MICROMEDIA GUIDEBOOK

A Guide to Establishing a Youth Micromedia

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1. Introduction: What is this guide for?

The Micromedia Guidebook supports mentors, teachers and youth workers who want to establish a small media outlet with young people in their community. It brings together the knowledge needed to develop content, record and publish it, and support a group of young people through the process. The aim is to help young people create media that reflects their interests and questions, with the guidance needed to work responsibly and gain increasing independence.

The Guidebook was developed within Micromedia Evolution, an Erasmus+ KA210-YOU partnership between the Kotlovnica Youth Center in Kamnik, Slovenia, and the Rojc Association Alliance in Pula, Croatia. It draws on the partners' complementary experience in journalism, community media, technical production and work with young people.

1.1. Who will find this guide useful?

The guide is intended primarily for mentors and youth workers supporting media production in a youth centre, school, organisation or informal group. Teachers can use it to develop a school radio or another form of micromedia, while civil society organisations can use it to create opportunities for the people in their community to address issues that matter to them. The guide is also useful for young people who want to create their own media content but don't know where to start or they lack specific knowledge; they can also use the guidebook to consult individual chapters as they take on editorial and production responsibilities.

Previous experience in every area is not required. A mentor may know a great deal about sound recording and need support with journalism and legal knowledge, or have experience in youth work and be learning the technical side. The chapters help readers identify what they can already contribute and where they may need further learning or assistance.

1.2. How the Guidebook was developed

The two partner organisations contributed knowledge from their respective fields. Radio Rojc mentors brought experience in journalism and radio production, including media literacy, journalism and responsible use of content. Kotlovnica mentors contributed knowledge of sound, video, production spaces and software tools, alongside experience of working with a school radio. These contributions formed the basis of a shared learning programme and the initial material for the guidebook.

The development process included learning between mentors as well as work with young people. Mentors exchanged knowledge and approaches so that they could support activities beyond their own specialist fields. Thematic practical workshops in

Pula and Kamnik provided opportunities to apply journalistic and technical knowledge together, test exercises and observe what participants needed to put what they learned into practise.

The learning continued through the preparation and production of pilot episodes with young people in the two local communities. Moving from an exercise to an actual episode brought questions of planning, editorial choices, collaboration and available time into the process. It also revealed mentoring challenges, including how much guidance to provide and how to set expectations appropriate to the group's experience.

Monthly mentor meetings provided space to discuss the work, exchange experiences and consider difficulties together. Alongside project coordination, these conversations supported reflection on mentoring practice. Experiences from the workshops, pilot production and mentor discussions informed the revision of the material and the guidance collected in this Guidebook.

The resulting guide combines specialist knowledge with practical learning from the project. Its recommendations offer a starting point for other groups, while recognising that the project took place in particular organisational and local settings.

1.3. How to use the guide

The guide has three parts. Part I covers media and journalism, including media literacy, copyright, verification and the ethical use of artificial intelligence. Part II covers technical production, including sound, image, recording, editing and publication. Part III explains how to establish a micromedia group, organise learning and production, and mentor young people throughout the process.

1. You can use the guide to plan a programme of activities or consult individual chapters when a particular need arises. A group preparing its first interview may need to practise asking questions and recording clear speech before learning more advanced editing techniques. Choose exercises according to the group's current task, previous experience and interests. Learning and production can develop together.

2. Adapt the duration, group size, equipment and publication rhythm to your setting. A school group meeting during breaks will need a different schedule from a youth centre running longer afternoon sessions. Some groups will begin with short audio contributions; others may already have the experience needed to produce a complete episode. The examples in this guide can be adjusted accordingly.

3. This flexibility applies to the organisation of the work. Accuracy, respect for participants and responsible use of other people's content remain essential. Adapt an exercise or production schedule while retaining the ethical and legal considerations addressed in the relevant chapters.

4. The accompanying Micromedia Toolkit presents key content through video examples. It can support demonstrations, independent preparation and revision of particular production tasks.

1.4. The core principle of the guide

The whole Guidebook was written in a way that can be executed with basic equipment such as a smartphone and free tools.

Begin with the resources your group can access reliably. A smartphone, a quiet room and free editing tools can support early experiments and simple productions. More complex production setups can be introduced as the group's skills and needs develop.

Technical choices should leave room for learning and participation. A setup that young people can understand and operate is particularly useful when responsibilities rotate or new members join.



2. What is micromedia?

“Micromedia is a small, independent media outlet created by a specific community for and about itself. It can be a school radio station, a monthly youth video podcast, a neighborhood audio magazine, or a thematic channel of an association. It differs from ‘mainstream’ media in scope and resources, but not in responsibility. A self-respecting micromedia outlet operates according to journalistic principles: it verifies facts, separates information from opinion, credits authors, and corrects mistakes. Why micromedia? Young people are rarely authors in traditional media; stories are written about them, but they rarely create content themselves on topics that concern them. At the same time, the line between media and influencers is unclear to many - anyone can publish, but very few publish responsibly. Micromedia combines journalistic ethics with new technological possibilities, giving young people a platform and the community an insight into what young people think and do.”

2.1. Forms of micromedia

- **Audio podcast** is the simplest format: a recorded conversation or show published on podcast platforms. Minimal equipment, maximum flexibility.
- **Video podcast** is a podcast with visuals: more demanding technically, but with greater reach on platforms like YouTube.
- **School radio and community media** involve regular programming, live or recorded, broadcast via internet streaming or within the school.
- **Hybrid formats** combine newsletters, social media, and short video formats (reels/shorts) as derivatives of the main content.

2.2. The three tennats of every micromedia

1. **CONTENT** - what we say and why: topics that the community considers important, processed according to journalistic standards.
2. **TECHNIQUE** - how we record and publish it: sound, image, editing, distribution.
3. **PEOPLE AND PROCESS** - who does what and at what rhythm: editorial staff, roles, monthly cycle, mentor support.

This guide follows precisely this three-part division, so Part I covers content, Part II technique, and Part III people and process.

PART I

Journalism, media, copyright and media literacy

3. Basics of Journalism

3.1. Media Act: The Legal Framework of Operation

A micromedia outlet is still a media outlet even when it is small. The freedom it enjoys and the rules it must follow stem not only from professional ethics, but also from the law, the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression, the media acts of both countries, and, increasingly, a common European framework. This chapter provides orientation on what laws regulate and what specifically applies to a micromedia outlet. This is not a legal analysis; media legislation in both countries has been undergoing changes (2025/2026), so always check the current state of regulations on the regulators' websites before launching your media outlet.

3.2. Croatia

The fundamental regulation is the Media Act, passed in 2004 and amended several times since. It guarantees media freedom and prohibits anyone from influencing editorial content through coercion or abuse of office, regulates the rights and obligations of publishers and journalists, media ownership transparency, the requirement for an impressum (imprint), the right of correction and reply, and the protection of journalistic sources. It explicitly prohibits the transmission of content that incites or glorifies national, racial, religious, gender, or other inequality and hatred, which serves as the legal foundation for the ethical rules outlined in the chapter on ethics. For micromedia outlets publishing online, the Electronic Media Act (2021) is equally important, regulating audio and audiovisual media services as well as electronic publications. The regulator is the Media Agency (until 2026 the Electronic Media Agency) with its Council, which maintains the register of service providers and electronic publications and operates the Fund for Encouraging Pluralism, which also co-finances non-profit media.

3.3. Slovenia

In 2025, Slovenia adopted a new Media Act (ZMed-1), the first comprehensive overhaul of media legislation in over twenty years; it replaced the 2001 act, which remained in application until May 2026. The new law retains familiar institutions—the media registry (razvid medijev), impressum, right of correction and reply, source protection—while introducing financial support schemes for media and aligning Slovenian law with the European framework.

3.4. European Framework: EMFA

Since 2025, the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA, EU Regulation 2024/1083) has been directly applicable throughout the European Union. It protects editorial independence and journalistic sources, requires transparency regarding media ownership and state advertising funds, and establishes common rules for all media services within the internal market. Croatia adopted its implementing legislation in March 2026, which, among other things, introduced the obligation to clearly label content generated by artificial intelligence. This rule, which this guide sets as an ethical standard (8.4), is now also a legal requirement.

3.5. Structure: The Inverted Pyramid

The classic journalistic structure is called the inverted pyramid: the most important information goes at the beginning, details and context follow, and the least essential information comes at the end. The first paragraph (the lead) must convey the essence on its own. In audio and video formats, the same rule applies to the intro—the first fifteen seconds determine whether the listener stays.

3.6. Journalistic Genres

— News — short, factual, without the author's opinion.
— Report — an expanded news story with more details, quotes, and context.
— Interview — a conversation with a single interviewee; the most common genre in podcasts.
— Feature report — a genre of atmosphere and story; the author is at the scene and conveys the experience, but facts remain facts.
— Commentary/Column — an opinion genre; legitimate, but must be clearly labeled as opinion and separated from informative content.
— Survey — short statements by multiple citizens on the same topic; a rewarding format for young people as it teaches how to approach people.

News is fresh, accurate, and relevant information about an event or phenomenon of public interest. Not every piece of information is news; for something to be news, it must meet at least some of the criteria for news value: timeliness, proximity (geographical or emotional), importance of consequences, unusualness, conflict, well-known actors, or human interest. For micromedia, the criterion of proximity is crucial—what major media skip because it is 'too small' may be the most important news of the week for your community.

The foundation of every news story is the answer to six questions, known as 5W+H: who, what, where, when, why, and how. A good news story answers all the questions that can be answered at the time of publication and honestly states when an answer is not yet known.

A **report** is an expanded news story that provides more facts and details about a specific event. In addition to basic information (who, what, where, when, and why), a report includes statements from participants or experts, a description of how the event unfolded, potential consequences, and additional information that enables the reader or listener to better understand the topic. The goal of a report is to inform the public objectively and comprehensively.

An **interview** is a conversation between a journalist and one or more people who, through their experience, knowledge, or position, can provide important information on a specific topic. An interview can be informative, educational, or personal, and in podcasts, it is one of the most common and interesting genres because it allows for natural conversation, follow-up questions, and a deeper understanding of the interviewee. It is important to prepare questions in advance, listen carefully to the answers, and encourage open conversation.

A **feature report** is a journalistic genre that combines facts and the author's experience. The journalist is at the scene and, through descriptions of the space, atmosphere, people, and their own observations, conveys the feeling as if the audience were there. A feature report may contain participant statements, ambient sounds, and detailed descriptions, but it must remain faithful to the facts.

Commentary or a column is a genre in which the author presents their own opinion, stances, and arguments on a topic or event. Unlike a news story or report, a commentary is not entirely objective, but it must be clearly labeled as an authorial text so the audience can distinguish facts from personal stances. Quality commentary is based on verified information, logical arguments, and respect for differing opinions.

A **survey** is a short journalistic format in which multiple respondents answer the same or a similar question. The goal of a survey is to present the diverse opinions of citizens, students, or other groups on a current topic. A survey develops the communication skills of young journalists because it requires a polite approach to people, clear questioning, careful recording of answers, and the selection of representative statements. It is particularly suitable for school media and podcasts because it allows for the inclusion of a larger number of participants and the display of diverse viewpoints.

