

Fact-checking methods

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Module 1 – Finding fact-checkable claims

- **How to identify and select claims to check**
- **Facts, opinions, previsions: What is verifiable and not in fact-checking**
- **Where to look for verifiable claims**



Module 2 – Finding the facts

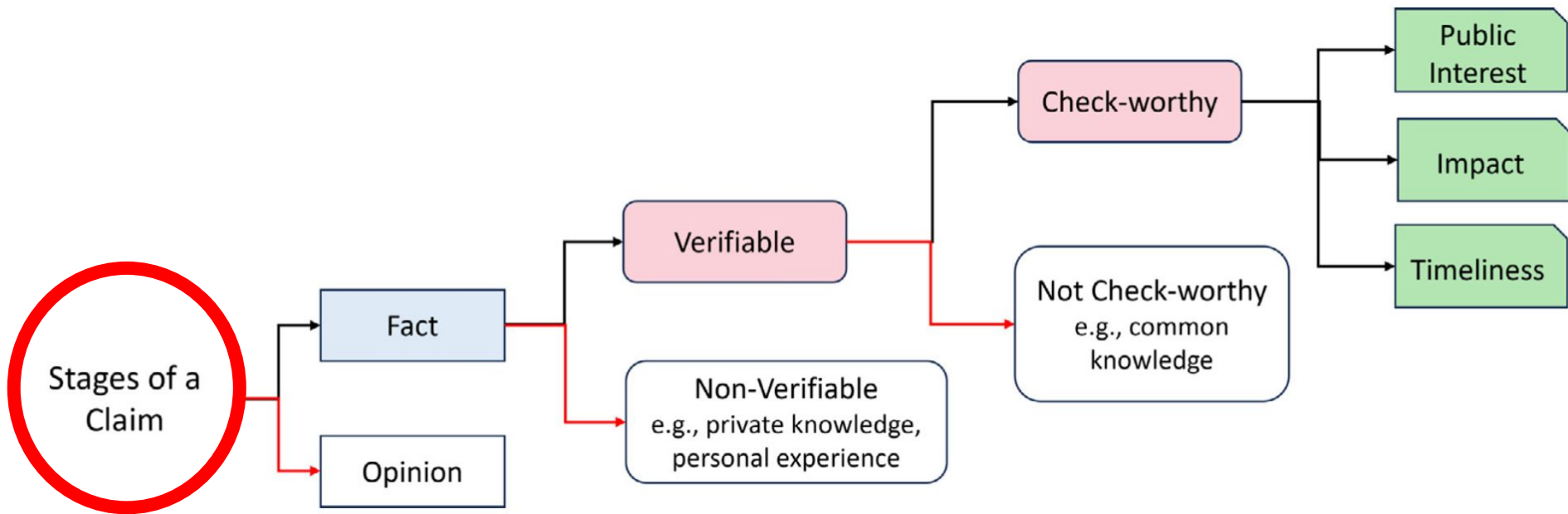
- Good **data** and bad data
- Main statistical **databases** :
Eurostat, OECD, World Bank,
International Monetary Fund
- Reports, **studies** and
other publicly available sources



