



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

BECID

YEAR 3 REPORT

January-May 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Also known by its slightly mysterious acronym, BECID, the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders was launched in December 2022 under the coordination of the Institute of Social Studies at the University of Tartu. Its mission? Nothing short of fortifying democratic societies in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania against information disorders, malign propaganda and foreign influence operations.

It is a vibrant consortium of:

- 4 universities: University of Tartu and Tallinn University (Estonia), Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (Latvia), and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania).
- 4 IFCN-accredited fact-checkers: Delfi EE, LV, LT, and Re:Baltica.
- The Baltic Centre for Media Excellence, a hub for third-sector media literacy initiatives across the three Baltic countries, positioned in Latvia.
- And Vidzeme TV, Latvia's quietly steadfast supporting partner (sans budget, but not sans impact).

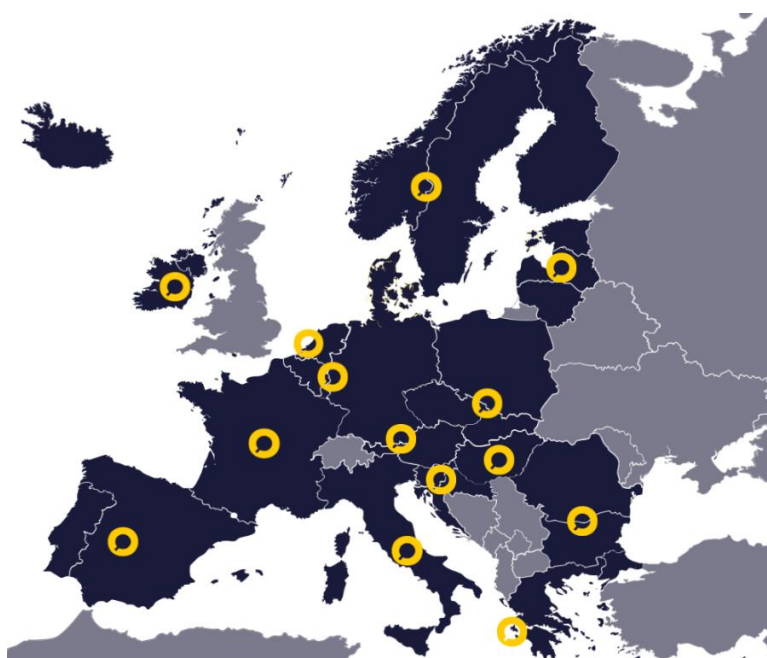


Figure 1. Map of EDMO hubs as of May 2025,
source edmo.eu

As one of the [14 EDMO hubs](#) of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), BECID is part of a pan-European tapestry woven to counter disinformation. In Estonia's case, co-financing (grant ID 101084073), backed by five ministries and the Government Office, stands as the country's most significant investment in international disinformation resistance to date; a testament to the power of aligned strategy and shared purpose.

BECID's ethos is forward-looking: proactive, not reactive. In a world rocked by crises, from pandemics to wars, and an election-saturated 2024, BECID has remained steadfast. We have tackled everything from AI-generated fakes and imposter content to undetected satire and strategic

manipulation, all while nurturing societal resilience like a gardener tending to seedlings in a storm.

Information disorder is a wicked problem, which needs to continuously be mitigated, rather than be solved. And so, with cautious optimism and a sharpened toolkit, BECID looks ahead. We have received preliminary approval for a second round of funding (2025–2028), ensuring that our work will continue to evolve alongside the ever-shifting digital landscape.

This annual report is the third and final part of the deliverable D1.1 for Task 1.4, aiming to provide an overview of BECID's activities for the first five months of 2025. In BECID2, we will combine quarterly reports rather than long reads for longer periods - make sure to subscribe on our website once the new one rolls out in July!

1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT, DISSEMINATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

WP1 Overview

In the first half of 2025, the final reporting period of BECID, WP1 focused on completing all remaining project coordination, outreach, and sustainability activities. The four tasks that were ongoing as of the previous reporting period (T1.3, T1.4, T1.5, T1.6) were finalized by the end of May 2025. This section summarises their completion.

Task	Start	End	Status
T1.3 Administrative and financial coordination	December 2022	May 2025	Completed
T1.4 Dissemination of Project Activities and Results	December 2022	May 2025	Completed
T1.5 Cooperation with EDMOs and National Authorities	March 2023	May 2025	Completed
T1.6 Strategize for Independence and Sustainability of BECID	February 2024	May 2025	Completed

This chapter briefly overviews activities in the last five months for WP1, with most of the focus on communication and dissemination.

1.1. Reflection on Administrative and Financial Coordination

Whilst most of the reporting period – as per traditions as old as time – consist of showing off our achievements and highlighting the best parts of the project, we take this opportunity at the close of the project to also self reflect in a more critical manner and highlight failures, in order to have a strong foundation for learning from our mistakes in the next round.

BECID finishes the first round of funding with 73 members in the group. That consists of admin personnel as well, of course, but is still a shocking number. Throughout the final project phase, **the Project Management Team (PMT)** of UTARTU ensured that partner institutions were fully supported in finalising their documentation and complying with funder guidelines. It is safe to say that with two and a half positions in the PMT, the planned admin workload was simply insufficient to make sure such an amount of people get to work seamlessly.

We did try and cater to the wildly different needs of the 73 consortium members. We started off with using e-mail, Sharepoint, and Slack as the main channels, but then moved away from Slack as it was deemed too difficult. So as to not constantly live in a Doodle limbo, we set up a meeting every last Thursday of the month with all BECID members. When that was inconvenient for some, we switched it to the first Thursday of each month. When meetings were hard to schedule, we established a “if this could be an email, make it an email” rule. When emails were stated to be too many, we created a Sharepoint group that would enable easy filtering of BECID-related content. When Sharepoint access was troubled for some, we created parallel folders to Google Drive.

The Grant Agreement seemed too difficult as an information source for some, so the PMT made sure that there are ways to navigate our plans for BECID in different formats: we have one pagers with and without visuals; we have all Tasks, Milestones and Deliverables written out in Word as well as Excel, aided by Gantt charts and powerpoint overviews, brand colours and Canva templates.

When the **Project Manager**’s direct emails to partners created information vacuums at times, the **Coordinator** sent out mass-letters with to-do lists for all, which apparently also did not reach many. When email reminders went unnoticed, we sent out monthly newsletters, and when those did not seem to drive important points home, we opted for a memo after each monthly meeting. The detailed memos drove people away from the meetings, though, as there was no more incentive to join. The last monthly meeting was attended by 12 people, 5 of them from UTARTU, so safe to say that communication format did not work.

The outputs of this project have been both highly valuable and well-received, as outlined in our previous reports and elaborated further below. However, it must be acknowledged that these high-quality outcomes were often achieved despite significant delays, instances of miscommunication – or complete lack thereof – and the need for persistent follow-up and oversight. It is important to emphasise that this was not due to a lack of dedication; on the contrary, the Baltic work culture is notably disciplined, and the excellence of the results confirms that the consortium consisted of top-tier experts.

In hindsight, a key takeaway is that the consortium was simply too large to be effectively coordinated within the limits of the available person-months and financial resources. For this reason, BECID2 will proceed with a leaner consortium of five partner organisations instead of nine. Partners will be selected based on their demonstrated in-house project management capacity and ability to respond swiftly to emerging themes and developments in the information landscape. Combined with upcoming personnel changes in the coordination team, we anticipate this structure will lead to a more collaborative, efficient, and predictable project experience.

1.2. Dissemination of Project Activities and Results

We continued seeking opportunities to be visible by organising and participating in conferences, seminars and workshops. In the first half of 2025, we appeared in Baltic news media 15 times, trained more than 8000 people and participated in more than 30 events organized by us or relevant stakeholders to disseminate our results and present BECID and EDMO as a whole.