Workshop Exercise 1: Writing News Reports, Feature Reports, and Interviews

Sample News Report:

Warehouse Fire in Zagreb Extinguished Quickly, No Injuries Reported

On Tuesday, January 18, 2026, around 9:15 AM, a fire broke out in a warehouse facility belonging to an electronic equipment distribution company in the Zaprešić Business Zone. Firefighters from the Zagreb County Fire Brigade localized and extinguished the fire within 40 minutes, and a statement from the brigade reported that no one was injured. Three fire engines and eight firefighters were dispatched to the scene, using foam and water. According to initial information from competent services, the cause of the fire was most likely a short circuit in an electrical installation inside the warehouse. Fire protection inspectors and the police conducted an on-site investigation and will determine the exact cause and potential liability through a detailed analysis.

Body of the News Report:

- What happened: A fire broke out in the warehouse of a company dealing in the distribution of electronic equipment.
- Who is involved: Firefighters of the Zagreb County Fire Brigade, company employees, and the police.
- Where: Zaprešić Business Zone, Zagreb.
- When: Tuesday, January 18, 2026, around 9:15 AM.
- Why: According to initial information, the fire most likely broke out due to a short circuit in an electrical installation; inspectors are continuing the investigation.
- How: Firefighting forces arrived with three fire engines and localized the fire within 40 minutes, using foam and water.
- Source: Zagreb County Fire Brigade, press release, January 18, 2026.

Task: Write a short news report (100–150 words)

Choose a topic or event independently. Present the most important facts clearly and objectively. Include answers to the 5W+H questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?) and structure the text with a headline, introduction, and body of the news. Optionally, add a participant statement.

Activity Steps

— **Choosing a Topic**
  Select an event or topic you want to write a news report about
  The topic should be interesting, current, and based on real information
— **Gathering Information**
  Collect basic data about the event

Answer the key questions:

— Who? — who participated in the event
— What? — what happened
— When? — when did the event happen
— Where? — where did the event take place
— Why? — why did the event occur
— How? — how did the event unfold

Planning the News Structure

— Create a short and clear headline
— State the most important information in the introduction
— Add details and further explanations in the body of the news

Writing the News Report

— Write the report in a length of 100–150 words
— Use an objective and clear journalistic style
— Include answers to the 5W+H questions
— Optionally add a participant statement

Checking and Editing

— Check the accuracy and clarity of the information
— Verify that all important elements of the news are included
— Edit the spelling and style of the text

Presenting the News

— Present your written news to the group
— Explain your choice of topic and information-gathering method
— Exchange comments and suggestions for improvement

ASSIGNMENT #1

Writing a Feature Report

With the help of mentors, students will create a feature report on a selected topic or event, combining factual information with descriptions of atmosphere, place, and experience, while developing storytelling and observation skills.

Characteristics of a Feature Report

- Reality and Authenticity – based on real events, people, and places
- Directness – the author is often present at the scene (witness, participant)
- Vivid and Descriptive Style – describes atmosphere, details, sounds, colors, emotions
- Subjective Impression of the Author – personal perspective is permitted, but without distorting facts
- Combination of Informing and Storytelling – informs while also telling a story like a narrative
- Conversations and Quotes – frequently includes statements from participants
- No Strict Structure – a freer form than a news report or article
- Timeliness – often deals with contemporary, socially interesting topics

Task: Choose a topic or event and write a feature report (250–300 words).

Present the event through facts, descriptions of atmosphere, and participant statements. Include answers to the 5W+H questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?) and structure the text with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Activity Steps

1. Choosing a Topic and Event

- Select a real event, topic, or phenomenon you wish to present
- Gather basic information about the topic
- Determine what is interesting and important for the reader

2. Gathering Information

Find answers to the key questions:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

Talk to participants or witnesses of the event

— Collect at least two statements to include in the feature report

3. Planning the Structure of the Feature Report

— Introduction: present the topic, event, location, and basic context
— Body: describe the details of the event, atmosphere, participants, and their statements
— Conclusion: present a final impression, message, or reflection on the event

4. Writing the Feature Report

— Write the text in a length of 250–300 words
— Use a feature-reporting style — combine facts with descriptions of spaces, people, and atmosphere
— Include interesting details that bring the event closer to the reader
— Ensure that personal impressions do not alter actual facts

5. Editing and Checking the Text

— Check whether all answers to the 5W+H questions are included
— Verify whether at least two participant statements have been added
— Edit the style, spelling, and clarity of the text

6. Presenting the Feature Report

— Present the feature report to the group
— Explain the choice of topic and information-gathering method
— Receive feedback and suggest possible improvements

ASSIGNMENT #2

Conducting and Writing an Interview

With the help of mentors, students will prepare, conduct, and write an interview with a chosen interviewee, developing skills in questioning, active listening, and accurately conveying answers.

Characteristics of an Interview

- Dialogue – consists of questions and answers
- Clear Purpose – has a goal (to inform, explain, introduce a person or a problem)
- Interviewee – an expert, a well-known person, or someone directly connected to the topic
- Prepared Questions – questions are designed in advance and logically connected
- Objectivity – the journalist does not impose their own opinion
- Direct Speech – answers are usually transmitted verbatim
- Introduction – a brief introduction of the interviewee and the topic
- Conclusion – a summary or concluding thought
- Different Types – informative, problem-oriented, portrait, investigative interview

Task

Write an interview (you must choose whom to interview yourself). Design ten questions to ask them. The questions must be interesting and informative.

Activity Steps

- Choosing an Interviewee and Topic
- Select the person you want to interview
- Consider why this person is interesting and connected to the chosen topic
- Determine the goal of the interview (to inform, introduce a person, explore a problem or topic)

1. Preparing Questions

- Design ten interesting and informative questions
- Questions should be clear, open-ended, and connected to the interview topic
- Avoid questions that can be answered with just ‘yes’ or ‘no’

2. **Conducting the Interview**
   — Introduce the interviewee and explain the purpose of the conversation
   — Ask questions in a natural order
   — Listen actively to the answers and ask follow-up questions if necessary

3. **Recording and Formatting the Interview**
   — Accurately convey the interviewee's answers
   — Format the interview as a dialogue of questions and answers
   — Add a brief introduction presenting the person and the topic

4. **Editing and Checking**
   — Check the clarity of questions and answers
   — Edit the text without altering the meaning of the statements
   — Add a conclusion with a concluding thought or summary of the conversation

5. **Presenting the Interview**
   — Present the interview to the group
   — Explain the choice of interviewee and topic
   — Receive feedback and consider possible improvements

Goal of the Activities

To develop skills in writing different journalistic formats (news report, feature report, and interview) through the application of journalistic rules, topic research, question formulation, information transmission, and the expression of personal observation. Participants will enhance their ability to clearly, accurately, and engagingly present events, people, and topics, while fostering critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills.

3.7. Sources and Verification

Journalism differs from mere publishing in its relationship with sources.

Basic rules:

— Always attribute information to its source: who said it, where it was published, which document proves it.
— A primary source (participant, document, official data) is always stronger than a secondary source (someone who heard, transmitted, or summarized it).
— The two-source rule: confirm an important claim that you cannot document with at least two mutually independent sources.
— The other side: if you are presenting criticism or an accusation against someone, you must give that person or institution an opportunity to respond before publication.
— An anonymous source is an exception, not a rule: the identity must be known to the editorial board, and the reason for anonymity must be justified.

3.8. Interview: Preparation and Conducting

1. Research the interviewee and the topic; never arrive unprepared, as the interviewee will sense it within the first minute.

2. Prepare a framework of five to ten questions, but listen to the answers, because the best questions arise from what was just said.

3. Ask open-ended questions (how, why, describe) instead of closed ones that can be answered with yes or no.

4. One question at a time. Double-barreled questions yield half-answers.

5. Do not fear silence, as the interviewee will often fill it themselves with the most interesting part of the answer.

6. At the end, always ask: “Is there anything I didn’t ask you that you consider important?”



Workshop Exercise 2: Recording the Written Interview

Learning Outcomes

After the workshop, the student will be able to:

- Prepare and conduct a short interview
- Ask open-ended questions and actively listen to the interviewee
- Apply the rules of polite and professional communication
- Analyze the success of the conducted interview

Activities:

Students work in pairs to prepare and record a five-minute interview on a topic from their school or neighborhood. After recording, the group analyzes: whether the questions were open-ended, whether the interviewer listened, and where the thread of the conversation was lost. The exercise is repeated with swapped roles.

Brief instruction for video interviews during recording:

- Introduction: Introduce yourself, introduce the person you are interviewing, and explain the purpose.
- Ask questions clearly and naturally.
- Listen actively, and use short follow-up questions for clarification.
- Maintain the rhythm: give the interviewee space, but stick to the time limit.
- Conclusion: Thank the interviewee.

Activity Steps

1. **Choosing a Topic and Preparing the Interview**
   - Young people work in pairs to choose a topic related to their school or neighborhood
   - They agree on the person they will interview
   - They prepare questions that are clear, interesting, and encourage the interviewee to give more detailed answers
2. **Introduction to the Interview**
   - The interviewer introduces themselves and the interviewee
   - They explain the topic and purpose of the conversation
   - They prepare the interviewee for the start of recording

3. **Conducting and Recording the Interview**
   - They ask questions in a natural order
   - They actively listen to the interviewee's answers
   - They use short follow-up questions for additional clarification
   - They mind the duration of the interview (about five minutes)
   - They give the interviewee enough space to answer and do not interrupt them

4. **Concluding the Interview**
   - They thank the interviewee for participating
   - They wrap up the conversation with a short conclusion or final thought

5. **Analyzing the Recorded Interview**
   - The group reviews the recording and discusses:
   - Were the questions open-ended and clear?
   - Did the interviewer listen actively?
   - Did the conversation flow well?
   - Where was the thread of the conversation lost?

6. **Swapping Roles and Repeating the Exercise**
   - Participants switch roles between interviewer and interviewee
   - They conduct the interview again, applying the feedback received
   - They compare their progress and evaluate their performance

Tips: Be professional, avoid interrupting, and respect the privacy of the interviewee.

Goal of the Activity:

To develop skills in preparing and conducting an interview, effective communication, and active listening through the practical experience of recording a conversation. Participants will enhance their ability to ask quality questions, conduct a structured conversation, adapt to the interviewee, and analyze and improve their own media performance.

4. Journalistic Ethics and Standards

Ethics is not a decoration but a tool; the audience trusts micromedia precisely to the extent that it adheres to the rules. Youth micromedia operates according to the same standards as a professional newsroom—scale is adjusted, responsibility is not. The starting points are the ethical codes of journalistic associations (in Croatia, the HND Code of Ethics; in Slovenia, the Code of Slovenian Journalists) and international principles.

4.1. Fundamental Principles

- **Accuracy** — only verified information is published; speed never takes precedence over accuracy.
- **Honesty (ethics)** — information is gathered openly; covert recording is an exception reserved for topics of major public interest, decided by the editorial board rather than an individual.
- **Independence** — content is not adapted to sponsors, school administration, or any centre of power; paid and sponsored content must be clearly labeled.
- **Separation of facts and opinion** — the listener must know at all times whether they are hearing information or a viewpoint.
- **Responsibility and correction** — mistakes are corrected promptly, visibly, and without excuses. A correction is not a defeat, but proof of seriousness.
- **Protection of dignity** — no hate speech, discrimination, mockery, or sensationalism; special care when reporting on vulnerable groups, accidents, and tragedies.

