A Literature Review: Examining Visual Design and Multimedia Elements Role in Fighting Misinformation and Strengthening Media Trust

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Article Information

Received: 21-11-2024
Revised: 28-11-2024
Published: 05-12-2024

Keywords
Visual Design; Misinformation; Media Credibility; Systematic Literature Review; Brand Equity

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Abstract

The development of digital media has presented new challenges in maintaining the credibility of information, especially amidst the increasing prevalence of misinformation and hoaxes that spread rapidly through social platforms. This study aims to explore how visual design and multimedia elements can contribute to building audience trust in media and encouraging engagement in disseminating credible information. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, the research follows a selection procedure based on PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure the validity and quality of the included studies. From 20 articles that meet the inclusion criteria, the key findings indicate that consistent and aesthetically pleasing visual design, particularly those capable of touching the emotional aspects of the audience, plays a crucial role in enhancing media credibility and brand loyalty. Additionally, interactive multimedia approaches, such as dynamic infographics and narrative-based short videos, not only capture audience interest but also strengthen their intention to share credible information. This study concludes that the application of strong visual elements and emotion-based multimedia strategies can help counter misinformation by strengthening media brand equity. Recommendations for future research include developing interactive designs that can educate audiences in identifying credible information and collaborating with media professionals to ensure broader impact. These findings provide practical guidance for media in integrating visual design as an effective tool to build trust and enhance information literacy in the digital age.

1. Introduction

The advancement of digital technology and social media has accelerated the dissemination of information across all layers of society. The rapid increase in social media users has created an ecosystem where information can spread quickly, often without undergoing adequate verification processes. However, this

convenience is accompanied by a rise in hoaxes and misinformation, which can have detrimental effects on society (Jia & Sundar, 2024). Massively disseminated misinformation has been shown to shape biases and incorrect perceptions of various issues, ultimately undermining the credibility of information (Lan & Tung, 2024). A study by Pennycook & Rand (2019) revealed that fake news accompanied by appealing visual elements is more likely to be shared than those without, demonstrating that visual appeal significantly drives the massive spread of misinformation.

As many as 58.8% of social media users tend to refrain from directly addressing or correcting misinformation they encounter. Gurgun et al. (2024) explain that most users feel hesitant or uncomfortable challenging false information in the digital public space, which ultimately poses a significant challenge in curbing the spread of misinformation. Additionally, emotions play a critical role in amplifying the reach of fake news. Content that elicits strong moral emotions, such as anger or fear, tends to be shared more frequently on social media (Brady et al., 2017).

In recent years, misinformation on social media has grown globally, particularly during crises or major events such as presidential elections or pandemics (Durani et al., 2024). For instance, Marcelino et al. (2019) found that COVID-19-related misinformation spread rapidly due to visuals that manipulated public emotions, leading to widespread uncertainty and confusion. Similarly, reports indicate that during election periods, hoaxes containing visuals that provoke negative emotions, such as fear and anger, are shared more frequently on social media than neutral content (Bakir & McStay, 2018).

According to Ladeira et al. (2022), visual content plays a significant role in enhancing the appeal of misinformation, allowing false information to spread more widely and quickly across various online platforms. For example, the use of emotionally charged images, whether positive or negative, has been proven to influence audience engagement with such content and increase their likelihood of sharing it (Keib et al., 2018). Other studies reveal that social media users are more inclined to trust information presented in visually appealing formats, even when the sources are not directly verified, presenting new challenges in efforts to curb the spread of misinformation (Meservy et al., 2020). The increasing dissemination of hoaxes and misinformation threatens social structures, erodes public trust, and can even impact decision-making processes. Additionally, news content containing visual elements is often perceived as more credible by audiences, even when the sources are not necessarily valid (Wobbrock et al., 2021).

According to Tellis et al. (2019), addressing the issue of misinformation requires an increasing emphasis on design and multimedia. Engaging, accurate, and interactive visual design not only serves as an informational tool but also as an instrument to strengthen public trust in content credibility. Through effective visual approaches, such as infographics or data visualizations, the public can more easily identify credible information and reduce the negative impacts of misinformation. One study found that using interactive infographics significantly enhances audience understanding of complex topics, ultimately reducing the spread of hoaxes (Geronazzo et al., 2019). Meanwhile, another study highlighted that combining visual elements with audio in short videos improves audience recall of visually presented informational content (Choi et al., 2017).

