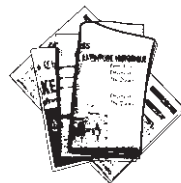
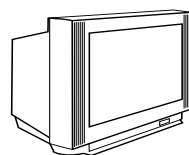
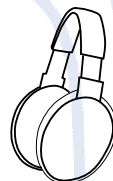
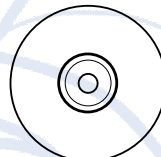
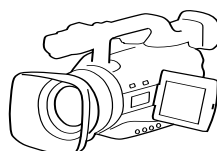


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# Media Education

A Kit for Teachers,  
Students, Parents  
and Professionals



# Media Education

**A Kit for Teachers, Students,  
Parents and Professionals**

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We also express our thanks to the Council of Europe for giving us permission to reproduce the full version of *Handbook on Information Literacy* in the kit.

## PREFACE

From the early 1960s onwards, UNESCO had not only identified media's critical role in social improvement, but also outlined concrete policies, programmes, and strategies in engaging and utilizing various media toward development goals. UNESCO is also sensitive to the idea of creating and sustaining spaces of dialogue. In an age where mediated forms of communication have become the primary means of delivering information and knowledge, what is, perhaps, needed is to extend dialogic forms of communication and conversation across cross-cultural boundaries. To this end, for the past several years, UNESCO has been involved in promoting freedom of expression and universal access to information and knowledge. It recognizes the important role media education plays in preparing young people who would facilitate the free exchange of information and knowledge by participating and appreciating the diverse uses of media. The free and equitable access to information and knowledge is an essential component for empowering people and ensuring their participation in knowledge societies. This is possible through a systematic teaching of media education as part of the curriculum in schools.

Within the context of expanding media worldwide, and the recent outcome of the World Summit on Information Society, that stressed the importance of education, media and e-learning, the objectives of UNESCO are to develop an awareness of, and a debate about, the role of media in society, not only for communication but also for information and transmission of knowledge. This newly published collection of documents, *Media Education. A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals*, includes five manuals and provides a broad set of guidelines and insights on how to introduce media education as a subject and topic of the curriculum at the school level. The kit has been developed to cater to a wide variety of people involved in media education, both directly and indirectly. Composed of nine sections, with a variety of entries and learning styles, it will be useful not only to teachers but also to students, parents and professionals alike.

This Training Kit provides a complex and comprehensive view of media education, encompassing all media, old and new. It seeks new ways in which people can enhance their participation in the political and cultural life of the general community through the media. In particular, it promotes young people's access to the media, while also increasing their critical appreciation of its activities. It has a sustainable development perspective and addresses some of the challenges of knowledge societies, especially the digital knowledge divide. It supports sharing of resources, elaborates on available strategies and tools and capitalizes on good practices. In its long term perspective, it tries to foster a digital dynamics: making media education available to all may help reach the critical mass necessary for constructive dialogue and exchanges across cultural media boundaries.

**Abdul Waheed Khan**  
**Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information**

## INTRODUCTION

### "IT IS BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN TO CURSE THE DARKNESS"

Media play an important part in the socialization of young people, a phenomenon which has been gaining in momentum. A large part of the cultural capital of the planet is passed on to them by many kinds of vehicles with which they are very familiar. This implies a change of attitude on the part of the various persons who accompany children and teenagers in their development. Such change should make it possible for them to appropriate this phenomenon by self-education. This is what is suggested by the organization of this kit, whose purpose is to deal at the same time with the means *to educate others* to media and to *educate oneself* to media, as part of lifelong training. It suggests the possibility of a dual approach for the user, sometimes in a learner position, sometimes in a teacher position.

This kit proposes a prototype of media education curriculum for the basic qualification of secondary school teachers. But then it extends its modular approach and its key-concepts to adults outside the school system, be it parents or media professionals and decision-makers. Such training is increasingly required with the introduction of the new digital technologies, as it becomes necessary for every citizen to search, retrieve and produce information as well as to communicate via the networks, with full autonomy. Educating others and educating oneself, getting information from others and producing information about oneself: such are the current needs for a media and information literate society.

Indeed, if media education becomes more and more crucial for teachers' training, it should not stop with them. Other actors are implicated and must be made sensitive to the needs of young people, such as caregivers or journalists, producers and broadcasters, and all other media professionals. Taken as a whole, the kit offers to each actor the possibility of getting acquainted with the culture of the others, – the media culture, the family culture, the school culture – in a spirit of dialogue.

The kit focuses on young people. Around them we will first look at their close circle, teachers and parents. As the circle widens the kit encompasses media professionals. The largest circle the kit envisions is that of their peers on the networks. Following that logic, the handbook intended for learners is bracketed by those intended for teachers and parents. They are followed by the handbook on ethical relations with professionals and the handbook for internet literacy, to master information on the networks. Throughout, the kit takes into account the necessary skills to decipher the various types of messages as well as the various stakes for citizenship and sustainability, beyond school and the family.

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS KIT

- > To provide solid and durable foundations for a large and systematic media education intended for young people, in schools but also in families and in media;
- > To propose master documents, in the shape of handbooks, that will help those who want to develop media education. They aim at providing a vision of the school curriculum that integrates media education in all its dimensions: initiation to audiovisual language, content analysis, understanding of the economic production of the media, appropriation of the rights of the public and of youth protection, awareness of self-regulation and regulation;
- > To help in teacher instruction by generalizing the use of modules for initial training and continuous education in curricula for teachers at all levels. The kit offers possible extensions outside the school, by multi-disciplinary initiatives to sensitize young people and parents to media education through action;
- > To sensitize all the actors, including decision-makers and broadcasters, to the fact that media education is a fundamental element of a pedagogy for democracy which would allow schools to renew their mission of training citizens in basic literacy, including informing and communicating about themselves;

- > To develop among the members of the public the basic skills for communication and an autonomous critical competence, to allow them to differentiate between the authentic and legitimate interests of the media and their own;
- > To build a new democratic, active and participatory citizenship, based on individual and collective responsibility as well as on solidarity and cooperation fostered by communication;
- > To support pluralism, cultural diversity, and the sharing of knowledge in a perspective of united sustainable development.

#### THE MODULAR USE OF THIS KIT

The various handbooks offer a wide range of perspectives but they are conceived alike. They all have:

- > a short outline of the context
- > a presentation of the environment (school, family, media),
- > a development of the key-concepts and modules (production, language, representation, public),
- > a proposal about the way in which these concepts could be taught at school or applied in society
- > a series of suggested activities.

The objectives and the theoretical tenets which ground these approaches are also made as explicit as possible. The key-concepts supply a general and systematic approach of media education, which can be applied to a whole series of media and which all the actors can appropriate. They are not hierarchically organized, and can be studied at various moments, but they all need to be reactivated, whatever the level of entry chosen.

The different sections propose a differentiated means of appropriating these key-concepts, which are distributed with a certain amount of organized redundancy in the handbooks for the various actors involved in the process of socialization of young people to media. These concepts are to be found across several handbooks. The user is invited to adopt a variety of points of views : the teacher's, the student's, the parent's, the professional's. He/she is always enticed to satisfy his/her curiosity as a learner. These modules are to be applied to several vehicles, and not exclusively to the dominant media, as television (the preferred one as it feeds the cultural environment of young people) or the internet (as it allows the emergence of new practices) but also minor media, that can be used at low cost in the schools, like photography, radio or video.

The pedagogical process used throughout the kit is based on questioning: the main purpose is to bring youngsters and adults alike to ask themselves questions. The answers are to be elaborated in common and individually. Those offered here are meant to introduce the debate and the dialogue rather than to close them definitively. There is no specific pedagogical material provided, for it is supposed to be adapted locally, for all modules. Some examples are mentioned, but mostly references are given which refer to Internet sites or to publications of UNESCO or other institutions, often free of rights... What matters most is the establishing of connections between the handbooks, the modules and the networks they suggest. In a development perspective, they can become transferable, modifiable, adaptable, to answer the current needs of shared knowledge societies.





# PROPOSAL FOR A MODULAR CURRICULUM

Media education is becoming more important in the process of teacher training. This section offers a media education curriculum prototype for basic qualification of secondary school teachers. It also analyzes the different ways in which this curriculum can be inserted in national and regional policies.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- > To propose a unified modular program of media education to be used by participating countries in various regions of the world;
- > To take into consideration cultural and societal differences as teachers in the different countries are not a homogeneous body. Their level of awareness of the importance of media education varies from country to country. Their relations and their use of media in the educational context may differ dramatically. Besides, their disciplines and their curricula may or may not be open to media materials;
- > To raise awareness about the need of a suggested unified curriculum for basic training of teachers. This common curriculum may be used in different countries with different degrees of incorporation.

**Main target audience:** Secondary school teachers.

### Levels of the Curriculum:

The proposed curriculum may be dealt with at two levels:

- > An initial and general level which tackles the basic knowledge and educational methods related to media education;
- > An advanced level which incorporates

media education and the educational process related to media education within units of subjects such as languages, social sciences, creative arts...

### Methodology:

The following proposal relies on a series of six modules which are considered as basics of media education training. Each country or formal training institution will be free to decide on how to adopt each or any or all of them according to local possibilities and choices. Each module is estimated to require a minimum volume of twelve hours of teaching. The contents of each module need to be framed or incorporated within a methodology grounded on experimentation and situation-based workshops and/or production, to give future teachers a hands-on approach to their pedagogical activities. Module six will vary in weight and importance according to its location either at the basic knowledge level or at the advanced subject level.

## CONTENT

### MODULES

Module 1 - Why?

Module 2 - What?

Module 3 - What?

Module 4 - What?

**The Cultural environment of media**  
**Media production**  
**Media languages**  
**Representations in the media**

Module 5 - Who?

**The publics  
in reception**

Module 6 - How?

**Pedagogical stages  
and strategies**

**MODULE 1**

**WHY?**

**The Cultural environment of media**

**Rationale**

This module aims at showing that media are part of an environment and are to be seen in the context of a specific culture and country (its institutions, its social demographics, its historical evolution...). It aims also at showing that the socialization of young people is a process no longer effected by the traditional actors only (family, church, school) but also by media productions.

**Objectives**

- > To show the teachers how important media education is.
- > To introduce the media to the trainees (teachers).
- > To sensitize teachers to the importance of media culture for young people.

**Elements**

- > Media in the life of young people (social effects of mass media).
- > Cultural practices.
- > Socialization by the media.

**Recommended duration of training**

12 -18 hours (over one week on a face-to-face basis) + projects development and collaborative works.

**MODULE 2**

**WHAT?**

**Media production**

**Rationale**

This module aims at showing that media create a culture of their own, due to their specific history and evolution in a country (ex: public service media vs commercial media models). It also aims at creating awareness about the different power relations that have shaped them and affect content production in a given society.

**Objectives**

- > To increase the trainees' knowledge of the media.
- > To clarify the relationship between media institutions and other institutions in society.
- > To promote awareness about power relations and content production.
- > To emphasize market dimensions of media and information production.

**Elements**

- > Definitions.
- > History and evolution of media and ICTs
- > Media institutions (systems, law, economics).
- > Media and producer rights and responsibilities.
- > Media and societies.

**Recommended duration of training**

24 hours (two weeks) + personal and collaborative projects.

**MODULE 3**

**WHAT?**

**Media languages**

**Rationale**

This module aims at showing that each media is a vehicle with specific semiotic resources (text, image, sound...) that can be compared to natural languages. Their uses and functions (entertainment, information, transmission...) need to be assessed for a better understanding of their impact and their enhancement of the communication skills, formal and informal, of the students.

**Objectives**

- > To identify the different languages, their codes, their functions and purposes.
- > To provide teacher trainees with a hands-on experience with these different languages.
- > To take into account the informal skills acquired by the students in their daily dealing with media.

**Elements**

- > Written, Visual and Sound media languages.
- > Interaction of media (audiovisual, multimedia...)
- > Promotion and validation of informal skills.



### Recommended duration of training

24 hours (two weeks) + personal and collaborative projects.

## MODULE 4 WHAT?

### Representations in the media

#### Rationale

This module aims at showing that media are mental and imaginary constructions of reality and that there are different degrees of relation between fictional and non-fictional productions that create expectations in the viewer, especially via the notion of genre (news, reality programming, docudrama, etc.). It also aims at analyzing the more recent evolution of media in terms of hybridization of genres, especially as more participatory productions and practices are appearing, due to the increasing use of Internet and mobile telephony.

#### Objectives

- > To identify different genres and media contents, their functions and purposes.
- > To sensitize teacher trainees to shifts and pressures in the genre production.
- > To acquire formal skills about distinguishing different media outputs concerning various degrees of constructing reality.

#### Elements

- > Diversity of media, genre and content.
- > Typology of genres (information, fiction, documentary, entertainment, advertising...).
- > Genre hybridization (reality, fiction, virtual reality; reality/verisimilitude).

### Recommended duration of training

24 hours (two weeks) instructional time + personal and collaborative projects.

## MODULE 5 WHO?

### The publics in reception

#### Rationale

This module aims at showing that youth socialization to media can take different shapes, from passive to active attitudes, from effects to uses and gratification, from reception to productivity. It also aims at creating awareness that such strategies of appro-

priation come with a certain amount of user rights, that may be different from producer rights (Intellectual Property rights, fair use...).

#### Objectives

- > To map various media exposure and experiences.
- > To provide teacher trainees with the range of young audience strategies of appropriation.
- > To encourage young audience's awareness of their rights and responsibilities in media participation and production.

#### Elements

- > Media and market strategies for audience studies.
- > Processes and conditions of receptions, audiences.
- > Interpretative skills, critical and civic analysis.

### Recommended duration of training

12 -18 hours (one week)

## MODULE 6 HOW?

### Pedagogical stages and strategies

#### Rationale

This module is about teaching to teach and learning to learn. Media education can foster new educational practices and pedagogies, especially related to collaborative work, project-oriented productions and new forms of evaluation (intermediary and global as well as individual and collective). This module also aims at empowering teachers and students by helping them design courses and material that are based on local needs and productions.

#### Objectives

- > To acquire project management skills.
- > to develop competence in guiding and assessing young people's projects.
- > To design local content courses and evaluate them individually and collectively.

#### Elements

- > Elaboration of projects within the framework of already existing subjects.
- > Description of objectives.
- > Design of pedagogical activities using specific media materials, data and media

production and outputs (newsletters, audio tapes, video tapes, on-line newspapers...).

> Assessment and evaluation of results.

**Recommended duration of training**

24 hours (two weeks).

**Recommendations**

These modules may be adapted according to local uses. In order to sensitize the trainees to the importance of media education, it is suggested to prepare a preliminary conference with question time. The objective of this process is to ensure further coherence within the school system and to reduce reluctance to change.

These modules can be also used as a basic training program for teachers who wish to train on their own and who want to apply these newly acquired skills and competences in the classroom. The contents of these modules are developed in the handbooks for teachers and for students. These can indeed serve as support tools for the initial training of teachers but the activities and pedagogical strategies they suggest can also be used outside the school, in a context where other actors can be involved, especially parents and professionals.

**THE STRATEGIC  
CONTEXT FOR  
THE INTEGRATION OF  
THIS MODULAR  
CURRICULUM**

**media education  
in the schools:  
an autonomous subject**

In several countries, particularly in the English-speaking world, media education is now fairly well established as a specialist subject in secondary schools. Where students can begin to opt for new specialist subjects—generally in the upper years of secondary schooling—there is growing demand for such courses. While these courses originally specialised in film, they

are now mostly concerned with the media as a whole. Over the past twenty years, and particularly in the last ten, these specialist Media Studies courses have experienced a steady growth in student numbers; and this has been supported by a phenomenal expansion of media courses in higher education. In principle, these courses offer a sustained experience of media education that provides both breadth and depth. Most courses of this kind combine “theory” and “practice,” and most cover the range of “key concepts” identified in the modules.

However, the establishment of such courses often involves a considerable struggle. The argument that “the curriculum is already overcrowded” has always been a very familiar one for media educators. Even in relatively hospitable conditions, it is often difficult for teachers to establish new optional courses against the competing demands of other curriculum subjects. New courses inevitably require investment in new equipment and resources, and a longer-term commitment to staffing. Despite their popularity with students, Media Studies courses have always remained vulnerable to cuts; and there has never been anything resembling a “career structure” for specialist media teachers. All too often, Media Studies courses are introduced by young and determined enthusiasts, only to fall by the wayside when such people move on.

Ultimately, the fate of such specialist courses depends very much upon the wider context of educational policy, and particularly on the control of the curriculum and of funding. Centralised control of the curriculum—which is currently increasing in many countries—frequently results in a decline in the time available for specialist or optional subjects, and in the training and support that is necessary for their development. Where there is a more decentralised “free market,” Media Studies often tends to prosper, because students clearly wish to opt for it. Nevertheless, it would be false to pretend that Media Studies at this level remains anything more than a minority subject: as an optional course, confined to the upper years of the secondary school, it will only ever occupy a marginal role.

Furthermore, Media Studies is still regarded by some schools as an 'easy option' which is best suited to the academic under-achiever; and this definition is reinforced by the fact that it is sometimes offered as an alternative to more "academic" subjects.

### MEDIA EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Advocates of media education have often argued that it should be seen as an element of *all* curriculum subjects. There are several reasons for this argument. Firstly, there is the fact that all teachers use media of different kinds as "teaching aids" - not only audio-visual media, but also textbooks and other print materials. For example, History teachers will routinely use films or photographs as sources of evidence alongside printed documents; Geography teachers will rely on anthropological accounts of life in other cultures, whether on video or in print; while Science teachers will use television as a way of demonstrating complex processes, or illustrating their effects, in ways that cannot be attempted in the classroom. If we are concerned to encourage students to be 'critical' of the media, or to use them in more informed ways, then surely this should be extended to the media they encounter inside the classroom.

This argument can also be applied to the use of media *production* in schools. Media such as video or photography are sometimes used to record classroom activities, or as an alternative way for students to present their work; and some have argued that media production of this kind offers a new *method of learning* that can be used in many situations. In some secondary schools, for example, media production activities are used in this way in a wide range of curriculum areas, including Art, History and Science: rather than writing up their work in essay form, students present it using audio-visual means. In presenting their work in media formats, and to a wider audience than simply their teachers, students can be enabled to reformulate their existing knowledge, and to learn at a more profound level.

Furthermore, it could be argued that many students' existing knowledge of school subjects—their "commonsense ideas" about science and technology, about other countries or about the past—are at least partly derived from the media in the first place. These media accounts may not, of course, necessarily claim to be factual. Students' perceptions of life in the nineteenth century may derive primarily from costume dramas; while their attitudes towards science and technology may owe most to science fiction. Yet however invalid or irrelevant this knowledge may be seen to be, it is clearly something which teachers neglect at their peril. A more radical variant of this argument would suggest that the curriculum itself is a mediation: it is a constructed representation of the world, not a neutral reflection of it. By questioning the ways in which the world is represented, and hence the processes whereby knowledge is constructed, media education can be seen to challenge the dominant epistemology of the curriculum as a whole.

For all these reasons, media education could be seen to play an important role right across the school curriculum. However, there is a danger that this might reduce media education to an instrumental or "servicing" role. Teaching *about* the media should not be confused with teaching *through* the media—although this confusion may be increasing as a result of the dissemination of information and communication technologies in education. There are also logistical objections here. Particularly in secondary schools, where subject specialisms are much more institutionalised, the fate of cross-curricular movements has not generally been a positive one, particularly where they begin from a relatively weak institutional base. An issue that is every teachers' responsibility can quickly become nobody's responsibility. It is for this reason that media educators have been inclined to regard the existence of a specialist Media Studies department as a pre-requisite for the formulation—and particularly the *implementation*—of cross-curricular policies.



### media education within language and literature teaching

Historically, media education has been a particular concern for teachers of language and literature. In practice, while some media teachers in schools are trained in other disciplines (notably Art and Social Studies), most are initially qualified in literature; and most specialist Media Studies teachers also remain teachers of literature. Many literature syllabuses include a requirement to address media such as advertising and newspapers; and many literature teachers are likely to cover aspects of popular television such as drama or soap opera.

Indeed, many would argue that the distinction between literature teaching and media education is spurious in the first place. A broader definition of “literacy” would suggest that print media should not be seen in isolation from other forms of language and communication. The distinction between “literature” and other forms of writing—and, by extension, other forms of cultural expression—is one that is both historically and culturally variable. In recent years, many academic critics have challenged this distinction, arguing that the notion of “literature” itself represents a form of elitism, and that popular culture is equally worthy of serious study.

These arguments are now widely recognised, although it is debatable whether they have had a very profound impact on the teaching of literature, particularly in schools. In practice, the pedagogic approaches adopted in relation to literary texts are often very different from those applied to media. Literary study is often seen to be a matter of cultivating the students’ “appreciation” of works of individual authorial genius. The more systematic analysis we have described above in relation to media texts is still comparatively rare in literature classrooms. Perhaps more significantly, several of the “key concepts” of media education are largely absent from most literature teaching. The more ‘sociological’ emphases on media production and media audiences, for example,

have no obvious equivalents in literature teaching; although there is no reason in principle why literature teachers should not address the economic structure of the publishing industry, or the ways in which books are marketed and distributed to readers. Critics would argue that the neglect of these aspects in literature teaching reflects an essentially individualistic approach to cultural production and reception.

To some extent, media education could be seen as a fundamental challenge to the values and approaches of traditional literature teaching. Yet in many countries, literature is a key component of the teaching of mother tongue language; and as such, it occupies a central role in the curriculum. In this situation, it is important to argue for media education as a major dimension of the teaching of language and literature; although over the longer term, it is possible that both literature and media education in schools will become part of a more inclusive subject field.

### media education and vocational training

In recent years, critics and policy-makers in many countries have challenged the notion of “liberal education,” and argued that schools need to be made more relevant to the realities of the world of work. The expansion and restructuring of the media industries in the wake of deregulation and new technologies might appear to offer many new opportunities here—perhaps particularly for social groups who have historically been under-represented. So to what extent should media education *in schools* be seen as a means of training young people for jobs in the media industries?

In some countries, training for employment in the media industries has historically been the responsibility of the industries themselves. In areas such as broadcasting and journalism, for example, much of this work has been undertaken within “on-the-job” training schemes. In other countries, however, universities have been major providers of vocational training, for example in the form of “journalism schools.” Yet even in those countries, vocational training has largely been confined



to further and higher education—that is, to the post-16 age group: it has not yet been widely seen as a responsibility of schools.

Nevertheless, the general expansion in so-called vocational education over the past decade has had particular implications for media education. Practically-focussed courses that claim to provide hands-on training in media production have become very popular—not to mention very lucrative for those who provide them. One of the obvious problems here is the danger of reducing media education to a form of technical training, in which the “critical” dimension of media theory would be lost—although in practice this does not necessarily occur. Perhaps the more significant question for students is whether such courses actually live up to their claims of providing access to employment in the media industries. In practice, it is doubtful whether many so-called “vocational” courses actually do fulfil their promise to equip students with adequate skills for jobs, or whether they are recognised as such by the industry.

These questions apply primarily to media courses in further and higher education, although pressures towards this more vocational approach are also being felt in the upper years of secondary schooling, particularly when dealing with students who might otherwise be seen as academic “failures.” Strategically, vocational courses can offer great opportunities for media education; although these opportunities may well prove to be double-edged. Here too, there is likely to be a struggle over the *status* of media education, as well as its ability to combine “theory” and “practice.”

## media education and ICTs

The advent of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) provides a complex set of opportunities and problems for media educators. On the one hand, ICTs represent important new subject matter for media teachers. One cannot teach about the contemporary media without taking account of the role of the internet, computer games and the convergence between “old” and “new” media. These new technologies also have a significant potential in terms of media production. The increasing

accessibility of digital image manipulation and digital editing, for example, allows students much more creative control than was available with “old” technology; and they also make it possible to explore some of the more conceptual aspects of the production process (such as the selection and construction of images) in a much more direct and concrete way.

On the other hand, these technologies do seem to be regarded by some as an educational panacea; and like television in an earlier era, there is a risk that they will be seen as merely neutral and instrumental—as simply “teaching aids.” In this context, it would seem to be vital to insist that “digital literacy” should address the more “critical” questions—for example, about production and representation—with which media educators have traditionally been concerned.

However, these new technologies will inevitably call into question the boundaries of “media” as a discrete curriculum area – boundaries which are problematic in any case. As the media converge, the logic for separating verbal and visual media, or electronic technologies and non-electronic technologies, will come under increasing pressure. In the process, the boundaries between previously discrete areas of the curriculum—and particularly those which are broadly concerned with “culture”—may come to seem quite obsolete.

At the same time, these technologies may also call into question the boundaries between the institution of the school and the many other contexts in which learning can occur. Digital cultures are significant sites of learning in their own right. Children’s everyday uses of computer games or the internet involve a whole range of informal learning processes, in which there is often a highly democratic relationship between “teachers” and “learners.” Children learn to use these media largely through trial and error—through exploration, experimentation and play; and collaboration with others—both in face-to-face and virtual forms—is an essential element of the process. Traditional forms of teaching, which involve the transmission of a fixed body of information, are largely irrelevant here. At least for some of their advocates,



ICTs offer a fundamental challenge to outdated notions of teaching and learning.

Media educators are bound to respond pragmatically to these developments. In many countries, there is now a massive investment in providing ICTs in schools; and this can present significant opportunities that it would be wrong to ignore. Yet media educators also need to participate in the broader debate that surrounds these developments; and—as in the case of language and literature teaching—they may find themselves adopting a stance towards official educational ideologies that is necessarily critical.

Each of these different locations for media education presents different challenges and opportunities. Yet the prospects for educational change clearly depend on the broader policy climate, and on the logistical and economic constraints in which schools operate. In this context, the future of media education is bound to depend, not just on the philosophical arguments of its advocates—however powerful they may be—but on the pragmatic realities of educational politics. The promotion of media education will then require a multi-dimensional strategy.

## BEYOND SCHOOLS

If the main focus may be on media education in schools, yet the boundaries between schools and other educational institutions are increasingly blurring; and there is now a growing interest in the potential for learning beyond the classroom. In this section, we will briefly note some opportunities that exist for ‘informal’ media education beyond the confines of schooling.

### COMMUNITY MEDIA WORKSHOPS

The use of media such as portable video within community work has a long history in many countries, and is often linked to broader arguments for democratisation, not only of the media but also of the political process in general. In the context of liberation struggles in countries such as South Africa, for example, video and other

media were actively used as tools of political struggle, and as a means of generating alternatives to government-controlled media. In the USA, by contrast, the provision of community cable access channels was for some time required by law, although the actual provision across the country is extremely variable; and of course such resources must be made freely available to individuals and political groups with a whole range of motivations. Nevertheless, the provision of community media of this kind is often seen as an essentially *educational* process, even if the extent to which educational aims are made explicit varies greatly. There is a great potential for young media professionals to be involved in such work, particularly those from disadvantaged groups who might not otherwise gain access to the media.

### MEDIA EDUCATION WITH PARENTS

In many of the above instances, the major focus for media education initiatives has been on parents rather than children. Many churches and activist organisations have produced advice literature aimed at parents, and in some cases educational materials designed to be used in the home. Again, the motivations here have been somewhat diverse. Much of the popular literature aimed at parents adopts a highly protectionist approach: for example, parents are offered strategies for reducing their children’s television viewing, or for teaching their children to resist commercial messages. As critics have argued, such approaches are explicitly normative, and often seem intended to induce feelings of guilt among “inadequate” parents. If parents are to be involved, they need to be seen as active participants, rather than simply being told what they should or should not be doing; and any educational initiatives aimed at parents need to take account both of cultural differences and of the sometimes difficult realities of child-rearing.

The diversity of this work inevitably makes it difficult to categorise and summarise; but it is clear that it cannot necessarily be aligned with “progressive” social goals. While such informal approaches to media education



tend to employ a rhetoric of “liberation” or “empowerment,” they are frequently characterised by protectionism. As with “formal” media education, the different national and institutional contexts for such work clearly exercise a determining influence on its aims and methods.

## A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Despite the growing significance of the media, and the urgency of the case for media education, progress in this field has generally been slow or uneven. Educational innovation of this kind is a complex process, and requires a range of strategies and tactics. It cannot be mandated, and it will not be brought about simply through the force or logic of the argument.

Experience in several countries suggests that promoting and developing media education depends upon the presence of a series of inter-dependent elements, and on partnerships between a range of interested parties. Some of these will function on an international level, some on a national level and some on a local level. Any intervention must necessarily take account of the specific factors in play at each level, and the shifting relationships between them. These elements should include the following:

> **Policy documents.** There is an ongoing need for clear, coherent and authoritative documents that define media education and provide a rationale for its implementation. Such documents obviously need to command general assent; to be succinct and strongly argued; and to be widely publicised and distributed.

> **Curriculum frameworks.** In addition to broad statements of purpose, there is a need for more specific documentation outlining frameworks for curriculum development and practice. Documents of this kind need to include: a clear model of learning progression, appropriate to specific curriculum locations; details of specific learning outcomes; and criteria and procedures for evaluation and assessment. Ideally, any such document should allow considerable

opportunity for flexibility and teacher autonomy, while nevertheless ensuring comparability and agreed standards.

> **Professional training.** Well-intended documents and frameworks are worthless without trained staff to implement them. Elements of training in media education should be included in initial and in-service training programmes, and be available as part of teachers’ ongoing professional development. Given the complexity of the field, any such training should be extensive and sustained.

> **Involvement of the media industries.** The media are, in many respects, the most obvious vehicle for media education. Collaboration between teachers and media producers has obvious benefits, for instance in terms of accessing appropriate teaching resources, informing teachers and students of contemporary developments within the media industries, and addressing students’ vocational ambitions. Other bodies that might have a role to play in this respect would include industry regulatory bodies and relevant government departments.

> **Involvement of parents.** If media education is to prove relevant and applicable beyond the classroom, parents and caregivers clearly have a vital role to play. While there are examples of good practice in this field that might be productively shared and disseminated more widely, this is generally an area whose potential has been little explored.

> **Involvement of youth groups.** The provision of facilities, training and support for more or less independent groups of young people is a further key dimension of media education. Such groups may come together in formal school settings, but they are likely to function more effectively in less formal situations; and media educators may have a great deal to learn from the kinds of “peer education” that are developed in such contexts.

> **Teaching materials and resources.** Despite the changing and sometimes ephemeral nature of the content of media



education, teaching materials can have a long shelf-life if they are carefully and professionally produced. They can also serve as a form of training in themselves, particularly where they are supported by appropriate documentation; and there can be significant benefits in providing additional training to support their use.

> **Self-organisation by practitioners.** All those involved in the media education partnership—teachers, media producers, parents and young people—need ongoing opportunities to share experiences and evidence from practice, to exchange resources and to collaborate on producing new curriculum plans and projects.

> **Research and evaluation.** Media education practice should obviously reflect current theoretical advances in our under-

standing of young people's relationships with media, and of pedagogy. There needs to be greater dialogue between academic researchers in these areas and educators who work directly with young people.

> **International exchange and dialogue.** While most of the above activities are more appropriately organised on a national or local level, several of them can gain significantly from international dialogue. UNESCO's ongoing initiatives on media education are currently addressing several of these issues, both nationally and internationally. Such dialogues and exchanges need to be sustained, rather than merely in the form of one-off conferences taking place every few years.



## HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

This handbook intends to elucidate the notion of media education. It traces its historical evolution and offers a definition of media education based on four “key concepts”: production, languages, representations, publics,—that refer to the “proposal for a modular curriculum”. It also considers practical and pedagogical approaches to media teaching and learning. It does not specify a particular “canon” of prescribed texts or a given body of knowledge. Rather it seeks to encourage critical and creative thinking in the mind of students while responding to their curiosity.

### WHAT ARE MEDIA?

The dictionary defines a “medium” as “an intervening means, instrument or agency”: it is a substance or a channel through which effects or information can be carried or transmitted. A medium is something we use when we want to communicate with people *indirectly*—rather than in person or by face-to-face contact. The word “media” is just the plural of “medium.”

This dictionary definition tells us something fundamental about the media. The media do not offer a transparent window on the world. They provide a channel through which representations and images of the world can be communicated *indirectly*. The media *intervene*: they provide us with selective versions of the world, rather than direct access to it.

The term “media” as used here includes the whole range of modern communications media: television, the cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising, newspapers and magazines, recorded music, computer games and the internet. Media *texts* are the programmes, films, images, web-sites (and so on) that are carried by these different forms of communication.

Many of these are often called “mass’ media,” which implies that they reach large audiences. However, some media are only intended to reach quite small or specialised audiences, and they can be important to study too. Some people would also argue that more traditional forms such as books are also “media,” since they too provide us with versions or representations of the world.

In principle, the approaches we develop here can be applied to the whole range of media—from big-budget blockbuster movies to the snapshot photographs that people take in their daily lives; and from the latest pop video or computer game to the most well-known “classic” films or literature. All these media are equally worthy of study.

**WHAT IS  
MEDIA EDUCATION?**

Media texts often combine several “languages” or forms of communication—visual images (still or moving), audio (sound, music or speech) and written language. Media education aims to develop a broad-based competence, not just in relation to print, but also in these other symbolic systems of images and sounds.

Many people refer to this competence as a form of *literacy*. They argue that, in the modern world, “media literacy” is just as important for young people as the more traditional literacy of print. *Media education*, then, is the process of teaching and learning about media; *media literacy* is the outcome—the knowledge and skills learners acquire.

Media “literacy” necessarily involves “reading” and “writing” media. Media education therefore aims to develop *both* critical understanding *and* active participation. It enables young people to interpret and make informed judgments as consumers of media; but it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right. Media education is about developing young people’s critical *and* creative abilities.

Media education is concerned with teaching and learning *about* the media. This should not be confused with teaching *through* the media—for example, the use of television or computers as a means of teaching science, or history. Of course, these educational media also provide versions or representations of the world. But media education is not about the instrumental use of media as “teaching aids”: it should not be confused with educational technology or educational media.

The guide is in three main sections.  
> The first (“why?”) outlines different rationales for media education, and traces its historical evolution (module 1).

> The second (“what?”) offers a definition of media education based on four “key concepts” (modules 2, 3, 4, 5).

> The third (“how?”) considers practical approaches to media teaching and learning (module 6).

The place of media education within and beyond the school (“where?”) appears in the section on *strategic context for integration* in the *Proposal for a modular curriculum*.

SECTION I

**media in  
THE CULTURAL  
ENVIRONNEMENT**

The media are, without any doubt, a highly significant aspect of contemporary children’s lives. In most industrialised countries, surveys repeatedly show that children spend more time watching television than they do in school, or indeed on any other activity apart from sleeping. If you add to this the time they devote to films, magazines, computer games and popular music, it is clear that the media constitute by far their most significant leisure-time pursuit. Many have argued that the media have now taken the place of the family and the school as the major socialising influence in contemporary society.

More broadly, it is impossible to deny the economic, social and cultural importance of the media in the modern world. The media are major industries, generating profit and employment; they provide us with most of our information about the political process; and they offer us ideas, images and representations (both factual and fictional) that inevitably shape our view of reality. The media are undoubtedly the major contem-

porary means of cultural expression and communication: to become an active participant in society necessarily involves making use of the modern media.

In this respect, the argument for media education would seem to be self-evident. It is essentially an argument for making education more *relevant* to children's lives outside school, and to the wider society. For many children, the gap between the world of school and the world of everyday life is alarmingly wide. Rather than ignoring the media—as many educators still try to do—we need to begin by recognising that they are an established fact of life. Whether we believe that the media play a negative or a positive role in children's lives, we do them little service by pretending that they do not exist.

The argument for media education is often defined by analogy with the argument for universal literacy. Literacy in the medium of print is generally recognised as a fundamental prerequisite for participation in contemporary society. Yet communication now increasingly involves the audio-visual languages of the modern media. Children and adults need to be literate in all of these symbolic systems. They need to be competent, critical readers and writers of 'media language' as well as print.

Bringing together the world of education with the world of media communication in this way will require a collaborative effort on the part of teachers, students, parents, media producers and policy-makers. It will also require a clarity and rigour on the part of educators, in terms of their aims and methods—and a willingness to re-think many of the fundamental principles of education. In this respect, media education represents an important challenge, but it is one that we cannot avoid.

MODULE 1

WHY?

## CHANGING TIMES

In recent years, there have been several developments in the media environment that make the case for media education all

the more urgent. Among the most significant changes are the following:

> **Technological developments.** With the advent of multi-channel television, home video, computers and the internet—along with a range of other technologies—there has been a massive proliferation of electronic media. The screen in the living room is now the delivery point for a wide range of electronic goods and services, and for a plethora of information and entertainment. According to enthusiasts, these technological developments have resulted in greater choice for the consumer—although some suggest that they merely offer more opportunities to see the same things, rather than greater global diversity. However, these changes do not only affect media consumption. The falling cost of technology has also created new opportunities for people to become media producers in their own right: by using video and the internet, it is now much more possible for individuals to create and distribute their own media texts.

> **Economic developments.** The media have been inextricably caught up in the broader commercialisation of contemporary culture. In many countries, public service media have lost ground to commercial media: public service television and radio channels, for example, are now only one option among many, and their audiences are correspondingly in decline. Meanwhile, forms of advertising, promotion and sponsorship have steadily permeated the public sphere, as commercial companies seek new markets. Fields such as politics, sport, health care—and indeed education itself—have increasingly been “invaded” by commercial forces. This has been the case even in countries where the media were formerly subject to strong state control and censorship; and in more pluralist societies, media regulation by governments seems increasingly powerless in the face of commercial forces.

> **Social developments.** Most social commentators agree that the contemporary world has been characterised by a growing sense of fragmentation and individualisation. Established systems of belief and ways



of life are being eroded, and familiar hierarchies overthrown. Traditional social bonds—such as those of family and community—no longer hold sway in these more heterogeneous, mobile societies. In this context, identity comes to be seen as a matter of individual choice, rather than birthright or destiny. The media are often seen as a primary source of these new, more individualized forms of identity and lifestyle; and the growing importance of “niche markets” has required producers to address an increasingly diverse range of social groupings. In the process, it is argued, individuals have also become more diverse—and to some extent more autonomous—in their uses and interpretations of cultural goods.

> **Globalisation.** The balance between the global and the local is changing in complex and uneven ways, both in cultural and in economic terms. Global media corporations—based in the wealthiest first world countries—dominate the marketplace: global brands now provide an international language or “common culture,” particularly among young people. At the same time, new technologies also permit more decentralised, localised communications, and the creation of “communities” that transcend national boundaries—particularly via the internet. Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor—both within and between nations—appears to be widening; and this is also manifested in terms of access to information and to media technologies. Choices of media—and hence, perhaps, of lifestyle and identity—are not freely available to all.

However we interpret them, these developments are decidedly double-edged. They create new inequalities even as they abolish older ones. They appear to offer new choices for individuals even as they appear to foreclose and deny others. Either way, they make the nature of contemporary citizenship significantly more complex and ambiguous.

The modern media are centrally implicated in all of these processes; and this has particular implications for children and young people. For the global media industries, the young are the key consumers, whose tastes and preferences are frequently seen to set the trend for consumers in general.

The formation and development of “youth culture”—and, more recently, of a global “children’s culture”—are impossible to separate from the commercial operations of the modern media.

Both in research and in public debate, children are frequently seen to be most vulnerable to media influence; yet they are also seen to possess a confidence and expertise in their relations with media that are not available to the majority of adults. They are defined both as innocents in need of protection, and as a competent, “media-wise” generation. Yet whichever view we adopt, the fact remains that adults are less and less able to control children’s use of the media. Children today can and do gain access to “adult” media, via cable TV or video or the internet, much more readily than their parents ever could. They also have their own “media spheres,” which adults may find increasingly difficult to penetrate or understand. Whether we look to technological devices (like the V-chip) or to changes in regulatory policy, the means of control appear increasingly ineffective. The proliferation of media technology, combined with the changing social status of children, mean that children can no longer be confined in the traditional “secret garden” of childhood—if indeed they ever could.

These patterns of technological and structural change in the contemporary media environment thus present significant new dangers and opportunities for young people. Digital media—and particularly the internet—significantly increase the potential for active participation; but they also create an environment of bewildering choices, not all of which can be seen as harmless. Meanwhile, for the large majority of children who do not yet have access to these opportunities, there is a growing danger of exclusion and disenfranchisement.

In this new situation, the case for media education becomes all the more urgent. We need to enable children to cope with the challenges posed by this new mediated environment; and we need to build upon and extend the new styles of learning and the new forms of cultural expression that the modern media make available to them.

Only in this way will it be possible for today's children to take their place as active citizens in the complex, commercially-oriented, global societies which are now emerging

### FROM PROTECTION TO PREPARATION

Like any other field of education, media education has been characterised by an ongoing debate about its fundamental aims and methods. Few teachers are initially trained in media education; and they therefore tend to approach it from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, and with diverse motivations. For some, media education represents a solution to a problem—a way of counteracting developments in society that they personally dislike. For others, it is seen as a form of “empowerment”—a way of enabling young people to take control of the means of media production, and to make the most of the opportunities they provide. Media education thus serves as the focus for a whole range of fears, concerns and aspirations, some of which may prove fundamentally incompatible.

Nevertheless, it is possible to detect a broad historical shift in the underlying philosophy of media education. Historically, media education has often begun as a defensive enterprise: its aim is to *protect* children against what are seen to be the dangers of the media. The emphasis here is on exposing the false messages and values the media are seen to purvey, and thereby encouraging students to reject or move beyond them. As it has evolved, however, media education has tended to move towards a more empowering approach. The aim here is to *prepare* children to understand and to participate actively in the media culture that surrounds them. The emphasis is on critical understanding and analysis, and (increasingly) upon media production by students themselves.

