



# fabricated

UNRAVEL FACT  
FROM FICTION  
IN YOUR DIGITAL  
WORLD



Sustainable  
Media Lab



An Interactive Exhibition on Digital Literacy  
Summary Report: European Tour 2024





## Executive Summary

*fabricated* is an award-winning, international exhibition on how digitisation is changing democracy. Through games and interactive moments, *fabricated* helps participants build their digital literacy and learn about AI, misinformation, and more. *fabricated* just completed a successful European tour, engaging with over 2,250 European residents and collecting a wealth of data on how participants feel about our rapidly digitising society. The *fabricated* team has secured funding to tour the United States in October 2024 in the lead-up to the American Presidential Elections.





# ***fabricated:***

## **Unravel Fact from Fiction in Your Digital World**



### **Background**

*fabricated* is a traveling research exhibit that promotes **digital literacy**. This project, led by the Sustainable Media Lab (SML), brings together an international, cross-sector partnership of researchers, students, nonprofits, journalists, government representatives, and libraries. *fabricated* uses **games and interactive moments** to teach communities about digital issues like **AI, misinformation, content moderation, targeted advertising, and the industry of digital services** designed to influence your vote. *fabricated* is currently available in English, Dutch, and German.

## **2250+ European residents**

visited *fabricated* during our European Tour in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and England

### **Impact for Communities**

*fabricated* promotes fair, informed elections, offering **communities a deeper understanding of their digital environments**. The playful, interactive nature of *fabricated* can significantly **lower barriers to understanding political information** online, inspiring civic participation from underserved communities. Our fun, informative, and localized approach **fosters an inclusive digital future for all**.

### **The Project Leaders**

*fabricated* was developed and curated by Dr. Andy Sanchez and Susannah Montgomery from the Sustainable Media Lab (SML) at Inholland University of Applied Sciences. SML applies expertise in human rights, digital technologies, and user-focused design to create interactive experiences that help people to thoughtfully explore the role of technology in society.



**Andy Sanchez, Ph.D.** is a post-doctoral researcher who explores the policy implications of emerging technologies, and uses legal, historical, and cultural comparisons to make the challenges of digitisation more tangible for society. He works as a Senior Researcher in Human-Centric Digitalisation at Erasmus University Rotterdam.



**Susannah Montgomery, M.A.** is Deputy Director of the SML and designer researcher who explores the impact of digitisation in the cultural sector. She specialises in creating playful and thoughtful participatory experiences for audiences throughout Europe, including cultural game jams, hackathons, and exhibitions.

# The Installations



## Welcome Video

Participants are welcomed to the exhibition by Alex, an AI avatar posing as a newscaster. Alex, whose script was partially written by AI, offers participants the uncanny experience of critiquing AI video, while learning about the challenges digitization poses to traditional media outlets.

*This video experience was developed in partnership with Peak15 Design and Research Studio.*

## The Personal Press

In this hybrid installation, participants turn physical dials and watch as generative AI changes the tone and bias of a news article in real time. The Personal Press showcases the speed, power, and potential harm to journalism presented by programs like ChatGPT.

*This installation was developed in partnership with TU Delft students, Neslihan Can, Sukriti Garg, Kim de Vrij, and Koen Weber.*



## Verify This!

This analog installation complements *The Personal Press*, highlighting the time and effort required for good journalism. Participants review real-world posts that contain misinformation, alongside fact-checks done by journalists. *Verify This!* educates participants on the many ways information can be manipulated in the digital age.

*This installation was developed in partnership with Agence France-Presse (AFP).*

# The Installations (cont.)

## Moderator Mayhem

In this digital game, participants learn about the difficult job of content moderators, who decide whether flagged posts should stay online. Moderator Mayhem allows players to safely roleplay as a content moderator, trying to review a deluge of posts before time runs out.

*The EU-edition of this game was developed in partnership with Leveraged Play & Copia Institute.*



## The Influence Industry

This analog game combines simple gameplay with the power of conversation. Players try to “win” this adapted version of Connect 4, but each piece contains information about real-world digital services politicians use to influence voters. Some are simple, but others are much more invasive. This longer experience offers participants the chance to reflect on how digitization shapes democracy.

*This installation was developed in partnership with Amber Macintyre, Tactical Tech.*



## Who Targets Me?

This two-part installation helps participants understand targeted advertising and facial-recognition technology. In the first part, users review real-world advertisements and learn why individual users were targeted with these ads. But the second part makes this concept emotionally memorable: a camera uses facial recognition to take their photo and turn them into a photorealistic AI avatar, complete with descriptions of what “AI advertisers” guess about the user: their age, gender, race, emotion, and even political opinion.

