Improving news literacy 7 to 9 year old children: an experiment with digital gaming

# Details

## Year

2018

## Scope

Local

## Countries

Portugal

## Type

Empirical research – Mixed methods

## Methodologies

## Researched Groups

Children

## Children Ages

Kids (6-10 Years old)

## Funder

Foundation for Science and Technology

## Funder Types

## Has Formal Ethical Clearance

## Consents

## Informed Consent

Consent obtained

## Ethics

Ethical considerations and/or protocol mentioned in the research design

## URL

https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/49930

## Data Set Availability

Data availability statement in the publication

# Goals

Children are particularly vulnerable to violent non fictional content (Buckingham, 2004). Therefore, scholars sustain the need to educate children about the news (Frau- Meigs, O’Neill, Soriani, Tomé, 2017). However, news literacy education for young children has been overlooked by academics (Livingstone Haddon, 2009). There is also a gap in the literature about media education in informal settings (Vraga Tully, 2015). There are a few digital platforms to teach children about the news. But, again, research about newsgames has been focusing older population’s uses too (Aayeshah, 2012). This research aims at filling those gaps in the literature by examining how digital platforms propose to educate children from seven to ten years old about the news. To do so, this thesis implemented four studies, using a mixed methods approach. On a first stage, this thesis assessed the best practices by interviewing five children and by analyzing nine digital platforms. On a second stage, a prototype was created and tested twice, first among a group of eight children (pilot study) and then among a group of 50 children (final testing). Results suggest that there is a great potential in the use of simulation and real stories to teach children about the news. Also, data implies that, when educating children about the news in a digital environment, it is important to achieve a balance between elements of fun and of learning. Not surprisingly, results suggest that children may learn practical skills about the news faster than abstract concepts. Even so, data also indicates that children are curious to learn more about abstract concepts like journalism ethics and the idea of truth. Finally, another conclusion of this dissertation is that while the use of digital platforms to teach about the news presents many advantages, the learning process may be expanded when there is also human interaction in connection with the digital. Guidelines to improve digital platforms to educate children about the news are included at the end of this dissertation, as well as recommendations for future studies.