media masters

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WORK PACKAGE N° 33

MEDIA MASTERS WORKSHOPS - PLAYING THE EDUCATIONAL GAME, IN SPAIN

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EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	33
Event name:	[Media Masters Workshops - Playing the Educational Game, in Spain]
Type:	workshop
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	[Spain], [Zaragoza]
Date(s):	[21/05/2025][16, June 2025]
Website(s) (if any):	https://institutoikigai.org/juguemos-y-acabemos-con-las-mentiras/
Participants	
Female:	38
Male:	30
Non-binary:	
From country 1 [name]:	Spain
From country 2 [name]:	
From country 3 [name]:	
…	

Total number of participants:	68	From total number of countries:	

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

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1. Introduction

Across Europe, the spread of misinformation and disinformation poses a growing challenge—not only to democratic values but also to young people's trust in media and institutions. In response, the Media Masters (MEDMAS) project was launched to promote media literacy, critical thinking, and civic participation through innovative, interactive methods.

What sets MEDMAS apart is its focus on learning through play. At the center of the project is a specially designed board game and mobile application, both of which immerse participants in real-world media scenarios. Players are asked to evaluate news stories, identify manipulative tactics, and reflect on their own media consumption—all within a dynamic, game-based setting. This approach helps make complex issues both accessible and engaging, especially for those who might otherwise feel disconnected from formal civic education.

Rather than relying on traditional top-down instruction, MEDMAS events are structured around local workshops, classroom sessions, and community-led discussions that place youth at the center of the learning process. Activities are designed to promote peer exchange, open debate, and collaborative problem-solving, creating environments where diverse voices are not only heard but valued.

From classrooms to conference halls, MEDMAS has already reached hundreds of young people across Europe, with 42 local events planned before the project concludes. The initiative will culminate in a final international summit in Brussels, where lessons learned, best practices, and youth-generated insights will be shared with policymakers and civil society.

By bridging education, innovation, and civic engagement, Media Masters offers a compelling model for addressing one of the most urgent challenges of our time—ensuring that tomorrow's citizens are not only media-aware, but media-wise. In this report, we will analyze the workshop for the MEDMAS project that was held in ESIC University, Zaragoza, Spain to give a well-rounded picture of this event.

2. Conference in the ESIC University

Event structure

The Media Masters workshop took place on 21 May, 2025, at ESIC Universit Zaragoza, a private university specializing in business, marketing, and digital transformation. There were 56 participants attending the event and it was integrated into a class majored in marketing led by professor Vicente Ferrero, who provided the Ikigai team with the opportunity to present the MEDMAS project to a group of undergraduate students who are part of the main target groups.

ESIC University Zaragoza is a leading private business and marketing school in Spain – part of the ESIC University network founded in 1965 and formally established as a university in 2019. ESIC Zaragoza offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Marketing, Digital Business, Communication, and Advertising, and serves around hundreds of new students annually, forging strong links with both national and international industry. Known for its "transformative learning" philosophy, ESIC combines academic theory with real-world applications, emphasizing marketing's role in the digital ecosystem .

After getting in contact with professor Vincent Ferrero, the Academic Coordinator of ESIC Aragón, the Ikigai team was welcomed into his marketing class which is an ideal setting as part of the university's focus on academic teaching includes the social media strategies, brand perception, and content dissemination in digital spaces. This offered a valuable opportunity to engage with students who are already trained to think critically about content creation, consumer perception, and the influence of media platforms which are those key themes that align closely with the objectives of the MEDMAS project.

The workshop was designed to help students to reflect critically on the intersection of marketing and the spread of fake news.

Adding depth to the session, Eduardo Sánchez Salcedo, a respected journalist with a background in audiovisual communication, marketing, and political communication, and a long-time institutional communicator in Aragón, delivered a insightful and inspiring speech on "Fake News and Its Impact on European Democracy." Eduardo is currently a media advisor to the Aragón Government, professor at San Jorge University, director of the Serralbo review. Eduardo is also a member of the Asociación y Colegio de Periodistas de Aragón (APA), making this event a continuation of the collaboration that began during the earlier Media Masters workshop at APA headquarters. His participation marked the continuation of our collaboration with APA from the first workshop, bridging professional journalism and youth education in a university context.

