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>> This is the final episode of our five-part podcast miniseries in partnership with the Google News Initiative. In this episode, you'll hear from Daniel Brammati of Abraji as he speaks on the future of news and collaborative reporting at the first Google News Initiative Innovation Forum in London. You can watch a video of this talk by visiting g.co/talksatgoogle/collaborativejournalism.

>> BRAMMATI: Thanks for having me. I'm going to talk about the largest collaborative project involving journalism in the history of the Brazilian press, this is the Comprova Project. And at the beginning of this year, we--my--the organization that I'm representing here at the Brazilian Association of investigate--Investigative Journalism was invited to-to take part of an--a coalition to help--to organize and coordinate a coalition of 24 news organizations.

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To fight misinformation in Brazil. And this was, like, a danger zone to us, so we-we hesitate to say yes, but we did and it was a good call. As you-you know, Brazil is right now a very polarized society and all this polarization is transforming our-our social networks in political battlefield. It's-it's really hard to explain, because I think you don't have polarization here, right? You-you--I-I heard-I heard that you live in a-in a consensual society, but the invitation came from-from First Draft, from Claire Wardle who is here--is here with us today. And these-these are the-the partners of the equalization, you have here newspapers.

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You have TV stations, radio stations, web-based news organizations, and also news agencies. And the idea was to pull the resources of all these newsrooms to-to monitor and--monitor misleading content on social network and also to use the power of amplification of these news organizations to spread the debunkings of this false content. So in the end of May, the-the journalists involved-involved in the project met for the first time. And a lot of journalists, they were not familiar with content verification, so they had to be trained. And First Draft gave us the tools and methodology to do it. And in June, the project was officially launched.

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In August, we began to publish our content in August 6th. And as you can see at the bottom of the slide, a lot of news organizations were working together to check the content, so collaboration was working from day one. And we are--we were very positively-positively surprised by the engagement that this project generated in between journalists. We use a WhatsApp group to communicate because we had to work remotely. And in six months, about fifty journalists, they exchanged more than--than eighteen thousand messages on this WhatsApp group, all-all related to the projects, all related to content verification. And also I did a word count in-in-in this message.

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And we exchanged more than 315,000 words and that's more in terms of book--text volume, it's more than any book of the Harry Potter saga. So what we learned and sometimes a-a shared purpose is--motivates more than

the competition. Collaboration is horizontal, but you need a central coordination, of course. And the editor, the person in-charge of this coordination, he must not act like a boss, but like a diplomat. Collaboration builds trust and collaboration improves quality. We-ended the project with zero errors. And also for the future, one collaborated--collaborative projects opens the door to another one.

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So we are right now in Brazil discussing a new Comprova, a slightly different one to-to begin in 2019. We also learned that verification is hard. Sometimes it took days to debunk just-just one piece of content that may be created in a matter of minutes. But the Comprova project managed to publish around 12 debunks per week or 147 in total. We get--we have--we got more than 70 thousand messages sent by our-our readers, you know, WhatsApp channel. And, of course, our content had millions of views. But the question is, was it enough? Of course, not. The impact of this information in the electoral campaign was huge.

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And when I think of the role of Comprova and the electoral process, this image can--comes to my mind. In September of this year, our National Museum in Rio was hit by a huge fire. And almost immediately--it was a Sunday night and a lot of workers, museum workers and also researchers, they-they rushed to the scene, and some of them even entered the building, and faced the flame to rescue some items. They knew they could not save the museum, but they did what they could and they did what was right. Thank you very much.

>> Launched in 2018, the Google News Initiative is Google's effort to work with the news industry to help journalism thrive in the digital age.

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