Research by Bock et al. (2023) highlights the importance of designing platforms or visual tools that help the public identify hoax content, such as through easily understandable data visualizations or interactive infographics. In the context of rapid digital development, the ability to process and comprehend visual information has become increasingly critical. Images and visual elements possess the power to influence emotions and perceptions more quickly than words, making a design approach that prioritizes clarity and visual effectiveness essential.

In addition, the use of multimedia design can also play a role in creating news media brand equity among the public, while also countering misinformation. Multimedia content, in particular, helps media outlets outperform competitors by more clearly articulating their identity, so that they remain relevant to their audience. According to a study, brands with a consistent visual identity tend to be more trusted by audiences compared to brands with a changing image (Saulīte & Ščeulovs, 2023).

Furthermore, creating more emotional content has proven effective in reaching and influencing audiences to be more active in spreading or clarifying information on social media. Emotional broadcaster theory states that people have an intrinsic need to share stories that evoke emotions, so emotional content can motivate broader social sharing, which is effectively used to combat misinformation (Keib et al., 2018). As expressed by Zhou et al. (2021), emotions conveyed through visual content, such as images or videos highlighting emotional expressions, often increase audience engagement with news content. Other studies also mention that visual content that evokes positive emotions can increase user interaction on social media, making them more likely to share content they consider important (Kadakas & Ojamets, 2022).

In this context, this research aims to explore how visual elements and multimedia design can play a role in influencing audience perception of information credibility and strengthening media branding. This research will also evaluate how emotional content can contribute to the dissemination or clarification of information on social media. Thus, the results of this research are expected to provide new insights and practical recommendations in combating the spread of hoaxes and misinformation in the digital era.

2. Research Methods

The methodological approach in this research uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, which is a structured approach to identifying, assessing, and synthesizing relevant research. According to Kitchenham et al. (2009), SLR ensures that relevant evidence is collected and evaluated transparently and comprehensively, allowing this research to be built on a strong foundation of knowledge. In its implementation, this research applies the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines. According to Page et al. (2021), PRISMA was developed to maintain transparency and quality in reporting systematic reviews. The application of PRISMA helps this research achieve reliable and replicable quality results by other researchers, ensuring consistency in literature selection and screening.

SLR also includes an important stage in formulating keywords and building effective search strings. The initial step in this research is determining relevant keywords and constructing search strings using Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR." Snyder (2019) emphasizes that proper keyword selection and the use of Boolean operators are important strategies in SLR to expand search results and increase accuracy in finding relevant literature.

Furthermore, strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to screen the relevant literature. According to Petticrew and Roberts (2006), the use of clear criteria in article selection helps to ensure that only high-quality and relevant studies will be included in the systematic review. This supports the validity of the results obtained from the literature analysis. In addition, this study refers to a multi-layered article screening process to improve the quality of the review. Higgins et al. (2011) suggested that multilevel screening methods can improve the efficiency and accuracy of the article selection process in systematic reviews, so that the results are more structured and systematic.

2.1 Identification of Key Concepts and Keywords

The first step in this research is to determine the main concepts related to the topic, namely the Role of Design and Multimedia in Overcoming the Spread of Hoaxes and Misinformation. To build a thorough understanding, keywords were organized based on core terms such as “Interactive Design”, Multimedia, “Graphic Design”, Visual, Media, Platform, Social Media, Hoax, Misinformation, Literacy, Branding, and Content. These words were chosen to cover key aspects relevant to design and multimedia in the context of information dissemination. Once the keywords were identified, the search string was organized using Boolean operators such as OR and AND to expand the search results and improve the accuracy in selecting relevant articles.

The next step was to formulateresearch questions (RQs) as the main frame of reference for the research. In this study, three main questions were asked, namely:

Table 1. Research Question Formulation

No	Research Question
1	To what extent can visual content, especially information design, influence the audience's perception of information credibility?
2	What is the relevance of using multimedia design in creating news media brand equity among the public or countering misinformation?
3	Can more emotional content creation reach and influence audiences to be more active in disseminating or clarifying information on social media?

