Aneta:

Hello. Welcome to the second episode of Reflections, a three-part podcast on fake news and disinformation, which is a part of SPARK Initiative project. Your hosts today are Aneta and ...

Ger:

Aneta:

Hello, Ger.

Ger:

[crosstalk 00:00:16] I'm very loud. Sorry. I'm very excited to be here for episode two.

Aneta:

That's great. thank you for being here and accepting my invitation.

Ger:

Thank you.

Aneta:

In our first episode of Reflections, as you remember, we talked about the emergence of fake news, particularly in the wake of the 2016 US presidential elections. We showed that fake news is an umbrella term, and provided you with examples of what the term embraces. We also discussed the real consequences of disinformation and what dangers disinformation poses to our democracies.

Aneta:

Today, we are going to focus on ideas and concepts that help us to understand how it happens that we are actually being exposed to disinformation and fake news. To understand that is a first step to develop a critical attitude towards the information that we encounter online.

Aneta:

As we are talking about online attitudes and information that we encounter online, Ger, I want to ask you about social media. Do you use social media, and what type of social media? And if you could, maybe talk about the contents that you encounter.

Ger:

Yeah. Well, first of all, I love social media. It's one of my favorite things. I probably enjoy it a little bit too much. I use lots of different forms of social media and for different reasons as well. I have Facebook, but I don't really ever really use Facebook anymore. It's really to keep in touch with some people, and that's about it.

Aneta:

Interesting.

Ger:

In terms of ... Yeah, well, you know. But in terms of for content, the two that I would use most regularly would be Instagram and Twitter. But I think the content of both of those platforms, for me anyway, are very different.

Ger:

In terms of Instagram, it's usually more product-based or personal-based, whether you're following a certain celebrity, or if there's a particular product or brand that you like, or that you see while you're scrolling through. That's what I would use most of Instagram's content for.

Ger:

Whereas Twitter, I would use it more as a source of, I guess really, to use the buzzword of this whole podcast series, of information. I like to keep up with news channels. I like to see what videos are going around. I like to search hashtags and see what's going on. But as I am sure we are going to learn, there's obviously perils and some dangers that come along with that too.

Aneta:

Yes, yes. I actually would like us to discuss a few concepts that relate to the content that you encounter online, but yeah, going back to the concepts that can help us to understand why and how we encounter information that we do. These concepts are echo chambers, confirmation bias, information overload. We are going to talk a little bit about the role of algorithms as well.

Aneta:

Firstly, I think it's very important to stress that these concepts are specifically related to social media, which I think most of people, and especially talking about students and the younger generation, as they encounter most of the news and other information on social media. The biggest tendency that we see recently is the blurring of the line between professional journalism, professional news media, and social media chatter.

Aneta:

The first concept, echo chamber, relates to an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own. An echo chamber leads its members to sometimes distrust anybody from the outside of that chamber, or we could also call it information bubble.

Aneta:

For example, if you again, I don't know, Ger, you maybe can speak about Twitter a little bit in a second, but if you have your groups on Facebook, and you like certain things, and you follow certain sites, but never consult any other news, then you exist in this very insulated ecosystem of information.

Aneta:

Just to repeat that, echo chambers then relate to that environment in which you are being exposed to this specific type of information. I don't know if that happens on Twitter, but we definitely see that on Facebook.

Ger:

I think we definitely see it on Instagram. Absolutely.

Aneta:

Okay. In what way?

Ger:

Again, it's probably not dissimilar to Facebook in that there is ... This is one of the things that you don't necessarily see it as a dangerous thing, but there will be a lot of targeted ads. I know you mentioned, briefly, algorithms and obviously with that is cookies.

Ger:

I think when we see cookies, a lot of us don't really understand. We just accept it to get rid of that little warning very fast. But when we think they're little tiny pieces of data that's allowed to be stored about what we're looking at and what we're clicking into. It does remember that.

Ger:

It always reminds me of that echo chamber, because once you like one thing or one brand or one company, you will just constantly see that coming through on your feed on Instagram again and again and again.

Ger:

I guess in Twitter, it's a little bit of your own doing, I think, is what I find. You can find yourself that you've put yourself into an echo chamber because of who you choose to follow. I think that's important.

Ger:

I've had to learn to combat that with Twitter, to expose myself to other opinions and views, just in a general sense, to be like, don't just follow people that reinforce what you think.

Aneta:

You like what they are saying or you like the news. Yes.

Ger:

Exactly. Yeah. It's hard to not do that.

