

# MASQUERADE DOCUMENTATION

## ***The problem and research backing it:***

- Misinformation poses a significant threat to awareness with children being more immersed in the online world than ever.
- Kids lack the skills to discern between truth and deception.
- This concern is often disregarded considering that most parents allow their children social media from a very young age.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/10/health/fake-news-kids-common-sense-media/index.html>

<https://pirg.org/edfund/articles/misinformation-on-social-media/#:~:text=Researchers%20at%20MIT%20have%20found,true%20reporting%20on%20social%20media>

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/255852/childrens-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2023.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0027/255852/childrens-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2023.pdf)

<https://www.common sense media.org/kids-action/articles/our-new-research-shows-where-kids-get-their-news-and-how-they-feel-about-it>

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-129/Technology/How-Finland-is-teaching-a-generation-to-spot-misinformation-26376>

“Media literacy is not just important, it’s absolutely critical. It’s going to make the difference between whether kids are a tool of the mass media or whether mass media is a tool for kids to use.” – Linda Ellerbee

## ***Analysis of the target audience and the accessibility strategy:***

- Children/students are the target audience, schools/teachers would be the clientele as the platform can be managed and introduced by teachers to students.
- Children are less likely to find an educational platform on their own.

## ***Design decisions that are made to ensure user-friendliness:***

- We had a point system so that getting a correct answer will gain the user points and vice versa, but it was eliminated to let teachers have more control over the experience when using the e-learning platform. The point system took the experience a bit further away from the teacher.
- The software is simple to use as you only need the space bar and arrow keys to play.

## ***Changes made based on feedback and testing:***

- Originally, it was meant to be an adventure game that teaches children how information can be perceived in different ways.

- We had multiple storylines to pick from; some were centred around a specific humanitarian crisis to raise awareness, but we realised the game should be more generic.
- After a lot of feedback from peers and pro-con lists, we settled on making the game centred around the idea of simply teaching children how to interpret information and to be able to tell whether it is reliable or not.
- We also had to format the text showing on the screen differently as we noticed some issues after texting the game, as well as fixed errors in the graphics aspect of our project after some research.
- Using a game engine such as GameMaker was not the most difficult task, but it was definitely a learning curve.

#### ***Business plan and funding strategy:***

- We are a B-to-B (business to business, ours to schools) that would have a subscription of 10QR per student per month.
- According to Education in Qatar – Statistical Profile 2022 there were around 66,000 preparatory school students in Qatar. This means that our Total Addressable Market (TAM) in one year (if 100% of the profit is captured) would be 7,920,000QR.  
[https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/Education/2022/Education Statistical Pro%EF%AC%81le 2022 EN.pdf](https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/Education/2022/Education%20Statistical%20Profile%202022%20EN.pdf)
- So even conservatively, even when more developers are hired in the future, we can still make enough to breakeven and go beyond to fund our own project.
- Qatar is only our beachhead market. We plan to expand beyond Qatar into the region, and then worldwide. We also aim to target international curriculums such as IB or IGCSE to embed our product into their syllabi. This will be another source of funding.

#### ***Technical documentation of the prototype:***

- We used GameMaker as a game engine and did almost all our code on it.
- We used Crochet, a tool for creating and branching out interactive stories (e.g. picking “yes” takes you to the library, picking “no” takes you to the castle). It mainly helped us with scripting our story and had very minimal coding.
- We linked our Crochet file with GameMaker to make a ChatterBox, which was then linked to the code and the illustrations.
- We also designed our own pixelated characters using Piskel.

#### ***Evidence and plans for scalability:***

- As mentioned above, expanding and reaching more schools will not affect us negatively as we have economies of scale.
- To be able to expand to different schools we will create different versions of this software and introduce difficulty levels to add some diversity to the game. We could also use AI to write different scripts efficiently.