With this RQ, the research is geared towards exploring how visual and multimedia aspects can have a positive impact in improving audience literacy and resilience to misinformation.

2.2 Initial Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by searching for scientific articles available in various leading databases, such as Elsevier/Sciencedirect, Sage Journals, Emerald, Taylor & Francis, First Monday, National Library Medicine, and Wiley. The data collection process was conducted from September 17 to October 5, 2024, to ensure relevant and up-to-date results on the topics investigated. The choice of these databases was based on their credibility and reputation for being frequently used for research in the fields of design, multimedia and information science. This search yielded 960 articles that matched the initial search string. The articles were then screened based on certain criteria, such as open file access, English as the primary language, and relevant publisher. This initial selection reduced the number of articles to 634, making it easier to process in the next stage.

2.3 Article Filtering Process Using PRISMA Method

The screening process using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method was carried out in several stages to ensure the quality and relevance of the selected articles.

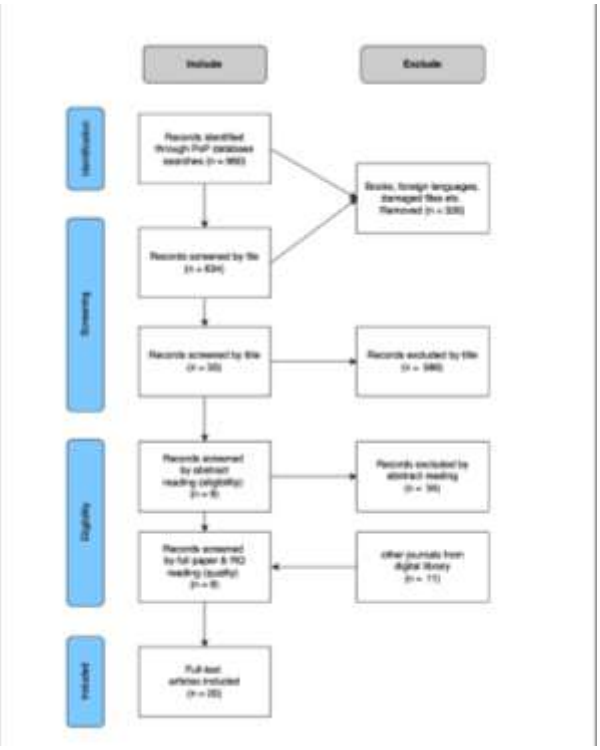

Fig 1. Prism flowchart of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion.

- File Based Filtering Stage (Identification): At this stage, articles that did not meet the basic criteria such as not being in English, locked files, or not matching the specified publisher were removed from the list. From the initial 960 articles, 634 articles that met the criteria were retained for the next stage.

- Screening by Title Stage: After file screening, an assessment based on the title of the article was conducted. Only articles that had titles relevant to the selected topic were retained, leaving 33 articles. Articles that did not match the title or were not directly related to the research topic were then moved to the trash folder.

- Screening by Abstract: Next, the abstracts of the articles that passed the previous stage were reviewed to ensure that the topic was relevant to this study. At this stage, 24 articles were excluded because they did not fit the topic, leaving 9 articles that were considered relevant.

- Screening by Full Paper (RQ) Stage: In the final stage, an in-depth assessment of the full content of the remaining articles was conducted to ensure that the content could answer the formulated RQs. Of the 9 articles, all of them had substance that could be used as the main reference to answer the research questions.

2.4 Classification by Publisher

As an additional step, articles that have passed all screening stages are further classified by publisher. The distribution of articles that passed the classification is as follows:

- Elsevier/Sciencedirect: 7 articles
- Sage Journals: 4 articles
- Emerald: 3 articles
- Taylor & Francis: 3 articles
- Other: 3 articles, including from First Monday and National Library Medicine

This grouping helped to see the distribution of articles from each publisher as well as identify the sources that most frequently released works related to this topic. In the end, a total of 20 articles were deemed most relevant and of high quality to answer the RQ.

Articles that passed all selection stages were then used as the basis for the main analysis. In this analysis, the research explores the effectiveness of visual and multimedia design in improving public perception of information and strengthening user engagement. The articles form the basis for understanding how design works in the media as an educational tool to counter the spread of misinformation. With this systematic and layered method, the research is expected to produce in-depth and relevant conclusions on how design and multimedia can be effectively utilized in tackling hoaxes and improving media literacy in society.

