



#IThinkForMyself

#MyslimZaSeba

Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice, Faculty of Arts, Department of British
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Our Goal

I Think For Myself, a P2P: Challenging Extremism initiative project, is a reaction to the growing extremist tendencies and thinking not only in Slovakia but also the whole world. We, the students of the Department of British and American Studies at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, have decided to help the younger generation understand that they cannot believe everything they see, hear, or read on the Internet or in other media. Our goal is to show them that checking the facts and seeing through biased emotions can aid them in their personal growth as well as make them less vulnerable to extremist propaganda.



Our target audience

Our main target audience are millennials, however, thanks to social networks we are able to reach even more people. On the social networks we focused mainly on the age group 15 to 25 as we feel these are the most vulnerable because they are prone to using internet as the first source of information without fact-checking. They often believe that the internet is an amazing place to search for information not bearing in mind that nowadays anyone can post trustworthy-looking information.



First online survey

First, we spread online survey on social media and we got 168 responses:

- **Average age:** around 20 years-old
- **Where did you hear about extremism from?:** Internet 82,5%
- **Were you further informed about extremism?:** Own research 57,8%
- **Is extremism a problem in Slovakia?:** 84,8%
- **What do you consider to be a form of extremism?:** None of the options got 100% (neo-nazism:87,8%, racism:82,9%, etc.)
- **Are you prone to any kind of extremism?:** 20% of them stated that yes



Analysis of first online survey

After the online survey we knew what to focus on as people were lacking information on the topic of extremism and it led them to search for information on the internet by themselves; and this is a very dangerous situation. Due to immigrants crisis and our Roma people issues we have in Slovakia, there are a lot of extremist messages and hoax messages spreading the hate further.



Second survey

After the first online survey we focused on millennials as they are our future and, at the same time, they are the most vulnerable ones and have right to vote so we felt it was important to focus on them. We created second survey which we took to high schools and we got 174 responses. Main points:

- **Average age:** 18 years-old
- **What is extremism?:** 48,85% did not know, and only 20,67% could clearly state what it is
- **How would you solve the issue of immigrants?:** answers can be grouped in two options: either they would solve the problem in their country; or the second one: they would solve it in extremist way; send them somewhere far away, or they wouldn't deal with it



Analysis of second survey

The second survey helped us to narrow the topic of our presentation we wanted to address. Many of the answers were racist and religiously extremist and, thus, we decided to discuss such hoax messages which were supporting such extremist views.

e.g.:

„I would let only Christian refugees to come in to Slovakia.“

„Not let them in because they couldn't assimilate with our culture.“

„For Romas, no aids and they should live in a separate country.“



Presentation

At this point, we decided to direct our attention at hoax messages and stressing the importance of fact-checking as the social media and the internet are very powerful tools of spreading hate easily and worldwide. We know that the biggest impact we can make is when the presentation gets personal and one can identify with the emotions and imagine the examples in the context of reality.



Our strategy

Our strategy was composed of two main elements:

1. A well-known person

who has been publicly standing against extremism in Slovakia for 2 decades. We have chosen a rapper, Supa, whose songs send direct and powerful messages. He was very pleased with such project and didn't hesitate to accept the invitation to come and present with us.



Our strategy

2. Analysis of hoax messages from real life.

We decided to analyze examples of particular hoax messages to show people what they should focus on when reading an article. We had 11 examples of hoax messages collected from the social network and from news websites, ranging from ridiculously obvious spams to trustworthy-looking articles.



Executing TH!NK

When the project was executed, that day an article in local newspapers was written about us. We encountered probably more negative feedbacks than the positive ones; saying that

- we were american propaganda, imposing western opinions
- we shouldn't be giving presentations when we are only students,

It did set us back a little, however, we believed that if we influenced at least one person it would be worth it. We have had big support of our Faculty and when we switched focus on the millennials, almost all of the negative comments quit.