The session brought together theory and practice, exposing participants to the real-world relevance of media literacy and disinformation in professional fields such as marketing, journalism, and public relations. The event followed a structured format that included an expert speech, project presentation, hands-on gameplay, group discussion, and feedback collection.

The session opened with a presentation delivered by Eduardo Sánchez Salcedo who has extensive experience in public institutions and political communication. Drawing on his background in audiovisual journalism, public communication, and his work for the regional government of Aragón, Eduardo offered a deep and comprehensible explanation of the fake news mechanisms in the contemporary media landscape. He elaborated on the motors of disinformation spread—emotional manipulation, algorithmic amplification, and intentional narrative distortion—and highlighted its growing impact on the democratic processes in Europe. Eduardo also shared examples that happened in real life scenarios and circulated across social media to describe how disinformation or false information influences public opinion, undermines trust in institutions, and polarizes societies. His lecture provided students with a broader context to understand why media literacy is critical to safeguard democratic values during a time when content online moves faster than it can be verified. Students were engaged and interactive during the discussion, which paved the way for the rest of the workshop.

● **Presentation of the MEDMAS Project**

Following Eduardo's speech, the Ikigai team for the MEDMAS project introduced the project in more detail. They illustrated the European scope of the project showing its comprehensive nature. According to the Ikigai team, the fundamental objective of the project is to provide young people with skills and competencies to recognize, analyze, and resist fake news through the use of open and interactive educational tools and formats. They guided the students through the two principal tools of the project: a board game and a mobile app, both of which simulate real-world media scenarios with the aim of enhancing learning efficiency and encouraging critical thinking. The presentation successfully showed visually the creation principles of the game, its objectives, and its intended learning outcomes. Special attention was given to the application of gamification as an educational strategy for the purposes of reaching youth audiences that would otherwise be restricted and confined by more traditional methods of learning. Besides, the QR codes were shown on screen for students to download the app and find out more. The flexibility of the game to fit in a multicultural, multilingual European environment is shown through multiple aspects such as questions are located in the specific country that the participants choose, translated into many languages and able to be used in a range of educational contexts.

● **Interactive Board Game Session**

After the presentation of the MEDMAS project, students were divided into small groups of players to play the Media Masters board game with the mobile app. The group was linguistically diverse, and the students had the option of playing either in English or Spanish. This was greatly appreciated, as it facilitated smoother

interaction and more accurate comprehension of the questions and concepts presented.

The students were extremely interested and active, looking for related information online, debating each question and sharing views in their groups. The game assisted them to apply their knowledge of online communication, social media trends, and psychological manipulation in identifying fake news. This process successfully converted abstract concepts into concrete, comprehensible tasks to allow students to better use and practice the techniques in real life.

However, there were also some technical issues. In several instances, the QR codes on the question cards did not function properly, either opening error messages or blank screens. Despite these challenges, participants remained highly engaged and focused and were patient and active by recording issues and reporting them to the team afterward. These results were collected for game and app future improvement.

● **Open Discussion and Reflection**

After the gameplay session, a group discussion was held to share the experience and gather initial feedback. Students appreciated the interactive workshop and praised the relevance of the questions, especially those referencing real-world examples from environment, politics, social revolution and internet culture. They discussed how some fake news strategies were comparable to those used often in advertising or influencer marketing, demanding an exploration of the blurry boundary between persuasion and manipulation. Some of them shared that they got stronger confidence through coming up with the right answer and sharing their thoughts. A few students also offered suggestions for the app, including better QR code scanning experience and more comprehensive game instructions. Others saw the use of the game in classroom settings not just for communication students, but also for political science, sociology, and education students. They emphasized that media literacy is a transversal competence that goes beyond any one discipline.