3. Result and Discussion

In the results and discussion section of this systematic literature review, the authors will address each research question by presenting an analysis that responds clearly and thoroughly to the question. These answers will be compiled based on the findings from various scientific articles that have been systematically collected and analyzed during the literature review process.

3.1 The Effect of Visual Design on Perceived Credibility of Information

Visual design plays a crucial role in influencing how audiences perceive the credibility of information. In the context of digital media, design elements such as article length, layout, number of images, font size and type, and overall visual consistency, have been shown to have a major impact on how audiences perceive the trustworthiness of content. The study by Wobbrock et al. (2021) shows that these elements create what is known as the " goldilocks zone," where the balanced and aesthetically pleasing appearance of an article is judged more credible by audiences, regardless of the content of the article itself. For example, too many images or inconsistent use of fonts can lower the perceived credibility of online news content as it gives a less professional and difficult-to-read impression. In contrast, a consistent and professional design can help audiences process information better and strengthen their trust in the content.

Similar findings from the research of Nayoga et al. (2021) also support the important role of visual design in enhancing credibility. In this study, neural networks were used to analyze visual patterns and classification of emotions in news-related image content. The utilization of this technology not only helps detect fake news but also improves the accuracy of information delivery. This proves that visual design that pays attention to details, such as the classification of emotions in visual content, can support the delivery of more credible and informative messages to audiences. In addition to basic elements such as layout and fonts, the selection of appropriate colors also affects perceptions of credibility. According to the findings of Liu et al. (2021), the use of design elements that are consistent with the organization's visual identity, such as brand colors, typography, and logos, goes a long way in establishing credibility in the eyes of the audience. These visual elements not only strengthen branding, but also build audience trust in the information conveyed by the organization. Consistent colors can create a feeling of familiarity and professionalism, so audiences are more likely to trust the information they read when the visual presentation reflects a stable identity.

Also, Babac's (2022) study highlights the importance of aesthetics in videos as part of visual design. In this study, it was found that aesthetic elements such as lighting, color consistency, and highlighting attention-grabbing objects can enhance audience comprehension of visual content. Aesthetically appealing visuals enhance the audience's ability to understand information and make the content more believable. This research shows that well-optimized visuals can help audiences process information faster and deeper, which in turn increases the perceived credibility of the content presented.

In the realm of news communication, Cheng & Li (2024) also noted that news supported with relevant and emotionally valuable images tends to have a greater impact on building trust. This is especially important in social media platforms, where information is often consumed quickly. Images with positive or negative

emotional value that match the context of the news can reinforce the message and make it easier for audiences to emotionally engage, increasing the credibility of the content. This shows that visual design serves not only as an aesthetic element but also as a tool that can strengthen emotional appeal and trust.

Overall, the right visual design elements, from layout to the use of neural networks for visual classification, play an important role in shaping the audience's perception of credibility of information on digital media. By ensuring that elements such as color, typography, and harmonious visuals are used consistently, organizations can establish the credibility of the information conveyed and strengthen the audience's emotional connection to the content. The combination of aesthetic beauty, consistency, and utilization of visual design support technology has proven to be an effective approach in increasing trust in information amidst the many issues of misinformation in today's digital era.

3.2 The Role of Multimedia Design in News Brand Equity on Digital Platforms

Multimedia design is not just about conveying information but also plays a strategic role in creating strong brand equity, especially on digital platforms. In a competitive social media environment, news brands that carefully use multimedia design can differentiate themselves from competitors and increase audience trust. The study of Tandar et al. (2024) revealed that news brands that successfully create a unique visual identity through consistency of elements such as color, typography, and layout can build a positive image and credibility. This not only plays a role in increasing loyalty, but also positions the brand as a reliable source of information amidst the flood of information that may not be trustworthy.

According to the same study, strong brand equity can be achieved by paying attention to visual details in every piece of published content. News brands that are consistent in their visual presentation tend to be more memorable to the audience, and this builds an emotional connection between the audience and the brand. By using consistent colors and recognizable logos, news brands can create immediate associations in the minds of the audience. For example, certain colors and logos become unique identities that are instantly recognizable amongst the hundreds of other pieces of content that appear on social media feeds, thus creating a long-lasting relationship that encourages audiences to return to consume content from that source.