Executing TH!NK

There were three ways of getting our project out there

1. Presentations (both public and at high schools)
2. Facebook
3. Media coverage



PRESENTATION



Presentations

We have prepared an interactive and eye catching presentation with examples from everyday life that would spark off and engage our audience in further discussion.



1.1 School presentation

We managed to give 7 presentations in groups of 30 people at local high schools which was an amazing experience. Each presentation was carried out in the way that we started with defining what is Hoax and Media Bias. We encouraged the students to comment and speak up.



School presentation

Usually in each group there was at least one person who knew what Hoax was, however, they were not familiar with the term Media Bias. What followed next was an open discussion with the analysis of particular 11 hoax messages to show them how to question such messages and how to do fact-checking.





Petr

Cheb nádraží

Sdílet · Včera

👍 To se líbí 2 uživatelům.

↪ Sdíleno: 1.359x

Top right photo was spread on the topic of immigrants crisis, bottom left is the real picture

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Apart from school presentations, we held two public presentations at a popular local venue so even broader range of people could attend and hopefully learn something new.



PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Presentations were carried out in the same manner as in high schools, followed by a discussion that went even beyond our main goal, although still related, and people were keen to react to each other's comments.



2. FACEBOOK

The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook page for 'I Think For Myself'. The page header includes navigation options: Liked, Following, Message, and More. The profile picture is a logo with the letters 'TH!' and colorful splashes. The page name is 'I Think For Myself' with the handle '@idothinkformyself'. The main content is a video post with the text: 'Výstižné videá od Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti rámci super projektu' followed by a smiley face emoji, 'Great short video by Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti as a part of their project' with another smiley face emoji, and the hashtags '#MyslimZaSeba #IThinkForMyself #ChallengeExtremism'. The video player shows a black screen with white text: 'AJ NENÁVIŠŤ SKRYTÁ ZA SLOVOM' and 'Hatred leads to extremism – even hidden behind the word 'BUT''. Below the video, it says '215,809 Views' and 'Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti July 8 · 🌐'. The post text continues: 'Nie je nám jedno, čo sa deje v spoločnosti. Preto sme vytvorili kampaň zameranú na boj proti extrémizmu a nenávisti.' The right-hand sidebar features a blue '+ Add a Button' button, a search bar for posts on the page, and several statistics: 'Very responsive to messages' (91% response rate, 3-mins response time), '1,391 likes +463 this week' by Veronika Kejbl Gacíková and 35 other friends, '1,390 follows', 'See Pages Feed' (Posts from Pages you've liked as your Page), 'Invite friends to like this Page', and '7,192 post reach this week'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a short description of the page: 'I Think For Myself (Myslím za seba) je študentský projekt zameraný na zvyšovanie mediálnej gramotnosti a podnecovanie kritického myslenia u stredoškôlkov.'

2. FACEBOOK

Another way to reach people is Facebook. Almost everybody has an account and this way we can actually reach our target audience from other parts of Slovakia, Europe and perhaps even beyond.



2. FACEBOOK

Thanks to customizable Facebook ads we were able to reach out to our target audience even more easily and directly and in a short time we have garnered over 1300 likes and over 7000 post engagements weekly.

