

## Fact-checking Practices during Political Turmoil in Peru

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### *Prácticas de verificación de datos durante la crisis política en Perú*

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**Resumen.** La verificación de datos, disciplina que se ocupa de la verificación en la práctica profesional, se ha convertido en una de las tendencias más populares del periodismo digital en la última década, tras las declaraciones de algunos líderes políticos que popularizaron el término "noticias falsas", responsables de difundir desinformación y atacar a la prensa general en redes sociales. En esta investigación, se exploran plataformas de verificación digital en Latinoamérica, como Chequeado en Argentina y ColombiaCheck en Colombia, tras el acuerdo de paz con las FARC. Realizamos un análisis con una metodología cualitativa y exploratoria de las plataformas de verificación más relevantes en Latinoamérica y España, centrándonos en Perú en 2021, un año clave para el contexto político nacional que culminó con las elecciones presidenciales, donde Pedro Castillo ganó. Un factor innovador fue que el Gobierno peruano se encargó de realizar las verificaciones a través de un comité recién creado dentro del Jurado Nacional de Elecciones (JNE). Perú, tanto a nivel gubernamental como en el panorama mediático digital, es un ejemplo para otros países en materia de verificación de datos.

**Palabras clave:** periodismo, fact-checking, verificación, Perú, desinformación.

**Abstract.** Fact-checking, the discipline of verification in professional practice, has become one of the most popular trends within digital journalism in the last decade, following the statements of some political leaders who popularize the term fake news, who were responsible for spreading misinformation and attacking the general press on social media. In this research, an exploration of digital verification platforms in Latin America is carried out, such as Chequeado in Argentina and ColombiaCheck in Colombia, due to the peace agreement with the FARC. We carry out an analysis with a qualitative and exploratory methodology of the most relevant verification platforms in Latin America and Spain, in order to focus on Peru, in 2021, which was a tipping point for the political context around the country and culminated with the Presidential election, where Pedro Castillo won. An innovative factor was that Peruvian Government oversaw carrying out verifications and fact-checking from a newly created committee inside of the National Elections Jury (JNE). Peru, both within the Government and the digital media landscape, is an example to other countries in fact-checking

**Keywords:** Journalism, fact-checking, verification, Perú, disinformation.

### Image 1.

*IDEA Internacional's event in Lima*



## Introduction

Fact-checking is one of the most relevant journalistic techniques and Latin America is no stranger to its need. In journalism, verifying information belongs to a set of good journalistic practices. As such, it should be a common practice for any published journalistic product. Nonetheless, the usage and consumption of information on social media, along with the leading media's loss of prominence in news coverage and the replacement of opinion leaders to social media influencers, alert us on why we must return to the basics in journalism: telling stories that reach the readers and audiences hearts; well-told, factual and credible stories. The truth is losing its meaning in the shadows of the post-truth. The truth becomes muddled due to deception, misinformation and the banalization of information and message. According to Rodriguez-Perez (2020), fact-checked journalism is in full swing, growing in a relevance that is key, especially in electoral cycles.

Fact-checking goes, hand in hand, with investigative journalism in politics and with civil society's shaping of the public discourse. The development of this discipline is intrinsically linked to the political communications evolution in electoral periods, especially during a polarizing political climate and in the context of a communications crisis for traditional media (Rodriguez-Perez et al., 2022). In this sense, journalism responds to the misinformation phenomenon with fact-checking, adopting this journalistic practice to evaluate the content accuracy, data and statements made by actors who influence public opinion of public discourse in media and social media (Mena, 2019). Fact-checking shall not be confused with the built-in media

responsibility to assess the content (data, facts, multimedia), while considering its social impact, theme and exposure, before publishing new content (Zommer, 2015).

This study identifies Peru's institutional model as an innovative precedent in state-led fact-checking. The main hypothesis is that this institutionalization of fact-checking during the 2021 Peruvian elections constitutes a pioneering model in Latin America to combat disinformation from state institutions in a polarized political context.

## Methodology

This research methodology is primarily qualitative. Its exploratory and descriptive characteristics reflect four digital platforms dedicated to fact-checked journalism, three of which are from Latin America (Argentina, Colombia and México, more specifically) and one—a pioneer in fact-checking—is from Spain. The main objective is to analyze and compare them as digital fact-checking platforms to later delve in Peru during elections between 2021 and 2023. The Peruvian case study is epitomic because during the elections, the National Elections Jury (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, in Spanish) creates a committee to make 74 fact-checks to political information circulating in Peruvian media and social media. We study from the general fact-checking platforms to the particular, as a deductive method, to land in the Peruvian case study in the times of electoral turmoil as was Pedro Castillo's presidential election.