4.2. Specifics of Working with Minors

In youth micromedia, minors are both authors and interviewees, so additional rules apply:

- Participation, recording, and publishing recordings of minors require the consent of a parent or guardian (a consent template is attached).
- The child's best interest always comes before the attractiveness of a story; nothing is published that could harm a minor now or five years from now.
- Sensitive topics (violence, addictions, family circumstances) are handled without identifying individuals, under mentor supervision.

4.3. Editorial Policies: How Media Outlets Decide

Every media outlet has an editorial policy. This is the set of criteria by which it chooses what to publish, in what order, and in what tone. Understanding editorial policy means understanding that no media outlet is a 'neutral mirror' of reality. For micromedia, this means two things: first, you should write your own short editorial policy (whom we represent, what topics we cover, what we do not publish). A template is attached. Second, through their own editorial experience, young people learn to critically read mainstream media—who owns it, who decides, and what is missing from the content.



5. Media Literacy

Media literacy encompasses three dimensions: access to information, critical evaluation of it, and the ability to create one's own content. Research among young people (e.g., the Slovenian study Youth 2020) shows that just over forty percent of young people feel capable of assessing whether online content is credible. Micromedia acts on all three dimensions simultaneously; by creating media, young people best understand how media works and where manipulation can occur.

5.1. How the Media Image of Reality is Created

- Selection: media outlets choose a fraction of reality; what is not chosen for the public practically does not exist.
- Framing means that the same fact sounds different depending on the context, headline, and chosen interviewees.
- Attention economy means that clicks and viewership reward emotion and conflict rather than accuracy, which also distorts professional media.
- Algorithms: social media displays content that retains attention and confirms existing views. This creates filter bubbles and echo chambers.

5.2. Questions for Critical Reading

For any media content—someone else's or your own—it is worth checking five questions:

1. Who is the author, and who stands behind the publication (media outlet, organization, owner, funding)?
2. What is the source of the claims, and is it stated in a way that I can verify it myself?
3. What has been omitted—which side, which piece of data, which context?
4. Who benefits from the publication, and what emotion does it target?
5. Does the headline differ from the content (clickbait)?

6. Fake News and Disinformation

6.1. Concepts

— Disinformation is deliberately created and spread untruth, with the aim of deception, profit, or political impact.
— Misinformation is an untruth spread by people without malicious intent, believing it to be true. This is the most common form in everyday life.
— Malinformation is true information used to cause harm (e.g., publishing private data taken out of context).
— The term ‘fake news’ is used colloquially, but it is clumsy because it is often also used as a label to discredit uncomfortable yet accurate news. In workshops, we recommend using the more precise terms from the threefold classification above.

6.2. Common Manipulation Techniques

— Fabricated content: completely manufactured news, often on websites mimicking real media outlets.
— False context: a real photo or video attributed to a different event, place, or time.
— Manipulated content: edited photos, cropped statements, doctored quotes.
— False attribution: real content attributed to the wrong author or institution.
— Satire mistaken as news: content without intent to deceive that is shared out of context.
— Clickbait and sensationalism: a headline that promises more or something different than the actual content.



6.3. Fact-Checking Procedure

1. Check the source: does the medium/author exist, is there an impressum, who owns the domain, what do other publications look like?

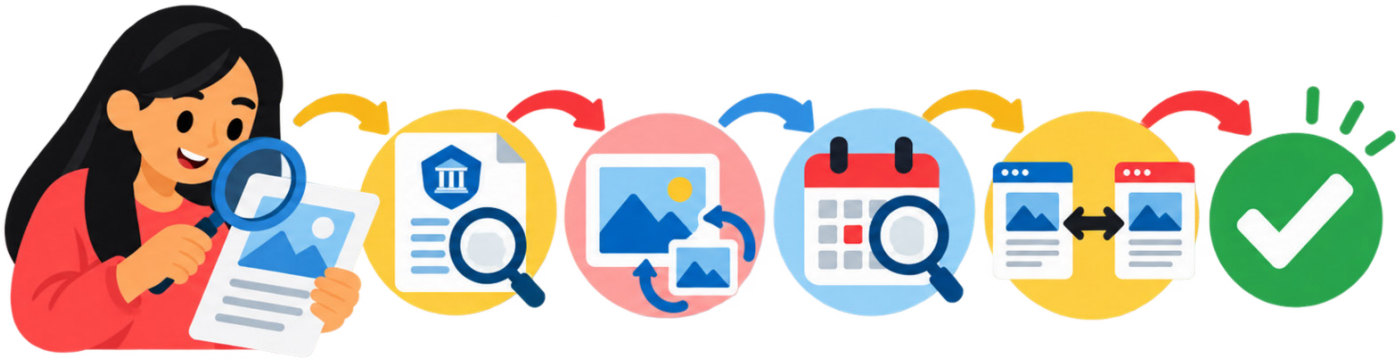
2. Check the claim with the primary source: official websites, documents, original statements.

3. Reverse image search (Google Lens, TinEye) reveals whether a photograph is older or from a different event.

4. Check the date: old news in a new context is a frequent form of manipulation.

5. Look for independent confirmation: are other credible media outlets reporting on it?

6. Consult fact-checking services: in Croatia, Faktograf; in Slovenia, Oštro/Razkrinkavanje; internationally, the EDMO network, AFP Fact Check, and similar.



Workshop Exercise 3: Verification of Media Content Credibility

Learning Outcomes

After the workshop, the student will be able to:

- Differentiate between reliable and unreliable information
- Apply information-verification procedures
- Argue their assessment of content credibility
- Recognize manipulated, satirical, and false content

Activity:

Mentors prepare ten different posts representing a mix of accurate news, satirical content, manipulated posts, and completely fabricated information. Examples may include posts from internet portals, photographs, short video recordings, or graphics. Participants are not told in advance which category each post belongs to.

Young people work in smaller groups and apply a credibility verification procedure to each post. They analyze the information source, author, publication date, headline, and content, check whether credible sources exist that confirm or refute the claims, and pay attention to potential signs of manipulation, such as sensationalist headlines, emotional language, lack of sources, or digitally altered photographs.

For each post, the group reaches a conclusion and justifies it with clear arguments. The emphasis of the activity is not on participants 'guessing' whether a post is true or false, but on demonstrating a logical and systematic procedure by which they arrived at their assessment. After presenting the results, the mentor leads a joint discussion, compares different verification approaches, and explains why individual posts are credible, satirical, manipulated, or false.

At the end of the activity, participants jointly compile a short list of steps to follow before sharing information on the internet. The activity develops critical thinking, media literacy, argumentation skills, and responsible and thoughtful use of digital media.

Through this activity, participants develop critical thinking and media literacy skills. They learn how to recognize reliable and unreliable information and how to reach conclusions through a verification procedure rather than relying solely on personal impressions or assumptions.

Activity Steps:

1. **Content Preparation**
   - Mentors prepare ten different posts
   - The posts include accurate news, satire, manipulated content, and fabricated information
   - Examples can be texts, photographs, or video recordings
   - Participants are not told the type or credibility of individual posts

2. **Analyzing Posts in Groups**
   - Young people work in smaller groups
   - For each post, they check the source, author, publication date, headline, and content
   - They research whether additional sources exist that confirm or refute the information

3. **Recognizing Signs of Manipulation**

Groups analyze potential indicators of questionable content:

- sensationalist headlines,
- emotional language,
- lack of sources,
- altered photographs or videos,
- inconsistencies in the content.

4. **Reaching a Conclusion**
   - Groups assess the credibility of each post
   - They justify their conclusions with arguments and outline the procedure by which they reached them
   - The emphasis is not on 'guessing', but on proper information verification

5. **Presenting Results and Discussion**
   - Groups present their assessments
   - The mentor leads a discussion and explains the differences between credible, satirical, manipulated, and false content
   - Different verification methods are compared

6. **Creating Rules for Information Verification**
   - Participants jointly create a short list of steps to follow before sharing content on the internet
   - They agree on the basic rules for responsible use of digital media

Goal of the Activity:

To develop critical thinking, the ability to verify information, argumentation, and responsible behavior in a digital environment.

7. Artificial Intelligence in Media Production

Generative artificial intelligence is simultaneously a tool and a risk. A tool because it accelerates transcription, translation, drafting, and technical processing. A risk because it enables the mass production of convincing untruths—synthetic photographs, voice clones, and deepfake videos—and because uncritically adopting AI-generated text introduces factual errors into content. Micromedia uses artificial intelligence thoughtfully and transparently.

7.1. Rules of Ethical Use in Micromedia

1. Humans sign, humans are responsible — AI can assist in preparation, but the final content is verified and approved by the author. Responsibility is never delegated to a tool.

2. Transparency — if a significant part of the content (text, image, voice) is generated by artificial intelligence, this must be clearly indicated.

3. Every fact from an AI tool must be verified with a primary source. AI is not a source, but an assistant.

4. No synthetic portrayals of real people without their consent — voice and likeness cloning are used only with explicit agreement.

5. Data protection — personal data of interviewees and unpublished materials must not be entered into public AI tools.

7.2. Recognizing AI-Generated Content

— Images: anatomical errors (fingers, teeth, glasses), illogical background details, ‘blurred’ text on signs, overly clean or perfect skin texture. Detection tools exist but are unreliable; a judgment is always a combination of clues and source verification.
— Video (deepfake): unnatural blinking, facial edges during head turns, mismatch between voice and lip movements, strange lighting.
— Voice: flat intonation, unnatural pauses, absence of breathing and background sounds.
— Text: generic style, fabricated sources and quotes, confident tone without substance. AI text detectors are unreliable and must not be the sole criterion.
— The most important rule: checking sources and context (Chapter 6.3) applies equally to AI content; the question ‘where does this come from?’ is stronger than any forensics.

8. Copyright and Law in Micromedia

This chapter provides practical rules for everyday work and is not legal advice. In case of doubt, consult a mentor, and for more serious matters, a legal department or expert. The legal frameworks of Croatia and Slovenia are aligned with EU law, so these principles apply in both countries.

8.1. Basics of Copyright

— A copyrighted work (text, photograph, music, video) is protected automatically upon its creation. The © symbol is not a condition for protection.
— 'I found it on the internet' is not a legal basis. Everything published has an author and rules of use.
— Using someone else's work requires permission unless a statutory exception applies (quotation, teaching, parody).
— Quotation is permitted under conditions: the author and source are stated, the scope is reasonable, and the quotation serves to support one's own treatment of a topic rather than replace it.

8.2. Creative Commons and Free Content

The safest path for micromedia is content with open licenses. Creative Commons (CC) licenses are assigned to a work by the author to pre-approve certain uses:

— CC BY — you may use and adapt the work with attribution to the author.
— CC BY-SA — same as BY, but adaptations must be shared under the same license.
— CC BY-NC — non-commercial use only.
— CC BY-ND — no derivatives or adaptations.
— CC0 / Public Domain — no restrictions.