Furthermore, the study by Santos et al. (2023) highlights that multimedia strategies with a visual narrative approach play an important role in building brand equity. Strong visual narratives, such as storytelling in image and video formats, allow audiences to feel more connected to the content presented. These narratives not only present facts but also evoke emotions relevant to the issues raised, which in turn builds a positive image of the brand in the eyes of the public. News brands that are able to package stories with strong and relevant visual elements show that they understand the audience's need to absorb complex information. This can increase audience loyalty to the brand as they feel that the information source can present a meaningful story.

Interactive approaches in multimedia design have also proven effective in increasing audience engagement. According to research by Straker & Wrigley (2016), news brands that use interactive designs, such as infographics or interactive videos, have higher engagement rates compared to static news content. Interactivity allows audiences to actively participate in the consumption of information, for example by interacting through comments, clicks, or even participating in quizzes or polls related to the news. Content that allows the audience to “play” with the information visually is not only engaging but also enhances the user experience, thus reinforcing the impression that the news brand is responsive to their needs. In addition, the use of short videos as part of a multimedia strategy has become an important tool for building brand equity. According to a study by Bresciani & Eppler (2015), videos that are short in appearance and duration but packed with information can significantly increase engagement. Videos that are packed with interesting visual elements and emphasize key points can make it easier for audiences to absorb information faster. With this strategy, news brands not only increase engagement but also build credibility as an efficient and reliable source of information.

Furthermore, research by Brum et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of immersive visual experiences, such as interactive audio and video, in creating emotional engagement with audiences. Multimedia experiences that create a strong “sense of presence”, for example with the use of 3D audio or virtual reality (VR), can build a

deeper connection between audiences and news brands. In this context, the audience is not just reading or watching the news, but they feel as if they are present in the news. News brands that are able to create immersive experiences through multimedia design demonstrate innovation and sensitivity to the latest digital trends, which can increase audience trust and loyalty.

In an effort to combat misinformation, Mills & Robson's (2020) study highlights that audiences tend to trust news sources that have strong and sustainable brand equity across multiple digital platforms. When news brands display a consistent and high-quality visual design, audiences feel safer to trust the information presented and are less susceptible to misinformation. With trust built, audiences are also more likely to share information originating from such sources, which ultimately helps spread credible information and combat misinformation in the digital space.

3.3 Effectiveness of Emotional Content in Mobilizing Audiences to Share Credible Information

Emotions triggered through visual content have proven effective in increasing engagement and encouraging audiences to share credible information. Research by Keib et al. (2018) identified that images with strong emotional value both positive and negative were able to increase audience intention to click and share the content. Content that creates a deep emotional response is more effective in attracting attention compared to neutral or text-based content. Images or videos that present emotional elements, such as a human face showing a happy or sad expression, for example, tend to trigger higher engagement because the audience feels "connected" to the information being conveyed. This also indicates that content that is intentionally designed to tap into audience emotions is a powerful tool in spreading credible information on social media.

Furthermore, Straker & Wrigley's (2016) study shows that an emotional approach in digital content strategy increases the likelihood of audiences to actively engage. When content is created by emphasizing emotional aspects, such as socially relevant issues that touch the audience's empathy, it strengthens their attachment to the information and increases their intention to share the content. For example, social campaigns that use emotionally evocative visual elements related to issues such as health or the environment are often shared more because audiences feel compelled to spread positive messages or support change. With this strategy, emotion acts as a catalyst that encourages audiences to spread information more widely.

Cheng & Li's study (2024) also supports the importance of an emotional point of view in attracting audience engagement, especially in platforms like TikTok that prioritize short videos and visual expressions. When content is created from a second-person point of view and uses in-depth narratives, audiences feel more engaged and motivated to share because they can feel an affinity with the subject or message. For example, a video with a personalized view or a narrative that focuses on the experience of someone struggling with a particular issue allows the audience to feel empathy and is more easily moved to share the content. This approach has proven to be effective in creating a stronger interaction between the audience and the content, and ultimately extending the reach of credible information.