Module 1 – Finding fact-checkable claims



Stages of a Claim

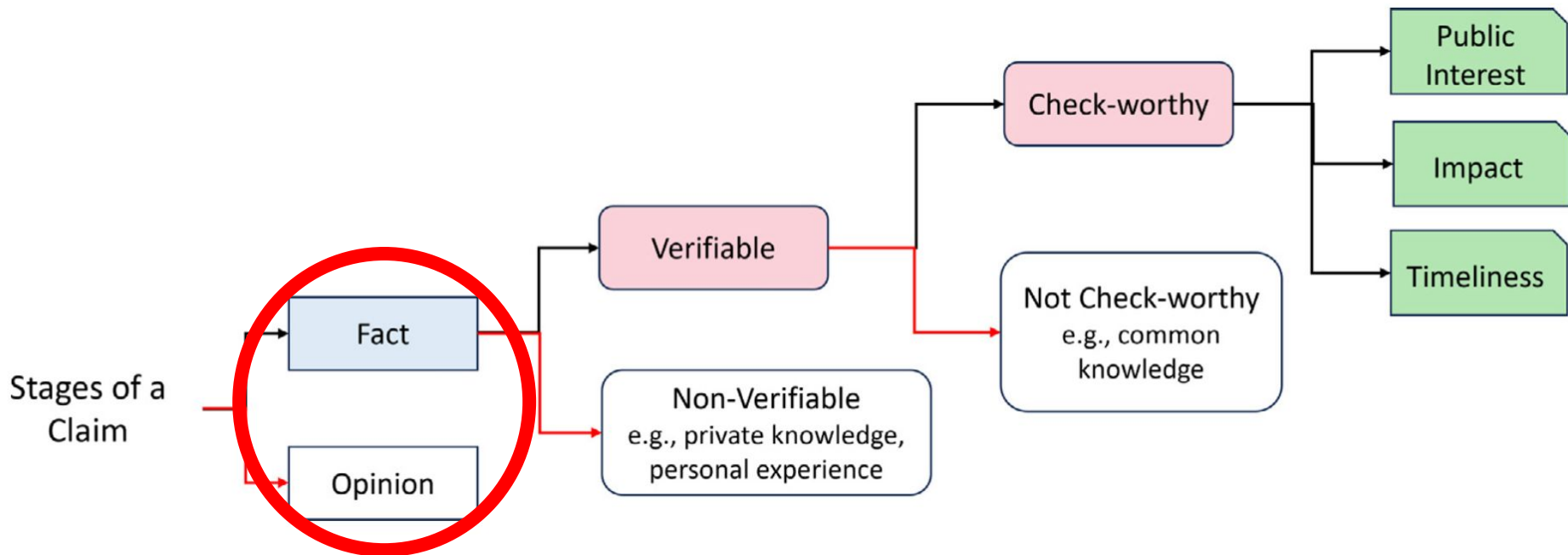


Claim

**An assertion or statement that
someone puts forward as true.**



Stages of a Claim



Fact vs Opinion

A claim can be based on fact or opinion.

A claim rooted in fact relies on **objective ,
verifiable evidence, whereas a claim based on
opinion reflects **personal beliefs** ,
interpretations, or perspectives, which may not
be universally accepted or substantiated.**



Examples – Opinion 1

“Croatia’s **tourism sector has the potential to surpass its current growth rate if more investments are made in eco-friendly accommodations”.**



Examples – Opinion 2

“The Croatian labor market would benefit significantly from adopting more flexible work arrangements to attract younger talent”.



Examples – Opinion 3

**“Increasing government support for
small and medium-sized enterprises
is essential for driving innovation and
economic diversification in Croatia”.**



Examples – Fact 1

“In 2023, Croatia’s tourism sector contributed 20% to the GDP, highlighting its significant role in the economy”.



Examples – Fact 2

“The Croatian labor market has a youth unemployment rate of 23%, indicating a need for policy changes to attract younger workers”.