Aneta:

I really like that you obviously reflected on your attitudes on Twitter, and you said you combat [crosstalk 00:06:19]. You took initiative.

Ger:

Positive action.

Aneta:

Yeah, positive action to actually combat that.

Ger:

Love that word, positive action.

Aneta:

That is something that is really interesting about social media is that social media platforms are used not just to connect with people, like Facebook, Instagram, again, very different social media. But the idea of Facebook was that we are going to connect with others, right?

Ger:

Yeah.

Aneta:

But actually, these platforms are used to consume information, to disseminate information, but also to compose some texts. Also, people on social media participate in public debates, in commenting on the news. So they obviously are constantly part of distribution, but also creation of information.

Aneta:

But the spread of information on social media, the speed of disseminating information on social media, means that very often the new stories, like breaking news, appear on social media before they are being discussed on TV or other media channels which actually provide a more thorough analysis.

Aneta:

So the information might be shared in a short space of time within small groups on Facebook or on Twitter pages. The biggest, I guess, danger or disadvantage of that, when people are not critical or reflecting actually what they are seeing, what news they are being exposed to, is that they might be sharing content before checking.

Aneta:

We often talk about mental laziness, but actually we should also understand that every day we are being bombarded with sometimes contradicting pieces of information and news that leads to what we call information overload.

Aneta:

I guess it is challenging, even for the journalist sometimes, to recognize what is fake. But I think it's very important to understand that we should actually bother to at least check other media platforms.

Ger:

Yeah. Just to even give a very simple example of this is a friend of mine tagged me in something on Facebook. It was an article that was by the ... It was a newspaper and it was a tabloid newspaper. I just can't remember what one it was. This was only very recently, since the second lockdown in Ireland, so only the last month. It was that Penneys was now going to be online, and you could buy everything online.

Ger:

I was so excited when I saw this. I immediately shared it. Didn't think twice about it. It wasn't until maybe a day later that someone commented on it, was like, "You know this was ..." when I clicked in, "This is an article from 2018. It was a rumor then that's still only a rumor now."

Aneta:

Wow.

Ger:

It's such a great example that we think it's something so innocent. I'm just sharing an article, because this is great, and I want everyone else to know about it. But without checking it. All that would have taken for me to actively check that would have been a click, see is this real, or a quick Google even, to see if there any [crosstalk 00:09:24]

Aneta:

Yes. But this is actually, this is an excellent illustration how echo chambers work. Because you see, part of that, why we fall victim to rumors or fake information, is that we have our group of peers, friends on Facebook, our network. Very often, we rely on these friends, on likes, on these shares, that they are true.

Ger:

You're exactly right.

Aneta:

So we let our guard down, because of where the news comes from. If there is a person I trust, and they share that information, I tend to believe that it is true. That is how it works.

Ger:

I didn't think of it that way actually. That's exactly right.

Aneta:

Yes. It's almost like, being in a bubble, you have that almost like an attention deficit when you don't check. It actually happens to everyone, if that makes you feel better.

Ger:

Yeah. It does. It does.

Aneta:

It happened to me [crosstalk 00:10:21] times.

Ger:

Thank you. I don't know if you're just flattering me, but okay. I'll trust you so I feel a little less guilty about it.

Aneta:

Then we tend to share and seek information that is aligning with our existing views and values. That phenomenon is described as confirmation bias. It means that people deliberately seek out facts and data, even false or inaccurate or unchecked often, that specifically support their conclusions, what what they believe in. I think we will come back to that believe and feel, which is not really about evidence.

Ger:

Absolutely. Especially, I think, confirmation bias and what I've learned now about confirmation bias is I think it's one of the most, I don't know about you, but it's one of the most prevalent issues I've seen in student work is definitely confirmation bias, when it comes to sources and fact checking. Much more so than some of the other ones. So I'm really interested to hear more about then this bias.

Aneta:

Yes. Facebook is particularly bad with it, I would say. That takes me to algorithm, again, the role of algorithm on social media, which basically are pieces of software that gather consumer information, what we like, what we dislike, to basically then use that to present us with tailored information.

Aneta:

When you often seek information on a given topic on Facebook, it is very likely that you will be presented with content of a similar subject or similar actually point of view, which has relevance for thinking about evidence-based information or fake news.

Ger:

It's so funny. It's such a shame, in a sense, that this is so audio, because as you're saying things, I'm seeing my head nod along so much in agreement with everything. I feel like, "Oh, no one's going to see me nodding along." It feels like ...