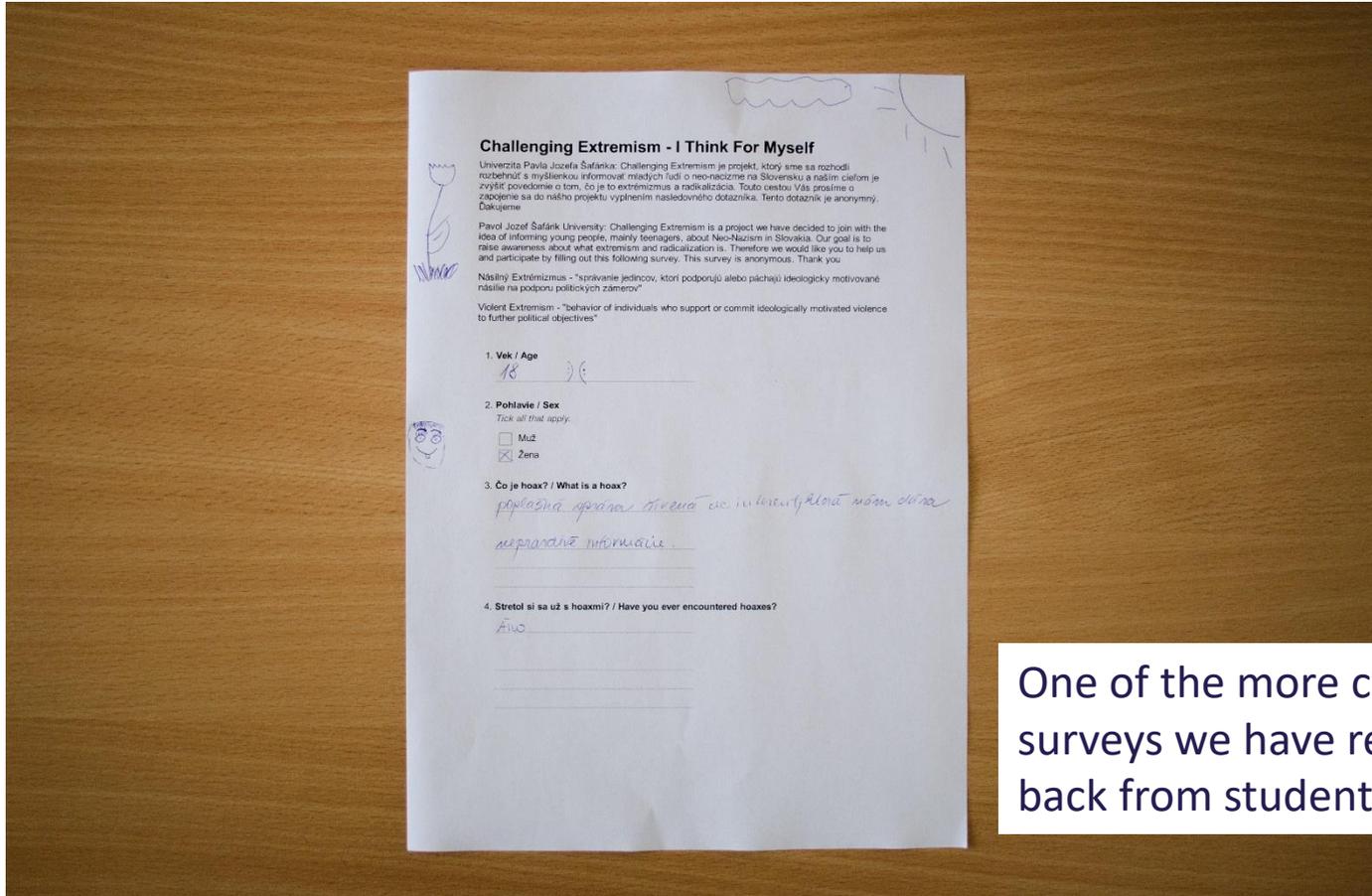


3. MEDIA COVERAGE

We have contacted several local media outlets (and some from other parts as well) who were happy to write about our project and spread it even further, outside our main target audience. We have also had some negative coverage, as already mentioned above. Ironically it fit very well into our presentation and in the end it helped our project more than it hurt it. It gave us a first hand experience with hoaxes and media bias and we were able to use it as an example.



SUMMARY



One of the more creative surveys we have received back from students.

SUMMARY

- 7 presentations at 3 different highschools
- 2 public presentations
- Over 1300 likes on facebook
- Reached more than 100 000 people
- 15 000 post engagements
- 5 media outlets wrote about us