We have also continued disseminating our project activities on our website becid.eu. In 2025, we have updated materials about media literacy, added new reports, shared fact-checks and given an overview of our activities via newsletters. In May 2025, our website had 1600 new users and 2300 page views weekly.

In Estonia, we have collaborated with the online safety initiative Targalt Internetis. In February, we partnered up to celebrate the Safer Internet Day and we focused on children's and young people's online behaviour. We put together an informational toolkit titled [Towards Becoming a More Informed Internet User](#) which was aimed at teachers and youth workers. The toolkit included information about popular apps among children, topics that could be discussed with children and teenagers, and practical resources (such as games, videos, etc.).

1.2.1. Conference, Seminar and Workshop Facilitation and Participation by BECID

A central pillar of our dissemination strategy at BECID continues to be active, visible engagement across a wide range of professional settings. Whether through formal presentations or more informal knowledge sharing, we strive to ensure that our work – and the broader efforts of the EDMO network – remains accessible, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our communities.

January (2025)

- On January 14, Annaliisa Post (UTARTU) conducted trainings on digital safety to the winners of the comic competition "[How to be good on the Internet?](#)".
- On January 15, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UTARTU) gave a lecture "What and how do we teach?".
- On January 16, Maia Klaassen and Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UTARTU) gave an overview of the master's programme "Disinformation and Societal Resilience" during the Virtual Open Day of the University of Tartu.
- On January 22, Maria Murumaa-Mengel and Gretel Juhansoo (UTARTU) conducted a training "Is the media influencing us or are we influencing the media?" at Hugo Treffner Gymnasium.

- On January 24, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UTARTU) conducted a webinar for the Academy of Ukrainian Press on the topic “Advancing Media and Information Literacies in Estonia.”.
- On January 29, Gretel Juhansoo (UTARTU) conducted a training on media usage and information disorders at Võru Gymnasium.
- On January 29, Maria Murumaa-Mengel participated in the Eesti Raamat 500 event in Jõgeva and gave a lecture “Spicy #BookTok, inspirational bookstagram and comunal Facebook – social media and book lovers”.

February (2025)

- On February 3, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) gave a lecture “How do politicians influence us on social media?” to high school students visiting the University of Tartu.
- On February 25, Maria Murumaa-Mengel and Inger Klesment (UT) conducted trainings on AI and disinformation at Kohtla-Järve Gymnasium.
- On February 26, Inger Klesment (UT) talked about developing kindergarten children’s digital skill through games at a conference aimed at teachers.

March (2025)

- On March 4 and 20, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) trained the University of Tartu’s communication staff on social media communication.
- On March 6, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) gave a lecture on developing media literacy in Estonia at the international conference Media Literacy in Journalism Education: Ukrainian and International Practices.
- On March 7, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) trained the University of Tartu’s leaders in the workshop Sexual Harassment at the University on the topic of technology-mediated violence and harassment.
- On March 11, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) participated in the media-themed panel discussion at the Praxis conference “Jüri juhib, Mari rühib?”.
- On March 13, Maria Murumaa-Mengel (UT) gave a guest lecture titled “Tackling Disinformation – Estonian Experiences” to journalism and communication students at Kharkiv University.
- On March 20, Gretel Juhansoo (UT) and Oksana Belova-Dalto conducted a webinar “How to detect conspiracy theories in crisis”?
- On March 25, Maia Klaassen (UT) gave a presentation titled “Resilience and Resistance in the Age of Information Disorders” and participated in a panel discussion at the SSCW conference-hackathon “Youth, Civil Society Organizations, and Educators Leading the Way – Shaping Media and Information Literacy and the New Digital Frontiers of Information”.

- On March 25–26, fact checkers Aistė Meidutė and Monika Jakimčukė (Delfi LT) attended the joint conference “Democracy Matters – Facts Matter”, organized by the EFCSN, EDMO, and the European Parliament, in Brussels.
- On March 28, Maia Klaassen (UT) took part in a panel discussion at the Social Sciences Institute’s employer fair on the topic “Is AI a Partner or a Competitor? How to Prepare for the Future?”.

April (2025)

- On April 1, Inger Klesment moderated a panel discussion at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair titled “Reading in the Digital Age: How Can We Inspire the Next Generation?”.
- On April 4, Maia Klaassen conducted a training workshop on critical thinking for members of the Solarride organization.
- On April 4, Maia Klaassen gave a presentation titled “Social Media, Health, and Information Noise”, and Maria Murumaa-Mengel presented “Does a Doctor Now Have to Become an Influencer???” at the Estonian Doctors’ Day.
- On April 10, Maia Klaassen gave a presentation and participated in a panel discussion at the Brussels conference “Identifying and countering disinformation: Lessons for Europe from Estonia and France”.
- On April 17, Kaarel Lott conducted a webinar “How are boys radicalized on social media?”.
- On April 10, Maria Murumaa-Mengel delivered a guest lesson titled “When the machine thinks for us... AI as a helper and an enemy” to 5th grade students at TäheTERA School.
- On April 15, Maria Murumaa-Mengel conducted a training session for education leaders titled “Social media for educational institutions: How can social media make education more effective?”.
- On April 17, Maria Murumaa-Mengel gave a presentation titled “How to smartly use internal communication in a company?” at the Estonian Secretaries’ Annual Conference.
- On April 23, Maria Murumaa-Mengel and Inger Klesment viisid conducted a training session titled “Digital heritage and media literacy” for museum educators.
- On April 25, Maria Murumaa-Mengel conducted a social media training for young participants of the President Kaljulaid Democracy Academy.
- On April 29, Kaarel Lott conducted a webinar “Mida teha, kui lapse eeskujuks saab manfluencer?”.
- On April 28, Maria Murumaa-Mengel conducted a training session for the Estonian Sexual Health Association titled “Gender and social media: masculinities and femininities”.

May (2025)

- On May 5-9, Maia Klaassen gave guest lectures for Luiss University's journalism and communication master's students about AI, journalism and information resilience .
- On May 7, Maria Murumaa-Mengel talked about critically analysing health information at the webinar "Teekond infodeemiast teadliku terviseotsuseni".

- On May 19, the second DigiRAPID event for children took place in Tartu
- On May 26, Maia Klaassen, Inger Klesment and Gretel Juhansoo conducted a webinar titled "Informeeritud ja motiveeritud valija toetamine".
- In May, Vytautas Magnus University celebrated the centenary of journalism studies in Lithuania and participated in events dedicated to this celebration: a symbolic marathon, different lectures, seminars and workshops for youth.

1.2.2. Dissemination Through News Media

We design our communication to reach clearly defined audiences rather than aiming for general visibility. Each message and media channel is chosen based on its relevance to the people we want to engage—whether educators, journalists, policymakers, or the wider public. This ensures that our work supports practical use, sparks meaningful discussion, and contributes to informed decision-making. By focusing on depth over breadth, we make sure our dissemination efforts are both strategic and impactful.

All our fact-checking partners also publish their fact-checks not only on [BECID's website](https://becid.eu) and [EDMO's repository](https://edmo.eu) but also on their websites, which have more traffic than BECID's website. For instance, fact-checks published by Re:Baltica on their website receive an average of 11,000 reads each.

The following list consists mostly of publications beyond our direct control, which adds to their value: they represent measurable impact and a tangible contribution to society.