Aneta:

He is nodding.

Ger:

I find all of this just so interesting.

Aneta:

Yeah. I think confirmation bias, that's why I said these concepts are interlinked. Obviously, we can imagine how echo chambers and confirmation bias are interlinked. I guess, what is a real, again, I don't want to use the word danger, but what really limits us is that when you live in that information bubble, you are never exposed to opposite views. So your perspective is one dimensional, and you literally are being exposed and seeking information which just confirms your views, and never being exposed to contradictory views or beliefs.

Aneta:

I really liked your comment about Twitter, that you said that you consciously went against that. So perhaps following people who are not aligning with the way we think and the way we see things.

Aneta:

But I want to say that, very often, living in that kind of bubble, people brand anything that doesn't align with their views as fake news, as false news. This has been used a lot by Trump in particular.

Aneta:

We apologize that we come back to him, but he's just such an excellent example, of course. It happens in other countries. It happens. There's other examples of that, but Trump is very specific.

Aneta:

We talked about how the term originated, but he used the fake news in a very specific way. I actually, on that point, want to mention that it was actually Hillary Clinton who used the word fake news to describe the propaganda around the elections during the election period.

Ger:

[crosstalk 00:14:06] I did not know that.

Aneta:

Yes. It's actually her who pointed out the spread of propaganda and spread of fake news, but then Trump actually used the label fake news for anything that didn't confirm to his views, but also, dangerously, what he started is that he used the term fake news to discredit journalists.

Aneta:

There are studies now showing how Trump repeatedly bashed certain media outlets which were perhaps critical of him, so like the New York Times, BBC, CNN, claiming that he had to actually emigrate to Twitter to bypass what he described as censorship, and distortion of truth, and producing fake news about him. He doesn't actually allow any critical views about himself. His strategy is to claim that this is fake news.

Aneta:

But luckily now, finally, we can see Twitter introducing the new feature, which is fact checking feature. They actually, during the current presidential elections of 2020, they introduced that feature, abolished the special treatment that Trump had, that he could basically, he could get away with saying anything on Twitter. That is the new feature that we saw for the first time when, actually, his tweets were even a warning sign saying that this is actually not true. This is lacking some basic evidence to support the claims.

Ger:

Yeah. Were you going to ask me ...

Aneta:

Because I remember you telling me that you actually also experienced fact checking.

Ger:

It was, yeah, on Twitter. Yeah. I remember I got very excited. I screenshot it and sent it to you straight away. I was like, "Oh my God. Look what just happened on Twitter. This is amazing." As you said, it was during the US presidential election.

Ger:

The important thing to keep in mind with that, with Twitter, before I even explain what it was that happened, is they also don't want to be, or can't seem to be, restricting anybody's right to an expression or right to an opinion. So I think one of the difficulties that lots of these platforms have is how are they going to, for want of a better term, police this, or force people to recognize the issue without infringing on any rights.

Ger:

What was happening was I had seen an article that I didn't read, I'll be honest. I saw the headline of it, first of all. It was just about ... It actually escapes me now, but it was something about the primaries, anyway, in the States. So it wasn't even related to the particular time. It was a little bit earlier. It was about a couple of months earlier.

Ger:

I went to share it, well, retweet it. It's the first time I'd ever seen this. It came up and said, "You are about to retweet an article that you have not read." So Twitter knew I hadn't clicked into this article. I had only just clicked to share it again.

Ger:

Now, it would still let me do it, but I had to acknowledge that to a point, and say, "You're right. I didn't read this. I do need to check it." No, it doesn't say, "Make sure you check this," but it's bringing your attention to the fact that you are going to share something that is not necessarily ... It might not be true. It could be just conforming, like you said, to your own ideas, your own biases. So it was a really interesting one to see.

Ger:

I think it's that that feature on Twitter is part of a larger, I suppose the word's dialogue, that's going on, especially within the EU. I don't want to take away and say, it's just the EU because they're brilliant. That's not what I mean. But we're really seeing it here with the development over the last two years, actually it started four years ago, but a series of a code of practice dealing with disinformation and how disinformation can be tackled, I guess, in online platforms.

Ger:

Again, I've already asked Aneta to warn me if I'm going to [inaudible 00:18:01] with this, which isn't the point at all, but I just want to explain what a code of practice is.

