Trainer on Social Listening for civil society actors in Mongolia

With the increasing accessibility to the Internet and reduced cost of producing and disseminating misleading content, people globally are exposed to an unprecedented volume of potentially harmful information. This prevalence of disinformation has become a significant challenge for media and civil society actors (CSOs). This project addresses the urgent need to equip media and CSO actors with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate this complex information landscape, identify disinformation, and provide reliable information to the public.

We outline a comprehensive training program designed to equip media and CSO actors with the necessary skills and tools to combat disinformation in the digital age effectively. We focus on teaching them about hands-on data collection from social media platforms, providing an understanding of emerging platforms, discussing trends in disinformation identification, and leveraging AI technologies to detect the spread of misinformation. This program will empower media rooms and CSOs to adapt to the ever-evolving social-media information landscape.

**Organization**

[SimPPL](https://simppl.org) is a research collective that aims to rebuild trust in the social internet. Our work spans three verticals: we identify networks of threat actors, measure the influence of mis and disinformation, and deploy mitigation measures that are open-access and allow the public to audit online information. We support newsrooms, fact-checkers, and intergovernmental agencies like the United Nations in deploying AI tools for social good that are informed by local stakeholders and cultural norms. Our team is pursuing cutting-edge engineering and research projects that help advance information integrity and limit the effects of misleading information online. We also train students through international award-winning, hybrid, months-long programs in machine learning and social science complementing their curriculum, with the goal of producing top-tier research and developing scalable computing tools.

**SimPPL has previously worked successfully with the NEST Center for Journalism in Mongolia, and with Deutsche Welle Akademie on a number of projects focusing on digital literacy, social listening, and AI. We have conducted successful trainings for DW staff and NEST Center staff with a focus on Generative AI and on technology development for fact-checkers, respectively.**

**Accomplishments**

SimPPL’s work spans 6 countries with over 20 universities, newsrooms, and nonprofit partners, reaching thousands of people with over 50 million viewers of our online media coverage in multiple countries. We built and deployed systems to audit recommender systems at Oxford ([Mehta et. al, 2022](https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:d1b07465-cf5b-4cee-8c02-8ab1ff900623/files/s8623j018t)), tracked coordinated networks with UK-based newsrooms, detected state-backed threat actors with former US intelligence agency partners, identified gendered hate and harassment with Bangladeshi country leads for Meta ([Infolab report, 2024](https://infolab.techglobalinstitute.com/)), supported digital literacy in Germany and Mongolia, deployed digital literacy and healthcare tools for hundreds in villages in India and Bangladesh. We have trained over a hundred undergraduate students, published papers at workshops at ICML, NeurIPS, ICWSM, AAAI, received awards from MIT, Google, Mozilla, the NYC Media Lab, the Goethe Institut, the Center for Tech and Society, and been invited to panels and presentations at multiple embassies to advise policymaking around AI.

Our work with platforms like X (Twitter), Meta, and evaluating information on Bluesky ([Shamraj et. al, 2024](https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.09035)), Truth Social ([Shah et. al, 2024](https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.03354)), and Telegram, presented at Stanford University, spotlight the variety of dark patterns within large and small tech platforms and how platform business models are centered around extracting value from user data, often at odds with data protection policies like the GDPR. Our leadership’s contributions at the Integrity Institute, a trust and safety think tank, informs policymakers in the US, EU, and UK to improve [transparency regulation](https://integrityinstitute.org/news/institute-news/integrity-institute-releases-overview-of-online-social-platform-transparency) and [elections integrity measures](https://integrityinstitute.org/news/institute-news/elections-pt-2). Their efforts served as the basis for the advice provided to the European Digital Media Observatory, Ofcom, European Council on Algorithmic Transparency, and were featured in national media, newsletters, and presentations.

### Timeline

| **Agenda** | **Day 1** | **Day 2** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Case Studies for the Identification of Misleading Information – Meta and YouTube | 1 hr. |  |
| Identification of Chinese and Russian Influence Operations in Mongolia | 2 hrs. |  |
| Emergent Social Media Platforms: Bluesky and the Fediverse | 1 hr. |  |
| **Workshop: Data Collection from Social Media Platforms** | 2 hrs. |  |
| Research Tools for Journalists and Civil Society |  | 1 hr. |
| Measurement of the Influence of Misinformation |  | 1 hrs. |
| Artificial Intelligence for Combating Disinformation |  | 1 hr. |
| Human-assisted Content Flagging |  | 1 hr. |
| **Workshop: Using AI to Flag Hateful Speech** |  | 2 hrs. |

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### Budget

The training team will comprise a team leader and up to 9 staff members who bring individual expertise into social listening, AI, hate and harassment, mis and disinformation. The agenda describes presentations and workshops each staff member will develop and lead. Our proposed budget includes all overheads and legal fees for the work to be done.

| **Item** | **Cost (EUR)** |  | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Staff Members | 5800 | 9 staff members  Team Lead: 75 EUR / hr \* 24 hrs  Presenters (8): 25 EUR / hr \* 20 hrs | The staff members we will dedicate to this project for the listed duration. |
| Software Infrastructure | 425 | Data collection pipeline development, data storage, and cloud computing resources required for workshops | Preparing live demonstrations of AI tools and social listening systems for hands-on learning experience |
| Overhead | 575 |  | Overhead expenditure including fiscal sponsorship fees. |
| **Project Cost** | 6800 |  |  |