The selection of these four platforms for doing fact-checking journalism is based on his relevance, for instance, the four of them are pioneers as journalists' platforms in their countries: Chequeado was born in Argentina in 2010, Maldita.es on social media (later as a website) in Spain in 2014, ColombiaCheck in Colombia in 2015 and Verificado, born in Mexico in 2017. These four platforms are digital media which are doing independent journalism in Spanish language in their countries as references in their field. Once they have been carefully selected, we analyze the following four points:

1. The definition of every website or platform for doing fact-checking journalism, considering their section called 'Who We Are' (or similar) inside the web.
2. Add a screenshot made on the homepage of the website.
3. To have a verification process to strengthen transparency within the platforms, they explain how they work on their verifications' methods step-by-step.

4. Research how they work, how many sections they have and how principles are linked as an organization of journalism.

## Theoretical framework: Fact-checking vs. Misinformation in a Turbulent Political Context

In 2024, the presidential candidate Donald Trump, falsely accused immigrants of eating domestic pets such as dogs and cats, in his first face off against Kamala Harris, during a prime-time televised debate in the United States. The debate's moderator fact-checked Trump on air, questioning his claim. Regardless, Trump won a second term as president on November 5, 2024. While Trump's assertion went viral on social media and across the media, the reporter's fact-checking response barely made the news.

Fact-checked journalism is the journalistic response to the misinformation phenomenon. It specially acts as a firewall against the spread of so-called *fake news* (hoaxes), particularly those that affect the public sphere or political discourse, as in electoral cycles or on rapidly polarizing issues such as immigration (Rodríguez-Pérez, C. et al., 2020). In the document *The Fact-Checking Boom in Latin America. Lessons Learned and Challenges from the Chequeado Case*, Chequeado—one of the first digital fact-checking media outlets in Latin America—compiles data and contrasts long-standing journalistic variables. Media outlets exclusively dedicated to fact-checking public discourse emerged in the beginning of the previous decade. We may initially find American situations in FactCheck.org, created in 2003 at the University of Pennsylvania and later, in Politifact.com, founded in 2007 by Bill Adair, professor at Duke University and Pulitzer Prize winner in 2009. Our most important responsibility, after the rise of social media and social interactions, is to stay aware of the reality we live in, discerning facts from lies. Rodríguez-Pérez et al. (2020) points out that language as a reflection of our thoughts and when news—conceived as truthful—get permeated by falsehoods, journalism as its essence receives a spear to the heart, because journalists bear the social responsibility of producing and broadcasting news on what is factually happening around us.

The 2024 Digital News Report indicates that the most important concerns surrounding journalism are misinformation and artificial intelligence. The challenges facing six Latin American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru—in terms of media and news consumption are: a regional trend toward political polarization, the economic crisis, and threats to press freedom. In fact, social media

platforms like TikTok have gained popularity as news sources, with countries like Peru and Colombia standing out with 27% and 22% in TikTok consumption, respectively. This is topped by the violence against journalists and social leaders, especially in Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. The Peruvian political upheaval in 2022 challenged traditional journalism and regional journalist, in the context of a two-year pandemic period that claimed the lives of 200,000 Peruvians and Dina Boluarte's unprecedented rise to presidential power amid numerous citizen protests, whose repression cost the lives within two months of fifty people in different cities of the country, a pair of which were the young people from Lima, Inti and Bryan.

In the book called 'Infocracy, digitalization and the crisis of democracy', Han (2022) explains fake news, too, is first and foremost information. Before any verification process can even begin, it has already had its effects. Information travels faster than the truth and cannot be overtaken by it. In his opinion, the attempt to combat the infodemic with the truth is therefore doomed to failure. According to 'Infocracy', information is used as a weapon; therefore, infowars with fake news and conspiracy theories indicate the current state of democracy, where truth and veracity no longer matter. The role of fake news and hate speech in polarizing societies is widely acknowledged (Vasist, Chatterjee & Krishnan, 2024). Its crippling effects are now accompanied by rising calls for action on online disinformation, which threatens to polarize society and destroy democratic life (The Express Tribune, 2022).