In essence, the protectionist approach seeks to arm students against the perceived dangers of the media. To be sure, these “dangers” have been defined in different ways at different times and in different contexts. In some countries, the fundamental concern of early media educators was a

*cultural* one. They saw the media as a form of “low culture” that would undermine children's appreciation of the values and virtues of “high culture.” In others, the fundamental concern appears to be *moral*. Here, the media are seen to teach children values and behaviours (for example, to do with sex and violence) that are deemed to be inappropriate or harmful. Finally—and especially in the forms of media education that developed in the 1970s—one can detect a *political* concern: a belief that the media are responsible for promoting false political beliefs or ideologies. In each case, media education is seen as a means of counteracting children's apparent fascination and pleasure in the media—and hence their belief in the values the media are seen to promote. Media education will, it is assumed, lead children on to an appreciation of high culture, to more morally healthy forms of behaviour, or to more rational, politically correct beliefs.

As in media research, these arguments tend to recur as new media enter the scene. For instance, the advent of the internet has seen a resurgence of many of these protectionist arguments for media education. The internet is seen primarily in terms of its ability to give children access to harmful material, or alternatively to make them victims of commercial exploitation. Here, media education is yet again perceived by some as a kind of inoculation—a means of preventing contamination, if not of keeping children away from the media entirely. In this scenario, the potential benefits and pleasures of the media are neglected in favour of an exclusive—and in some instances, highly exaggerated—emphasis on the harm they are assumed to cause.

While these protectionist views of media education have been far from superseded, there has been a gradual evolution in many countries towards a less defensive approach. In general, the countries with the most “mature” forms of practice in media education—that is, those which have the longest history, and the most consistent pattern of evolution—have moved well beyond protectionism. From this perspective, media education is now no longer so automatically opposed to students' experi-





ences of the media. Media education is seen here not as a form of protection, but as a form of *preparation*. It does not aim to shield young people from the influence of the media, and thereby to lead them on to “better things.” On the contrary, it seeks to enable them to make informed decisions on their own behalf. In broad terms, it aims to develop young people’s *understanding* of, and *participation* in, the media culture that surrounds them. In the process, it inevitably raises cultural, moral and political concerns; but it does so in a way that encourages an active, critical engagement on the part of students, rather than commanding their assent to a predetermined position.

**The reasons for this change of emphasis are manifold, but the following would be among them:**

> **Changing views of regulation.** To some extent, this shift is part of a broader development in thinking about media regulation. While protectionism is often driven by well-meaning, positive motivations, it can result in a situation where children’s active participation in the media is restricted. As such, it can be seen to conflict with children’s rights to information and participation (for example, in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Among media regulators themselves, the emphasis is now moving away from censorship, and towards “consumer advice”—of which media education is often seen as one dimension.

> **Changing views of the media.** The notion of the media as bearers of a singular set of values and beliefs—or indeed as uniformly harmful or lacking in cultural value—is no longer so widely held. Of course, there are still significant limits in the diversity of views represented in the media; but the development of modern forms of communication has resulted in a more heterogeneous, even fragmented, environment. In general, there is now a greater recognition of the benefits and opportunities afforded by the media, rather than simply of the harm they are alleged to cause.

> **Changing views of young people.** Following from the above, the notion that

the media are an all-powerful “consciousness industry”—that they can single-handedly impose false values on passive audiences—has also come into question. In the case of children, the idea that they can be seen merely as innocent victims of media effects has steadily been challenged and surpassed: contemporary research suggests that children are a much more autonomous and critical audience than they are conventionally assumed to be. Teaching about the media can no longer begin from the view that young people are simply passive victims of media influence.

> **Changing views of teaching and learning.** Finally, there has been a growing recognition among educators that the protectionist approach does not actually work in practice. Especially when it comes to the areas with which media education is so centrally concerned—with what students see as their own cultures and their own pleasures—they may well be inclined to resist or reject what teachers tell them. The recognition of these difficulties has led to the emergence of a more student-centred perspective, which begins from young people’s existing knowledge and experience of media, rather than from the instructional imperatives of the teacher.

From this perspective, media production by students also assumes a much greater significance. Of course, the primary aim of media education is not to train the television producers and journalists of the future: this is a task for higher education, and for the media industries themselves. Nevertheless, the participatory potential of new technologies—and particularly of the internet—has made it much more possible for young people to undertake creative media production, or for teachers to do so with their students. By emphasising the development of young people’s creativity, and their participation in media production, media educators are enabling their voices to be heard; and in the longer term, they are also providing the basis for more democratic and inclusive forms of media production in the future.

This more contemporary perspective on media education offers a more effective



and coherent definition of its aims and methods. In reality, of course, we recognise that individuals come to media education with a wide range of motivations and aims. Yet ultimately, whatever approach one adopts, it is important to be clear about one's underlying assumptions, and the evidence on which they are based. All media education programmes embody implicit assumptions and values of the kind we have been addressing. They are all based on views about the media themselves, about young people, and about the nature of teaching and learning; and it is essential that these views should be clearly identified and open to debate.

SECTION 2

DEFINING THE  
SUBJECT FIELD

There are many ways in which we might choose to define a given subject or discipline within education. It could be defined in terms of a *body of knowledge*—a collection of facts or content to be learned. Alternatively, it could be defined in terms of a set of *skills*—a series of competencies to be performed and mastered. In general, however, media education has come to be defined in terms of *conceptual understandings*. This definition is often rendered in terms of a set of “key concepts” or “key aspects.” This approach has several clear advantages. It does not specify particular objects of study (a “canon” of prescribed texts, for example); and this enables media education to remain responsive to students’ interests and enthusiasms. Neither does it specify a given body of knowledge—which in a field such as media education would quickly become out-of-date.

There are various versions of the “key concepts,” several of which are embodied in curriculum documents around the world. In practice, however, there is a considerable degree of overlap between them. They can be defined through four key concepts: Production, Languages, Representations

and Audiences (“Audience” is synonym for “Publics” elsewhere in this kit). These concepts provide a theoretical framework which can be applied to the whole range of contemporary media, and indeed to “older” media as well. In this section, we introduce these concepts in turn, drawing on the summaries provided in the students’ handbook.

MODULE 2

WHAT?

PRODUCTION

At its most basic, “production” involves the recognition that media texts are consciously manufactured. Media texts take time—and sometimes a great deal of money—to produce. Although some are made by individuals working alone, just for themselves or their family and friends, most of the media texts we consume are produced and distributed by groups of people, often working for large corporations. This means recognising the commercial interests that are at stake in media production, and the ways in which profits are generated—not least by “exploiting” a given property or brand across a range of media. It also means acknowledging the increasingly global scale of the media industries, and the changing balance between global and local (or indigenous) media. More confident students should be able to debate the implications of these developments in terms of national and cultural identities, and in terms of the range of social groups that are able to gain access to media.

Looking at media *production* means looking at:

- > **Technologies.** What technologies are used to produce and distribute media texts? What difference do they make to the product?
- > **Professional practices.** Who makes media texts? Who does what, and how do they work together?
- > **The industry.** Who owns the companies that buy and sell media? How do they make a profit?
- > **Connections between media.** How do companies sell the same products across different media?
- > **Regulation.** Who controls the production and distribution of media? Are there



laws about this, and how effective are they?  
 > **Circulation and distribution.** How do texts reach their audiences? How much choice and control do audiences have?  
 > **Access and participation.** Whose voices are heard in the media? Whose are excluded, and why?

In analysing production, students might focus on case studies of specific media institutions or companies. These should obviously include companies that operate on a global scale, with interests in a range of media, like Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation or the BBC. Here the focus would be on discovering how the different aspects of the business inter-connect and reinforce each other. An alternative approach here would be to investigate the international sale and distribution of television formats, such as *Big Brother* and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* Here, the focus would be on the global trade in media, and the ways in which formats are used and reinterpreted in specific national contexts. However, it is important that students are also aware of other models of media production. Thus, they might focus on public service broadcasters, or on smaller organisations such as non-profit "alternative" media groups or minority publications, and compare their working practices and ideologies with those of major corporations. They should also be aware of the work of regulatory bodies.

Studying production is often best achieved through research-based tasks. Thus, students might identify the companies that own their favourite magazines, and the other titles or companies they own; or investigate the patterns of cross-ownership in their national television industry. Another possibility here would be to analyse how different audiences are targeted by a particular medium: for example, the ways in which different TV channels create 'brand identity' or the ways in which women's magazines address different sections of the audience, as defined in terms of age or social class. Finally, it is important to emphasise that these kinds of questions can also be applied to the students' own experiences of media production. In making their own magazines or videos, for example, students will have to

make choices about their working methods and the technologies they will use, and about how they will identify and target their audience; and they will also have to confront all sorts of limitations in terms of the production and distribution of their finished product. Reflecting systematically on these experiences can help them to develop a more first-hand understanding of how media industries work.

MODULE 3

WHAT?

LANGUAGES

Every medium has its own "language"—or combination of languages—that it uses to communicate meaning. Television, for example, uses verbal and written language as well as the "languages" of moving images and sound. These things can be seen as languages in the sense that they use familiar codes and conventions that are generally understood. For example, particular kinds of music or camera angles may be used to signal particular emotions; and a page of a newspaper or a sequence of shots in a film will be put together using a certain kind of "grammar." As in the case of verbal language, making meaningful statements in "media languages" involves *paradigmatic* choices—that is, selecting from a range of equivalent elements—and *syntagmatic* combinations—that is, putting the elements together in sequences or combinations. There are linguistic "rules" here, which can be broken; and there are familiar idioms or genres that use particular combinations of linguistic tropes and devices. By analysing these languages, we can come to a better understanding of how media make meaning.

Looking at media *languages* means looking at:  
 > **Meanings.** How do media use different forms of language to convey ideas or meanings?  
 > **Conventions.** How do these uses of language become familiar and generally accepted?  
 > **Codes.** How are the grammatical "rules" of media established? What happens when they are broken?  
 > **Genres.** How do these conventions and codes operate in different types of media

texts—such as news or horror?

> **Choices.** What are the effects of choosing certain forms of language—such as a particular type of camera shot?

> **Combinations.** How is meaning conveyed through the combination or sequencing of images, sounds or words?

> **Technologies.** How do technologies affect the meanings that can be created?

Studying media language should involve close observation and analysis. For instance, many media teachers use a broadly semiotic approach to analysing still images, such as those in advertising. Students might be encouraged to look systematically at elements such as framing and composition, the use of colour, typefaces and graphics, special effects, and so on, in order to assess how a particular “product image” is created. Similarly, students might look at the rules and conventions of news broadcasts, noting the “mise-en-scène” of the studio, the use of lighting, the newsreader’s dress and body language, and the sequencing of items within a bulletin. The “syntagmatic” aspects of media language are often difficult to identify, precisely because they have become so naturalised and widely accepted. Drawing attention to this may require students to look at texts that consciously set out to “break the rules”: for example, students might compare the use of continuity editing in a mainstream Hollywood movie with the editing in an art movie or some “alternative” pop videos.

As this implies, studying media language often involves close analysis of particular texts. It involves “making the familiar strange” by looking in detail at how texts are composed and put together. For example, this might involve producing a storyboard from a television advertisement, or physically “deconstructing” an image by breaking it down into its component parts. Another useful way of analysing media language is by means of comparison. Comparing several instances of a particular genre—for instance, advertisements for a particular type of product, or fashion photographs—can provide a good basis for identifying shared conventions, as well as patterns of variation across the genre.

However, this is not to say that the understanding of media language should be confined to analysis. Here again, the experience of producing one’s own media texts—and systematically experimenting with the “rules” of media language—can offer new insights, and in a more direct way. Taking a photograph, for example, involves a whole series of linguistic choices, to do with the composition of the objects in the shot, the framing and camera angle, the lighting, the focus and so on. Combining one’s photograph with written text or with other images (for example in a layout or photomontage) involves further choices to do with how the meaning of the photograph is to be defined. These choices may be made unthinkingly; and one of the aims of media education is to encourage students to reflect on the choices they have made, and to consider their consequences.

#### MODULE 4

#### WHAT?

### REPRESENTATIONS

The notion of “representation” is one of the founding principles of media education. The media do not offer us a transparent “window on the world,” but a mediated *version* of the world. They don’t just present reality, they re-present it. Even when it is concerned with real life events (as in news and documentary), media production involves selecting and combining incidents, making events into stories, and creating characters. Media representations therefore inevitably invite us to see the world in some particular ways and not others. They are bound to be “biased” rather than “objective.” However, this is not to imply that they are therefore deceiving audiences into mistaking representation for reality: audiences also compare media with their own experiences, and make judgments about how “realistic” they are, and hence how far they can be trusted. Furthermore, media representations can be seen as real in some ways but not in others: we may know that something is fantasy, yet recognise that it can still tell us about reality.

Looking at media *representations* means looking at:



- > **Realism.** Is this text intended to be realistic? Why do some texts seem more realistic than others?
- > **Telling the truth.** How do media claim to tell the truth about the world? How do they try to seem authentic?
- > **Presence and absence.** What is included and excluded from the media world? Who speaks, and who is silenced?
- > **Bias and objectivity.** Do media texts support particular views about the world? Do they put across moral or political values?
- > **Stereotyping.** How do media represent particular social groups? Are those representations accurate?
- > **Interpretations.** Why do audiences accept some media representations as true, or reject others as false?
- > **Influences.** Do media representations affect our views of particular social groups or issues?

Studying media representation therefore inevitably raises difficult questions about ideologies and values. In some instances, these values are quite overt. For instance, students should find it fairly easy to identify the political “line” of a given newspaper, at least as this is expressed in the editorial section; although they might find it more challenging to identify how that line is manifested in the selection and treatment of particular news stories, both in words and images. Here again, comparison between different newspapers is a useful technique. Another aspect of representation that students will be familiar with is *stereotyping*. They will be familiar with the argument that the media ignore minority or less powerful groups, or show them in a negative light. However, it is important that they should consider the functions of stereotypes, both for producers and for audiences; and avoid the facile conclusion that stereotypes can simply be replaced with “accurate” representations.

Students are frequently keen to assess media representations in terms of their “realism,” but they should be encouraged to reflect on these judgments and the different criteria that are used in making them. In this respect, it is important to consider texts that are clearly marked as “fantasy,” or that play with the distinction between

fantasy and reality, as well as documentary-style texts. More confident students will be able to debate the implications of these different kinds and levels of “realism” in terms of the potential influence of the media.

Here again, important insights into these issues can be gained from the experience of media production. Students can explore questions about accuracy and bias by being asked to produce contrasting representations of an institution or an area that they are familiar with, perhaps aiming at different audiences. The complexity of debates about stereotyping—and about “positive images” and “negative images”—can often be explored more productively by encouraging students to produce their own representations of social issues, and to reflect on the ways in which audiences respond to them.

MODULE 5

WHO?

audiences

Media education itself has often been informed by simplistic assumptions about media audiences. The “mass audience” is often seen as gullible and easily influenced—and this is particularly the case with children and young people. Yet research suggests that audiences are much more sophisticated and diverse than this would suggest. As the media have proliferated, they increasingly have to compete for people’s attention and interest. Finding and keeping an audience is not easy: producers might imagine they know what different groups of people will want, but it is often hard to explain why some things become popular and others do not. Studying audiences means looking at how audiences are targeted and measured, and how media are circulated and distributed; and at the different ways in which individuals and social groups use, interpret and respond to media. Debating these views about audiences, and attempting to understand and reflect on our own and others’ uses of media, is therefore an indispensable element of media education.

Looking at media *audiences* means looking at:

> **Targeting.** How are media aimed at particular audiences? How do they try to appeal to them?

> **Address.** How do the media speak to audiences? What assumptions do media producers make about audiences?

> **Circulation.** How do media reach audiences? How do audiences know what is available?

> **Uses.** How do audiences use media in their daily lives? What are their habits and patterns of use?

> **Making sense.** How do audiences interpret media? What meanings do they make?

> **Pleasures.** What pleasures do audiences gain from the media? What do they like or dislike?

> **Social differences.** What is the role of gender, social class, age and ethnic background in audience behaviour?

Like studying production, studying media audiences is therefore partly a matter of finding out about how the media industries operate. For example, students might look at how television audiences or newspaper readerships are measured, and how this information is then used, for example to set advertising rates. They might also consider how particular social groups or “niche” audiences are targeted, for example by comparing the layout and cover design of different magazines; or the assumptions about audiences which are made by media regulators. There may also be an element of first-hand research here, for example looking at how “fans” are cultivated by the media industries and how they organise and communicate among themselves (for example, on the internet).

As with representation, there is also likely to be a strong element of debate here. For example, students will be aware of public debates about issues such as media violence and censorship, and should be alerted to the different motivations of the participants in such debates. Students need to analyse the kinds of assumptions that are typically made about different sections of the media audience, and the evidence on which these assumptions are based.

Studying audiences should also involve an element of self-reflection and first-hand

research. For instance, students might be encouraged to keep “media diaries,” and collate and compare their findings with peers; or to observe the uses of media within their household. In the process, students should be encouraged to consider the merits and disadvantages of different research methods, and the validity and reliability of the information they generate. Such investigations often raise questions about the social differences in media use, and the extent to which it is possible to generalise about them. Here again, the experience of production—for example, attempting to target a particular audience, and then taking account of their responses—can also offer important insights.

#### KEY CONCEPTS IN PRACTICE

The key concepts seem to offer a comprehensive and systematic approach to media education, that can be applied to a range of media. However, they are not intended as a blueprint for a media education curriculum, or a list of contents that should be “delivered” to students. They are not hierarchically organised, nor are they intended to be addressed in isolation from each other—as though one would spend one semester on language, followed by another on representation, and so on. On the contrary, they are seen as interdependent: each concept is a possible point of entry to a given area of media education, which necessarily invokes all the others. As such, they provide a way of organising one’s thinking about any activity or unit of work which might be undertaken—and it should be emphasised that they can be applied as much to *creative* activities (such as taking photographs) as they can to *analytical* ones (such as studying advertising or the news).

In order to illustrate how the key concepts work in practice, we will now look at three examples of curriculum planning in media education. They are all aimed at children between 11 and 14. Each unit of work is designed to run across several lessons, and includes a range of classroom activities. These activities include small-group and whole class discussion, direct instruction by the teacher, role-plays and simula-



tions, close textual analysis, discursive writing and media production activities.

**EXAMPLE 1 Teaching *The Simpsons***

This unit provides a good example of how one text (in this case, a television programme) can be used as a *case study*, raising all the four key concepts identified above. The unit includes the following activities:

> **The title sequence.** Students are asked to watch the title sequence closely several times, noting key elements. Group discussion then focuses on issues such as the visual style, the use of sound, the image of *The Simpsons* home town, and the elements of the sequence that change in each programme. Students are then asked to write a summary of what we learn about *The Simpsons* from this sequence, and how it sets up expectations for the programme as a whole.

> **Background and context.** Here students are given a brief introduction to the history of TV situation comedies featuring families, from *I Love Lucy* through to *Married with Children*. They are then asked to identify the differences and similarities, for example in terms of social class, in terms of the types of families, and in terms of the settings. They are then given an introduction to *The Simpsons*, and asked to consider how it differs from earlier programmes in this genre.

> **Character.** Students are asked to produce a character study of one *Simpsons* character, and compare their own analysis with that contained in publicity materials.

> **Comedy.** Following a screening of a single episode, students are asked to break down the plot and identify the nature of the humour in each incident. Students are encouraged to think about the different types of humour (satire, slapstick, absurdity, “black” comedy and so on), and then carry out a further analysis of an episode of their choice.

> **Conventions.** Building on their analysis of the two episodes, students are asked to

consider how the programme uses—and also departs from—the conventions of its genre. For instance, they are asked about how it uses the conventions of situation comedy; how it uses animation to “break the rules” of verisimilitude; and the extent to which it can be seen as “realistic.” They are then asked to write a detailed critical analysis of one episode.

> **Industry.** Here students are provided with some information about the production process (scripting, animation, overseas sales, scheduling, merchandising, and so on). They are then asked to study the cover of a *Simpsons* videotape, and find out the roles played by different companies in production and marketing. Finally, they are asked to carry out some research on *Simpsons* merchandise, considering how it is targeted at different audiences and how it is bound by the copyright requirements of the production company.

> **Debates.** Students are presented with a range of statements about *The Simpsons*, ranging from positive newspaper reviews to the criticisms voiced by President Bush. They are then asked to evaluate and debate these statements in the light of their own responses, focusing particularly on the idea that the programme presents “negative role models.”

> **Simulation.** Finally, students are asked (in groups) to undertake a simulation, in which they produce an outline of an animated family show that is specific to their national context. They are asked to devise characters, settings and sample storylines, and think about ways of promoting their show through merchandising. In addition to reporting back to the whole class, they also have to produce a written rationale for their proposals.

This unit addresses all four key concepts through an integrated study of one text. The aspects covered would include the following:

> **Production:** production processes, merchandising, international distribution.

> **Language:** genre (the sitcom), form (animation), codes and conventions.

> **Representation:** realism, stereotyping, moral values, images of the family.



> **Audience:** targeting audiences, interpretations, influences, pleasures (comedy).

### EXAMPLE 2 Selling Youth

This unit is organised more thematically, in that it focuses on a genre (advertising) and a theme (“youth”) that cut across several media. It focuses on advertising that specifically targets young people, and the broader issues to do with consumer culture that it raises. It includes the following activities:

> **Reading ads.** The unit begins with a description produced by a drinks manufacturer of a particular drink, “Product X.” Students are asked to identify product X from the range of drinks produced by this company. In doing so, they are asked to think about how advertisements define the image and qualities of products, how particular audiences are targeted, and how these are reflected in the design of product logos.

> **Creating the image.** The students go on to brainstorm ideas for selling Product X (now identified as a drink called Juice Up), and then compare this with real ads for the product. They then undertake a detailed analysis of three ads from the Juice Up campaign, focusing on the visual techniques, editing and soundtrack. They are asked to think particularly about how the product is targeted at a youth audience, how this is reflected in its marketing and branding, and how young people are represented in the ads.

> **Marketing.** Finally, the students are given an article from an advertising trade newspaper concerned with the Juice Up campaign, and asked to consider how the marketing campaign was conceived by the advertising agency and the company. Discussion here focuses on issues such as the scheduling and placement of the ads, and what the producers assume about their audience.

> **Scheduling.** Students are asked to watch as many TV advertising breaks as possible at home. They are then asked to consider the range of ads that target their age group, and where these are most likely to be scheduled.

> **Catching the audience.** On the basis of their viewing at home, students are asked to identify which ads are most effective at catching their attention, and how they achieve this. They identify the ads they personally liked the most, and what they liked about them; and then share the results with the whole class. In the process, they consider the assumptions that are made about themselves as a target audience, and the extent to which they are accurate.

> **The advertiser’s perspective.** Students read a series of statements made by an advertising agency executive about the youth audience. Students are asked to debate these statements, and then assess them against their viewing of a series of ads produced by the agency in question. Following group discussion, students are then asked to produce a written essay analysing a particular campaign of their choice, and discussing how it attempts to target the youth audience. They are asked to consider the kinds of images and identities such campaigns are selling to their own age group.

> **Making ads.** The final activity in this unit consists of a simulation, in which students are asked to assume the role of an advertising agency responsible for marketing a new cereal product aimed at their own age group. They are given a description of the product, and asked to identify its potential appeal, both to the target audience and to their parents, who will actually be buying it. Through “brainstorming,” they identify the image or “personality” of the product, and consider likely marketing strategies. They then go on to devise a logo and packaging design, a script or storyboard for a television ad, and to suggest where and when it should be scheduled. In presenting their ideas, they are asked to explain how their campaign is targeted, and how their strategy is designed to appeal to the audience.

Like the previous unit, this unit addresses all four key concepts through an integrated study of one media theme. The aspects covered would include the following:

> **Production:** the work of advertising agencies, TV schedulers and commercial companies.



- > **Language:** the codes and conventions of advertising, the creation of a “product image.”
- > **Representation:** images of young people and the values they are seen to represent.
- > **Audience:** targeting audiences, influences, pleasures and preferences.

**EXAMPLE 3 Photography and Identity**

This unit looks at photography and documentary film, and raises questions about how they are used to represent and construct identities. The focus here is therefore much less to do with popular ‘mass’ media than the two previous units. The unit includes the following activities:

> **Portraits.** Students are shown a series of pictures from the personal album of a 14-year-old girl. They are asked to discuss the differences between the images, for example in terms of where and why they were taken, the different poses and expressions, and the different types of images (for example, snapshots, formal portraits, family groups, etc.). They are also asked to match the girl’s own captions to the photographs.

> **Making a photo-documentary.** They are then asked to sequence the photographs to make a short “photo-documentary” about the girl, and to debate the different ways this might be done. They are asked to create a script for a soundtrack, and to suggest music that might be used. They are then invited to compare their productions, debating how the girl herself might have wanted the images to be arranged for different audiences. This activity introduces the key question about how accurate or truthful photography can be.

> **Exploring a documentary.** The students then watch a short BBC documentary called “Photo-You,” which is about photo-booths of the kind that are often found in railway stations or airports (other local or national documentaries can be substituted). Before viewing they are asked to consider the different functions of documentaries as a genre (such as teaching, offering a personal view, persuading, entertaining, etc.). They are then asked to identify

examples of how “Photo-You” and other documentaries achieve these purposes.

> **Documentary conventions.** Students are then introduced to a range of techniques used in documentaries (such as interviews, archive compilations, reconstructions, voice-over narration, etc.) and asked to identify which of them are used in ‘Photo-You’, and the effects they produce.

> **Editing.** Students are asked to undertake a close analysis of “Photo-You,” one sequence at a time. Questions are asked at each stage about the choices made by the film-makers, the different techniques used, the placement of the camera, the selection of images and sounds, and so on. They are then asked to “re-edit” the film using a series of still images provided on a CD-Rom. In groups, they are asked to produce a version of the film that will instruct people on how to get good pictures in a photo-booth, persuade people of the benefits of installing photo-booths, or train people look after and clean photo-booths. Having considered these alternatives, they are then asked to write to the film’s director with a personal response to the film.

> **Commentaries.** Here the students are asked to write a commentary for another short piece of film, about a graduation ceremony at Oxford University. Again, groups are asked to write commentaries reflecting different views, and then compare them, thinking about how the commentary can change the meaning of the images.

> **Writing a proposal.** Here the students work towards a proposal for a short documentary film, written for the commissioning editor of a TV station. They are invited to assess the director’s proposal for “Photo-You,” and consider which aspects were omitted from the final film.

> **Simulating a documentary.** Finally, the students are asked to put together their proposal, which is for a five-minute film about “a day in the life of our school.” They are given a mock memorandum from the commissioning editor, and asked to think through the criteria they will use in select-



ing which film will be made. Finally, they plan and make the film itself.

Here again, this unit addresses all four key concepts through an integrated study of one media issue. The aspects covered would include the following:

> **Production:** the work of documentary film-makers and commissioning editors.

> **Language:** the codes and conventions of photography and documentary, the use of commentary, sound and images.

> **Representation:** images of individual identities and social institutions (the school).

> **Audience:** how documentaries attempt to teach, persuade, convince audiences of their truthfulness, and so on.

None of the units really sets out to “rescue” students from what are perceived as the negative effects of the media.

In general, therefore, much of the work is *deductive* rather than *inductive*: it is about students reaching their own conclusions from the evidence provided, rather than seeking to command their assent to a position that has already been defined. In *The Simpsons* unit, for example, students are presented with a range of arguments about the moral and political issues raised by the programme, and encouraged to reflect systematically upon them. Clearly, this approach is not one that seeks to avoid or ignore complex issues; but its aim is not to provide a form of “counter-propaganda.”



## SECTION 3

### SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This description indicates several general principles which characterise good practice in media education. These can be categorised under three headings: overall aims, curriculum planning and pedagogy.

#### AIMS

The general approach adopted in these units is clearly oriented towards *preparation* rather than *protection*. The work does not begin from the assumption that students are passive victims of media manipulation, who are in need of inoculation against media influence. The second unit on advertising, for example, assumes that students are able to understand the ways in which they are targeted by advertisers, and to reflect on how their own choices and values as consumers may be informed by media images. The pleasures students experience from advertising are acknowledged and explored, but students are also assumed to be capable of making rational, informed decisions on their own behalf.

#### CURRICULUM PLANNING

Each of these units attempts to address all of the four key concepts in an integrated, holistic way. While different emphases emerge more strongly than others at different times, it is implicitly assumed that students need to understand how these different elements of the media are related. Thus, the first unit on *The Simpsons* clearly addresses each of the key concepts, focusing in turn on representations, languages, production and audiences; and (as in the other units) the final activity effectively integrates these into a single, practical exploration of how they are related.

Differences of emphasis are of course inevitable: not all key aspects will be equally covered in each and every unit of work. The third unit on photography and documentary, for instance, is probably stronger on aspects of media language than it is on production. However, it should be clear from these accounts that any one of the key aspects can (at least potentially) serve as a “way in” to any of the others. Implicitly, therefore, meaning is seen to emerge from the *relationships* between the various key aspects. Thus, the unit on advertising implicitly regards the production of “youth culture” as something that emerges from a negotiation between the media industries and the needs and expectations of audiences. Likewise, the questions about realism raised in the unit on *The Simpsons*

imply that viewers also make critical judgments about how the media represent the world: realism is not simply a property of texts, but also a perception on the part of viewers or readers.

### PEDEGOGY

Within the three units described above, there is a diverse range of pedagogic strategies. These include: individual, small-group and whole-class work; provision of information by teachers and by students; critical analysis and practical media production; as well as strategies such as simulation, textual analysis and student research. In some respects, the approach could be described as “student-centred,” in that there is a strong emphasis on students sharing their own knowledge and opinions, and forming their own conclusions about the issues. All these units begin by assuming that students already know something about the topics to be addressed, and that their knowledge is both valid in itself and a useful resource for further reflection.

However, there is also a recognition that there are things that students do *not* know, and which they need to be taught. For example, the third unit on documentary explicitly sets out to teach about techniques of documentary film-making, or about the ways in which producers “pitch” their ideas to television companies. In some instances (for example in relation to media language), this is a matter of making explicit what students already know implicitly—turning “passive” knowledge into “active” knowledge. This occurs through systematic analysis, and through sharing and comparison with peers. But in other instances (for example in relation to production), it involves directly teaching students information they do not already know. This occurs both through the direct provision of information by the teacher, and through research on the part of the students. In this sense, learning in media education involves an ongoing negotiation between existing knowledge and new knowledge. These issues to do with the pedagogy of media education will be addressed in more detail in the next module.

## MODULE 6

## HOW?

### MEDIA EDUCATION

### IN PRACTICE

The course units use a range of pedagogic approaches. Few of these are specific to media education: some might just as easily be found in social education, or in history teaching, for example. However, media educators have steadily developed a repertoire of pedagogic techniques that are suited to particular aspects of the curriculum. In this module, we will look at six of these techniques: textual analysis, contextual analysis, case studies, translations, simulations and production. The first three of these are more analytical, while the last three are more practical. This is by no means an exhaustive selection of teaching techniques, but it gives a fair idea of the range of approaches that might be involved in any media education course.

Implicit in these approaches are questions and assumptions about the nature of *learning*. As we have implied, students already have a great deal of knowledge about the media—almost certainly more than they have of other areas of the curriculum. There is some truth in the argument that, when it comes to media education, teachers are no longer the experts. Nevertheless, there is likely to be a great deal that students do not already know, and which it is important for teachers to teach. This relationship between existing knowledge and new knowledge, and its implications for learning, will be considered in more general terms in the closing part of this module.

### TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Textual analysis is probably the most familiar aspect of media education for teachers whose previous experience is in teaching literature or art. It is important to begin by distinguishing between *textual* analysis and *content* analysis, although both are useful strategies for media teachers. Content analysis is well-established as a method in the academic study of communication: it involves the quantitative analysis of a relatively large corpus of material using pre-

determined codes or categories. For example, students might count the proportions of image and text, or the amount of space devoted to advertising, in a range of newspapers; or they might conduct a 'head count' of the numbers of males and females in advertisements, or the kinds of roles they occupy. This can prove time-consuming in the classroom, but it does offer a rigorous way of testing hypotheses and identifying tendencies in a large sample.

By contrast, textual analysis offers depth rather than breadth. It tends to focus in great detail on single texts; and the texts selected are often quite short or limited in scope, such as single photographs, advertisements, opening sequences, trailers or music videos. Textual analysis involves close attention to detail, and rigorous questioning. Students need to be steered away from making instant judgments, and encouraged to provide evidence for their views. Analysis of this kind means "making the familiar strange"—taking something that students may know very well and asking them to look very closely at how it has been put together, and to think about why it has been made in that way. In the process, students will come to understand that visual and audio-visual texts have to be 'read' like other texts.

Let us consider how students might undertake a textual analysis of a TV advertisement, for example. Textual analysis generally begins with *description*: students are asked to identify and list everything they can see and hear in the text. At this stage, the teacher may cover the video screen and ask students to listen carefully to the soundtrack: the students should then describe the type of music, the sound effects, the language, the speaker's tone of voice, the use of silence, and so on. The teacher may then turn off the sound and ask students to concentrate just on the images, for example by using "freeze-frame" on the video. Here, the focus should be partly on identifying what is shown—the use of settings, "body language," colour and so on—and partly on *how* it is shown—for instance, the use of camera angles, composition and lighting. Teachers may ask students to "spot the shots," marking each

change in shot and looking carefully at how shot transitions are created, and considering the pace and rhythm of the editing. Finally, students will be asked to consider how these various elements are combined in the text as a whole.

Only when this process of detailed description is complete should students move on to the second stage of textual analysis, where they are invited to consider the *meaning* of the text. Again, this should begin in a systematic way, looking at the connotations and associations invoked by the various elements of the text. For example, students might consider particular images or elements of the setting, or particular musical sequences, and identify what they remind them of. They might look at the way lighting or sound or colour is used to establish a particular mood or atmosphere, or how particular camera angles or movements place us as viewers in relation to the scene. One useful approach here is called the "commutation test," where students are asked to imagine how the meaning would change if a particular element of the text were to change – for example, if the producers had used a different character or piece of music, or a different style of graphic design. "Intertextuality" is also important here: students should be asked to think of other texts (or genres) to which this text seems to relate or refer.

Finally, students can move on to a third stage, where they are encouraged to make *judgments* about the text as a whole. These judgments may relate to the values or ideologies they identify in the text. In the case of our TV advertisement, for example, we are likely to discover that the product is associated with qualities that are seen as positive in some way: the ad may claim that a product is "natural" or "homely" or "sexy" or "scientific," or that it will make the user into a better person—more powerful or sophisticated or attractive, for example. The analysis should enable students to understand how this claim has been made, and to make an informed judgment about the values that it invokes. These judgments may also relate to the "quality" of the text—in other words, how effective it has been in



attempting to convince us of its claims, or to convey its meaning. “Quality” in this sense is also about aesthetic pleasure; and one result of the analysis should be that students are able to understand *how* the text has managed (or indeed failed) to create feelings of excitement or glamour or energy, for example.

Of course, this is not to imply that textual analysis is always such a well-regulated process: there may be a great deal of negotiation and debate between students over the meaning of a particular text, and about their judgments of it. The aim is not for students to agree on their conclusions, but for them to be systematic and rigorous in their analysis.

Textual analysis obviously involves students acquiring a technical vocabulary, for example to describe different types of camera angles or shot transitions. However, it is very important that such analysis does not degenerate into a routine, mechanical activity: it should be used sparingly, and in relation to other activities. Textual analysis should also have a practical dimension. Students might be asked to “deconstruct” an image into its component parts, labelling each part with an analytical commentary, or to construct storyboards from moving image texts. This can lead on to constructing montages of “found” images, or storyboarding photo-strips or short video sequences. Taken in isolation, textual analysis can seem rather like the teaching of formal grammar: if it is to be meaningful for students, it needs to be applied to real texts in real contexts, and explored in practical ways.

**CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

Textual analysis works by removing texts from the contexts in which they are usually encountered. While this can be a powerful way of “making the familiar strange,” it also has its dangers. Close attention to *context* will enable us to understand the connections between particular forms of media language and two other key concepts of media education: production and audience.

One useful technique here is to encourage students to focus on the elements of a text that they might usually ignore. For example, the opening and closing sequences of movies or TV programmes can provide important information about how the text is targeted at a particular audience, and the different roles in the production process. Title sequences on television, for example, are used to identify and “sell” the programme to its intended audience. They may offer a succinct summary of the programme’s most significant “appeals” to its audience—which may include characters, settings or typical storylines. Detailed textual analysis of the music or editing, for example, can reveal a great deal about the producers’ assumptions about their audience. Title or closing credit sequences also contain information about who produced the text, the companies that own and distribute it, the various roles involved in making it, and so on. Identifying these can alert students to the financial (and perhaps ideological) interests it may represent. This technique is often most effective when there is a comparative dimension—for instance, when comparing the title sequences of two examples of a given TV genre that are aimed at different target audiences; or when looking at the companies that produce and distribute two contrasting representations of a particular social issue.

Another technique is to gather information about how a given text was marketed and distributed to audiences. This might include looking at TV listings magazines, video catalogues, shop displays, film posters and ads, websites, trailers and press releases. Media companies will often provide a “press kit” that can be mined for such information. Students should evaluate this material, paying attention to the claims made about the text and the methods being used to promote it. In many instances, they will become aware of the extent of cross-media marketing, and the connections between the various companies involved—which may operate on a global scale. If possible, it is useful to compare such material from different cultures—for example, by considering how a given film was marketed in two different countries.

In addition, students should seek out information about how the text was received, using the trade press or the media pages in national newspapers—for example, data on TV ratings, box office receipts and reviews. This will encourage students to consider the effectiveness of the text in reaching its target audience. However, students should also be encouraged to think about how this kind of information is gathered, and how reliable it is; and about the ways in which it is fed back into future planning. In some instances, students will be alerted to the ways in which media companies deliberately court controversy in order to sell their products. Taken together, these kinds of activities should help students develop an awareness of the economic motivations behind the media industries, and the often competitive, risky nature of the enterprise.

These activities are often easiest to undertake in relation to visual media, although contextual information of this kind is available for a range of other media. The popular music industry is particularly fruitful here: students can begin by studying CD covers, posters and advertising, and move on to look at the range of merchandising (both “official” and “unofficial”) that surrounds successful acts. This material often provides a very clear indication of how particular audiences are targeted, and how products are differentiated from each other in the marketplace. The music industry trade press, record companies’ press packs, fan websites and fanzines can also be used to explore the connections between the various companies involved, and the struggles that sometimes occur between music fans and the industry. It may also be interesting for students to consider how particular acts may have attempted to change (or widen) their audience over time, and how this is reflected in the ways they are packaged and marketed.

Pedagogically, this kind of contextual analysis draws students away from a narrow focus on textual explication. It encourages them to recognise that media texts do not simply appear from nowhere, but that promotion and marketing are crucially important aspects of the ways in which texts find

audiences. At the same time, it is important that students do not fall into the view that such activities are merely a form of conspiracy to manipulate the public. In this respect, it is important to consider examples of media products that fail to reach audiences, or to generate profit (which constitute by far the majority); and to consider how audiences can appropriate and change meanings—sometimes in ways that the media industries might not favour.

### CASE STUDY

This broadly contextual approach features more strongly in the third technique, case study. Here, students are encouraged to conduct in-depth research into a media topic of their choice. Of course, it is important that media educators should respond to their students’ enthusiasms, and to contemporary controversies; but this can be very demanding and time-consuming. In some instances, teachers may be able to gather the necessary information; but in many cases, students will need to do this themselves. Independent research and investigation of this kind should therefore play an important role in media education.

The simplest kind of case study focuses on the production, marketing and consumption of a particular text. To some extent, this is an extension of the kind of contextual analysis discussed above. The launch of new media products provides a particularly useful opportunity for this kind of case study: students might focus on the launch of a new TV show or youth magazine, the release of a new feature film, or a current advertising campaign, for example. Students may gather information of the kind identified above and (if possible) arrange to speak to producers.

A second kind of case study involves a cross-media investigation of a particular issue. For example, students might choose to explore the use of animals in advertising, selecting particular examples for close study, using the trade press, looking at audience responses, and consulting with relevant pressure groups and regulatory bodies. Alternatively, students might choose to focus on the media coverage of



a particular event, such as an election or a major sporting event, or a local news story. Here, they might study how stories are circulated, as each medium feeds off the others.

A third approach involves investigating media audiences. For example, students might develop and administer small-scale questionnaires or “media diaries” looking at patterns of media use, or conduct observational studies or interviews with particular audience groups—possibly focused on a particular text or genre. Students could be encouraged to compare their findings with those of published audience research (for example, the TV ratings), and to present them in a range of visual as well as written formats.

Finally, students might choose to investigate the work of a single media company or organisation. This need not be a major global company: it could equally well be a small organisation run by a minority group, a local newspaper or a regulatory body, who might be more willing to provide information. If students are undertaking “work experience”, this study could be conducted via observation. Here again, students will need to use ‘insider’ sources, such as industry reference books, the trade press and company PR materials.

While these different types of case study have different emphases, they present important opportunities to address the *relationships between* several of the key concepts. A case study of *Big Brother*, for example, might usefully cover:

- > **Production.** The production process, the broadcasters and sponsors, cross-media marketing, global sales.
- > **Language.** Editing, visual style, the generic mix of documentary, soap opera and game show.
- > **Representation.** “Realism” and falsehood, performance, the construction of characters, moral values.
- > **Audience.** Ratings, newspaper reviews, “interactive TV,” audience response.

