**Online Traps:
how extremists
target you**

Facilitator's handouts

educate.against.
hate

Contents

Date: _____

Name: _____

# Digital literacy	The ability of individuals individuals to use digital technologies effectively, safely, and critically to access, manage, create, and communicate information.
# Influencers	Individuals who who have the power to affect the opinions, behaviours, and purchasing decisions of their followers through social media platforms, blogs, or other digital channels.
# Grooming	The process by which individuals or groups build trust and manipulate vulnerable people, often young people or those at risk, to influence, exploit, or control them.

Cyberbullying	Repeated, intentional behaviour, occurring online, that is meant to hurt someone emotionally or physically. It can involve threats, teasing, exclusion, spreading rumours, or physical harm.
Extremism	The promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance.
Online platforms	A digital service or website that enables users to create, share, access, or interact with content or services over the internet.
Radicalisation	The gradual process through which an individual adopts extreme political, social, or religious ideals and behaviours that may lead to support for, or participation in, terrorism.

Misinformation	False or misleading information shared without the intent to deceive. It is often spread by individuals who believe it to be true but may lack the skills or knowledge to verify it.
Disinformation	Deliberately false or manipulated information shared with the intent to mislead, cause harm, or influence opinion or behaviour. It is often used to fuel division, undermine trust in institutions, or radicalise individuals.
Algorithm	A clear and logical sequence of steps that can be followed to solve a problem or complete a task, especially within programming and computing contexts.

Definition	Term
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The ability of individuals to use digital technologies effectively, safely, and critically to access, manage, create, and communicate information.	Influencers
A digital service or website that enables users to create, share, access, or interact with content or services over the internet.	Algorithm
The process by which individuals or groups build trust and manipulate vulnerable people—often young people or those at risk—to influence, exploit, or control them.	Cyberbullying
The promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance.	Radicalisation
Individuals who have the power to affect the opinions, behaviours, and purchasing decisions of their followers through social media platforms, blogs, or other digital channels.	Digital literacy

Starter activity: Online traps: how extremists target you (easy)

Date: _____   Name: _____

1. Digital literacy

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2. Influencers

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3. Grooming

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4. Cyberbullying

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5. Extremism

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6. Online platforms

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7. Radicalisation

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8. Misinformation

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9. Disinformation

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10. Algorithm

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Image 1

What do you think this image represents?

Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Image 2

What do you think this image represents?

Image credit: Nomad_Soul

Image 3

What do you think this image represents?

Image credit: sonmez karakurt

Image 4

What do you think this image represents?

Photo credit: StreetMic LiveStream, CC BY 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

Debate Reflection Handout

Use this space to note down some of your reflections following the debate:

Arguments FOR social media companies being more responsible for monitoring extremist content:

Arguments AGAINST social media companies being more responsible for monitoring extremist content

Your personal view:

Did anyone/anything change your mind or adjust your view?
Yes / No / Not sure

What did you learn from the other team?