Ger:

It's voluntary, so it's not enforced on companies, but again, in this climate, there would be a strong moral obligation to sign up to this. We've seen lots of the really big online platforms that have a huge presence sign up to this code of practice. We've got the likes of Facebook, Google, Mozilla, Twitter, Microsoft, most recently TikTok has signed up to these codes of practice too. It's the first time that

we've really seen a worldwide industry, a tech industry, that's agreed to something like this on a voluntary basis.

Ger:

It's a commitment to combat fake news and to combat disinformation. What it does is it's a series of ideas for best standard practice to try and combat the spread of fake news, the spread of disinformation.

Ger:

What's really interesting, how it's implemented is it provides a series of roadmaps, knowing that every online platform has a different audience, has different content, so they have the best type of practice that they recommend for different platforms to use. You'll see it in different ways creep across it. It's a really innovative piece of work.

Aneta:

Let me just see if I understand that. This is not a law. For instance, if I am a TikTok user and I, let's say, share fake news or spread disinformation, I'm not going to be punished.

Ger:

No.

Aneta:

What are the implications of these laws? Is it to impose certain good practices maybe over time? Maybe we will see over time, would Twitter ...

Aneta:

Well, it's definitely great to see that there is that discussion, which we see that this is an outcome of these companies finally recognizing this is a huge problem, how they actually enabled, through giving people the tools, how they enable spread of fake news. Also, they recognize their responsibility of addressing this problem.

Aneta:

But I was just wondering, so the code of practice, this is like an indication that there's a willingness to do more perhaps, right?

Ger:

Yeah. It's a commitment.

Aneta:

Yeah.

Ger:

Exactly. You're exactly right. It's a commitment to tackle the problem, I suppose at a grassroots level, and watch that grow. What's really interesting, when you look at the difference ... If you were to look at

the document itself, and then you look at all the different roadmaps, which is how would they describe the individualized versions of it for the different platforms, there's two things that comes across. I think it's really interesting, because it's something that you pointed to last week, when you were discussing about disinformation and what that means.

Ger:

What they talk about in it is that it's information that is verifiably false. That it either may cause harm or been sent with the intention of malice or the intention of misinforming groups.

Ger:

What this code of practice is doing is it's bringing the responsibility, actually to the platforms, and not so much the users, which I think is really important, because they're saying you can run an online platform, but you have to do it responsibly. It's not saying restrict people's voice or restrict their opinions, but you have to acknowledge the fact that you could be propelling or perpetuating the spread of disinformation and fake news.

Ger:

What I think is really special about the code of practice is it's at EU level. It's not a regional level, it's not a national level. We're seeing this as a collection of states that have said, "No. We recognize this as a real problem, and we need to commit to starting to try and tackle it." So it's a really interesting piece to see come through. Is it sad that I find that very exciting that we're the ones that have started this?

Ger:

We've seen, even in the news this week with the share of ... It was a social network. I don't know if you've ever even heard of it, because I'd never heard of it before this week, but it was then a leak of intimate images of women and girls from Ireland that was shared. It was taken from different websites. Because of the privacy sentence on the websites, it meant that people could screenshot and share these things.

Ger:

But the EU is one of the first countries, as well, that's looking at how cyberspace can have such an impact on the lives of people through things like this, the stealing of pictures or the sharing of pictures without permission. That goes hand in hand with disinformation and fake news, and that we're recognizing the dangers the Internet has, as well as the great benefits.

Aneta:

Yeah. I think definitely social media should step up on this, because they make a lot of money on us, as users.

Ger:

Yes.

Aneta:

The money from advertising, and also, you mentioned reader analytics. Obviously, social media wants to attract as many people as possible. So a lot of news that appears on that, it's just pure clickbait, because it's all done for the reading metrics.

Ger:

Yeah.

Aneta:

So this is all related and relevant. I think they need to give back, basically, to these communities as well.

Ger:

Yeah. It's interesting when you talk about clickbait there and what they show ... I did this as part of research for this podcast as well, actually, to see what happens. But if you want to sponsor or pay for a post to be highlighted or promoted on Instagram ... Now this is, I don't [inaudible 00:23:12] any other platform, but on Instagram it actually goes as far as to ask you what your goal with that post is.

Ger:

Do you want more people to see your page? Do you want more people to follow you? Do you want more people to click onto a particular website from this post? Do you want people to follow somebody else from this post?

Ger:

It shows how manipulative these analytics can actually be without us knowing. So I think that's a really important point to bring up.

Aneta:

Yeah. In a way, it's terrible, and it's driving the culture, because if we do everything for these metrics and readership, then we're going to see more sinister activity like that, when the fake news is produced purely for clicks and likes.

Ger:

Yeah.