According to Geronazzo et al. (2019) investigated the use of interactive audio and visuals as a way to increase audience emotional engagement. The use of elements such as 3D audio or interactive audio renderings allows the audience to not only see but also "feel" the information presented. In this context, interactive audio elements can create an immersive experience that strengthens the audience's emotional connection with the content, especially for news that has high emotional value, such as natural disasters or social campaigns. Audiences who feel connected to the content through an immersive sensory experience are more likely to share the information because the experience they feel is visceral and personal.

In addition, Babac's study (2022) revealed that emotions displayed through video or image content often stimulate higher engagement from audiences compared to text-based content. For example, videos or images that feature visual expressions such as happy, sad, or angry faces directly affect the emotional centers in the audience's brain, ultimately increasing the likelihood of interaction and participation. Visual elements that create this emotional response can bind the audience's attention more effectively and make them more emotionally engaged, which in turn encourages them to spread credible information to their networks. This is

in line with the findings of Zinchenko et al. (2020), that emotions have a specific valence effect on attention that interferes with the encoding of spatial target-distractor relationships and the formation of spatial context memory in visual search environments. Another study, Boatman et al. (2024), emphasized the importance of emotions in building audience engagement with news content on social media, particularly in counteracting misinformation on platforms such as TikTok.The study found that when information is presented with a strong emotional context, such as using a positive or empathetic narrative, audiences are more likely to actively participate in spreading the content.Strong emotions in the content make it easier for audiences to remember the information presented, so they feel compelled to share it with others to spread the message.This emotion-based approach effectively increases the spread of credible information as audiences are not only passive consumers but also play an active role in information dissemination.

The findings from these studies show that an emotional content strategy is a highly effective approach in encouraging audiences to share credible information. Emotions evoked through visual elements, personal narratives, and interactive sensory experiences can create a deeper bond between the audience and the content. Emotional approaches not only increase engagement but also help audiences sort out relevant and trustworthy information, ultimately encouraging them to share such information widely on digital platforms.This approach is becoming increasingly important in the fight against misinformation, as content that appeals to audiences' emotions tends to be more memorable and trustworthy.

3.4 Author Discussion

Based on my literature review, I found that the role of visual design and multimedia in countering misinformation faces some important challenges. Interestingly, while visual elements have proven to be effective in attracting audience attention (Pennycook & Rand, 2019), the same are also utilized to spread false information. This creates a dilemma in using engaging visual elements while maintaining the credibility of the information. Studies show that content that provokes strong emotions tends to be more viral (Brady et al., 2017). In my opinion, the media needs to develop visual strategies that can evoke positive emotions while maintaining objectivity, instead of getting caught up in provocative content. In addition, people's visual literacy needs to be improved to be able to critically analyze visual information (Bock et al., 2023). Visual consistency and technological innovation are also important aspects that need to be considered. Media must be able to maintain a consistent visual identity while continuing to innovate with new interactive formats. I believe that the success of visual strategies in countering misinformation requires a balance between visual appeal, information credibility and audience empowerment.

4. Conclusions

This research highlights the crucial role of visual elements and multimedia design in addressing misinformation and strengthening trust in the media. Consistent and professional design is proven to increase the credibility of information, helping audiences distinguish real news from fake. Technologies such as AR, VR, and neural networks provide new ways to deliver information interactively and emotionally, creating a more immersive and effective experience. In addition, strong visual narratives strengthen media brand equity, making them more memorable and trustworthy. Emotional content that utilizes storytelling and social issues also encourages audiences to share credible information. Thus, visual and multimedia elements serve not only as aesthetic tools but also as strategic instruments in building public trust and countering misinformation in the digital age.

To increase effectiveness, media should develop interactive designs that incorporate elements such as infographics and videos, and utilize VR technology and 3D audio. Emotional content strategies need to focus on evocative narratives and social issues to encourage interaction and dissemination of correct information. Public education on visual literacy is essential, and collaboration with design and communication experts is needed

to ensure accuracy and effectiveness. Media should also continue to innovate with new technologies such as AI to personalize the user experience and increase resilience to misinformation, while ensuring content accessibility for different age groups and abilities. With this approach, media can more effectively face the challenges of misinformation in the digital age, build public trust, and improve overall media literacy.

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