## **Field work: Digital media on Fact-Checking**

### **Journalism in Latin America and Spain**

Let us analyze some fact-checking media outlets in Latin America and Spain and investigate their models as digital platforms. For each fact-checking platform, we will present their homepage, the description they give of themselves as a fact-checking platform, their verification method, the principles that govern them as fact-checking websites, and part of the platform's structure through the sections that divide them. There are four digital fact-checking platforms, three of them located in Latin America and one in Spain: Mexico's Verificado; Argentina's pioneer Chequeado (2010); one of its key successors: Colombia's ColombiaCheck (2015); and, finally, a very popular website that has exerted considerable influence in Spain and Latin America for its strong fact-checking work, Maldita.es.

#### ***Verificado (Mexico)***

**Verificado** is an investigative journal and fact-checking media platform, supported by various statistical, documentary, and specialized sources. This established methodology allows for the confirmation, verification or debunking of statements and assertions, and the detection of errors, inaccuracies, and lies, from politicians, public figures and the media.

**Image 2.**

Verificado's Homepage



The method used consists of five main steps that serve to review public discourse, that is, what public officials and political leaders say, as well as any content circulating in the media, on the web, on social media, or on instant messaging which may contain misinformation:

1. Select content to verify.
2. Consult the original source.
3. Research and verify the content.
4. Place the content in context.
5. Rate the verification.

When classifying information, we rate: false, when the information is false; misleading, when the information or data is partially true but is taken out of context or manipulated; true, when the information or data has been verified to be completely true; inaccurate, when the figure or data is presented inaccurately; nonsense, when the information or data makes no sense or logic; unverifiable, when the information or data cannot be verified with reliable sources at the time. Verificado makes verification without discrimination based on partisan, ideological, sexual, or ethnic orientation.

Their website includes a correction policy in case of errors in the information or omissions. They add an email address for the correction policy section, as well as the option to contact them via social media. The six sections on Verificado website are: anti-viral, COVID-19, research, explainers, dialogues, and methodology.

### **Chequeado (Argentina)**

Chequeado is one of the pioneering fact-checking digital platforms in Latin America region. Launched in October 2010, Chequeado is the first organization of its kind in Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere, and it is one of the top 10 fact-checkers around the world. Chequeado is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to contribute to improving the quality of public debate to strengthen the democratic system. As we can read on Chequeado's website: "We do this by verifying public discourse, combating disinformation, promoting access to information, and opening up data in innovative environments to provide evidence for public discussion and encourage critical thinking in society." Chequeado is one of the best organized fact-checking websites in terms of usability and information architecture, as is evident once the user delves into it. They quickly define what they do and what motivates them. The Media, Education, Innovation and Impact, and New Initiatives program seeks, as they indicate, the following: To improve the quality of public debate, develop antidotes to misinformation, and promote access to information and open data.

#### **Image 3.**

Chequeado's Homepage



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Chequeado's purpose is promoting public debate driven by data and facts, not by opinions, prejudices and biases. This organization promotes transparency, as emphasized in the "Who We Are" section. As part of this transparency, they make public a method for fact-checking leaders and viral content, including a code of principles and a correction policy, asserting that they regularly respond to the community's frequently asked questions. Regarding the method for verifying public discourse, Chequeado selects statements from politicians, economists, businesspeople, union members, journalists, public figures, media outlets, and other opinion-forming institutions, without discrimination based on their partisan or ideological orientation. As they explain, once the information is selected, the source person is consulted to determine the original source of the data used.

If it is accessed directly, other sources are consulted to corroborate its validity and to explain its relevance and impact. If this is not possible, verification is done through alternative means: documents (reports, analyses, or statistical compilations, public and private) and interviews with specialists. Context refers to the local socioeconomic, historical, and cultural context, and, whenever possible, the regional and international context, so that verification is not limited to an exclusively literal comparison. There are eight steps to fact-checking:

1. Select a phrase from the public domain.
2. Weigh its relevance.
3. Consult the original source.

4. Consult the official source.
5. Consult alternative sources.
6. Place the information in context.
7. Confirm, play down, or deny the information.
8. Rate.