Aneta:

As we saw a couple of stories as we also prepared for this podcast, we encountered stories of students, broke students, college students, unemployed people who basically are hired to produce completely made up stories.

Ger:

I know we've seen then that people can be unintentionally manipulated by certain areas of disinformation and fake news on social media. But I'm wondering, Aneta, what are some other factors that make or could make people susceptible to fake stories.

Ger:

Are there special conditions? Is there special times, particular times? Are some people more inclined than others? Are some people are more prone to disinformation or propaganda? This all sounds very conspiracy of me, I know, but I'm just wondering if ...

Aneta:

No. This is a very valid question. The research studies in psychology and social sciences are showing that, explain actually why people might come to believe false stories or sometimes unbelievable stories, and why they refuse to change their mind in the face of being presented with the factual evidence that might contradict their beliefs.

Aneta:

Big factor in being susceptible to fake news or believing false stories are anxiety, fear, also sense of losing control. These seem to be triggers. They trigger people to see often nonexistent patterns in whatever is happening and evoke explanations, which we describe us as conspiracy theories.

Aneta:

Probably everybody is on the topic now of Princess Diana because of her interview, but also because of the new season of The Crown that introduced the storyline of Princess Diana. But I watched the documentary on Channel Four, which talks about that specific interview which Diana gave to Martin Bashir on 20 November, 1995.

Ger:

[crosstalk 00:26:02] I remember that. I remember sitting down and watching that. Yeah.

Aneta:

Excellent. Excellent. I actually talked to many people who even were small children, and they remember the mood around that interview. But I think what is really interesting is that it is a really good illustration, that particular interview and it's context, of what psychological and social science research describes.

Aneta:

Princess Diana, at the time, as we now know from the investigation, she was presented with some fake evidence by Bashir, presented some bank statements, which were false bank statements, that supposedly were showing or were supposed to indicate to Diana that her family is being followed.

Aneta:

At that time, Diana was very distressed. She had lots of issues in her personal life. She was going through depression and all kinds of mental health issues, and not mentioning problems in her marriage, which we don't want to go into this.

Ger:

That's a whole other podcast.

Aneta:

Yes. And we don't want to speculate. But this one is actually evidence, because BBC Panorama, where Martin Bashir obviously worked there at the time, they confirmed that this was fake evidence.

Aneta:

But Princess Diana was led to believe, she already was prone to believe ... She was kind of paranoid, and she believed in that theory. She was actually seeing patterns everywhere that she was being followed by the royal family. So she's a classic example of being distressed, having sense of losing control.

Aneta:

There is evidence that disasters would produce also very high stressful situations where people might ... like earthquakes or other natural disasters, but also a loss of job or job uncertainty, and most recently COVID-19.

Aneta:

These crisis stress situation actually prompt people to concoct, embrace and repeat conspiracy theories, because you know what? When chaos happens, for some people, conspiracy theory can introduce some sense of structure, some sense of order when there is no. This is potentially very stressful for people.

Ger:

I'm so glad you said that, because I have to say, and I'm sure people listening to this were the same, since the chaos that's come with COVID, we've seen different people react in very different ways.

Ger:

I was really questioning people that I knew, whether it was family members, whether it was friends, colleagues, who were part of these bubbles that were, "COVID isn't real, because we don't know anyone that's ever had it." "COVID is a fake. It's a joke. It's not real." "It's the government spying on us." All of this kind of thing.

Ger:

I couldn't understand how people I knew quite well would think that way. That's really just explained it to me in a really clear way. That makes perfect sense.

Aneta:

Yes. It also relates to look how we receive so much information every day, and sometimes these were contradictory pieces, because this is something new. This is something unprecedented. We didn't know this virus, and there were so many different theories. So again, there's this information overload which creates anxiety, creates chaos on top of being afraid of this unknown virus.

Ger:

It does make it a lot more understandable, I have to say.

Aneta:

Yes.

Ger:

It makes more sense, because I was really confused by people's reactions that would be saying things. This makes perfect sense to me now.

Aneta:

There's a actually very fancy concept, if you want, that researchers use. It's called illusory pattern perception. It's a kind of cognitive ability which is believed to be an ingredient in these beliefs of conspiracy theories. Because our brains generally tends to see patterns.

Aneta:

You know when you lie down on the grass and you look at the clouds, you sometimes see clouds forming shapes.

Ger:

Yeah. Shapes. Yeah, yeah.