Sources of Free Content:

— for music: Free Music Archive, ccMixter, YouTube Audio Library, Pixabay Music;
— for photographs: Unsplash, Pexels, Wikimedia Commons.
— The terms of each platform should be read carefully because 'free' does not always mean 'unconditional.' Attribution is good practice even when the license does not explicitly require it.

Workshop Exercise 4: May I Use This Content?

Learning Outcomes

After the workshop, the student will be able to:

— Differentiate between the basic types of Creative Commons licenses.
— Recognize when the author's permission is required to use content.
— Choose content that can be lawfully used in micromedia.
— Properly credit the author and source of the used content.

Activities

Mentors prepare about 10 examples of photographs, music, and video clips with different licenses (copyright-protected work, CC BY, CC BY-NC, CC BY-ND, CC0, and content with no specified license).
Students work in groups. For each example, they must answer:

— May the content be used in school micromedia?
— Under what conditions?
— Must the author be credited?
— May the content be edited or adapted?

After the discussion, the groups justify their answers, and the mentor, together with them, checks the correct solutions and explains the differences between the licenses. Through this activity, students learn to recognize the rules for using other people's media content and to differentiate between license types that determine how photographs, music, and videos can be used in school micromedia. The goal is not just to find the right answer, but to understand the conditions of use and the importance of respecting authors.

Activity Steps

1. Preparing Content Examples

Mentors prepare around 10 examples of photographs, music, and video clips.
The examples include various types of licenses:

— copyright-protected work,
— CC BY,
— CC BY-NC,
— CC BY-ND,
— CC0,
— content with no specified license.

2. Content Analysis in Groups

Students work in smaller groups.

For each example, they analyze the terms of use and answer the questions:

- May the content be used in school micromedia?
- Under what conditions can it be used?
- Must the author be credited?
- May the content be edited or adapted?

3. Discussion and Conclusion

- Groups compare their answers.
- They justify their decisions based on the rules and licenses applied.
- They exchange different approaches to solving the task.

4. Checking Solutions with the Mentor

- The mentor checks the answers together with the groups.
- They explain the differences between licenses and clarify the terms of content use.

5. Creating Rules for Future Work

- Participants create a brief reminder for using other people's content in micromedia.
- They emphasize the importance of checking licenses, attributing authors, and responsible material usage.

Goal of the Activity

To develop an understanding of copyright, proper digital content usage, and responsible creation of media content.

8.3. Music in Podcasts and Radio Programs

Commercial music is the most common trap for micromedia. Public use of commercial music requires rights that are generally regulated through collective rights management organizations (in Croatia, HDS ZAMP and related organizations; in Slovenia, SAZAS/IPF). Podcast platforms and YouTube have their own recognition systems (Content ID) that demonetize, mute, or remove content containing unauthorized music. A practical rule for micromedia is to use exclusively music with a clear license (CC, licensed libraries) for intros, background tracks, and transitions, or music by local authors with written permission. This also presents an opportunity for collaboration with young musicians from the community.

8.4. Privacy, Personal Data, and the Right to One's Own Likeness

— Recording individuals: consent for an interview and performance on a show is implied by the agreement to participate, but having it in writing is good practice; for minors, consent from a parent or guardian is mandatory.
— Public spaces: recording an environment in a public place is generally permitted, but singling out and depicting an individual requires caution and, when the person is in focus, consent.
— GDPR in micromedia practice: collect only the data you need (name, contact for organization), store consents safely, do not share data with third parties, and designate a person responsible for collecting and storing data within the organization.
— Defamation and insult: an untrue factual claim that harms someone's reputation carries legal risk—which is yet another reason for verification and the 'other side' principle (3.4)



9. Preparing a Show: From Idea to Script

9.1. Show Concept

Before the first recording, the editorial board defines the concept, or identity card, of the show: who we are addressing, what we are talking about, in what tone, at what duration, and with what rhythm. The concept is written down on a single page and serves as a filter for all subsequent decisions.

For a monthly youth video podcast, the recommended framework is: a duration of twenty to thirty minutes, two to three segments, a permanent intro theme, and a regular publication schedule.

9.2. Structure and Script

Every show has a skeleton:

- the opening/intro (what the show is about, why now),
- the central part (segments, conversations, features), and
- the closing (summary, announcement of the next show, credits/sign-offs).
- The script does not need to be written word-for-word; an ordered outline of blocks with durations, interviewees, and technical notes is sufficient. A script template is attached.

9.3. Speaking Before the Microphone and Camera

- Write for the ear: short sentences, active verbs, one thought per sentence. Read the text aloud before recording; what cannot be spoken smoothly is not good in writing either.
- Numbers should be rounded and translated into comparisons; listings longer than three items do not work well in audio format.
- Stage fright is normal; preparation, rehearsal, breathing, and the fact that a recording can be repeated all help.
- Your own voice and speech are valuable: dialects and accents are part of the community's identity. Micromedia does not hide them but nurtures them, while maintaining the requirement of comprehensibility.

Workshop Exercise 5: Creating a Concept and Pilot Episode

Learning Outcomes

After the workshop, the student will be able to:

— Design a concept and plan the content of a pilot show
— Organize the sequence of content blocks and distribute tasks within a team
— Prepare and record a short media announcement
— Apply clear and expressive communication in public speaking
— Give and accept constructive feedback
— Evaluate their own work and the work of the group

Activity

The group jointly designs the concept for their pilot show. First, they define the topic, target audience, and purpose of the show, and agree on its title and basic style. Next, they create a plan for the first episode, determining the sequence of content blocks, the estimated duration of each part, potential interviewees, shooting locations, necessary technical equipment, and team members' tasks. Special attention is paid to the logical flow of content and realistic time planning.

After making the plan, each participant prepares and records their own show announcement lasting up to 30 seconds. In the announcement, they introduce themselves, briefly announce the episode topic, and strive to capture the audience's attention through clear, natural, and expressive speech.

Upon completing the recordings, the group listens back to all the announcements together. Feedback is given according to the 'two praises, one suggestion' principle—each participant first highlights two good aspects of the recording (e.g., clarity of speech, an engaging introduction, good pacing, or expressiveness), and then offers one concrete suggestion for improvement. Based on the comments received, participants can re-record their announcements and compare their progress. This activity develops skills in media content planning, teamwork, public speaking, constructively giving and receiving feedback, and self-evaluation.

Activity Steps

1. Brainstorm the Show Idea

— The group selects a topic for the pilot episode
— Defines the target audience and the purpose of the show
— Agrees on the title, style, and method of communication with the audience

2. **Create the Plan for the First Episode**
   — Determines the sequence of content blocks
   — Plans the duration of individual parts of the show
   — Coordinates interviewees, filming locations, and technical conditions
   — Group members assign roles and tasks

3. **Prepare the Show Announcement**
   — Each participant creates a short announcement lasting up to 30 seconds.
   — The announcement includes an introduction, the topic of the show, and an attention-grabbing hook for the audience.
   — Practices clear, natural, and expressive speech.

4. **Record the Announcements**
   — Participants record their announcements.
   — They pay attention to diction, speech tempo, expressiveness, and audience connection.

5. **Analyze the Recordings**
   — The group listens to and discusses the recorded announcements together.
   — Evaluates the clarity of the message, the engagement of the introduction, the rhythm, and the presentation style.

6. **Provide Feedback**
   — Applies the ‘two praises, one suggestion’ rule.
   — Participants highlight two strengths of the recording and provide one concrete suggestion for improvement.

7. **Refine and Evaluate Work**
   — Participants improve their announcements based on feedback.
   — They compare results and evaluate their own contribution to the group’s work.

Goal of the Activity

To develop the ability to conceive, plan, and present media content through teamwork, creative expression, public speaking, and constructive exchange of feedback. Participants will enhance their communication skills, work organization, and ability to evaluate their own contribution to creating a media project.

PART II.

Technology, software tools, and implementation

10. Equipment

10.1. Hardware

Smartphone (Android or iOS)

- a camera capable of recording at least 1080p at 30 fps;
- sufficient storage capacity; file size depends on resolution, frame rate, codec and bit rate, so make a short test recording before a longer session;
- support for connecting an external microphone, using a USB-C or Lightning adapter where required;
- a sufficiently charged battery or continuous power during recording.

PC, laptop or desktop computer

- at least 8 GB of RAM for basic audio editing; 16 GB or more is generally recommended for video, depending on the resolution and software used;
- a USB port or USB-C support;
- sufficient disk space, because video files are large;
- stable operation without overheating.

USB cable compatible with the phone and computer

- USB-C to USB-C for current devices;
- USB-C to USB-A for older computers;
- Lightning to USB for older iPhones.

10.2. Additional recommended equipment

- an external microphone: a lavalier microphone for one person, a directional microphone for speech to camera, or two separate microphones for an interview;
- closed-back headphones for monitoring without sound bleeding into the microphone;
- a phone tripod and mount that can safely hold the device even when an additional microphone is fitted;
- a windshield for outdoor recording;
- a splitter, audio interface or receiver when recording several microphones;

— an extension cable, power strip and power bank for longer sessions.

Compatibility check

Matching connectors do not necessarily guarantee compatibility. With USB-C, check whether the phone supports USB audio devices. With analogue microphones, confirm whether you need a TRS or TRRS connector. Different iPhone generations use either Lightning or USB-C. Test the adapter and microphone in the chosen recording app, because the phone may still default to its built-in microphone.

10.3. Software

Open-source applications and free versions of commercial software can be used to record and process audio and video. Before installation, check that the application supports your operating system and that the computer meets its current system requirements.

Recommended software:

— OBS Studio;
— Davinci Resolve;
— Audacity.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit



Workshop exercise 6: preparing and checking recording equipment

Learning outcomes

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- select basic equipment for the programme format and available budget;
- identify USB-C, USB-A and Lightning connectors and choose the appropriate cable or adapter;
- correctly connect an external microphone, headphones and smartphone;
- verify that the recording app is using the external microphone rather than the built-in microphone;
- prepare backup options for power and file storage.

Activity

Working in small groups, participants assemble a recording kit for one of three situations: a solo audio podcast, a piece to camera, or a two-person interview. Available equipment includes a smartphone, computer, various cables and adapters, several types of microphone, closed-back headphones, a tripod, a windshield and a power bank. Each group must select only the equipment it genuinely needs, connect it correctly and use a ten-second test recording to demonstrate that every device works.

Activity steps

1. **Choose the recording situation**
   - Choose a solo audio podcast, a piece to camera or a two-person interview.
   - Decide which devices will record sound and which will record video.
   - Prepare a list of essential and backup equipment.
2. **Check the connectors**
   - Identify the connectors on the smartphone, computer, microphone and headphones.
   - Select the appropriate cable or adapter and, when using analogue equipment, check the difference between TRS and TRRS connectors.
   - Confirm that the phone has sufficient free storage and at least 50 per cent battery capacity.
3. **Assemble the kit**
   - Secure the phone in its mount and use landscape orientation when recording a conventional video podcast.
   - Connect the microphone and closed-back headphones or audio interface.
   - Route cables so that participants cannot step on them or pull them out.

