



## Journalism Trust Initiative JTI

A mechanism to promote the trustworthiness of information and fight disinformation

### 70 percent: False news spreads faster than the truth<sup>1</sup>

Falsehoods are 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than the truth, researchers found. And false news reached 1,500 people about six times faster than the truth.

### US\$2.6 billion per year: The amount that top brands are spending on misinformation<sup>2</sup>

Misinformation publishers are reaping billions in annual advertising revenue from top brands [while] the journalism industry is struggling worldwide with newsrooms across the world cutting staff, shutting their doors, or fighting to stay afloat.

### 20 percent or more: Newspaper's loss of revenue over five years<sup>3</sup>

The global newspaper industry's revenue is forecast to fall from US\$108 billion to US\$86 billion between 2019 and 2024.

**The Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) is an independent third-party mechanism to –**

- Promote trustworthiness of news and information, especially in the digital space;
- Combat disinformation by promoting quality journalism and advancing ethics in the media;
- Support the sustainability of media outlets, by rewarding their investment in professionalism and ethics;
- Thus, incentivize all types of media to uphold and live the ideals of journalism;
- Create an integrity factor for algorithmic indexation;
- Avoid that either governments or platforms decide who is a journalist and who is not.

## Criteria

The JTI is based on a Standard for the trustworthiness of news and information, which has been developed under the aegis of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and published as Workshop Agreement no. CWA 17493 in December 2019. As a public good and reference, the CEN Workshop Agreement is available for download free of charge.

Its 18 clauses cover the institutional and process level of journalistic production, including specifications on ownership transparency and editorial guidelines, covering independence, accuracy and correction policies for example. The resulting JTI Standard is a non-proprietary benchmark for internal self-assessment and external audit of news media outlets.

- > The JTI was initiated and is operated by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), supported by partners such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and Agence France Presse (AFP). This initiative is collectively sourced with contributions by more than 130 organizations and individuals representing the media industry, academia, regulatory and self-regulatory bodies, tech companies and the media development sector (including the BBC, Associated Press, Tamedia, Google, Facebook). Final adoption of the text was preceded and informed by a public consultation.

<sup>1</sup> <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6380/1146>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.newsguardtech.com/brands-send-billions-to-misinformation-websites-newsguard-comscore-report/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-01-18/can-google-facebook-fix-the-108-billion-news-industry-it-helped-break>

## Conformity

The implementation of the JTI includes a number of distinct features and achievements:

- The [JTI web application](#) as a tool for transparency and accountability – currently available in English, French, Spanish and German, it offers a collaborative space for easy self-assessment, public disclosure and external audit and certification;
- The [JTI certification programme](#) as an added value – including officially recognized requirements and rules for certification bodies, based on ISO 17065:2012, to be licensed ('accredited') to independently audit and confirm the conformity with the JTI Standard;
- The [JTI Campus](#) to exchange best practices and provide assistance – with a network of partners worldwide, targeted support and capacity building is available to meet the JTI Standard and to make journalism better.

The JTI is not ranking or rating individual journalists or pieces of content. It is also not replacing existing professional norms, ethical codes or self-regulatory structures, but complements them with two distinct features that have been missing so far:

**Compliance-ready:** By means of optional third-party audits, the JTI is certifiable and thus, adds transparency and external accountability to the self-assessment of media outlets.

**Data-driven:** The JTI is machine-readable to inform both human and algorithmic decision making in the distribution and consumption of news.

## Benefits

The holistic nature of the JTI provides tangible advantages for different groups of stakeholders, reinforcing each other with an 'invisible hand':

- **Media outlets** of all types and sizes can use the JTI via the jti:app to self-assess their conformity, publish their transparency reports and get independently audited;
- **Regulators and Governments** can apply the JTI Standard as a normative benchmark to allocate subsidies to eligible media outlets;
- **Media development actors and donors** can utilize the JTI as a tool to evaluate partners and beneficiaries, but also for capacity building in the field of trust, governance and editorial management systems;
- **Certification bodies**, as well as **self-regulatory bodies and associations** can offer services around the JTI;
- **Advertisers** can demand JTI-compliant environments to enhance their brand safety and re-direct spending accordingly;
- **Platforms and intermediaries** (social media, search, programmatic advertising) can facilitate the above by means of the JTI data-channel.

## Impact

The JTI will:

- **Enable** consumers and citizens, regulators and the private sector, like advertisers and distributors, to identify and reward trustworthy journalism;
- **Incentivize** media outlets to optimize editorial processes, performance, and ethical conduct by providing competitive advantages, and –
- **Deliver** an independent, transparent, systemic and potentially game-changing mechanism to remedy information disorder (disinformation, hate).

## Next Steps

Our **objective for the next five years** is that thousands of media outlets of different types and sizes and from different countries are using the different features of the JTI, and to unlock the maximum of external benefits for JTI certified media.

The market entry and implementation from 2021 onwards includes the following activities:

- Promoting the usage of the JTI among media outlets;
- Supporting participating media outlets (training and capacity building) via the JTI Campus;
- Building coalitions;
- Stimulating the certification sector.

For more information visit: [journalismtrustinitiative.org](https://journalismtrustinitiative.org)