

franchetvinfo.fr

A satirical website that says it delivers “all the news, but fake,” and whose name and appearance mimic FranceTVInfo.fr, one of the most-read news sites in France.



This is a satire or humor website.
It is not an actual news source.

Description

FranchetvInfo is a satirical site that publishes hoaxes and made-up news stories inspired by real events in France and internationally. The About page states, in French and English, that “All the items on our site are fake.” The site’s Facebook page claims that it won the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for false information.

“The testimonies, investigations and character names used in our articles are fictitious. The use of names of real personalities or companies is here for purely satirical purposes,” the site states, listing its guiding values as “Humor, truthfulness and falsehood” (“L’humour, la véracité, le faux”). Individual articles do not include a disclosure about their satirical nature.

The website’s name is a play on FranceTVInfo, a popular news platform publishing articles and multimedia content produced by several public media outlets. (Franchetv means frank or direct in French.) The site’s design is also copied from FranceTVInfo. Content is divided into sections similar to what a reader would encounter on a real news site, including culture, economy, crime, politics, health, and society.

Typical articles have included “3 tips to know if you are a Hindu or if a sniper is targeting your skull” (“3 astuces pour savoir si vous êtes hindou ou si un sniper vise votre crâne”); “The National Assembly is degrading more quickly than plastics” (“L’Assemblée Nationale met moins de temps à se dégrader que le plastique”); and “E. Philippe: ‘They will be allowed to retire at 60 if they die at 60.’” (“E. Philippe : ‘Ils pourront prendre leur retraite à 60 ans s’ils meurent à 60 ans’”).

In December 2019, the website published a fictional article titled "Macron: 'If you have 200€ to buy gifts, then you don't need a raise'" ("Macron : 'Si on a 200€ pour des cadeaux, on n'a pas besoin d'une augmentation'"), which claimed that French President Emmanuel Macron had made this comment to a cashier. Within hours, the false story was widely shared on Twitter, as many people assumed the quote was authentic, Liberation and FranceTVInfo itself reported.

Asked about this, the site's founder, who goes by the pseudonym Pierre Girard, told NewsGuard in an email: "Internet is a go-fast machine, but not a go-well machine. It's written everywhere that we are parodic, satirical and we wish to make people laugh, not to fool them." ("Internet est une machine à aller vite, mais pas à aller bien. Il est partout indiqué que nous sommes parodiques, satiriques et nous souhaitons faire rire le monde et pas le tromper.") Girard added that "it's on the readers to check their news, not on us to walk on eggshells." ("Nous allons continuer sur la même ligne sans rien changer, c'est aux lecteurs de vérifier leur information, pas à nous de marcher sur des œufs")

people are fooled by its stories, the site considers that "humorous recognition" ("consécration humoristique").

Some sections of the website imitate other well-known French media. A page called "Those fooling around" ("Les Décodeurs") mimics the logo of Le Monde's fact-checking team, Les Décodeurs, which means "those who decode." The page states that "Les Décodeurs" offers "average verifications, explanations that are so-so... at the rhythm of fake news." ("des vérifications moyennes, des explications bof (...) au rythme des fake-news") In December 2019, this section featured an investigation titled "No, Angela Merkel and Donald Trump are not the same person, that photo is a montage." ("Non, Angela Merkel et Donald Trump ne sont pas la même personne, c'est un montage").

Another page, called "Deconex," is an imitation of Le Monde's Decodex, a search function that enables readers to check a website's reliability. On

Franchetvinfo.fr, the search bar only offers the option to check the reliability of one site — Daesh-Couture-Infos (Isis Sewing News), a made-up website that it rated as unreliable.

Franchetvinfo.fr does not provide information on its ownership or top editors. Writers' names listed on articles are pseudonyms. The site provides an email address to reach the editorial staff.

Advertising is distinguished from editorial content.

The About page tells a fictional story of how the site was started in 1825 by a journalist named Pierre Girard. The site was actually launched in April 2019, its founder told NewsGuard in an email. "I studied in business school, but I always mixed with a lot of people working in the journalistic field, which helped motivate me to start this project," he said. Four people write for the site on a part-time basis, he added.

"Michel" and "Catherine," two of the main writers for the site, said in a radio interview with Radio Delta that they were both expelled from middle school after creating a blog called "Listen to your teachers" ("Ecoute tes profs"), where they made fun of their teachers.

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Sources

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