Work on a case study of this kind thus involves a range of sources of data. In addition to watching and analysing extracts from the show, students would be looking

at other media coverage, reading publicity produced by the production company, visiting the websites, reading the trade press and researching other people’s responses to the programme.

The case study approach clearly requires students to develop skills as “researchers”—skills that are not frequently taught on the school curriculum. These skills are partly a matter of gathering information—for example, by using libraries or the internet, or making enquiries with media companies, or by conducting surveys or observational studies. However, they are also to do with *evaluating* such information. Students may find it relatively easy to locate material on the internet, for example; but they need to make some careful and informed judgments about how far such material can be trusted. Here, as with any other media text, students need to be aware that the material they have gathered is a *representation* that has been produced by people who will obviously have particular interests; and as such, they need to assess this material critically. Likewise, when undertaking audience research, students need to reflect upon the inherent limitations and biases of their chosen methods, and the representativeness of their samples.

Finally, it is important that students recognise that a case study is an *example*—it is, precisely, a case study of broader issues or tendencies. Media education is not a license for students simply to accumulate vast amounts of information about their media enthusiasms. They need to be encouraged to recognise the broader issues that are at stake in them. In this respect, it is important that students are encouraged to present their research to the teacher and to their peers at regular intervals, and to present a summary of their key findings. Debate and questioning should encourage a more distanced, reflective approach.

## TRANSLATION

This approach focuses primarily on questions of media language and representation, but it can also involve the more contextual issues addressed above. “Translation” is



essentially concerned with the differences that arise when a given source text is employed in different media or in different genres. The approach can be both analytical and practical.

The more analytical approach involves students investigating the treatment of a given issue in two different media, or for two different audiences. This might mean examining how a key moment in a fictional print text has been dealt with in two different film adaptations; or comparing how a given theme has been dealt with in fictional and factual forms. Students can systematically examine which elements remain the same between the two versions, and which are changed—and, most importantly, why this might have occurred. In the process, students will be considering how ideas and issues are represented in different ways in different genres or media forms, or for different audiences; and how a given text can be presented in a variety of ways.

Thus, in the case of fiction, they should develop a clearer understanding of how different media deal with features such as character construction, setting, time and narration. They may come to recognise that what can be communicated in one medium may be impossible to show in another. In the case of factual material, they should consider how different treatments in different media inevitably lead to a partial or “biased” view of the world. For example, students might choose a group of people who tend to be presented in the media in distinctive ways, such as refugees. They could gather and analyse a range of material in different media (such as news coverage, material from refugee charities and pressure groups, even fictional material), comparing the kinds of information that can be conveyed in each. This kind of activity also shows how the intended audience of a text can affect its ideological or moral message.

The more practical approach involves students themselves “translating” a text from one medium to another—from a newspaper story to a TV news item, or a short story to a film sequence, or vice-versa. If production facilities are not available, students

might translate a print text into a script or illustrated storyboard. This kind of work enables students to realise the possibilities and limitations of different media, and the ways in which meanings can change when they are presented in different forms or transposed from one medium to another. This provides a very practical way of addressing questions about the “codes and conventions” of different forms of media language. In the case of translating fiction from print into film or video, for example, students may have to address the difficulties posed by first-person narration, or changes in the narrative point-of-view. Conversely, translating from film to print can pose challenges in finding verbal equivalents for the use of sound and visuals to create atmosphere and suspense.

In both cases, it is important to address the contextual issues identified above. The constraints and possibilities of different media are not solely determined by the characteristics of the media themselves: they also depend upon the production context, and on the intended audience. One of the problems with the use of “the film of the book” in literature teaching is that these issues are frequently ignored. A “classic” literary text is compared with a mass-market film adaptation; and the latter is, almost inevitably, found to be lacking. Yet millions more people have seen Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet* than have ever seen Shakespeare’s original text performed on stage; and the particular qualities and achievements of each of them need to be assessed in terms of the different audiences they are seeking to reach, and their overall aims. As this implies, media analysis should be both textual *and* contextual.

## SIMULATION

Simulation is a very popular technique in media teaching. Simulation is a form of role-play: it involves putting students into the position of media producers, albeit in an essentially fictional way. Simulation is particularly useful for addressing questions about production—for example, about production roles and processes within the media industries, and about how media producers balance financial, technological



and institutional constraints in their work. Students are generally presented with a series of choices to make or problems to solve, and then encouraged to reflect upon the consequences of their decisions, in comparison with those of other groups within the class. The teacher may also act “in role” as a Commissioning Editor or Executive Producer.

Simulations do not necessarily need to proceed to the stage of production itself. Thus, students might be asked to act as TV programme makers tendering proposals to a broadcaster for a new series in a given genre—a children’s series, for example. Here, they will be required to produce a description of the series, outlining its appeal for its target audience, as well as character sketches, plot summaries and costings. Alternatively, they might be asked to introduce a range of hypothetical new characters to an existing programme (such as a soap opera), or to develop a new location; or to take an existing text and “re-package” it for a different audience. These approaches can obviously be applied to other media: students might become authors seeking to sell proposals for a new “blockbuster” novel to a major publisher, or journalists seeking to launch a new magazine title.

In some cases, this approach can become quite elaborate. For instance, there are several published simulations about the popular music industry, in which students are asked to form an imaginary band, get them signed with a record company, seek relevant publicity and media exposure, and so on. In this kind of simulation, different groups in the class may take roles representing different groups of personnel: managers, agents, record companies, radio stations, and so on. The same approach has been used in relation to the film industry. Here, groups of students act as competing production companies: they have to develop script ideas, identify marketable stars and directors, and draw up budgets. These ideas must then be “pitched” or “sold” to another group of students acting as potential financial backers. Here, students will come to recognise that success depends not just on the originality or appeal

of the idea itself, but also on the “package” that is presented, and its potential for merchandising and global sales.

Students can also simulate the activities of other aspects of the media industries. For example, they might be given a TV scheduling exercise, in which they are asked to timetable a given selection of programmes into an evening’s viewing, perhaps in competition with another channel whose schedule has already been fixed. This encourages students to think about the ways in which different audiences are targeted at different times of day, and about how channels establish a distinctive identity. Regulation is another aspect of the industry that can be explored in this way. For example, students might be presented with examples of films that have to be classified or certificated according to certain age bands, and asked to provide justifications for their decisions.

In some instances, simulations will be carried through to the production stage. For example, questions about the selection and construction of news can be addressed very effectively through a practical simulation. Here, students act as a production team (editors, producers, newsreaders) and are presented with a steady flood of incoming stories of various kinds over a period of several hours (or lessons). Production constraints—for instance, in the form of last-minute items and instructions from station executives—are also thrown in. The students are required to select, edit and sequence the stories into a short news bulletin (for radio or TV) aimed at a particular target audience, which is then recorded ‘live’ at a pre-determined time.

Another approach that is frequently used is the “photoplay.” Here, students are given a series of still images and invited to select and sequence them to form a storyboard for a moving image sequence. Such activities can be used to explore how editing is used to construct mood and atmosphere; or to construct different types of narratives from the same material. Different groups of students in the class can also be briefed to create different end products, and the results compared. Such materials are now available using CD-Rom technology (rather



than scissors and glue); and some of these materials also use moving images and sound, thus enabling students to explore the effects of different combinations or sequences.

The obvious advantage of simulations is that they offer a direct, 'hands-on' experience of aspects of media that are often difficult to teach about in other ways. For example, there is a risk that teaching about media production and the media industries can become heavily information-laden; and in this area, simulation provides a much more active, accessible approach. Simulating media production for different target audiences, and thinking how to attract and reach them, can also provide an engaging way of approaching this area, which can sometimes appear rather "abstract."

However, as with case studies, one of the key issues for teachers here is to enable students to realise the broader issues at stake. The personal immediacy of a simulation can make it hard for students to distance themselves from what is happening, and to reflect upon the consequences of the choices they have made. "Debriefing" is particularly important in this respect: students need to be encouraged to evaluate their own and each other's work, and to consider the similarities and differences between the "unreal" world of the simulation and the real world of the media industries.

The value of a simulation also depends very much on the nature and quality of the "input"—that is, the ways in which students are informed about the area of media they are working on, and the constraints that are built in to the process. Students need to be effectively briefed about the nature of their particular role and the institutional circumstances they are operating within; they need to be presented with problems that are sufficiently challenging; and their choices should genuinely make a difference. A simulation should not be regarded as just a form of play acting.

## PRODUCTION

To a greater or lesser extent, most of the approaches discussed so far involve some form of media production. Practical, hands-on use of media technology frequently offers the most direct, engaging and effective way of exploring a given topic. It is also the aspect of media education that is most likely to generate enthusiasm from students. Practical work offers a comparatively "safe" space, in which students can explore their affective investments in the media, and represent their own enthusiasms and concerns. If we are concerned to develop a complete form of media literacy, "reading" the media and "writing" the media should be inextricably connected. For all these reasons, media production is a central and indispensable aspect of media education—although it is often the most challenging one for teachers.

Some media educators are still somewhat sceptical about the educational value of production work. They argue that students' productions are often little more than a mindless imitation of mainstream media. However, recent research has questioned this view. Researchers have shown that students' uses of popular media forms and genres frequently display a clear understanding of "media language," and a form of ironic distance which is at least potentially "critical." By making these dimensions of their work explicit, and through subsequently reflecting upon them, students can be encouraged to develop a more thoughtful approach to concepts such as representation, which are sometimes dealt with in rather mechanistic terms.

Over the past few years, the advent of digital technology has created significant new opportunities here. In many cases, this technology is both less expensive and easier to use than the technology it is replacing: for instance, editing video on a computer is much more straightforward than using older analogue equipment; while digital still cameras offer instant images much more cheaply than traditional cameras. In many instances, it is also possible for students to produce extremely 'professional' results; and the internet now makes it pos-



sible for them to distribute their productions to wider audiences.

These developments have several important implications in terms of learning. Using digital editing and image manipulation software, it is now possible for students to develop their understanding of “media language” in a much more direct and intuitive way than can be achieved through analysis alone. Through play and exploration, students can make their “passive” or unconscious knowledge of media language (which they have developed as consumers) into “active,” conscious knowledge. These technologies also create new opportunities for reflection: sharing their production work via the internet, and gaining feedback from real audiences, can help students evaluate what they have done in a much more thoughtful way.

However, media production need not involve access to “high tech” equipment. A great deal can be achieved using cheap disposable cameras, or even pens, scissors and glue. Furthermore, it is important to keep production activities small-scale and manageable, particularly in the early stages. Students will avoid disappointment if they understand the limitations of the available technology and adjust their ambitions accordingly. As with any other form of “writing,” production skills need to be acquired in a structured, gradual way: students who launch enthusiastically into making their own feature films will learn little apart from failure. In the early stages, activities should build a step at a time, from textual analysis towards exploratory hands-on experience with technology, and then on to small-scale, modest productions, such as trailers or opening sequences, rather than “complete” texts.

A full discussion of these issues would require more developments, particularly as media technology is changing so rapidly. It is becoming harder for teachers to specify what and how students should be learning in this field. Production is an area where teachers have to cede some of their authority and control to students, and allow them a space for exploration—and for many teachers, this is difficult to achieve.

However, there are certain general caveats that should be raised here.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that—even in the most well-resourced schools—media production work can present significant problems in terms of classroom management. Teachers will have to develop ways of rationing students’ access to equipment, and ensuring that the inevitable technological obstacles can be adequately dealt with. Production work generally involves students working in groups over a relatively long period of time; and this often requires high-level skills in communication and in time-management. Students need to learn to set their own targets, to work to deadlines, to resolve disputes, to allocate responsibilities among the group, and so on. Furthermore, students may already have different levels of expertise in production, gained from their experiences outside school. If certain groups of students are not to dominate, these issues need to be explicitly addressed rather than left to chance.

Secondly, media production work needs to be effectively integrated with the kinds of critical analysis students are undertaking elsewhere in their courses. Of course, it is easy to agree in principle that “theory” and “practice” should be connected; but this is often much harder to achieve in practice. The aims and parameters of production work should be defined from the outset, and communicated clearly to students. Teachers need to be aware of the conceptual issues that the project is intending to address, and ensure that these issues are constantly brought to students’ attention. This is partly a matter of well-timed and effective intervention by the teacher. Students need to be regularly encouraged to distance themselves from what they are doing, and to reflect upon the consequences of the choices they are making. This can be a formal requirement, which is built in to the process: students can be required to have regular “production meetings” with the teacher, and even to draw up a form of “contract” which will promote ongoing self-evaluation and review of the project as it proceeds.

Self-evaluation is particularly crucial here. In evaluating their own and each other's practical production work, and audience responses to it, students are encouraged to consider the relationship between intentions and results, and hence to recognise some of the complexity of meaning making. Far from reducing production to a mere illustration of theory, this can enable students to generate new theoretical insights. Thus, as with simulations, it is vital that students should “debrief” at the end of the process, and formally evaluate their work. This can be difficult to achieve immediately, so it is often wise to leave time for students' emotional involvement in the work to cool. Undertaking this kind of evaluation in the context of a whole-class discussion, and taking account of the responses of other audiences (if these can be found) is also a very valuable way of helping students to achieve this.

Perhaps the key point here is that—in the context of *media education*—production is not an end in itself. As we have noted, the aim of media education is not to train young people for employment in the media industries: this is a task that is best left to higher education, or to the media industries themselves. Of course, media education should enable young people to “express themselves” creatively or artistically, and to use media to communicate; but it is not primarily a matter of training them in technical skills. In the context of media education, production must be accompanied by systematic reflection and self-evaluation; and students must be encouraged to make informed decisions and choices about what they are doing. Media education aims to produce *critical* participation in media, not participation for its own sake.

### WATCHING MEDIA LEARNING

The accounts of pedagogic approaches in this module have implicitly reflected a certain set of assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning in media education. Broadly speaking, they all begin from a recognition of the validity of what students *already* know about the media; and they all involve “active learning” on the part of students. Nevertheless, it would be false to

conclude from this that media education is therefore little more than a “celebration” of students' existing knowledge. All these strategies implicitly assume that there are things students do *not* know, and that they need to learn. They all entail the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, either through instruction from the teacher or through investigation and research by students themselves. Students are required to make explicit what they already know, to reflect systematically upon it, and thence to move beyond it. Media education is therefore very far from being an easy option, as it is sometimes described: while it should be pleasurable, it should also be rigorous and intellectually challenging.

The relationship between “theory” and “practice” is crucial in this respect. Of course, the balance and relationship between critical analysis and practical production is likely to vary from one unit of work to another. Nevertheless, the interaction between them is increasingly seen as typical of good practice. To return to the analogy with literacy, it is in the movement back and forth *between* different language modes—between “reading” and “writing” — that much of the most significant learning may occur. Thus, production may enable students to turn “passive” knowledge (which is developed through analysis) into “active” knowledge (which is necessary in order to communicate new meanings). It should encourage students to make explicit and to formalise their existing knowledge; although it may well require subsequent critical reflection in order for this to be fully achieved.

Nevertheless, there is a need for more research and debate about the nature of learning in media education. As we have noted, the view of media education as a form of ideological “inoculation” or “demystification” which was prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s has increasingly come to be challenged, both in the light of new developments in academic research, and in the light of classroom experience. To some extent, these developments could be seen to represent a “coming of age”: it was perhaps inevitable that as media education moved beyond its pioneering stage, some



hard questions about its effectiveness and its motivations would have to be raised. Much of this questioning has developed from classroom-based research conducted by teachers themselves.

Perhaps the most fundamental question here is to do with the nature of conceptual understanding. Media education is generally based on a set of “key concepts.” Yet we know relatively little about how students develop their understanding of these concepts, or how they relate to their existing knowledge and understanding. This in turn poses significant problems in terms of evaluation. Media educators need a firmer basis on which to evaluate or assess students’ understanding, and hence to identify evidence of progression in students’ learning. Despite several attempts to devise a model of progression, there is considerable uncertainty about what we might expect students to know about the media at different ages, and how we might expect them

to move from one level of understanding to the next. There are particular problems in this respect with evaluating students’ creative production work, and in establishing how “theory” might relate to “practice.” The evident danger with the conceptual model is that it can prove to be unduly rationalistic. We need to find ways of taking account of students’ *affective* relationships with media, and engaging more directly with questions about cultural or aesthetic value. Above all, we need to know more about whether media education actually makes any difference to students’ relationships with the media, and how it might do so.

These are relatively basic questions, of the kind that are faced by any new curriculum area. The continuing development of media education will depend upon how effectively and coherently they can be addressed—and in this respect, practising teachers should have the most important role in the debate.



## HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

This handbook aims at encouraging students to question the media they use every day, and to try to find out more about the way they work. It focuses on the analysis of four key-concepts: production, languages, representations, publics. Mirroring the handbook for teachers, it seeks to foster critical and creative thinking in the mind of students while responding to their curiosity.

### WHAT ARE MEDIA?

A medium is something we use when we want to communicate *indirectly* with other people—rather than in person or by face-to-face contact. “Media” is the plural of “medium.”

The term “media” includes the whole range of modern communications media: television, the cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising, newspapers and magazines, recorded music, computer games and the internet.

Many of these are often called “mass” media, which implies that they reach large

audiences. However, some media are only intended to reach quite small or specialised audiences, and they can be important too.

Media *texts* are the programmes, films, images, web-sites (and so on) that are carried by these different forms of communication.

Media texts often use several types of communication at once—visual images (still or moving), audio (sound, music or speech) and written language.

**WHAT IS  
MEDIA EDUCATION?**

Media education is education *about* the media. This is not the same as education *through* the media—for example, using TV or the internet to learn about other school subjects.

Media education focuses on the media we all encounter in our everyday lives outside school—the TV programmes we watch and enjoy, the magazines we read, the movies we see, the music we listen to.

These media are all around us, and they play a significant part in our lives. Media help us to understand the world and our place in it. This is why it is so important for us to understand and study them.

Media education involves *making* media as well as *analysing* media. In this handbook, though, our main emphasis is on analysing.

**MODULE 1                      WHY?**  
**QUESTIONING**  
**THE MEDIA**

Our aim isn't to stop you from watching your favourite TV programmes, or to save you from what some people see as harmful influences. Nor is it about getting you to agree with a particular point of view about the media.

Our aim is simply to encourage you to *question* the media you use every day, and to try to find out more about how they work.

**In this handbook, we'll be looking in more detail at four key questions connected to four key-concepts:**

- Production:** who makes media?
- Languages:** how do media communicate meaning?
- Representations:** how do media portray the world?
- Audiences:** how do people make sense of media?

**MODULE 2                      WHAT?**  
**PRODUCTION**

Media texts don't just appear from nowhere. They take time—and sometimes a lot of money—to produce. Some are made by individuals working alone, just for themselves or their family and friends. However, most of the media texts we consume are produced and distributed by groups of people, often working for large corporations. Media are big business: the most popular movies and TV shows make large profits. Media are also global in scale: the same movies, records and TV formats are available in countries around the world.

**KEY QUESTIONS**

Looking at media *production* means looking at:

**Technologies.** What technologies are used to produce and distribute media texts? What difference do they make to the product?

**Professional practices.** Who makes media texts? Who does what, and how do they work together?

**The industry.** Who owns the companies that buy and sell media? How do they make a profit?

**Connections between media.** How do companies sell the same products across different media?

**Regulation.** Who controls the production and distribution of media? Are there laws about this, and how effective are they?

**Circulation and distribution.** How do texts reach their audiences? How much choice and control do audiences have?

**Access and participation.** Whose voices are heard in the media? Whose are excluded, and why?

**EXAMPLES**

**1. News Corporation**

News Corporation is an example of a large, multi-national media company. Owned by Rupert Murdoch, News Corporation began as a newspaper publisher and now has interests in television, movies and the internet. It owns the Fox TV networks, Times

Newspapers, Twentieth Century Fox and Star TV. See if you can find out which other companies and brand names are owned by News Corporation. How do these companies connect with each other? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the media being run by such large corporations?

## 2. Big Brother

The “reality show” *Big Brother* is an example of a TV format that has been sold around the world. The format was invented by a TV company in the Netherlands, and versions have since been shown in more than 40 countries. *Big Brother* has also led to many other “reality shows” in which real people are set challenges and can be “voted out” by the audience. See if you can find further examples of such programmes. How do shows like this use other media, like the press and the internet? Are these shows “interactive,” and do they give power to the viewer, as some people claim?

## 3. GAP (Global Action Project)

GAP is a small organisation that works with young people to make videotapes and television programmes. It is based in New York City, but has worked with young people in many countries, including Guatemala, Ireland and Israel. It does not run for profit, and it is funded by charities and foundations. See if you can find out about the productions it has made, and where they have been shown. Are there production companies like this in your own country? What are the difficulties faced by organisations like this? Why aren't they featured more on mainstream TV?

### TAKING IT FURTHER

> **Ownership.** Take a copy of your favourite magazine, or the newspaper your family reads. See if you can find out the company that owns it. What other companies do they own—for example, other media companies?

> **Branding.** Take two TV channels in your country. Compare the logos and graphics they use, and the links between the pro-

grammes. What kind of identity or feeling do they try to create? Who do they seem to be aiming at?

> **Merchandise.** Take a popular media phenomenon—a new movie or computer game. Look at the range of other media that surround it: press coverage, free offers, advertising, merchandise. How are they trying to maximise the audience?

### QUESTIONS TO DEBATE

> **Global culture.** Look at a list of the most popular movies or records. How many of them were produced in your country? Where else do they originate from? Do you think we will all end up with the same media—and does that matter?

> **Commercialism.** How much of the media produced in your country is made for commercial profit? How much of it is made by government, or by non-commercial organisations? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a “public” system, as opposed to a “market” system?

> **Control.** If the media are controlled by large corporations, does that make it harder for minority voices to be heard? Do some media offer more opportunities for participation than others?

### MODULE 3

### WHAT?

## LANGUAGES

Every medium has its own “language”—or combination of languages—that it uses to communicate meaning. Television, for example, uses verbal and written language as well as the languages of moving images and sound. We call these ‘languages’ because they use familiar codes and conventions that are generally understood. Particular kinds of music or camera angles may be used to signal particular emotions, for example; a page of a newspaper or a sequence of shots in a film will be put together using a certain kind of “grammar.” By analysing these languages, we can come to a better understanding of how media make meaning.





## KEY QUESTIONS

Looking at media *languages* means looking at:

- > **Meanings.** How do media use different forms of language to convey ideas or meanings?
- > **Conventions.** How do these uses of language become familiar and generally accepted?
- > **Codes.** How are the grammatical “rules” of media established? What happens when they are broken?
- > **Genres.** How do these conventions and codes operate in different types of media texts—such as news or horror?
- > **Choices.** What are the effects of choosing certain forms of language—such as a particular type of camera shot?
- > **Combinations.** How is meaning conveyed through the combination or sequencing of images, sounds or words?
- > **Technologies.** How do technologies affect the meanings that can be created?

## EXAMPLES

### 1. images in Advertising

Advertisers use images and graphic design to say what is unique and valuable about their product. For example, they use colours and lighting to create a mood; unusual camera angles to add drama; and typefaces to give a sense of style. The people in the ads are carefully dressed and posed in order to show how the product makes them more powerful, more sexy or more intelligent. Compare a selection of ads for a particular type of product. How do advertisers create the idea that the product is classic or modern, natural or high-tech, sophisticated or down-to-earth?

### 2. The Codes of TV News

TV news generally has very strict rules and conventions. The newsreaders are smartly dressed; they generally sit behind a desk, shot in medium close-up; they rarely show emotion; and they look straight into the camera—although nobody else is allowed to do this. News begins with ‘serious’ stories, and ends with light-hearted ones; it often focuses on dramatic or unusual events;

and it tends to show politicians and celebrities rather than ordinary people. Why do some things become “news” and others do not? Why do news programmes all tend to look very similar?

### 3. The Language of Editing

Film-makers take great care to select and combine shots in order to tell a story, and to create the effects they want. Most feature films use “continuity editing,” which has definite rules. For instance, when we see a shot of a character looking out of the frame, and then we cut to another shot of an object or a person, we automatically assume that this is what they are looking at. Many pop videos and some experimental films use montage editing, which combines shots to convey feelings and ideas. Watch a sequence of film and try to concentrate just on the editing. Is it fast or slow, smooth or jarring? How does it help to tell the story or create the mood?

## TAKING IT FURTHER

> **Body language.** Collect some photographs from a fashion magazine, featuring women and men. Compare the poses, the way the models look at the camera (or at each other, or out of the shot), the use of lighting and colour. What are the similarities and differences, and what do they tell you?

> **Talk radio.** Make a tape of a radio talk programme (a phone-in or discussion show). Listen carefully to the kind of language that is used, and who controls the discussion. What are the rules of talk radio? What kinds of talk are not allowed?

> **Storyboarding.** Make a storyboard of a TV ad you have recorded. Draw each shot, showing whether it is a close-up or a long shot, a low angle or a high angle, and how each shot is joined to the next. How does the advertiser use visual “language” to tell a story or give the product a unique identity?

## QUESTIONS TO DEBATE

> **Alternative languages.** See if you can find examples of films or videos that “break the rules” or try to create a different language—for example, experimental films made by artists. Are they harder to understand or less enjoyable than mainstream films? Why/why not?

> **Mixing genres.** Look at media texts that mix or combine genres—such as comedy-horror films, or drama-documentaries on TV. What are the problems with mixing genres? What new ideas can be conveyed in this way?

> **New technologies.** Digital technologies have offered us new forms of media language—for example, in computer games and the internet. But how have these technologies affected “old” media such as newspapers or television or recorded music?

### MODULE 4

### WHAT?

## REPRESENTATIONS

The media don’t just offer us a window on the world. They don’t just present reality, they re-present it. Media producers inevitably make choices: they select and combine, they make events into stories, they create characters, they invite us to see the world in a particular way. Media offer us versions of reality. But audiences also compare media with their own experiences, and make judgments about how far they can be trusted. Media representations can be real in some ways and not in others: we may know that something is fantasy, yet it can still tell us about reality.

## KEY QUESTIONS

**Looking at media *representations* means looking at:**

> **Realism.** Is this text intended to be realistic? Why do some texts seem more realistic than others?

> **Telling the truth.** How do media claim to tell the truth about the world? How do they try to seem authentic?

> **Presence and absence.** What is included and excluded from the media world?

Who speaks, and who is silenced?

> **Bias and objectivity.** Do media texts support particular views about the world? Do they put across moral or political values?

> **Stereotyping.** How do media represent particular social groups? Are those representations accurate?

> **Interpretations.** Why do audiences accept some media representations as true, or reject others as false?

> **Influences.** Do media representations affect our views of particular social groups or issues?

## EXAMPLES

### 1. In the news

Most newspapers have a particular political “line,” or a particular party they will support. This is normally very clear from the “editorial” sections of the papers, where journalists are allowed to present their own views directly. Yet political beliefs may also influence the kind of new stories they choose to cover, and how they interpret and present them. Compare how a couple of newspapers cover a political story, or an election. How are their beliefs shown in the choice of language and images? Does bias in the news necessarily influence readers?

### 2. Representing social groups

Critics have often argued that the media ignore minority or less powerful groups, or show them in a negative light. The proportion of women or people from ethnic minorities who appear on television, for example, is generally much lower than the proportion in society. Researchers also find that non-white characters are more likely to be shown as criminals or villains; and that women are less likely to be shown in powerful roles. What do you think are the consequences of this situation? Can you think of any important exceptions to this, and what do they tell you?

### 3. Access

Mainstream media are often dominated by powerful groups. However, many TV and radio stations have “access” slots that allow ordinary people to present their



views: this might be in the form of a phone-in or a studio talk show, or a separate programme. Many minority groups also publish newspapers or make videotapes to communicate ideas on issues that concern them. Try to get hold of an example of a minority newspaper or magazine, or watch an access show on TV. How is it different from mainstream media—both in what it is saying, and in how it is saying it?

**TAKING IT FURTHER**

> **People in drama.** Take a couple of popular TV drama serials or soap operas. What roles do women or ethnic minority characters play in them? Are any of them obviously “stereotyped”? Why do stereotypes seem to be so necessary?

> **Documentary.** Watch a documentary that deals with an issue you already know about: it could be about school or young people, or about a hobby or interest you have. Does the documentary give an accurate picture? How does it claim to tell the truth?

> **Fantasy.** Look at a fantasy text, such as a film or a novel or a computer game. Study the setting, the storyline and the characters’ actions, and look at how they are portrayed. What is realistic and unrealistic about this text? Can it be both at the same time?

**QUESTIONS TO DEBATE**

> **Objectivity.** Some people see the media as the primary source of prejudices such as racism and sexism. But how important are the media, when compared with other influences, such as the family or school?

> **Influences and effects.** Some people see the media as the primary source of prejudices such as racism and sexism. But how important are the media, when compared with other influences, such as the family or school?

> **Positive images.** Critics have often argued that the media show minorities or less powerful groups in society in a negative way. They have called for more “positive

images.” Do positive images always have positive effects, for example on people’s attitudes?

**MODULE 5**

**WHO?**

**audiences**

Media would not exist without audiences. Yet the media have to compete for people’s attention and interest; and finding and keeping an audience is not easy. Producers might imagine they know what different groups of people will want, but it is often hard to explain why some things become popular and others do not. People also use, interpret and respond to media in very different ways. A given media text will not mean the same thing to everybody. Understanding and reflecting on our own and others’ uses of media is therefore an important part of media education.

**KEY QUESTIONS**

Looking at media *audiences* means looking at:

> **Targeting.** How are media aimed at particular audiences? How do they try to appeal to them?

> **Address.** How do the media speak to audiences? What assumptions do media producers make about audiences?

> **Diffusion.** How do media reach audiences? How do audiences know what is available?

> **Uses.** How do audiences interpret media? What meanings do they make?

> **Signification.** Comment les publics interprètent-ils les médias ? Quelles significations en tirent-ils ?

> **Pleasures.** What pleasures do audiences gain from the media? What do they like or dislike?

> **Social differences.** What is the role of gender, social class, age and ethnic background in audience behaviour?

**EXAMPLES**

**1. Measuring TV audiences**

In most countries, the popularity of TV programmes is measured by “ratings.” Often,

a fairly small sample of viewers have meters attached to their TV sets to show when it is turned on; and some have 'people meters' that show who is in the room at the time. This information is multiplied to give an estimate of the overall audience. This information is vital for advertisers, who want to know how many people are watching and what kind of people they are. TV companies also use it to know how much to charge advertisers for screening their ads. What do you think are the limitations of this system?

## 2. Fan culture

Many TV programmes, film stars and pop groups have a very dedicated fan following. In many cases, the media encourage this by forming fan clubs and publishing fan magazines and websites. However, fans often exchange information between themselves via magazines or the internet, or at meetings or "conventions;" and in some cases they even write stories or make videotapes about their favourite stars. See if you can find some examples of this material. What does it tell you about the pleasures people derive from the media? Do you think fans are typical of media audiences in general?

## 3. Media Violence

One of the most important areas of research on media audiences has been concerned with the effects on media violence. Some research has involved experiments, in which people's responses to media are observed and measured. Some has involved surveys, in which people are questioned about their television viewing and their attitudes towards violence. There is a great deal of disagreement between researchers about the nature and extent of such effects. Why do you think there has been so much research on this issue? Will we ever find convincing proof?

### TAKING IT FURTHER

> **Targeting readers.** Take two newspapers that seem to be targeted at different groups of readers. Look at differences between them—for example in price, layout,

language, the use of photographs, the range of content and the coverage of particular stories. What do the editors of these papers assume about their readers?

> **Media diaries.** Keep a diary of your own uses of media across the course of a week or two. If possible, compare it with a friend's. Are there predictable patterns in your media consumption? Do you think you are typical of people of your age or social group?

> **Watching audiences.** Spend an evening or a weekend observing your family's use of media. What discussion or interaction goes on when people watch TV, read the newspaper or surf the internet? Do people combine different media? Who controls the use of media, and how?



### QUESTIONS TO DEBATE

> **Negative influences?** Many people argue that children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the influence of media. Others see them as much more knowledgeable and sophisticated than adults. What is your view? What evidence do you have to support it?

> **Global audiences.** Some media texts are popular with audiences throughout the world—particularly those that are produced in the United States. According to some critics, this means that audiences are all being led to accept American values and ideologies. Do you agree?

> **Interactive media.** The internet and computer games are often described as 'interactive' media. To what extent, and in what ways, do they allow audiences to be "active"? How much power and control do audiences really possess?

### MAKING MEDIA

Media education isn't just about analysing media. It's also about making your own. There are many reasons for wanting to make your own media:

> To get your views across to an audience.

- > To help you explore your own ideas and experiences.
- > To learn to work with other people.
- > To have fun!

## TECHNOLOGIES

New technologies create all sorts of possibilities for making media. With the right computer packages, you can manipulate photographs and images, create layouts for newspapers or magazines, edit video and sound, and put your work out on the World Wide Web. This technology is getting cheaper all the time, and it can make your work look really professional.

But making media doesn't have to be high-tech. You can make great stuff with instant cameras, or even just paper, scissors and glue. Magazines, collages, posters and photo displays are cheap and easy to make, and can be a good way of getting your message across. Radio or audio tape can also be a great medium to work with.

## AUDIENCES

Of course, there's a lot of fun to be had just messing around with media. But if you want to really improve your work, you can learn a lot from trying to reach a particular audience. This will help you think hard about what you want to say, and how you are going to put it across.

Finding out how people respond to what you produce can be surprising and informative—and (if you're lucky) it will really give you confidence. There are more and more ways for young people to get their productions noticed: use the World Wide Web, or approach your local TV or radio station.

## QUESTIONING THE MEDIA

Making media yourself can also help you think about how the professionals do it. Several of the questions we've asked in this handbook can also be asked about your own productions. Here are some things to think about:

## Production

- > What kinds of technology can we use, and how will they affect the finished product?
- > How are we going to organise our work together?
- > How is our production going to reach an audience?

## Languages

- > What are the most effective ways of getting our message across?
- > Can we use well-known conventions or genres, or do we need to do something new?
- > What choices are we making, and what consequences will they have?

## Representations

- > What ideas or values are we trying to convey?
- > How do we want to represent the world?
- > Are we using stereotypes, and what are the consequences of doing so?

## Audiences

- > Who are we communicating to, and why?
- > What assumptions are we making about our audience?
- > How are we going to persuade them, or get them to believe us?

## CONCLUSION

In this handbook, we have been asking four key questions:

- > Production: who makes media?
- > Languages: how do media communicate meaning?
- > Representations: how do media portray the world?
- > Audiences: how do people make sense of media?

These questions are linked to the key concepts. They are all connected. If you ask one, you're almost bound to start asking the others.

These questions apply to any media phenomenon. Whether it's *Pokémon* or the *Spice Girls* or *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, these questions should help you think a little more about what's going

on. And these questions can also be applied to your own productions—whether it's a photo for your family album or a home video, or a fanzine or a music tape you record with your friends.

### FINDING OUT MORE

There are plenty of ways to find out more about the media:

- > Read specialist magazines, and look for the media pages in newspapers.
- > Contact your local TV or radio station or newspaper and ask them to send you information about their work.
- > Use the World Wide Web to seek out media websites.
- > Look out for information about alternative media workshops, film and video festivals and events.

Note: this list can be supplemented with local information and examples.







## HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

The aim of this handbook is to generate opportunities and situations enabling parents and caregivers to watch television and other media with their children, in a constructive manner. It proposes different activities to be developed by families, and provides some tools to observe media, understand them better and, if possible or necessary, intervene and participate in their elaboration. These indications are to be taken not as recipes, but as suggestions of autonomous and innovating pathways.

The school's role in the media education process is certainly irreplaceable, but by no means exclusive. Much can be planned and done with the same aim in mind within the family, the religious organization, or the media library in town. The underlying idea is that television and other media are a worthwhile subject of conversation and study. It implies accepting the place they occupy in many households and many lives, and allowing people to have a say in it—especially children.

### CHANGES IN THE FAMILY

In spite of all the major changes it has undergone over the last few decades, the family continues to be a reference as well as a 'fundamental element' of society. It is to a large extent within the family fold that most people are born and grow up, receive the first tender loving care, and learn to live with people different from themselves. It is



there that they learn to listen and to speak and, in this way, to say what they think and how they feel. It is based on such affection, relationships and initiatives that each one of us comes into contact with the surrounding world and becomes aware that we are both a product and an active part of it. Several surveys have found that among the values endorsed by the respondents, the family emerges as the most important or one of the most important and that the majority feel that a child needs both a father and a mother in the home in order to have a happy childhood.

Exactly because it is such a basic and fundamental experience—although its foundations have been shaken up over recent decades by profound changes—it is no wonder that the family has been the subject of diverse and even contradictory discourses. Some aim to defend the family, making it out to be uniform and immutable, thus converting it into a mythicized reality. Others have dreamed or still dream about its dilution in favour of so-called more advanced forms of social life. Both as expression and agent of social change, the family institution has come to assert itself as a plural reality in the concrete forms of its existence and development.

To provide an insight into the transformations that have occurred or are ongoing within the family institution, several factors are usually drawn upon, like:

- > Urbanization and the spread of urban lifestyles;
- > The shift from authoritarian to democratic regimes;
- > The growing entrance of women into the labour market;
- > The spread of the egalitarian ideal relative to the rights and duties of men and women;
- > The dissociation of sexual relations and procreation coupled with the widespread availability of contraceptive methods.

**One may state, therefore, that the changes that have been affecting the family have occurred at the intersection of:**

- > Cultural factors (feminist movements, greater acceptance of separation and divorce);

- > Political and economic factors (professionalization, implementation of family policies);
- > Medico-scientific factors (mother-child health programmes, widespread availability of the contraceptive pill);
- > Technological factors (transport, household electrical appliances, etc).

**Some consequences are reflected in phenomena such as:**

- > A sharp decrease in the birth rate;
- > A steep reduction in the infant mortality rate;
- > A clear drop in the number of offspring and of large families;
- > A significant growth in the number of divorces and of children born out of wedlock.

**To these trends other factors must be added, namely:**

- > The growing school education of the population;
- > The gradual reduction of illiteracy and a marked growth in attendance at higher education institutions by people in the relevant age bracket, women in particular;
- > The gradual but consistent movement away from the countryside and rural life and all the panoply of networks and relationships associated with it;
- > The growing concentration in urban environments with likely access to new kinds of opportunities (e.g. where employment is concerned) but not necessarily better living conditions.

All these elements are certainly not enough to encompass the full range of transformations occurred over recent decades, the more so because the cultures, traditions and resources of each different country or region are quite distinct from each other. Such elements enable us, however, to understand the plurality of situations and contexts in which family life now exists.

#### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

**Family life is conditioned by both internal and external factors.**

- > Employment (or lack of it) is certainly one of them, and is characterised by greater or

lesser stability, greater or lesser degree of satisfaction and absorption.

> The characteristics and location of housing are another: they determine many of daily life routines and decisive aspects of the quality of life, such as access to social and cultural equipment, as well as having a strong bearing on the length and quality of the relationship with the children. For example, a family who lives on the outskirts of a major urban centre and who requires one or two hours to get to work and just as long to return home, having en route to drop the children off at educational institutions or at the home of relatives, find themselves in a completely different situation to that of a family who lives within the area where they work.

> The rhythms and demands of daily life become at times so stressing, that the members of the household arrive home exhausted when there is still so much to be done.

It is important to underline, in this respect, that women's demands for a fair share in domestic tasks and the care of the children is still far from being translated in practice, despite some significant progress, at least in some social and cultural environments. When women have a professional occupation, they are sometimes doubly sacrificed within a social framework in which domestic work, because of its invisible nature, remains unappreciated. Data supplied by official statistical services in this connection are often misleading as the averages conceal wide sex-distribution asymmetries—domestic work and care of the family being a case in point.

The truth is that, among modern families, time is becoming an ever-increasingly scarce commodity: be it because work takes up far too much of their time, or because home life demands dedication, it is often easier to simply sit the children in front of the television set, the video games console, or the computer screen, rather than actually being with them. The feeling of powerlessness or guilt drives many parents to make up in toys, or money, for the short time they spend with their children.

CHILDREN,

AN ILL-CONCEIVED

CATEGORY

In the history of the Western world, children have been the object of attitudes and behaviours which have known diverse expressions over time. We have known the practice of abandoning newborns, the practice of handing children over to other people to care for them and raise them. This does not mean to say that in times past, children were not given enough love and care and attention. What happened was that, owing to their number, and their extremely high mortality rate, the investment in each one of them and in their journey through life did not assume the prominence that it came to have in the twentieth century.

What we nowadays call “childhood”—as being a long period, largely taken up with schooling and the acquisition of various learning—seems to be but a few centuries old. In former times, once they reached the age of reason and achieved some language and physical ability autonomy, children were gradually integrated into the world and tasks of adults. The great institution that eventually contributed to making childhood a specific social category was school and its gradual spread among the well-to-do, first, and then progressively among ordinary people. The time necessary to acquire the skills in reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic expanded as the knowledge and requirements to carry on social occupations and functions also grew. This entailed the preparation time becoming increasingly longer until it reached the configuration it has today. Most countries do not accept that children undertake work, paid or otherwise, before a certain age (16 being the standard most often mentioned), the assumption being that they will attend school until that age at least. One may say that studying is understood to be their work.



