

# Almost 60% of secondary school students in public schools can identify fake news

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Almost 60% of secondary school students in public schools identify fake news.  
Credit: UC3M

More than half of Spain's Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO, in its Spanish acronym) students can distinguish between fake and real news. This is one of the conclusions of a study carried out by researchers from the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) which analyzes Spanish

public school students' approach to the media.

The research shows how these [students](#) (between 11 and 16) get their information and how they deal with misinformation, among other factors. "A fake headline about COVID-19 was identified as fake news by 58.8% of the students, while 51.8% considered a headline containing [fake news](#) about immigration to be true," says one of the authors of the study, Eva Herrero, who published this work in the journal *Comunicar* together with Leonardo La Rosa, both from the UC3M Communications Department.

Regarding discrimination between journalistic genres, 92.1% say that they are able to distinguish between information and opinion, but researchers found that 64.4% confuse an opinion piece with an informative text. In relation to the preferred platforms to get information, the majority do so through social media (55.5%), television (29.1%) and their family and friends groups (7.9%), ahead of digital newspapers (6.5%) or radio (1%).

Researchers have studied how teenagers deal with the media from a mixed approach. Firstly, they carried out a [quantitative analysis](#), surveying more than 1600 ESO students from [public schools](#) in Spain. Secondly, they carried out more than 75 in-depth interviews with teachers at this level of education. According to the teaching staff at these schools, among students there is a media consumption which is characterized by the intensive and uncritical use of certain audiovisual and digital media such as TikTok, Instagram or YouTube.

Following the interviews with teachers, the majority of secondary school teaching staff noted the opportunity to introduce content related to how the media works into the curriculum. In this sense, they have detected that when working with students in the classroom on topics related to the content they consume on their [social media](#), the students' motivation and

attention is greater.

This research shows that media and [information literacy](#) is still a pending subject in the secondary school curriculum.

**More information:** Eva Herrero-Curiel et al, Secondary education students and media literacy in the age of disinformation, *Comunicar* (2022). [DOI: 10.3916/C73-2022-08](https://doi.org/10.3916/C73-2022-08)

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