

Media Literacy

Supporting Illinois Curriculum Mandates

Why Now?

In August 2021, Illinois became the first state to require media literacy classes for high school students. To encourage students to develop their research skills, the state is requiring classes that will teach teenagers how to discern facts from fiction. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, HB0234 (Public Act 102-0055) requires every public high school to include in its curriculum a unit of instruction on media literacy.

Why Newsela?

Between our constantly updating stream of vetted, real-world content and dedicated resources , we can help teachers bring media literacy and digital citizenship into their classrooms with engaging, thoughtful lessons that help students build media literacy skills, practice analyzing media and think critically about how media literacy relates to making responsible decisions.



ILLINOIS LESSON EXAMPLE

Social media platforms are watching your every online move



HIGHLIGHTS:

Helps students understand media and advertising concepts and techniques

Engaging topics and activities help students make sense of the past and present and understand how it relates back to their lives.

Provides instructional supports and lesson ideas for every text

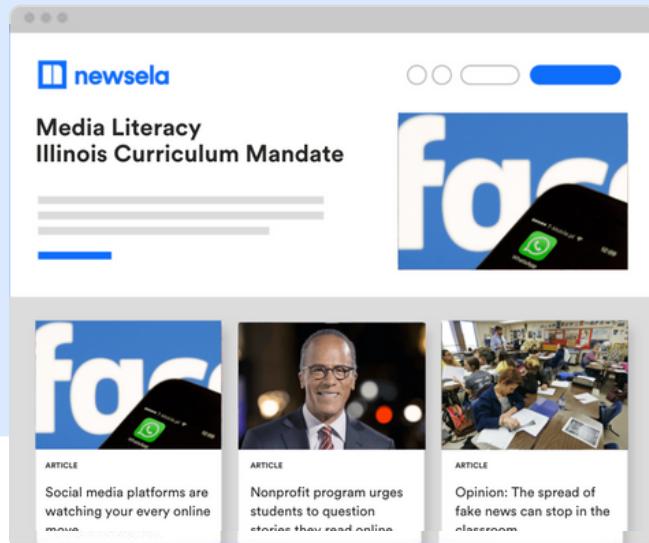
Each text set comes with resources to help teachers support students understanding of media literacy and the importance of being able to determine fact from fiction.

Supports ISTE #DigCitCommit in preparing students to be good digital citizens

Students can explore articles related to each of the five #DigCitCommit competencies (Inclusive, Informed, Engaged, Balanced and Alert) to stay safe, solve problems and become a force for good.

Instructional supports for each article

Help teachers expand students' learning experience and engagement

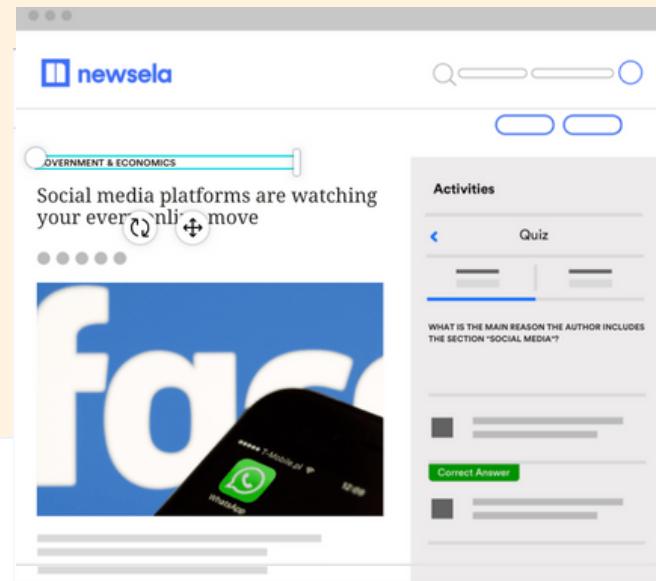


Curations, Lessons, and Customizations

Teachers can use Newsela to teach to the standards and priorities of their school and district. Create custom activities, search for content by standard, curate Text Sets, and control the reading levels students see.

Quizzes, Writing Prompts, and Assignments

Teachers can create and share customizable assignments and give students access to reading comprehension quizzes, customizable writing prompts, and annotations.