**INSUFFICIENTLY  
CONCEPTUALIZED NOTIONS  
OF CHILDHOOD AND  
ITS POTENTIALITIES**

The way to consider and understand children and their development towards adult life and full citizenship has varied widely and continues to be the object of greatly differing conceptions. There are those who view the child as a kind of blank sheet or wax tablet on which parents, first, and society at large, next, gradually imprint knowledge, values, behaviours and feelings. From an essentially receptive and passive attitude, individuals would thus acquire the skills and tools to become autonomous.

A quite different perspective is that which, while not denying the importance and decisive role of adults, emphasizes the active role that children do, or should, take on in their process of discovery of the world around them, and of others, and, in this way, of themselves. And also the importance of acknowledging and prizing in education the skills that children already possess.

In the former, the individual is taken to be essentially a product of society, i.e., what is primarily looked at is what the individual (still) lacks; in the latter, the individual is regarded not just as a product but also as a producer—in other words, the focus is on what the individual (already) is or (already) is able to be.

These are, after all, two complementary ways of seeing the same reality: it is a bit like the glass of water filled halfway; some regard it as half full, others as half empty. However, one and the other views may have different consequences as regards the orientations to adopt in education and in socialization, if one or the other view is adopted exclusively. Put another way: if I view children as incompetent or deficient, I will tend to place adults at the centre of the socializing process, a place within which lies a kind of cultural programming which must be transferred to the infant's world. Conversely, if I recognise that children, at their own level and in their own way, are (relatively and progressively) competent, I

will seek (without doing away with the role of adults) to acknowledge and enhance such skills and build on them in a way that ensures younger people not only receive but also give.

A vast set of studies carried out in the last few decades have drawn attention to the importance of the networks of friends and colleagues and of neighbour groups in the life and growth of children. The exchanges and relationships established in these settings; the solidarities and rivalries generated; the assumption of roles and the phenomena of leadership that occur make such times and spaces into vital dimensions of their own discovery of themselves and of the world around them. These are contexts and opportunities generated and built in large measure by the children themselves—freed, as far as possible, from the projects and programmes of adults—in which they can develop their imagination, relationship skills, friendship and solidarity.

Despite recognising the importance of such networks and such opportunities, the truth is that the housing conditions of many families, the capabilities and pace of life of many parents and the lack of vision and sensitivity of the political agents to the development of times and spaces within which children may be left to themselves in safety, causes the life of a number of children to be marked by either excessive programming or unacceptable neglect or isolation.

**CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO  
PARTICIPATION**

If we look at the text of the Convention on the Rights of Children approved by the UN in 1989—which is law in the countries which have ratified it (all except the United States and Somalia)—we will see that three types of rights are proposed and established therein:

- > Protection rights, in order to prevent people from harming them;
- > Provision rights, in order to provide them with what they lack;
- > Participation rights, in order to encourage and welcome children's voicing their views on matters that directly concern them.

Despite the huge problems that still affect childhood worldwide, one ought to recognise the enormous progress that has been made, and continues to be made, in respect of the first two types of rights. This does not prevent, however, children themselves being the social group most affected by situations of poverty and war nor the emergence of new forms of exploitation and violence against them (cases in point are child prostitution rings linked to sex tourism; the incidence of HIV/AIDS-infected children; the growing number of street kids in some large metropolises, particularly in developing countries). Nor can it prevent us from recognising the huge shortcomings prevailing in the field of participation rights (see articles 12, 13, and 17 of the Convention).

This third family of rights, which is new, and which entails a whole plan of action, directed first and foremost to the family and the school, is already a concern shared by many educators, but is far from being a widespread sensibility. By placing emphasis on the rights of children, we run the risk of a “politically correct discourse.” It is true that recognition of the worlds and of the rights of the younger generations may have led us to mistake proximity and effort at communication for a certain type of “demagogic” companionship, which makes the adult an equal, someone who does not behave as a grown-up, that is, who is just another child.

The dominant conceptions of education from the 1960s to the present day require an in-depth analysis. But it is necessary to state that adulthood is not incompatible with the recognition of young children’s dignity, as well as of their own place and voice. Besides, experience shows that the persons who marked us the most were not those who made themselves our equals when we were little, but rather those who opened up our horizons, helped us unveil new worlds and discover ourselves, within our limits and capabilities. Children’s most serious problem, nowadays, seems to lie in the fact that they have neither the time nor the conditions to be children.

The pace of day-to-day life of quite a number of children is such that they seem rather like executives of a large firm. Many of them get up very early, have a long way to go to school, attend class, and in addition to having their lunch and their afternoon snack, they study foreign languages, practise some sport, all of which within a tightly-timed schedule, which may extend until 5 or 8 o’clock in the evening, when they are eventually collected and brought home to do their homework. Surely this portrayal reveals, in any case, an effort by the parents at best solving a problem which to many families is quite a problematic one: the huge lack of fit between school timetables and work schedules. In this scenario, the children are never unaccompanied, and, they attend activities that are complementary to their school education, which might well prove very important in the future. But they don’t know how to manage their time, the fun of invented games and of the un-programmed contact with nature.

A quite distinct picture is that of children who stay at home, often on their own, or in the charge of an elder sibling or under the distant supervision of a neighbour, who take responsibility for their own meals and the times to go to school, and to whom household chores are entrusted, inside and/or outside the house, which at times are quite heavy and demanding. There is, in these contexts, the disadvantage of learning being confined to a rather narrow life horizon, albeit counterbalanced by a greater share of responsibility being undertaken by the child, as well as by times—including play times—which are to a greater extent decided upon and organized by the child itself.

Surely several of these aspects take on a differing importance depending on the child’s age and the density of its relationships with other significant adults (grandparents, close neighbours, etc). But it is a fact that a large number of children end up being mainly the victims of the impossibilities, the inequalities and the irresponsibility of the adult world.



**THE SCHOOL  
in SEARCH FOR  
NEW DIRECTIONS**

Much as we criticise school and however poor the state of education is, children in general like school. But they like it not necessarily for the same reasons as adults would like them to: not because of what is taught and learnt there, or because of the masters who teach there. They like school because it brings together their friends and colleagues; because it affords them time for recreation and play, before, after, and in between classes. And because it provides, in spite of all, an opportunity for them to free themselves from their parents tutelage. One might almost say, surely with some exaggeration, that the school the kids like is the *“school of break times.”* This is a point that features strongly in the studies conducted by researchers, and which deserves greater consideration and attention than is the case, from both parents and teachers.

At the same time, however, it is fair to acknowledge that a growing number of education professionals has been working towards making the school into a quality time and space where children like to be, schools in which they learn how to live, over and above what is required by the school syllabus. Taken for a long time to be a time of preparation for life, the school has for a century now been enhancing not only its function as “scaffolding,” but also enhancing the life that is built and expressed within it. That is, it has been discovering and enhancing “the person inside the student.” This is not just the man and woman of tomorrow, but the active subject of the here and now.

Understood by some as a social leveller, and by others as a factor in the reproduction of social inequalities, the school has shown a remarkable vigour and has asserted itself as one of the fundamental institutions of society. The utopias that predicted its doom and the pronouncements of those who believed in global and centralizing reforms of this institution have all fallen by

the wayside. At the same time, multiple innovative experiments were tried out. In essence, however, the traditional model has quite resisted change. Just consider how the time-measuring logic underlying the organization of teaching times and spaces has lasted and endured. Many educationalists, like Piaget and others, consider that the main goal of school education is not to repeat what previous generations have done or the knowledge they have formulated, but rather to develop creative and discovery skills through active methods based on research and information analysis. The truth is that the transmission model—or “banking” model, as Paulo Freire dubbed it—centred on the figure of the teacher, continues to demonstrate an unfaltering vigour.

Despite the efforts propounded by different educational currents aimed at both motivating students to learn and making their school experience (and, in a wider sense, their life experience) more appealing, it must be said that school education is quite hard. It demands organization and discipline, gradualness and progress, dedication and evaluation. From this point of view, it rests on a different—some would even say antagonistic—logic to that of the media, and, in particular, that of television, with which young children have a close daily rapport from birth.

A big misconception in this field concerned the project that the political and cultural elites, particularly in Europe, intended to bring to fruition by designing for radio, first, and television, next, a format which would turn such media into major popular schools which would carry the lights of civilization to the four corners of the land. Particularly in the case of TV, which evolved as a medium geared primarily to entertainment, the disappointment engendered alienation and refusal, which strengthened the idea that television is a competitor or an opponent of school.

Equally problematic was the trend, which gradually set into the school field, to introduce audiovisuals into teaching, not so much in order to study them in the forms and expressions that made them mass phenomena both socially and culturally, but

rather to adapt them to school logics. Despite all the innovative ideas and experiments originated in many quarters, the audiovisual media came to be regarded above all as a technology to be appropriated and not as a dimension of a cultural universe to be understood. And yet, the audiovisual media incorporate fundamental questions as to how to accommodate the universe of young people, their symbols and their language.

Something analogous might be going on with the computer networks and the Internet. Indeed, the insistence placed on the widespread availability of terminals in school and on its use by teachers and students runs the risk of, in the words of Seymour Papert, « *hyperpetuating the teaching and learning methods invented in the nineteenth century, embellished with technology* ». We believe, at times, that the fact of introducing technologies into school will change almost automatically all teaching practices. Clifford Stoll, an Internet pioneer, issues a word of warning in this respect: « *I'm fully convinced that it is a nonsense to clutter our classrooms up with computers and Internet connections. [...] Well-asked questions can never come from a computer. [...] The Internet only teaches us to click on. [...] You don't have to think, you only have to click on. [...] Hence surfing the Internet is an excellent recipe for stopping to think* ».

The exaggeration is obvious, but the caution deserves to be retained.

The school—it has been said—is growing ever more distant from its former situation, when it constituted the principal source of diffusion of knowledge and learning. The multiplication and diversification of channels of access to information and knowledge has but made this situation even more noticeable. The Internet, with all the developments it has known, and will know in the near future, is far more than a new means of communication: it is an interactive communication and information environment through which one can access diverse modes of exchange, including an endless number of traditional media, both printed and audiovisual.

A problem to take into account, in this context, is that children and the young have available to them means of access to information which are at times far more interesting and motivating than those they find in class, a situation which threatens, and will increasingly threaten in the future, the essentially transmission school model. Many education scholars and many teachers have already realised that and have been battling for radical change. It so happens that such a situation entails many other factors, such as teacher training, the conditions regarding space, equipment and resources, class sizes, how to organize and manage the life of educational institutions, the role assigned to students, inter alia.

It is becoming increasingly noticeable that, sooner or later, school is bound to be forced by circumstances to change the way it is designed and organized, as no other institution is envisaged to take its place as yet. There are in fact tasks which, within the framework of current societies, the school alone can successfully perform. Pierre Bourdieu referred to them in a report for the French government he submitted in 1985:

> On the one hand, to develop and work on the acquisition of skills/intellectual tools necessary for an understanding of all the messages and for the rational integration of all the knowledge;

> On the other hand, to develop the capacity to critically analyse and synthesize the information and the knowledge acquired through other means, as well as the conditions of such acquisition.

UNESCO's important report, *Education—A Treasure is Hidden Within It*, published in 1996, summarises these new skills into four major programmatic axes:

> *Learning to know*, by acquiring the tools for understanding;

> *Learning to do*, in order to be able to act upon the environment;

> *Learning how to live with others*, in order to cooperate and participate in social life;

> *Learning to be*, which is an essential pathway that follows from the three aforementioned.





These skills require time and presuppose high quality human climates, in which teamwork and the teacher's new way of being and intervening become indispensable requirements. It all leads us to believe that the school institution remains irreplaceable. But it is likely that within the next few decades it will be driven to blaze a new trail, by an endogenous capacity for transformation and in response to the cultural and social challenges and/or as a result of very strong outside pressure. It would be no wonder if students performed a prominent role in such change, for it is they, more than any other actor in the educational scene, who most feel or might eventually feel the discomfort and the unease of the present situation.

TELEVISION,

BUSINESS AND

CITIZENSHIP

The children and adolescents of today are faced with a world wholly "made up of change," as the great poet Luís de Camões once said, in the sixteenth century, at another great moment of social transformations. But there are aspects which, being so integrated and imbued in our daily life, seem as though they have always existed. That is not yet the case with the Internet, which became established and diffused itself exponentially in the second half of the 1990s. But maybe that is already the case with television. For the younger ones, the notion is vague that 40 years back, when their parents were young, this small household electrical appliance, which today occupies a central, attention-grabbing place in the home, was a rare object that made people curious and even a little wary.

At that time, in most countries there was only a single black-and-white channel which broadcast a few hours a day, with frequent breaks in transmission due to flawed networks. The TV sets had a design which today would appear pre-historic and there were people, especially the older ones, who believed that the news readers and the entertainment presenters could actually

see them when they came on the screen. Compare that with what happens today: several over-the-air channels, scores of channels broadcasting via satellite and accessible by satellite dish or by cable, digital television in the process of being launched, opening the way to a growing interactivity with the viewers. Between the early years of television and today's reality, a number of innovations have come to the fore which have enabled a significant change, not only in the way we watch television but also in the television experience itself. Here are a few examples:

> *Colour TV*, which already existed in the USA in the 1950s but only expanded across Europe and North Africa from the late 1960s, and mainly in the 1970s;

> *The video recorder*, which spread far and wide through the 1980s, and which, in addition to making possible other uses for the TV set, such as watching videotape recordings of movies, allowed us to defer the moment and alter the mode of viewing television programmes;

> Finally, *the remote control*, which allows viewers to change channels without having to get up from their seat, thus enabling them to zap across the channels, which means an added challenge to programmers who are committed to not letting slip—and if possible, to capturing—new audiences.

To the technical innovations one must add the drop in the cost of TV sets which, coupled with the multiplication of channels on offer and an improvement in family buying power, has made easier the fast rise in the number of sets in the home. The existence of a second TV set (and sometimes even more), being the easiest way to avoid choice conflicts or simply to watch television in greater comfort, has led to a phenomenon which one could call "privatisation of television consumption." Indeed, TV consumption was in the earlier decades of television a reason for families and neighbours to get together at the home of whoever had a set, or for people to assemble in cafes and bars to follow particular events. Thereafter, with the spread of the



new medium, we witnessed a progressive “privatisation” of consumption. In the last few decades, a second privatisation has been taking shape, this time in the home: the living room (or the kitchen) has tended to cease being the meeting or interaction space that, in spite of all, the viewing of television programmes provides, as such consumption nowadays occurs in the bedrooms.

Many analysts have pointed out that the increase in television supply, both in terms of the number of channels available and the number of hours of broadcast, is far from meaning an increase in the diversity or possibilities of choice. Although this remark refers mainly to the major general-interest channels which tend to copy each other, it is true that, generally speaking, prime time television has declined by becoming too alike. As has been said, we now have “more of the same.” This is not to say that there aren’t any quality programmes, even on general interest channels; what happens is that they are shunted into time slots which are unfeasible for most people.

Therein lies a problem faced by those who take an interest in television and its cultural and social role, and that is the problem of quality. There is no one who will not vouch for its quality, but few will venture to spell out what quality means to them or the criteria they use as a basis to judge what has quality and what hasn’t. Highbrow culture continues to have a strong bearing on such considerations. Some comments spell it out clearly: quality is minimal because prime time fare should contain more documentaries, more theatre, more debates, more styles of music, more *auteur* films, and more sports other than football. One could counter-argue that there are other channels that seek to cater for such interests but do not meet with wide acceptance. Or that there are documentaries or theatre plays, or other productions, that have no quality for the plain and simple reason that they are technically and aesthetically poorly directed and produced.

That is—and this is the first important idea to bear in mind—quality does not stem from the fact that it is a particular television

genre, but should be formulated taking account of the specific criteria for the genre in question. It is not reasonable that a social or cultural group should set its standards of taste as a general norm and then seek to impose on others what they deem as deserving of attention. But one ought to recognize that the avenue between elitism and demagoguery is a rather narrow and arid one. In any case, we perceive a programme’s quality when it leaves you feeling that there is more to it than meets the eye; that it is innovative or original in the solutions it finds; that it is able to interest different types of public, that is, that it allows for differing levels of significance; that it is emotionally and cognitively enriching and that it broadens the horizons of those who watch it. It is important to note, furthermore, that it is not only at the level of isolated programmes that quality may be gauged, but also, and perhaps mainly, at the level of programming.

One often opposes quality to popularity, such opposition meaning that what has quality is not popular (that is, does not attract large audiences), and, vice-versa, what appeals to the great masses is as a general rule of no quality. There are cases which show that such opposition is not inevitable. But it is a fact that, when the market commands the television programming logic, the solutions adopted tend to be those which are least costly as well as those that resort to the most elementary “lowest common denominator” codes. The prime objective is to “produce” as large an audience as possible in order to “wrap it up” and sell it to the advertisers. This is a business that views television viewers as a target, as real or potential customers, whose loyalty it is necessary to safeguard.

The legitimacy of such perspective is not at issue here, but one needs to state that it cannot be the only one. TV viewers are consumers, real or potential, but before that they are people who are situated in social networks and social contexts, with differing problems and needs, interests and identities, who are moved by different reasons, sharing dreams and values or not, in search of a purposeful life. They are not merely a seduced clientele or a clientele to



be lured: they are citizens who become conscious of their place in the world and are called upon to participate in collective life. They deserve, therefore, that the TV fare on offer recognizes and embraces such a plurality of social situations and positions, not only as a business opportunity, but also as a service to the community.

It is also true that many of those who advocate a less commercial television nurture a basic misconception about TV, for they forget that, while television may contribute to people's information and education, it is above all an entertainment medium, a storyteller. It is necessary to review the rules that have prevailed in this sphere. The initiative of those responsible for television channels, which gives shape—unsatisfactorily, according to many—to the programmes on offer, would gain from a greater interaction with various initiatives from entities and organizations of the so-called civil society.

The awakening of civil society to the problem of television, including consumer and viewer associations, as well as schools, religious communities, research centres, and cultural animation and production institutions, can perform a more relevant role in either applauding or criticizing the action of media operators.

## TELEVISION IN THE FAMILY

All things considered, one could say that among all the large media of collective broadcasting, television is the one that could rightly be said to be a family matter. For a start, that is where a large share of consumption occurs, both by adults and children. But television is a matter in the family and of the family for it has come to be converted into a factor for structuring family time and space.

It has not always been so, however. In the earliest times of television broadcasting, the consumption context was a rather different one, partly due to the fact that few people had television in the home. In that period, the café, the sports or cultural

association and other local institutions became favoured venues in which to follow programmes. Thus, one could say that watching TV was a collective, and to a large extent, public act, which with time increasingly became an ever more individual activity. On the one hand, this sea change has allowed a number of conflicts and tensions to be solved which would inevitably arise—at the time when there was only the one set-over matters such as turning the television set on or off, choosing the channel or programme to watch, setting the sound volume, or controlling the use of the remote control (*zapping*). On the other hand, the interaction and the dialogue that was bound to happen whenever the family or part of it gathered to watch television have been lost.

Oddly enough, we may now consider watching television together as a reason for mutual enrichment, when precisely one of the criticisms that was often levelled against television was that it undermines dialogue within the family. It is true that watching some programmes, especially during meals, could be used as a screen to keep out conversation. But it is equally true that there were, and still are, frequent situations in which it is precisely the themes covered in the programmes, including news on current affairs, that originate and foster interactions which might otherwise not even occur.

One of the questions that may be asked in this connection is with regard to **factors which influence TV consumption**. These factors vary widely in both kind and number. In a broad sense, we may say that such factors are related to two major types of questions:

- > Factors relating to (and lying with) the supply side of television;
- > Context-specific factors relating to (and lying with) the receiving end.

**In the factors relating to the supply side, what carries weight is, for example:**

- > The number and variety of channels available;
- > The image and knowledge one has of one

particular channel or another: the type of programmes they usually broadcast; the degree of satisfaction or interest they produce; a special broadcast on a certain specified day, etc.

**As for the contextual factors, they may have to do with aspects such as:**

- > The values, ideologies and tastes of each one of us or of each respective household, which lead us to look for and favour certain genres and contents over others;
- > The life styles that underlie our everyday lives, and which are closely related to the material and symbolic resources available as well as to the paces of life;
- > The existence of alternatives to television, whether within the domestic environment, or in the context of local communities, including the conditions of access by potential users;
- > The existing time availability, depending on the moment of day, the days of the week, the seasons of the year, the weather conditions, etc.

There are moreover other less context-specific factors that come into play and which concern each person's position in the life cycle. To be more concrete: if we view human life as a cycle, younger children and the elderly are at each respective extreme those who, in principle, have the most spare time free from compulsory activities and commitments. No wonder, therefore, that it is precisely within such age groups that we find the highest rates of television consumption. As children grow up and become less reliant on their parents, their

scope widens significantly and television tends to lose the prominent place it occupied up till then. But when young adults start new families and centre themselves back on the home, television receives once again some attention which, according to currently prevailing patterns, will go on growing as they get older (see table).

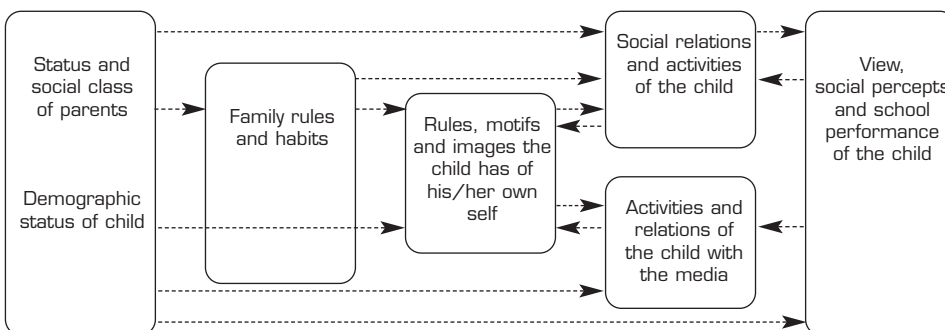
The notion of "life styles" then requires more developments. "Life styles" may be understood, in the wake of sociologists such as France's Pierre Bourdieu and England's Anthony Giddens, as the standards that guide and structure our preferences and our choices and which are owed, in large measure (but not exclusively) to the environment in which we grow up. One interesting question that may be posed is this: are there different ways of conceiving and putting into practice the education of our children? That is, are there distinct values, means, projects, and investments? Has that diversity of "styles" and educational practices, also been reflected in the use of television when we consider the case of children in particular? In other words, is there a relation between educational values, life styles, and the use of television?

Several researchers have endeavoured to solve these questions, and have identified at least "three styles." They are just another way of speaking of the type of dominant relationship between parents and children:

- > An *authoritarian or protective style*—marked by a strong control of children's television practices by their genitors, which may be due to a fear of the possible influ-



CONCEPTUAL TABLE OF TV USE BY CHILDREN



Source : Rosenguen and Windahl (1989), *Media Matter : TV use in Chidhood and Adolescence*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, p.9.

ence of the television medium in shaping the child's personality;

> A *liberal* or, in more extreme versions, "*laissez-faire*" (*let the children to their own devices*) style whereby parents leave all the initiative to the will and decision of the children, either out of a conviction that the matter is unimportant, or through carelessness and neglect;

> A *democratic or participatory* style, in which the decisions are the object of "negotiation" and dialogue between the parties, namely where television is concerned.

In most studies, the majority of children (who are aged between 8 and 12) are evenly distributed across the liberal and authoritarian styles. That is, most parents tend to adopt either imposing or "laissez-faire" behaviours, the cases of adoption of dialoguing practices being in the minority.

We know very well, though, that actual living conditions and family rhythms far too often prevent putting into practice the values and attitudes that we would think preferable. One of the greatest difficulties consists in dovetailing the schedules of the different family members so as to make it possible to devote more care and attention to both family life and the children. Distance, transport difficulties, conditions laid down in the workplace, the overrating of work, turn daily life for many families into a roller coaster which not all are able to survive. The changes in the models and types of family and the inequality between the sexes in the assumption of the different kinds of domestic tasks might be factors which compound still further a picture which already looks quite gloomy as it is.

The result of these diverse types of factors is that many children spend part of their day increasingly alone at home or with their siblings (whether older or younger), whereas a number of other children find themselves overly occupied in their daily lives as a strategy which may be both an investment in a higher qualification by their parents and a recourse to cope with the mismatch between, and voids in, the schedules of the various household members.

Television emerges in this context as an accessible, easy, and attractive resource. It arouses interest since virtually the first few months of life, crowds the child's universe with stories (to the point of it being called the "electronic granny"), and, above all, keeps children occupied and away from the dangers lurking in today's streets, notably in urban environments (hence it also being called the *baby-sitter*). Consequently, television thus becomes, in today's daily life, the most viable and interesting solution to keep children busy, precisely the very same television that is so often accused of exerting a nefarious influence on the little ones. There are many paradoxes to deal with!

## SUGGESTED

## ACTIVITIES

### PARENT (SELF-)TRAINING

It is often said that there are courses on everything, except on how to learn to be a father or a mother. The school of life continues to feature at the top of the table of possible schools, but that does not preclude people from being able to think about finding times and spaces for exchanging experiences and disquiets, as well as finding more clear-headed paths to meet the challenges that the education of their children throw up nowadays.

The problems that so often are associated with television may provide an excellent chance for people to meet, be it in already existing structures, such as parents associations, family movements or training groups of diverse nature, or through *ad hoc* initiatives among people who share identical problems.

If part of the difficulties of everyday life arise out of not quite knowing how to act in regard to: how to watch television and for how long; whether this medium is frequently a source of, or brings out, the problems and difficulties within the family; whether these difficulties are shared by the generality of the families—why not make this issue a starting point for meeting and for training? Television is, besides, not only a source of

problems and anguishes, but of enjoyment, learning and discovery as well. It becomes important to take the television experience in its multiple dimensions.

### GATHERING INFORMATION ON PROGRAMMES

A more attentive and demanding attitude vis-à-vis television presupposes information about television programmes. It is important that such information be as complete (comprising the various channels to which one has access) and as timely (some time beforehand, in order to enable the user to work out his own "programming") as possible. As seems evident, no training activity can do without this information.

TV magazines can play an important role here, although nowadays both general interest newspapers and several sites on the Internet make available enough material of interest on this matter. It would be in everybody's interest to have one or more services which offer to collate, systematize, treat and diffuse relevant information on the programmes, including complementary sources and exploration routes. Such a service, of interest for families and for schools and other educational institutions, might rest on a partnership involving family associations, television operators, the public service ones in particular, and the educational authorities (ministries, regional governments, etc).

The Internet might constitute a fine and speedy environment for imparting information and, within a more ambitious scope, promoting debate on it by means of forms, chats, weblogs, etc.

### IDENTIFYING FAMILY PORTRAITS ON THE SMALL SCREEN

A topic which has been a cause for concern in different countries, and which has originated a lot of research, has to do with the way television treats and represents family life in its various kinds of programmes.

Here are a few questions as a contribution to a possible handbook on the issue, that

could be used for organizing meetings with parents:

- > Do certain family stereotypes predominate?
- > What are those stereotypes and how to characterize them?
- > Are they proper to a specific type of programme?
- > How is the family of the protagonists and heroes portrayed?
- > What family models predominate in television series and soap operas?
- > What is the role of each parental figure?
- > What is the place and role of the children?
- > In which circumstances are the older members of the family portrayed?
- > How often are situations of breakdown in family life, such as separations, divorces, etc, portrayed?
- > How are domestic tasks represented?

### ANALYSING IMAGES OF CHILDREN ON TV

In this activity, the theme being spotlighted is, in particular, the representation of children on television programming (note that it is not just about programming for the younger ones). Again, a few topics to aid in examining the matter:

- > What place and what visibility do children hold in the programming of the various channels?
- > To what extent and in what contexts and circumstances do children have a voice in these programmes?
- > In what roles and situations are they placed when they come into the studio?
- > To what degree are the rights of children to privacy, to the non-disclosure of their identity and the non-exploitation of their vulnerability safeguarded, especially when obtaining information from children that might hit the front page?

### DISCUSSING VIOLENCE

Violence is a recurrent theme in talks about television. It is not a clear, self-evident concept. We do not distinguish real violence which actually happened from fictionalised violence; physical violence from social or



psychological violence; believable from non-believable violence; violence as a resort for the triumph of evil or for the triumph of good, etc. Based on different kinds of programmes, this theme might be the subject for conversation in the home (or in another context).

Here are a few possible topics:

- > To what extent is there an over-representation of violent acts on the screen relative to the environment in which we live?
- > To what extent is television violence a fair reflection of social violence and/or the agent producing such violence?
- > What modes of problem solving and conflict resolution are shown in the series, the films or the soaps?
- > What violence shocks the most: that of news bulletins or that of movies?
- > To what extent is it possible to create an extremely violent climate without explicit scenes of physical assault actually occurring?
- > What is the appeal of violence?
- > To what extent does insensitivity to violence exist? Can it be generated?

### TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT ADVERTISING

The advertising phenomenon is present whenever there is television and media. Today's children have become the most marketed-to generation in history, not only because of their purchasing power (which should not be underestimated), but also and mainly because of their prescriptive power of consumption, that is, their influence on their parents and other caregivers. Besides, they are prospective adult consumers and, for the advertisers, investing now is also investing in the future. Talking to children about advertising is a way of making them wiser as consumers and more resistant to the pressures to be "cool."

Here are a few tips adapted from *Talking about television with children*, available on the Canadian website of the Media Awareness Network:

- > Start young: until the age of six or seven, children have difficulty understanding the intent with which commercials are shown,

and often find them more engaging than many programmes;

- > How advertising works: the consumption fads; the creation of necessities; the exaggerated claims made about the products; the idea that they bring happiness. A suggested activity consists in having children make a list of the good and important things in their lives (the things they value). Then they have to make a list of the things they wish they could buy. A comparison between the two will enable them to see what will or will not bring them happiness and why.

- > Tricks of the trade: point out the methods used to get us to buy their products, like making us feel good; using misleading words; backing it up with the findings of studies carried out; mounting campaigns and offering product tie-ins; using stars and heroes.

- > De-construct food advertising: the type of products advertised (cereals, *fast-food*, candy, ice-cream, beverages) and the language used to describe them—"nutritious," "natural tasting," "natural fruit."

- > Talk about the value of money : faced with a commercial environment which promotes spending over saving, and which stimulates unbridled consumption in any way it can, it is important to learn how to be smart about money in order to become a responsible consumer.

### EVALUATING TV EDUCATIONAL STYLES

This activity can be a rather interesting reason for parents and educators to meet, in order to discuss their shared worries about the place television occupies in the life of young children (and at times in that of adults as well). There are those who are far too strict, ostensibly in order to control children's consumption down to the last detail. There are those who use TV as a punishment or a reward. There are others who take a dim view of television, but nonetheless find it preferable to street dangers. There are also those who do not bother all that much. And finally, there are those who



tend to attribute to television in general, or to certain types of content in particular; the most obvious cause of certain behaviours and attitudes in their children in respect of language used, concentration on their studies, school performance, their relationship with their parents and colleagues, etc.

Some studies conducted on this matter suggest that a good start towards facing up to and overcoming existing difficulties may lie in the ability to verbalize and share together personal and family experiences, the fears and the ghosts, the discoveries and the learning. One aspect which will surely emerge is that what happens with television has a lot to do with everything else that happens in our everyday lives and the challenges they pose.

## SUPPORTING AND PROTESTING

One of the most serious problems of society's relationship with the media resides in the fact that we easily accept the practices of both the programmers and the people in charge as a fait accompli. There is, indeed, between the two sides, a rather unequal relationship, which leads us to consider implicitly that our room for manoeuvre as viewers and users is tiny, and the effectiveness of our action negligible. But we must not forget that part of the power of the media depends on the attitudes and behaviours of the audiences. It is not the same to get a feedback of satisfied, dissatisfied, or indifferent.

Although the determining factor stems from audience results, lobbying moves and actions may also carry a weight of their own. Responding to broadcasts, to the contents put out by the media, is not—and cannot be—just to run them down. It must consist also in supporting what we deem worthy of praise and requesting more of what we regard to have been good programming moments. For these reasons we suggest that, through the means available to us—letters, telephone calls, e-mails—we get our applause as well as our protest across whenever there is occasion. Without forgetting that, in addition to contacting the channels, it is worthwhile at times to take advantage of other facilities, such as letters

to the editor of local or national newspapers, as well as specific Internet websites.

Obviously, contents should not be the sole target for citizens' action. The broadcasting schedules often constitute a sensitive issue worthy of attention. Finally, consumer demands may be with respect to what the media broadcast, but it may also be with regard to what they fail to broadcast: that which they do not do, but should do.

One point that qualifies and lends credibility to citizens' action vis-à-vis the media resides in its substantiation, the information that substantiates it, which takes account of the nature and logic of the media themselves.

## EDUCATION FOR THE MEDIA, FAMILY AND SCHOOL

Over the last decades, impelled by a large number of institutions, in particular UNESCO and the Council of Europe, there has been a growing effort to establish media education. Some view it as an education that relies on broadcasting means, in other words, that tries to use to best advantage some of their contents. There is a wider consensus, however, around the idea that media education is, first and foremost, a form of personal empowerment and a ground for exercising citizenship. Whether through something which is similar to "literacy"—the understanding and command of certain codes and conventions specific to the various media —, or through the understanding and the scope (political, economic and cultural) of the media industries, the aim of this education is to make the individual more critical and participatory. This should make him more capable of contributing to turn the media into multiple platforms for information, training and entertainment.

It seems also essential to recover the legacy from those who, like Paulo Freire and Mário Kaplún, have placed the emphasis on popular communication. In this light, media





education should be viewed not only as a pathway to a more critical understanding of the media environment but also as a means to learn and communicate better, with oneself and with the others as well. In other words, such an education should stress less the media than the communication process.

Media education—despite the connotations that this expression carries—is neither a subject pertaining only to the school nor something that has to do with pupils and children and teenagers alone. Of course the school institution, as guarantor of an overall, consistent and sequential education of the individual human being and the citizen, must play a decisive, or even irreplaceable, role. However, the media phenomenon is so ample and its effects on individual and community life are so significant that no social institution can remain indifferent in the face of it.

The family, no matter how deep the changes it has undergone over the last decades, remains that basis of support and affection, of opening of the mind, that no other institution will ever be able to truly replace. For that very reason, it is in the family that the awakening to the world and to life occurs. And the media have an unavoidable role to play in such an awakening, both as a resource and an agent. Hence the growing opinion that the family can and should assume the education for the media as a concern of its own.

We have already looked at the specific case of television and how parents and educators can, by themselves or in association with others, take that means as an excuse for, and a focus of, assembly and reflection. However, as daily life shows us, while it certainly plays an unquestionably important role, television is far from being the only focus of attention and concern.

Magazines, CDs, the Internet, games, they all represent and reflect the lives of the young generations of today. Through all these means and supports, agendas are theme-oriented, tastes and fashions are expressed and produced, values and lifestyles are exhibited, and the references

and motivations for interaction between children and adolescents are created. Therefore, media education would be lopsided if it were circumscribed to a single media.

The media are not experienced in a manner isolated from other modes and occupations of everyday life as a whole. With a bigger or lesser importance, they always combine with other facets and other occupations and must be understood on the basis of that “single fabric” which makes our everyday life. Therefore, media education has a lot to gain if it is approached from, say, an “environmental” perspective, covering all aspects which can comprehensively contribute to a better quality of life.

From the family point of view, there are two aspects that seem relevant as regards media education. The first is to be acquainted with what the school can do, or actually does, in this field. The second lies in the forms of cooperation between the family and the school to foster media education.

#### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES OR CAN DO

A growing number of school headmasters and teachers are becoming aware that media education must be part of the teaching provided, and the activities carried out, in the school. It is very important to keep parents informed about this type of initiatives, which they should encourage and closely follow. This will prevent them from reacting adversely if their children tell them, for example, that they read the newspaper during classes or that they have, as homework, to watch a given TV programme or study the lyrics of some fashionable song.

Depending on the level of preparation of the teachers, the route followed by each school and the resources available, initiatives in this regard may range from the organization of special events to the setting up of continuous programmes in direct relation with the curricula.

Often, when we think of television and the media in general, we tend to consider in

particular the contents they convey and the broadcasting technologies. Sometimes, we also consider the professionals—be they reporters, anchors or artists. But one easily forgets that, in the field of production and broadcasting, a highly constraining factor of everything that is produced and broadcast are the *communication businesses and corporations*, which operate in a market with strictly defined laws and subject to various legal constraints, both at national and international level. And one forgets, even more easily, everything that happens at the other end of the broadcasting process, that is, within the field of reception. Therefore, it might be good to be aware that the work and the role of media in society can hardly be approached and understood without considering the following key-concepts and environments:

> Production and the business environment—considering a company's projects and aims, its position in relation to competitor businesses or groups, its way of organizing and managing itself, who owns it and controls it, and its connections, if any, with national and/or foreign economic groups;

> Languages and the semiotic resources environment—in the multiplicity of languages and codes, genres and discourses (i.e. information, fiction, advertising, and also images, texts, graphics, etc.);

> Representations and the political and cultural environment of messages—that defines the framework and the context of all values, rules and standards which, explicitly or not, the media must follow in their activity, nationwide or internationally (as is the case with a number of legal provisions and rules arising, for example, from membership of organizations such as the UN, the European Union, etc.);

> Audiences and the reception environment—that is, the more or less numerous and diversified group of persons who, from within specific contexts, access to the media and the contents they convey and, in socially differentiated ways, incorporate such contents in their daily lives.

Within production it is important to consider two sub-dimensions: the environment of

professionals who produce the messages—not only the reporters but also the producers, the directors, the scriptwriters, the programmers, all set in the context of specific hierarchies and different work systems; the environment of technologies, where the emerging digital and multimedia systems have been radically changing not only the forms of creating, producing and editing, but also the ways of accessing and using multimedia contents.

Between the media and society there is a close relationship of reciprocal influence. A large number of research studies show that the media have a growingly marked influence on social life as a whole, as regards core values, attitudes towards problems, and individual and group behaviour. But these studies also show that those same media are, to some extent, a reflection of the societies from which they emerge and in which they intervene. To say it in a simpler way, they mould the lives of individuals and society, but they are moulded by them as well: they are, at once, social products and producers.

It should be noted, however, that when one says that society is revealed or reflected in the media, that doesn't happen as if it were a photograph or a mirror. In fact, it is impossible for the media to retrieve the world's reality: what they do is to represent and reconstruct, through different languages, that same reality. In this expression of reality, as indeed in any other formulation, we are always, of necessity, in the face of interpretations, perspectives, forms of understanding and apprehending, and never in the face of the actual events, the actual things. And if this is particularly true in the case of creation and production as a whole, it is not less so in the world of information and journalism.

The assumption that the media do not reflect reality but rather reconstruct it and reinterpret it, and, in so doing, broaden it and enrich it, is so to speak a founding principle of media education. To give one example of the importance of this notion: it is common to relate television to the idea of lifelikeness and authenticity, given the relationship of analogy and similarity between



the representation (the images shown concerning an event or situation) and the thing represented (what actually happened or is happening). The association of truth with what the eyes can see easily falls apart when, using the grammar of the image, one discovers how, with the same raw material, one may construe several, sometimes conflicting, versions.

Media education is bound to make significant progress if parents' and family organizations include it in their agendas as a concern of their own. The first scope of action by parents concerning media involves incorporating media as a subject matter of their meetings and gatherings, at school, community, regional and national level. They can do so with the help of media professionals, decision-makers, media sociologists, and pedagogues with specific experience in this field. The aim is to respond to the concerns and hopes felt by the parents, on the basis of their daily experience.

We can also imagine scenarios where the cooperation between parents' organizations and schools may give rise to important and far-reaching initiatives. It is likely that, in some specific situations, the parents' organizations themselves will call the school's attention to, and insist on, the importance of taking the media as both subject matter and reason for the teaching activity. In other cases, they will associate themselves as partners of that action, cooperating in specific times and tasks.

The following action lines and activities may rely, one way or the other, on parental or family support, depending on the contexts and the available conditions.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES  
FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN  
FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS**

**Organizing one week dedicated to the media.** This type of week-long activity is already a tradition in several countries. The initiative is focused on media-related problems and provides an opportunity for inviting to the school professionals who will talk about their experience. Sometimes, such a protracted event offers an excellent chance

to establish closer relations with the local community media, especially if some of the pupils' parents are linked with them.

**Producing a school newspaper (or radio).** Many schools produce their own media with great commitment and investment, assigning to them the role of bringing out talents and of promoting communication in the school and between the latter and the community. Some projects, namely the Fax newspaper, for some years now coordinated by the CLEMI in France, go as far as being circulated internationally. It would be possible to further develop some experiments of parental involvement in the school media, even at this international level.

**Recalling the history of the media.** The rapid pace of change, namely in the technological field as well as in family and social life, puts at risk the survival of collective memory. The contribution of parents and grandparents in describing how one communicated before, how the various media were introduced, what habits and tastes existed in earlier times, compared to present-day reality—all these may be interesting reasons to listen to what older generations have witnessed. Taking television as an example, this sort of initiatives shows that what seems to have come from “the dawn of time” (for children have always seen the TV set in their homes) is, in fact, quite a recent thing.

**Participating in initiatives such as “A week without TV.”** In some countries, “fasting and abstinence” with regard to television has become common practice for some years. Very different directions are adopted concerning this type of initiative. Some embark on a clearly moralistic approach, which one could call “anti-TV narrow-mindedness.” Others adopt a more ecological approach, sustaining the need for periods of silence and keeping away from sources of “environmental pollution,” such as television. Finally, others adopt this type of initiative, not so much because they are against television, but because they believe it is necessary to discover the large variety of activities that one may carry out when television doesn't absorb one's daily life.