*This installation was developed in partnership with Sam Jeffers, Who Targets Me? and artist Matthias Oostrik with support from Digital Society School*



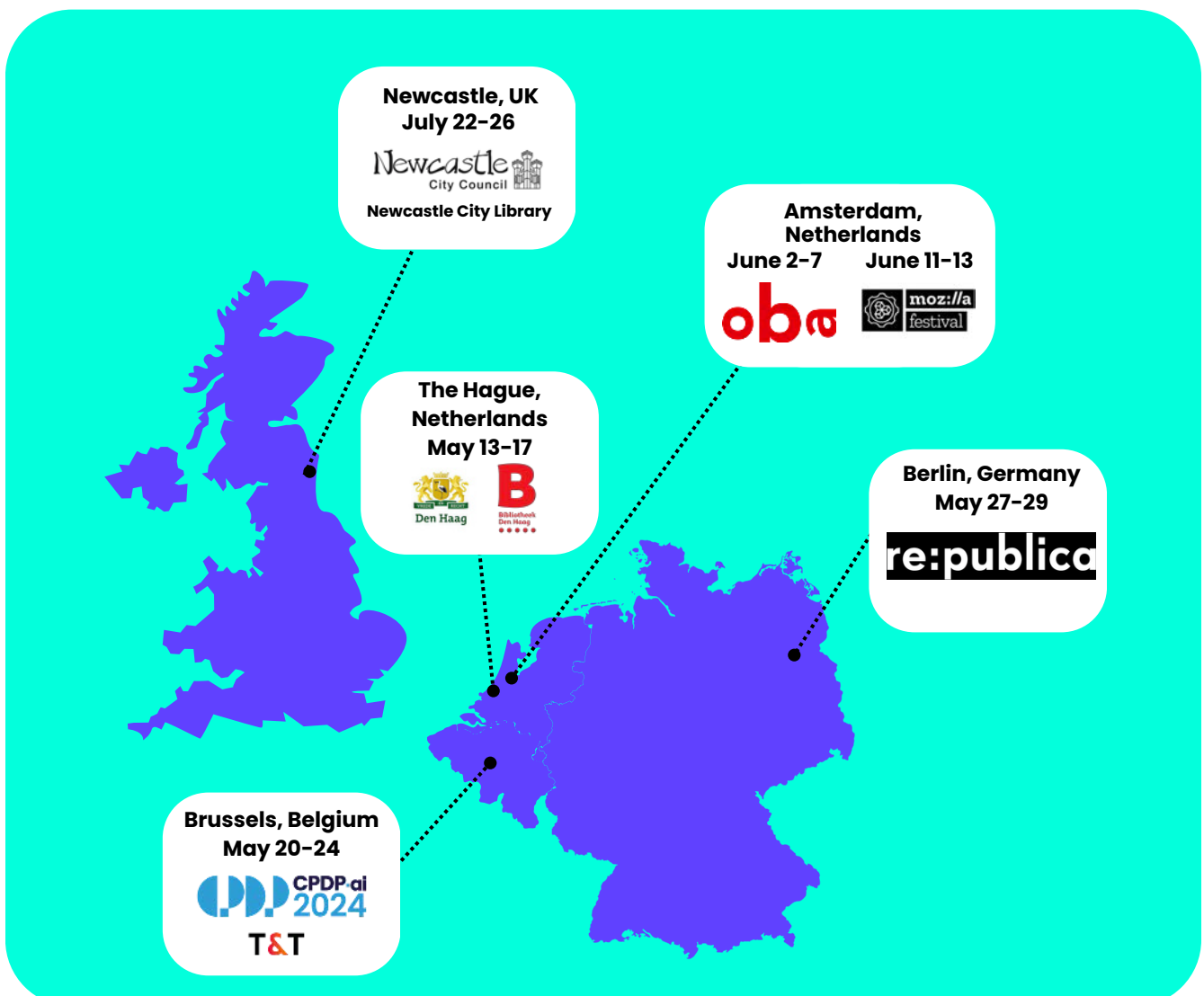


# Outcomes from Phase 1



*fabricated* has **reached over 2250 European residents** during its inaugural tour of The **Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom**. During these showcases, our team conducted over **300 surveys and 30 conversational interviews** to better understand what Europeans think about contemporary digital challenges. The *fabricated* team will share their findings through **publications** for academic, policymaking, and general audiences.

