

Addressing Information Disorder: Best Practices and the Way Forward

Background

As the proliferation of false information continues to pose a significant challenge, various stakeholders and local communities in the Asia-Pacific area are joining forces to combat this issue. On April 6th 2023, the recently established Safer Internet Lab (SAIL), a project initiated by CSIS and Google Indonesia, organised its inaugural gathering, bringing together professionals and experts to exchange knowledge and insights. SAIL's first hybrid seminar on addressing information disorder is also a part of the fact-checking day celebration leading up to the G7 forum on misinformation to showcase best practices in the fact-checking community and share recommendations on the way forward for policy makers and other countries who want to kickstart similar initiatives in the region.

Summary

Keynote Speech

Bonifasius Wahyu Pudjianto

Director of Informatics Empowerment, Ministry of Communication and Information



Minister Pudjianto expressed his gratitude for the organisation of the SAIL Seminar. He highlighted the prevalence of information disorder globally and emphasised the need to address the issue. Minister Pudjianto further explains that Governments in the Asia-Pacific region, including Indonesia, have implemented strategies like digital literacy enhancement

and content blocking to combat misinformation. He also remarked collaboration and sharing successful strategies are key to overcoming information disorder.

Safer Internet Lab Introduction

Beltsazar Krisetya

Researcher, Department of Politics and Social Change CSIS and Principal Researcher, Safer Internet Lab



Krisetya introduces Safer Internet Lab by first highlighting how information disorder spreads rapidly and is more likely to go viral than factual information on major social media platforms. The increasing trend of mixed media disinformation, particularly in video sharing platforms, makes it more challenging to debunk compared to text-based disinformation as the delay in fact-checking allows disinformation to gain significant engagement within the first 24 hours of posting. While efforts have been made to boost digital literacy, Krisetya elaborated bridging the gap between information and political literacy remains a challenge. He explored the orchestration of disinformation involving various actors, including state-sponsored agents, in-house staff, PR agencies, and those with economic motives. Therefore, the Safer Internet Lab (SAIL) initiative was launched, focusing on prevention, preparation, and curbing of disinformation through research, engagement events, database building, and policy recommendations. Being a representative of SAIL, Krisetya invites governments, academia,

tech platforms, civil society, and media to collaborate in resolving this issue and empowering users against information disorder.

Session 1: Sharing Learnings and Best Practices from Regional Fact-Checking Community



The first session of the event explored the networks of Fact-Checking communities in Japan and Taiwan, and also shared experiences fighting against disinformation in their respective countries. **Daisuke Furuta** from Japan Fact-Check Center talked about the importance of networking globally and elaborated how Japan Fact-Check Center is dedicated to encouraging collaboration with other organisations that are crucial in fighting misinformation effectively. He noticed fact-checking efforts in Japan are limited, hence misinformation persists. **HuiAn Ho** from Taiwan Fact-Checker Center focused on media literacy education programs in Taiwan and collaboration with local groups and community colleges. She also shares the Taiwan Fact-Checker engagements with elderly individuals through the Fake News Cleaner group, teaching media literacy skills through quizzes and conversations. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of equipping individuals with fact-checking skills and expanding their initiatives' impact.



Fact-checking communities from Indonesia were also present at the event. Finally, **Septiaji Eko Nugroho** from Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (MAFINDO) addressed the rise of misinformation and hate speech during political events. He stressed on the need to address the root problems of misinformation rather than solely relying on fact-checking. Septiaji also highlighted the importance of education efforts and trust-building to combat misinformation effectively. initiatives targeting specific groups like housewives, students, and the elderly with educational content to counter misinformation should be more common. Prevention through trust-building, inoculations, and prebunking, alongside strengthening fact-checking efforts are needed to counter information disorder.

Session 2: Policy Dialogue and Q&A on Improving The Capacity and Capability of Fact-Checking Community Regionally



Building off the previous talks, the second session discussed the practical ways in improving Fact-Checking efforts in the region. **Bhredipta Socarana** from the Ministry of Communication and Information first started by discussing the government's efforts to combat information disorder. Knowing disinformation and hoaxes in Indonesia often have cross-border influences, Minister Socarana elaborated how the government collaborates with local and regional stakeholders to address these issues through employed a Penta Helix approach, involving the government, media, local communities, academia, and businesses to promote sustained behavioural changes. He also added efforts in sharpening digital literacy through campaigns, classes, training, and discussions with various stakeholders. Likewise, monitoring and removing unlawful content, debunking hoaxes, and providing support to law enforcement agencies when criminal violations occur is also one of its efforts. On a regional level, Minister Socarana emphasised the role of Indonesia as part of ASEAN Member States (AMS) need to raise awareness, strengthen collaboration, and improve fact-checking technology to combat disinformation effectively, especially in the face of AI-generated content.

Collaboration within the check-fact coalition is crucial in pursuing these goals. **Ika Ningtyas** from The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and Representative of Damai Coalition highlighted the challenges in countering information disorder, focusing on three key areas; ethical issues surrounding political campaigns in the digital realm, where misinformation is spread by hired cyber troops, content moderation challenges on social media platforms, including algorithm transparency and moderation process, and last, policy-related complexities that unintentionally limit freedom of expression. She advocated for a human rights-based approach and introduced the Damai Coalition to promote transparency and freedom of expression. Damai Coalition is a coalition consisting of 12 different civil society organisations and think-tank which cooperates with UNESCO in advocating for a human rights-based approach to promote transparency and freedom of expression as part of the digital safety.

Meanwhile, **Septiaji Eko Nugroho** from CekFakta explained the importance of working together to combat misinformation, drawing inspiration from the Crosscheck initiative in France in forming the CekFakta coalition. The coalition aims to improve response time, monitoring, and fact-checking efforts across various sectors, including media and academia. He also added the significant training conducted for journalists and newsrooms, as well as the expansion of fact-checking channels within different media outlets. Lastly, He expressed hopes for future growth, increased participation, and influence on digital literacy courses in schools to strengthen the fact-checking ecosystem and effectively respond to the population's needs.

As part of SAIL initiator, **Arianne Santoso** from Google Indonesia stated that Google is committed to address information disorder and aim to understand and tackle misinformation through the Safer Internet Lab, collaborating with stakeholders such as fact-checking communities. Google's approach includes protecting users, empowering them with appropriate context and information, surfacing authoritative information through partnerships with credible news channels, and collaborating with the broader ecosystem. She further elaborated the implementation of Google product policies, including search features that provide information sources and grants to support fact-checking networks. Google also invests in media literacy programs and drives prebunking initiatives to proactively address misinformation.

Closing Remarks

Arya Fernandes

Head of Department of Politics and Social Changes, CSIS



In the last session of the event, Fernandes emphasised that The Safer Internet Lab (SAIL) and CSIS aim to counter information disorder through collaborative efforts. CSIS has been fostering networks among stakeholders, politicians, and universities, including the establishment of the Political Parties Discussion Network and the Social and Political Science Conference. He shares the same values and ideas with their partner, Google, in preventing misinformation and how CSIS-SAIL synchronised steps across stakeholders are crucial in staying ahead of disinformation campaigns. He then concluded SAIL is expected to handle, prevent, and mitigate the spread of misinformation, especially in the upcoming highly competitive presidential election. Efforts to understand and intervene in information disorder must continue sustainably.

Overall, this event exposed ways of addressing information disorder that requires collaboration among stakeholders, empowering individuals with media literacy skills, government initiatives, human rights-based approaches, and support from technology companies like Google. These efforts aim to create a safer digital space and combat misinformation effectively.