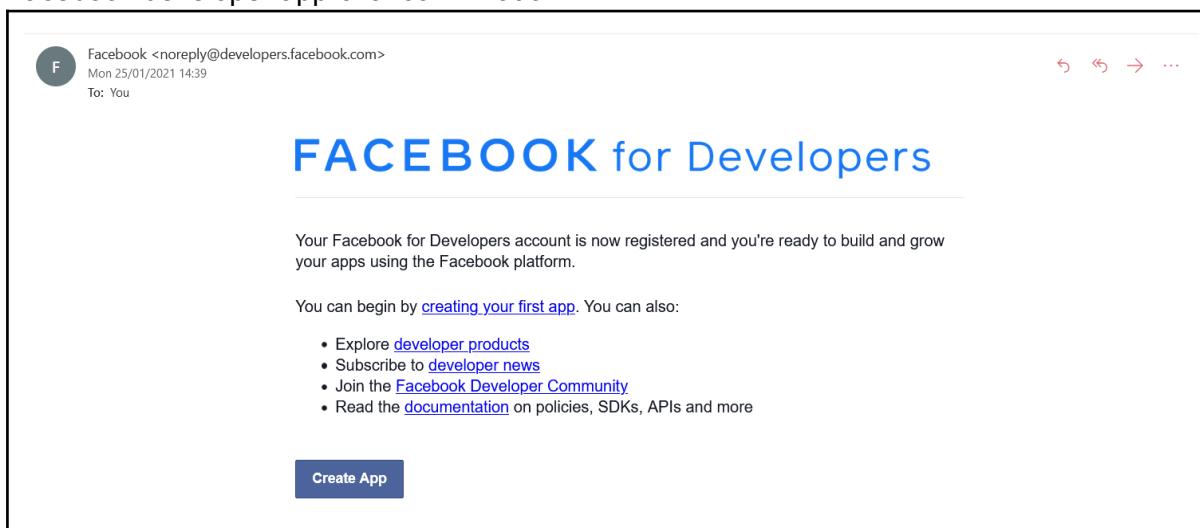
Facebook and Twitter page:

<https://github.com/Kaz-W/scottish-parliament-live>

Twitter developer approval confirmation:



Facebook developer approval confirmation:



Appendix 5: A Guide to Contacting your MSP

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MSP

A quick guide to contacting your representative in the Scottish Parliament

Why should you get in touch?

Contacting your MSP is a simple and effective way of making your views heard.

Representing your views and concerns is your MSP's job. By contacting them you can make sure the issues you care about are recognised.



How to contact your MSP

1 Find out who they are

Find out who your MSPs are by going to the www.parliament.scot/msps website and entering your postcode



2 Find their email address

Click on their profile to find out information about your MSPs, and make a note of their email address



3 Follow the template

Follow the template below and send the email - it's that simple!



SUGGESTED TEMPLATE

Dear [insert name] MSP,

Begin your letter by introducing yourself and explain that you are one of their constituents.

Then, introduce the topic you care about. For instance, "I am writing to you regarding the Scottish Government's commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2045. Whilst this commitment is to be welcomed, I feel it does not tackle this pressing issue quickly enough".

Provide evidence to support your point. For instance, "The world is one degree hotter than it was in pre-industrial times, and we are on course to be 1.5 degrees hotter by 2030. A temperature increase of this scale could have a disastrous impact on populations and ecosystems."

You could talk about ways you feel the issue may affect you personally. For instance, "I fear that if governments do not respond to this issue quickly enough, my generation will face an insecure and dangerous future".

You could end your email by inviting your MSP to discuss this issue with you further, or by asking them to vote a certain way on future legislation. For instance, "I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my concerns about climate change further, and I urge you to support future legislation that would speed up Scotland's response to this urgent threat."

Kind regards,

[your name]

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

A quick guide to having your say on issues that matter

The Scottish Government uses consultations to hear what the public think about different issues

Its an easy way to let politicians know what you think about the issues that matter to you

Visit the consult.gov.scot/ website to discover consultations that you can take part in