Aneta:

Exactly. This is what researchers actually describe as being one of these important factors in conspiracy theories. When you look at the conspiracy theories, they rely on logical fallacies, on false assumptions, and denying facts, scientific discoveries.

Aneta:

But a big part of, actually, in conspiracy theories is emotions, is feelings, is what people believe. That is superior to evidence. It's almost like people are denying ...

Ger:

It's so interesting, this particular area. It's fascinating to me. Is that what you would say the relationship is between conspiracy theories and fake news? Is that what it? That they're willing to believe?

Aneta:

Yes, yes, exactly. The relationship between what is fake news and conspiracy theories is that false theories will not rely on evidence, but they twist that evidence in order to support that false theory.

Ger:

Their own [crosstalk 00:31:24]

Aneta:

Yeah. What we see more and more in the current political climate is that, yes, exactly, that the objective facts have less influence on opinions and decisions than personal emotions and beliefs.

Aneta:

This has been obvious during the pro-Trump protests, where ... I've watched, actually, a number of interviews with Trump protestors. It's striking that they say things like, to the reporters, "I believe," or, "I feel that Trump has won", even though the evidence shows otherwise.

Aneta:

Again, this is legacy of Trump in promoting disbelief, distrust of the traditional media outlets and professional journalism, is that these people are saying, "We can't believe the news. We can't believe the outcome of the elections, because how can we make sure that the media are not lying?" They actually, they would see journalists and they would say, "Oh, you are fake news."

Aneta:

This is the legacy of Trump. When the evidence doesn't match the vision of reality, it has to be negated. Again, this is confirmation bias.

Ger:

Okay. Yeah. I've seen that they've said that they've seen their own evidence to support this. There's been a couple of different examples, but when being then probed by journalists as to where they saw this information, where they sourced their own information, it was the usual culprits, I guess, of social media platforms. I think you even mentioned an obscure media outlet that nobody had really ever heard of. So, it's worrying.

Aneta:

Yes. It is.

Ger:

That people are believing that these are genuine sources of reliable information.

Aneta:

Yes, and that they cannot actually rely on news or professional journalists. It is. This tendency is actually very, very worrying.

Aneta:

Particularly, again, bringing this to college students, and those who want to pursue a more academic scientific path in their professional career, this situation makes me think of, and I would like to actually end, with that, our discussion.

Aneta:

There was a protest, a climate strike in Poland in 2019. I saw one of the posters, which really, really stuck with me. It said, "Why do you ask us to learn if you don't listen to the learned?"

Ger:

I love that.

Aneta:

This was particularly with a reference to climate deniers. This is a valid question that every student could ask. What is the purpose of our education? The students especially, as junior scholars, you start creating knowledge, but why do we do that if actually you don't listen to the facts, you don't listen to what science is saying?

Aneta:

So I really loved that poster, because it is a clever question to adults, I guess. Why do you ask us to go to school and learn facts if we stop believing in facts? I think this is a very, very important question.

Ger:

Excellent point. Yeah.

Aneta:

Yeah. Okay.

Aneta:

That would be everything for today. To not provide our audience with information overload ...

Ger:

Nice.

Aneta:

... we need to ration the information.

Ger:

Yes. A full circle. That was nice. That was a nice sign off.

Aneta:

Yes. But we invite you to our next podcast. Our next episode, we'll be discussing why conspiracy theories and disinformation, more general, are threats to critical thinking and scientific knowledge, which I guess relates to students who are junior scholars and you are beginning to produce knowledge. So it should be very relevant.

Aneta:

We will also talk about the importance of gaining media literacy skills, as well as propose what specific attitudes could help students in their research and study, in addition to the concepts that we introduced today. Ger, do you remember what concepts we introduced today?

Ger:

I knew you were going to give me a pop quiz. I knew it. Information overload, echo chambers, confirmation bias. Then we had a lovely conversation, which was my favorite part so far, by the way, about the relationship between fake news and conspiracy theory. I just think that's so ...

Ger:

I bet a pound to a penny people listening are going to really find that interesting, because it's just something I never thought of until I heard you explain it the way you did. So I'm really excited about where this is going to go from here.

Aneta:

Very good. Very good, Ger. Okay. I think [crosstalk 00:36:01].

Ger:

No pressure. Yeah. No pressure. I'm sorry.

Aneta:

Yeah. We hope that the material covered today will encourage our audience to reflect critically about the information you encounter on social media especially.

Aneta:

That was Aneta and ...

Ger:

Ger.

Aneta:

... for you. Thank you.

Ger:

Thank you. Bye.