

A Bilingual Tool That Fights Misinformation On WhatsApp | NPR

By Michel Martin

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As we get closer to Election Day, you might be noticing a spike in the amount of misinformation and disinformation you're seeing online on a variety of different platforms like Facebook or Twitter or Instagram. But if you speak Spanish and use that language with friends and relatives and to get your news, you're probably getting bombarded with it on one particular platform.

WhatsApp is the app of choice for many who keep in touch with relatives throughout Latin America and the United States. And because the messages are encrypted, it's hard to trace the origins of stories shared by WhatsApp users. It also creates a unique way for anybody outside of the United States to filter inaccurate or deliberately misleading information into the country - that according to Randy Pestana, assistant director of research at Florida International University's institute for public policy.

But there are efforts to fight the spread of online misinformation and disinformation. Right now, we're going to hear about one of the newest ones. It's a fact-checking tool available to WhatsApp users in both English and Spanish. It's called FactChat. It was developed by the Poynter Institute's International Fact-Checking Network. And joining us now to tell us more is associate director Cristina Tardaguila.

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