4. **Test the setup**
   - Check the selected input source in the recording app.
   - Record ten seconds of speech and monitor the sound on headphones while recording.
   - Gently touch the external microphone. The sound should be clearly audible in the recording, confirming that the correct input is active.
5. **Present the solution**
   - Present the selected equipment to the other groups and explain why it is suitable for the task.
   - Identify the most likely fault or failure and explain the backup solution you prepared.

Objective of the activity

To develop the ability to independently select, connect and test basic recording equipment. Participants should understand that production quality depends less on the quantity of equipment than on compatibility, correct placement and a completed test recording.

11. Fundamentals of audio recording

When producing a podcast, sound quality is as important as the content itself. Even when recording with only a smartphone, a few simple but correctly applied procedures can produce professional-sounding audio. The key is to understand the recording environment, position the microphone correctly and control the external factors that affect the sound. The aim is to capture clean, clear and consistent audio without unnecessary noise, reverberation or distortion.

Good source audio is always more valuable than extensive post-production. A quiet recording space, correct microphone placement and a short test recording before each session will prevent many problems that are difficult or impossible to correct later.

The most important points to remember are:

- microphone-to-speaker distance, typically 10–20 cm when using an external microphone;
- an even delivery and consistent recording level;
- as little ambient noise and room reverberation as possible;
- recording peaks of approximately −12 dB, with sufficient headroom to prevent clipping;
- regular monitoring and a test recording before the session begins.

Room acoustics have a significant effect on recording quality. Soft furnishings and irregular surfaces, such as curtains, carpets, bookshelves, upholstered furniture and blankets, help absorb or disperse sound reflections. A simple improvised recording space in a furnished room will usually produce better results than an empty classroom or another large room with hard, reflective surfaces.

11.1. Preparation and input level

Set up the equipment before the guests arrive and record at least 30 seconds of normal speech. The speaker should deliver several sentences with the same energy and volume they expect to use during the programme. Listen to the test recording on headphones and check for background noise, reverberation, plosive consonants, clothing rustle and other unwanted sounds.

If the recording application provides manual input-gain control, adjust it so that normal speech peaks at approximately −12 dB and the loudest parts remain safely below 0 dB. The level meter must not remain in the red zone. A signal that exceeds 0 dBFS is clipped, resulting in audible digital distortion that generally cannot be repaired effectively in post-production.

The official OBS Studio guidance recommends monitoring audio meters continuously and notes that the red zone indicates that the signal is approaching digital clipping. (OBS Project Knowledge Base, 2026.)

Backup recording and synchronisation marker

Whenever possible, record audio simultaneously to the main device and to a backup phone or audio recorder.
At the start of the recording, clap loudly while the action is visible on camera. The resulting short transient peak in the audio waveform provides a clear synchronisation marker, making it easier to align separately recorded audio and video during post-production.
State the programme title, recording date and take number at the beginning of each recording. This verbal slate reduces the risk of confusing or incorrectly identifying files later.

11.2. Recording outdoors

Outdoor recording can create a relaxed, documentary or visually engaging atmosphere. It also presents the greatest challenges, particularly because of the environment and weather.

Common challenges outdoors:

— wind, the greatest enemy of recorded sound;
— traffic, loud passers-by and unpredictable environmental sounds;
— birds and excessive reflections in some open spaces;
— unpredictable changes in light when video is also being recorded.

Tips for better sound

Use an external microphone with the phone

A small clip-on lavalier microphone or a directional smartphone microphone makes a major difference. It is almost essential for recording speech outdoors.

Always use wind protection

— A furry windshield, often called a “dead cat”, is suitable for wind. A foam windscreen mainly helps with light air movement and vocal plosives.
— Even an inexpensive windshield can turn an unusable recording into a stable one.

Find shelter from the wind

Record:

— beside a wall;
— around a corner;
— among trees or shrubs;
— inside a car, with a door open for light, when exceptionally clean sound is required.

Record as far away from traffic as possible

Most phones use automatic gain control. A passing vehicle in the background can therefore reduce the intelligibility of the speech.

Control the distance

The phone should be:

— as close to the speaker's mouth as practical, approximately 45–70 cm;
— or used with a microphone clipped to the speaker's clothing, 10–20 cm from the mouth.

Make a ten-second test recording

Before recording, check:

— whether wind is reaching the microphone;
— whether the level is too high and distorting;
— whether the speech is clearly intelligible.

11.3. Recording indoors

Indoor recording offers the greatest control over sound. A furnished room at home is generally better than an office, and an office is better than a large hall. The aim is to reduce sound reflections and avoid the hollow reverberation commonly heard in sparsely furnished rooms.

Common indoor challenges:

— hollow reverberation in large, empty rooms;
— electrical or mechanical hum from refrigerators, computers and fans;
— noise through windows and from outside traffic;
— footsteps and chair movement.

Improving sound indoors

Choose soft, well-furnished rooms
The best rooms include:

— bedrooms;
— living rooms;
— spaces with curtains, carpets, sofas and cushions.

The least suitable include:

— kitchens;
— corridors;
— empty offices.

Switch off all noise sources

— air-conditioning units;
— fans;
— computers with loud cooling systems;
— aquarium filters;
— washing machines in adjacent rooms.

Use improvised acoustic treatment

— place blankets over the table;
— record in a corner beside a curtain;
— open a wardrobe full of clothes or hang a blanket behind the speaker;
— position large sofas or bookshelves around the recording area.

Microphone placement

— 10–20 cm from the mouth for a clip-on microphone;
— 20–40 cm for a microphone on a desk or stand;
— the phone should never be more than 60–70 cm away.

Avoid touching the microphone

The most common handling noises when recording with a phone are:

— clothing rubbing against the microphone;
— knocks on the table;
— movement of the cable.

A test recording is essential

Listen to the full ten seconds on headphones. If you hear reverberation, soften the room with additional fabric surfaces.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit

Workshop exercise 7: sound recording and comparison

Learning outcomes

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- position a lavalier or directional microphone correctly for the recording situation;
- set a safe input level without digital clipping;
- identify wind noise, reverberation, hum and clothing rustle;
- choose a more suitable location and apply basic measures to improve the sound;
- monitor the recording with closed-back headphones and compare results using clear evidence.

Activity

Groups record the same speech passage of approximately 30 seconds in three versions: with the phone's built-in microphone, with an external microphone in a less suitable space, and with the external microphone after improving the room or adding wind protection. The speaker must use the same text and approximately the same level in all recordings. The group then uses headphones to compare intelligibility, level, noise, reverberation and distracting sounds.

Activity steps

1. **Prepare the comparison script**
   - Write a short passage lasting approximately 30 seconds.
   - Include quiet and louder speech as well as words containing plosive and sibilant sounds such as p, b and s.
2. **First recording**
   - Place the phone at a typical distance without an external microphone.
   - Record the speech and note the distance, room and identified noise sources.
3. **Second recording**
   - Connect the external microphone but leave the recording environment unchanged.
   - Position a lavalier 10–20 cm from the mouth or a stand-mounted microphone 20–40 cm away.
   - Set the input level so that the loudest sections do not reach the red zone.

4. **Improve the environment and make the third recording**
   - Indoors, reduce reverberation with curtains, blankets or other soft furnishings. Outdoors, find shelter and use wind protection.
   - Remove or switch off predictable sources of noise.
   - Repeat the recording without changing the position of the speaker or microphone.
5. **Listen and evaluate**
   - Listen to all three recordings on closed-back headphones without looking at the filenames first.
   - Assess speech intelligibility, level consistency, noise, reverberation and plosives.
   - Select the best recording and justify the decision with at least three specific observations.

Objective of the activity

To develop critical listening and an understanding of how distance, the room, wind and input level affect recorded speech. Participants learn to improve sound through placement and monitoring before relying on post-production tools.

12. Fundamentals of video recording

12.1. Composition fundamentals

Sound is half of the video: the entirety of Chapter 11 applies to video recording as well - viewers will forgive a weaker image, but never bad sound.

Camera position

— Position the phone at eye level or slightly above it, never below, which creates an unflattering angle.
— Use a tripod or another stable surface.
— Record in landscape orientation unless the podcast is specifically intended for vertical platforms.

Correct distance

— Place the camera 1–2 metres in front of the subject.
— Frame the head and shoulders, leaving approximately 5–10 cm of headroom between the top of the head and the upper edge of the frame.

Composition and the rule of thirds

— The primary rule for video interviews is to place the eyes in the upper third of the frame.
— Prioritise stability, simplicity and a clean background.

Single-camera interview composition

For a single-camera interview, decide in advance whether the frame will show only the guest or both the guest and interviewer. A medium close-up of the guest is the most common choice for a conventional interview: frame the person from approximately mid-chest upwards and position the camera at eye level or slightly above it. This framing shows facial expression while allowing some hand movement.

— The guest should normally look at the interviewer seated just beside the camera, rather than directly into the lens. Use direct eye contact with the lens only when the person is addressing the audience.
— Leave slightly more space on the side towards which the guest is looking than behind their head. This is called looking room or lead room.
— Place the eyes approximately on the upper-third line. Leave some headroom, but not so much that the face drops into the lower half of the frame.

— Keep the interviewer close enough to the camera axis to avoid recording the guest almost in profile. An angle of approximately 15–30 degrees from the lens usually works well.
— If the questions will be removed in the edit, ask the guest to answer in complete sentences and pause briefly after each question.

Wide two-shot

When both participants share the frame, seat them turned slightly towards one another, but not in full profile. The camera should see both faces and some body language. Leave enough space between them to avoid a cramped frame without creating a large empty gap in the centre.

— Keep both heads at approximately the same height unless the content requires a different emphasis.
— Do not crop the body exactly at a joint such as the knee, wrist or elbow.
— Tables, microphones and other objects must not obscure faces. Before recording, also check that stands or cables do not appear to grow out of a person's head.
— Remove very bright objects, flickering screens and distracting signs.

Interview with two or more cameras

The safest setup uses a main camera for a wide two-shot and one closer camera for each participant. The wide shot is the safety shot: use it for transitions, longer pauses or whenever a close-up contains a problem.

— Camera A: master or wide shot of both participants.
— Camera B: medium close-up of the guest with suitable looking room.
— Camera C, if available: medium close-up of the interviewer facing in the opposite screen direction to the guest.

Place every camera on the same side of the imaginary line running between the participants. This is the line of action, also known as the 180-degree rule. If a camera crosses the line, screen direction can reverse between shots and make the participants appear to be looking in the same direction rather than at each other.

Matching shots between cameras

Use the same aspect ratio, resolution and frame rate on every camera.

— Frame the guest and interviewer close-ups at a similar size and from a comparable camera height.
— Ensure that the wide and close shots differ clearly enough. Cutting between two almost identical framings creates a distracting jump cut.

— Do not change the zoom or camera position during an answer unless this is a deliberate creative choice.
— Before recording, make one synchronisation clap that is both visible and audible on every camera and audio recorder.

Cutaways for editing

After the interview, record 10–20 seconds of additional material: the interviewer listening, the guest nodding, hands, microphones, the room and the exterior of the location. These cutaways can conceal edits, but reaction shots must never be used in a way that changes the meaning or emotional tone of the conversation.