The rating system used by Chequeado to verify speeches by leaders is: 'unverifiable', 'true', 'true but', 'debatable', 'hasty', 'exaggerated', 'misleading', 'unsustainable', 'false'. However, they also report that Chequeado does not verify statements of religious, personal, or strictly related to sports, entertainment, or issues such as corruption allegations, which are being processed in court and are yet to receive a verdict. They also include a method to combat viral misinformation. Chequeado selects articles, audio, images, and videos from the social media platforms it monitors, such as Facebook and Twitter; from private messaging services it monitors and through which it receives material for verification, such as WhatsApp; and from the ordering platform Chequeo Colectivo and the Readers' Mailbox (info@chequeado.com).

The rating system for viral misinformation on social media is: false, misleading, true, and unsustainable. Chequeado is one of the certified organizations of the Poynter Institute's International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Its code of principles includes the following:

1. Commitment to impartiality and fairness.
2. Commitment to transparency regarding our sources.
3. Commitment to transparency regarding our funding and organization.
4. Commitment to transparency regarding our methodology.
5. Commitment to open and honest corrections.

When we entered Chequeado's homepage in November 2024, we could see the daily topics: money laundering, the American elections, and tariff increases. Normally, a blue box in the top right redirects users to the toolbox, composed of programs, pages, and apps for working with design, audio, videos, data, artificial intelligence, and more. Next to the Chequeado header are four sections: Get to Know Us, Notes, Learn, and Join Us. There is a section called "Explainers" and another "In Focus," in addition to its own podcast and specials such as Mileipedia: Everything You Need to Know About Javier Milei's Government.

## ColombiaCheck (Colombia)

In 2016, during the talks leading up to the peace agreement between the Government and the FARC, Consejo de Redacción (in Spanish), an association that promotes digital journalism in Colombia, launched the country's first fact-checking website, focused primarily on verifying public discourse. The International Journalists' Network (IJNET) describes ColombiaCheck as an initiative inspired by Chequeado in Argentina, to combat fake news on social media ahead of the 2016 peace referendum. On the website Who We Are, ColombiaCheck defines itself as a project of Consejo de Redacción, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that brings together more than 100 associated journalists in Colombia to promote investigative journalism.

### Image 4.

ColombiaCheck's Homepage



The screenshot shows the ColombiaCheck homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'CHEQUEOS', 'INVESTIGACIONES', 'ESPECIALES', 'PODCAST', 'ZOOM', and social media icons. The date '04 de Noviembre de 2024' is also displayed. Below the navigation, the ColombiaCheck logo is on the left, and a menu bar includes 'CHEQUEOS', 'EXPLICADORES', 'ESPECIALES', 'PROYECTO MIGRACIÓN VENEZOLANA', and 'MEMORIAS DEL CONFLICTO'. The main content area features several fact-checking articles. One article, 'El pueblo lo ama', is marked as 'FALSO' (False) and includes a video thumbnail. Another article, 'Video de "fuera Petro" en la COP16 en Cali es un montaje con un audio viejo', is also marked as 'FALSO' and includes a video thumbnail. A third article, 'El #FueraPetro en la COP26 no podía faltar', is also marked as 'FALSO' and includes a video thumbnail. Below these, there is a section titled 'ÚLTIMOS CHEQUEOS' with two more fact-checking articles, each with a video thumbnail and a 'FALSO' label.

The project consists of an open, collaborative digital platform for publishing articles based on fact-checking and data, stemming from a long tradition of anglo-saxon journalism. ColombiaCheck establishes a methodology, similar to Chequeado, applied to the Colombian context. Although the initial motivation was to verify data and the discourse surrounding the peace process, data verification continued, especially during the elections. ColombiaCheck applies the International Fact-Checking Network's code of principles. The commitments adhered to by the signatory organizations are:

1. A commitment to nonpartisanship and fairness.
2. A commitment to transparency of sources.
3. A commitment to transparency of funding and organization.
4. A commitment to transparency of methodology.
5. A commitment to an open and honest correction policy.

ColombiaCheck principles are listed in eight points. The first three state that ColombiaCheck selects public speech from public figures in general, without bias or preference based on ideological, sexual, racial, or religious orientation. The second point specifies that the public speech being checked must have been expressed in public settings: on a social network, in a public document, in a press release, in a media

outlet, or at a public event. Point three states that opinions and statements of commitment are not subject to verification unless supported by data, nor are statements about religion, sports, or entertainment. There are six steps to follow when checking public speech:

1. Select a quote from the public domain.
2. Consult the author of the quote.
3. Compare the information and data in the quote with official and reliable sources.
4. Consult alternative and expert sources.
5. Put the fact-check in context.
6. Rate the statement.

