

Fact-checking boom in Finland during presidential election

Bulletting (released April 3 2018)

Faktabaari editorial board

In January 28 2018, President Sauli Niinistö was reelected as the President of Finland with unforeseen popular vote. Before the vote, fact-checking, too, had become popular in Finland. All three major media groups, the national broadcaster YLE, Alma Media, and Sanoma, published their own fact checks in dozens of newspapers and online sites, on all the eight presidential candidates. Before 2018, the independent fact checking organisation Faktabaari (established in 2014) had been the only one to produce systematic work on political facts during elections in Finland.

Today Faktabaari released a report “Fact Checking in Finland: what we learned from the 2018 elections” published in Finnish (“[Faktantarkistus Suomessa: Oppeja vuoden 2018 presidentinvaaleista](#)”, written by political scientist, dr. Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen and K. Severi Hämäri, member of Faktabaari editorial board). Here is a summary of our findings:

We presented a questionnaire to all the journalists that took part in the fact checking and analysed 84 of the fact checks found online. The presidential candidates were fairly presented in the checks. Almost half of the claims were said to be false, quarter half truths and 13% true. 15% of the claims were found not suitable for fact checking (mostly because too ambiguous).

Our main recommendations for the Finnish media houses are:

1. Invest in the quality of fact checking. More resources are needed in future (especially during the national and European parliamentary elections).
2. The process for choosing claims to fact check needs developing: there must be a clear criteria for it.
3. Attention needs to be placed on the clear and precise citation of reliable sources.
4. The contexts of the claims checked should be stated more clearly.
5. The tools and resources for the journalist researcher collaboration need development.
6. The IFCN fact checking code of principles should be better known and followed by all claiming to be fact checkers in Finland. The principles and transparency statements should be more easily available for the readers through the publications of the media houses.

Because there are now more fact-checking in Finland than ever before, Faktabaari will look into ways of developing its own projects. We will proceed with three aims:

1. Coordinate and educate the fact-checkers and provide a national network of collaboration in developing professional fact checking.
2. Provide education in media skills and media and information literacy (MIL) for teachers, schools, and for the general public through our recognised #FaktabaariEDU -project.
3. Collaborate in research and fight against the online disinformation on the national, European, and international levels. (Mikko Salo, coordinator of Faktabaari, is a member of European Commission's High-Level Expert Group on Fake News and online Disinformation.)

At the core of our over all project is fact checking and its development. For this purpose we have updated our handbook in January 2018 and will produce several online and paper publications. We will follow closely the development of fact-checking in the somewhat similar media environment in the Baltic Sea area for exchange of best practices. We provide seminars on the national and regional levels for our network of journalists, educators, researchers and civil servants. For instance, today we will have a public seminar on future of fact-checking in Finland as part of International fact-checking day celebrations.

For more information, please contact:

Mikko Salo, Founder and coordinator of Faktabaari, @mikkovsalo

Severi Hämäri, member of the Faktabaari editorial board and co-author of the report

@severihamari

toimitus [at] faktabaari.fi

@faktabaari, @factbar,

<https://faktabaari.fi>

www.factcheckingday.com by International Fact-Checking Network