Common interview composition errors

— excessive headroom or insufficient looking room;
— a camera well below eye level, emphasising the chin and ceiling;
— positioning the guest in front of a bright window, leaving the face underexposed;
— recording the two close-ups from opposite sides of the line of action;
— distracting objects, signs or apparent lines passing through the subject's head;
— mismatched camera height, colour, exposure or frame rate in a multicamera setup;
— a microphone or table edge obscuring the mouth or an important part of the subject's body language.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit





12.2. Lighting

Lighting is the single most important factor in smartphone video quality.

Lighting tips

Always turn the face towards the light: place the window in front of the subject, not behind them.

Use soft light

— natural window light;
— or a ring light or LED panel with a diffuser.

Avoid mixed lighting

— do not use warm and cool light sources at the same time;
— avoid mixing daylight from a window with a strong yellow household lamp.

Basic lighting setups

— One-point lighting: one light in front of the subject; ideal for solo recording.
— Two-point lighting: one light in front and another slightly to the side; this creates more natural depth.
— Three-point lighting: key light, fill light and backlight; a professional setup for interviews.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit

12.3. Image stability

Uncontrolled camera shake is one of the most distracting video faults.

The best ways to achieve stable video are:

— a tripod or phone stand;
— a phone supported securely on a table;
— an optional gimbal, although it is not essential.

Do not shoot handheld unless a documentary style is intentional.

12.4. Smartphone settings

Video resolution

— 1080p at 25 or 30 fps is the most versatile option;
— 4K at 25 or 30 fps is suitable when storage capacity and lighting are sufficient.

In low light, choose 1080p rather than 4K.

Stabilisation

— Enable video stabilisation when available.

Lock focus and exposure

— Tap the face, hold and engage AE/AF Lock.
— This prevents exposure pumping and focus hunting while the person is speaking.

Check battery and storage

— Video recording requires substantial storage capacity.
— Keep 30–40 per cent of the device's storage free.

12.5. Colour, exposure and consistency

— Use the same recording frame rate on all cameras, for example 25 or 30 fps. Mixing frame rates complicates editing and can produce uneven motion.
— If the app allows manual white-balance control, lock it after the test shot. This prevents skin tones from changing automatically during recording.
— Do not place a bright window or lamp directly behind the speaker. If the background is too bright, move the light closer to the face or change the camera position.
— In a multicamera setup, record several seconds of the same colour and lighting reference before starting and make a synchronisation clap.

12.6. Recording an interview or conversation

Positioning two people

— Seat the participants at a slight angle, rather than directly facing each other in profile.
— Light both participants evenly.

Using two cameras, optionally

For a more professional result:

— Camera A records the wide two-shot;
— Camera B records a close shot of the speaker using a second phone.

12.7. Audio for video

When recording video, remember that sound remains the most important part of a podcast.
You can use the built-in microphone, but the following options are recommended:

— a wired or wireless lavalier microphone;
— a directional microphone fitted to the phone rig;
— a separate recording app or recorder for backup audio.

12.8. Separate audio recording and synchronisation

A separate audio recording is often better than the sound captured by the phone, but it requires consistent organisation. The camera should still record its own reference audio. In the editing application, align the clap transient in both recordings, then listen to several sentences and check lip sync.
If the audio gradually drifts out of sync towards the end of a long recording, divide the material into shorter sections and realign them. In a multicamera production, every device must record at the same frame rate.

12.9. Pre-recording video checklist

— phone in landscape orientation;
— stable support or tripod;
— clean rear-camera lens;
— focus and exposure locked;
— adequate light;
— microphone attached correctly;
— ten-second test recording completed;
— at least 50 per cent battery capacity;
— sufficient free storage on the phone.

Workshop exercise 8: setting up and recording a video interview

Learning outcomes

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- prepare a stable wide shot and medium close-up for an interview;
- use looking room and place the eyes on the upper-third line;
- position two or three cameras on the same side of the line of action;
- match the resolution, frame rate, colour and exposure of all cameras;
- record a synchronisation marker and useful cutaways for editing.

Activity

In groups of three or four, participants prepare and record an interview of approximately three minutes. They first record it with one camera and then extend the setup with a master shot and one or two close shots. Before recording, they draw the line of action, check screen direction and match the device settings. After recording, they review the sequence and check whether the participants appear to look towards each other in the close shots.

Activity steps

1. **Prepare the room and assign roles**
   - Assign a host, guest, camera operator and, if required, an audio operator.
   - Remove distracting signs, bright objects and elements that appear to grow out of a person's head.
   - Seat the participants turned slightly towards one another.
2. **Single-camera setup**
   - Position the camera at eye level or slightly above it, approximately 1–2 metres from the guest.
   - Record a medium close-up from mid-chest upwards.
   - Ask the guest to look at the host seated just beside the camera and leave more space in the direction of their gaze.
3. **Multicamera setup**
   - Draw an imaginary line between the participants and place every camera on the same side of it.
   - Camera A records the wide two-shot, Camera B the guest close-up and Camera C the host close-up.
   - Frame both close-ups at a similar size but with opposite screen directions.

4. Match the technical settings

— Select the same aspect ratio, resolution and frame rate on every device.
— Lock focus, exposure and, where possible, white balance.
— Check microphones, storage and batteries, then make one common synchronisation clap.

5. Record and review

— Record an interview of approximately three minutes, followed by 10–20 seconds of listening, nodding, hands, microphones and room details.
— Review every camera for focus, screen direction, synchronisation and crops that cut the body at a joint.
— Each group presents one successful solution and one error it would correct on a second attempt.

Objective

To develop the ability to plan a visually clear interview that is safe to edit. Participants combine the rule of thirds, looking room, line of action and technical camera matching into one coherent recording workflow.

13. Editing and post-production

The workflows in this chapter use open-source applications and freely available versions of commercial software.

13.1. Audacity for audio editing

Type: open-source application
Platforms: Windows, macOS and Linux

- cleaning audio by reducing noise, hum, wind noise and clicks;
- cutting and joining audio clips;
- balancing speaker levels;
- adding a music bed.

13.2. OBS Studio for audio and video recording and live production

Type: open-source application
Platforms: Windows, macOS and Linux

- recording video podcasts with one or more cameras;
- capturing a screen for presentations and remote interviews;
- recording sound from an external microphone.

Important: OBS is primarily a recording and live-production application, not a conventional nonlinear editor. It nevertheless provides basic and sufficient tools for preparing scenes, adding graphics, switching between cameras and recording a ready-to-publish programme.

13.3. DaVinci Resolve for video editing

Type: free edition of a commercial application
Platforms: Windows, macOS and Linux

- higher-level video podcast editing;
- advanced colour correction;
- synchronisation of audio and video recordings.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit

13.4. Recommended audio-editing workflow

— Import the original files and immediately save the project under a new name. Never overwrite the source material.
— Remove false starts, long pauses and obvious mistakes while retaining the natural rhythm of the conversation.
— Apply noise reduction conservatively. Audacity's tool is intended mainly for steady-state noise such as hum, whine or fan noise; it is not suitable for traffic and other changing sounds.
— Apply equalisation and compression where required, then balance the level of each speaker.
— Perform loudness normalisation towards the end of the process. Audacity allows the target to be set in LUFS.
— Listen to the complete programme on headphones and check at least part of it on a phone or small loudspeaker.

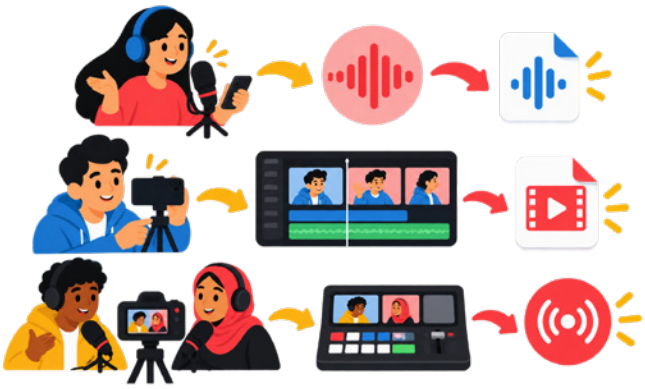
▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit



13.5. Recommended video-editing workflow

— First synchronise every camera and all separately recorded audio.
— Select the main audio track, then edit the picture. Do not interrupt the sound at a picture edit without a reason.
— Add opening and closing graphics, contributor names and any required photographs or screen recordings.
— Perform colour correction only after completing the rough cut.
— Add subtitles and review them manually, especially personal names, place names and specialist terminology.

▶ Watch the video summary in the Toolkit



13.6. Example workflows by programme type

Audio podcast

— Transfer the audio from the phone to the computer.
— Edit it in Audacity: clean-up, cutting and level adjustment.
— Export an MP3 and retain a high-quality archival version such as WAV.

Video podcast

— Transfer the video from the phone to the computer.
— Clean the audio in Audacity if required.
— Edit the video in DaVinci Resolve.
— Export an MP4.

Live or hybrid podcast

— Record or produce the live programme in OBS Studio.
— Edit in DaVinci Resolve.
— Make audio corrections in Audacity.
— Record to MP4 or stream live online.

Workshop exercise 9: editing a short segment

Learning outcomes

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- organise a project while keeping the original files unchanged;
- synchronise separate audio and multiple video recordings using a common clap;
- select the editorially important material while preserving the natural rhythm of the conversation;
- apply basic noise reduction, level balancing and colour correction with restraint;
- add checked titles or subtitles and prepare a review version of the segment.

Activity

Using material recorded during the previous exercise, each group produces a 60–90 second interview segment. It must use the wide shot, both close shots, the main audio recording and at least two cutaways. The edit must preserve the meaning of the statements, maintain intelligible sound and retain logical screen direction. The group saves the project, a review export and a list of revisions agreed after the group screening.

Activity steps

1. **Import and organise**
   - Copy the material into the project folder. Do not rename or overwrite the source files unless a backup exists.
   - Save the project with a clear name and the version identifier v01.
2. **Synchronise**
   - Align the transient peak from the common clap across every audio and video recording.
   - Before editing, check lip sync near both the beginning and end of the material.
3. **Rough cut**
   - Select a self-contained passage and remove false starts and obvious mistakes.
   - Retain natural pauses when they support the meaning or rhythm of the conversation.
   - Do not interrupt the audio when changing shots unless the content requires it.

4. Picture and sound

— Maintain correct screen direction between the two close-ups. Use the wide shot for transitions or to cover a problem.
— Use cutaways only where they do not alter the meaning or emotional response.
— Reduce noise conservatively, then balance speaker levels and basic colour consistency where required.

