FAQ: Framework for Information Incidents

What is the Framework?

- Proposed by Full Fact, the *Framework for Information Incidents* is a five-level model that sets out options for responding to misinformation crises in proportionate and effective ways.
- While every incident is unique, predictable challenges will often emerge for those trying to find and distribute reliable information and/or tackle bad information. It is possible to identify patterns in the chaos. By identifying the most common challenges in advance we can prepare coordinated responses to reduce the harm that bad information can bring.
- A shared assessment system will enable clearer and faster responses, quicker scaling, effective collaboration with clarity about roles and responsibilities; and a clear demonstration of success as a situation de-escalates.
- We are now publishing the first draft of the Framework as a consultation that will run until 14 May 2021.

What are you consulting on?

- We want to know how the Framework could relate to you or your organisation. This could be based on research you have done on misinformation, your experiences of responding to incidents or views on how this could be implemented by different stakeholders.
- The consultation poses eight questions on the detail of the proposed Framework, and there is an additional question which is an opportunity for any other comments or suggestions you may have. You can answer any or all of the questions.
- We also hope you'll share the consultation with people in your network who could offer input or feedback.

Who is the Framework for?

- The Framework is aimed at anyone who is impacted by or works in response to misinformation crises. We want it to be useful for senior decision makers and practitioners across a variety of different sectors. This includes:
  - Internet companies
  - Open democratic governments and regulators

- ○ Civil society organisations, intermediaries such as fact checkers and the media, academia and researchers
- ○ Those looking to hold organisations to account, including people or groups affected by misinformation

Why is a Framework necessary?

- Events such as elections, public health emergencies and natural disasters can affect the information environment in ways that make it harder to tackle misinformation effectively. Until now, there has been no common system to rank how serious an information incident is.
- Responses to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and violence in the US Capitol in 2021 showed that those working to counter misinformation can respond quickly and innovatively.
- But it is clear that we need more discussion of the principles underlying action. These questions can get pushed to the side when immediate action is required and responses can be improvised and not as effective as they might be.
- By introducing five levels of severity, the Framework is designed to build a shared understanding of severe incidents, helping to coordinate timely and proportionate responses to crises.

What will it look like?

- Currently the Framework is in two sections: a five-level model that sets out the severity of incidents, and the common challenges you might expect to see with suggested aims that responses should be seeking to achieve.
- Part of this consultation is getting feedback on how the levels, challenges and aims so these elements can be improved and brought together with suggested responses to form a simple and useful tool.
- Flexibility is a core component - each user should be able to tailor the Framework to their own situation and use it to guide but not replace their own judgement as to what action is required from them (and/or others).
- Subject to feedback, we're planning to create an interactive tool that enables users to select challenges and draw up a basic menu of aims and responses. This could form a discussion document for planning when incidents occur.

When will it be ready?

- We have now published a first draft of the Framework for Information Incidents. We are running a consultation until 14 May 2021 and will be engaging with a variety of different organisations to refine and further develop the Framework.
- Following the consultation, we will publish a second version in late 2021.

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Who's been involved in creating it?

- Full Fact has acted as convenor, generating ideas following discussions with experts including fact checkers, technology companies, civil society and academics. We've sought feedback from a wider network of civil society organisations, academics and policymakers.
- We are particularly grateful to Facebook for funding this work in 2020.
- We will continue to engage with a wide range of organisations to ensure that the Framework is a useful and relevant tool.

What countries and/or region(s) is this intended to apply to?

- To date, we've worked with fact checking leaders in India, South Africa, Argentina, Turkey and Spain as part of our collaborative process, as well as organisations in the UK and North America.
- We recognise that more work is needed to create a globally useful product that reflects the variety of circumstances and environments that organisations are operating in.
- This will be a key part of our work in the coming months. If you think you could support this, we would be interested in hearing from you.

How does this fit in with the proposed regulation of the internet companies being developed in countries across the world?

- There are many problems within the misinformation sphere, and this Framework does not propose to solve them all.
- We know that there will be many crises in the near future, potentially before any regulation comes in. This Framework attempts to provide guidance that can be used immediately.
- In many contexts the Framework could work alongside voluntary and regulatory measures.

Where can I read more?

- We are committed to running this process transparently and openly. Over the past six months Full Fact has published discussion papers which outline further detail and thinking on each of the key elements of the Framework so far. You can read them here: fullfact.org/policy
- We will continue to publish papers as this project continues, including a summary of the feedback gained during the consultation.