Online traps: how extremists target you

1. What is online radicalisation?

   ☐ Learning how to fix computers online

   ☐ Being influenced online to support extreme ideas or actions

   ☐ Watching films and TV online

   ☐ Using the internet for shopping

2. Which of these could be a warning sign that someone is being drawn into extremism?

   ☐ Becoming secretive about who they're speaking to online

   ☐ Posting lots of photos of food online

   ☐ Sharing funny videos

   ☐ Talking about everyday hobbies

3. Why do extremist groups often use the internet instead of recruiting people face-to-face?

   ☐ It's more expensive

   ☐ People don't like talking online

   ☐ Social media is always private

   ☐ It's easier to stay anonymous and reach more people

4. How might algorithms contribute to the spread of extremist content?

   ☐ They hide all extremist content

   ☐ They only show you funny cat videos

   ☐ They recommend similar content, keeping people in a "bubble" of the same ideas

   ☐ They block all messages from strangers

5. Why might it be difficult for social media companies to monitor all extremist content?

   ☐ There's a huge volume of content and hidden or coded language is often used

   ☐ There are too few people on social media

   ☐ Extremist messages are always obvious and easy to spot

   ☐ People only post photos, not messages

6. What is one argument against governments creating stricter rules for social media platforms?

   ☐ People would never use social media again

   ☐ It could be seen as censorship and limit free speech

   ☐ Social media companies want to ban all users

   ☐ Only young people use social media

7. Which is a responsibility of an individual online user?

   ☐ Ignoring harmful content

   ☐ Sharing everything they find online

   ☐ Reporting extremist or harmful content when they see it

   ☐ Keeping quiet about their opinions

8. Which of these is a good way to protect yourself from extremist content online?

   ☐ Reply to everyone who contacts you

   ☐ Avoid suspicious links and check sources of information

   ☐ Keep your accounts public so everyone can see them

   ☐ Share your personal details with strangers

9. Which combination of behaviours might suggest someone is being radicalised online?

   ☐ Suddenly changing opinions, isolating themselves, and using new or secretive online accounts

   ☐ Using strong passwords and security tools

   ☐ Sharing funny memes with friends

   ☐ Posting recipes and cat videos

10. Apart from telling a trusted adult, which two actions help protect you from extremist content online?

   ☐ Responding to all friend requests and clicking unknown links

   ☐ Keeping your profile public and sharing personal details

   ☐ Sharing extremist posts so friends can see them

   ☐ Fact-checking information and adjusting privacy settings

Case study – Jamie's story

Jamie is a 15-year-old who enjoys online gaming and spending time on social media platforms. Over the past several months, Jamie has increasingly withdrawn from offline friendships and become more involved in a private Discord server dedicated to gaming. While the group initially shared gaming tips and funny memes, over time, the content began to shift.

Some of the older members in the server regularly posted memes, videos, and links to livestreams containing extreme political messages. At first, Jamie saw this material as just 'edgy' humour designed to provoke reactions. However, the repetition of similar ideas, blaming specific groups for social problems and glorifying violence started to influence Jamie's views.

The group members encouraged Jamie to follow certain online influencers who promoted conspiracy theories and violence. They directed Jamie to carefully curated websites and private channels that presented biased information often mixing half-truths with outright misinformation. These platforms made Jamie feel part of a community with 'special knowledge' that outsiders did not understand.

Gradually, Jamie started to see the world through the lens promoted by the online group. Group chats regularly framed immigrants, religious minorities, and people with different political opinions as 'the enemy', accusing them of deliberately destroying society. Violence was increasingly discussed as a legitimate or heroic way to 'fight back'.

Jamie's behaviour offline began to change. Friends and teachers noticed that Jamie became more irritable, withdrawn, and suspicious of others. Jamie started using new phrases and slogans picked up from the online group, expressing hostility towards people Jamie had never previously talked about negatively. When a friend gently challenged these ideas, Jamie reacted defensively, accusing them of being 'brainwashed by the mainstream'.

Jamie's parents remain unaware as Jamie has become secretive about online activity and dismissive of concerns.

One of Jamie's close friends is now genuinely worried. They have noticed how the online content has escalated from provocative jokes to open calls for hatred and violence, but they are unsure how to help Jamie or who to tell.

Video script

If I'm honest, I think most people are a waste of space. I don't like many of the students and I really don't like my tutors. They think they know it all, but they have got no idea. I learn more from being online in 5 minutes them they try and teach me in a week. I mean, why do people actually have to go to a college? To sit in a classroom, bored? To get bullied in a corridor? To get laughed at? Don't need it.

The other day I actually Googled 'why are people cruel?'. Spent ages looking at what people were saying: 'It's human nature', 'It's survival of the fittest'... Pretty depressing.

There were some messed up videos on there as well. I couldn't stop watching. Under this one I liked, I posted 'No one gets me either '. In literally seconds someone hit me back and said they felt the same. We started messaging loads, just like that.

I joined this Discord chat thing. Everyone was proper nice to me. They get why I hate most people – 'cos they do as well. I mean, some of the stuff that they shared was pretty out there but, at last, I reckon I've found some pretty cool friends.

It's so weird when you think about it. I have closer friends that I have actually never met than most idiots I know in real life. Online, I feel like they totally get me. I share loads of stuff with them.