● **Completion of Feedback Questionnaire**

To conclude the session, the students were invited to complete the feedback questionnaires targeting their gaming experience and learning process to have a detailed and in-depth grasp of their opinions. The questionnaire was accessed via QR codes projected on the screen. Participants provided thoughtful and honest feedback, highlighting both the game's potential for learning as well as areas for development. These responses will provide precious ideas and insights into the development of the project directly and its adaptation and improvement for future participants.

Feedbacks

The feedback collected from the workshop was notably insightful and multifa[...]
Participants offered comments and suggestions that reflected both their
understanding of digital media and their expectations as users and learners. This
feedback provided valuable input for refining and optimizing the board game and
the mobile app in terms of
structure, usability, and educational impact.

1. Game Dynamics and Pacing

Students appreciated the turn-based structure of the board game but noted several
issues regarding pacing and flow. A commonly raised concern was that the
progression of the game sometimes felt overly slow, especially when players
encountered technical issues or spent extended time discussing each question. In
some groups, the game remained within the first few rows of the board despite a
considerable amount of time having passed. Some of them spent too much time
reading and understanding the context and question which exhausted their passion
to a certain extent as this lack of progress reduced the sense of momentum and
made it harder for participants to feel a sense of achievement.
Several suggestions were proposed to improve pacing:

- **Introduce progress-based bonuses**: For example, groups could receive
  bonus moves after answering a set number of questions correctly in a row.
- **Simplify movement rules**: Instead of conditional dice rolls, students
  recommended linking movement directly to correct answers, which would
  speed up the game and make success more tangible.
- **Implement a team-based structure**: Instead of individual play, grouping
  participants into small teams helped maintain engagement and make better
  use of time between turns.
- **Add a time limit per question**: A timer (via the app or a physical hourglass)
  could create more focus and energy during play.

Overall, while the core mechanics were well-received, most students agreed that
the rhythm of the game should be optimized to better suit an efficient and enjoyable
educational session.

2. Content and Accessibility

The feedback on content was largely positive, with students highlighting the
relevance and realism of many questions. However, several areas for improvement
were identified.

Text Complexity:
Some questions were seen as overly long or technical, containing vocabulary more
suited to academic texts than words used in daily information exchanges. This
created accessibility challenges in understanding and thinking whether through the

usage of certain less familiar words or translation, especially for those non-na[...] speakers and subjects that are not commonly discussed.

Background Knowledge:
Students noted that a few questions required very specific cultural or political knowledge, which was not always held or shared among the group. Examples included lesser-known organizations, new digital trends or scientific discoveries, or public figures unfamiliar to international students.
Suggestions included:

- Simplifying sentence structures and shortening questions.
- Providing easily accessible contextual cues or definitions (possibly embedded in the app).
- Allowing players to choose between "basic" and "advanced" question levels depending on the group's background.

Despite these concerns, students found the questions intellectually stimulating. They encouraged the use of current examples, meme culture, and social media scenarios to better align the content with their actual digital experience.

3. Technical Functionality and QR Integration

The QR-code-based system received mixed feedback. While students understood and appreciated the concept—scanning QR codes to access digital questions—they encountered recurring technical issues that disrupted the gameplay.
Common issues reported:

- **Unresponsive QR codes**: Some scans led to broken or blank pages, resulting in unnecessary delays.
- **Slow loading times**: Even when functional, some QR-linked pages took too long to load, leading to uncertainty and disengagement.
- **Inconsistency**: Some groups reported that a few cards worked smoothly, while others kept failing and there weren't sufficient replacement cards to fill in the blanks.
- **Language switching**: A few students mentioned that some QR pages opened in unexpected languages when they switched the countries.

Students emphasized the need for technical stability and fallback options, especially in classroom environments where time is limited.
Recommendations included:

- Creating a lightweight, downloadable companion app to host all questions offline.

- Allowing manual access to all cards in PDF or printed form as backup
- Adding a "feedback" button when a QR code fails to help improve error tracking.
- Using short URLs under each QR code for manual input if scanning fails.