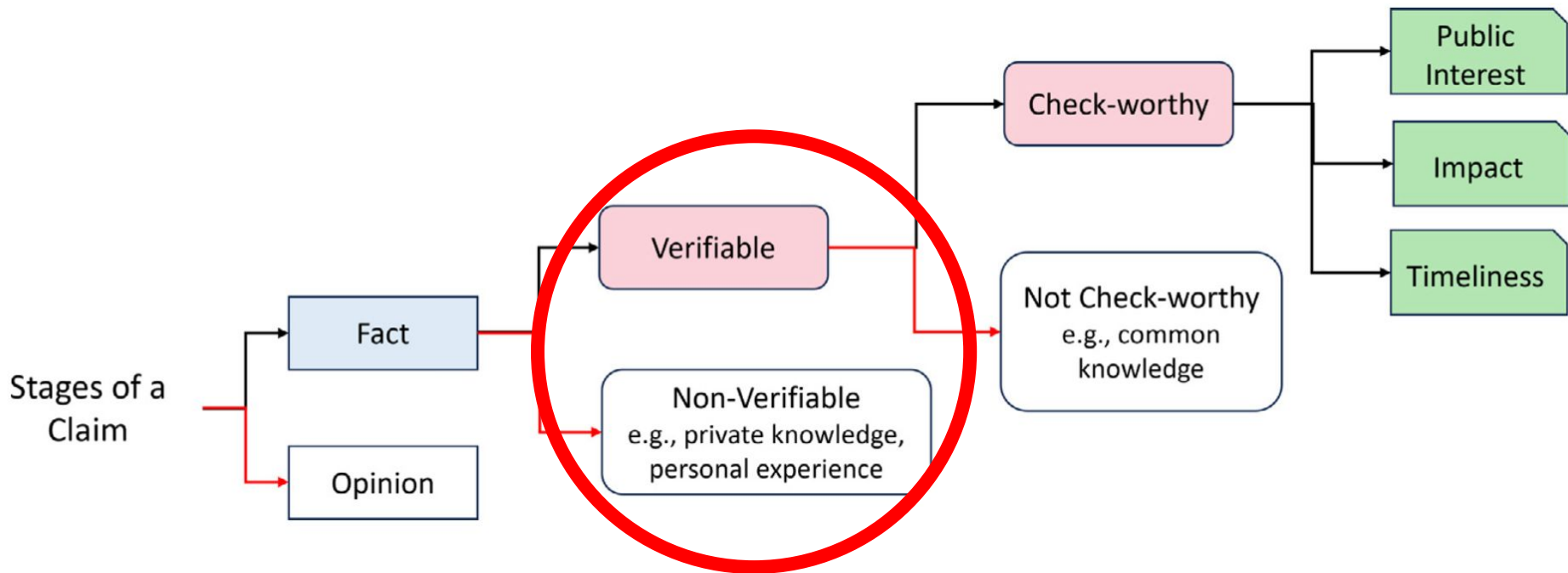


Examples – Fact 3

“Small and medium-sized enterprises account for 99% of all businesses in Croatia, underscoring their importance for economic diversification”.



Stages of a Claim



Personal experience

**Claims that are not capable of being checked
using publicly available information .**



Example 1

“During my visit to several local businesses in Zagreb, I observed that many entrepreneurs feel burdened by excessive bureaucracy, which they believe hinders their growth”.



Example 2

“In my discussions with recent graduates, many **expressed frustration over the lack of job opportunities that match their qualifications, suggesting a disconnect between education and the job market”.**



Verifiable claim

**Factual statement that can be checked , or
assertion about the world that is checkable .**



A taxonomy

- 1. Quantity**
- 2. Prediction**
- 3. Correlation/causation**
- 4. Laws/rules of operation**
- 5. Other**



A taxonomy

1. **Quantity**
2. **Prediction**
3. **Correlation/causation**
4. **Laws/rules of operation**
5. **Other**



1. Quantity

- a. Current value of something**
- b. Changing quantity**
- c. Comparison**
- d. Ranking**



a. Current value of something

**“One in five Croatian households report
spending over 30% of their income on **housing
costs**”.**



b. Changing quantity

“Since the implementation of the new economic policy, Croatia has seen a reduction of 5,000 unemployed individuals each month”.



c. Comparison

“Small and medium-sized enterprises in Croatia are growing at a faster rate than large corporations”.



d. Ranking

**“Croatia has the highest tourism
revenue per capita in the Balkans region”.**



A taxonomy

1. **Quantity**
2. **Prediction**
3. **Correlation/causation**
4. **Laws/rules of operation**
5. **Other**



Prediction

e. Hypothetical statements

f. Claims about the future



e. Hypothetical statements

“By 2025, Croatia’s GDP will have increased by 10% if the government continues to invest in digital infrastructure ”.



f. Claims about the future

“Croatia’s **unemployment rate will drop to below 5% within the next three years due to anticipated economic reforms and foreign investments”.**



A taxonomy

- 1. Quantity**
- 2. Prediction**
- 3. Correlation/causation**
- 4. Laws/rules of operation**
- 5. Other**



Correlation/Causation

g. Correlation

h. Causation

i. Absence of a link



g. Correlation

“Regions in Croatia with higher levels of education tend to have lower unemployment rates”.



h. Causation

**“Reducing corporate tax rates has
directly led to an increase
in foreign direct investment in Croatia”.**



i. Absence of a link

“Increasing the **minimum wage has not led to a significant reduction in poverty levels in Croatia”.**



A taxonomy

- 1. Quantity**
- 2. Prediction**
- 3. Correlation/causation**
- 4. Laws/rules of operation**
- 5. Other**



Current laws or rules of operation

j. Public institutional procedures

k. Rules/rule changes



j. Procedures of public institutions

“Decisions regarding the allocation of **economic development funds are now made by regional development agencies in Croatia”.**



k. Rules/rule changes

“Starting next year, small businesses in Croatia will be exempt from **paying VAT if their annual revenue is below 40,000 euros”.**



A taxonomy

- 1. Quantity**
- 2. Prediction**
- 3. Correlation/causation**
- 4. Laws/rules of operation**
- 5. Other**



Other type of claim

l. Voting records

m. Definition

n. Support

o. Other other



I. Voting records

**“The minister of Economy voted against
the recent **budget proposal** ”.**



m. Definition

“Using government funds to support failing businesses without a clear recovery plan is what's known as economic interventionism”.