The fact-checking steps are:

1. Select content circulating on social media or websites and assess its relevance.
2. Evaluate the veracity of the information, analyzing each element with data and facts.
3. Compare sources.
4. Contextualize the publication.
5. Clarify the verification path and the reasons for the rating.

After the verification process, ColombiaCheck assigns one of the following ratings: true, true but questionable, false, or unverifiable. This rating system went into effect on November 23, 2018. ColombiaCheck also consists of five sections: Fact Checks, Explainers, Specials, Venezuelan Migration Project, and Memories of the Conflict.

## **Maldita (Spain)**

Maldita is an exemplary fact-checking site for its digital media and journalistic transparency. It presents itself as a non-profit foundation, meaning it does not belong to any media outlet, nor is it dedicated to making profit for its shareholders. Maldita, they write, is part of civil society. Their mission is described as follows: "The Maldita Foundation exists to help citizens make decisions with all the verified information at hand and to ensure they do not get caught in the fight against misinformation. It does this through journalism, technology, education, and new narratives." They assert that misinformation affects all levels of society because it is present in our lives. For that reason, the foundation develops tools to combat it and generates evidence-based information so that the various actors involved, from legislators to content distribution platforms, journalists, citizens, and governments, have verified data to rely on. Although the Maldita Foundation Against Disinformation: Journalism, Education,

Research, and Data in New Formats was established in 2019 with three founders who contributed an initial endowment of 30,000 euros, led by Clara Jimenez and Julio Montes, the Maldita Association was founded in September 2018 with five founders.

#### Image 5.

Maldita's Homepage



The screenshot shows the homepage of Maldita.es. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with links to 'DANA en directo', 'Parking de Bonaire', 'Palazo Pedro Sánchez', 'Bomberos', and 'Aviso rojo por lluvias'. Below this is the Maldita.es logo with the tagline 'PERIODISMO PARA QUE NO TE LA CUELEN'. The main menu includes 'Herramientas' with social media icons, a search bar 'Busca en Maldita.es...', a 'Inicia sesión' button, and a yellow 'HAZTE MALDITO' button. The main content area features a large headline in Spanish: 'sería el epicentro mundial de las “ciudades inteligentes”'. Below the headline, there is a text snippet in Spanish: 'Pero La teoría de la conspiración que afirma que la DANA habría sido provocada para poder convertir a Valencia en una “ciudad inteligente”'.

Maldita's platform is structured like a digital native; it has a homepage and the sections: Newspaper Archive, Hoaxes, Science, Data, Explainers, Technology, and About Us. The most frequently covered topics (migration, feminism, food, climate, education, and scams) and trends of the day and week vary according to the current situations. There are different types of methodologies depending on the section: Maldito Dato (Damn Data), Maldito Bulo (Damn Lie), and Maldita Ciencia (Damn Science). All the methodologies are explained on Maldita's website and are inspired by the FactCheck.org process, the Politifact methodology, and Chequeado.

For example, the Maldito Dato team monitors Spanish politicians' public statements daily, whether in the media or on social media. Maldito Dato verifies content and debunks information deemed false, by providing context. This practice, known in the international verification community as "Fact-checking 3.0," goes beyond verification and helps citizens understand what information may have been omitted or what is necessary to evaluate political claims. For example, Maldito Dato publishes and links to the sources of the data it uses to debunk politicians' messages or statements so that the audience can verify how the fact-checking was made and what it is based on. Furthermore, Maldita La Hora (Damn the Hour) is a weekly podcast about hoaxes, data,

and newspaper archives from Maldita's perspective. It has built a large community to share its work with, including WhatsApp and Telegram.

## What Is Happening Nowadays with Information in Peru?

In 2024, the event Political Journalism in the Age of AI: Innovations in the Fight Against Disinformation was held in Lima. It was sponsored by IDEA International Peru (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), the National Association of Peruvian Journalists (ANP), the National Elections Jury (JNE), and the European Union. This event presented, for the first time, a Guide to Combating Disinformation, which discusses concepts about how disinformation affects democracies in Latin America, teaches how to detect disinformation and false information, and explains what the JNE did to overcome disinformation and the verification guidelines of the Technical Fact-Checking Committee of the National Elections Jury (CTCF).