5. Titles and group review

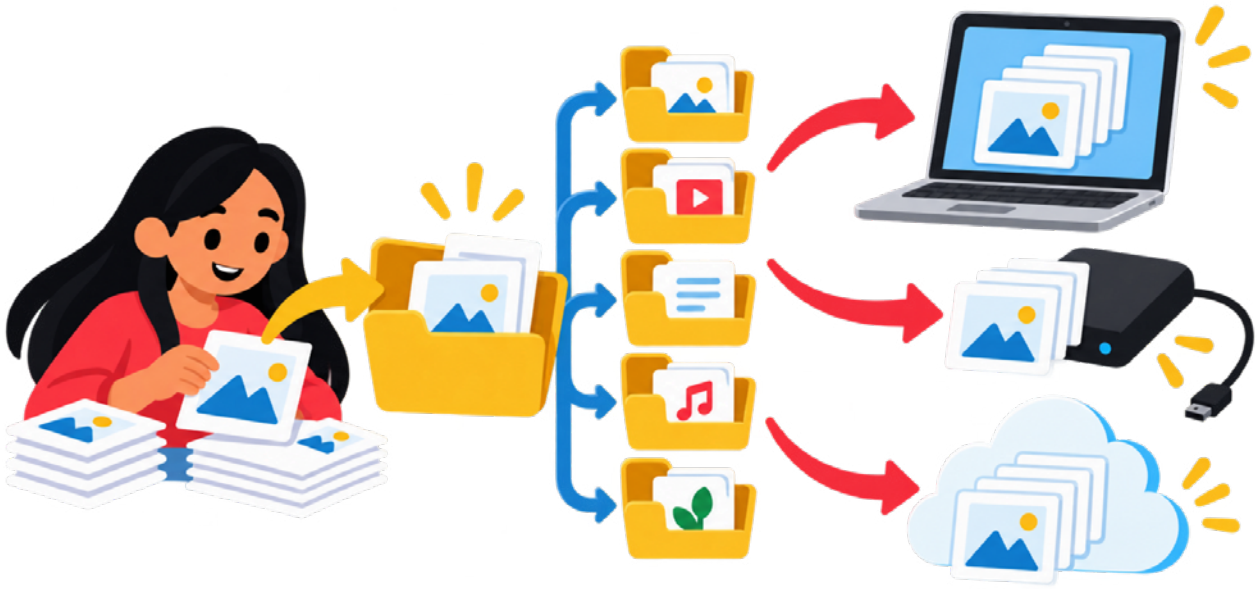
— Add the guest's name and checked subtitles for the selected passage.
— Play the entire segment to the group and record two positive observations and one specific recommendation for improvement.
— Make the revisions in a new project version and compare the two versions.

Objective

To develop a basic post-production workflow from organised import to review export. Participants learn to make technical corrections serve the content, preserve the meaning of statements and improve their decisions through specific feedback.

14. File management and backups

Good file organisation saves more lost time than any editing trick. Immediately after recording, create a project folder and copy every file into it without deleting the originals from the phone or memory card.



14.1. Recommended project structure

- **01_ORIGINALS**: unchanged files from cameras, phones and recorders;
- **02_PROJECT:** Audacity or DaVinci Resolve project files;
- **03_GRAPHICS_MUSIC**: logos, photographs, music, permissions and credits;
- **04_EXPORTS**: review versions and final files;
- **05_PUBLICATION**: title, description, subtitles, thumbnail and social-media copy.

Use consistent filenames, for example 2026-08-19_programme-name_camera-A_001.mp4. Use the ISO date format YYYY-MM-DD. Mark versions as v01, v02 and so on; use FINAL only after the version has genuinely been approved.

14.2. The 3-2-1 backup rule

For important projects, retain three copies of the data on two different types of storage, with one copy kept in another location. Before deleting the originals, open a sample of randomly selected copied files and confirm that they play correctly.

15. Export and technical quality control

15.1. Audio podcast

— MP3 or AAC at 44.1 or 48 kHz is generally suitable for speech. Apple accepts MP3 or AAC in an RSS feed and specifies 64–128 kbps for mono and 128–256 kbps for stereo at 44.1 or 48 kHz.

— As a practical loudness starting point, use approximately −16 LUFS with a maximum true peak of −1 dBFS, which Apple recommends for podcasts. The hosting provider's requirements take precedence.

— In addition to the compressed publication file, retain a high-quality WAV or FLAC archival export.



15.2. Video podcast

— For online publication, the safest combination is an MP4 container with H.264 video and AAC audio. Keep the resolution and frame rate consistent with the source project. YouTube recommends uploading at the same frame rate used for recording.

— Before publication, check the beginning, middle and end of the file, audio-to-video synchronisation, the level of both speakers, the spelling of names and the aspect ratio.

16. Publication, accessibility and copyright

16.1. Metadata and accessibility

— Prepare a clear episode title, a short summary, guest names, the date and links to referenced sources.
— Add reviewed subtitles to the video. Automatically generated captions are a useful starting point, but correct errors and identify important non-speech sounds before publication. Subtitles/transcripts increase accessibility and reach.
— If the platform supports chapters, add timestamps. Apple podcast describes chapters as a way for listeners to find individual sections of an episode quickly.
— Visibility: the description of every episode must state co-financing from the program along with the prescribed labels.

16.2. Where to Publish

— Video podcast: YouTube as the primary platform (free, searchable, embeddable on organizational websites).
— Audio podcast: podcast hosting with an RSS feed (e.g., free/accessible platforms like Spotify for Creators or other hosting services) that distributes episodes to Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other apps.
— Derivatives: short clips for Instagram/TikTok and other social media platforms as a call to action for the full episode, and publication on partner and school websites.

16.3. Music, photographs and permissions

Use only material that you created, for which you obtained permission, or that you may use under an appropriate licence. A “free” label alone does not mean that a work may be included in a podcast.

— For Creative Commons licences, check the conditions BY for attribution, NC for non-commercial use, ND for no derivatives and SA for share alike. More about copyright you can find in Chapter 8.
— Store the link, creator’s name, licence text and download date in the project folder. Include the credit in the episode description or closing credits.
— Obtain consent from contributors for recording and the agreed form of publication before the session, especially when minors are involved or sensitive subjects are discussed.

16.4. Rhythm and Continuity

Micromedia thrives on regularity; one solid monthly episode in a fixed slot is better than three in the first month followed by silence. The monthly production cycle is detailed in Chapter 19.1.



Workshop exercise 10: preparing files, export and episode publication

Learning outcomes

After the workshop, participants will be able to:

- organise project files according to an agreed structure and label versions correctly;
- produce at least two verified copies of important material;
- select an appropriate audio or video podcast format and perform technical quality control on the export;
- prepare a title, description, subtitles, timestamps and source credits;
- check permissions, licences and consent before publication.

Activity

The group prepares a publication package for a short pilot episode. It organises the project folder, creates the final export, checks it on a computer and phone, and prepares all accompanying metadata. Before the simulated publication, another group uses the final checklist to verify that the files, subtitles, permissions and credits are complete. Only a version in which every identified issue has been corrected may be published.

Activity steps

1. **Organise the project**
   - Sort the material into the folders 01_ORIGINALS, 02_PROJECT, 03_GRAPHICS_MUSIC, 04_EXPORTS and 05_PUBLICATION.
   - Name files using the date, programme name, source or camera identifier and sequence number.
   - Mark project versions as v01, v02 and so on; use FINAL only after approval.
2. **Create backups**
   - Copy the complete project folder to another type of storage or another location.
   - Open several randomly selected copies and verify that they play correctly.
3. **Export**
   - For audio, create an MP3 or AAC publication file and a WAV or FLAC archival file.
   - For video, use MP4 with H.264 video and AAC audio and retain the frame rate of the source project.

— Review the beginning, middle and end of the export, synchronisation, levels and aspect ratio.

4. **Prepare the publication**
   — Write a clear title and short summary, list the contributors and add links to sources used.
   — Review automatic subtitles and correct personal names, place names, specialist terminology and important non-speech sounds.
   — Add creators, licences and all other required acknowledgements to the description or closing credits.

5. **Peer review**
   — Another group uses the final checklist to review the content, sound, video, accessibility, rights and archive.
   — Record every finding as a specific correction rather than a general assessment.
   — After making the corrections, check the final file again and only then approve it for publication.

Objective

To develop a responsible final workflow from the project folder to a publishable episode. Participants understand that export is not the final step: publication quality also depends on technical review, accessibility, documented rights and verified backups.

16.5. Final checklist

— Content: the title, names and factual details have been checked; any material that must not be published has been removed.
— Audio: speech is intelligible and free from clipping, distracting level differences and abrupt edits.
— Video: the image is stable, colours are consistent, and audio and video are synchronised.
— Accessibility: subtitles have been reviewed, the description is clear and all links work.
— Rights: permissions, licences and creator credits are documented.
— Archive: the originals, project and final export exist in at least two verified locations.



PART III.

Establishing micromedia and mentoring young people

This part addresses the organisation and mentoring of youth micromedia. Chapter 17 outlines the launch, Chapter 18 focuses on organizing thematic workshops, and Chapter 19 describes the recurring production cycle. The final chapters address mentoring dilemmas, evaluation and support for mentors. Adapt the proposed arrangements to the group while retaining clear responsibilities and opportunities for young people to shape the work.

17. Implementation: Launching Micromedia Step by Step

1. Gather a core team.

One mentor and three to six young people is a possible starting arrangement. Agree on roles (editor, hosts, technical crew, social media) and opportunities for role rotation.

2. Write the show concept and a short editorial policy.

Use the templates in the appendices to define the audience, topics, format, and publication rhythm together. The mentor helps the group choose an achievable scope and clarify editorial responsibilities.

3. Inventory existing equipment.

Add only what the planned production requires. Start with a smarthphone and accessible tools if needed and select a setup that participants can learn to operate.

4. Prepare the recording space.

Choose a quiet room, improve the acoustics where needed and use a fixed location if possible. Agree on access to equipment and a shared system for storing recordings and project files.

5. Clarify the arrangements for responsible recording and publication.

Address permissions and consents (especially for minors), third-party content and responsibility for collecting and storing personal data, following the relevant chapters and organisational procedures. Explain these arrangements to the group before recording.

6. Record a ‘zero’ (test) episode for internal review.

Go through the complete process, from preparation to export.
Use the result to assess the workload, identify missing skills and agree on a few priorities for further practice. Allow time for feedback and another attempt. This test will not be published.

7. Set up publishing channels and visual identity (name, logo, intro theme).

Clarify who manages the accounts and how access and working materials will remain available when members change.

8. Publish the first episode and establish a regular schedule.

Complete the publication checks and follow the episode with a brief evaluation of the product and the process, as described in Chapter 21. Make sure that the decided schedule is manageable. Conduct a major review after a few episodes.

Four episodes can be a useful point to discuss what to retain, what to change and who else to involve.

Reconsider the format, workload and mentoring support considering the group's experience.

The Principle of Continuity

Micromedia must not depend on a single person. Ensure continuity by sharing essential knowledge so the micromedia can continue when participants or mentors leave. Every role must be mastered by at least two people, and knowledge is transferred through a mentoring pair: the more experienced person introduces the newcomer. This is how the show survives generational shifts, which is crucial in a school context.

18. Planning and facilitating micromedia workshops

18.1. Define the theme or learning task

Workshops provide time to practise particular skills before or during production. Select exercises from Parts I and II according to the group's experience and current needs. A workshop on follow-up questions, for example, can prepare participants for an upcoming interview without requiring them to cover the entire journalism section first.

Identify what participants should be able to do by the end of the session and design a practical task that makes this visible. Match its scope to the time and equipment available. With limited recording equipment, pairs can alternate between preparing, recording and reviewing their work.

18.2. Structure the session around practice and revision

Use a sequence of brief explanation or demonstration, practical work, feedback and a second attempt. Keep theoretical input close to the task so that participants can apply it immediately. The second attempt allows them to test the feedback while the experience is still fresh.