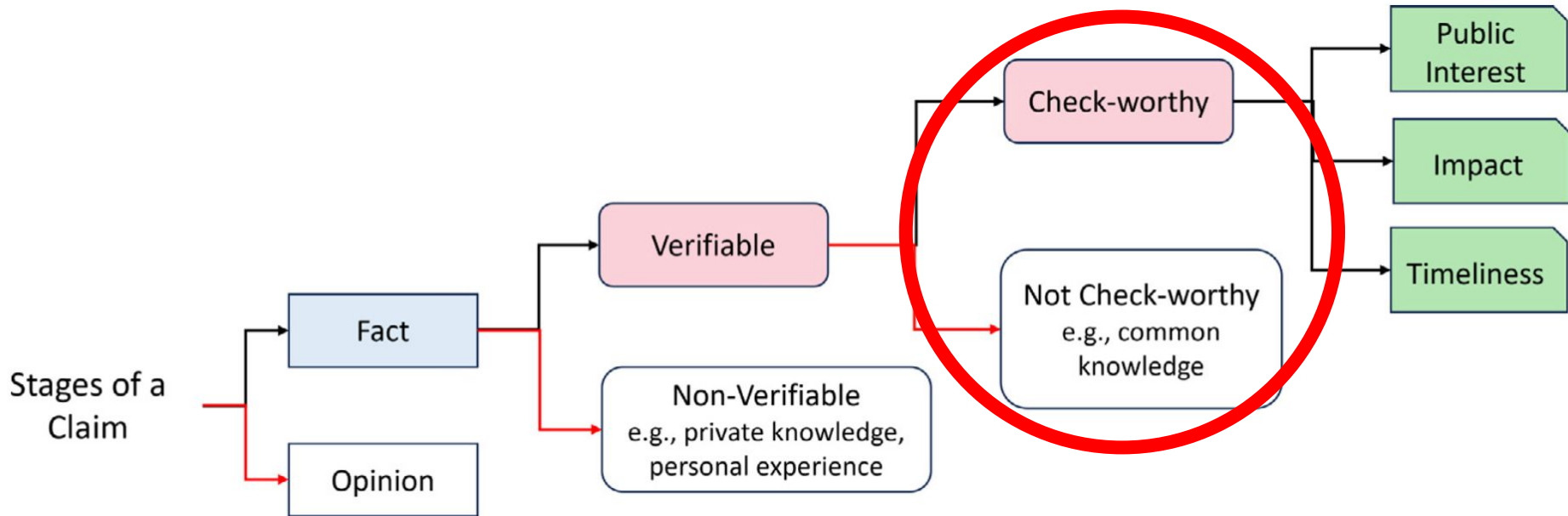


n. Support

“The government pledged to increase subsidies for renewable energy projects”.