## Where Did We Travel?



# Our 2024 Venues

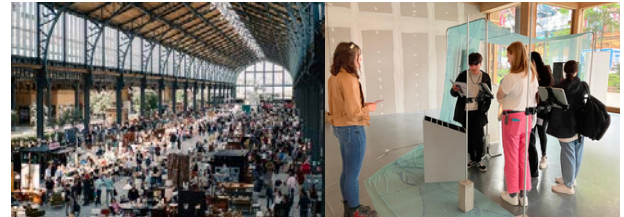
## The Hague, Netherlands May 13-17

We started the first week of our tour in the atrium of The Hague Central Library in partnership with the Municipality of The Hague.



## Brussels, Belgium May 20-24

We then created a 5-day pop-up exhibition in the Tour & Taxis Gare Maritime market hall for the CPDP Conference.



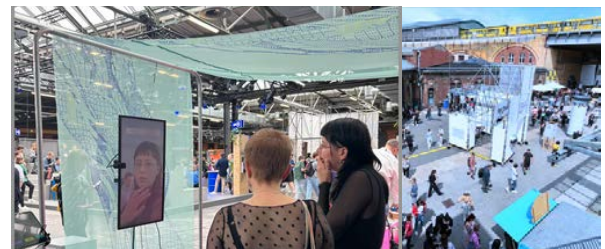
## Amsterdam, Netherlands June 2-7

Just in time for the EU elections, *fabricated* came back to the Netherlands 5 days at the Amsterdam Public Library in Javaplein, which also serves as a local polling station!



## Berlin, Germany May 27-29

Afterwards, we took a road trip from Belgium to Germany to join 3-day the Re:Publica Festival in STATION Berlin.



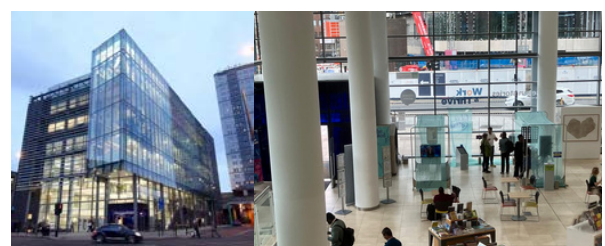
## Amsterdam, Netherlands June 2-7

The following week, we created a 2-day pop-up exhibit in the Tolhuistuin about AI and our democratic futures for MozFest.



## Newcastle, England July 22-26

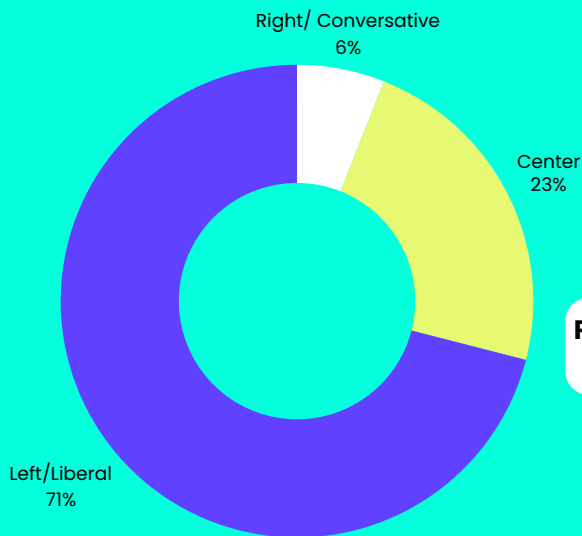
Finally, we visited the Newcastle Central Library in England for 4 days to share our exhibit with local residents after the UK elections.



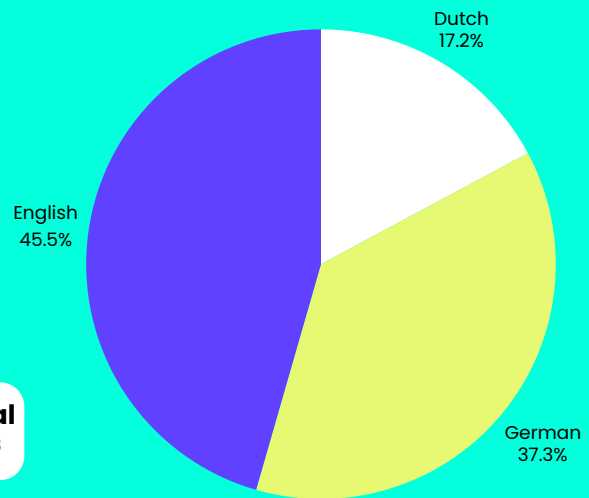
# Who Visited *fabricated*?