Now, all this mad stuff just appears in my feed without me even having to search hard for it. This guy in America said to me 'you are smart to question things, most people are brainwashed'. They are, right? You know most people are. He sent me a hard core video though. It was someone live streaming shooting up a school where he lives. It was a hard watch but at the same time I couldn't stop. In the comments someone said,
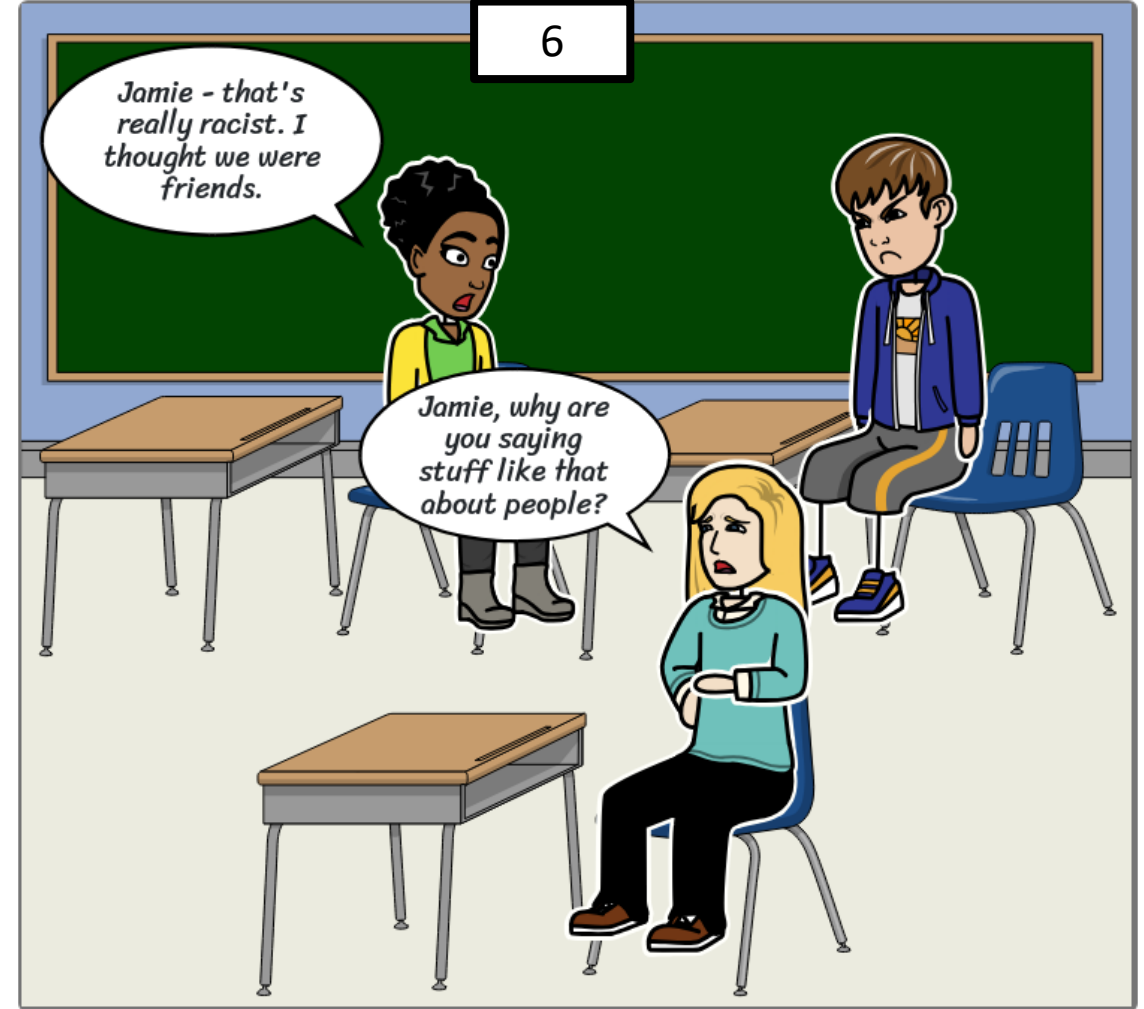'where's next?' I thought, 'hmmm, I know'.

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