**Contacting and meeting media professionals.** Nothing better than planning one or more visits to different media facilities or to a cinema and video production house. Parents may play an active role in the preparation and organization of such visits. The world of TV and other media professionals is an interesting field of inquiry and discovery, starting with the most visible functions and activities (news anchor, reporter, correspondent, assistant, cameraman, editor, scriptwriter, producer, director, executive, manager, etc.). Both in the actual visit and during its preparation, one may become better acquainted with the procedures for collecting, processing, editing, producing and broadcasting as they unfold with each media. The new digital technologies may act as a further source of interest, owing to the changes they have introduced in some media-related jobs and tasks.

**Creating and animating a club.** This could be focused on cinema—the older generation will certainly remember the joys of attending repertoire cinema clubs—as well as on television, video, DVD, etc. As was the case with the old repertoire cinema movement, which in some countries played an important cultural and even political role, this is a form of membership drive, more or less structured, founded on the interest shared by a group of persons for a given media or a given type of programmes. It can also relate to their interest for more cross-sectional aspects common to such media or programmes, like violence or the treatment of news. The list of activities is very long: watching together, articulating well-founded criticism, finding additional documentation, organizing activities intended not only for the club itself but also for the outside, producing audiovisual and multimedia products... The list is limited only by the inventive capacity of the club members, who will not be cast in the roles of teachers and students. In this context, making use of community facilities such as video, film and media libraries may prove extremely useful and desirable.

**Interacting with radio and television public operators.** Public TV channels have, throughout their history, accumulated experi-

ences that prove that it is possible to reconcile strongly education-oriented contents with the interests of the younger (and even the older) viewers. At a time when public broadcasting services is in a state of crisis, increasing the responsibility of citizens and of educational and cultural institutions in the planning policies of radio and television operators could certainly be an avenue to be explored. Public service operators are guided, at least formally, by principles that are not subject to market mechanisms; they are paid for by the taxpayers. So it seems all the more legitimate that citizens should be involved in careful public scrutiny of their activity.

**Training of teachers, educators, parents and practitioners.** This is a strategic line of action, on which the effectiveness and depth of media education rests. While not totally unexplored, this is an area where enormous shortages still exist. Training institutions have tended to direct their concerns mostly to the technological aspects. Closer attention must be paid to the social and cultural impact of the media, the social behaviours and attitudes in relation thereto, and the skills required to make the best use of the media from the educational viewpoint. Continuous training initiatives in teachers' training centres, as well as in-depth learning, specialization and master's degree courses are vitally necessary in this context. Higher education institutions, continuous training institutions and parents' representative bodies can play a decisive role. It is also the duty of educational authorities to play a decisive role of facilitation, encouragement and support such initiatives.

**Creating a portal for media education.** The need for media education is felt by the different education partners, but often in a vague way. It would be important if teachers, parents and children could have access to documentation on various experiences, multimedia documents, activity plans, training course models, data on different media, results of research studies, and other support materials as a basis for their work. The most suitable supporting environment for this type of service—which can be easily updated—is certainly the



Internet. Hence the suggestion to set up, at national or international level, portals similar to the one existing in Canada (Media Awareness Network).

### CONCLUSION

What can and should be done to turn the relation with television and the media into an enriching experience is rather vast and depends on the active participation of all of us. It doesn't only depend on the media themselves or on other entities. That is precisely what some of the ideas and suggestions contained in this handbook try to demonstrate.

It should be noted that any action of an anti-TV or anti-media nature is doomed to fail. Television, just as any other mass media, is part of the social environment where we live and, while being an expression of that social environment, they are also agents that shape it and construct it. Television is like the supermarket. We can hardly do without it, but we can switch on the TV set in many different ways, and with differing purposes. One must be aware that certain dimensions cannot be provided for by television and will have to be sought elsewhere. However, with regard to what it does offer, one can be more or less demanding, more or less selective, more or less dependent. An idle and laidback consumption fuels the laziness and greed of programmers. They are also guided by the signals we send them in response to what they send us (silence itself being a message).

This doesn't mean to say we're not entitled to voice our outrage whenever there is cause to do so. We have a right to indignation. The relation between the media and society is not unidirectional: there are perspectives, interests, roles and responsibilities on both sides. If, on a more careful and critical look at television, we only consider what is on the other side and behind the screen, we will be looking at only half the problem. The other half is on this side, that is, on our side: our behaviours, attitudes, routines, constraints, lifestyles. The same is true with regard to other broadcasting and communication means, old and new.

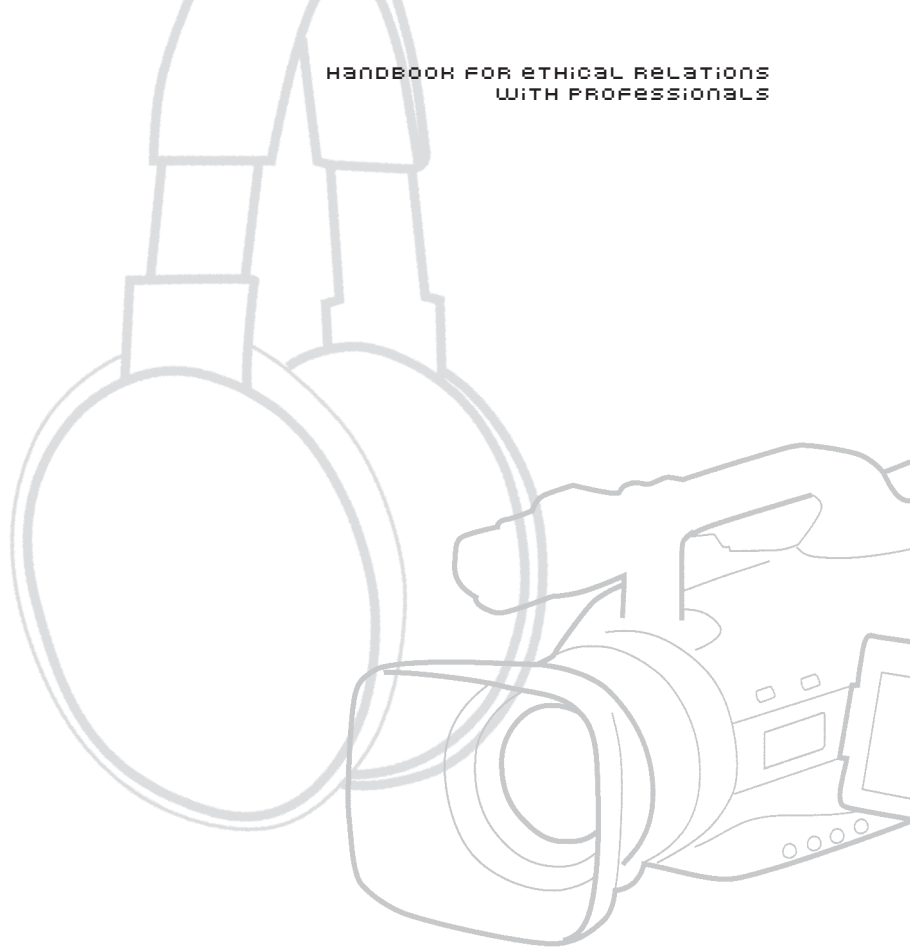
*Television or not*

*"Turn the television off", said the father:  
"Go out and live your life".*

*I went out and came back in the evening  
With a bee in my ear  
A mouse in my shoe  
Glue on my shirt  
Chalk on my nose  
Locusts in my torn pockets  
A beetle on my knee  
An ant on my belly  
A lion by the hand  
And a camel behind, pulling me by the hair*

*'Don't go out anymore', said the father:  
'Turn the television on'.*

Adapted from a Portuguese poem by  
Luísa Ducla Soares



## HANDBOOK FOR ETHICAL RELATIONS WITH PROFESSIONALS

This handbook aims at analyzing the reciprocal and complementary relationships between media, schools and the general public. It brings to the fore the various actors implied in the communication process: professionals, teachers, civil society, the private sector, state institutions. It provides a context for the different modalities of implementation of the principles of freedom of expression and communication, worldwide, while reviewing the concrete manifestations of self-regulation, regulation and co-regulation.



Today the borders which separate the school from the other educational and media institutions are increasingly blurred. A lot of interest is also generated by the various "informal" learning situations, which can take place outside the classroom, with the cooperation of the media professionals, whose culture and ethics needs to be better known. This implies an ethics for media education, which could consist in taking into consideration the delicate balance in the debate over values, without any partisanship.

In 1983, UNESCO had already drawn attention to the importance of universal ethical principles for journalism in its "Declaration of international principles on the ethics of journalism." Among these principles, the major ones mentioned were related to the social responsibility of journalists, the respect for the public interest, as well as the access and the participation of citizens. Many international press organizations and media institutions have also promoted such ethical principles among the ranks of their professionals.

To understand these principles as well as freedom of expression and the responsibilities of the media and communications professionals allows us to understand the conditions of everybody's freedom and responsibility.

Media education, as a discipline which aims at enlightening the relation between the media and the general public, needs to underline such notions. In the same manner as it tries to foster the critical reading of media by citizens and to prepare them for democratic participation, it can promote an awareness and an understanding of the ethical principles that govern the responsibility of media and of communication professionals. In this way, it will not only contribute to create a favourable environment for the professional practice, but it will also enable the general public to confront the media with their rights and their ethical requirements..

## OBJECTIVES OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN RELATION TO THE ETHICS OF PROFESSIONALS

The question of ethics and the responsibility of professionals is therefore part of media education, with the following objectives:

- > To make students and the general public more aware of the responsibilities of media in their practice and functions;
- > To remind the media professionals of their ethical responsibility and the need to respect the standards set by their profession;
- > To encourage citizens to be more conscious and critical of their rights in relation to media as well as of the social responsibility of professionals and help them solve problems they can encounter;
- > To foster the possibilities for communication and cooperation between the media and the general public, in order to explain the implementation of the principles of freedom and independence of the press while taking into account the ethical components and social responsibilities they entail for media;
- > To promote the options for self-regulation and co-regulation, as well as regulation when needed, i.e. the formal and informal modalities of the ethical and civic commitment of the various actors implied in the communication process.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS HANDBOOK

- > To provide pedagogical tools to introduce media ethics in media education, with a special focus on the systematic study of ethical principles and on their confrontation to their cultural anchorage and the institutions within which they are practiced;
- > To create distinctions between the various ethical levels: the level of ethics for all that applies to any person involved in the communication process on the one hand,

the more specific level of ethics that applies to media professionals;

> To offer reasoned information on the documents, codes and institutions that encapsulate and frame the major ethical principles at stake in the media;

> To supply tools for a better understanding of the uses media and professionals make of their responsibilities;

> To make students and the general public more aware of the existing means of access to and participation in media as well as of the acceptable requirements for media to keep their ethical commitments;

> To foster a better understanding of the role of ombudsmen and their potential in the promotion of self-regulation of media;

> To present the role of the public institutions in charge of media regulation and their functions in relation to the ethics of professionals;

> To encourage the development of solidarity in communication, in order to enable civil society actors to participate in the co-regulation of media;

> To stimulate the knowledge of ethics of communication in technological contexts in constant evolution.

## THE CONTROVERSIAL

## RELATIONSHIPS

## BETWEEN EDUCATION

## AND COMMUNICATION

**The socialization of young people by media is an irreversible phenomenon.** Many signs converge to indicate that in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century most children and young people will acquire their knowledge and values via the media, as well as the cultural capital of the planet. This implies a change in the attitude of the various actors involved in education and communication, the communicators being invited to become more aware of their social responsibility, and the educa-

tors to take into account the weight of media in their pedagogical practice. There is no longer place for reciprocal ignorance nor for mutual blame-casting. Rather, there is an emergency to foster a civic consciousness both critical and active, to access a constructive and creative use of media.

The worlds of education, family and communication no longer can stare at each other like pet enemies, principally where children's socialization is a stake. The practitioners of these different worlds need to conclude some kind of truce or alliance and interact in a spirit of dialogue. In spite of a variety of professions, their activities are complementary. Among educators, there are not only parents and teachers but also librarians, information-providers, school masters... in the same way as among the communicators there are not only journalists but also producers, directors, broadcasters, etc.

This alliance should start with a deep and reciprocal understanding of the specific values of each field and with activities of mutual recognition of participants. Schools are social bodies that communicate, broadcast and provide orientations, codes, and languages. So do families, so do media. A press company or a communication corporation are, in a way, systems that broadcast knowledge to a specific public. Mutual understanding is therefore necessary in order to establish a compact of coordination between communicators and educators, beyond media education in formal situations, in informal settings outside the classroom walls.

**Nonetheless this relation remains extremely controversial.** Communicators defend freedom of expression above any other right. They distrust any possible intrusion in their practices and their creativity. They believe the media can and must transmit their messages in all liberty, without pressure or censorship. Freedom of expression is a primordial condition for the development of freedom of consciousness and individual independence and it is the cornerstone of their commitment.

Such a notion runs counter the cornerstone of the educators' commitment, which



aims at teaching children and young people to control the flux of their expression, and, as a consequence, to choose appropriate programs and evaluate their risks. Their mandate consists in evaluating the risks and the right to privacy and dignity of the person, including minors of age. They believe that media must be carefully monitored. According to them, parents and educators must have a say in the media consumption of children and young people, partly because media obey a commercial and industrial drive that is not always objective in what concerns the protection of the person. Advertising and sponsoring tend to be over-invasive and to promote a media culture that separates the child and the teenager from his or her family or school culture. Freedom of expression, crucial as it may be, cannot be an absolute right, that intrudes on intimacy and privacy.

These perceived differences in value between educators and communicators don't necessarily need to be experienced as in tension or in contradiction. A conciliatory attitude implies a certain commitment of media professionals to the respect of the values of education, so as to take into account the distress of the young when they are exposed to these tensions and contradictions. Conversely, it implies that teachers and educators initiate the young to appreciate the price of freedom of expression as well as the rights and duties attached to it. The balance between these two poles, difficult as it may be to maintain, is part of everybody's social responsibility. Maintaining a clear distinction between general questions of communications ethics, applicable to all whatever the communication process, and the professionals ethics, applicable to communicators in the exercise of their functions, may help reconcile the positions of both parties.

**These commitments can be of two kinds:** active and positive commitments, that tend to favour and disseminate messages or contents stimulating for the intellectual, moral, cognitive and physical growth of young people; passive commitments that satisfy themselves with limiting access to potentially harmful content that can make the child vulnerable, at times.

Active commitments tend to produce programmes dedicated to children, with content they can identify with, adapted to their needs and their age. They can also consist in reserving some broadcasting time for educational programmes designed to stimulate the intellectual and moral growth of children. Passive commitments tend to be restrictive and to propose damage-control solutions, rather than adapting or improving content.

In general, the media with broadcasting missions, benefiting from state licenses (namely public service radio and television) are those who have the most obligations to respect the rights of children. As for commercial media, without editorial control, with free access and use (newspapers, books, cable, etc.), they have the least commitments as concerns children (except if it is mentioned in their license specifications). Consequently, public service media are those that are most implicated in the wellbeing of young publics, especially television. Programmes dedicated to them are more frequent on their screens.

However the commitments of media to education don't end at the attention devoted to young publics. In so far as communication can be considered as a public service or as serving the public interest, it must—or should—meet some obligations related to education. The way of interpreting these obligations varies a lot from one country to another and from one society to another.

In most cases, the media, and more specifically television (public rather than commercial), consider that, besides news and entertainment, education is part of their main functions. They tend to interpret this duty of education as their contribution to the public and moral consciousness of the country, as well as a help to the dissemination of a common knowledge and culture. In their everyday practice, they translate this duty into the obligation of providing educational programmes for various kinds of publics, and children and young people more specifically.

But, in the current context of lifelong learning in the information society, many media

institutions, and especially private and public televisions, tend to agree that one of their tasks consists in the broadcasting of knowledge and the promotion of competences, for people of any age and on any topic. This educational function has induced many broadcasters, and particularly in the audiovisual sector, to elaborate specific services for their publics, services traditionally qualified as “educational” or “scholastic.”

**Educational television can be developed under different shapes:**

> It can be a substitute for schools in countries or regions where it is difficult to complete a full curriculum. In such a case, television can broadcast scholastic content that can reach students directly, even while they are at school;

> It can be dedicated to remedial or complementary activities, without substituting for the transmission of the school curriculum. It broadcasts then programmes either to complement or to deepen the school work or programmes that encourage values and behaviours connected with study and teaching;

> It can interpret its teaching mission in a larger sense, and take on tasks or values transversally, within the whole spectrum of its programmes. Its purpose then is to create opportunities that help in the teaching and training of its publics via diversified programmes and spaces, that are not strictly or formally educational;

> Finally, as is most frequent, it contributes to education through various programmes that strategically combine the three dimensions mentioned above.

The commitment of medias however doesn't stop at educational television. For some time now, in different countries, it is admitted that the contribution of television, and media in general, is a question of fine tuning, so that the values they disseminate be on the same wave length as those disseminated by the schools. This implies that the emphasis needs to lay on the congruence—or incongruence—between the attitudes and values disseminated by media and those encouraged in the school environment.

In the same way as schools have a curriculum or a programme (explicit or hidden),

media can be said to have a curriculum (explicit or hidden), more particularly in matters of audiovisual programming. In order to clarify this curriculum and to have it known, the media professionals have been increasingly compelled to elaborate documents for internal use (charters, guidelines, style sheets...) to spell out the system of values on which their content and programmes should rest and provide their structure.

In general, these documents deal with the obligations of networks in terms of objectivity and truth in information. They tend to remain within the sphere of information and news. And yet other questions and issues, related to education and values, can be raised about other programmes, be it fiction, games, or others. In many countries, it is more and more current for the media industry to have specific obligations, especially concerning equality between the sexes, the promotion of women, the fight against racism and any form of discrimination (cultural, religious, political, etc.), the right of minorities and the respect for cultural diversity, the respect for handicapped persons, or elderly people. Some of them also are related to the relay of local and regional cultural events, the support and sustainability of schools, etc.

All these obligations, in the large meaning of the word, have to do with education and communication. And media education, in many ways, is the slowest but surest (in the long term) means for cooperation between the two environments and understanding of their shared stakes.

**THE MODALITIES  
FOR COOPERATION  
BETWEEN  
COMMUNICATORS  
AND EDUCATORS**

The tasks of communicators and educators are, in many ways, similar and complementary, and it is difficult to imagine a social system that could rest on a permanent



disagreement between these two professional environments.

This understanding implies that communicators must respect the work of educators, and even bring their contribution to it. Conversely, this implies that educators must incorporate in their work issues raised by the media, their messages and their social role. This mutual understanding opens a large spectrum of new possibilities. The media professionals can extend their ethical commitment to an educational commitment, which is to say the moral obligation to keep in mind the educational consequences of their work. The school professionals can deal with media issues in their teaching, which is to say make a media commitment, that pays attention to daily news but also that take into account the new modalities for communication and education offered by the media, as they can be most useful in their classes.

Media professionals don't simply need to enlarge the scope of their work to include educational communication, but also to impart their own work with a pedagogical philosophy. Educators mustn't just use media in education as simple tools but also integrate media education as an operational discipline. Two new centres of interest emerge clearly from this cooperation, that don't pretend to cover the whole range of the relations between communication and education, one directly located in the media domain, the other in the education domain: educational media on the one hand, media education on the other hand.

These centres of interest present the added advantage of fitting within the recent debates on the Information Society, which UNESCO considers as leading towards societies of shared knowledge: knowledge acquisition, information and communicational experiences are to be placed at the heart of the organization of individual and community life. Such is the appropriate framework for the dual development of educational media and media education. Education and knowledge acquisition are no longer reserved exclusively to some age groups and confined to some limited spaces. This framework implies that it must be pos-

sible to learn anywhere at any time. The need to acquire new knowledge or to update acquired information has accelerated enormously. From now on, **lifelong learning is a reality, with learning to learn as an essential tenet.** This justifies even more the necessity for a systematic cooperation between educators and communicators.

## FORMAL AND INFORMAL MODALITIES

The cooperation between communicators and educators can be established either in a formal or an informal way. Lately, the establishment of formal relations is a strong tendency, which aims at underlining the explicit or even institutional relationships between the two spheres. Informal relationships tend to emerge implicitly, as a matter of fact. Communicators need to deal with education issues in their work (regarding the content but also the effect of that content on education); educators, at times, use media to develop their own teaching programme.

The formal modalities of cooperation are thus expanding. On the media side, digitalization of information and the expansion of means of transmission – particularly via internet and television – have opened many opportunities to create media specifically dedicated to education. This has allowed the emergence of a great many thematic television and radio channels with an educational mission, as well as internet portal offering pedagogical materials, etc. This has entailed systematic collaborations between educators and communicators. Television programmes for young people, for example, have been a very fruitful test ground for cooperation.

On the education side, new technologies have appeared too, that can add up with other pedagogical tools, like computers, high definition television, internet or the portable media. They have given rise to a very recent discipline that, depending on the country, may be called “educational technology” or “educational communication.” An infinite variety of platforms and activities have emerged from that discipline. They have been compelled to inte-

grate the knowledge, up to now partitioned, of communication and education. Consequently, the relationships between the professionals of media and of education have increased in both environments.

But it is the civic dimension that, recently, in many countries, has pushed for a further extension of the cooperation between communicators and educators, beyond the strictly professional ground. New forms of relationships are emerging, at the intersection between the missions of communication and the missions of education. This increased awareness has gone through a series of steps, similar whichever country is considered:

**1.** The first step corresponds to an increased social and civic unease and unrest, caused by some perverse side effect of media: the excess of violence, the lack of educational content, the feeling of loss in quality programming, the oversight of public service obligations, etc.;

**2.** This unrest expresses itself in different ways until it reaches the public sphere through protests, complaints and calls to the authorities, etc.;

**3.** In order to solve the conflict, the authorities and civil society tend to send a call for the cooperation between educators and communicators, and insist on the need for dialogue between the two parties and a reciprocal awareness of their duties;

**4.** As a consequence, two complementary proposals have emerged:

> The need for a renewed commitment of communicators to education, which has often led to the adoption of passive political solutions in favour of children and minors, like family hours, to avoid the broadcasting of some harmful content, or even the exclusion from the airwaves of some programmes deemed noxious, etc.

> The acceptance, by educators, of the need to incorporate in their curriculum a new discipline, called in most cases "media education" (also known as "education for communication," "media literacy," etc.);

**5.** The last step is not always present everywhere. In some countries only, these proposals have been institutionalized in a variety of ways: the creation of associations to foster the cooperation between communicators and educators, or the establishment of formal entities or councils with a mission, either to develop the educational dimension of media, or to develop the communicative activities in the education domain.

In this context, several countries show visible signs and concrete achievements of the increased cooperation between communicators and educators. These can be flexible and informal, between the industry and the educators, the media ensuring that they have a dynamic and nurtured contact with the world of education while enriching their programming offer and schedules. They can also be more formal and institutional, the authorities in charge of regulating or co-regulating media incorporating in their activities the presence of experts or of consultative committees for education or forums where educators and trainers can express themselves and show their work and experiences. Relations are thus not only developing between communicators and educators but also with the decision-makers and the media regulators.

In the education environment, several countries have created entities which are integrated within the school institutions and whose mission consists in stimulating the relations with media. Within the ministries of education, there generally are curriculum councils or committees whose task is to foster activities connected with the press, audiovisual communication and new media. Such entities ensure that schools incorporate media, either as an object of study or as a tool for learning and developing pedagogical innovation. Accordingly, they develop proposals for media education curricula and, above all, they try to stir and deepen the interest of the teaching body for this theme as well as provide adequate training. They establish activities connected to communication technologies, the audiovisual language, multimedia communication, etc.





**TOWARDS NEW MODALITIES  
OF COLLABORATION  
AND PRODUCTION**

Recently, new developments have occurred due to the technological progress in the domain of communication and education. They are connected to the new possibilities of a technology that has become both portable and mobile, a great asset for adaptation to the field of education. The digitalization of information, the price cuts in production and recording technologies as well as the extension of digital television channels and of internet open a larger and larger field, that allows educators to access and participate in media to a degree never possible before.

The development of low cost digital video, the creation of non-linear editing programmes (capable of editing images as well as sounds) that can be loaded on a basic personal computer, the cheap publishing opportunities of all kind of texts and, above all, the existence of internet and the world wide web, all contribute to the renewal of interest for communication among the education and school entities.

Radio and television stations in the schools, pedagogical journals on line, educational portals managed by educators, training materials published on distributed networks, and forums and cooperation platforms around the uses of internet are witness to this renewed interest. It is amplified by the increased democratization of the options for on-line journalism, via web logs as well as personal and institutional websites o this tendency, etc.

This trend concurs to the creation of a new communication ring around education, which consequently enlarges the educational mission of schools and develops at the same time new communication qualifications among all the actors of the learning process. It results in the emergence of a new form of production, an edu-communication whose main players are educators and students.

The school practices concerning communication, which, until now, used to be con-

finied to the classroom, are incorporated in the public space. A new communication culture is fostered in education that, at the level of practices, assimilates the competences of educators to those of communicators, not without consequences for the media sphere.

It is within the media sphere that the expansion of the communication competences of the whole population (starting with the school population), portability and digitization allow for the insertion of an influx of new content to mass media. This influx is a sign, to a certain extent, of the effects of the media revolution in education.

Such a phenomenon is particularly visible at the local level. This so-called local communication (the local press, radio and television) focuses on small communities (townships, regions...); it is progressively being appropriated by spaces and programmes managed by the school community. For instance these local media can carry content produced by the schools of the district. They can also dedicate space for broadcasting some documentaries, short movies, or even fiction, made by a secondary school of the area. Alternately, some nationwide media can find some material form content and productions emanating from the school community.

This phenomenon, combined with all the others, reinforces the capacity-building around communication activities in education, with a definite commitment in their favour. As a dynamic consequence, a new development phase is taking place in media education, which benefits from the diverse modalities of relations with media professionals.

**THE RELATIONSHIPS**

**WITH PROFESSIONALS:**

**A LARGE SPECTRUM**

**OF INTERACTIONS**

In this context, the media industry can't keep ignoring the needs of and for media education and the calls for dialogue with educators (be it parents or teachers).

The implication of the media industry and its professionals has evolved through time. It has gone from a protectionist era, when media claimed a total independence from the public and power, to a more open era, when dialogue can take place in different manners: self-regulation among professionals, regulation of the sector by government multi-stakeholder agencies, and even co-regulation, that has extended the partnership to other actors, like civil society. These diverse modalities vary from country to country. They correspond to the need felt by all the stakeholders in media education for partnership and for empowerment of all players in the field, considering the social evolutions at stake. They are a historical response to media critics and have evolved towards more flexible forms of exchange, with the possibility of sharing experiences, collaborating on common projects and generally fostering a better knowledge of the media industry culture.

#### SELF-REGULATION BY THE MEDIA INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Media professionals have strained to make their own curriculum (explicit and hidden) more transparent, especially concerning their work ethics. They have elaborated a variety of tools aimed at the public and for internal use. Through these tools they elucidate the value system upon which content is elaborated.

The solutions adopted correspond to self-regulation, characterized by the elaboration and the application by communicators themselves of instruments to gain the trust of the public. They vary depending on the countries but on the whole they tend to assert similar processes. They establish standards and guidelines that communicators must abide by in their daily work. Such commitments are often written in the constitutions of nation-states, if not in the charters establishing a media sector. They underline the importance of freedom of expression and are a reminder that information is a common social good, and not just a commercial product. These principles can then be reinterpreted at the level of each media institution and professional,

in the shape of a code of ethics for each individual's behaviour. They underline the awareness of the social responsibility of communicators, which is why they are often referred to as "Media Accountability Systems" (MAS).

These solutions and instruments would benefit educators, students and families if they were better known but they are on the whole under-used. Providing the public with internal procedures, organization charts, standards of practice, editorial choices and the general stance of each media company on ethics is still very haphazard and unpredictable, from media to media and from country to country. The internet websites of these media often post them but they remain unpublicized. If they were better informed of the media guidelines and practices, various portions of the public, according to their concerns, could react in a constructive and efficient manner. Part of media education and of the pedagogical solutions to the communication-education dialogue should be devoted to a larger awareness of such initiatives and of the spectrum for negotiated interactions.

These types of interactions are varied and exist at different hierarchical levels, each with its advantages and its limitations:

> Elaborating **style sheets**. They tend to present recommendations and commitments on the way to deal with news and information. They help professionals to deal with thorny social issues, like the representation of violence or of content that can hurt the public's sensitivity, the portrayal of minorities and of young people under the age of consent, the choice of words and the appropriate level of language, etc. They are not binding *per se* and they are mostly directions for use.

> Writing up negotiated **guidelines for standards of good practices**. They tend to focalize on issues of objectivity, equity, protection of sources, independence, avoidance of conflicts of interest especially when commercial sponsors, political clientelism or nepotism are at stake. Some take into account the rights of the public and the professionals' duties to the public. They corre-



spond to the values of freedom of expression. They echo the principles of the profession as expressed in international documents, like the 1983 declaration by UNESCO on the ethics of journalism or the similar declaration adopted by the European Council in 1993. They establish the social accountability of journalists, the integrity of the profession, respect for human dignity and the public interest, the diversity of cultures and the culture of peace. In general such guidelines are not binding and don't mention fines or sanctions.

> Establishing **ombudsmen** for news or for a whole television station. This instrument tends to be visible mostly on public service channels. The ombudsmen tend to be the human interface between a media and its public, for they try to relay the suggestions of the users and the complaints that are lodged. They can remind their colleagues of the basic guidelines ruling the profession: journalistic interest in a topic, attention to broadcasting time, application of the recommendations of the charters or guidelines for good practices. They can have their own programme or a time to answer the public, which gives them a pedagogical or educational function. They can thus be facilitators for a better understanding of key questions in communication, among professionals and among citizens. Their mediation can be related to an informal negotiation, internal, without going so far as arbitration.

> Creating **ethics or liaison committees**. They can be made up of members from outside the media environment (teachers, therapists, association leaders, ...) whose expertise and competence can represent some of the interests of the general public. They aid the media in exploring ways to present democratic debate and respect for human dignity, to protect minors and to take responsibility for the socialization of young people. They point out any lack of rigor in news production, any absence in the news agenda and follow-up, as well as any accumulation of trivia to the detriment of issues of national and international importance. They have a consultative status and their existence contributes to the public image of the media.

> Publishing **professional journals** and producing **programmes that criticize and review media**. Some specialized journals or programmes participate in the self-criticism of the profession and stimulate discussion about journalistic standards. Their content generally examines techniques for enquiry and reporting; it can include the exposure of botched articles or untrue reports. They can even go as far as publishing documents that have undergone censorship. They also can deal with relational issues in the editorial board (discrimination in terms of gender, race, for example) and, in certain cases, they denounce the collusion of interests between the press and the political or economic world. They serve as a reference in the field and tend to allow the members of the profession to assert their independence.

> Convening **press councils**. Their role consists in ensuring that the press is really independent while taking into account its readership. Meetings between members of the press and representative citizens take place on a monthly or bi-monthly basis; complaints are examined and solutions considered. These councils only have a consultative power and they can't prescribe sanctions but their recommendations can be published in the columns of the newspaper. They tend to be useful and visible at the local level rather than the national one.

> Setting up **professional ethics workshops**. They initiate citizens to the everyday work of the press. Members of the public have the opportunity to discuss editorial decisions with journalists: their methods of enquiry and reporting, their difficulties in preserving objectivity and pluralism. The purpose is not to bring both parties to write up the news together but to develop a mutual understanding between the professionals and their various publics. They are spaces for debate, often at the local level, but they can be enlarged to become wider events, like the "week of the press."

> Broadcasting **call-in shows**. These allow the audience to express themselves freely and are an echo to the very old practice of publishing "letters to the editor" in the print media. They make it possible to publish con-

tradictory comments or to echo questions of readers or auditors. The Internet sites for such programs as well as channels programming for young people tend to relay them. This opens additional possibilities for education thanks to interactivity. It is one of the humblest MAS but also one of the most efficient, because of its simplicity, its immediacy and its aura of authenticity and participation. The channels often have to take precautions in order to answer people's calls for help or respond to provocations to discrimination, sexism or violence. They need to show responsibility in the transmission of civic and democratic values to young people.

> Awarding **prizes**. They stimulate personal motivation and give professional recognition; financial rewards can be attached to them. The Pulitzer Prize is one of the most prestigious but all kinds of other awards have been created, tagged for special domains (environment, health, etc.), for the print, audiovisual and on-line media. The publication of their yearly list of winners, highlighting the performance of a publication or of a programme, is an interesting alternative to the celebrations around the big prizes. These rewards function as a MAS in their positive form of encouraging quality. They provide a counterpoint to the negative criticism of the profession.

In general, these MAS tend to remain within the sphere of news, not fiction. People in charge of self-regulation in the media, like the ombudsmen, tend to think about the impact of programmes on children and teenagers in isolation. There is no system, no institution and no network to organize them in regular seminars on their activities. There is hardly any training for the MAS personnel. They seldom meet their colleagues in other media, let alone researchers or association members. All these encounters could give more sense and efficiency to their everyday practice. At present, MAS have a limited local scope, without much claim to be representative. They often rely on the personality and goodwill of a few participants. Their presence tends to diminish in direct relation to any decreased mobilisation of public opinion. In their reliance on personal relations, they

tend to lay the burden of social responsibility for news on to the single person of the journalist, while hiding the role of the media industry. This personal approach can seem naïve and explains the reservations the profession harbours in their regard.

Besides news, media professionals have adopted other solutions for their dialogue with the public where other programme genres are concerned (fiction, games, advertising, for example):

> Creating **self-regulated monitoring entities**. In advertising, where whose practice can sometimes run afoul of the citizens' right to true and contrasted information, self-monitoring is especially common. As the rules and guidelines differ from one transmission vehicle to another, these self-regulating entities tend to have a transversal competence across all media. Sponsors join on a voluntary basis and they can refer to self-regulators for advice. Such entities can formulate rules and recommendations, so as to be in step with the networks' public service obligations like the clear-cut separation between programmes and advertising. When the public expresses concerns about the image of women and children, hidden sponsoring or product placement, these entities can respond.

> Elaborating **labels and classificatory systems**. In some countries, video cassettes, DVDs and video games have to be classified, either in a voluntary manner or according to requirements formulated by the regulatory entity in concert with the publishers and producers. The classification choice must be fully displayed on the product cover (almost always in case of violent or pornographic content). The mechanism for classification needs to be activated and maintained by the producers themselves and, in some countries, ad hoc commissions to solve actionable cases have been created. In most countries this voluntary classification done by producers is not connected to sales or rentals to minors and doesn't put a limitation on their access to products that are not made for them.

> Establishing **screening committees**. Their status and composition varies a lot



from country to country and according to the audiovisual media (public or commercial). Managers of programme units who are or in charge of compliance with the channel obligations are assisted by people representing the public (parents, psychologists, therapists...). They tend to take the final decisions for buying programmes and scheduling them. They are not real tools for evaluation and because of competition rules, it is difficult to reconcile some commercial decisions with committee recommendations (in the case of youth programming for instance).

> Offering **scrambling or remote control locking systems**. Some media offer a technical system for encoding programmes. Parents use them who would like to receive scrambled programmes or who would like to forbid their children access to programmes or websites that don't correspond to their age or to their family values. Such systems rely on technical capacity and access to digital tools via satellite, even if more and more television sets are built with integrated chips that can be programmed at will. In some countries, double encryption systems are being tested, to draw the parents' attention to the need to make decisions on content availability. Some Internet servers offer these locking systems for free download. This is particularly true on the official sites of some television channels, and also on some digital service providers sites and on sites dedicated to games and activities for children.

Other problems associated to education and values can appear that are not related to the media *per se* but to societal issues at large. These issues are often connected to political and legal decisions, which have an impact on all the industrial sectors of a country, and don't spare the media industry. Such decisions can refer to equality between the sexes, the protection of minors, racism, cultural diversity, handicapped people and other minorities. In such cases, the dominant trend is to let regulation or co-regulation take over, especially as they have evolved through time: the entities for media regulation are moving away from notions of censorship to lay the emphasis on the preparation and the par-

ticipation of consumers and users. Media education is often considered as an essential dimension, if not the best filter.

## REGULATION BY STATE ENTITIES

Through regulation the state delegates part of its authority to an intermediary entity. Regulation of media is established between government and communicators to preserve or correct the market balance. Its role can vary from country to country, as it can either ensure that official texts are respected and applied, or encourage the adoption of standards for better practices. In most countries, where they exist, these entities are called "commissions" or "councils," like the Federal Communications Commission in the United States or the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel in France. They are buffer-agencies, with members from the state, the profession and occasionally, from civil society. Historically, their task has consisted in monitoring the broadcasting norms (for high fidelity), and in negotiating the commercial licensing of public airwaves,—as often required by the private sector itself. At any time they may be captured by the state or the industry. With the state comes the risk of *a priori* censorship of some programmes (for example, those with a political thrust). Industry might lower public service obligations. With the rise of an organized consumer sector, regulatory agencies have progressively been involved in the management of disputes concerning ethical standards and public service obligations of the networks. They have been increasingly transparent as to their procedures.

> Establishing **regulatory entities**. These have the power to authorize broadcasting agreements and to establish services and obligations. They must negotiate the contracts with each operator, even in domains that pertain to the general interest, like the protection of minors. They aim at maintaining the principles of pluralism and cultural diversity as well as the balance between various opinions, existing rights and expectations of different sections of the public. Sometimes they incorporate research and development departments. They usually

produce a newsletter and an annual report. In some countries they can have full regulatory powers, they can be seized *a priori* or *a posteriori*, they may have certain degrees of freedom to apply sanctions (broadcasting corrections, fines, formal summons). They tend to exert a soft pressure on the media industry in matters of creating labelling codes or classificatory systems.

> Setting up a **complaints bureau**. A bureau may vary from country to country, when there is one. Sometimes integrated as a department within the regulatory entity, sometimes part of the service for viewers at public and commercial channels, it ensures that remarks and criticisms emanating from the audience reach the programme managers and the news editors. Its existence is justified by the right to correct information, to the respect of a person's public image, to the possibility of asking for correction; it also monitors the rights of reply in case of personal attack or political editorializing.

> Establishing **public service obligations**. These obligations apply to commercial as well as public channels. They encapsulate the rights and duties of media in relation to their public. They are implemented in the case of news (through measures like the candidate access rule and the personal attack or political editorializing rule). In fiction, especially in advertising, in youth programming and in documentaries there are also rules. In relation to local media, such rules can be attached to a list of priority topics to be dealt for the community as decided in town meetings. They are specified in the channels licenses and agreements and they can be associated with requirements for yearly evaluation of the relations with the public.

> Applying a **set of measures for the protection of minors**. In most countries, the media need to enforce existing children's rights. These are often incorporated in their public service obligations. An appropriate context is needed along with a facilitating culture, with rules such as the right to one's own image or to privacy. It can lead to procedures like scrambling or protecting anonymity, as well as asking for official per-

mission to broadcast news or fictions where children are featured. This set of measures is usually characterized by a juxtaposition of various rules, according to the period of emergence of the different media, and it tends to lack global coherence in any country. It can also refer to international institutions whose mission it is to defend children's rights, like UNICEF (for those under 12) and UNESCO (for those above 12), especially in relation protection of minors, and promotion of culture, communication and education.

> Elaborating **parental warning systems**. Such systems aim at classifying programmes prior to broadcasting according to their content, by signalling the presence or absence of violent or pornographic messages as well as other categories of material that might damage young people's sensibilities. They belong to a subset of the measures for the protection of minors and the public service obligations. Their nature and their structure vary according to the channels, as they are often elaborated by screening committees within the media itself. They can be associated with scheduling restrictions, even sometimes with broadcasting prohibitions. They can be reviewed in annual reports and submitted to discussions at regular intervals with the regulatory authorities. They give a strong ethical signal, and though they were perceived at first as a form of censorship, they have progressively been accepted as a form of parental decision-making tool.

> Fostering the **public broadcasting of critical reading programmes**. Such programmes tend to be aimed at children and their families on public radio and television channels. They can be produced in association with the ombudsmen but this is not necessarily the case. Excerpts of programmes are debated in terms of how they were produced and what editorial decisions were made in the process. Producers meet experts in media and education, and often some members of the public who express their reactions.

In most cases, these public entities and initiatives attempt to resolve conflicts before or after regulation. They don't meddle with





rights like freedom of expression or information (including those of young people, as established by the United Nations convention on the rights of children). They operate while keeping in balance the political and legal decisions applied in their country (on protection of minors, on racism, and other minorities). They take into account the fact that each media type is unique and is ruled by a particular set of codes and guidelines. They also consider that, from the point of view of media and communication ethics, there are general principles that have to be applied to all, especially where the public is concerned.

#### CO-REGULATION AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Like self-regulation, co-regulation implies a cooperation between the media industry and other sectors of society, but in a more active, organized sense. Co-regulation in media education is a negotiation in which all the resource-persons around the child (parents, educators, therapists, etc.) are on an equal footing with the producers and distributors. A number of institutions have a major role in this domain, especially the self-regulation entities of the media sector as well as the ministries or government bodies with related mandates (culture, communication and education). Co-regulation cannot substitute for public authorities, especially when fundamental rights are concerned. Nonetheless it adds value to the general interest. In some countries, like France which is a pioneer with its Forum on the Rights of the Internet, it is considered as the "regulation of self-regulation." In other countries, it is considered rather like a negotiation to be held in multi-stakeholder partnerships and forums.

