Our Mission

The News Literacy Project (NLP) is a nonpartisan national education nonprofit that works with educators and journalists to teach middle school and high school students how to sort fact from fiction in the digital age. NLP provides these students with the essential skills they need to become smart, active consumers of news and information and engaged, informed participants in our democracy.

News literacy teaches that all information is not created equal. It helps young people use the aspirational standards of quality journalism to determine what they should trust, share and act on. It also fosters an understanding of the importance of the First Amendment and a free press in a democracy, especially the watchdog role.

Through NLP's original educational materials, which deliver news literacy instruction through classroom, after-school and innovative e-learning programs, students are taught how to discern verified and unbiased information from misinformation, hoaxes, opinion and spin — whether using search engines to find information about specific topics, browsing social media feeds, watching videos on YouTube or reading a news article or blog post.

Students are also encouraged to share and produce information that is accurate, fair and responsible and that empowers their voices. This is vital, because in an age of unparalleled access, in which unprecedented amounts and types of information can be shared more widely and easily than ever before, anyone can be a publisher — and everyone must be an editor.

The furor over "fake news" that emerged following the 2016 presidential election only served to emphasize the need for news literacy education — not just among students, but among the general public as well. Many of those false reports were shared on Facebook, which, studies show, is the primary source of news for a majority of students and young adults. To deal with this, Facebook is supporting a two-week public service campaign by NLP 2017 that will use the platform to provide news literacy lessons to 8 million of Facebook's engaged users.

NLP's goal is to see news literacy embedded in the American educational experience as an essential skill, giving the next generation an appreciation of credible journalism and the skills to be active participants in a robust democracy.

The *checkology* ® Virtual Classroom

In May 2016, NLP launched the **checkology** ® virtual classroom, a cutting-edge online platform that provides engaging, real-world lessons for students. This resource is the culmination of NLP's previous experience with classroom, after-school and digital programs that served nearly 25,000 students since 2009 in New York City, Chicago, Houston and the Washington, D.C. area. Since its release, more than 11,000 educators who teach more than 1.7 million students in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and 83 countries registered to use the platform.

The virtual classroom incorporates many of the best practices in e-learning, including self-pacing, personalization, blended and experiential learning, rich formative assessment, teacher feedback and remediation, points and digital badges, and a class discussion area where students share and comment on work, reflect on key questions and initiate their own conversations about the news and information they encounter in their daily lives.

Throughout the core lessons, journalists from BuzzFeed News, Bloomberg, NBC News, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post are joined by experts on the First Amendment and digital media as virtual teachers.

The core unit, which is aligned with next-generation state standards and 21st-century skills, includes 12 engaging, interactive lessons in four thematic modules that incorporate NLP's four pillars, or enduring understandings:
- The ability to filter information is an essential skill for journalists and consumers.
- The First Amendment and a free press are vital to American democracy.
- Today's news and information ecosystem presents great challenges and enormous opportunities.
- Knowing the standards of quality journalism empowers students as consumers and citizens.

The e-learning experiences in these four modules emphasize social media and other digital platforms. They address such topics as the identification and evaluation of viral rumors, the role of algorithms in personalizing news and information, and the ethical implications associated with the rise of branded content.

The core collection of lessons can be completed in 15 to 20 hours and requires access to a high-speed internet connection. Educators can draw from several implementation models to tailor the platform to their students' abilities, resources and schedules — such as teaching the lessons one-to-one in the classroom, having students do the lessons as homework, or selecting individual lessons from the core unit.

Our Impact
Assessment results for the 2015-16 school year showed significant improvements in students' knowledge, attitudes and behavior upon completion of NLP units.

In particular, the majority of students who participated in an NLP program said they:
- Gained a greater appreciation of the First Amendment and the watchdog role of a free press.
- Gained a greater appreciation of quality journalism and what distinguishes it from other sources of news and information.
- Learned to value the independence, standards and integrity that journalists strive to achieve.
- Learned how to seek out news that will make them more knowledgeable about their communities, the nation and the world.
- Learned to exercise civility, respect and care in online communities.
- Were more likely to become civically engaged by seeking corrections to factual errors in news reports or by posting links or comments on social media about an issue that concerns them.
- Were more likely to vote in elections when old enough to do so.