## What do we know about the 2,250 visitors of *fabricated* in Europe?

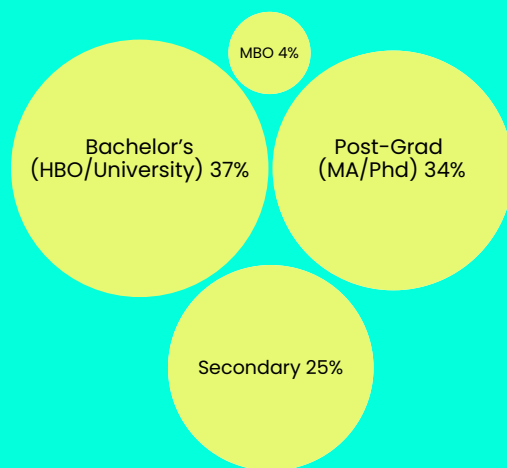
### Political Views



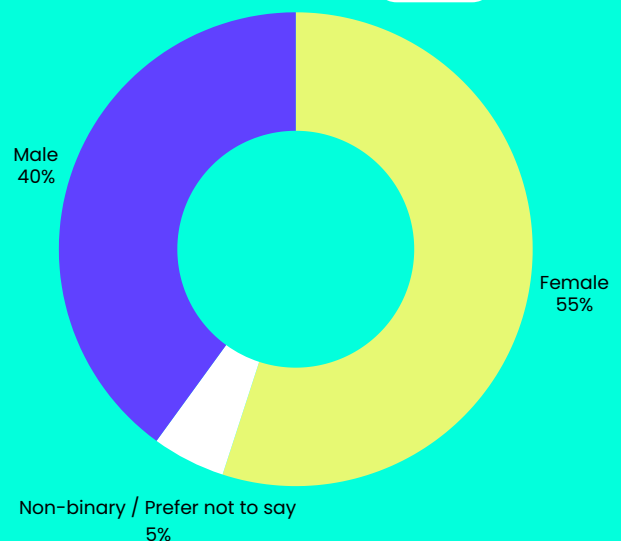
### Preferred Language



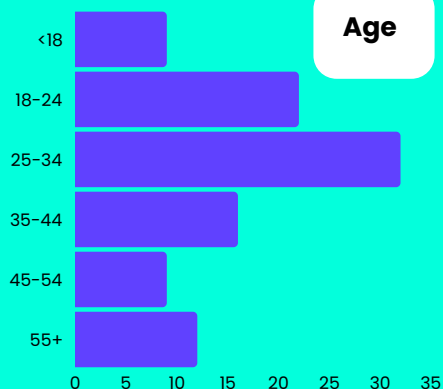
### Highest Level of Education Completed



### Gender



### Age





# What Did We Learn from our Visitors?

Here is a snapshot of some of the early data findings from the **300+ surveys** completed by residents of the **Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom** who visited *fabricated* during its first tour. Each question to the right is linked to the experience of interacting with one of the installations from the exhibition.

## Top 5 Feelings Shared by Visitors after Exploring *fabricated*

- 1) Curious
- 2) Confused
- 3) Surprised
- 4) Worried
- 5) Inspired



How do you feel about the impact of AI-generated content on the news you consume?



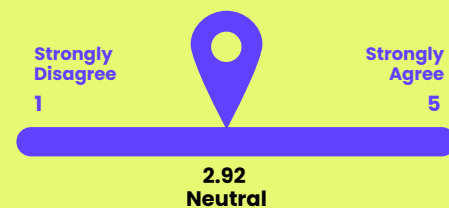
How confident are you in your ability to identify news online that is misleading?



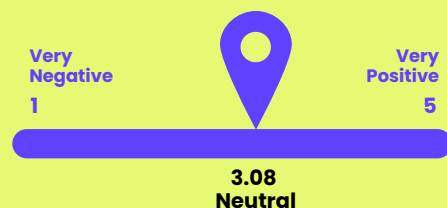
How would you rate your overall certainty in the decisions you made in the content moderation role-playing game?



Do you think the influence industry can strengthen democratic values and institutions?



How do you feel about the AI-generated descriptions that were assigned to you?

