

# University libraries fighting fake news: an analysis of the knowledge and practices of Portuguese librarians

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# WHY STUDY FAKE NEWS FIGHT

- IFLA expressed deep concern about the public impact that fake news has in the face of freedom of expression and access to information
- Academic libraries are located on the frontier of creating new knowledge, bridging the gap between the production and dissemination of information and the public, namely students, teachers, and researchers



# OBJECTIVE



The aim of this work, based on a survey launched to the community of **academic libraries in Portugal**, is to describe and explain which **strategies and practices** are being considered and implemented given this problem, and some actions to adopt in the future by the academic libraries.

# DISSEMINATION OF FAKE NEWS

- New lies and camouflages emerge every day and are used to deceive the most unsuspecting, namely concerning digital identity theft, hatred, religious and racial intolerance, fraud in e-commerce transactions, cybersecurity issues, political fraud, charity, among others
- **Preventive behavior** in the face of these risks is increasingly important and urgent



# STRATEGIES TO FIGHT FAKE NEWS



- **Student are competent communicators on social networks** but are unaware of the potential for manipulation
- It is necessary to enable people to navigate the **Internet safely**, but it is also essential to teach them how to filter the contents that will use or place and make available to others
- **Libraries have developed several projects and initiatives** to ensure the training of students and researchers and to awaken the necessary care in research and information analysis

# METHODS

- **Qualitative and Quantitative analysis**, using a survey launch to Portuguese academic librarians
- Questions to know about the ideas, knowledge, commitment, and strategies of Portuguese librarians
- Convenience sample obtained from the universe of the 177 Portuguese academic libraries



# METHODS

## Study variables

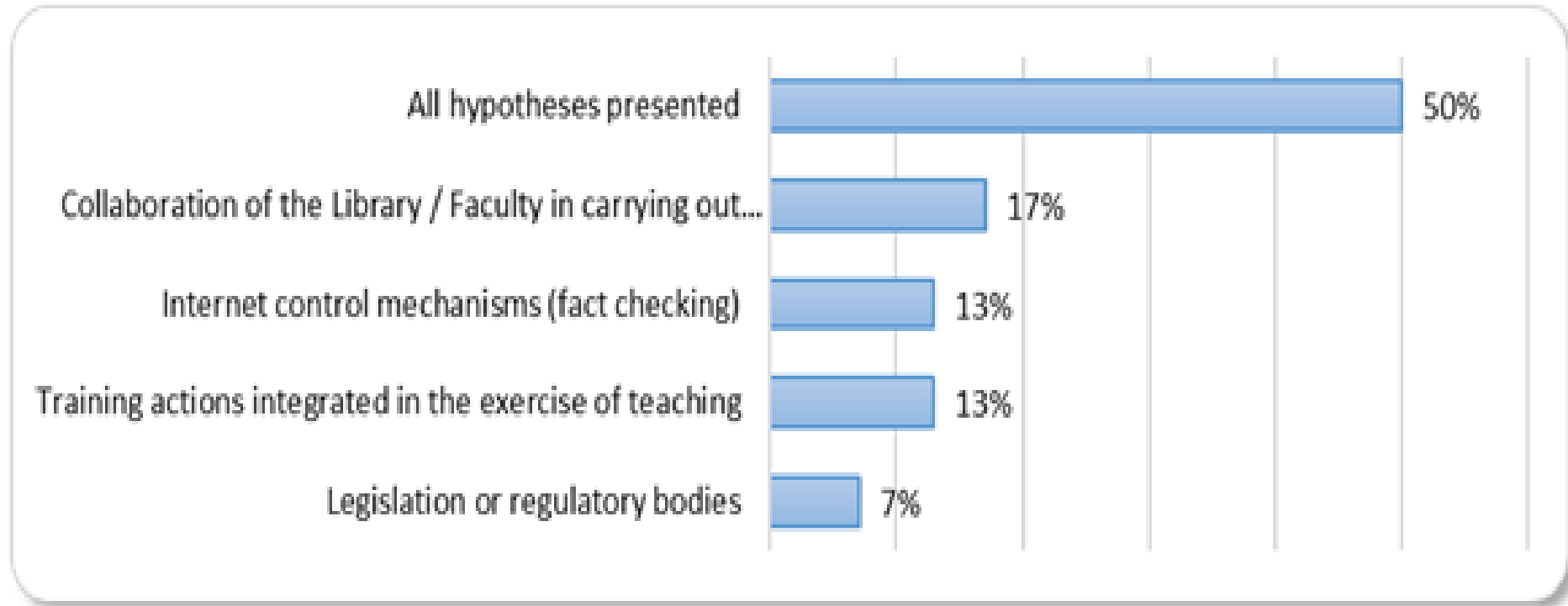
Questionnaire sections	Evaluation scope
1. Perception of false news and validity of the mechanisms that exist to combat them	1.1. Do you believe, as the Director/Head of the Library, that libraries can play a role in the fight against false news? 1.2. From what techniques or activities do you believe that the phenomenon of disinformation responsible for information bubbles and false news on the Internet could be solved?
2. Risks regarding verification of information academic by the students	2.1. Do you consider that this problem affects both news in the media and scientific information? 2.2. Do you believe that social networks enhance the dissemination of non-validated scientific information? 2.3. Do you believe that academic students can be affected at the academic level by the difficulty in identifying the veracity of the information? 2.4. Do you consider that media and information literacy can be a method of combating false news? 2.5. What media and information literacy resources should the Library make available to combat false news?
3. Present and future initiatives	3.1. Does your institution's library plan any activities in this regard? 3.2. If so, what resources are being made available?
4. Open question	4.1. An opinion, a comment, or a suggestion.