1. Alas, B-M., Punamäe, S. & Kimmel, M. (2025). Hommikuraadio: Inger Klesment - slängisõnastikust. [Raadio Kuku](#)
2. Ert, K. & Steppan, T. (2025). Lott: *manfluencer* õpetab domineerima naiste üle ja allutama teisi mehi. [Vikerraadio](#)
3. Ert, K. & Steppan, T. (2025). Maria Murumaa-Mengel: läbulaivide lõpetamine on paljuski platvormide endi kätes. [Vikerraadio](#)
4. Kangur, M. (2025). Raadiouudised kell 15:00 (19.05). [Vikerraadio](#)
5. Libe, K. (2025). „Naised peaks klubis käima ainult oma mehega.“ Kuidas naised halvustav sotsiaalmeediasisu jõuab noormeesteni. [Eesti Ekspress](#)
6. Maripuu, M. E. (2025). Tartus õppisid koolieelikud end digimaailma ohtude eest kaitsma. [Aktuaalne kaamera](#)
7. Meidutė, A. (2025). Kinija pasiekė tokią poziciją, kokioje dar nėra buvusi: ką dėl to daryti Lietuvai? [Delfi](#)
8. Murumaa-Mengel, M. & Juhansoo, G. (2025). Episode 15: Crisis Communication and Simulations (Lāsma Šķestere). [Dialoogia](#)

9. Murumaa-Mengel, M. (2025). Osa 16: Laste meediamaaailmas (Iko Mengel). [Dialoogia](#)
10. Pavlenko, A. (2025). Art and Media Literacy against Cyberbullying: the Estonian Experience. [Hive Mind](#)
11. Raag, T. (2025). Õpilased saavad valida ligi 1500 valikaine vahel. [Õpetajate Leht](#)
12. Zbytniewska, K. (2025). Putin and Trump cast as champions of traditional values / Truth Talks: Estonia. [EURACTIV.pl](#)
13. Uuetoa, H. (2025). Kuidas noorte silmis «based olla» ja «aurat» teenida? Vanemad võivad seda nüüd õppida sõnastikust. [Tartu Postimees](#)
14. Väli, K. (2025). Naistevihkajate uurija Kaarel Lott: kõige äärmuslikumad mehed peavad endi õiguseks naisi vägistada. [Õhtuleht](#)
15. Мінчук, К. (2025). Естонська викладачка Марія Мурумаа-Менгель: «Ми намагаємося вчити наших студентів бути відкритими та критичними до інформації водночас». [Journalism Teachers' Academy](#)

2. FACT-CHECKING

WP2 Overview

WP2 focuses on strengthening fact-checking in the Baltic region – in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – by conducting consistent, high-quality fact-checks in the local languages as well as in English and Russian. It also aims to establish an efficient, collaborative information-sharing system between fact-checkers and academic institutions in the Baltic States, ensuring regular activities based on shared principles and methodologies.

BECID's fact-checking team involves four partners: Re:Baltica, Delfi Lithuania, Delfi Latvia and Delfi Estonia. They all publish their fact-checks both on their own channels and on the BECID website. Analyses are also reaching a global audience through EDMO's bi-monthly Fact-Checking Briefs and published on EDMO website.

2.1. Selection of fact-checks published in 2025

Re:Baltica

- [Cilvēki rada simtreiz vairāk CO2 nekā vulkāni](#) (Ronalds Siliņš)
- [Eiropas Komisija neatnems iedzīvotāju iekrājumus](#) (Ronalds Siliņš)
- [Latvija varētu saražot visu elektrību, bet tas būtu dārgi](#) (Ronalds Siliņš, Annija Petrova)
- [Rīgā nav 70 tūkstošu šizofrēnijas pacientu gadā](#) (Ronalds Siliņš)

- [Ukraina nezog karavīru orgānus; Pandēmijas līgums neuzspiež vakcināciju](#) (Ronalds Siliņš)

Delfi Lithuania

- [Ar tikrai dauguma europiečių dėl karo kaltina Ukrainā?](#) (Delfi faktų tikrintojai)
- [Ar tikrai j Donaldo Trumpo gyvybę ir turta pasikėsinę žmonės karštai palaikė Ukrainā?](#) (Delfi faktų tikrintojai)
- [Ar Trumpas sustabdė karinę pagalbą Ukrainai?](#) (Delfi faktų tikrintojai)
- [„Neteisėtai mobilizuotas“ – kaip Kremlius pastatė antkapį neegzistuojančiam Ukrainos kariui](#) (Delfi faktų tikrintojai)
- [Propaganda per meną](#) (Aistė Meidutė)
- [„Visuotinis atšilimas – geriausia, kas nutiko Žemei“: mokslininkė paaiškina, kodėl tai melas](#) (Delfi faktų tikrintojai)

Delfi Latvia

- [Faktu pārbaude: Latvijā ziedotās asinis neizmanto Ukrainas militārpersonu ārstēšanai](#) (Zane Ārmāne)
- [Faktu pārbaude: nav pierādījumu, ka ASV tērējusi 50 miljonus dolāru prezervatīvu iegādei Gazā](#) (Zane Ārmāne)
- [Faktu pārbaude: vai pedagogu iztrūkums izveidojies valsts valodas prasmju pārbaužu dēļ?](#) (Zane Ārmāne)
- [Faktu pārbaude: vecākus, kas nevakcinē bērnus, cietumā "nesēdinās"](#)
- ["Jaunlatviešus" satrauc "melnas astes" lidmašīnām; eksperti skaidro parādību](#) (Zane Ārmāne)
- [Vecāki satraukti par bīstamas infekcijas izplatību, ēdot importa zemenes; BKUS skaidro situāciju](#) (Zane Ārmāne)

Delfi Estonia

- [FAKTIKONTROLL | Linnugripi viirus ei „toitu“ linnulihast inimese kehas](#) (Marta Vunš)
- [FAKTIKONTROLL | TalTechi teadlased pole avastanud, et e-valimised pole turvalised. TalTechi teadur levitab sama ülikooli teadlaste töö kohta valeinfot](#) (Marta Vunš, Mari-Liis Somelar)
- [FAKTIKONTROLL | Trumpi mõrvakatsetes kahtlustatavad ei ole „kõik seotud Ukrainaga“ ja keegi neist pole sealt pärit](#) (Marta Vunš)
- [FAKTIKONTROLL | Tuulegeneraatori sündroom ja vibroakustiline haigus – pseudoteadus, mis on jõudnud ka eestikeelsesse inforuumi](#) (Mari-Liis Somelar)
- [FAKTIKONTROLL | Uus rahvatervishoiu seadus pole „tervisediktatuur“, vaid keelab üleskutsed ohtlike ainete kasutamiseks](#) (Marta Vunš)
- [FAKTIKONTROLL | Venemaa võrk ei olnud Balti riikidele turvalisem kui Mandri-Euroopa ühendus](#) (Marta Vunš)

2.2. Disinformation on Social Media Platforms in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

Estonians primarily rely on public broadcasters (ETV, ETV2) and online news, while Russian-speaking residents consume a broader mix, favoring social media and Russian-language portals. Trust in Estonian media among Russian speakers has declined post-Ukraine invasion.

Traditional media consumption is decreasing in Latvia, with social media gaining prominence. Russian-language media bans post-Ukraine war have led to uncertainties in audience migration. Telegram and TikTok have emerged as key disinformation platforms.

Media trust is low in Lithuania, with only 51% of Lithuanians considering their media free. The audience is split between public broadcasters, commercial media, and alternative outlets, some of which spread disinformation.

Facebook remains dominant across all three countries, but Telegram is more popular among Russian-speaking communities. TikTok usage is growing, particularly in Latvia and Lithuania.

YouTube is widely used as a news and entertainment source. X has limited traction, though accounts especially in Latvia spread disinformation.

Disinformation on Platforms

There are patterns and key narratives across major platforms:

- Meta (Facebook, Instagram): Disinformation spreads through closed groups, alternative media pages, and influential individuals. Key narratives include government corruption, NATO's role in Ukraine, and climate change denial.
- X: Disinformation often amplifies global viral content, especially in Estonia. Latvia sees bot-driven campaigns, while Lithuania experiences sporadic, low-impact disinformation.
- TikTok: Disinformation spreads through viral videos and manipulated political statements. Topics include Baltic states preparing for war, economic struggles, and vaccine conspiracy theories.
- Telegram: Russian-speaking communities frequently use Telegram, with narratives centered around Ukraine, economic struggles, and Western influence.
- YouTube: Channels mimic professional media formats to spread alternative viewpoints and false narratives.