Despite the issues, students generally liked the QR system conceptually and hoped future versions would address current flaws to streamline digital integration.

4. Design, Usability, and Visual Appeal
From a visual and functional standpoint, participants had varied reactions to the board and card design.
Board Aesthetics:
Some found the color scheme and overall layout was a bit simple or lack of novelty. Similar colors sometimes made it difficult to distinguish paths. The board felt more utilitarian than engaging, and some felt it needed a more playful or eye-catching identity.
Card Layout:
The information density shown on the screen after scanning the cards was often too high. Text was small, and some cards lacked visual hierarchy, making it hard to read quickly or grasp question logic at a glance.
Suggestions included:

- Refreshing the color palette to ensure greater contrast and readability.
- Improving card layout with clearer headings, icons, or symbols.
- Adding themed graphics or symbols to create a stronger "game world" feeling.
- Exploring digital-only gameplay, especially if most features are app-based.

Despite the critiques, the students saw strong potential in the game's visual structure and format. They believed small improvements to visual clarity and aesthetic design could significantly enhance the user experience.

5. Educational Relevance and Added Value
Students, all engaged in marketing and digital communication studies, recognized the importance of media literacy and praised the project's effort to create a game-based tool for this purpose. Many remarked that the questions encouraged deep thinking about content manipulation, social media dynamics, and ethical communication.
Highlights included:

- The opportunity to reflect on their own media habits.

- Exposure to misinformation techniques that overlap with commercial c
  influencer strategies.
- The chance to work collaboratively in small teams to solve real-world
  challenges.

Some students proposed adapting the game for marketing or communication classes at ESIC, possibly integrating it as a recurring simulation tool or debate starter. A few expressed interest in developing new game cards based on their coursework, turning the tool into a co-creative learning experience.

6. Gamification and Motivation Mechanics

Some participants commented on the motivational structure of the game—what drives players to stay engaged and strive to win. While the educational value was appreciated, several students felt the lack of a competitive or reward-based system made it harder to maintain momentum throughout the session.
Suggestions included:

- Introducing a scoring system, with points awarded for correct answers and bonus rounds.
- Allowing groups to "level up" or earn badges for different skill categories such as fact-checking expert, manipulation detector.
- Adding "power cards" with fun mechanics so the participants can use them to skip a difficult question, challenge another group.
- Incorporating a narrative or "mission" structure, for example, players may uncover a media scandal or save a fictional city from disinformation.

This approach would add layers of gamification, making the experience more dynamic and appealing to competitive or goal-oriented learners.

Communication and Promotion of the Initiative

The workshop at ESIC University Zaragoza represented a strategic opportunity to test the Media Masters board game and app in a university setting—specifically within a marketing course where students already deal with subjects related to digital content, online influence, and critical consumption of media. For this reason, the promotion and communication strategy was carefully designed to ensure engagement with a highly relevant and professional audience while also extending the visibility of the MEDMAS project to the broader academic and journalistic communities across online social communities. It focused not on mass promotion, but rather on targeted outreach, leveraging both formal institutional platforms and informal peer-driven channels.

Pre-Event Promotion

The promotion of the workshop was mainly carried out by internal circulation among students by professor Vicente Ferrero, who was instrumental in ensuring the participation of his class. Considering the educational experiment nature of the event, the recruitment of participants was handled with discretion and purpose. Professor Vicente Ferrero informed his students in advance, both in person during class sessions and peer communication. This method of academic word-of-mouth proved effective in confirming attendance and encouraging students to come prepared for the interactive session.

Channels Used

1. Instagram

Instagram proved particularly effective in reaching youth-centered audiences, including interns, former participants in Ikigai activities, and student followers. The visual content allowed for easy resharing among attendees and helped spark informal interest from other students and educators.

This channel was used for the post-event communication, via stories and posts, which are popular with the younger demographic. The team Ikigai edited a short video recording the highlight moments, including the speech from Eduardo Sánchez Salcedo, the presentation of MEDMAS project, the game play session during the workshop, and the active engagement of the students.