


Chapter 12


Building a GenAI Socratic Chatbot for Critical Thinking: Insights From Cross-Cultural Cocreation, Living Labs and Pilots

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the challenges and opportunities of deploying generative AI to enhance critical thinking to fight disinformation, focusing on the TITAN project under Horizon Europe. The chapter conceptualizes a Socratic chatbot powered by generative AI, aiming to foster media literacy and resilience against disinformation among diverse user groups. This Socratic chatbot aims to enhance critical thinking skills by asking users questions about media content. Building upon user insights from cocreation, living labs and pilot testing conducted in higher education in Flanders, NGOs in Bulgaria, and migrant communities in Italy, the chapter critically examines the efficacy and potential of a Socratic chatbot. While the results of the pilots indicate a strong potential, the current state of chatbots like ChatGPT have altered the playing field. Users tend to search more for answers than they are willing to answer questions themselves. This chapter provides actionable insights into the design, implementation, and pedagogical value of generative AI tools in combating disinformation.

INTRODUCTION

Disinformation poses a significant threat to democratic values, social cohesion, and informed decision-making (McKay & Tenove, 2020). Efforts to halt the dissemination of fake news and disinformation may vary from system-level (i.e., platform-level fact-checking and debunking, legislation, policy regulation, etc.) to individual-level interventions (Kozyreva et al., 2024; Ziemer & Rothmund, 2024). System-level approaches to combating misinformation have shown mixed success and often lack long-term effectiveness compared to individual-level interventions (Ecker et al., 2022; Hoes et al., 2024; Koppel et al., 2023). Even effective debunking strategies, such as warning labels (Martel & Rand, 2024), require continuous

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