Read the full report [here](#).

3. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

WP3 Overview

Work Package 3 (WP3) continued to serve as the research and analysis backbone of the BECID project, with a focus on generating evidence-based insights to support fact-checking, media literacy, and policy development across the Baltic region and the wider EDMO network.

In 2023, WP3 began with a clear set of objectives: to conduct a systematic literature review on fact-checking epistemology and tools (**T3.1**), examine fact-checking practices in the Baltic states (**T3.2**), initiate research into how vulnerable target groups respond to fact-checking (**T3.3**), and analyze the regulatory landscape surrounding misinformation and platform governance (**T3.4**). The work was distributed among the four partner universities—Tallinn University, University of Tartu, Vytautas Magnus University, and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences—each leading one of the core tasks.

While the initial plan anticipated two reports and two academic publications, the team exceeded expectations, producing eight reports and seven peer-reviewed articles. A collaborative “sandbox” initiative involving researchers and media literacy practitioners also resulted in two manuscripts (in addition to work done in **T1.6** with the rest of the EDMO network).

The overflow of outputs illustrates that first, we had too many researchers in the hub to complete only four pieces of research, and second, that we collected quality datasets in all the four core research tasks, as it enabled several publications and smaller research groups working together.

In addition to these core outputs, WP3 developed a standard methodology for assessing the impact of fact-checking on different audiences as well as researching disinformation in general. This methodological framework is intended to support both internal evaluation and future research across the EDMO network.

See the table below for an update on publishing status and links to all already published studies. Currently, three articles still await publication. All our studies are available in full for free to anyone interested; in the case of articles still in the preparatory publication phase, we will email them over gladly.

Task	Publication	Status	Link/comment
T3.1 Evaluating existing knowledge and tools: systematic review of scientific literature, assessment of existing tools for fact-checking and multimodal information verification tools	Report on mitigating disinformation through the lens of societal resilience, vulnerability, and risk awareness.	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/mitigating-disinformation-vulnerability-with-situational-risk-awareness-and-human-centered-approaches-a-conceptual-model-2023/
	Report on conceptual and methodological approaches in societal resilience research.	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/conceptual-and-methodological-approaches-in-societal-resilience-research-2024/
	Report on teaching media literacy at school as an interdisciplinary objective.	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/teaching-media-literacy-at-school-as-an-interdisciplinary-objective-2024/
	Report on topics researched in disinformation and tools used by Baltic fact-checkers.	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/systematic-literature-reviews-on-the-state-of-the-art-on-disinformation/
	"Unveiling The Many Faces of Fact-Checking: State of the Art of Academic Research on Information Correction", in peer-review in the Central European Journal of Communication	In peer-review	Full text available upon request
T3.2 Comparative analysis of fact-checking practices, work processes, and journalistic fact-checking genres across the Baltic States	Initial findings on the research Baltic fact-checking practices, processes, and comparative study of (AI-)tools used published in BECID's Year 1 report.	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/becid-year-1-report-december-2022-december-2023/
	Estonian country data summarised in an article for the yearbook of the Estonian Academic Journalism Society: "Faktikontrolli artiklites Eesti praktikas" ("On the practice of fact-checking articles in Estonia").	Published	https://sisu.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/sites/365/EAAS-aastaraamat-2023-2024_net.pdf
	Comparative research article based on interviewing Baltic fact-checkers: "Human vs. Machine: The Role of Human Verification Practices in Fact-Checking in the Era of AI" (Abstract accepted; full manuscript rejected in peer-	Re-submission	Full text available upon request

	review; will be re-submitted).		
	"What a Human-Centred Approach Reveals About Disinformation Policies: The Baltic Case", through review and set to be published at the journal called Media and Communication, 2025, Volume 13, Article 9548.	Pre-publication	Full text available upon request; set to be published here: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.9548
T3.3 Conceptual framework based on the study of audiences' reception of fact-checking genres and formats	"Media and Information Literacy as a Strategic Guideline Toward Civic Resilience: Baltic-Nordic Lessons", published in UNESCO's MIL Yearbook	Published	https://repository.uniminuto.edu/items/7dffc88e-8deb-4c2a-8e9f-2ba5b1b54a45
	Report: "A human-centric approach to countering disinformation: Fostering epistemic agency via collaborative partnerships and digital source verification interventions"	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/a-human-centric-approach-to-countering-disinformation-fostering-epistemic-agency-via-collaborative-partnerships-and-digital-source-verification-interventions/
T3.4 Analysis of regulative aspects of fact-checking	Report "The Regulation of Fact-Checking and Disinformation in the Baltic States"	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/the-regulation-of-fact-checking-and-disinformation-in-the-baltic-states/
T1.6 Cooperation with the EDMO network and outside experts	"Baltic democracies beyond the EU accession: media as a bearer of democratic culture and means of resilience in navigating uncertainties", published in Journal of Contemporary European Studies	Published	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14782804.2024.2360030
	"Social media microinterventions: Testing information activism as a media and information literacy tool", published in the Journal of Media Literacy Education	Published	https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/jmle/vol16/iss2/1/
D3.5	Based on research experience in T3.1-T3.4, the report "Recommended Code of Conduct and Ethics for BECID Fact-checkers: Common Principles for Researching and Monitoring Fact-checking"	Published	https://becid.eu/results_and_studies/recommended-code-of-conductand-ethics-common-principlesfor-researching-and-monitoringfact-checking/

4. MIL ACTIVITIES IN 2025

WP4 Overview

The Media and Information Literacy (MIL) team has consistently demonstrated a dynamic commitment to fostering media literacy, employing both rigorously researched and innovative methodologies across a wide spectrum of audiences. Over the five-month period from January to May 2025, their dedicated efforts culminated in the organization of **20** impactful training sessions, events, seminars, workshops, and presentations. These initiatives, spanning both the Baltic region and international platforms, successfully engaged a remarkable over **8000** individuals, including children, youth, seniors, subject-matter experts, general internet users, corporate representatives, and policymakers.

Far from being confined to the Baltics, the team's influence is amplified through its active participation in diverse local and international projects, as well as its integral involvement in global networks like the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), the UNESCO MIL Alliance, and various national MIL Councils, all contributing significantly to the advancement of media literacy and the crucial fight against disinformation.

There was one task in the MIL WP that was running in 2025, and of course as a part of WP1, T1.5, our collaboration within the DML network of EDMO as well as our pledge to be a regional stronghold for thematic developments, our MIL team has put a lot of effort into topics of misogyny as Andrew Tate information operations have reached the classrooms in the Baltics (see more in [chapter 4.2.](#))

Task	Start	End	Status
T4.5 Baltic MIL Hackathon Series	Sept 2024	Mar 2025	Completed

4.1. Baltic Youth MIL Mediathon (Hackathon) Series: Fostering Media Literacy and Content Creation

The Baltic Youth MIL Hackathon Series, a cornerstone initiative within the BECID project (Task 4.5), aimed to significantly enhance media and information literacy (MIL) among youth in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This collaborative endeavor, involving the University of Tartu (UTARTU), UAB Delfi, AS Delfi, Ekspress Meedia, and the Baltic Centre of Media Excellence (BCME), focused on nurturing a new generation of media content creators by providing comprehensive training and a practical platform for content production.