This anti-disinformation guide explains that, in 2021, the Peruvian National Elections Jury (JNE) implemented the Technical Fact-Checking Committee (CTCF) for identifying fake news on social media regarding electoral issues and combating disinformation. To this end were created: a disinformation database, a content verification protocol, a website where fact-checking is published, and a multimedia communications strategy for these news products to reach more users. The team, the guide explains, daily monitors various platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram to identify potential fake news and subject them to a rigorous verification protocol. All false content is compiled in a database that records the user who generated it, the type of publication, and its impact, among other criteria. After the verification process, which includes interviews with at least three sources of information, the JNE publishes the results on its platforms.

What happened in Peru in 2021 is new in terms of fact-checking in Latin American elections. Its teachings, along with the publication of the anti-disinformation guide, serve as digital literacy training to combat disinformation in Latin America. In the wake of this initiative, Ama Llulla ("You Will Not Lie" in Quechua) was created in 2021. This platform was promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the media outlet Ojo Público. However, Ama Llulla only functions as a section, which later became part of Ojo Público. Their final publications dated to the 2023 first trimester. Ojo Público's current section for verifying content is called Ojo Biónico, which fact-checks with the following ratings: true, misleading, unverifiable, false. At the end of 2023, Ojo Público launched Quispe Chequea, thanks to the Google

News Initiative, a fact-checking platform that uses artificial intelligence to produce journalistic fact-checked content in different formats and in up to three native languages: Aymara, Quechua, and Awajún. This platform automates textual generation and its conversion into audio clips that can be broadcast on radio stations in Peru's nine regions.

In March 2024, Ojo Público, with a circulation of 500 copies, published the book *We Are Not Alone: Artificial Intelligence Resources in the Era of Misinformation*, written by journalists David Hidalgo and Gianella Tapullima. It is divided into three chapters, with illustrations, serving as a brief teaching guide for Peruvian journalists. In 2021, due to the electoral turmoil, PerúCheck was formed as a collaborative fact-checking journalism alliance to combat disinformation arising from its context. This platform involved national and local media outlets from 15 regions participating as replicators and producers of fact-checked information. This platform was organized by the Peruvian Press Council (CPP) and Verificador de La República, with the support of the Google News Initiative. Its resulting information could be rated as true, false or inaccurate. Its last fact-checking was dated October 2022. It is currently not functioning as a tool for verifying journalistic content.

In contrast, La República has an up-to-date fact-checking unit, which enhances the writing of articles based on data verification techniques (fact-checking) and the debunking of fake viral stories. This unit was created in the mid-2019s to review misinformation circulating online in the form of distorted headlines, edited photographs and videos, rumors and false claims. On its website, it explains that its fact-checks focus on dismantling misinformation that is affecting people's lives, generally regarding health, human rights, the economy, and politics. The fact-checks are published in La República's Verificador website and social media accounts on Facebook and on X with the account @VerificadorLR. It keeps an independent editorial line and is exclusively funded by La República's Peruvian media platform.

Verificador, in its methodology, conducts an exhaustive internet search that includes local sources, other fact-checking articles, open data, and online documents, which are referenced by indicating the publication date and article names. Regarding the methodology, in the case of verifying a claim, the person issuing the statement is contacted; in the case of a viral post, the source of the images is traced using the free reverse search tools Google, Yandex, and TinEye. And for videos, InVid. Since contextualization is deemed important, efforts are made to explain the nuances of the verification. Finally, the information is rated as true (in green), false (in red), inaccurate or misleading (in amber). These colors are used as is typically applied to

most fact-checking websites. The inaccurate rating implies that there is insufficient data to classify it as either true or false. The misleading rating refers to content generated from data that does not match the reality. Currently, Peru does not have a digital media outlet dedicated exclusively to fact-checking. However, perhaps in the upcoming general elections, many of the websites that are not operational will be able to resume functioning as they did in 2021.