Example Lesson Spark for Media Literacy

What Social Media Platforms Know About You

Time to Complete: 30 mins.

Overview: Facebook and its founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg came under fire in 2017 and 2018 over a scandal involving the harvesting of data from tens of millions of users. One result of this scandal is that it has raised a lot of questions about social media and search engines.

In this Lesson Spark, students will learn what social media platforms know about us, including what kind of data is collected and how this information is shared.

Key Takeaways

- Social media platforms have access to everything you do on their site; this includes, but is not limited to, the photos and videos you post, your comments and "likes," anything you search, share or consult, the identity of your friends and any other users you interact with, and your location.
- Social media platforms and search engines do not sell data, but rather use it to give companies targeted access to a consumer (i.e. you) who has very specific characteristics.

Comprehension Questions

- What kinds of user data do social media platforms and search engines collect?
- How do social media platforms and search engines use your personal data?

Activities

Before Reading

Ask students to reflect and respond: What do you think your favorite social media site or search engine knows about you? After giving students some time to respond, show [this video](#) (2:20 mins) from a ProPublica feature about Facebook user algorithms.

Reading Strategy

As you read, complete a **Venn Diagram**. Record details about what social media platforms know about you and how they use this information on one side. Record details about what search engines know about you and how they use this information on the other. Details that overlap between the two should be recorded in the center.

Custom Write Prompt: What kind of user data do social media platforms and search engines have access to? How do social media platforms and search engines use your personal data? Support your answer with details from the article.

After Reading

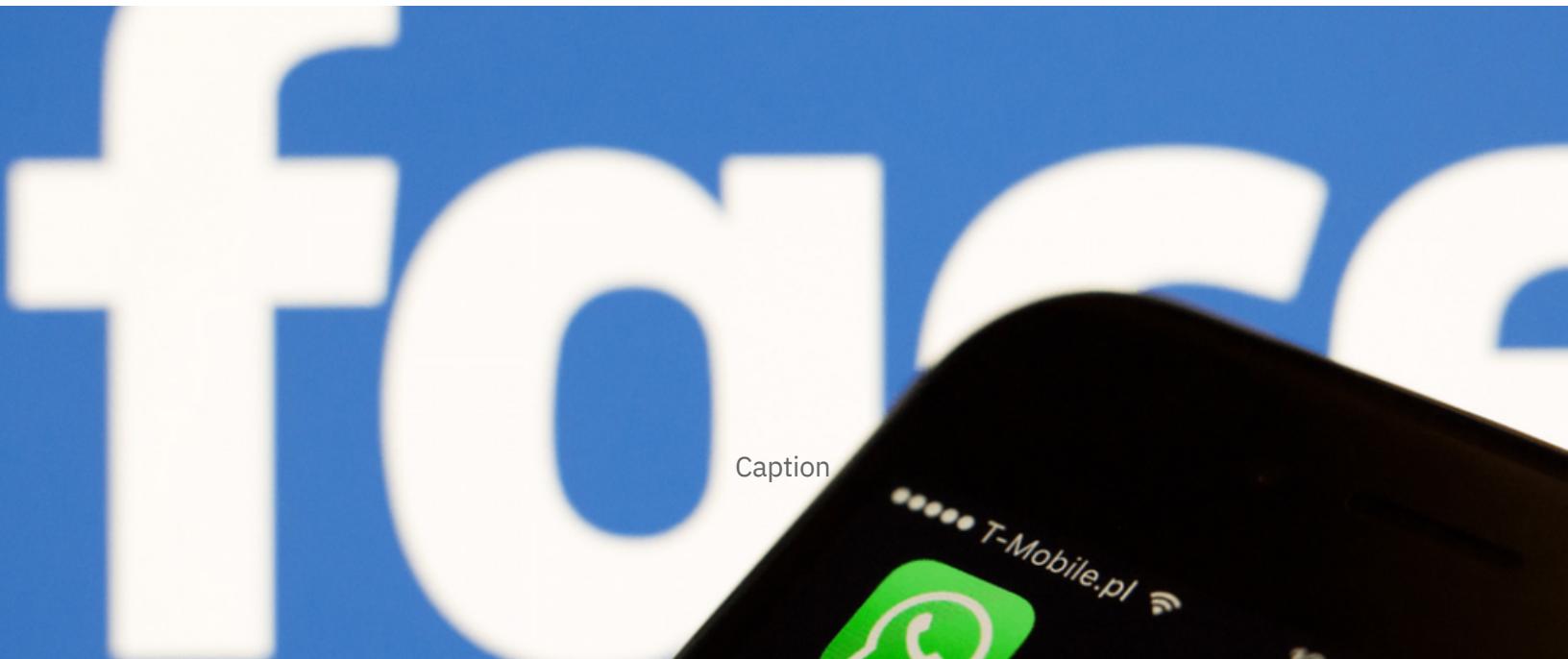
Give students an opportunity to make their opinions and recommendations heard. As pointed out in the article, countries around the world vary in terms of their official policies on how to govern user data on the Internet. Have students research and write a policy recommendation, making sure to explain the rationale behind their recommendation. Consider submitting these recommendations to a local representative.