# RESULTS

73 libraries answered  
(41.5% of the  
universe under  
analysis)

Identification	Universe	%	Answers	%
Public University Teaching	71	40.3	38	52.0
Private University Teaching	27	15.3	12	16.4
Public Polytechnic Education	51	29.0	18	24.7
Private Polytechnic Education	25	14.2	4	5.5
Military and Police Education	2	1.2	1	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>

# RESULTS



«From what techniques or activities do you believe that the phenomenon of disinformation responsible for information bubbles and false news on the Internet could be solved?» (%)

# RESULTS

Do you believe that academic students can be affected at the academic level by the difficulty in identifying the veracity of the information?

98,63%

Do you believe that social networks enhance the dissemination of non-validated scientific information?

98,63%

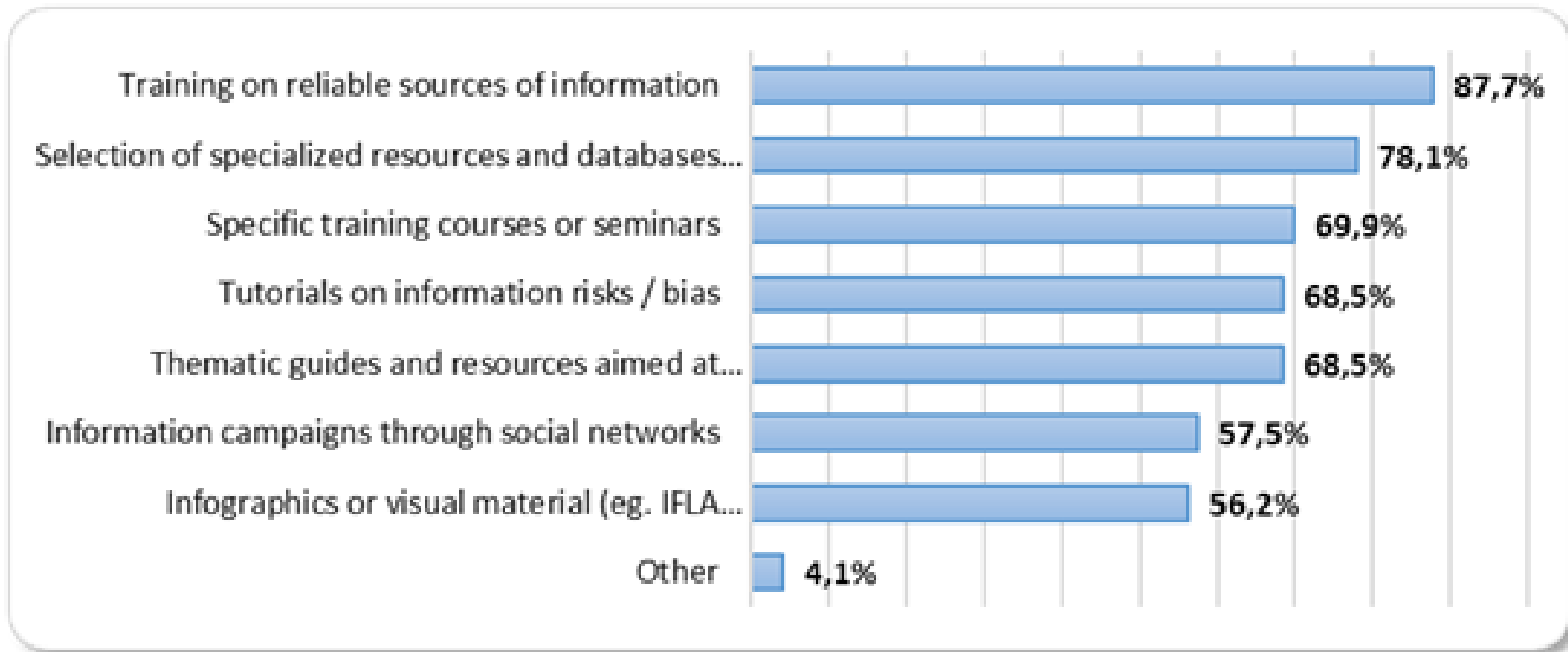
Do you consider that this problem affects both news in the media and scientific information?