Recognizing the crucial need for media literacy and critical thinking amidst a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the primary objective of T4.5 was to facilitate the creation of innovative and engaging MIL content directly by young people. This initiative addressed persistent challenges in youth media literacy, such as research gaps, insufficient teacher training, lack of standardized resources, and disparities in digital access. The program was structured into two intensive phases:

1. **Expert-led Workshops:** These hands-on training sessions were conducted at DELFI newsrooms in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius on January 18, 2025. As a prerequisite for the subsequent Mediathon, these workshops equipped up to 60 young participants (aged 18–23) with essential skills in critical thinking, media logic, ethics, fact-checking, visual literacy, mobile journalism, and social media marketing.
2. **Time-constrained Hackathon (Mediathon):** The project culminated in the Mediathon held in Riga, Latvia, on February 1, 2025. Here, 30 selected participants from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania formed mixed teams to develop well-researched and impactful media content strategies on critical societal topics for youth-frequented platforms. A jury evaluated and selected the most outstanding content.

Media Training in DELFI Newsrooms across the Baltics On January 18, 2025, expert-led training sessions successfully prepared participants for the Mediathon, focusing on practical skills and insights into the media landscape.

- **Estonia:** Participants were selected via the "MIL in the MAIL" game, which had engaged approximately 1400 young people. Sixteen active participants received an exclusive invitation to the training at Delfi Estonia's editorial office, where they learned about fact-checking, investigative journalism, and media house operations from experts like Erik Moora, Marta Vunš, Martin Laine, and Greete Lehepuu.
- **Latvia:** Eleven young participants (7 women, 4 men, average age 19.6) from various cities attended training at the Delfi editorial office. They gained valuable knowledge on media operations, social media algorithms, and fact-checking from experts like Aija Krūtaine and Jānis Sildniks. Feedback highlighted appreciation for understanding credible information, with suggestions for more practical examples and interactive elements.
- **Lithuania:** Workshops led by Delfi journalists Aistė Meidutė, Eglė Lungytė-Ramonienė, and Vytautė Merkytė focused on critical thinking, fact-checking, media logic, social media marketing, mobile journalism, and data visualization. The workshops were highly successful, demonstrating strong engagement and a keen interest in understanding complex information and media production tools. Participants appreciated the relevance of topics and trainer delivery, suggesting more hands-on exercises for advanced learners.

Baltic Youth MIL Mediathon (Hackathon) in Riga, Latvia On February 1, 2025, the Mediathon brought together 30 participants from all three Baltic countries in Riga. This

dynamic event allowed mixed teams to apply their newly acquired skills to develop media content strategies addressing pressing societal issues. Experts including Filips Lastovskis (DELFi Latvia), Rasa Lukaitytė-Vnarauskienė (DELFi Lithuania), Erik Moora (DELFi Estonia), and Inese Braže (Re:Baltica) mentored and judged projects based on relevance, credibility, audience engagement, visual communication, and innovation.

The event showcased exceptional creativity and teamwork. Outstanding ideas included board games for media literacy, social media campaigns against financial fraud, and an app for comparing political platforms. The winning team – Janete Olev, Pauls Zalitis, Karl-Erik Ūn, Filips Rasmussens, and Viltė Apolianskaitė – developed an investigative project on cryptocurrency scams. They created a visually engaging educational campaign featuring informative social media videos, interactive presentations, fact-checking reports, and practical guidelines, effectively debunking myths and empowering young people to navigate the digital financial landscape with confidence.

The Baltic Youth MIL Hackathon Series successfully equipped young individuals with essential media literacy skills and fostered their capabilities as media content creators. By combining theoretical insights with practical, hands-on experience, the initiative addressed key challenges in youth media literacy and empowered participants to critically evaluate information and contribute actively to the media landscape. This project demonstrated a scalable model for future media literacy initiatives across the Baltic region, highlighting the growing awareness of media influence and the need for fact-based, ethical journalism.

4.2. Enhancing Media Literacy: Addressing Online Radicalization of Boys

The year 2025 has been a particularly active and impactful period for BECID in addressing issues of sexism and misogyny. In collaboration with the think tank Praxis, [we published a comprehensive report analysing the prevalence and dynamics of sexism and misogyny across both traditional and social media platforms in Estonia](#). This research laid the foundation for a range of educational and public engagement initiatives.

Building on the findings of the report, [we developed a set of public educational materials](#), including a lecture component and accompanying exercises designed to support classroom discussions. Additionally, [we launched an open-access website that provides theoretical resources and practical lesson ideas](#) for educators, aimed at fostering critical thinking and awareness among students. Another significant milestone was the publication of [an open-access scientific article](#) examining the influence of Estonian misogynist content creators on TikTok. This study has contributed to the growing body of academic work on digital radicalisation and gender-based hate speech.

BECID also organized two highly impactful webinars led by Kaarel Lott, Junior Research Fellow of Digital Media Studies at the University of Tartu¹. These sessions, developed in collaboration with BECID, addressed the critical issue of online radicalization among boys, aiming to equip parents, teachers, and other professionals with essential knowledge and practical strategies to navigate the complex influences of the "manosphere" and "manfluencers." The webinars leveraged the narrative of the Netflix series *Adolescence* to illustrate real-world scenarios and highlight broader societal trends.

Objectives and Key Themes

The webinars meticulously explored critical questions surrounding online radicalization, sexism, and misogyny among young males, with a strong focus on practical recognition and intervention. Key objectives included:

- **Defining "Manfluencers":** Explaining who these online figures are, their tactics for engaging boys, the platforms they use (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, X, Rumble), and the inherent harm in their promotion of regressive, sexist ideologies and notions of masculinity.
- **Understanding the "Manosphere":** Providing an overview of these online communities centered on men's perspectives and grievances, often characterized by misogyny. This involved identifying various subcultures (e.g., Incels, Pick-up Artists, Men's Rights Activists) and their problematic ideologies, such as the "Red Pill" metaphor.
- **Recognizing Red Flags:** Equipping attendees to identify warning signs in a child's behavior and internet use, including specific code words (e.g., "top g," "chad," "stacy," "foid," "rapecel," "soy boys"), emojis, and problematic content creators.
- **Intervention Strategies:** Offering guidance on appropriate responses when a young person exhibits beliefs or spreads manosphere-linked messages. Emphasis was placed on building trust, understanding underlying issues, creating safe spaces for discussion, and advising against banning social media, instead recommending boundary setting and critical interrogation of ideas.

Delivered by Kaarel Lott, the webinars provided a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon, integrating academic research with current events like the global ideology gap between young men and women. Key takeaways for participants included a deeper understanding of the manosphere's core ideologies (e.g., victimization of white, heterosexual,

¹ Public lecture in English:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtrPvZGWb1o&t=29s&ab_channel=T%C3%9C%C3%BChiskonnateadusteinstituut

Public lecture in Estonian:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQXotqtzSnU&t=2406s&ab_channel=T%C3%9C%C3%BChiskonnateadusteinstituut

cis-gender men, "black pill" fatalism among Incels) and the prevalent themes used by manfluencers (e.g., "Doom & Gloom Society," "Suffering & Discipline," "Dominance & Violence"). The sessions highlighted how these influencers exploit anxieties for monetization and underscored that the problem extends beyond social media, rooted in broader issues of gender, masculinity, and education.

Practical advice included focusing on media literacy in schools, challenging harmful gender norms, and fostering open dialogue. The webinars successfully raised awareness and provided actionable strategies, with the recorded session and slides available on the BECID website for further reference. Kaarel Lott further amplified this crucial topic through multiple public interviews on the subject.