For example, a 90-minute interview workshop could allocate 15 minutes to the goal and demonstration, 30 minutes to interviews in pairs, 15 minutes to listening and feedback, 25 minutes to revision and another attempt, and 5 minutes to identifying next steps. These timings illustrate the sequence and can be adapted to the exercise.

A concentrated workshop may combine several exercises into a trial production; shorter sessions can develop the same skills over time. In either case, leave room for reflection and technical delays. Close by identifying what participants can now do, what still needs practice and how they will apply it in production.

19. Organising the production cycle

The production cycle organises the recurring work needed to create and publish an episode. It can include short learning activities, but its overall task is to coordinate contributions, responsibilities and deadlines. Make the next steps visible in a shared plan and agree when the group will review progress.

19.1. Monthly Production Cycle of a Pilot Show

The following example is written for a show with a monthly publishing schedule; use it as a guide and extend or shorten the segments according to the defined schedule of your micromedia group.

Week 1 | Editorial planning: topics, roles, research, and scheduling.

Young people select a topic and angle, identify contributors and divide tasks. The mentor helps assess feasibility and identify missing perspectives. The result should be a production plan with responsibilities, deadlines and an outline of the episode.

Week 2 | Research, preparation and feature production: interviews, surveys, field recordings.

Participants gather and check information, contact guests and prepare questions, scripts or contributions. The mentor reviews unresolved questions and supports unfamiliar tasks before recording begins. The group conducts planned interviews, surveys and other show features.

Week 3 | Show recording and assembly: block sequence with durations and notes; studio recording; first assembly edit.

Participants record contributions and programme sections, organise the files and prepare a first edit. Review a rough version while there is still time to change the structure, add context or record missing material. The mentor helps prioritise changes without routinely completing the production on the group's behalf.

Week 4 | Finalization and publication: final editing, copyright and consent verification, publication, promotion and evaluation.

Complete the content, technical and permission checks, prepare the description and credits, publish and promote finished product. Follow this with a short review of the work and decisions for the next cycle.

19.2. Scheduling and coordination

A monthly cycle might use week one for editorial planning, week two for research and contributions, week three for recording and assembly, and week four for final review and publication. Retain the sequence while adjusting its duration to the group's availability. Reserve time for corrections instead of treating the publication date as the end of recording.

Separate tasks requiring the whole group from those that individuals or pairs can complete independently. Agree on intermediate check-ins so that missing material becomes visible early. When time is insufficient, reduce the scope or revise the deadline with the group. Regularly finishing episodes through unplanned mentor overtime conceals the workload and reduces participants' involvement in the final stages.

20. Mentoring young people in micromedia

20.1. Mentoring competences and responsibility

Journalistic and technical knowledge needs to be accompanied by competencies in facilitating group decisions, supporting learning, giving feedback and recognising when expectations or working conditions need to change. Mentors also need to observe whose ideas influence the production and who receives opportunities to practise. A successful production process should develop young people's capacity to make and carry out decisions.

Mentors can share specialist responsibilities, but should agree on the learning goals and level of support. Differences between mentors' expectations can otherwise leave participants uncertain about what is required. Recognising the limits of one's expertise and seeking support are part of the mentoring role.

20.2. Balance freedom and structure

Young people should influence the topics, tone and direction of their micromedia. Mentors clarify resources, responsibilities and publication requirements, then adjust their involvement to the task. A participant may work independently as a presenter while still needing close support with editing.

When the group becomes stuck, begin with questions that help it identify the next step. If these are insufficient, offer examples, demonstrate a method or work through part of the task together. Agree on a point at which the mentor will check progress. This provides support while keeping responsibility visible.

Intervention is also needed when group dynamics exclude participants or editorial choices raise unresolved concerns. Explain the reasons and involve young people in finding a response. Avoid using the mentor's preferred style or topic as the default measure of whether their choices are acceptable.

20.3. Support the development of relevant topics

In an ideal setting, a mentors' role would be to help young people turn an interest or everyday concern into a question they can investigate. Whilst putting this Guidebook into practice, our mentor team ran into a different dillema: How can we encourage young people to think about bigger issues rather than just whatever comes to mind? Putting together a programme about Valentine's Day might be fun for young people in the moment, but a series of such programmes will not encourage young people, listeners or viewers to think critically about the world around them or about issues that directly affect them. It is also the mentor's role to encourage young people to become competent and confident enough to tackle more significant topics and explore them from their own unique perspective.

Such extensive and more in-depth tasks can be daunting for a group; this is where the mentor's support and a well-structured task are crucial. If a bigger idea emerges, you don't need to rush it or force it into the monthly programme cycle. Give the idea time and tackle it when the group is ready; in the meantime, you can work on less demanding themes.

Regardless of the scope of the topic, encourage the young people by asking questions: why the topic matters to them, what they want to find out, whose perspective is missing and what they can explore within the episode. These questions help shape a workable contribution without replacing the young people's interests with the mentor's agenda. Allow time for individual ideas before group selection so that confident speakers do not determine every topic.

20.4. Manage expectations and disappointment

Although micromedia operates on a smaller scale than larger media outlets, production can still be demanding. Difficulties during filming, editing and other tasks may lead to dissatisfaction when expectations exceed what the group can currently achieve. These expectations may come from mentors, individual participants or the group as a whole.

Agree on the intended product and learning goals before starting. Mentors should match their expectations to participants' experience, available time and support. Young people may also compare their early attempts with professional productions; help them identify what is achievable now and what they can work towards.

When the result falls short, discuss what feels unsatisfactory and why. Mentors should consider whether the task and guidance were appropriate, while recognising how their own disappointment may affect feedback. Focus on specific improvements and acknowledge progress, even when the product needs further work.

If young people become passive or consider giving up, take their concerns seriously and help them choose a manageable next step: revising one section, trying another role or making a shorter contribution. Individual expectations may differ from those of the group, so leave room for different assessments. Give participants time and support to try again and see the effect of their changes.

Maintain publication standards while allowing for repetition and uneven progress. Agree together whether to revise, simplify or continue practising. A disappointing result can guide further learning without becoming a judgement of anyone's ability or commitment.

20.5. Work with limited time and uneven participation

School obligations and other commitments should shape the production plan from the start. Agree on manageable tasks and review availability around examinations or other demanding periods. Repeated missed deadlines can indicate an unsuitable

role or schedule as well as a difficulty with commitment; discuss the circumstances before deciding how to respond.

Keep essential information accessible to absent members and provide a clear task through which they can rejoin. Offer roles beyond presenting and rotate responsibilities with support. Watch for an arrangement in which experienced or confident participants repeatedly take over while others remain peripheral. Adapt the task distribution without making the mentor the permanent substitute for missing contributions.

21. Reflection, evaluation and support for mentors

21.1. Evaluate the product and the process

Review the episode using the content and technical checklists, then discuss the learning process separately. A polished episode may involve little decision-making by young people; an imperfect one may show substantial progress. Consider what participants learned, which decisions they influenced, whether the workload was manageable and what support they needed.

A brief discussion after each episode can identify changes for the next cycle. A broader review after several episodes can revisit the format, roles and rhythm. Audience reactions help assess clarity and relevance, while views and listening figures provide only a partial picture of the activity's value.

21.2. Reflect on mentoring practice

Include your own decisions in the review. Were expectations realistic? When did you take over, and why? Did participants receive enough guidance and time to act on feedback? How did you respond to mistakes, absences or disappointment? Ask young people what support helped and where they wanted more independence or guidance, providing a private way to raise concerns where needed. Repeated difficulties may require a change in task design, timing or the division of responsibilities between mentors.

21.3. Use peer reflection and extra support

Monthly mentor meetings in the project provided space for discussing practical dilemmas alongside coordination. These exchanges supported reflective peer learning similar to intervision, in which colleagues examine a professional situation and consider possible responses together.

Other teams can establish a similar practice within an organisation or across a network. Separate reflection from routine scheduling. One mentor presents a concrete dilemma, colleagues ask clarifying questions, and the group explores possible responses before the presenting mentor chooses an action to try. Return to the outcome at a later meeting and share only the personal information necessary for the discussion.

Seek specialist input where required, for example from a journalist, technician or experienced youth worker. Agree on the group's learning needs beforehand and connect the contribution to ongoing mentoring. Keep useful conclusions and working instructions so that experience can be passed on to future participants and mentors.

22. Appendices

22.1. Appendix A: Pre-Episode Publication Checklist

— All factual claims have a source; controversial claims are confirmed by two independent sources.
— The criticized party has been given an opportunity to respond.
— Opinions are clearly separated and labeled as opinions.
— All used music and materials have cleared rights (license or permission).
— Consents of all participants collected; for minors, parental/guardian consents.
— AI-generated content parts (if any) are verified and labeled.
— Sound and video technically checked on a secondary device before publishing.
— Episode description contains the topic, interviewees, sources, and the Erasmus+ co-financing notice.

22.2. Appendix B: Show Concept Template (One Page)

— Show title and one-sentence tagline/motto.
— Audience: who we are addressing (age, community, interests).
— Topics: three to five recurring thematic areas.
— Format: duration, segments, number of hosts, tone (informative/entertaining/mixed).
— Rhythm: frequency and regular publishing slot; platforms.
— Roles: editor, hosts, technical crew, social media; rotation plan.

22.3. Appendix C: Block Sequence Template with Durations, Interviewees, and Technical Notes

— Block 1 — Intro & Announcement (1 min): host, announcement text.
— Block 2 — Segment/Feature 1 (5–8 min): topic, interviewee, host, technical notes.
— Block 3 — Segment/Feature 2 (5–8 min): same.
— Block 4 — Studio Interview (8–10 min): guest, core questions outline.
— Block 5 — Outro (1–2 min): summary, announcement of the next episode, credits and acknowledgments.

22.4. Appendix D: Short Micromedia Editorial Policy (Template)

Micromedia [Name] is created by youth of [Community/School] with the mentorship support of [Organization]. We publish verified information on topics important to our community. We separate facts from opinions. We correct mistakes quickly and visibly. We do not publish hate speech, discrimination, or sensationalism. We do not adapt our content to sponsors or centers of power; any paid content is clearly labeled. Third-party materials are used only with cleared rights. We use artificial intelligence as an auxiliary tool, subject to human verification and labeling.

22.5. Appendix E: Consent Elements for Participation and Publication (To be elaborated with a legal expert)

- Participant data and (for minors) parent/guardian data.
- Description of activity: participation in the show (name), audio/video recording.
- Purpose and channels of publication (platforms, partner websites, promotional clips).
- Retention period for materials and the right to withdraw consent.
- Contact information of the data protection officer within the organization.

22.6. Appendix F: Glossary

- Lead / News lead — the first paragraph conveying the core of the news.
- Disinformation / Misinformation / Malinformation — deliberate falsehood / unintentional falsehood / truth used to cause harm.
- Creative Commons (CC) — a system of open licenses through which an author pre-approves the use of their work.
- Deepfake — synthetic video or audio that convincingly mimics a real person.
- Content ID — YouTube's automated copyright-recognition system.
- LUFS — a measure of perceived loudness; podcast standard is around -16 LUFS.
- Ducking — automatic lowering of background music volume while speech is present.