In terms of academic research, the first scientific articles and publications on fact-checking have begun to emerge in Peru. One of these investigations is Fact-Checking as a Journalistic Tool for Media 'La República' y 'Ojo Público' Under Former President Manuel Merino's Government (11/10/2020 – 11/15/2020), published in 2022 by Gabriel Sandro A. Mejía at the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences. This thesis states that the Media Lab portal of the National University of San Marcos developed several programs focused on fact-checking. It also refers to two digital media platforms that have their own fact-checking sections: Convoca with its fact-checking unit, Convoca Verifica; and Salud Con Lupa with the Comprueba section.

For Mejía (2022), his research findings demonstrate the limited presence of fact-checking in Peru. He portrays fact-checking journalists as the primary journalistic figures who are responsible for verifying data, belonging to a fact-checking unit, and nurturing work that goes beyond informing. One of his conclusions explicitly points out that fact-checking is the most efficient method for combating the disinformation that arises, above all, in crisis contexts, since those are the moments in which users depend most on the media to collect data. In other words, for Mejía (2022), fact-checking is a key journalistic tool and paramount to comprehensive journalistic practices.

## **Conclusions and Closing Reflections about Fact-checked Journalism**

Given the disaffection that exists in our contemporary society, which views politics as a source of deception and manipulation, traditional media platforms, linked to political parties and powers, have engaged in misinformation practices, especially when addressing political issues, which serve specific interests. Following the emergence of native digital media and the arrival of social media as precursors in the spread of information and formation of new habits in date usage and consumption, the first digital media platforms were born at the beginning of the 21st century. They have adopted practices for fact-checking, one of the most important journalistic disciplines, which in political communications aims to verify statements made by political leaders or public figures whose content affects citizens.

Inspired by pioneering American websites, such as FactCheck.org in 2003, several important fact-checking platforms emerged in Spain and Latin America, such as Chequeado in Argentina, publicly launched in 2010, and ColombiaCheck, contextualized in the peace agreements with the FARC under the government of Juan Manuel Santos in Colombia. The case of Peru is worthy of analysis in the wake of its 2021 general elections, which occurred amidst a context of high political polarization, fueled by hate speech on social media during the first round on April 11th and the second round on June 6th. The incessant attacks against the National Elections Jury referred to electoral fraud. Given this political turmoil, Peru sought out solutions through fact-checked journalism by creating a Fact-Checking Technical Committee (CTFC). This committee had the objective of detecting and verifying information spread on social media. Through a resolution, the Fact-Checking Technical Committee of the National Elections Jury was established and tasked with verifying disinformation disseminated during the 2021 elections in Peru. This innovation turned Peru into a fact-checking leader. Between 2021 and 2023, the CTFC conducted 74 fact-checks on disinformation and misinformation on Peruvian media and social media.

Later, the Communications and Image Directorate determined that the CTFC needed to promote digital literacy alongside its fact-checking work. From this experience, several fact-checked journalism networks developed and emerged in Peru, such as Ama Llulla and PeruCheck, which are no longer operating. Currently, Ojo Público maintains a section called Ojo Biónico, and La República offers a more extensive section called Verificador.

In early November 2024, Peru took another step forward in the fight against disinformation with the publication of a guide promoted by IDEA Foundation, the National Elections Jury, the European Union, and the National Association of Journalists of Peru. This guide reminds us there are verifiable topics and not (yet) verifiable data such as memes or personal opinions. Currently, there is no platform that serves as a native digital platform exclusively for fact-checking in Peru; therefore, there is a niche for work by 2026, should there be any Peruvian journalists interested in this type of journalism. Until then, we agree with Mejia's undergraduate thesis (2022) to call on Peruvian journalists to implement fact-checking strategies to every publication they create, or to develop a verification or fact-checking unit in their media networks, focused on fact-checking information that circulates in the traditional media or on social media platforms.

Apart from that, verifications' processes on digital media made by independent journalism are pointing out an important way to protect our democracies in the middle of complicated political contexts such as Latin-American countries. Consequently, these platforms doing fact-checking journalism acquire relevance especially before and during Presidential Elections as the best way to fight against disinformation, misinformation and malinformation concerning to politics around Latinoamerica. Fact-checking journalism has been widely studied by scholars and by journalists as the solution for defending the truth in the middle of the chaos made by fake news disseminated around social media networks most of the times, and around mass media many other times. Fact-checking journalism is giving light to the information who verifies data, quotes' made by politicians and facts, in the darkness of our western democracies when everything looks like to be confusing due to manipulated content and because of 'war of information' spreading on our digital lifestyle of reading news every diary on social networks sites.

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