Kaarel Lott further amplified this crucial topic through several public interviews on the subject:

- Õhtuleht: <https://www.oh tuleht.ee/1129416/naistevihkajate-uuri ja-kaarel-lott-koige-aarmuslikumad-mehed-peavad-endi-oiguseks-naisi-vagistada>
- Eesti Ekspress: <https://ekspress.delfi.ee/artikkel/120367261/naised-peaks-klubis-kaima-ainult-oma-mehega-kuidas-naisi-halvustav-sotsiaalmeediasisu-jouab-noormeesteni>
- Vikerraadio: <https://vikerraadio.err.ee/1609659488/kaarel-lott-manfluencerid-pole-ainult-valismaa-probleem>
- Raadio 2: <https://r2.err.ee/1609645502/kaarel-lott-raagib-uest-hittsarjast-adolescence>
- Novaator: <https://novaator.err.ee/1609677518/sotsiaalmeedia-loob-pinnase-misoguunia-ja-meeste-ohvritunde-levikuks>
- Laser: <https://www.tv3.ee/tv3telekanal/tana-laseris-oma-lugu-jagab-tatei-akadeemia-kasvandik-carl/>
- Õhtu: <https://oh tu.kanal2.ee/8223021/saates-oh tu-manfluencerid-kes-need-on-ja-kuidas-tunda-ara-kas-noor-on-manfluenceri-moju-all-millised-on-koodsonad-mida-noored-kasutavad-ja-kui-aarmuslikuks-nad-lahevad>
- Levila: <https://www.levila.ee/tekstid/uks-uudis-noortel-meestel-on-lootust>
- Mürileht: <https://www.muurileht.ee/uut-tuupi-poliitilise-lohe-retsept/>
- LaserTech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpIROyP7Ob4&ab_channel=LASERTECH
- Jagatud ruum podcast: <https://tasku.delfi.ee/podcast/e3b59353-5e79-4bf5-b988-3c84d4d7b433>

We will continue exploring this theme in depth in BECID2, where it has been included as a core topic.

4.3. DigiÄKK And Pracademic Approach In Higher Education



Photo: Laura Murel

The University of Tartu (UTARTU) continued its new "Playful Development of Media Literacies" course, which culminated in its second large-scale digital literacies event, DigiÄKK. This course delves into the media world of children and youth, equipping students with practical skills for teaching media literacy through engaging games. The DigiÄKK format itself involves a series of rapid-learning sessions where participants rotate through stations, encountering fresh content every 10 minutes.

The course was notably led by Maria Murumaa-Mengel (theoretical-academic) and Inger Klesment (practical-educational), embodying a "pracademic approach" that emphasizes collaborative, research-oriented relationships between academics and practitioners. This method aimed to translate research insights directly into practical applications for the field. The course began with theoretical foundations of play and learning, alongside an overview

of children's media environments, guiding students to develop innovative game ideas for physical spaces that would teach digital media concepts.

Game Development: From Creativity to Implementation

A core focus of DigiÄKK events was the creation and refinement of educational games designed to offer children playful learning experiences while nurturing creativity and problem-solving. This process underscored that games are a natural learning mode for children, making complex information accessible and skill discovery exciting. The demanding work involved thoughtful discussions and extensive testing to craft truly engaging and impactful educational games. Preparations began with collaborative brainstorming, focusing on imaginative concepts that would teach digital navigation. Games were developed through trial-and-error, with practical sessions ensuring a balance between complexity and simplicity, always adopting a child's perspective to ensure tasks were comprehensible and enjoyable. Instructor Inger Klesment emphasized inclusivity and dynamism, stating that a good game "is genuinely connected to children's internet use, and one where everyone can participate." Teamwork proved invaluable, with each member contributing unique strengths, fostering active listening, and collective problem-solving. This collaborative environment enabled games to be finalized quickly, ready for use by teachers.

After a training day at a local kindergarten, the course concluded with the second DigiRapid event in Tartu on May 19, 2025. This main event saw 300 children participate, building on a practice day with 150 children, **bringing the total number of children trained by students over two days to 450**. This expansion clearly demonstrated the format's effectiveness and scalability.

Teacher Perspectives on Digital Engagement

The rapid registration for both the rehearsal and main DigiÄKK events highlighted the clear necessity and interest in such initiatives, affirming the crucial role of digital media literacy from an early age. Kindergarten teachers expressed enthusiasm, viewing the students as future colleagues and valuing the opportunity to expand their repertoire of digital games and knowledge. Insights from teachers like Eliko Rebane (Tartu Lasteaed Lotte), Janika Nõukas (Tartu Karlova Lasteaed), and Elis Vennola (Lohkva Lasteaed) consistently revealed that children frequently discuss digital topics, including games and social media content from home. They underscored the importance of integrating digital safety discussions—such as image sharing permissions, password security, and the risks of adding strangers—into daily lessons. While younger children grasp some concepts, teachers acknowledged that a full understanding of digital security remains an ongoing challenge, becoming a more prominent curriculum topic in the final kindergarten year.

In conclusion, the DigiRapid format successfully delivered a tailored learning experience, recognizing generational influences on media habits and addressing concerns about

technology's impact. It promoted a more nuanced understanding of media use across generations. Simultaneously, BECID experts from the University of Tartu are developing an academic research paper on creative media literacy interventions, action research, and playful approaches, featuring DigiRapid and similar initiatives as key case studies.



Photo: Gretel Juhansoo

4.4. Webinar for Local Government Officials: Supporting Informed and Motivated Voters

On May 26, 2025, the University of Tartu's Institute of Social Sciences hosted a webinar titled "Supporting Informed and Motivated Voters." This online event was specifically designed for local government council and executive members, officials, and community leaders. Held in May 2025, the webinar's primary aim was to introduce BECID's capabilities and offer crucial support for the upcoming local government elections scheduled for autumn 2025. Its central goal was to empower these key figures with the knowledge, tools, and inspiring practical

examples necessary to foster more informed and engaged communities as they prepare for the electoral season.

A Deep Dive into the Information Landscape

The webinar commenced with a comprehensive introduction to the complex world of information disorders, viewed through the lens of local government elections. Led by Maia Klaassen, this opening segment meticulously defined key terms such as mis-, dis-, and malinformation, alongside a critical examination of propaganda, the distinct roles of political advertising versus traditional journalism, and the pervasive influence of algorithmic amplification. The discussion extended to audience-specific research, shedding light on how residents acquire information, which messages circulate, and the underlying reasons for their dissemination. Participants gained a clearer understanding of both the immense potential and inherent challenges within today's dynamic information environment.

Addressing the Community's Concerns

A distinctive feature of the webinar was its direct engagement with questions and concerns submitted by registered participants in advance. These questions, reflecting the tangible challenges faced by local governments, covered a wide array of topics crucial for effective governance and community engagement. Discussions focused on strategies for re-engaging and rebuilding trust with citizens who have become disillusioned with politics, exploring innovative methods for reaching and involving passive community members. The session also weighed the effectiveness of social media campaigns against the irreplaceable value of direct, face-to-face interactions. Practical insights were shared on proven communication and engagement strategies within local government contexts, alongside guidance on developing inclusive election programs through digital platforms and facilitated discussions. A significant portion of the dialogue was dedicated to navigating and communicating polarizing issues, such as the development of wind farms, in a balanced and comprehensible manner, as well as exploring how election coalitions could foster greater public trust and participation.

BECID's Role and Pathways for Collaboration

The latter part of the webinar, presented by Gretel Juhansoo and Inger Klesment, provided a detailed overview of BECID's mission and its impactful work with various target groups, including youth, seniors, and the broader public. A key highlight was the introduction of the micro-degree program in information resilience. The speakers elaborated on the program's structure and content, emphasizing its practical applicability for local government officials and active citizens, thereby outlining clear avenues for professional development and community empowerment. The seminar concluded with an open discussion on future collaboration opportunities and next steps, inviting participants to identify specific resources and potential partnerships that could further support their efforts in fostering an informed electorate.

4.5. Selection Of Materials and Interventions Created In 2025 By BECID's MIL Team

In 2025, BECID's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) team developed a range of innovative materials and interventions to address contemporary challenges in education and foster critical thinking in different audiences. Below is an overview of selected resources and their unique contributions to enhancing media literacy and digital competency in the Baltics.