Stages of a Claim

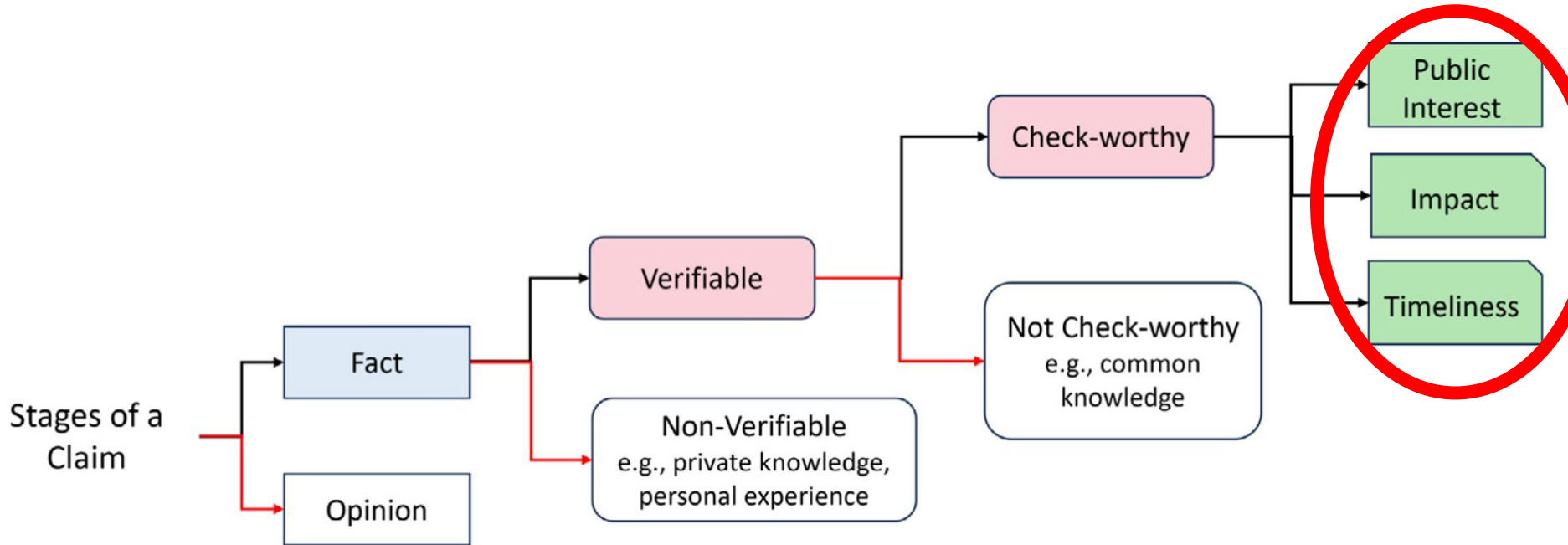


Trivial Claim

“Tourism is a significant part of Croatia’s economy”.



Stages of a Claim



Attention-worthy Claim

A verifiable claim that should get the attention of the policymakers and government entities.



Harmful Claim

A verifiable claim that is **harmful to society.**



Interesting to the general public

**A verifiable claim that may have an impact
on society or **attract interest**
from the general public.**



Example 1

**“Croatia’s public debt has reached 85% of GDP”
(posing a significant risk to long-term
economic stability)**



Example 2

“The **unemployment rate among young people
in Croatia has surpassed 20%”
(indicating a critical need for targeted
job creation programs).**



Example 3

“Croatia’s **aging population is projected to double healthcare costs within the next decade”
(necessitating urgent reforms
in the healthcare system).**



Where to look for verifiable claims





Module 2 – Finding the facts



“Fact-checking is **not rocket science . It is scrupulous analysis driven by one basic question: ‘How do we know that?’. At the same time, fact-checking is **not spell-checking** . There is not a dictionary-style guidebook with **all the facts** , nor a simple software that will examine documents and flag anytime something has been misstated as fact”.**



Search for the evidence

- 1. Proximity**
- 2. Expertise**
- 3. Rigour**
- 4. Transparency**
- 5. Reliability**



1. Proximity

How close is the evidence to the phenomenon?



1. Proximity – Example

A financial news outlet reporting on Croatia's GDP growth rate is typically less proximate to the data—and therefore less valuable—than the **Croatian Bureau of Statistics**, which directly collects and publishes the official GDP figures.



2. Expertise

What credentials indicate the quality of the producer of the evidence?



2. Expertise – Example

The economic analysis was authored by a professor with a PhD in economics from a prestigious university and has numerous publications in top-tier economic journals, indicating a high level of expertise in analyzing Croatia's economic trends.



3. Rigour

How was the evidence collected?



3. Rigour – Example

Data on household income in Croatia is often collected through self-reported surveys .

This can introduce biases, as respondents might underreport or overreport their income.

Differences in survey methodologies and response rates can make it challenging to compare data accurately across different regions or time periods.



4. Transparency

What do you know about the evidence?



4. Transparency – Example

A government report on Croatia's employment rates includes detailed methodology , raw data, and analysis, all publicly accessible online, allowing other economists to review and validate the findings.



5. Reliability

Is there a **track record to evaluate?**



5. Reliability – Example

The Croatian National Bank has been publishing annual reports on the country's financial stability for over 15 years , providing a long-standing track record that allows economists to assess the reliability and consistency of its data and analyses.



**Main statistical
databases :
Eurostat, OECD,
World Bank, IMF**



eurostat





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