

A multitude of trends are converging to undermine the foundations of information integrity globally. AI-powered disinformation, weak laws and regulations and struggling news organisations are just a few of the factors making it ever harder for people to rely on the information they access.

Since the threats to information integrity are varied and complex, there isn't a single fix that will solve everything. What is needed is a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that reflects the complex and highly diverse nature of those threats: an approach based on collective and strategic action by local, regional and global actors with a shared interest in ensuring that everyone can make informed decisions based on access to trustworthy and timely information.

The IMS Information Integrity Solution Papers address a range of key threats to information integrity. The papers do not purport to be silver bullets, individually or together, nor do they claim to be exhaustive. Instead, they propose a variety of experience-based, workable solutions to mitigate some of the most prominent threats to information integrity and to the ability of people everywhere to access the kind of trustworthy and timely information they need in order to shape their own lives.

The present paper outlines how it is not only possible to build alternative, locally-anchored platforms with the public interest at heart but also to scale them up for added impact.

Information integrity needs alternative platforms that serve the public interest

THE PROBLEM

As disinformation and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) challenge democracies and put local communities, journalists and human rights defenders at risk around the world, dominant tech companies are scaling back on factchecking and content moderation on their social media platforms.

Alternative platforms with information integrity built in from the outset are out there. They need to be replicated and scaled while remaining deeply anchored in the local communities they serve.

A COMPREHENSIVE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

Journalism and technologies that engage local communities and promote their interest and needs are vital for upholding information integrity. On the basis of almost 25 years of media development experience in contexts marked by crises and conflict, IMS knows that the trustworthy journalism and technologies serving the public interest must be assessed based on their commitment and ability to engage communities, uphold public values and to meet specific, urgent local needs.

To achieve this, alternative platforms must be designed and scaled with information integrity built in from the start. That's why IMS works to advance a human-centred digital infrastructure model: supporting platforms and shared information systems built around the public interest.

SOLUTIONS

To achieve scale, rather than "one new Facebook", strengthening the global movement of people, communities and donors building and supporting a wide range of locally-based alternative platforms designed to serve the public interest is the way to go.

That is why IMS, in partnership with Jamii Africa (Tanzania) and Splice (Singapore), has built **Good Commons**: a collective that offers a platform to help people build strong communities with the knowledge, spaces and tools they need to participate, connect and belong.

Good Commons exists to uplift community builders, who are developing or scaling local solutions, often with limited support or recognition. Good Commons learns from community media, public interest technologists, researchers and designers building tools, spaces and principles that have information integrity, inclusion, accountability and trust at heart. The collective collaborates with and helps scale projects that are:

SOLUTIONS

- **Local:** built with, and often by, the communities they serve, to reflect their language, norms and needs.
- **Principled:** designed for trust, transparency, fairness, inclusion and accountability.
- **Human first:** combine technology with human verification, knowledge, moderation and governance.
- **Collaborative:** leverage different stakeholders to solve problems and share toolkits and best practices for others to adapt and replicate.
- **Impactful:** earn trust by sharing useful information and following up with stakeholders until problems are solved.

This is not a theoretical exercise:

- **In Tanzania, since 2006, JamiiAfrica** has empowered people to share and discuss local issues via the online platform JamiiForums. By lowering barriers to participation, protecting data and anonymity and by amplifying and quality-checking grassroots reporting, JamiiAfrica promotes civic accountability and raises the level of digital literacy and security nationwide.
- **Since 2009, CGNetSwara in India** has enabled tribal communities who lack Internet access to use voicemail and Bluetooth to report local issues and to push for their resolution. The next phase, AI-R, will leverage AI and natural language tools to help speakers of Gondi to communicate with each other digitally and with state officials.
- **Since 2018, Mutante in Colombia** has turned journalism into citizen-driven conversations about social change. By engaging communities directly in shaping stories, Mutante builds trust, amplifies marginalised voices and strengthens accountability through dialogue.

The essence of these examples is that human-centred alternative platforms aren't just add-ons to existing factchecking operations or media: they are foundational infrastructure for resilient information ecosystems. We can help address disinformation by shifting our emphasis from content control to designing for participation, trust, access and impact.

ASKS

To scale up and deepen the impact of human-centred alternative platforms in countering disinformation, the following is recommended:

- **Funders and donors:** Invest in public interest infrastructure (tools, shared platforms, public interest tech) and support flexible, long-term funding so that communities can build trust and governance.
- **Technologists and companies:** Collaborate with local communities to co-design platforms that value and promote inclusion, transparency and data justice; support open source, federated or decentralised models; experiment with alternative business models – including unlocking local capital – to make the platforms self-sustaining.
- **Researchers and procurement policymakers:** Support and adopt frameworks that assess tools and platforms for their public interest values; develop policies that guard against harms of dominant social media architectures and monopolisation of information.
- **Media and journalism organisations:** Partner with others to develop alternative infrastructures – such as fact checking networks, reporting tools and community engagement platforms – and share learning openly; test and report on alternative tools and platforms; build a tool kit to help others implement these solutions in their local communities.
- **Everyone:** Join goodcommons.world and share what's working.

READ MORE

[Public Interest Infrastructure: Digital alternatives in our data-driven world and journalism's role getting there](#)