1. [Addressing misogyny and gender roles with young people](#)
 - 1.1. Widening value gap
 - 1.2. Masculinity and femininity as social constructs
 - 1.3. The backwards world
 - 1.4. Personal experiences of injustice
 - 1.5. Shifting perspectives
 - 1.6. Manfluencer bingo
 - 1.7. Tate's messages
2. [Creation of a dictionary of children's and youth's internet language](#)

5. STUDENT WORK HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025

The BECID project actively encourages and supports student initiatives that apply academic knowledge to real-world challenges in media and information literacy. Among the exemplary works submitted by students, the following project stands out for its innovative approach and practical impact.

5.1. Information Resilience Calendar for Seniors

A micro-project developed by Anett Maria Reinas, Anete Sammler, Grete Koho, and Julia Siimberg from the University of Tartu's Master's programme in Journalism and Communication, culminated in the creation of a prototype "Information Resilience Calendar for 2025." This project aimed to enhance societal information resilience, primarily targeting seniors and pensioners, while also offering valuable knowledge to younger demographics.

Concept and Rationale

The idea for the calendar emerged from an extensive brainstorming process, drawing inspiration from traditional Advent calendars. The physical wall calendar format was chosen for several key reasons:

This project has received funding from the European Union DIGITAL-2021-TRUST-01. Grant number: 101084073.

- **Accessibility:** Calendars are widely used by seniors, making it a familiar and integrated daily item. This bypassed dilemmas about how to best reach the target group, as lectures or online courses might not be as suitable.
- **Engagement:** It allows for easy note-taking, enabling users to highlight important information and events.
- **Knowledge Integration:** It provides a seamless way to embed crucial information resilience knowledge into an everyday object.

Theoretical Foundations

The project is grounded in research indicating that seniors are at a heightened risk of falling victim to various scams (FBI, 2025; Ebner & Pehlivanoglu, 2024; Jaffee, 2024; Relmers, 2023). Factors contributing to this vulnerability include accumulated savings, trustfulness, politeness, potential loneliness (leading to susceptibility to romance scams), reduced cognitive abilities with age, and lower digital literacy (Ojamets, 2020). Statistics from 2023 highlight the significant financial losses incurred through investment fraud (€2.5 million) and banking scams (€1.8 million) in Estonia, disproportionately affecting seniors.

Project Description and Content

The project began with an internal group brainstorm, generating various ideas before settling on the 2025 wall calendar concept. This decision was solidified following consultation with a professor who suggested seeking a partner for financial support and distribution. This led to a successful collaboration with the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders (BECID), which recognized the potential of the initiative.

The "Information Resilience Calendar for 2025" features BECID and European Union logos on its cover, with all content and design created by the student group and funded by BECID. The calendar introduces 11 common types of scams and phishing methods that endanger seniors. Each month provides a brief overview of a specific scam, along with practical advice on how to avoid it. The December page, instead of a new scam, features an information resilience crossword puzzle summarizing the calendar's content. The primary goal is to educate seniors practically and usefully, bringing vital information directly to their homes without requiring extra effort or leaving home.

Implementation and Outcomes

While wider distribution was still being negotiated at the time of the report's writing, the calendar prototype was tested with the students' elderly relatives during the Christmas break. Initial feedback, gathered informally through PDF prototypes, provided valuable insights on color usage, visuals, fonts, and number size. Seniors emphasized the importance of including all significant dates. Following BECID's funding commitment, the calendar's color scheme and fonts were adjusted to align with BECID's official branding.

Observations of relatives engaging with the PDF prototype revealed significant interest, particularly among elderly women, who appeared to take the topic more seriously than men. Further feedback was also received from a senior lady via a BECID representative, who found the texts "understandable, useful," and enjoyed the crossword. This feedback proved instrumental in refining the calendar, correcting minor errors, and adding more concrete examples. The team is optimistic that the calendar's impact will be positive, as it offers easily digestible, novel information for seniors. The project's success would be measured by its ability to prevent even a few individuals from falling victim to scams, providing constant tips on protecting oneself and one's assets.



We handed out calendars at training sessions for teachers, in libraries and elsewhere.

This project has received funding from the European Union DIGITAL-2021-TRUST-01. Grant number: 101084073.

May 2025, version 1.0.

Reflections

The project was a comprehensive learning experience, allowing team members to leverage their strengths in content creation, visual design, writing, and analysis. The collaborative process enhanced their knowledge of scam types and their skills in creating and articulating educational content for the target audience. The students noted an improvement in their ability to convey complex information compactly and instructively, along with enhanced teamwork and delegation skills. The previously abstract topic of scams targeting seniors became concrete and impactful through real-case analysis and feedback.

A notable development is the interest from Narva College, which plans to adapt the calendar into a bilingual (Estonian-Russian) version. This initiative aligns with the university's mission to serve society, addressing the issue of limited information access for older, non-Estonian-speaking populations in Narva. Narva College, which organizes a Russian-language university for seniors attracting around 200 participants per event, aims to print at least 200 copies.

The project underscores the importance of continuous education on digital literacy for seniors, given the evolving nature and increasing sophistication of scams, particularly with the advent of artificial intelligence. The calendar, while valuable, would require annual updates. The students expressed satisfaction that their academic work could provide practical assistance, and they themselves gained significant information resilience during the project. While the current scope is limited to a prototype, the project's broader future depends on BECID's plans for its utilization, printing, and distribution.

5.2. Decoding Youth Digital Slang: The 2025 Slang Dictionary Project

In 2025, students enrolled in the University of Tartu's "Sotsiaalsed digipädevused" (Social Digital Literacies) course undertook a significant micro-project: the creation of a comprehensive slang dictionary dedicated to understanding contemporary youth language. This initiative, driven by Bachelor's level students from the Institute of Social Sciences, aimed to bridge the communication gap between generations by deciphering the evolving lexicon used by children and young people online.

Project Objectives and Methodology

The core objective of the project was to investigate and clarify how young people communicate within digital spaces, identifying the specific words and phrases they employ and the underlying reasons for their usage. To achieve this, students conducted interviews with diverse age groups, including children around ten years old and older youth aged 15-16. This qualitative data collection was complemented by insights from existing research and

broader media analysis, forming the empirical basis for the dictionary. The project was conceived as a group work assignment, fostering collaborative learning and practical application of digital literacy concepts.

Product and Impact

The result is a dynamic slang dictionary, currently featuring over two hundred youth-specific phrases and their explanations, hosted on the [meedia.ut.ee platform](https://meedia.ut.ee/platform). This resource is designed to be invaluable for parents, educators, and anyone seeking to better comprehend the nuances of youth communication. The dictionary's practical value lies in its ability to foster intergenerational understanding, dispelling potential alienation arising from differing linguistic and value frameworks in social media environments.

Looksmaxxing

- **Estonian equivalent:** improving appearance
- **Meaning:** trying to make one's appearance as attractive as possible; the word is often used in the context of *brain rot*
- **Example sentence:** "Looksmaxxing is very popular on TikTok."
- **Additional information**

Mew, mew

- **Estonian equivalent:** technique for sharpening the jawline
- **Meaning:** The tongue is pressed to the roof of the mouth to make the chin protrude
- **Example sentence:** "If you *meow* all the time, your chin will be sharper."
- **Additional information**

What

- **Estonian equivalent:** average
- **Meaning:** used to describe something mediocre or not very good
- **Example sentence:** "This food is very *tasty*."

Pookie

- **Estonian equivalent:** nickname
- **Meaning:** An abbreviation referring to loved ones or pets
- **Example sentence:** "How are you, pookie?"

Screenshot of a slang dictionary (5/23/2025).

