



## 07/2020 Newsletter #3

<https://defacto.space>

### SOMA MEMBERSHIP

In March 2020 De Facto became member of the EU Observatory for disinformation (Social Observatory for Disinformation and Social Media Analysis - SOMA). SOMA is working with a dedicated collaborative platform that is used primarily by leading media organisations and investigative journalists worldwide.

We believe that a key asset we can bring with us to the team at SOMA is our unique approach on disinformation: not only dealing with fact-checking and source-checking, but also looking into the possible motivation, the cognitive processes behind attempted manipulation, and the potential long-term effect on us via the education and training systems.

## Our Third Newsletter

From this third De Facto newsletter you will receive up-to-date information about the latest project results and activities. The COVID-19 crisis required some changes and adjustments of the initially planned workflow of the project partners but we all managed to adapt to the new working environment in order for the quality of the project outcomes to remain as high as originally intended.

## Project Results

The De Facto project is towards its end and we are proud and satisfied with the results of this two-year journey. During the project's lifetime we gained insights and knowledge about the natural, unconscious cognitive processing of new pieces of (dis)information. Now we have a better understanding of how mis- and disinformation is produced and spread. The De Facto partnership has developed tools aimed to empower the educators in their endeavour to teach learners how to detect false information and to develop their critical thinking skills.

### De Facto key results:

- De Facto science-based Framework;
- Detection algorithm in dual form: digital (De Facto Factification game web app) and analog (De Facto Board Game);
- Disinformation case studies for use in training contexts (Disinformation Games);
- Disinformation production kit;
- De Facto Guidebook for educators;
- De Facto Blueprint

The De Facto partners continuously update and maintain user-friendly and easy-to-navigate website <https://defacto.space/> which accommodates all project deliverables. All project results and activities are available there in the 7 partner languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, English, Italian, Polish and Slovenian.

## On Focus

In January and February 2020 we organised two training activities (C1&C2). A total of 42 educators participated in the Foundation Level trainings held in Ghent (Belgium) and Kroměříž (The Czech Republic). During these trainings we presented and discussed the science behind De Facto and the disinformation case studies, developed to assist the educators in their teaching practices.

In March an Advanced Level training (C3) was held in Sofia (Bulgaria) but the restrictions imposed by the governments of some partner countries prevented the participants from those countries to travel and thus only participants from Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia took part. During this training the educators received first-hand experience in developing their own case study.

All training interventions were organised in a workshop manner which put the educators in the role of active participants and not only passive listeners.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to find a new solution for the fourth De Facto face-to-face training (C4) which was planned to take place at the end of March 2020 in Łódź (Poland). A challenge for us all, as it was never an option to cancel the event altogether, which requires swift adaptation of our work, with the support from the Bulgarian NA.

Now an interactive online training course has been developed by the partners, hosted on the NTCenter's learning platform. It starts on 1st August 2020 and the participating educators will be able to interact and work together from a distance.

# National Training Center

NTCenter is a private adult education and training company established in 1999 and is dedicated to supporting, advancing and promoting innovative education and training practices, through research projects in vocational and adult education. This includes developing and supporting international research partnerships and projects, coordinating major partnerships with other educational organisations and the private sector.

The primary areas of research and development expertise are: training methodologies for adult education and training, competence-based assessment systems, EQF and ECVET referencing, curricula development, authoring learning materials, creating business-related games and case studies, designing/authoring/adapting training content for learners with Special Education Needs (SEN), teaching strategies based on cognitive science, mis- and disinformation in education and training contexts.

In 2004 NTCenter was licensed to operate the Adam Smith College of Management and until mid-2017 this was a key element of its activities which helped build a very strong profile in designing training programmes, authoring training content and experimenting newly developed methodologies in adult and vocational training. Due to new legal requirements, the Adam Smith College of Management became a separate legal entity and now functions independently.

NTCenter is founding member of the non-profit organisation Education Network Association and supports the NGO's key activity of providing internationally accredited ICT certifications.

NTCenter is the project coordinator of De Facto. More info at <https://www.ntcenter.bg/en/expertise/>



## Andy Stoycheff

Andy Stoycheff is one of the NTCenter's founders. He has MBA in Business Administration from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, and postgraduate qualification in pedagogy from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia.

Works on research projects and projects related with development and applying innovations in the field of education and training, since 2003.

He teaches Entrepreneurship and Strategic Planning at the Adam Smith College of Management in Sofia. He is Director of the College and has previously worked as a business analyst, junior consultant, senior consultant and team leader in management consulting companies.

Since 2015 he has been developing methods and approaches to learning based on neuroscience, cognitive science and cognitive linguistics, including a focus on the mis- and disinformation phenomena.

## What's next?

Mandatory social distancing in the time of COVID-19 pandemic posed a new challenge to the partnership:

*How to organise the planned face-to-face multiplier events in order to spread and promote the exploitation of the project results among the different De Facto target groups and stakeholders?*

The obvious solution was to substitute face-to-face events with live online webinars. The first webinars were hosted in the end of June 2020 by the Polish partner AHE. In July and August webinars will be organised by the Bulgarian, Belgium, Italian and UK partners.

Still, there will be two face-to-face multiplier events - in The Czech Republic and Slovenia.

Follow the news section on our website for more info about the events <https://defacto.space/news/>



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