Fighting Fake News
In the last couple of years, data packages have become significantly affordable for Indian consumers, courtesy spectrum competition.

For many, social media, and particularly WhatsApp, is the first exposure to the connected world.

There are over 200 million WhatsApp users in India.
WHATSAPP ALLOWS

Text | Audio | Video | Links | Documents | Emojis

Social Interactions
Business Engagement
Information Dissemination
Outreach and Awareness

However, the increased penetration of WhatsApp comes with its disadvantages as well. People could knowingly and unknowingly use it to spread fake news.
OUR EFFORT

In an effort to curb fake news, WhatsApp has partnered with Digital Empowerment Foundation to conduct community-based workshops to create awareness among users about the need to verify information before sharing it.

These workshops will be organised in partnership with the District Collector's Office or in partnership with the Superintendent of Police in states, which are due for elections this year or have seen unfortunate incidences of violence because of fake news.
TRAINING TOPICS

- Differentiating between fact, opinion, rumour and fake news
- Understanding the impact of sharing information
- Being empathetic towards other community's perspectives
- Identifying, questioning and verifying fake news or misinformation
- Leveraging technological tools introduced by WhatsApp
- Learning from case stories around us
PARTICIPANTS

- Police Officials
- Local Administration Officials
- Teachers
- NGO Representatives
- Local Entrepreneurs
- Students
- Self-Help Groups
4,500 PEOPLE TRAINED SO FAR

CHHATTISGARH
JHARKHAND
RAJASTHAN
TELANGANA
MADHYA PRADESH
KARNATAKA
MAHARASHTRA
WEST BENGAL
ASSAM
MIZORAM
JHARKHAND
RAJASTHAN
KARNATAKA
MAHARASHTRA
WEST BENGAL
ASSAM
MIZORAM

September 26, 2018
October 9, 2018
October 12, 2018
October 15, 2018
October 22, 2018
November 1, 2018
November 2, 2018
November 19, 2018
November 27, 2018
December 7, 2018
December 18, 2018
December 21, 2018
October 8, 2018
October 11, 2018
October 11, 2018
October 16, 2018
November 28, 2018
December 6, 2018
October 8, 2018
October 9, 2018
December 6, 2018
October 7, 2018
November 1, 2018
October 15, 2018
October 16, 2018
October 15, 2018
October 15, 2018
October 16, 2018
FEEDBACK

How useful were the workshops?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Responses of only 1592 of total respondents have been digitised so far

Were you aware of verification techniques before coming for the workshop?

- Yes, I knew about all that we discussed: 29.1%
- Yes, I knew about a few guidelines and techniques: 26.2%
- No, I did not know about any verification technique: 44.7%

*Responses of only 1592 of total respondents have been digitised so far
How often did you verify forwards on WhatsApp earlier?

How often will you verify forwards on WhatsApp now?

*Responses of only 1592 of total respondents have been digitised so far*
Where have you come across WhatsApp campaigns ads?

- Newspaper: 35%
- Radio: 3.8%
- Social Media: 1%
- N/A: 60.2%

*Responses of only 1592 of total respondents have been digitised so far*
The District Collector's Office in Ranchi, Jharkhand, has built a team of City Peace Committee comprising members of the society that are known for their extremist views, violent nature, political biases or local stronghold. The City Peace Committee has been entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining peace in their localities.
The Police Department of Seoni, Madhya Pradesh, regularly organises workshops for their personnel to understand cyber crimes better. Such workshops are organised in other parts of the country too.
During the workshop, teachers in Palghar, Maharashtra who confessed to sharing fake news, are educating other teachers, students and local community members.

PALGHAR, MAHARASHTRA
LOCAL EFFORTS

Law students in Jaipur pledged to become 'Agents of Change' and reach out to people voluntarily, spreading awareness about fake news.

JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN
OBSERVATIONS

WhatsApp is extensively used by law enforcement departments to communicate with the citizens.

Law enforcement departments do not see much value in encryption due to local law & order challenges.

Police departments & District Collectors’ Office see great value in organising such workshops.

There is little understanding in Tier III cities of how people can make money off misinformation or fake news.

Police officers in smaller districts do not understand encryption.

People are mostly unaware about the new technical features of WhatsApp.

Students in all the states seem much more responsible than their teachers.

People are largely unaware of the "report" and "contact us" features on WhatsApp.

There is little understanding about the difference between misinformation and disinformation.

Participants were amazed to learn how videos and audios can be altered software.

The idea of technology is very limited and people find it easy to forward than creating new content.

Learning about the new Grievance Officer of WhatsApp has been beneficial.

Learning Reverse Photo Search is the most engaging part of the workshops.

Participants are looked at as the agents of change and are willing to take collective responsibility.

Everyone thinks it is just one forward and they are not directly responsible but barely anyone understands they are a part of the bigger fake news menace.
WORKSHOPS
Remaining 9 workshops in Assam, Tripura and Jharkhand will be completed by mid-February. Village-level users of WhatsApp will be reached with training through DEF’s physical presence in 11 states.

RESEARCH
The research report will be completed by the end of March 2019.
Established in 2002, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) aims to connect unreached and underserved communities of India in an effort to bring them out of digital darkness and equip them with access to information.

With the belief ‘Inform, Communicate and Empower,’ DEF finds sustainable digital interventions to overcome information poverty in rural and remote locations of India, and empower communities with digital literacy, digital tools and last mile connectivity.

www.defindia.org/
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