Driving Force and Collaboration

The initiative was inspired by Associate Professor Maria Murumaa-Mengel, who supervises the course and focuses on youth social media use and digital literacy. Her observation of distinct linguistic and value worlds across age groups in social media spurred the idea for a tool to enhance mutual understanding. The project also underlines her belief in the power of language and creative linguistic use to elucidate broader societal truths. The slang dictionary is integrated into the wider meedia.ut.ee platform, which was launched in July 2024 as part of a digital mentor project in collaboration with Telia. This broader initiative aims to connect digitally skilled youth with both children and seniors, providing support and advice for safe internet use, and offering educational materials for teachers.

Student Contribution and Learning

The students' meticulous work in interviewing young people, analyzing their language, and compiling the dictionary demonstrates a profound engagement with the subject matter. This practical application of their "Social Digital Literacies" studies provided them with firsthand experience in qualitative research, data interpretation, and the creation of accessible educational content. The project also highlighted the rapid evolution of digital slang, necessitating continuous updates to the dictionary and reinforcing the dynamic nature of digital communication. Through this project, students gained valuable insights into the social dimensions of digital literacy and contributed a tangible resource that actively works to reduce the digital divide by improving intergenerational communication.

5.3. Project Overview: "Miks ta siis...?" – Addressing Secondary Victimization in Media

Mari Laasik, Kermo Aruoja, Andra Jundas, and Marko Noppel, students of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tartu's Institute of Social Studies, undertook the group project "Miks ta siis...?" ("So why did she?" in English). This initiative directly addressed the misrepresentation of sexual violence in media through the lens of secondary victimization, aiming to highlight this critical issue and foster public awareness.

Project Aim and Methodology

The primary goal of "Miks ta siis...?" was to engage the public and spark discussion around secondary victimization. This was achieved by re-contextualizing article headlines and common claims that perpetuate secondary victimization, presenting them on posters in absurd, provocative, or even rude ways to capture attention. The project utilized a multi-platform approach, launching a dedicated website (<https://mikstasiis.ee/>) and an accompanying Instagram account ([@mikstasiis](https://www.instagram.com/mikstasiis)). Between December 4, 2024, and January 4, 2025, eight Instagram posts directed users to the website.

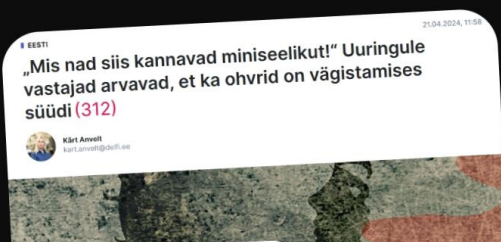
WHAT IS THIS RE-SACRIFICE ALL ABOUT?

Secondary victimization is a situation in which a victim of a wrongful act, such as sexual or intimate partner violence, is re-traumatized through the way institutions or individuals treat the victim. Re-victimization can occur, for example, when the victim has to repeatedly encounter their attacker during a criminal investigation, when they are repeatedly questioned about the same circumstances, or when their behavior is commented on insensitively.

Re-victimization can involve victim blaming, doubting the victim's story, or minimizing the seriousness of the crime. It can leave a deep psychological scar on the victim, reducing their mental capacity and trust in the justice system.



Example of a re-sacrificing photo. Photo: mstandret / Envato



Screenshot of the project's website (5/23/2025).

WHY RE-SACRIFICE?

This can be explained by a phenomenon called the just world hypothesis. The just world hypothesis is the mistaken belief that people's actions always lead to morally just consequences, that is, good people are rewarded and bad people are punished. According to the just world hypothesis, victims of violence are often blamed for their own suffering.

The website offered a concise overview of secondary victimization, explaining how to recognize it in media. It also featured an anonymous knowledge test, with results not saved to encourage honest and thoughtful participation. Visitors could voluntarily provide demographic data (age, how they found the site) and their opinion on the test. Data on visitor numbers, country of origin, and most visited subpages were collected. A crucial subpage, "Ajakirjanikule (For Journalists)," aimed to guide journalism enthusiasts to ethical guidelines compiled by Simone Eelmaa, Kadri Kallip, and Annika Tamme for more responsible coverage of sexual abuse, addressing the perceived lack of awareness of such guidelines among many journalists.

While the initial strategy included extensive physical poster placement in urban areas, practical constraints meant the project's primary reach was through social media. The posters were intended to feature QR codes linking to web versions that would reveal the original, revictimizing headlines alongside references, followed by the educational test.

Idea Generation and Development

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The project's concept originated from brainstorming sessions focused on societal issues related to misinformation, particularly the problematic framing and victim-blaming often present in media headlines covering rape crimes. Initial considerations included analyzing the prevalence of such articles, which quickly revealed that while written content might sometimes be acceptable, the accompanying visual elements frequently exacerbated revictimization.

Inspired by a lecturer's encouragement to boldly highlight how rape victims are revictimized, the campaign evolved. The idea shifted from merely pointing out problematic statements to creating a striking contrast by transposing these statements onto other types of crimes. To fulfill an educational purpose, this concept was integrated with a webpage featuring a test, enhanced with small "bubbles" providing educational information for each question or answer. This combined approach aimed to provoke thought via the posters and provide tangible learning through the interactive website.

Reception, Challenges, and Impact

Upon its public launch, "Miks ta siis...?" garnered notable attention through promotional efforts and media mentions. The project was highlighted in the Ministry of Education and Research's newsletter for teachers and featured in an opinion piece in [Eesti Päevaleht](#). Support also came from academic mentors, peers, and organizations such as NGO Progressiivne Liikumine, which [shared](#) the Eesti Päevaleht article on their platforms, helping to extend its impact.

Despite positive reception, some challenges were encountered. Early constructive criticism from an expert led to revisions on the website to more accurately distinguish between a journalist reporting a quote and direct journalistic revictimization. Other suggested changes were considered within the scope of a student project. A significant obstacle was the paywall for the Eesti Päevaleht article, which limited its accessibility and reduced potential website traffic. Budget constraints also restricted the planned widespread physical poster campaign. Nevertheless, the project successfully reached a significant audience, and the topic generated immediate public discussion in the article's comment sections. The expert specifically praised the initial educational content on the website for its clarity and relatability. The effectiveness of the group dynamics and the complementary contributions of each team member were central to the project's successful outcome.

Project Reach and Statistics

Between December 4, 2024, and January 4, 2025, the "Miks ta siis...?" website recorded 1616 unique visitors and 3889 page views. Of these, 166 individuals completed the voluntary test, with the majority (103) aged 35-54. Most visitors (109) accessed the site via social media, and 99 respondents reported gaining new knowledge, particularly regarding secondary victimization.

The project's Instagram account, which peaked at 40 followers, utilized paid post boosts. These generated 6514 initial plays and 236 website visits at an average cost of approximately €0.13 per visit. In total, four reels and eight posts reached 6528 accounts, accumulating 11299 impressions. The website attracted visitors from 31 countries, with Estonia being the primary source. Peak popularity occurred during the first two weeks after launch, driven by educators sharing the site and its feature in the Ministry of Education and Research's media literacy newsletter. The Eesti Päevaleht opinion article, despite its publication, did not significantly increase website traffic, possibly due to its paywall and the link's placement.

Impact and Overall Feedback

A significant impact occurred when the project team wrote to the editor of Eesti Päevaleht to point out that the initially published photo for their article depicted an aggressive man on top of a woman, which was revictimizing. The newspaper promptly changed the image to an illustrative, non-revictimized one (a dummy replacing the victim), demonstrating a direct impact on media practices. While the original revictimizing photo continues to circulate on Facebook due to initial sharing, the main article now features the updated image.

Furthermore, a young journalist from the Nõusolekuprojekt sought advice on appropriate photographs for covering rape crimes. The team was able to discuss and share their materials, gaining insight into the challenges journalists face (e.g., lack of criminal photos due to non-public court hearings vs. easier access to victim photos). The journalist pledged to discuss the issue and educate her colleagues.