"Governance" frames the notion of co-regulation. Governance is a form of government that aims at re-founding the democratic basis for the exercise of power, by proceeding with directives and recommendations rather than laws and sanctions. It implies a multiplicity of actors, at all levels, local, national, regional and even international. It encourages participation and responsible behaviour from citizens in the face of today's complexity, to which the media envi-

ronment contributes massively. Depending on the countries and the regions of the planet, the actors of civil society incorporated in governance may vary, but they tend to represent citizen groups (consumers, families, parents, youth...), non-governmental organizations, trade unions and corporate organizations, professional groups, youth and popular education movements, charitable institutions, local communities and researchers.

Civil society associations related to media exist everywhere in the world and, in some countries, they have gained considerable importance. They tend either to be organizations specifically dedicated to communication issues or to be consumer or professional groups that have added communication and the media in their general agenda. In most cases, their commitment leads to thematic choices. Often they defend rights that are not respected either by the ruling political powers or by the dominant commercial powers.

At the international level, the most current and recurrent thematic choices, whatever the media vehicles, deal with: the presence of violence or of sexually explicit content, the protection of minors, the representation of women and minorities, advertising, objectivity in news and media education. Other issues can be grafted to these, depending on the region and continent: the fight against stereotypes and sexual discrimination, racism, the abuses inflicted by majority groups on minorities, the specific rights of indigenous people, the defence of a balanced information and communication flux between North and South, access to broadcast, print and digital media, the transmission of news related to health (HIV/AIDS mostly but also other epidemics and behavioural troubles like obesity).

Such recurring themes reveal that educators and consumers at large are worried by the impact of the media environment on young people and society in general. They want to benefit from the advantages of a balanced socialisation via the media while their actions testify to an awareness of the de-socializing risks brought about by over-exposure to media in some countries or by

scarcity, either caused by poverty or organized suppression, of media in others. Over exposure to media tends to disconnect young people from real life objectives, causes disinterest in school work, brings on anxieties and insomnia linked to the stress induced by some programmes, increases aggressiveness or dependence. Under-exposure tends to result from censorship and limitations on access of all sorts, which entail their own dysfunctions in the modern world.

Civil society associations base their activity on the awareness that it is impossible to expect economic or political actors to take initiatives of their own accord. In a context of governance, the associations' claim responds to the expectation for direct participation in a democratic process. This claim includes the media that have long been considered an essential mechanism in democratic political theory. Civil society associations want to participate fully in the co-regulation of the media industry, not only at the implementation of regulations and follow-up level of enforcements, where traditionally they have acted, but also at the decision-making level. They require essential information in a sufficient timeframe so as to make their own counter-proposals and additional contributions. They want to develop a structured relationship with the media and to establish ethical relations with professionals.

These independent associations are trying to arouse an active critical awareness of the general public on issues like the rights of minors and other rights related to communication and information. They aim at establishing principles, recommendations and standards of practice and to disseminate them. They encourage cooperation agreements among the different actors implicated in the media process. When not being critical or defensive in their role as media educators, they show their unity and solidarity in support of positive actions from the state or the industry. In the United States for instance, Action for Children's Television spent more than two decades lobbying the American administration and the media regulatory entities to make sure the industry would apply some of the basic

principles of the protection of minors (having to do with advertising, violence...). Similar actions have been conducted in other countries, like Japan (the Forum for Children's and Citizen's Television), Canada (the Alliance for Children and Television) and France (the Collectif Interassociatif Enfance et Médias).

Civil society entities can be involved in such actions at different stages of intervention, at the local, national or international level. The range of actions is very wide:

> Participating in **advisory councils for programmes or multi stakeholder forums.**

In some countries, public service channels have incorporated users as part of their councils. Other channels have invited users to forums to discuss rights on the internet. Councils can also be part of ministries such as education or communication and culture. In a variety of countries, the entities in charge of regulating or co-regulating the media officially appoint council members who come from the world of education and of paediatrics. They can present state of the art research and practices. These appointees can participate in exchanges that extend beyond the decision-makers to include producers and broadcasters. They can help write up recommendations about certain values, certain content issues, editorial strategies and specific formats that correspond to the expectations of the community they represent.

> Creating **media monitoring entities.** This is one of the Media Accountability Systems most favoured by civil society. The aim is to create stable structures allowing associations to exercise a degree of surveillance in relation to the young public. These watch-groups also raise awareness among the general public, stimulate and popularize research, and foster dialogue with the communicators, the government officials and the researchers. Beyond the creation of a space for exchange with the public authorities and the media on issues related to the media environment of young people, such structures can litigate against industry, regulation and co-regulation entities. They tend to receive support from non-profit foundations and collectives, and depending on the



country, they can act as watchdogs and denounce or offer critical analysis strategies. They are quite numerous on the Internet, where the swiftness of information and response provides them with an increased capacity to remain on alert.

> Organizing **multi-stakeholder events**. Such ritual events can range from festivals to summer universities to workshops and also “the week of the press in review” or “information society day”... They attract multi-stakeholder participants and guests from the industry, the public authorities and the network of associations. Such semi-formal and semi-official meetings contribute build trust and habits of exchange among actors who rarely have the opportunity to meet in neutral places.

> Developing **resource centres**. Such centres can be media libraries, computer databases or on-line portals. They can store documents used by associations needing regular updates on events, to shed new light on their own analysis of media issues related to children and youth, and even to train their representatives in the different entities and public authorities where they are involved.

> Publishing **pedagogical materials**. Such documents can be published in different formats: manuals, newsletters, even programmes to be broadcast on local and community channels. They spread training and self-tutoring methods and content to develop media literacy for adults. They can be distributed within the context of a club or an association.

> Launching **campaigns to increase public awareness**. Such media education initiatives mostly focus on parents but they can include campaigns aimed at children. They encourage adults to get involved by treating them like active participants rather than simply by telling them what they must or must not do. They are most successful when they take into account cultural differences and the real-life difficulties met by parents in the process of raising their children.

> Implementing **community media centres and tele-centres**. In many countries, com-

munity activities have long been using media, especially portable media like radio or video. Tele-centres have introduced the use of computers and networks in media-deprived places in the world. More and more hybrid solutions are being set up, that offer a combination of old and new media, in a sustainable development perspective. This implementation is often rationalized with general arguments about increased democracy not only in relation to media but to the political environment of a country. By providing a community with its own media, an essential process of *education* is triggered, even if the degrees of clarification as to the learning goals can be varied and context-specific.

> Involving **religious organizations and foundations**. Churches in some countries have played a major role, by promoting media education outside the formal education system. So have foundations, from the non-profit and non-denominational sector. Such work has diverse motivations. In some cases, media education has been used as a means of opposing the “consumerist” or “anti-religious” values seemingly promoted by the media. In others, it has been promoted as an ideological tool against foreign media and their cultural imperialism and as a means of counterbalancing their influence. In Latin America, the “liberation theology” developed around the ideas of Paolo Freire, aimed at bringing about social transformations, especially via popular education as it can be conveyed by mass media like radio. Many religious organizations and foundations have produced their own pedagogical materials, to reach parents. They tend to offer either very protectionist and prescriptive methods of dealing with media or very liberal and suggestive methods, with a plethora of advice and practical ideas.

> Establishing **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**. These organizations are independent and work on specific issues, like those aiming at the protection of journalists or of human rights (Journalists Without Borders, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch...). These civic rights associations monitor the rights and duties of media in all countries, collecting precise

data and proceeding to international comparisons and on the spot investigations. They extrapolate the consequences from these analyses and, if they consider that some rights have been superseded, they denounce the violation so as to correct the problem, or failing that, to raise public awareness. They launch campaigns to bring the issue to the attention of the media and the communicators themselves. They use a whole repertoire of media strategies, with regular publications, reports, on-line petitions, etc. They can work in coordination with Inter-Governmental Organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO, on issues related to youth, culture, education, communication and information.

> Coordinating with **Inter-Governmental Organizations (IOGs)**. They are dependent on the United Nations system and composed of members from different states. They also work on specific issues, applying the principles adopted by the United Nations. They try to coordinate international and national policies, in a development perspective. They publish their reports regularly, especially in relation to the Millennium Goals for Development. They often call on NGOs and civil society, especially at the local level, as they need their expertise and their hands-on experience. In the case of youth and media, the most active IOGs are UNICEF and UNESCO.

The participation of civil society in these mechanisms for co-regulation requires some care and vigilance. This is particularly the case in situations when independent associations are solicited to take shared responsibility with the industry on issues over where final control is left to the free play of competition. The classification of programmes, done with broadcasters, exemplifies this dilemma. Participation in the administration councils of public or private media is another example, as civil society can retain a measure of control on the global editorial line but not manage the daily decisions of broadcasters. So co-regulation implies that the responsibilities and social functions of each stakeholder should remain separate and clearly delineated.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM OR AT HOME

Media education plays a double role in relation to the knowledge of media ethics and the rights and responsibilities of both professionals and users. First, it can make children and young people aware of their own rights and responsibilities. Second, it presents adults with the necessary competences to lead informed negotiations with the other actors of the communication and information process.

In both cases, a healthy preparation for the media environment is the goal. People should learn to make informed and autonomous decisions. Such an understanding of media ethics and their concrete applications enhances everybody's participation in contemporary culture. When analyzing the whole spectrum of interactions, inevitably conflicting cultural, moral and political considerations emerge that require debating. The point is less to avoid them than to ensure that they are considered on the basis of concrete examples, and that the positions of all the actors implicated in the process be considered. Students can thus be encouraged to engage in critical thinking, without requiring them to adopt a predetermined line of thought.

### Activities for understanding self-regulation

The ethics codes and standards of practice can be a very interesting primary source for this activity. They refer to the principles that students and young people should know and experiment with. They can be used as a template to analyse or compare a variety of media. They can become tools for outreach activities and to improve communication relations.

- > Write up the standards of practice for the high-school newspaper;
- > Follow up libel suits or court cases involving a media organ (they are often led at the expense of the tabloid press);
- > Participate in call-in programmes;
- > Analyze the role of the ombudsmen:



read his/her articles in the press or watch his/her programme on television, then establish direct contact, either to ask questions or to invite him/her to participate in a debate in the class or with the community.

**Activities for understanding regulation**

Regulatory authorities tend to provide annual reports, to publish other documents (resolutions, recommendations, etc.), and they can even organize public consultations before coming to major decisions (renewing the licences of radio and television channels, creation of a new channel, evaluating classificatory systems...). Becoming familiar with such documents and processes can be the main thread for a course sequence. Consulting the data, visiting some of those services and entities can also have an added value as a pedagogical experience. Forums and discussion groups that are set up during public consultations can also offer opportunities for contact and participation, via the independent associations mostly but on a personal base as well. Activities in the field are numerous and rewarding:

- > Examine the official texts on the image rights of young people and organize a debate in class about scrambling the image of young people and their representation in the media;
- > Write to the regulatory entity (a letter of complaint or of congratulation) and arrange a visit;
- > Analyze the licence of a channel, and mark out its public service obligations;
- > Create a classification system specific to the class or the home, using some films or television programmes as examples, making sure that each category and decision is properly justified;
- > Test the various labels or encryption systems available on internet sites, compare them, taking into special account the contents they evaluate, the sampling they use and the age groups implied;
- > Evaluate the constraints of regulation, on advertising for instance. The use of animals

or the representation of minors in television spots can be explored fruitfully. Taking specific examples, the students can consult the regulation authorities and compare their own decisions with those expressed by the professional organs and the lobbies involved, in the industry as much as in civil society associations.

**Activities for understanding co-regulation**

Many initiatives are possible, to involve parents and medias, to which the education system can be associated. Ritual events tend to be federating moments and places of exchange, beyond the school walls.

- > Get involved in “the week of the press” or in a programme for reviewing media content;
- > Participate in a festival for youth production, that showcases films and programmes made by people or young people, especially if they are developed in the context of the class or the school project;
  - enter the class in a competition for best scenarios or photographs;
- > Test the pedagogical materials that are available on portals and exchange impressions with the associations that have developed them;
- > Collaborate in a campaign to raise awareness among parents and children, as for instance a campaign on parental warnings or on risk-inducing behaviour on the Internet. Several dimensions could be explored, like the education stakes for media, children’s curiosity, the dialogue between young people and their families...

Such an array of activities is an opportunity to deal with the *relations* that exist among the several key-concepts in media education, namely production, languages, representations and publics. By testing them against ethical issues, they could cover the following notions with renewed interest:

**Production:** the integration of regulation and self-regulation constraints on production, the positions of the broadcasters and advertisers on the criticisms emanating from civil society associations, the conse-

quences of ethical decisions on the sale of certain programmes, across several media.

**Languages:** the analysis of montage and of visual style in programmes for critical reviewing of media, the rhetoric of ombudsmen, especially as addressed to their colleagues in the journalistic world, the deconstruction of series or television games with materials provided by the resource centres of independent associations or religious institutions.

**Representations:** the realism in the depiction of scenes with violent or harmful content, the actors' portrayal of issues such as tolerance or racism, the construction of characters in relation to minority identities or contradictory moral values.

**Publics:** audience ratings of a programme can be compared to other means of expressing criticism: parodies on internet websites, complaints by civil society associations or lobbies. The reviews of a movie or a game in the specialized press can be contrasted with those published in the daily newspapers. The exchanges that take place on official websites can be matched up to those that take place on fan sites...

These various activities can also lend themselves to a number of pedagogical strategies:

> **Textual Analysis:** Can be applied to documents like standards of practices, universal declarations (human rights, journalism...) as well as channels agreements and licence renewals.

> **Contextual Analysis:** Can be applied to the retrieval of information published by a self-regulatory entity or regulatory body, so as to examine the documents they produce and how they may have an impact on the production and broadcasting of media texts. Commercial techniques can also be confronted with the constraints and obligations imposed by the social context. Comparisons with situations in other countries can be very interesting and yield valuable results.

> **Translation:** Can be applied to how channels and networks transpose directives or how they interpret classificatory systems and parental warnings in fiction programming. It can be interesting to observe the intellectual property rights negotiations as a text is transposed from one genre or one media to another (novel-film, reality programming and its licenses...), especially when the publics differ or the countries change.

> **Case study:** Can be lead by conducting in-depth research on an ethical issue chosen by the students (the representation of women, cultural diversity, violence, justice, copyright, etc.). This can also be done by focusing on a small association from civil society, or on a regulation body and its policies. The students can proceed by observation, by interviews and questionnaires all the while becoming familiar with the sources of the "insiders."

> **Simulation:** Can take place by means of role-playing. The students can each take the part of the ombudsmen, the president of a viewers' association or of a regulatory entity. They should deal with concrete decision-making activities, in relation to the representation of young people or the presence of racism, for instance. They must solve their problem, and compare the decisions they came to with those of other groups in the class.

> **Production:** Can be done by having a class participate in a competition, a festival or in campaign for awareness raising, for instance. According to the means available to the class, it will either lead to a real life production, like the creation of a short film or a spot, or to a lesser production, like the elaboration of a storyboard or a scenario, that will be exhibited in the class or in the school. What is most important is to make the communication process visible and explicit, especially by taking into account the various ethical stakes, and the critical thinking that motivated the final choices. The comparison with real life campaigns or productions can be added later, for an even more effective use and understanding.

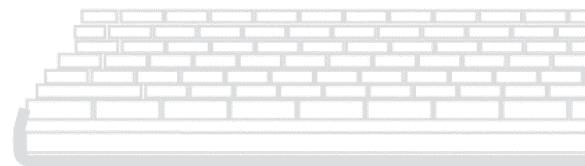




This handbook prolongs the invitation to investigate and to question the media developed in other sections of this kit. It focuses on the Internet and navigation on the networks. It places the Internet in a media continuum, to which it brings an additional feature, interactivity. The Internet is an interactive environment of communication and information that provides access to different modalities of exchange and to an infinity of traditional print and audiovisual media. In media education, it has become essential for all to be capable of finding information—to search, retrieve and process data—and of providing information—to produce and circulate data. (Self)informing is part of (Self)educating. The handbook thus recombines the key-concepts, the repertoires of strategies and the suggestions of activities in the form of practical fact sheets. These are not recipes but ideas for further explorations, on-line and off-line.



## INTERNET LITERACY HANDBOOK



## INTRODUCTION

### WHY CREATE INTERNET LITERACY FACT SHEETS?

Over the past decade or so, the Internet and mobile technology have transformed multiple facets of life in society across the world. They have changed our work and leisure patterns and they place greater demands on us as active citizens.

The factsheets are intended as an aid and a guide in using this remarkable network of information and communication. The aim is to:

- > offer teachers and parents sufficient technical know-how to allow them to share young people's and children's voyages of discovery through communication technology;
- > highlight ethical issues and give insight into added-value in education;
- > provide ideas for constructive, practical activities in class or at home to draw benefits from the Internet and mobile technology;
- > share best practice in widely varying domains of Internet use;
- > provide links that will give further information or practical examples.

### ETHICAL ISSUES AND DANGERS ON THE INTERNET

As we point out in each fact sheet, alongside the many advantages the Internet has brought, we must also respond to certain challenges. Viruses ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)), for example, cost administrations and private enterprise in Europe alone some two to three billion euros annually. Unsolicited e-mails, otherwise known as spam ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail\\_spam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail_spam)), now account for almost 90% of all e-mails, with more than 1.5% containing malicious code. A significant percentage of content on the Internet is either illicit or prejudicial, undermining the very basis of human rights and human dignity. Furthermore, that permanently fragile concept of equality is once again under threat as the digital divide ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_divide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_divide)) separates the information "haves" and "have nots." Many young people are experiencing a growing disadvantage due to lack of material means to access the Internet, technical skills and online skills to search for information and use it effectively.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The Internet is, as its name indicates, no more than a route between information networks. Already access means are changing with the development of new technology such as wireless networking and 3G mobile services.

Nowadays every citizen needs to be information literate, a 21st-century form of literacy built upon the four fundamental pillars of education which constitute the very foundations of society. These are learning to know, to do, to be and to live together.

### AN EVOLVING MANUAL TO RESPOND TO TEACHER AND PARENT NEEDS

As technologies evolve and other information sources become available, these fact-sheets will be updated and new ones added. You are welcome to participate in this project by sending us your feedback or your ideas on classroom activities, best practice or pertinent links.

## TIPS FOR THE READER

For an explanation of the terms used in this handbook, the authors refer you to Wikipedia—a free-content encyclopaedia, written collaboratively by users from around the world, and which is constantly updated. The handbook provides web addresses that will take you directly to many specific terms in Wikipedia, such as “Boolean search,” “zombie computer” or “phishing” to name but a few; others can be found via the Wikipedia home page at <http://www.wikipedia.org>. Wikipedia definition addresses are encased in (parentheses). Other website addresses are encased in <brackets>.

Please note that Wikipedia references link directly to the English language version of the Wikipedia website, which offers a number of other language versions to choose from.

To avoid having to type out lengthy and cumbersome Web addresses cited in this handbook, consult the online version, which provides automatic links. It can be accessed at <http://www.coe.int/media>. Consult it as well for any Web addresses that you are unable to open.

The handbook uses the term “student” throughout. It refers to any young person, whether a student, school student or pupil, who is learning in a school or at home, regardless of age or level.

All Internet addresses cited were last accessed in January 2006.



FACT SHEET I

**GETTING CONNECTED**

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers linked together through servers which function as connection nodes ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Node\\_%28networking%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Node_%28networking%29)). In March 2005 there were an estimated 900 million Internet users in the world of which more than 250 million were in Europe.

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

- > The Internet offers a wealth of new ideas and resources for teachers. Lesson plans, online exercises for students and electronic educational games.
- > The Internet facilitates exchange of experience and communication between teachers and students across international borders.
- > The Internet provides students with the opportunity to take part in projects to practise language and share cultures. This can be quicker and more efficient than traditional pen pal exchanges and does not involve the expense of a school trip.
- > The Internet makes research tools accessible even to those who do not regularly visit a traditional library.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS**

- > As in the offline world, there is fraud, false information and inappropriate material for children.
- > While Internet offers a number of new possibilities, technical solutions are not always better than traditional ones. For example, e-mail has revolutionised communication, but it will never replace face-to-face communication.

**HOW TO**

- > If you are connecting from an institution (school, university, administration) your computer is probably automatically linked to an in-house server.

- > To get connected to the Internet from home, you will need:
  - a computer equipped with a modem;
  - a telephone connection;
  - a subscription to an Internet service provider (ISP).

> ISPs ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_service\\_provider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_service_provider)) form the necessary link between the user and the Internet. They can be private companies such as telecom or cable companies, or organisations such as universities.

> ISPs usually require a monthly subscription fee, and offer a range of services.

> A dialup ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dial-up\\_access](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dial-up_access)) connection allows the user to access the Internet through a standard analogue telephone line. The user is often charged according to time connected, as with a normal phone call. An analogue line does not allow an Internet connection and phone connection at the same time. Connection speeds are slow.

> A broadband ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadband\\_Internet\\_access](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadband_Internet_access)) connection provides access through a digital line. ISDN (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISDN>) and DSL ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_Subscriber\\_Line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Subscriber_Line)) are examples. ISPs' broadband subscriptions usually allow unlimited access time for a fixed fee. However, a cap may be set on how much data can be downloaded. Connection speeds are much faster and these lines allow a phone to be used without the need to disconnect the Internet.

> An increasing number of computers, especially laptops, are fitted with wireless network cards (Wifi) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/wifi>). These allow cablefree access to the Internet at home or at "wireless hotspots." Wireless hotspots can be found at public places such as cafés and airports.

> Choose a connection appropriate for your Internet usage. A broadband connection is likely to be worthwhile if you use the Internet regularly.

- > If you have broadband, do not remain connected unless you are using it. It may not cost extra money, but it increases the security risk to your data (see Fact Sheet 16 on security).
- > Draw up an acceptable use policy (AUP) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AUP>) if others will be using the computer or network you are responsible for.

#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > The List is a worldwide directory of ISPs: <http://www.thelist.com/>. Education websites such as European Schoolnet at:
  - > <http://www.eun.org/portal/index.htm>, Global Schoolhouse at <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/GSH/> and Education World at <http://www.educationworld.com/> offer resources and collaborative projects.
- > Advice on writing an AUP from can be obtained from Becta, the UK agency for ICT in education: [http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/index.php?section=ap&catcode=as\\_pl\\_acc\\_03&rid=1963&rr=1&PHPSESSID=820174b4b4df8ca7de75604c566d00ee](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/index.php?section=ap&catcode=as_pl_acc_03&rid=1963&rr=1&PHPSESSID=820174b4b4df8ca7de75604c566d00ee).
- > The Insafe portal offers resources and advice on how to get connected and surf safely: <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/>.

#### FACT SHEET 2

### SETTING UP

### WEBSITES

#### SO YOU WANT TO SET UP A WEBSITE?

School administrators, teachers and students increasingly feel the need to present their school and/or work on the World Wide Web—the growth in the amount of homepages is incredible. A good school website is a wonderful public relations tool that can be used in many different ways, for example for presenting school information or publishing lesson plans. It is also, of course, a very important pedagogical tool.

But since websites can be used in so many ways, it is sometimes overwhelming for administrators, teachers, students or parents who want to start their own website to know where to begin.

Before starting to build your own website, you should consider the following points:

- > What is the purpose of your website?
- > Why do you need a website?

- > Who is your website audience—world, district, hometown or just students and parents?
- > What will the content be?

#### TURNING LOCAL SCHOOLS INTO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

> The Internet makes it possible for students all over the world to communicate and collaborate very easily. Today's classroom defies the traditional image of a brick and mortar room in a fixed geographical location. When using the Internet as a communication tool, classroom walls disappear and local schools go global.

> A good school website is interactive and, by means of tools such as message boards ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message\\_boards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message_boards)), it is possible for students, parents and teachers to access the latest school information anytime anywhere.

> Students can play an active role in setting up websites. In fact, when we look at website contests like Think Quest at <http://www.thinkquest.org/>, CyberFair at <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/index>.



html> and others, websites made by lower and upper secondary school students are very often of a better quality than the websites made by teachers.

> Web-building basics can be taught as part of the curriculum: students can create websites as assignments for math, biology, language or music. In fact, all subject areas are compatible with website creation.

> The wonderful thing about the Internet is that students are not restricted to creating websites with their own classmates: they can collaborate with students from all over the world using communication tools like e-mail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>), video conferencing ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video\\_conferencing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_conferencing)) and chat (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chat>).

For further information, take a closer look at Fact Sheet 7 on chat, 11 on creativity and 1 on getting connected.

### PLAYING SAFE

It is important to consider safety issues when putting together any kind of school-related website.

> School policy on Internet safety and acceptable use must be clearly defined before creating an official website or having students participate in websitebuilding competitions.

> The layout and the way photos are used should reflect school Internet safety policy.

> Because of safety and privacy concerns, many schools do not provide the names, or only give first names, of those in photos they publish. This is something to consider when you set up your website: what is your safety protocol in this matter?

> It is a good idea to screen all external hyperlinks to other websites in order to ensure integrity of information and that the websites adequately reflect the school's stance on Internet safety.

> Will you filter your Internet access or will you teach your students to be more "street-

wise"? Many schools find a combination of these two techniques to be effective.

> When students create a website as an assignment, keep in mind that it can be visited by users from all over the world. Think of these websites as a kind of public relations tool for your school. Therefore it would be wise for teachers to supervise students' work and guide them during the creative process.

> Teachers are ultimately responsible for all work students produce. Therefore, teachers need to have the power to refuse web pages or remove them from a school or project website. In order to adequately supervise students' work, teachers should always have access to passwords (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password>), websites (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website>) and so forth.

### BUILDING A SCHOOL WEBSITE

When used correctly a school website can serve as a powerful tool to draw together the many different facets of a community. It can foster a sense of cohesion and is a valuable communication tool which makes information easily accessible to all parties. Here are some helpful suggestions for Web content.

> Teachers could provide lesson plans, or overviews of what students did during a certain period.

> Administrators might post schedules or announcements.

> Students may want to publish art, poems, stories, reports or other work.

> Parents can use the site to announce parent-teacher activities, such as festivals or other gatherings.

> The community-at-large may use it as a forum for announcements from or about soccer teams, field trips, police, road workers and so forth.

A wide variety of content may enrich a website, but a wide base of contributors can



also make Web maintenance chaotic. It is important that a small team of people is chosen to be responsible for collecting and editing content. This task might be best carried out by a teacher or administrator or other person chosen to function as the information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator.

Some basic requirements to consider before website set-up are:

> **Software:** Most webmasters and web editors prefer to work with WYSIWYG (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WYSIWYG>) html editors such as Dreamweaver and FrontPage. These programs allow editing in a familiar environment without necessarily requiring the user to know html. Web content management systems are often used and some have been designed with schools in mind.

> **Hardware:** Modest hardware resources are helpful, such as image scanners ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image\\_scanner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image_scanner)), digital photo cameras, digital video cameras, tripods and tape recorders.

> **Hosting** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_hosting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_hosting)): Schools need to find an organisation which will provide an online system for storing Web pages, images, files video and so forth and making them accessible via the web. It is important to research different providers and services offered to ensure that the plan meets your school's needs.

## BEST PRACTICE

Through trial and error, your school will develop a method to reach your target audience in an efficient manner. A model school website often includes:

- > Contact information such as addresses and telephone numbers.
- > Information about the school, for example lessons plans, care and so forth.
- > Information about the staff.
- > Information about the involvement of the parent-teacher organisations.
- > Classroom pages with the latest information, drawings and photos from students.
- > Links to related educational sites.
- > A "guest book" for visitors to "sign."

Some technical considerations for best practice would include:

- > A pleasant, easy-to-read design.
- > Web accessibility compliance to cater to users with disabilities.
- > Avoiding large graphics or other files that will take a lot of time to load.
- > Consistent use of layout, easy navigation and information on when the last update was made.
- > Versions in different languages when appropriate. English is often chosen as a common language when reaching out to students from different countries.
- > A healthy respect for children's rights, social and cultural diversity, personal and physical integrity, and the democratic values of equality, freedom and friendship. For example, if students will be using your school website to connect with each other, it might be helpful to employ guidelines such as those published on Chatdanger: <http://www.chatdanger.com/>.



### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

There are thousands of good websites that meet these standards: two examples are St Joan of Arc primary school in the United Kingdom at <http://www.st-joanarc.sefton.sch.uk/index.php> and the International School of Amsterdam in the Netherlands at <http://www.isa.nl/About/abouthome.html>. More information to help in building your school website can be found at:

- > Building a School Website: <<http://www.wigglebits.com/>>.
- > Education World—the Educator’s best friend: <<http://www.education-world.com/>>.
- > Webmonkey articles / tutorials for html, design and development: <[http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/authoring/html\\_basics/](http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/authoring/html_basics/)>.
- > Webmonkey for kids: <<http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/kids/lessons/index.html>>.
- > “Lessons on teaching writing from website design.” A University of Washington professor showcases ways that students can transfer skills used to build a website to the writing process: <<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/literacy/stone.htm>>. Potential school partners and a wide variety of school websites can be found at:
- > European Schoolnet’s eTwinning action: <<http://www.etwinning.net/ww/en/pub/etwinning/index2005.htm>>.
- > European Council of International Schools: <<http://www.ecis.org/>>.
- > Directory of UK Schools websites: <<http://www.schoolswebdirectory.co.uk/>>.
- > European Schools Project Association: <<http://www.esp.uva.nl/>>.

FACT SHEET 3

SEARCHING FOR  
INFORMATION

EDUCATIONAL ADDED VALUE

> The Internet is an exceptional resource that allows quick and efficient research on any number of topics.

> The skills necessary to perform research on the Internet and in traditional libraries are similar. Successful searches require critical content analysis and Internet literacy.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS  
AND RISKS

> Maintain a healthy scepticism about material you find. The Internet offers a free space for people to air opinions and put forward ideas. Be sure to evaluate with a critical eye in order to avoid propagating myths or falling for false claims.

> A number of websites offer complete essays on a wide variety of subjects for use by students. By using these files, students are misrepresenting their work and committing plagiarism.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is the source of an unprecedented amount of information, and is constantly changing and expanding. The first search engines ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)) for the Internet appeared in 1993.

Most searches work by collecting information about websites using an automatic web crawler ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_crawler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_crawler)) which follows links and stores information about content. Many search engines check not only web pages but also online newsgroups (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsgroup>) and databases, and a search for the word “website” on the popular search engine Google at <<http://www.google.com/>> finds more than 1 billion results in 0.07 seconds.

> Be conscious of copyright issues if you use material you find on the Internet (see Fact Sheet 10 on music and images).

> As far as possible, credit the author and give the source of material you quote or use. This is important because:

- it gives the author and source due credit;
- it protects you from accusations of plagiarism;
- it helps others form their own judgment about the credibility of the material.

> Websites use a variety of means, including payment, to improve their ranking in search engine results. Some search engines, such as Google, clearly identify which results are sponsored advertisements. Many others do not make this distinction.

> The most common search terms entered to search engines are used to find sexually explicit content. However, search engines generally censor these terms when listing the top searches performed on their websites.

## HOW TO

> The vast majority of people search for information on the Internet by using a search engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)).

> A metasearch engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metasearch\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metasearch_engine)) or "ferret" allows searching several search engines simultaneously.

> Search engines usually require the user to input a number of key words.

> "Boolean" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boolean\\_datatype](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boolean_datatype)) searches can specify that key words appear together, or exclude results containing certain key words. These work slightly differently according to the search engine. Using quotation marks, plus and minus signs are the most common methods.

> Some search engines include directories which involve searching through categories and sub-categories.

## BEST PRACTICE

> Use specialist sites instead of standard searches. For example, when searching for the meaning of a word, use a dictionary such as <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/> site instead of search engine.

> Vary search terms. Different combinations of key words will bring out different results and a selection of searches will bring out more relevant results.

> Bookmark useful sites so you do not have to search for them again.

> If you find useful material, print or save it. You may not find it again or it may be taken offline without warning.

> Enclose specific phrases in quotation marks in order to narrow down searches and find exact matches.

> If you cannot find the answers through a search engine, post a query in a relevant newsgroup (see Fact Sheet 8 on newsgroups).



## > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> The most popular search engines are Google: <http://www.google.com/>, Yahoo: <http://search.yahoo.com/> and MSN: <http://search.msn.com/>.

> Clusty at <http://clusty.com/> and Grokker at <http://www.grokker.com/> are innovative search tools with an alternative approach.

> Google Zeitgeist at <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html> shows the latest trends according to what searches people are making on Google.

> Wikipedia is a free-content encyclopaedia, written collaboratively by users from around the world: <http://www.wikipedia.org/>.

FACT SHEET 4

**PORTALS**

**WHAT IS A PORTAL?**

Portals are websites that serve as a starting point to find targeted material or activities on the Internet. They provide the user with focused links and information specific to categories or areas of interest. Typically a portal appears as a web page with a map of links to topics or fields of interest. It often includes a search engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)), chat (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chat>), games ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online\\_gaming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_gaming)), news feeds ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS\\_%28\\_file\\_format%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_%28_file_format%29)) and content among other things. Portals can be classified into two general types—horizontal and vertical. Horizontal portals offer a broad range of services, activities and content. They can provide items such as news, weather, financial information and links to popular culture items, like movies or music, in addition to directories of links to specific topic areas. Yahoo! at <http://www.yahoo.com/> is probably the best known example.

Vertical portals provide a wide variety of content aimed at a specific type of user. A good example of an education-related vertical portal is the United Nations Educational Portal: [http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/eosportal\\_index.asp](http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/eosportal_index.asp).

**WHAT ARE PORTALS USED FOR?**

Portals function as a starting point for investigation into a topic. Searching the Internet for information is similar to using a traditional library. Searches must be done in a methodical way and a portal can assist you by breaking down topics into logical categories.

Portals offer a useful “at-a-glance” function for the range of topics within a theme. For example, within the subject of science, we can view various forms of biology, such as oceanography or botany. Similarly, the category of art history is an expansive field within the history category.

**ETHICAL ISSUES ON PORTALS**

Portals are very often dependent on sponsorship or advertising, and will promote products and services accordingly. It is important to remember that the links offered by portals reflect the value sets of a particular group. Make sure that these values are acceptable to you for your students or children, before including them as a hyperlink on your website.

Some portals may require membership or registration, which may be paying. Before you register (even for “free” services) make sure that you understand the terms and conditions of the service, and that you have examined and understood the privacy policy of the website. See <http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=privacy%20policy>.

Continue using your critical thinking skills! It is a good idea to try new portal resources on a regular basis just to reinforce the information you receive from your shortlist of favourite standbys.

Following links from a portal may lead the unsuspecting user to sites that contain content, products or participatory processes inappropriate for your children or students. You can limit the “active” links according to your judgment using filtering software ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content\\_filtering\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_filtering_software)) or settings in your browser.

**USING PORTALS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

> Set a search target for any topic: create teams that use different portals, as well as a team that uses other search techniques described in Fact Sheet 3 on searching for information. Allow the teams to compare results, ease of access and quality of information.

> Create a topic for exploration, for example 18th-century art depicting children, or ecosystem dynamics of a particular species in the ocean.

> Provide your class with portal URLs (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL>) that will lead to links supporting the lesson plan.

> As there will probably be too many links for individuals to follow, create teams to divide up the links and cover as many as possible, and allow each team to present their findings.

> Team results may differ, thus providing a narrower focus for further refinement of the class' learning.

> Create a portal for either of the above two subjects. This would involve creating a web page, defining the categories that emerge from your projects, creating the links that inform these categories, and testing the page with another class.

### BEST PRACTICE

> Be prepared: you need to take several steps before introducing portals into your school environment. Create a staff team to develop this resource for your particular needs.

> Identify the subject areas you wish your students to investigate with the use of portals.

> Now identify a range of portals, using search engines, for each subject area you are interested in.

> Apply an evaluation of each portal according to criteria agreed as policy in your school, or use the evaluation process guidelines in Fact Sheet 3.

In addition to evaluating information, you may also establish whether the service is free or not; what value system underpins the service; whether there are any cultural or language issues to be taken care of; if the site promotes or sells any products; if the site offers services such as e-mail or chat; and if you would want students to access these services (see "Best practice in Education Portals" below for an in-depth discussion).

> Make a selection of the best portals. Now explore these portals thoroughly, testing and evaluating links as you go. Make lists of problem areas, and filter inappropriate links.

> Remember to use the skills learned from Fact Sheet 3. Saving, referencing and cataloguing your process will make it easier to obtain a useful outcome.

### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> Yahoo! at <<http://www.yahoo.com/>>, Netscape at <<http://www.netscape.com/>>, Lycos at <<http://www.netscape.com/>>, Infospace at <<http://www.infospace.com/>> and About.com at <<http://www.about.com/>> are some of the most popular portals on the Web.

> The Education Portal at <<http://www.theeducationportal.com/>>, Discovery School at <<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/index.html>> and <<http://www.thegateway.org/>> are examples of educational portals with different approaches to design, usage and content.

> Best Practice in Education Portals: <<http://www.col.org/Consultancies/O2EducationPortals.htm>>. This excellent in-depth evaluation report on education portals best-practice is worth reading for educators wishing to create viable policy criteria for portal usage in their school environment.

> Wonderport at <<http://www.wonderport.com/>> gives a breakdown of different types of portals including news, directories, reference and so forth.

> Art History Resources on the Web can be found at <<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHLinks.html>>. Christopher Witcombe's award-winning art history portal is worth a visit whatever your subject area.



FACT SHEET 5

E-MAIL

INTRODUCTION

E-mail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>) short for electronic mail, is the system for sending messages between computers connected in a network such as the Internet. The term also refers to the message itself. An e-mail is usually transferred successfully in a matter of seconds and the recipient can access and reply whenever it is convenient. A flexible and efficient system, e-mail has drastically changed the way we work and communicate. Billions of messages are sent every day.

An e-mail address is composed of two parts: local and domain, separated by the “@” sign. The local name will often—but not always—indicate the name of a user. The domain will indicate their organisation, company or Internet service provider. Domain names may indicate type of organisation and/or country. For example, name@ox.ac.uk would be someone working or studying at Oxford University.

An e-mail message is divided into a header and a body. The header includes information about the sender, recipient(s), date and time, and a subject line. The body includes the main text of a message, perhaps with a “signature” including the sender’s contact details.

E-mail can be sent and received via a mail user agent (MUA) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MUA>). MUAs are computer applications that need to be installed on a computer. Although current messages can be accessed remotely, the mail program is usually used from the same location.

Another method for e-mail transmission is via webmail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webmail>), which allows the user to download and send e-mail from any computer that has an Internet connection. Messages are stored at a remote location and are therefore available regardless of the user’s location.

EDUCATION

E-mail is increasingly being used as a channel of communication between teacher and student. For example, teachers can inform an entire group of upcoming changes or distribute and receive study material for distance learning (see Fact Sheet 13 on distance learning).

E-mail is a valuable tool in cross-cultural projects between classes of students in different countries. Students can use it to develop their language skills and share information about their cultures.

Some quiet and shy students express themselves better through e-mail than they would in face-to-face classroom discussion.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

> Discussion tends to be less formal in e-mail than it would be in a traditional written letter.

> The expression of emotions via e-mail is difficult. This problem can be solved through the use of small caricatures called “emoticons” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticons#Basic\\_examples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticons#Basic_examples)). Use these sparingly, however, to keep from distracting from your message.

> A high proportion of e-mail sent is unsolicited and usually undesired spam ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail\\_spam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail_spam)). (see Fact Sheet 6 on spam).

> Apart from commercial spam, there is also an issue with e-mail sent between friends and colleagues. Some users copy in more people than are relevant to an issue, or distribute jokes and other such forwarded e-mails to those who may not want them.

> Some “forwards” are false or fraudulent. One example is where an e-mail claims to be tracked. Often citing a cause such as a sick child requiring surgery, it falsely claims that a company or organisation has promised that money will be paid each time it is forwarded.



> E-mail is the most common method for spreading malware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malware>) such as viruses ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)), and worms ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_worm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_worm)).

> It is easy to conceal a name in order to be misleading. This can be done by simply changing the name in the settings or creating a webmail address such as [elvispresley@hotmail.com](mailto:elvispresley@hotmail.com). Even if you recognise the e-mail address, be aware that the owner's machine may a "zombie computer" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_zombie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_zombie)) affected by a hacker or virus.

> A link may appear to be directing you to one website when in fact it leads to another. This is particularly common in phishing scams (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing>).

#### BEST PRACTICE

> Keep e-mails messages short and to the point. Try to avoid long blocks of text.

> Make sure you include relevant words in the subject line. This helps the recipient identify your message as being genuine and aids finding the mail at a later time.

> Be considerate in the volume of e-mail you send out. Use the "reply-to-all" facility only if the message is relevant for all, and avoid forwarding mails to those who may not appreciate it.

> Avoid checking your e-mails every 10 minutes. Many people allow e-mail to be a constant interruption.

> Think carefully before including private or sensitive information, such as bank details. E-mails can be intercepted and are easily forwarded.

> Use the "plain text only" setting in your e-mail. Html can allow for more attractive presentation but can also be used to spread malicious code.

> Maintain a healthy scepticism about e-mails you receive. Do not open e-mails if you do not trust the source.

> Be especially wary of attachments. If you were not expecting an attachment from the sender or do not trust it for any other reason, delete without opening.

> Be sure to consult Fact Sheet 6 on spam and 16 on security for additional advice on e-mail.