5,48%

91,78%

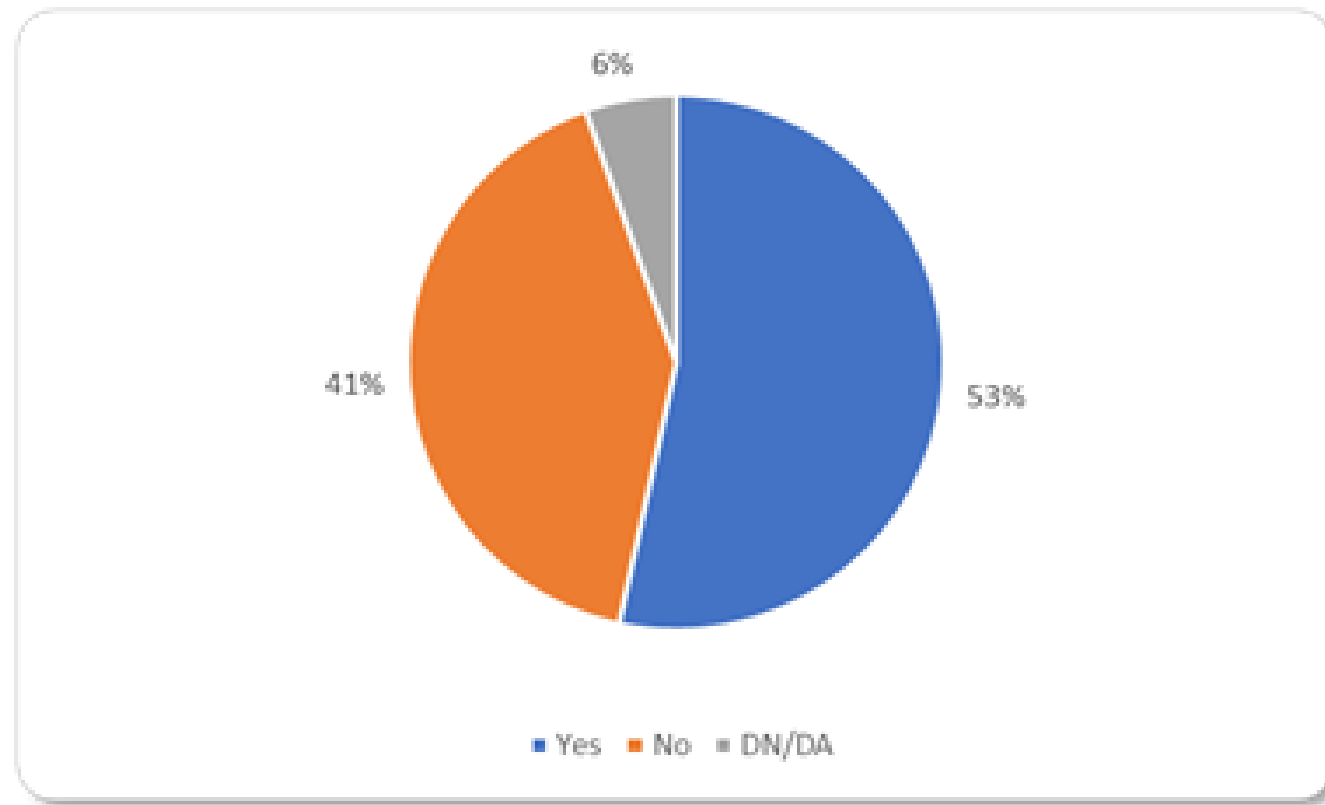
■ NO ■ Yes ■ DN/DA

# RESULTS



«What media and information literacy resources should the library make available to combat false news?» (%)

# RESULTS



«Does your institution's library plan any activities in this regard?»

# RESULTS

«Does your institution's library plan any activities in this regard?»

## Initiatives

- Classroom **training sessions**
- **Collaboration** with the teachers
- Individualized **support** for students to identify reliable and scientifically reliable resources
- Dynamization of graphic materials, especially for **IFLA infographics**
- Use of **social networks** to create **alerts** to fake news
- Partnership with secondary schools to ensure **earlier awareness** and training



# CONCLUSIONS



- Despite being aware of the issue, librarians seem to still be unsure about the actions to be taken, particularly with academic students, to contribute to their training in combating fake news
- Students need to be exposed to real information and false news, to learn how to evaluate the information in order to produce proactive thinkers, researchers, and consumers of information that they identify and surpass as false news and its harmful effects

# CONCLUSIONS



- Actions must be developed in a controlled environment, with concrete measures, based on thoughtful training strategies, especially in conjunction with teachers
- The teaching of strategies for detecting fake news among academic students can restrain its dissemination
- That is why the work of librarians, with a proximity character, should be valued

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## THANK YOU !



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