ARTICLE

Government & Economics

Social media platforms are watching your every online move

By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff. Published: 07/20/2018. Word Count: 667
Recommended for: High School. Text Level: 7



Caption

Image 1. In 2016, the European Commission investigated claims that Facebook could not merge user information from the messaging network WhatsApp, which it acquired in 2014. Facebook was fined \$135.7 million in 2017. Photo: Jaap Arriens/NurPhoto/Getty Images

In March, the public learned that the personal information of more than 87 million Facebook users was used by another company. The company, Cambridge Analytica, helps candidates win elections.

The scandal raised many questions about privacy on social media and search engines.

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the U.S. Congress about how the company protects user data. Here is a primer on what the company knows about you.

Social Media

Facebook, which has more than 2 billion users, has access to everything you do on the site. It can see the photos and videos you post, your

comments, your "likes," anything you share. Among other things, it also knows the identity of your friends and your location.

The same goes for Instagram and WhatsApp, which are owned by Facebook, and Snapchat and Twitter. A user can control who sees some of their data with privacy settings and the ad preferences page.

Facebook insists it does not sell information to advertisers that would identify an individual or even a group of people. It does give advertisers the ability to target specific demographics that would be more likely to buy their products. Twitter, for its part, has a search engine that sweeps up all messages on the site. It gives advertisers access to it.

Outside app developers have access to most social media platforms. They create apps based on data from users. In the case of Facebook, anyone can view a person's public profile — the whole page for some people, or just the first and last name and photo for others. The user does not have to give permission, but seeing the rest of the information may require a separate OK from the user.

Once data is mined by outside apps, Facebook does not have control over it. Trying to get hold of it again is difficult.

"Once people had access to that data, Facebook has no way of knowing for sure what they did with that data," said Ryan Matzner, co-founder of mobile app designer Fueled. "It's like sending an email to somebody and then saying,

What did they do with that email? You don't know."

Only bank and credit card information is completely private.

Search Engines

Google, Yahoo and Bing gather all information involving searches. They keep a record of what websites are searched and where the user is located. This can be put together with information from other services owned by the giant Internet companies. The end result is that the Internet companies can tell a lot about you.

You don't have to tell Google your age and your gender and all those things. They can determine all of that based on so many other factors," said Chirag Shah, a computer science professor at Rutgers University.

Like social networks, its revenue comes largely from advertising. It does not sell data, but rather access to a consumer with very specific characteristics.

This comes from compiling search engine data but also, in the case of Google, from searches and content viewed on YouTube. Google used to also mine the content of Gmail but ended it in June 2017.

Like social media networks, search engines share data with developers and third-party app makers.

In the United States, there are practically no laws against using data from social media or search engines.

In 2011, the Federal Trade Commission said Facebook broke its promise to keep user information private. In response, Facebook said it would seek permission before sharing it with other companies.

In Canada and Europe, there are some limits on the use of data, mainly involving health.

Facebook was fined \$135.7 million by the European Union last year for sharing personal data with WhatsApp.

In Europe, a new law to protect user data called the General Data Protection Regulation went into effect in May. Users must give permission for companies to collect their information. It also sets strict guidelines about what kind of data can be collected and how it can be used.

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Newsela's content is published daily from trusted and vetted sources at 5 different reading levels. Teachers can find a wide range of SEL resources to support instruction supporting Illinois curriculum mandates.



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