#### HOW TO

> E-mail with a MUA (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MUA>) requires the program to be installed on your computer. Most computers come with a pre-installed MUA (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MUA>) such as Microsoft Outlook.

> Setting up a free web-based e-mail account is very simple. Popular webmail sites such as Yahoo! (<http://mail.yahoo.com/>) and Hotmail (<http://login.passport.net/uilogin.srf?lc=1033&id=2>) have a straightforward registration procedure.

> For information on setting up a spam filter see Fact Sheet 6.



#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> Well-known examples of MUAs are Microsoft Outlook: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/FX010857931033.aspx> or MozillaThunderbird: <http://www.mozilla.org/projects/thunderbird/>. Two of the most popular webmail sites are MSN Hotmail: <http://login.passport.net/uilogin.srf?lc=1033&id=2> and Google's Gmail.

> OECD page on spam: [http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_22555297\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_22555297_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

> BBC article: "Time to switch off and slow down":  
 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4682123.stm>>.

> Truth or Fiction is a website for Internet users to check the veracity of commonly forwarded e-mails: <<http://www.truthorfiction.com/>>.

**FACT SHEET 6**

**SPAM**

**INTRODUCTION**

Spam refers to the mass mailing of unsolicited messages to multiple recipients. It is most commonly associated with e-mail, but also applies to newsgroups, instant messaging and so forth.

Different countries have different legal definitions for spam and use different approaches to counter it. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has put together a task force to try and homologue these approaches: see <[http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_22555297\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en_2649_22555297_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)>.

Phishing (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing>) is a more recent evolution of spam and represents a growing concern in the world of consumer safety. In this version, recipients receive spam which is disguised as legitimate mail from a known institution such as a bank. These mails often contain links to false websites which are used to gather sensitive user information.

Spam is popular for commercial purposes because it is an extremely cheap and effective way of reaching a large audience. E-mail addresses for mass-mailings are usually collected using web bots ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_bot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_bot)) which search the Internet and harvest addresses from various websites.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

> Spam often includes false or fraudulent information. Because the sender remains anonymous, it is currently not possible to prosecute for false claims.

> Spammers often prey on the goodwill of recipients in order to gather mail addresses for their databases. For example, mails may be sent requesting recipients to add their personal information to a list in order to support a petition or cause. Often citing a cause such as a sick child requiring surgery, it falsely claims that a company or organisation has promised that money will be paid each time it is forwarded.

> Spam may contain malware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malware>).

> Another type of online fraud is "419" named after a Nigerian law prohibiting this type of victimisation. This typically involves promises of a share of a large sum of money in return for help with bank transfers.

> Spam can also be used as sabotage. One example is the bombardment and subsequent overloading of discussion groups with false messages.

**BEST PRACTICE**

> Maintain a healthy scepticism about e-mails you receive. Do not open e-mails if you do not trust the source.

> Be especially wary of attachments. If you receive something that looks suspicious, or that you have not requested, delete it immediately without opening it.

> Check all links in e-mails before clicking on them. This can be done by holding your cursor over the link—the URL should appear in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen just above the task bar. If you are suspicious that a link does not lead to where it claims, type it into your browser instead of clicking on it.

> Use spam filters to avoid wasting time deleting unwanted mails: <http://spam-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/>].

> Avoid distributing your e-mail address on a large scale. Bear in mind that if you include your e-mail address on a website, web crawlers can pick it up and add it to distribution lists for spam.

> If you do need to post your e-mail address, you can disguise it by adding char-

acters which will fool a web bot. See Lancaster University's tips on reducing your visibility at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/iss/email/spam.htm#reduce>.

> Do not respond to spam. This will confirm your e-mail address to the spammer. Be aware that links promising to remove you from their mailing list may not be genuine. Automatic out-of-office replies also pose a problem since they send responses to spammers as well as legitimate contacts.

#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> European Union's anti-spam initiative: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/topics/ecommerce/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/ecommerce/index_en.htm).

> The European Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-mail: <http://www.euro.cauce.org/en/index.html>.

> Microsoft spam and phishing page. Bill Gates article of 28 June 2004 on "Preserving and enhancing the benefits of e-mail": <http://www.microsoft.com/mscorp/execmail/2004>.

> "419 Coalition fights 419 on the Internet": <http://home.rica.net/alphae/419coal/>.

> OECD on spam: [http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_22555297\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_22555297_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

> Truth or Fiction is a website for Internet users to check up on claims made by commonly forwarded e-mails: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/>.

> Anti-spam tips: <http://www.anti-spam-tips.com/>. Help with spam: <http://www.spamhelp.org/>.

> SpamBayes, free spam filter which can plug into Outlook: <http://spambayes.sourceforge.net/>.

> Spam filter reviews: <http://spam-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/>. BBC Article (1 February 2005): "Junk e-mails on relentless rise":

> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4225935.stm>. Radicata-Mirapoint study on e-mail bad habits:

> <http://www.messagingpipeline.com/news/159903196>.



**FACT SHEET 7**

**CHAT**

**WHAT IS CHAT?**

Chat is a generic term that refers to interactive communication which takes place on a dedicated discussion channel. Users can talk to groups of people in chatrooms (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatroom>) or hold private conversations with selected friends by using instant messaging services ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant\\_messaging](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_messaging)).

Chatting is a very informal means of communication similar to face-to-face conversations and occurs between two or more persons. Chat discussions are usually typed but can also include video or audio streaming (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming>) through the use of headsets and webcams. This form of communication is instantaneous and therefore different from e-mail, which does not depend on the recipient being present at the same time as the sender.

**IS CHAT DANGEROUS?**

There has been a lot of negative publicity in recent months about risks young people might encounter when using chatrooms. Due to several high-profile criminal cases, parents and teachers often worry about the possibility of children coming into contact with paedophiles in chatrooms. Although these dangers do exist, it is important to keep these fears in perspective. A vast majority of chatroom users are who they say they are, and most chat communication is completely innocent. Rather than preaching fear or banning the use of chat, adults should empower the young by teaching them how to stay safe. Some basic rules to follow are:

- > Never give out your personal information or post photos of yourself.
- > Always bring an adult with you if you are going to meet a chatroom friend.

- > Tell an adult if anything you have encountered in a chat session makes you uncomfortable.

**EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS OF CHAT**

Teachers often underestimate how important chat is to young people. Chat and instant messaging are popular pastimes and are transforming the way young people communicate with each other. It is entirely feasible to harness this force and apply it as an educational tool. Some ideas include:

- > Brainstorming sessions and problem-centred real time discussions.
- > Role-playing games and simulations.
- > Exchange of opinions and debates and small-group panel discussions.
- > Tutoring and guidance.
- > Group investigation.
- > Creation of an online community

**HOW TO GET STARTED**

There are many kinds of free chat programmes available on the Web. You can find a wide range by searching for "chat" in any search engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)). Many web-based chat programs such as Yahoo Chat at <http://chat.yahoo.com/?myHome>, ICQ at <http://www.icq.com/> and AOL Chat at <http://site.aol.com/community/chat/allchats.html> provide a wide variety of chatrooms with real-time discussion groups. Users must often first download a small application to enable chat and register with the moderator but can then login and participate freely.

Instant messaging ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant\\_message](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_message)) applications, which allow private conversations with select users, now surpass chatrooms in popularity, see [http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/unsafe/news/articles/0305/uk\\_ukcgo.htm](http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/unsafe/news/articles/0305/uk_ukcgo.htm). These capabilities can be found by searching for "instant messaging" in any search engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)). Users download an application to enable instant messaging and then compile a list of people with whom they want to

chat. Because communication takes place in a restricted user group, instant messaging is often considered “safer” than chatting in chatrooms

### HOW TO USE A CHATROOM

- > Open your chat program.
- > Provide a username and password if necessary.
- > Choose an appropriate chatroom. Usually there are rooms for different purposes and topics, for example automotive interest groups, subject-specific study groups, chats for teachers and so forth.
- > Once you are logged in, you will see the participants’ conversation scrolling on the main text screen.
- > Type your message and press “enter” or click “send” to post it so that chat participants can see it.
- > If you want to send a message to one specific person, select a person from the participant list in the window.
- > Many chatrooms can also be used for peer-to-peer file exchange: ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer\\_to\\_peer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_to_peer)). Chatrooms enable the swapping of files too large to be sent by e-mail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>).

### HOW TO USE INSTANT MESSAGING

- > Open your instant messaging application ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant\\_message](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_message)).
- > Check your list of contacts to find out who is online and available to chat.
- > You can add new contacts by entering in their e-mail address (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>) and inviting them to join your contact group. They will receive an e-mail invitation and if they agree, they will be registered in your list. This will enable you to chat with them real-time when you are both online.

> Click on that person’s ID to send a message and open a dialogue for communication.

> Type your message and press “enter” or click “send” to post it so that chat participants can see it.

### ABOUT ETHICS

Chat is text-based. Because social cues, gestures and non-verbal communication cannot be transmitted while typing, misunderstandings can easily occur online. One should be as agreeable, polite and well-mannered as in real-life situations and make a habit of using good netiquette (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette>). Humour and emotions can also be shown through use of emoticons (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticons>), small symbols that look like faces written sideways.

When chatting with strangers on the Web, one should also remember that it is always possible that people may not be who or what they say they are. Closed groupware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupware>) chats which provide conferencing possibilities for use in a school or classroom setting are safer to use and do not have this problem because participants represent a limited user group. See <http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=username>.

It is important to remember that file exchange between users is vulnerable to security. Make sure that all files have been scanned for viruses before sharing them and scan anything you receive before opening it (see Fact Sheet 16 on security).

### SOME RULES OF THUMB

The language used in chatting is fragmented, associative and very colloquial; a chat participant must not only be fast but flexible enough to switch from one topic and even one discussion to another. The supporting role of the teacher is very important when assuring quality of content and balanced participation by all those who contribute to the chat. The younger students are, the more important it is that the chat is hosted and moderated by the teacher.



- > Follow the discussion actively during the whole chat session.
- > Agree on the schedule of the session beforehand: everyone should be present at the same time.
- > Be polite and kind, as if you were face-to-face.
- > Remember that a carelessly written message can hurt even if this was not your intention.
- > A short message works best. Do not monopolise a real-time chat session by pasting chunks of pre-written text which the others are obliged to read and respond to.
- > Chat style is close to a stream of consciousness style. Try to read carefully others' messages and understand what they are trying to say. This may involve filling in the blanks.
- > Remember not to share your username and password.

#### SOME IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

- > Pick a topic and have students ask each other questions and exchange information in a chat setting.
- > Decide on a study topic, such as poetry in 19th-century England. Gather some orientation material to help students to do their pre-lesson activities. Have the students work on their assignments in pairs or small groups. This working phase should be organised along the lines of a group study model. (Chat works at its best in small-group interactions, that is 2-6 students).
- > At the end of the project, students prepare presentations suitable for a chat session. Chat starts with small-group presentations of different study topics. The study community sums up together what they have learned during the course.
- > Because chat sessions model real-life conversations, they offer students opportunities for authentic interaction and are therefore useful in studying foreign languages. The teacher can encourage students to participate in the discussion, advising them to post short messages. Interaction can be enhanced by creating roles for students: one may be an innovator, another a critic. The other students can follow the discussions at first and later provide feedback.
- > Environment Online (ENO) at <http://eno.joensuu.fi/tools/chat.htm> is an international web-based environmental education project. At the beginning of the course, students get their topics from the web pages of the project. The students collect scientific and empirical environmental data, measure different phenomena or take photographs.
- > During each theme period, virtual lessons are arranged in the form of interactive and synchronous real-time chats <http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=real%20time%20chat>, electronic questionnaires and message boards ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message\\_boards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message_boards)). Before and after lesson activities, students share ideas and monitor their tasks via chat and reflect on what they have learned.

#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > Elementary School Educators' Chat: <http://k6educators.about.com/mpchat.htm>.
- > Teachers Net Chatroom: <http://teachers.net/chatrooms/>.
- > Voila Chat (in French): <http://chat.voila.fr/>.



- > International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning: The Development of Social Climate in Virtual Learning Discussions: <<http://www.irrodl.org/content/v3.1/mioduser.html>>.
- > Student Chatrooms (United Kingdom): <<http://www.ukstudentchat.com/>>.
- > In-room chat as a social tool: <<http://www.openp2p.com/lpt/a/3071>>.
- > The Meaning of Chat—a hyper dictionary: <<http://www.hyperdictionary.com/computing/chat>>. See Wikipedia at for a list of basic emoticons: (<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon#Basic\\_examples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon#Basic_examples)>).
- > Instant messaging: Friend or Foe of student writing? A graduate student in Educational Technology discusses the impact of “speak” on student writing: <<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/literacy/oconnor.htm>>.

## FACT SHEET 8

## NEWSGROUPS

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS  
AND RISKS

## INTRODUCTION

A newsgroup is a discussion group with a focus on a particular topic. They date back to the early days of the Internet and even predate the World Wide Web (WWW).

Each newsgroup consists of a collection of communication in the form of electronic mail messages. There are hundreds of thousands of newsgroups worldwide and the more active groups receive hundreds of new messages each day. The messages are divided into threads, which record and display the sender’s name and the time the message was sent.

They are still used extensively, and most servers and browsers today make them available to interested users.

## EDUCATION

- > Newsgroups are a useful resource for finding out information.
- > Newsgroups can provide a fertile forum for discussions, thereby sharpening students’ debating skills.
- > Teachers can share information and experiences about a subject or teaching methodology.

> Very few newsgroups are fully moderated and users are not tracked. This can be exploited for illegal activities such as distribution of copyrighted material or child pornography.

> Newsgroups have their own social conventions called “netiquette” (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette>>).

> Some newsgroup users abusing their anonymity post critical messages and exhibit anti-social behaviour such as flaming (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming>>).

## HOW TO

> Usenet (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usenet>>) is the network which supports newsgroups. Your Internet service provider (ISP) decides which ones to offer (<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_service\\_provider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_service_provider)>). It is also possible to find public servers which will allow access.

> You can access many newsgroups using a news client. This is included in some mail programs such as Outlook Express. See <<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/using/howto/oe/gettingnews.msp>> for information on how to do this, with or without Outlook Express.



> Newsgroups already cover a range of specialised topics, but you can create your own newsgroup. This is a tricky process however. The “Big 8” categories (the original 8 newsgroups) have a slow and democratic process for accepting new groups. You should post your suggestion to news.groups.

> The more anarchic “alt” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alt\\_hierarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alt_hierarchy)) newsgroups are outside the Big 8. You can post your idea for a new alt group in the alt.conf newsgroup.

**BEST PRACTICE**

> Be wary of publishing your e-mail address. You may get unwanted mail either

from other newsgroup users or from junk mail spammers picking it up with web bots (see Fact Sheet 6 on spam).

> When first joining a newsgroup be sure to check the frequently asked questions (FAQ) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faq>) for guidelines. This will give you an idea of the netiquette of the newsgroup. Different newsgroups have different rules.

> Keep your messages as short as possible but make sure you give all relevant information. For example, if seeking the answer to a technical problem, give precise details about the hardware and software you are using.

> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> Google newsgroups at <http://groups.google.com/> has a complete list of newsgroups and an archive of over 1 billion postings.

> Dartmouth college tips on online classroom discussions: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~webteach/articles/discussion.html>. Advice on creating a Big 8 newsgroup by David Lawrence and Russ Allbery:

> <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/usenet/creating-newsgroups/part1/>. Wikipedia entry for newsgroups: (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsgroups>).

> Newzbot has a number Usenet resources, including a search for public servers hosting newsgroups: <http://www.newzbot.com/>.

**FACT SHEET 9**

**WORLD-WIDE LIBRARIES**

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ONLINE AND A DIGITAL LIBRARY?**

The original idea behind the creation of the Internet was to develop an electronic library for the easy access and distribution of information: see [http://www.livinginternet.com/i/ii\\_summary.htm](http://www.livinginternet.com/i/ii_summary.htm). In many ways this goal has been accomplished: today the Internet functions as an enormous library. More than 18 000 libraries are now pres-

ent on the Internet and have a web page at <http://www.libdex.com/>.

A distinction should be made between libraries with a presence on the Web, and digital or electronic libraries. Online libraries maintain a simple web page providing users with basic information on programmes, activities, collections and contact details. They may include the lending of physical books listed in catalogues and which can be ordered over the Internet. Universities and other learning institution libraries often provide such services, though many public libraries offer them on the Internet too. Digital libraries offer the service of accessing books online, usually digitised as html script ([114](http://en.</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

wikipedia.org/wiki/Html), meaning it looks like a web page, or as plain text (ASCII) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASCII>) documents, or as MSWord or Adobe PDF documents at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/pdf.html>.

### WHY USE ONLINE LIBRARIES AT SCHOOL?

> The research skills necessary to navigate both traditional and online libraries are similar. It is crucial to practise and hone these skills in all areas of the curriculum.

> There are thousands of category-specific libraries on the Web at <http://dir.yahoo.com/Reference/Libraries/> that relate specifically to curriculum areas and themes. A webquest is “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet.” The model at <http://webquest.org/> can be very useful when creating activities for classroom participants to use library facilities on the Internet while developing a range of core skills, such as research, archiving, literacy, analysis and evaluation.

### ETHICAL ISSUES

> Individuals and institutions need to apply the safety criteria listed in Fact Sheets 15, 16 and 18 on privacy, security and shopping online respectively, and the evaluation criteria in Fact Sheet 3 on searching for information. Libraries may require a subscription fee or registration in order to use the facilities.

> Subscription libraries: These libraries typically require an annual fee, and may require membership of a university or institution.

> Free libraries are restricted to publishing materials which do not have copyright restrictions. The original trendsetter is the Gutenberg Project: <http://promo.net/pg/>.

> Registration libraries require a simple registration of your details in order to access their materials. Be sure to check the privacy policy and the conditions of use:

<http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=privacy%20policy>.

> Most libraries will provide access according to certain rules. These rules at [http://www.gallowglass.org/jadwiga/SCA/libraries.html#Copyright\\_\\_Plagiarism](http://www.gallowglass.org/jadwiga/SCA/libraries.html#Copyright__Plagiarism) will require at least that the user honours the copyright criteria of the material. Remember that unless the materials are in the public domain, you may not redistribute or publish materials without the permission of the publisher.

> Copyright is also a personal responsibility. The most common temptation is plagiarism, which is the use of someone else’s work without crediting the source. Be sure to credit your sources, and instil the habit among your students.

### IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

> Identify the public libraries in your country that are on the Internet at <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ac940/eurolib.htm>. Ask your class to order a book from one of these libraries to support a current research activity.

> Using a current theme in your classroom, identify a category library at <http://vlib.org/>. Consider building a webquest around resources from this library, or use an existing webquest at <http://sesd.sk.ca/teacherresource/webquest/webquest.htm>. You can find webquests by using a search engine ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine)).

> Using the same theme, identify a text in the public domain (<http://promo.net/pg/>) and proof read or translate this text as part of the voluntary online projects to publish texts online.

> Consider creating an electronic library at school. This could start with one book turned into a web page or ASCII text, and stored on your school server. The International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), <http://www.iasl-slo.org/>, provides related policy information at <http://www.iasl-slo.org/documents3.html> and guidelines.



**BEST PRACTICE**

> Before encouraging students to use online libraries, make sure to review basic library skills and research strategies: <<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/preface.htm>>.

> Before requiring students to download files, talk to your school's network administrator. You should check to make sure there is space on the school server for downloading (<http://www.walthowe.com/glossary/d.html#download>) and storing files and archiving ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archiving#Computing\\_sense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archiving#Computing_sense)) them appropriately.

> Make sure that the online library usage tasks you set are possible. Check that the

resources exist, and that the URL (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL>) addresses work.

> Many files that you will download will be in Adobe PDF format to protect copyright. Make sure that you have downloaded and installed a recent version of the Acrobat reader in order to ensure that students can open these files. This can be done from <<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>>.

> The basic safety principles you apply when using the Internet should be applied when using online libraries. Check privacy statements, conditions of usage and scan files for viruses.

**> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <**

> The World e-book Foundation offers thousands of texts: <<http://www.netlibrary.net/>>.

> The Library Spot provides a free virtual library resource centre: <<http://www.libraryspot.com/>>.

> The International Association of School Librarians provides a storehouse of information, assistance, professional development and guidance specifically for school libraries: <<http://www.iasl-slo.org/>>.

> The Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts is a collection of public domain documents from American and English literature as well as Western philosophy: <<http://www.infomotions.com/alex2/>>.

> The Electronic Text Centre collection of the library of the University of Virginia, where you can browse in 15 languages: <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/uvaonline.html>>.

> Research Strategies: Finding Your Way through the Information Fog: <<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/textbook.htm>>.

> List of 1 000 + webquests from Saskatoon School Division Teaching Resources: <<http://sesd.sk.ca/teacherresource/webquest/webquest.htm>>. Article "Historical Research in the Modern Library":

> <<http://www.gallowglass.org/jadwiga/SCA/libraries.html>>.

## FACT SHEET 10

MUSIC AND IMAGES  
ON THE INTERNET

## INTRODUCTION

The Internet, as a multimedia platform, offers a large number of modes of communication including audio files, video files and digital photographs. These resources have a great impact since they go beyond linguistic, cultural and national barriers.

The major legal issues are copyright infringement and illegal content.

## COPYRIGHT

> A number of international laws and agreements are in place. In 1996 more than 100 countries signed two World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) treaties, which address digital content: <<http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/>>.

> A creator of audio-visual material automatically has copyright unless he or she waives it.

> Most countries' laws maintain copyright 50-70 years after the creator's death.

> There is usually more than one copyright holder of a piece of music. Author, performing artist, record company and publisher may all own rights or "related rights."

> Aside from the economic aspect, a creator of audio-visual content has "moral rights" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral\\_rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_rights)). This relates to the right to be recognised as the creator and the right for the work not to be altered or edited without permission.

> Music and films can be bought online (see Fact Sheet 18 on online shopping). There are several sites for purchasing music online, such as iTunes at <<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>> and Napster at <<http://www.napster.com/>>, but similar services for online movies are in their infancy. Film downloads are becoming common-

place as more people have faster connections to download the large files involved.

> Buying music or films online usually gives limited or no right to copy or distribute them. For example, Apple's online music store iTunes allows a purchased track of music to be authorised on up to five computers within a household: <<http://www.apple.com/itunes/share/>>.

> The music industry has brought legal proceedings against both peer-to-peer software companies and individual filesharers. An uploader—someone who makes files available—is more likely to be prosecuted than a downloader.

> Creative commons at <<http://creativecommons.org/>> is a non-profit organisation offering an alternative to full copyright.

## ILLEGAL CONTENT

> The definition of illegal content varies from country to country.

> Illegal content most commonly refers to child pornography, extreme violence, political extremism or incitement to hatred against minority groups.

> Many countries have a hotline for reporting illegal content: <<http://www.inhope.org/en/index.html>>.

> Taking action may be difficult or slow depending on the nature of the content and where it is hosted.

> Hotlines work together with Internet service providers (ISPs) and the police, and are best-placed to tackle illegal content.

> Inhope is a network of national hotlines.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS  
AND RISKS

> Worldwide global record sales decreased by 25% between 2001 and 2005. Many have attributed this to the rise of illegal music downloads.



> The music industry has responded by filing a number of lawsuits against websites and individual users.

> Using peer-to-peer software (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer-to-peer>) can be a security risk to your computer, as viruses (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viruses>) and spyware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware>) are often distributed by attaching them to music and image files.

### EDUCATION

> Educational establishments are, in certain cases, allowed to reproduce works and communicate them to the public. Refer to your national legislation or to the Directive 2001/29/EEC of 22 May 2001.

> Works used must be solely for teaching or scientific research purposes.

> Source, including the author's name should be indicated—except where this is impossible.

> No direct or indirect economic or commercial advantage must be gained from the use of this content.

> You need written permission from a parent or guardian before publishing photos of students online.

> In the case of content published on the school's website, all content, including content originating from children, is under the authority of the school.

### IN THE CLASSROOM

> Have a discussion on moral aspects. Is piracy of audio-visual material stealing?

> Inform students about the risks of viruses and spyware from downloads.

> Inform students about the possibility of fines for downloading copyrighted music and film.

> Discuss harmful and illegal content. Surveys show many students deliberately or accidentally find this type of content on the Internet, but few tell an adult.

### BEST PRACTICE

> Schools and companies should have an acceptable use policy (AUP), which includes issues on copyright and illegal material.

> Parents should agree certain rules on Internet use with children.

### COPYRIGHT

> Get written permission from a copyright holder before using material.

> Credit the author/creator of any material you use.

> Apply Creative Commons classifications to material you create to clarify how others may use it: <http://creativecommons.org/>.

### ILLEGAL CONTENT

> Software filters can help block some illegal websites.

> No filter is perfect. It is also important to discuss children's use of the Internet.

> Encourage children to talk about their online experiences.

> Report illegal content to a hotline, see in hope below.

### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

> World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO): <http://www.wipo.int>.

> Pro-music is a good source of information on online music piracy. It has a leaflet for kids and a Q & A on music downloads: <http://www.pro-music.org/copyright/faq.htm>.



- > Inhope is the network of hotlines for reporting illegal content on the Internet: <<http://www.inhope.org/>>.
- > The Council of Europe media page has information on its work in the field of copyright: <[http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/media/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/media/)>. European Commission information on intellectual property rights: <[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/copyright/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/copyright/index_en.htm)>.
- > Information on EU legislation in the field of intellectual property: <<http://www.europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/s06020.htm>>.
- > The International Federation for the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) gives a legal overview about online music: <<http://www.ifpi.org/>>.
- > BBC article, *European Commission plans for EU-wide copyright*: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4663731.stm>>.

## FACT SHEET II

## CREATIVITY

## HOW DOES THE INTERNET PROMOTE CREATIVITY?

Because of the flexible nature of the Internet, today's classroom setting is less rigid than ever before. Rapidly evolving technology provides students ample opportunity to explore topics that interest them and to learn in non-traditional ways. Using the tools that modern technology provides, students can create professional-standard material that can be published for audiences anywhere in the world. They can conduct experiments and simulations of all kinds within the classroom, or interactively with other learners across the Internet.

The Internet has globalised education and provides the opportunity for students to reach out in real-time to peers all over the globe.

## ENHANCING CREATIVE PROCESSES IN LEARNING

- > Successful technology integration in the classroom offers students a chance to show their innovation, individuality and creativity.
- > The use of creativity software and the Internet enables you to improve learning in your classroom in meaningful ways.

> The possibility to express creativity and take on a more active role in the classroom encourages learning and growth.

> Students can use the Internet to contact artists anywhere in the world to ask for advice and opinions on their work. Artists can use chat (see Fact Sheet 7), video conferencing, see <<http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=video%20conferencing>> or virtual meetings to give workshops.

> Using Internet message boards (<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message\\_boards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message_boards)>), students can work together, collaborating online on shared projects. This provides a new creative outlet and the brainstorming involved can stimulate the creative process.

## HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT CREATIVITY IS NOT INHIBITED?

There are several issues to be taken into consideration in the learning environment.

> Access issues: Does everyone in your school have access to necessary equipment? Do all students have the same access opportunities?

> Equality: All students—boys and girls the world over regardless of age or ability—should benefit from equal opportunities to be creative, that is to know how to use and create with all available technology.



> The online safety factor: Do the filters ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_filter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_filter)) put in place to keep students safe also inhibit access to material needed? How can this be dealt with so that students can enjoy safe access to information they need? (See Fact Sheet 14 on labelling and filtering.)

> Training for teachers: In many classrooms students are more Internet savvy than their teachers. Teachers need to benefit from all training opportunities available to them in order to properly guide their students in all aspects of ICT.

> Technical support issues: Does your school provide the technical support needed so that programmes and projects are not inhibited?

> A buffered environment: Creativity allows expression of your feelings as an individual. Although you should ideally limit constraints on a student's creative processes, it is important to retain control over the output, especially if brainstorming occurs in a group setting, such as chat. A teacher or other authority figure should be present to guide the work in a constructive manner.

### **BOOSTING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

> A webquest, <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/materials>, is an inquiry-based approach to integrating the Internet into the classroom. Additional webquest resources are available from the Canadian SESD teaching resources website: <http://sesd.sk.ca/teacherresource/webquest/webquest.htm>.

> Students can challenge their creativity by building their own websites. This stimulates creative thought processes in different ways by requiring input on graphics and content.

> Students can collaborate on projects that develop writing skills by producing online books and stories.

> Hot Potatoes software at <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/> is free of charge and can be

used to create interactive quizzes and activities for the Web.

> Students can create interactive stories with multiple outcomes with software such as that available at Quia's website: <http://www.quia.com/>.

> Secondary school and university students can create their own 3D learning environment at <http://www.active-worlds.com/> with software like Active Worlds. They can build their ideal landscape, their own virtual campus. They can also collaborate with other students in projects on different topics.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

> The Internet can be used as a basic research tool for background information on different topics. Students can then apply the knowledge they have gained to an assignment that stimulates creativity. Technology provides students the opportunity and the freedom to develop higher-order thinking.

> The Internet and other modern technology allows for powerful communication and collaboration between students of different countries and cultures. More than ever before, students have the possibility to brainstorm creative solutions with a broad peer base.

> Teachers have found that implementing technology in the classroom in such a way as to provide hands-on activities allows students opportunities for problem-solving and innovation.

> Keep learning goals in mind: the key to reaching these goals is to focus on the process taken to get to the product rather than on the product itself.

> When students publish the results of creative activities online, they need to respect copyright (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright>). Remind them to cite their sources when using material created by others.

## &gt; FOR FURTHER INFORMATION &lt;

A number of websites can be used as a starting point to involve students in projects where creativity is encouraged and collaboration is essential.

- > ThinkQuest is an international competition which challenges students and teachers to create websites on educational topics:  
<<http://www.thinkquest.org/>>.
- > Global Schoolhouse Cyberfair is an online meeting place where parents, students and educators can collaborate, interact, develop, publish and discover learning resources: <<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/GSH/>>.
- > Future Problem Solvers Program: Engages students in creative problem solving by simulating critical and creative thinking skills: <<http://www.fpsp.org/>>.
- > Mr Coulter's Internet tendency: to infinity and beyond. An experienced elementary school teacher uses online publishing to motivate young writers:  
<<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/literacy/coulter.htm>>. Online Fanfiction: What technology and popular culture can teach us about writing and literacy instruction can be found at
- > <<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/literacy/black.htm>>. A doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin explores an alternate literary world in cyberspace, which is often a compelling avenue for creative writing outside the classroom.
- > Gateway to educational materials provides educators with quick and easy access to educational resources. Do a search for "creativity" for lesson plans, classroom ideas: <<http://www.thegateway.org/>>.
- > Webquest reading and training materials:  
<<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/materials.htm>>. List of 1 000+ webquests from SESD: <<http://sesd.sk.ca/teacherresource/webquest/webquest.htm>>.

## FACT SHEET 12

## GAMES

## INTRODUCTION

Over half of all children who use the Internet play online games: 70% in the United Kingdom and 90% in Scandinavian countries, according to a 2003 SAFT (safety, awareness, facts, tools) survey at <<http://www.saftonline.org/>>.

There are many different game genres such as arcade, role-playing, strategy and sports games. They can be played alone or with partners, in closed circles or even with thousands of strangers playing together.

Investment in game development has increased rapidly in recent years. In 2005, the average cost of making a game was \$5-7 million, with some titles costing over \$20 million to develop.

A report by DFC Intelligence at <<http://www.dfci.com/>> forecasts that global video game sales will reach \$26 billion in 2010.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE

> Game-playing is more than entertainment: it is an enriching collaborative activity enjoyed by children and adults of all ages.

> Games foster creativity and interaction and play an important role in social and intellectual development.



- > Games represent one of the rare occasions when adults and children can exchange ideas on an equal footing (inter-generational communication).
- > Children learn about democracy by playing within different social structures, in an environment bordered by rules and parameters.
- > Games often involve sharing and respecting the rights and property of others, sometimes even bringing players into contact with other cultures and intercultural practices. Children can practise social skills without fear of failure and with a sense of control.
- > Because games require children to obey rules and follow directions, they increase their capacity for self-discipline and autonomy.
- > Puzzles, board games, adventures and quests offer opportunities for players to develop strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.
- > Other games can be used to increase fine motor and spatial skills in younger children and for therapeutic purposes with the physically disabled.
- > Online games are useful for introducing newcomers to technology and generally fostering interest in ICT ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information\\_technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_technology)).
- > Games can be integrated into almost any area of the curriculum, from mathematics to social studies and languages.

**POTENTIAL RISKS**

- > The violent nature of some computer games has been loosely associated with violent behaviour in young people. However a Danish Media Council report in 2002 suggested that the violent aspects of some games were not more influential than TV or

film violence: <[http://resources.eun.org/insafe/datorspel\\_Playing\\_with.pdf](http://resources.eun.org/insafe/datorspel_Playing_with.pdf)>.

- > Studies attempting to determine the proportion of young people affected by computer game addiction have had widely different results. This is because there is currently no agreement on an objective way to decide at what stage heavy use of computer games can be considered excessive or addictive. Gamers may play a high number of hours per week without adverse effects to their social and professional lives. However, it is generally accepted that addiction is a problem among a small proportion of gamers. This problem was highlighted when the case of a Korean man who died after a 50-hour game session was widely reported in the media in August 2005.
- > Some games have been accused of supporting racial or gender stereotyping.
- > Some online games allow the possibility to meet and communicate with strangers.

**BEST PRACTICE**

- > Labeling and rating systems encourage games industry actors to act responsibly by requiring them to define and describe their products. This also helps game buyers judge the content and age suitability of games and to navigate the game market more safely.
- > Monitor the number of hours spent playing. Take action if other social activities are avoided or children and young people skip school in order to spend time gaming.

- > Gaming communities can foster a sense of belonging and can lead children to trust too readily. Remind them that online friends may not always be who they say they are. It is important not to give out personal information to anyone online.

## &gt; FOR FURTHER INFORMATION &lt;

- > Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA):  
<<http://www.elspa.com/>>.
- > Game Studies: International journal of computer game research:  
<<http://www.gamestudies.org/>>.
- > See charts of top-selling games, and games news, descriptions, research reports and legislation reviews on the Elspa site: <<http://www.elspa.com/>>.
- > The Pan European Games Information (PEGI) website contains rating and labelling information: <<http://www.pegi.info/pegi/index.do>>.
- > "Parents ignore game ratings"—BBC article, June 2005:  
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4118270.stm>>.
- > Online games can be found at Amic Games at <<http://www.amicgames.com/>> and Yahoo! Games at <<http://dir.yahoo.com/Recreation/Games/>>.
- > "Playing with fire: how do computer games affect the player," Danish Council report: <[http://resources.eun.org/insafe/datorspel\\_Playing\\_with.pdf](http://resources.eun.org/insafe/datorspel_Playing_with.pdf)>.

## FACT SHEET 13

**DISTANCE LEARNING****WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING?**

Distance learning ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance_learning)) is defined by Wikipedia (see also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)) as « *a method of teaching in which the students are not required to be physically present at a specific location during the term* ». This method opens up lifelong learning opportunities to students of all countries and all ages, making it possible for them to earn diplomas, certificates and degrees from almost any online university in the world. Distance learning began with generations of adults seeking advanced education at home, in the military or on the job. Courses used to be done by correspondence, with material sent back and forth through the traditional postal system. These days, however, distance learning has evolved to take advantage of current technology. It thrives via the Internet, and students can study for degrees without ever setting foot in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Advances in distance learning have revolutionised the arena of advanced education. For example:

> Lectures can be given via streaming media ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming_media)) or as printed material saved in files which are stored on the educator's server ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_server](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_server)).

> Students communicate with the teacher and each other through message boards ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message\\_boards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Message_boards)), e-mail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail>) and chat (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chat>).

> Assignments are uploaded into a drop box and even quizzes and exams can be automated and taken online.

> Course materials are readily available and easily updated.

> The online format provides unparalleled flexibility for self-paced work.

**WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING?**

> The Internet is perfect for setting up a virtual learning environment. Students can, for example, stay in their own hometown while studying at a virtual university abroad.



- > Providing students with an access to the whole base of learning material gives them the opportunity to become more autonomous in their learning process.
- > Students have more ownership of their own learning, and the role of the teacher is transformed into the role of a coach.
- > Courses are not restricted to the opening hours of “normal” schools or universities, so everyone can benefit from more opportunities to become lifelong learners.
- > Distance learning changes the behaviour of both the teacher and the student. Successful students develop persistence and organisational skills and the teacher must become more conversant in technology.

**POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A DISTANCE-LEARNING PROGRAMME**

You should be aware that you, as the user, are responsible for taking certain precautions when choosing a degree or other distance-learning programme.

- > Remember that the Internet is not a regulated environment. There are dubious distance-learning institutions out there alongside the legitimate ones. Make sure you research a programme/organisation thoroughly before enrolling.
- > Security issues are always key, as with any exchange of information over the Internet. Viruses (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virus>) and hackers (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker>) can wreak havoc on a distance-learning system so be sure to consult Fact Sheets 15 and 16 on privacy and security to see which precautions you should take.

> Copyright (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright>) is usually protected by the law of the student’s home country. However, when following distance-learning programmes in other countries be sure to check that the learning sources are covered by international copyright.

> Fair use and payment of courses is also a hot issue: students are expected to use learning facilities in a trustworthy way and to pay for their courses on time.

**BEST PRACTICE**

The Internet is changing the way we learn and it is very important for students to have access to all information and tools available to help them learn. The “digital divide” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_divide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_divide)) is seen as a leading issue in the economic and social growth of many nations and the use of distance learning can narrow this gap.

Distance learning can increase student learning in measurable ways. It provides Internet training with hands-on experience for students, their families and teachers. Distance learning provides an opportunity for students to build new skills and qualifications and grow in new directions.

**> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <**

- > The Distance Learning Network provides information about distance learning, reports on its effectiveness—advantages, disadvantages, and techniques: [<http://www.distancelearningnet.com/>](http://www.distancelearningnet.com/).
- > The Distance Education and Training Council contains a number of reports on distance learning which are available for free download: [<http://www.detc.org/otherdownld.html>](http://www.detc.org/otherdownld.html).
- > Yahoo! has a directory page for distance-learning programmes and institutions: [<http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Distance\\_Learning>](http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Distance_Learning).



## FACT SHEET 14

# LABELLING AND FILTERING

## LABELLING

Labelling refers to a quality-assurance tag or label displayed on software and websites, or integrated into the content of websites. It ensures that the product meets the criteria and standards designated by rating agencies such as Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) and the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA).

Sites are labelled in order to protect minors, increase public trust and use of online transactions, and also to comply with legal standards. When labelling website content, a code is written into the webpage html, thereby detailing its contents so that the page can be rated. This rating—which is invisible on the page itself, details the nature of the content and is detected by filtering mechanisms, which will subsequently either block or load the page.

Websites can also be branded with “Quality Labels” and “Trustmarks,” labels which signify that specific regulations have been met. These regulations often include prescriptions about secure transactions (see Fact Sheet 18 on shopping online). Two well-known quality labels include Verisign at <http://www.verisign.com/> and Trust-e at <http://www.truste.org/>.

## FILTERING

> Filtering is the process of detecting and blocking inappropriate content on the Internet. It can be done within browsers and proxies, or by installing software censors.

> An alternative to filtering is “white listing,” whereby access is allowed only to certain pre-approved sites.

## EDUCATION

> Filters can be valuable in reducing the risk of students accessing inappropriate or harmful material.

> The issues raised by labelling and filtering practices are rich in material for citizenship and/or social studies themes. Start a debate on the subject of online filtering. Is it an acceptable and necessary form of censorship?

## ISSUES

> The labelling and rating of websites remains a largely voluntary practice, except where countries have laws to enforce certain standards.

> Currently only a small percentage of pages are labelled by the authors.

> Filtering software-services label pages according to their value systems and social agendas.

> Filters may block useful sites relating to contraception or sex education due to certain key words they contain.

> Some countries block sites of opposing political parties or ideologies.

> Some people consider filtering as a form of censorship and therefore against the spirit of the Internet. Others claim that if filter software did not exist, governments would be under pressure to regulate online content.

## HOW TO

> To label content you have created on a site of your own, follow instructions on a rating site such as ICRA at <http://www.icra.org/>.

> You will be asked to classify the material according to a number of set criteria.

> Most browsers can be set to filter out specific sites. For example, in Microsoft Explorer, this option can be found under “security options.”

> Very few computers are sold with filter software pre-installed. You will need to purchase a dedicated filter program for a more sophisticated approach to filtering sites. A number of products are available on the market.



> Most filter programs will allow you to specify what types of content you wish to filter or allow.

will do more to add value to your learners' Internet experience than censorship or witch-hunts.

**BEST PRACTICE**

> Have a close look at how a filter works before you install it. Does it make any ideological or cultural decisions in its filtering that you do not agree with?

> Consider "white listing" options—allowing access only to approved sites—for the youngest Internet users.

> Use electronic aids with discrimination, and do not believe the hype. Test product claims against personal experience.

> Experts recommend that parents should take an interest in their children's online activities and spend time online together.

> Talk to students, parents and staff about their usage and needs, and do so regularly. Creating an open discussion environment

> Children and young people should be encouraged to talk about inappropriate material they find on the Internet. Report potentially illegal content to a hotline: <<http://www.inhope.org>>

**> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <**

> The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) at <<http://www.icra.org/>> enables websites to apply labels according to different categories. It also offers its own free filter for download.