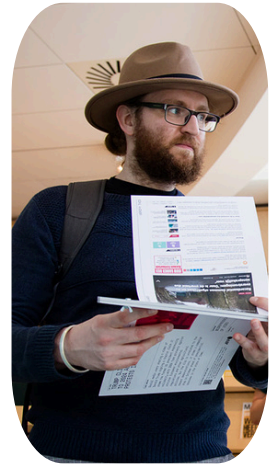


# What Did We Learn from our Visitors?

At the end of the exhibition, visitors were invited to **share 1-2 emotions** they felt after visiting fabricated:



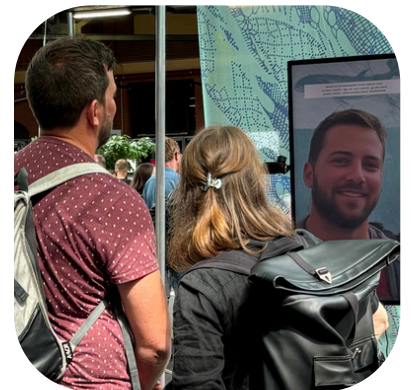
**"You can cut someone's throat with a knife, but also with a cotton swab."**



**"I feel curious but also worried that if we make AI too 'fun' it could spread biased views."**



**"I realize that I need to read news reports more carefully."**



**"Normally, I'm a pessimistic person, but I find this exhibition very good to make people aware of AI and democracy."**

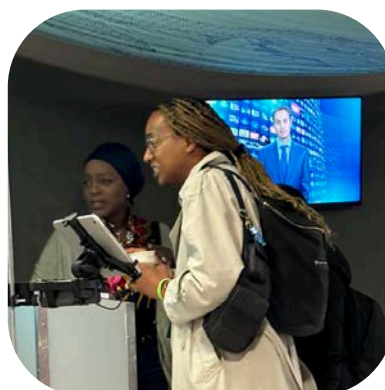


**"Learning more about data makes me feel more in control."**



**"This makes me feel worried and, hoping for a global wake-up call."**

**"This exhibition was stressful, disturbing, but brilliant."**





# What Did Our Partners Say?



**"Innovations in the digital world are always in motion... AI and other software seem to operate on an 'invisible' plane: its interaction with us is like magic! Our behaviours directly shape the digital world which in turn can influence our real life world view. Through the use of tactile design, we make the viewer aware of the interplay between the generated data and ourselves."**

--Koen Weber, TU Delft

**"Games are a powerful tool for helping players gain intuition about complex systems. This works by guiding players with feedback as they make decisions, and showing the consequences of their choices. Digital issues are often nuanced in ways that aren't apparent to those unfamiliar with the topic, and are difficult to simply explain. Through play, one can face these nuances and better understand the tensions and dynamics inherent to the issue they're exploring."**

--Randy Lubin, Leveraged Play



**"For the international news agency AFP, a worldwide leader in fact-checking, it was especially important to provide material relevant for the "Verify this!" installation in the countries hosting the fabricated exhibition, ahead of the EU elections. The immersive concept is surely the best practice in media and digital literacy, which has become an important mission to support critical thinking and democracy."**

--Isabelle Wirth, AFP, journalist,  
European Media projects manager

**"This is not merely an exhibition—it's an investment in the well-being of our citizens, addressing the vital need for digital literacy in our society."**

--Victorine Egter van Wissekerke, Media Policy Advisory at  
the Municipality of The Hague



**"We partnered with Fabricated for their innovative approach to digital literacy, merging art and technology to make complex issues accessible. Their interactive exhibitions align with our mission of lifelong learning and community engagement."**

--Francien Hagenaars, Program Manager at  
Oba Libraries, Amsterdam

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**inholland**  
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We would like to thank all our partners and funders, whose support made this project possible:

## Exhibition Scenography

Peak15 is a design & research studio focused to work with researchers to publicise their work to wider audiences through publications and exhibitions. Founded by Sigrid Schmeisser

Sigrid Schmeisser (Peak15): design, concept and art direction  
Dara Etefaghi: development  
Miguel Teodoro: design assistance  
Tanay Kandpal: consulting & technical drawings  
Teresa Carvalheira: Fabric alterations

Production companies  
Dutch Innovations  
HouseOfU  
Herr & Frau Rio (print production)  
Michael Sarinsky: Intro video script

## Research Partners



## Installation Contributors



Artist: Matthias Oostrik

## Public Partners



## Project Funders

Centre of Expertise  
Creative Innovation

**SIDNfonds**



European  
Cultural  
Foundation



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