> The Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) at <<http://www.w3.org/PICS/>> is another system for applying labels to websites.

> Wikipedia entry on censorship in cyberspace: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship\\_in\\_cyberspace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship_in_cyberspace)>.

> The Council of Europe media division website—information on their work promoting self-regulation and user empowerment: <<http://www.coe.int/media>>.

> NetNanny at <<http://www.netnanny.com/>> and Cyberpatrol at <<http://www.cyberpatrol.com/>> are among the well-known commercial filter products.

> ICRA at <<http://www.icra.org/>> and Weblocker at <<http://weblocker.fameleads.com/>> offer free filter software for download.

> Selfregulation.info provides in-depth reports from the University of Oxford's research project: <<http://www.selfregulation.info/>>.

> *A little less censorship*—BBC article: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4080886.stm>>.

> The OpenNet Initiative documents filtering and blocking worldwide: <<http://www.opennetinitiative.net/>>.

> The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) aims to defend civil liberties on the Internet: <<http://www.eff.org/>>.

> The Censorware Project: <<http://censorware.net/>>.

> Internet Content Rating for Europe (INCORE) report—an executive summary of a report on self-labelling and filtering: <<http://europa.eu/int/ISPO/iap/INCOREexec.html>>.

## FACT SHEET 15

## PRIVACY

HOW PRIVATE IS  
THE INTERNET?

> Privacy (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privacy>) refers to the degree of control that a person has concerning access to and use of personal information.

> Most e-mail (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail>) and Internet (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet>) users assume that personal information will not be used without permission and that information exchanges are private and secure. The reality, however, is very different.

> Every time you access a website or send e-mail, you leave information about yourself that could include your physical and computer address, telephone and credit card numbers, consumer pattern data and much more.

> Privacy is closely related to security; be sure to read thoroughly Fact Sheet 16 on security.

WHY TALK ABOUT PRIVACY IN  
CLASS OR AT HOME?

> The technical and social aspects of privacy provide valuable learning themes. Technical aspects may be included in information technology (IT) studies, but should equally form part of a life-skills curriculum.

> Every student should have the skills necessary to negotiate the Internet safely, and that includes knowledge of self-protection, effective communication and responsibility toward others.

> There is a natural flow from this theme into the citizenship dimension of any curriculum. The issues raised about online privacy accurately mirror social issues predominant in most cultures today. Exploring the motivations of hackers (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker>), crackers ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker#Hacker:\\_Intruder\\_and\\_criminal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker#Hacker:_Intruder_and_criminal)) and priva-

cy activists offers rich possibilities to discuss the value of democratic principles.

## ETHICAL ISSUES

> Online privacy is one of the most complex ethical and legal topics regarding the Internet.

> Everyone has a right to privacy and needs to be protected from malicious intent.

> We are accountable for all decisions we make about our own and others' rights, for example copyright (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright>) and intellectual property ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual\\_property](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property)).

> Freedom of speech is a politically accepted notion, however in practice this is a grey area with no easy answers. What is acceptable and what is not? How does one enforce the rules without encroaching on the rights of the speaker?

## IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

> Create a basic knowledge framework for privacy with your class. Define concepts, both technical and social, and identify prejudices and myths for discussion. Simply setting the questions "What is privacy?" and "Is privacy necessary?" should generate some strong views.

> Search for privacy sites on the Internet, and use traceroute (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traceroute>) programs to locate the physical addresses of these sites to demonstrate the diverse geophysical issues governing legality on the Internet. Explore other issues (cultural, political and historical) that come up from the trace results. For example, choose a re-mailer (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remailer>) site or anonymous proxy service, run a trace, then search for reasons why the services would be located in those countries.

> Explore the implications of privacy law, copyright and freedom of speech and information across national boundaries, or for different age and cultural groups.



> Teach students how to create secure passwords ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors\\_in\\_the\\_security\\_of\\_an\\_individual\\_password](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors_in_the_security_of_an_individual_password)).

**BEST PRACTICE**

> The golden rule: do not share your personal information with anyone you do not know and trust.

> Back up ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back\\_up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_up)) your system, and have a regular backup policy.

> Update security measures on your system and do some research on additional tools at <http://www.epic.org/privacy/tools.html> that will support your online preferences.

> Anti-virus (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antivirus>) and firewall ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firewall\\_%28networking%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firewall_%28networking%29)) software are an absolute necessity. You might also want to consider other tools such as pop-up blockers ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop\\_up#Add-on\\_programs\\_that\\_block\\_pop-up\\_ads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop_up#Add-on_programs_that_block_pop-up_ads)) and anti-spyware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware>). Be sure to check your system regularly.

> Use “strong passwords” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors\\_in\\_the\\_security\\_of\\_an\\_individual\\_password](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors_in_the_security_of_an_individual_password)) to protect your PC, e-mail and Internet connections.

> Before giving out private data, check for the locked padlock symbol that shows up in the toolbar. This is a sign that your transaction is taking place over a secure connection.

**COOKIES**

> A cookie ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTTP\\_cookie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTTP_cookie)) is a text file left on your

computer when you visit a website. It cannot harm your computer, but will give access to information about your behaviour and interests. This can provide a more personal surfing atmosphere. For example, when registering with a website you may be greeted by name upon your return.

> It is important to decide how private you want to keep your online behavior. Since cookies can be used to track usage patterns and contact information they provide a possibility for encroachment on your privacy.

> You can use anti-spyware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware>) to help control the data your system is broadcasting and to clean out unwanted cookies.

**DATA PROTECTION**

> Make sure your machine and e-mail programs are password protected (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password>). Most home machines have “default” user and password settings which allow access through standard passwords like “test.” See <http://www.netlingo.com/right.cfm?term=default>. Make sure you change these default settings to a more secure password and ID.

> It is best to encrypt (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encryption>) any sensitive information which is sent over the Internet. Fortunately this is standard for most e-commerce (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecommerce>) transactions but you should still make sure that a page is secure before transmitting credit card information or bank account numbers.

> Different sections of your computer can be secured using passwords. Create passwords for folders containing valuable documents such as confidential projects, research, original designs and so forth.

## &gt; FOR FURTHER INFORMATION &lt;

- > The Council of Europe's Legal Affairs page contains information about the work of the Council of Europe in the field of data protection: <[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal\\_affairs/Legal\\_co-operation/Data\\_protection/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_affairs/Legal_co-operation/Data_protection/)>.
- > The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) maintains a list of privacy tools and articles: <<http://www.epic.org/privacy/tools.html>>.
- > Find out what your PC is telling anyone on the net who cares to look by using BrowserSpy: <<http://gemal.dk/browserspy/>>.
- > Concerned about your civil liberties? These discussions on privacy could keep your citizenship class going for a while: Electronic Frontier Foundation at <<http://www.eff.org/>>, Privacy.org at <<http://www.privacy.org/>>, Privacy International at <<http://www.privacyinternational.org/>> and Privacy.net at <<http://www.privacy.net/>>.
- > CyberAngels at <<http://www.cyberangels.org/>>, is an Internet security website with simple tutorials and explanations.
- > TuCows at <<http://www.tucows.com/>>, is a website which provides access to over 40 000 shareware and freeware programs. It promises fast, local and safe virus and spyware free downloads.
- > Zone Alarm at <<http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/home.jsp>> is one of the better known firewall programs. It lets you set access controls for different programs which send information out over the Internet.
- > CryptoHeaven is an encryption package which offers secure mail, file sharing and chat with symmetrical and asymmetrical encryption: <<http://www.cryptoheaven.com/>>.
- > LavaSoft Ad-aware is an anti-trackware program that scans your computer and protects your privacy: <<http://www.lavasoft.com/>>.

## FACT SHEET 16

## SECURITY

## INTRODUCTION

- > Your online security can be compared to security at home. You protect the contents by keeping the windows closed and the door locked.
- > Malware (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malware>) is a generic term for malicious software such as viruses ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)) that can infect a computer. Malware can have a number of effects, such as preventing the

normal running of software or allowing unauthorised access or deletion of data.

- > The most common forms of malware are viruses ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)) and worms ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_worm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_worm)) which are self-replicating programs.
- > Despite the name, not all viruses and other forms of malware are designed with malicious intent.
- > An average of 10 new viruses are identified every day.
- > Many of the issues relevant for security are also relevant for privacy (see Fact Sheet 15).



**EDUCATION**

- > Discuss issues of self-protection and responsibility with students. Since many of the young are better-informed than adults, encourage them to share their knowledge and experience with each other and their families.
- > A number of hackers and creators of viruses are among the youngest users of the Internet. Have a classroom discussion about these issues.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS**

- > Your computer's security can have an effect on others. Viruses that infect your computer can be passed on to others.
- > Anyone who stores personal data on clients or other acquaintances is responsible for keeping this information secure.
- > Hacking ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hack\\_%28technology\\_slang%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hack_%28technology_slang%29)) or other unauthorised access to information about others is a violation of others' rights.
- > It is important to be cautious but do not go overboard with security measures! One of the Web's greatest qualities is its accessibility. Restricting rights or activating excessive filtering may constitute censorship or reduce accessibility.
- > Spyware refers to programs which hijack a computer usually with commercial motives. This could involve adding unwanted advertising or stealing credit card information. Dialers are a form of spyware that cause modems to dial numbers without the user's authorisation. This has been used to make calls to premium rate phone lines.
- > Cookies involve the storing of personal information. See Fact Sheet 15 on privacy for more details.

**BEST PRACTICE**

- > Install anti-virus software ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-virus\\_software](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-virus_software)) and keep it updated.

- > Install security patches as soon as they are available. You can set some operating systems and programs to update automatically or inform you as soon as a patch is available for download.
- > Install a firewall ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firewall\\_%28networking%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firewall_%28networking%29)) to control traffic to and from your computer.
- > Do not leave your computer unnecessarily connected to the Internet. Broadband subscriptions allow unlimited connection time but this can compromise security.
- > Avoid using passwords ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors\\_in\\_the\\_security\\_of\\_an\\_individual\\_password](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password#Factors_in_the_security_of_an_individual_password)) that have an obvious connection with you. Use a combination of letters and numbers.
- > Set your browser ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_browser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_browser)) to "disable scripts." You can enable scripts for trusted sites.
- > Do not open e-mails which may not be genuine (see Fact Sheet 5 on e-mail).
- > Make sure you trust the source before downloading anything to your computer. Be particularly aware of peer-to-peer software ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer\\_to\\_peer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_to_peer)), which is notorious for aiding the distribution of spyware (see Fact Sheet 10 on music and images).
- > Regularly back up important files to a location separate from your computer, such as on CD-Roms.
- > If you are managing more than one user of a computer or network, make sure each user has appropriate rights. Restricting unnecessary user rights can help avoid accidental or deliberate security problems.
- > Network administrators should create an AUP (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AUP>) so users do not jeopardise security of systems.

- > The Windows operating system and Internet Explorer browser are the most common targets of malware. Consider alternatives such as open source software

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_source](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source))  
or Mozilla Firefox: <http://www.mozilla.org/>.

#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > Microsoft security page: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/default.msp>.
- > Apple security page: <http://www.apple.com/support/security/>. Detailed information for IT professionals: <http://www.searchsecurity.com>.
- > European Network and Information Security Agency: <http://www.enisa.eu.int/>.
- > OECD guidelines for the security of information systems and networks: [http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34255\\_15582250\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/42/0,2340,en_2649_34255_15582250_1_1_1_1,00.html).
- > Information security magazine: <http://informationsecurity.techtarget.com/>.
- > 2privacy.com's website has a privacy test for your computer: <http://www.2privacy.com/>.
- > Online security advice from the governments of the UK at <http://www.itsafe.gov.uk/> and of the United States at <http://www.us-cert.gov/>.
- > Information security guidelines for direct marketing: <http://www.the-dma.org/guidelines/informationsecurity.shtml>.

#### FACT SHEET 17

## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

### WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INTERNET AND BULLYING OR HARASSMENT?

Bullying (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullying>) and harassment (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harassment>) have a huge impact on how people perceive themselves and the world around them.

The definition of bullying usually depends on who is defining it. However, for most people, bullying is an action which is taken against another person in order to cause harm, repeated in various forms over a period of time. Parents and children do not usually have the same perception of the scale of this problem. Bullying can imply

verbal or physical contact. These days, it can also include virtual bullying via the Internet, involving offensive or malicious e-mails, chat room or message board comments or, even more extreme, websites built with harmful intent towards an individual or certain groups of people.

Educators have always had to deal with bullying and harassment inside and outside of the classroom. It is imperative now for us to understand how this type of harassment involves the Internet as well.

### HOW CAN BULLYING AND HARASSMENT BE DEALT WITH AT SCHOOL OR AT HOME?

- > If students are to learn productively, they need to be in an environment where they feel self-confident and safe.
- > If a student is being harassed or bullied, then learning is restricted because he or





she is unable to focus, feels threatened and loses self-confidence.

> It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to ensure the best learning environment possible, whether in the classroom, on the playground or working online.

> Students need to be able to take responsibility for their own actions, but bullying undermines confidence and self-esteem.

> Students who feel threatened (either online or off) need the help of a trusted adult. We should also remember that the person doing the bullying is also in need of guidance so that this behaviour is not repeated in the future.

> Schools should have specific guidelines in place as well. It would be a good idea to incorporate precautionary measures in your school's Internet policy to deal with bullying.

**ETHICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES**

> Bullying and harassment in the classroom can lower the morale of the whole class, creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust and making learning nearly impossible.

> One preventive measure to help keep bullying or harassment from becoming a problem is to introduce anger management and conflict resolution into your curriculum. Well-chosen programmes of this type will allow children and teenagers to discover their own talents as potential mediators in the conflicts. In this way, the risk of minor conflicts developing into threatening behaviour will be reduced both offline and online.

> Your school should have an explicit policy in place—commonly called an acceptable use policy (AUP) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acceptable\\_Use\\_Policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acceptable_Use_Policy))—to monitor when and how students and staff use the Internet at school. This document should explicitly explain that vulgar language and bullying / harassing language will not be tolerated. Direct consequences should be spelled out clearly for anyone who uses the Internet in an inappropriate manner.

> There should be a procedure in place that can document Internet usage, including who is online, when and where.

> Students should be told to discontinue contact with anyone who is harassing them or making them uncomfortable in any way when online.

> Students should immediately tell a trusted adult what has happened and, if possible, show them the offensive material. Then the adult should follow the procedures spelled out in the school's AUP.

> The procedure is the same as in real life, were a child to be harassed by someone. They should discontinue contact with the offender and tell a trusted adult about the incident. They should not feel as though they are alone or have to deal with it themselves.

In summary, school Internet use policy should include intervention methods such as conflict resolution, training of students and staff about what to do in the case of harassment online, provision of positive support to the targets of abuse and, wherever possible, help the abusers to change their behaviour. With such a policy in place, schools should have little problem dealing with bullying or harassment.

**IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK**

> Role play: students participate in a mock-conflict resolution process. The teacher assigns the roles and organises groups in which students are responsible for settling a dispute. The next step is to reverse the roles, allowing students to approach the issue from a different perspective.

> Discussion groups: students participate in discussion groups where their group work is evaluated, and where they are encouraged to talk about their impressions.

**BEST PRACTICE**

Here are some ideas on how to handle online bullying, harassing e-mails or messages of any kind:

- > Students should be instructed not to open e-mails from unknown sources.
- > If an e-mail is opened and found to be offensive, delete it immediately.
- > If a person keeps sending offensive or harassing e-mails and it is possible (by means of the e-mail address) to find out where the e-mail is being sent from, contact that service provider ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_Service\\_Provider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Service_Provider)) immediately to report the harassment.
- > Your school's policy on bullying and/or acceptable user policy should have provisions on how to handle online harassment by students.
- > Just as with any other kind of bullying, students should know they can come to you or another trusted adult anytime they are harassed online.

> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > Bullying.org: <<http://www.bullying.org/>>.
- > Stop Bullying Now!: <<http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/>>.
- > Know the risks: Challenging Cyber bullying: <[http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/wa\\_teachers/safe\\_passage\\_teachers/risks\\_bullying.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/wa_teachers/safe_passage_teachers/risks_bullying.cfm)>.
- > What is cyber bullying?: <<http://www.netalert.net.au/01569-what-iscyber-bullying.asp?qid=10398>>.
- > Report bullying and harmful content to the Insafe network: <<http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/safety.htm>>.

**FACT SHEET 18**

**SHOPPING ONLINE**

E-commerce may be defined as the collection of services, software, and procedures that allows the sale of products online. Almost anything can be bought online from books to holidays, from clothing to electronics. Apart from material goods, you can also pay for services such as access to online content. According to Forrester Research at <<http://www.forrester.com/my/1,,1-0,FF.html>>, the European online retail market is expected to grow from ? 40 billion in 2004 to? 167 billion by 2009.

**EDUCATION**

Young people need to be well-informed consumers. As online shopping gains in impor-

tance, it is vital that they understand how to take advantage of the benefits and avoid the risks associated with shopping online.

- > Educate students to find out about the retailer and the conditions of sale.
- > Invite students, alone or in groups, to look on specific commercial websites for products or services, with a particular goal in mind. For example, planning a holiday according to a fixed budget (see Fact Sheet 3 on searching for information).
- > Plan an e-commerce website with your students (to sell school products, for instance), or do further work on existing initiatives of that kind already taken within the framework of the school. Study the structure of a good e-commerce website.



## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

- > Protect your credit card data. Hackers can obtain credit card information by accessing your computer or by breaking into insecure websites holding your information.
- > Criminals also obtain credit card or banking information by tricking people into giving them voluntarily. Phishing (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing>) falls into this category. These attacks often target users of online shopping or payment sites, asking them to “reconfirm” details.
- > Since online shopping often involves payment by credit card, consumers need to manage their finances carefully to avoid overspending.

## BEST PRACTICE

- > Find out about the retailer or vendor. eBay, for example, allows vendors to build a reputation according to their track record and feedback. Do not buy from untrustworthy sources, especially those advertised by spam (see Fact Sheet 6).

> Make sure you are insured against fraudulent use of your credit cards. Check your statements carefully for any unauthorised purchases.

> Read the terms and conditions. The text may be long and technical but do not click to say you have read and understood it if you have not done so.

> Hidden costs. These may be taxes or delivery charges on the side of the seller. Customs duties may also be charged if you are ordering products from abroad.

> Is the site secure? A padlock or key symbol in the lower right-hand corner of the web browser will indicate secure pages. Look for Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure\\_Sockets\\_Layer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secure_Sockets_Layer)) certificates which ensure that data is encrypted before it is sent.

> Make sure that you have control of your personal data. Pay attention to boxes relating to the retailer’s options to retain your data or contact you for marketing purposes.

### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > Teach your students about online commerce—from Microsoft: <http://www.microsoft.com/office/previous/frontpage/columns/edcolumn04.asp>.
- > European Commission form for seeking redress, available in 11 languages: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/index_en.htm).
- > TRUSTe—an independent, non-profit, global initiative aimed at building trust and confidence in online transactions: <http://www.truste.org/>.
- > UK Office of Fair Trading (OFT) information on online shopping: <http://www.offt.gov.uk/Consumer/Your+Rights+When+Shopping+From+Home/Online+shopping/default.htm>.
- > European Commission page on e-commerce : [http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/ecommerce/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/ecommerce/).
- > Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com>, and eBay at <http://www.ebay.com/> are two of the best known brands for online shopping.
- > Paypal fraud prevention tips: <https://www.paypal.com/eBay/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=p/gen/fraud-tipsbuyers-outside>.

- > eBay 'most popular brand' online-BBC article:  
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4468745.stm>>.
- > Kelkoo is a website for comparing prices from different retailers:  
<<http://fr.kelkoo.com/>>.

## FACT SHEET 19

**BECOMING AN ACTIVE****E-CITIZEN****MAINTAINING OUR RIGHTS AS  
E-CITIZENS**

The widespread use of the Internet, and new communication technologies has been a powerful engine for growth and jobs and has improved the quality of life for many citizens.

The informed participation of all citizens in what is known as the digital economy depends on the development of a much broader literacy. This includes the ability to critically analyse the variety of information we are subject to (that is audiovisual content), to form autonomous opinions and to be actively involved in community issues.

**WHAT NEW SKILLS ARE  
REQUIRED FOR CITIZENS  
TO BE ACTIVE IN SOCIETY?**

> Information and communication technologies are rapidly reaching into every aspect of our everyday lives and changing the type of skills necessary to be active members of society.

> As the Internet continues to evolve with the growth of wireless networks ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wireless\\_network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wireless_network)) and 3G (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3G> mobile technology), increasing importance will be placed on the ability to use today's technology to receive and transmit information efficiently in a way that transcends both media literacy and Internet literacy.

**WHAT ADVANTAGES DOES THE  
INTERNET OFFER IN HELPING  
US BECOME E-CITIZENS?**

> The Internet makes it possible not only to publish far more information more rapidly and to continually update this information so that citizens are informed of the latest developments in any areas of interest.

> In the past, we had to rely on the versions the press chose to publish to keep us informed; nowadays we can very often go directly to the source to obtain our information first hand.

> The fact that citizens are better informed empowers them to better participate in the democratic life of their own country and on a pan-European scale.

> Geographical, traffic, cultural and tourist information collected by public and private sector bodies considerably enriches the lives of citizens. In some countries, citizens can even use the Internet to officially change their address, apply for passport renewal or carry out various other formerly time-consuming activities. Do not forget, however, that a certain number of precautions should be taken when giving out private information online (see Fact Sheets 15 and 16 on privacy and security).

> The Internet also enables citizens to participate in online discussions and debates about topics of interest in public or local life and even take part in elections by e-voting (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-voting>).

**ETHICAL ISSUES  
ON E-CITIZENSHIP**

By having access to constantly updated, quality information, citizens are in a better



position to exercise their fundamental human rights. However, we must remain wary of the negative effects that technology could have on these rights, in particular:

> Equal access to information: the digital divide is creating a two-tier society between the information “haves” and “have-nots.” If the situation continues, democracy will be threatened as the less fortunate gradually lose their autonomy of expression. Without direct access to information, we are less able to form our own opinion and can therefore be more easily manipulated by those who are fluent in the use of new technologies. In addition, public sector information is very important for democratic and civic life, and more particularly a key resource for economic activity. If we are to ensure equal opportunities for all, then we need to ensure equal information access for all.

> Freedom of speech: information and communication technologies are playing such an important role in our life today that soon only those fluent in their use will really be capable of making their “voice” heard.

> Right to privacy: the huge increase in means of transferring and exchanging information means that we must take care to protect data about ourselves and therefore our right to privacy (see “Best practice” below).

#### IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

> Civics: One good resource which could serve as a basis for your civics study programme is the Council of Europe’s online human rights activity programme at <[http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/First\\_Steps/index\\_eng.html](http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/First_Steps/index_eng.html)>. You could also ask your class to draw up a human rights charter of its own. Let them apply their new knowledge about human rights to virtual environments, for example, how they could make the Internet a better place for them to work and play.

> History: the French revolution: Help your students to distinguish facts from hypothesis by comparing heroic revolutionary paintings of the storming of the Bastille with modern accounts. They should be able to “explain how and why the storming of the

Bastille has been interpreted differently.” This could be linked to media education concepts, such as how reality is represented for different purposes, and the reliability of evidence.

> Geography: passport to the world: Invite students to discuss the ways in which places of the world are represented on the Internet and analyse how the websites differ in emphasis or attitude with regard to a particular place.

> Content analysis: Choose a topic, and then look it up on news sites from different sources and analyse them in class. Do different organisations use different approaches? Why do you think this is so?

#### BEST PRACTICE

> Every citizen has the right to receive a copy of personal information which is gathered and stored. Insist on this right, and do not give out private information unless you consider it necessary.

> Always read the fine print on questionnaires to see how the information you give about yourself is going to be used, and do not forget to consult Fact Sheet 15 on privacy for more advice.

> Communication of literacy skills and the transfer of these across school, higher education and into civic society is essential if participation in the democratic process is to increase.

> A number of schools are currently working on Internet proficiency programmes in an effort to ensure that their students develop the skills necessary to live, work and play in the information society of today. These include:

- skills for navigating in the labyrinth of information available on the Internet;
- developing the capacity to discriminate between information and misinformation;
- analysing information for relevance and validity;
- using information in project-based learning;
- understanding and using the multiple opportunities that a browser and the Internet can offer.

## &gt; FOR FURTHER INFORMATION &lt;

- > Amnesty International at <<http://www.amnesty.org/>> and Human Rights Watch at <<http://www.hrw.org/>> are non-governmental organisations that campaign for human rights. Amnesty has a multilingual manual that was designed for teachers to help young people learn about human rights, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe: <[http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/hre\\_first](http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/hre_first)>.
- > The European Commission has information on protecting children and human dignity in audiovisual services: <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/new\\_srv/pmhd\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/new_srv/pmhd_en.htm)>.
- > *They threw me a computer... but what I really needed was a life preserver*, article in First Monday, a peer-reviewed journal on the Internet, identifies four attributes of the digital divide—literacy, access, content and training—and discusses the role of libraries and museums in cultivating each of these capacities: <[http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6\\_4/wilhelm/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_4/wilhelm/index.html)>.
- > Globalizing Democracy: <<http://www.prospect.org/print/V11/20/barber-b.html>>.
- > Article *The responsive classroom: a practical approach for bringing democratic ideals into the daily fabric of classroom life*: <<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/democratic/gimbert.htm>>.

## FACT SHEET 20

## MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Few people bought mobile phones when they first became available in 1983. In 1995, there were five mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in the European Union. According to Eurostat (2005), in 2003 the figure was 80 mobile phones per 100 inhabitants among the enlarged EU of 25 countries. Mobile phone usage is a worldwide phenomenon, growing fastest in Africa.

Standard features of mobile phones are voice calls and short message service (SMS) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short\\_message\\_service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_message_service)). So-called “smart-phones” have new capabilities such as e-mail, picture messaging and video.

The worlds of mobile technology and personal computing are becoming less and less distinct as many mobile phones now have Internet browsing and e-mail capabilities, and more and more computers are wireless.

## EDUCATION

> M-learning refers to learning with the aid of mobile technologies, such as mobile phones, handheld computers and PDAs.

> SRI International research in 2003 found that 90% of teachers who had used mobile technology found it contributed positively to student learning: <<http://www.intel.com/education/handhelds/SRI.pdf>>.

> M-learning offers the possibility to personalise the teaching delivered to students. For example, a school in the United States has set up a “paperless classroom”,— using the technology to give classes and provide extra assistance to those who have English as a second language: <<http://www.paperlessclassroom.org/>>.

> The future of m-learning depends not only on the development of technology, but also the development of educational material that can be delivered over handheld devices.

> Korea is recognised as one of the pioneers in mobile learning. Since 2004, stu-



dents have been able to download lectures to handheld mobile devices.

> Games for mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular as the technology improves and it is anticipated that educational games and other types of informal learning will be well-suited to the medium.

> The portability of handheld computers is beneficial for teachers who are on the move and for students working in groups or doing fieldwork

> Use of handheld computers has been found to encourage students to take responsibility for their work and they are less likely to lose notes and assignments.

> Since mobile phones are so popular with young people, teachers can engage students by incorporating use of SMSs and so forth in classroom activities.

### ISSUES

> There are concerns about children receiving mobiles too early. Research is inconclusive about the dangers of radiation exposure over time, however minimal.

> Computer use is still regulated within the home. Mobile phone use, however is considered by many parents to be private. Emboldened by newfound freedom, children could get themselves into financial trouble by spending money on prize “giveaway” media campaigns or accessories such as ringtones.

> Mobiles may be used as tracking devices. The issue of safety versus freedom is a controversial one.

> Bluetooth technology (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bluetooth>) raises security issues such as hacking and sending unsolicited messages.

> Moblogs (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moblog>) are mobile phone blogs (web diaries). Young people are posting information and photos and potentially compromising their safety.

> Mobile bullying is of growing concern. Young people called “happy slappers” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy\\_slapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_slapping)) use mobile phones to record attacks and then post the images on the Web to humiliate the victim. This takes place mostly in the United Kingdom (see Fact Sheet 17 on bullying and harassment).

> Because they are a distraction, mobiles can pose a risk while driving.

> Viruses ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_virus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_virus)) and worms ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer\\_worm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_worm)) have been infecting mobiles since 2004. One example is the “Cabir worm.”

### HOW TO

> Mobile phones are popular and it is easy and relatively inexpensive to own one.

> Once you buy a handset you can choose to pay a-la-carte for certain increments of minutes or you can subscribe to a specific provider and pay a monthly fee for services.

### BEST PRACTICE

> Encourage young people to restrict their use of mobile phones. Do not prohibit use, however. Mobile phone use is a widespread phenomenon among teens and in many circles it is essential for networking among peers.

> Do not leave Bluetooth on if it is not being used in order to avoid security risks.

> As with e-mail, accept data only from trusted sources.

> Be considerate with your use of the phone. People around you may not appreciate having to listen to your conversation.



## &gt; FOR FURTHER INFORMATION &lt;

- > The e-Learning Centre's m-Learning page: <<http://www.e-learningcentre.co.uk/eclipse/Resources/mlearning.htm>>.
- > Independent UK site for reviewing mobile phones: <<http://www.mobile-phones-uk.org.uk/>>.
- > Literature Review in Mobile Technologies and Learning—a detailed University of Birmingham report including case studies and a view for the future of mobile learning: <[http://www.nestafuturelab.org/research/reviews/reviews\\_11\\_and12/11\\_01.htm](http://www.nestafuturelab.org/research/reviews/reviews_11_and12/11_01.htm)>.
- > M-learning is a research and development programme investigating mobile learning among young people at risk of social exclusion: <<http://www.m-learning.org/>>.
- > Wireless world forum: <<http://www.w2forum.com/>>
- > Children and mobile phones, an agenda for action," online publication by Childnet International: <[http://www.childnet-int.org/downloads/CMPAAA\\_A4.pdf](http://www.childnet-int.org/downloads/CMPAAA_A4.pdf)>.
- > Independent Mobile Classification Body (IMCB): <<http://www.imcb.org.uk/>>
- > Mobile Data Association (MDA): <<http://www.mda-mobiledata.org/mda/>>.
- > Nokia page on protecting your phone from Bluetooth and malware: <<http://europe.nokia.com/nokia/0,,76016,00.html>>.
- > Bluetooth's security page: <<http://www.bluetooth.com/help/security.asp>>.
- > Mobile operator Vodafone's guide for parents: <<http://www.vodafone.co.uk/download/CSR%20Parent%20guide.pdf>>.

## FACT SHEET 21

## BLOGS

## INTRODUCTION

- > The word "blog" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>) is short for "weblog," and refers to an online journal created and published by groups and individuals.
- > The term "weblog" was added to the Oxford dictionary in 2003. Blogs are a recent phenomenon on the Internet.
- > Because bloggers post articles and information online, this trend has begun to take over a lot of newsgroup traffic (see Fact Sheet 8 on newsgroups).

> Although some politicians and celebrities have taken up blogging, blogs continue to be most closely associated with more ordinary people airing their views and talking about their daily lives.

> Because of the recent popularity of blogs, many websites have been created which offer software to help create and publish material. Each entry in a blog can be commented upon, which provides opportunities for discussion and can help generate new ideas. Mobile blogs, known as moblogs (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moblogging>), have recently emerged thanks to development of e-mail features in mobile phones (see Fact Sheet 20 on mobile technology).



> Vlogging (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vlog>) is a new trend in which users post video along with their commentary.

> RSS ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS\\_%28file\\_format%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_%28file_format%29)) or rich site summary is now being used to syndicate blogs. Those who wish to have their content published on other websites can make it available using an XML (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XML>) or extensible mark-up language version for web syndication. XML is a type of code similar to HTML and is also known as a “feed.” Basically it allows readers to “subscribe” to content and have blog updates delivered to them so that they do not have to visit the blog to get it. This sounds complicated but is actually a standard option on most blogging software.

**EDUCATIONAL USES OF BLOGGING**

> Blogs give students a chance to take control of their learning and set up a public forum in which to publish their thoughts and feelings.

> Blogs can be used as an innovative teaching tool for discussion and collaboration. For example, a modern literature class used blogging to study the novel

*The secret life of bees* (<http://weblogs.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/bees/>). The author wrote an introduction to the lesson and students and their parents were invited to write about their impressions of each day’s reading assignment. The author then commented on these. See: <http://weblogs.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/bees/>.

> Experts note a three-step process involved when blogging. This is described at <http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A4677C.cfm>. Bloggers must continually scour, filter and post material. By searching for material to comment on, the student becomes increasingly familiar with different theories and ideas and develops skills needed to critically analyse content.

> Technology can be used as a motivating factor in education. Students are interested in blogs because of their novelty and the

possibilities for self-expression. This can be used as a vehicle to teach a wide variety of subject matter.

> Blogs give every student in the class a chance to participate in a discussion which exposes children to different perspectives.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS**

> Remind students that they should not give out personal information in public Internet spaces. This is a particular problem with blogs, which are often personal by their very nature.

**HOW TO**

> If you have the technical skills, you can create a blog from scratch. Most people use sites which offer tools for creating and publishing content as a blog. School Blogs at <http://www.schoolblogs.com/> and Blogger (see below) are popular hosts which provide free services. They provide easy, step-by-step instructions which help you create an account, name your blog and choose a template.

> Once your blog is up and running, you compose and edit entries from a central webpage. The interface for popular software is WYSIWYG (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WYSIWYG>) format and is extremely user-friendly.

> Visitors to your blog can comment on content by clicking on a comments link at the end of each entry.

> Be sure to enrich your commentary with hyperlinks and images! Buttons for these features should be included on the toolbar above the text box where you enter your content.

**BEST PRACTICE**

> A blog is a great opportunity to air your views but you may wish to protect your privacy by using a pseudonym and holding back certain personal details.

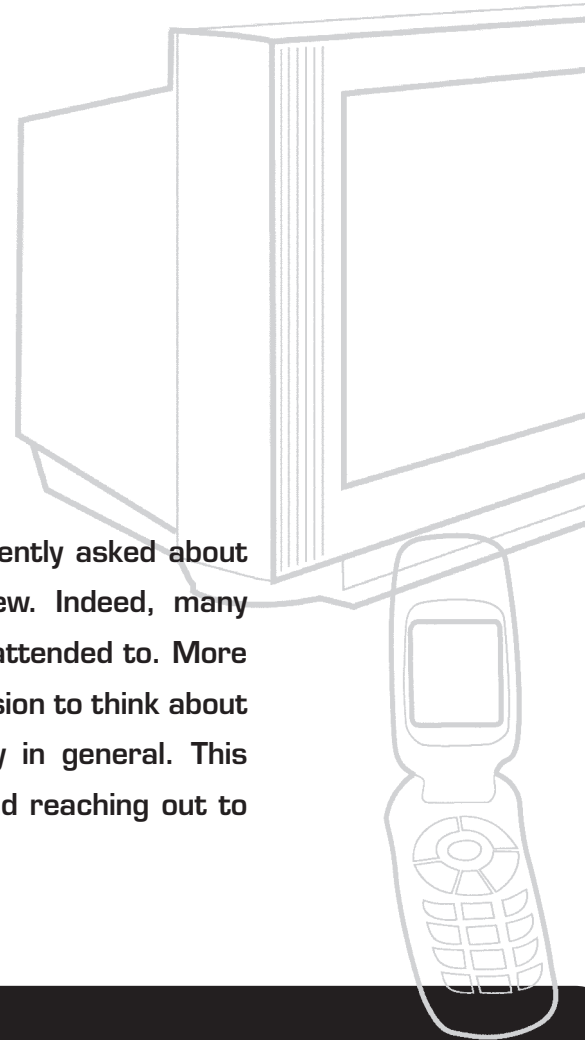
- > Children and young people should be particularly careful about revealing personal information in a blog.
- > Respect copyright laws and do not use other people's blog designs without their permission.
- > Start your own blog to familiarise yourself with the practice before introducing it into the classroom. It might help to visit other blogs for ideas and inspiration. The School Blogs (<http://www.schoolblogs.com/>) website has more than 4 000 members and gives users the possibility to launch their own school blog.
- > Spend time explaining the concept of blogging to your students. Tell them why it is done and give examples of good and bad blogs. Then give students a set of strict rules which might include length and frequency of posts, topics, number of hyperlinks/photos and so forth. Assign students to keep a blog, discuss their experiences and comment on others' blogs.

#### > FOR FURTHER INFORMATION <

- > Blogger is a site providing tools for blogging and now moblogging:  
<<http://www.blogger.com/start>>.
- > 14 copyright tips for bloggers:  
<<http://weblogs.about.com/od/issuesanddiscussions/a/copyrighttips.htm>>.
- > Electronic Frontiers Foundation (EFF) legal guide for bloggers:  
<<http://www.eff.org/bloggers/lg/>>.
- > Dartmouth college tips for online classroom discussions:  
<<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~webteach/articles/discussion.html>>.
- > BBC article of 23 January 2005 *Academics give lessons on blogs*:  
<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/education/4194669.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/4194669.stm)>.
- > Weblogg-ed—this site follows current blogging trends in education:  
<<http://www.weblogg-ed.com/>>.
- > Article in Journal, February 2004, *Content Delivery in the Blogosphere*:  
<<http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A4677.cfm>>.
- > Blogging and RSS—the “What’s It?” and “How To” of Powerful New Web Tools for Educators: <<http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan04/richardson.shtml>>.  
**Educational Weblogs:** <<http://educational.blogs.com/>>.
- > The Educated Blogger: Using Weblogs to promote literacy in the classroom:  
<[http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue9\\_6/huffaker/](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_6/huffaker/)>.
- > Tools to Support K-12 Student Writing:  
<<http://www.cesa12.k12.wi.us/teach/write/blogs.html>>.
- > Blog Idea File: list of ways that teachers are using blogs: <[http://www.weblogg-ed.com/stories/storyReader\\$100](http://www.weblogg-ed.com/stories/storyReader$100)>.
- > Blogging resources for educators:  
<<http://www3.essdack.org/socialstudies/blogs.htm>>.



This section tries to answer the questions most frequently asked about the media, under the shape of an imaginary interview. Indeed, many people have questions and doubts, that deserve to be attended to. More than a last word on the issue, this is an additional occasion to think about the role of the media in people's lives and in society in general. This section underlines the enormous need for research and reaching out to be done, both on the media and on media education.



## FAQ: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ON MEDIA AND  
THEIR IMPACT

The media are, in many ways, an unknown reality, which raises various public concerns. Are there well-founded reasons for such concerns?

To each new means of communication, society has responded with fears and concerns regarding the marks it could leave on the lives of individuals. There is a dialogue in the work of Greek philosopher Plato which refers to an Egyptian legend on the invention of writing. In this legend, the king,

faced with the satisfaction of the divinity that had invented the new art, expresses his concern for the evil consequences that writing would bring about. It would cause oblivion, because human beings would neglect the use of their memory, as they would start trusting what was outside of them—the characters—and no longer what was inside of them.

Gutenberg's printing machine was the object of close scrutiny—including official and ecclesiastical censorship of published material. The same could be said of cinema and, successively, of cartoons, radio, television, computers, video games, the Internet, etc. And the same will certainly occur with other, future media. The radio, a means with which we live peacefully nowadays, led a North-American author to issue the following comment, back in 1936: "The popularity of this new pastime has grown rapidly among children. This new invader of domestic privacy has brought with it a disturbing influence on their development. Parents are gradually becoming aware of an intriguing change in their children's behaviour. They feel confused by a set of new problems which they do not feel fit to handle."

And yet, who worries about the effects of radio these days? In spite of reasons for concern, as evinced by some listening practices of young people especially on call-in shows, there are advantages in looking at the historical perspective. It tends to show that it is not so much in the media that the problem lies, but in the way they interact with a whole series of social actors, like producers, broadcasters, regulators and the publics. Besides, the way they are adapted to a given culture also needs to be taken into consideration.

**Where do these fears spring from then?**

Apparently they spring, on the one hand, from the belief that those technologies have a specific capacity to markedly influence whoever uses them and deals with them, and, on the other hand, from the very contents such technologies convey and spread. What often seems to cause concern is the power of attraction and seduction linked to many of these new

means and processes of communicating. There seems to be a fear that the interest they arouse may compete with other institutions responsible for the education and socialization of the younger generations; that it could even supersede them, thus rendering them obsolete and useless. Nonetheless such concerns are part and parcel of the social process of appropriation of the media and shouldn't be dismissed without attention. A certain "right to indignation" should not be stifled as new media, taking advantage of the lack of regulation and novelty, will tend to trespass the consensual and binding values of a given society as well as some universal human rights.

**It is particularly in relation to children and teenagers that such fears are expressed. How is the controversial issue of the effects of television on young people to be addressed today?**

The younger generations are considered to be particularly vulnerable and more likely to be influenced by contents and processes not controlled by those entities which are culturally and morally responsible for education-related tasks. This can explain the current chorus of criticism around television.

It should be recalled that research shows the importance of models and representations for the development of young people. Some of the earliest studies in the domain showed results concurring in that direction, in the late 1950s, Professor Himmelweit, the coordinator of one such project, published in 1958, wrote: "Television is not as dark as one pictures it, but it isn't either the great herald of culture and enlightenment that his partisans would like it to be." Research has evolved since, as well as the supply for new vehicles and new contents in the media. The research results in consequence offer a very complex universe, very controversial, with two major trends, the effects school and the uses and gratifications school.

The effects school tends to posit that television (and media in general) actually seek to have an impact on the behaviour of young people. They use it to look for role-

models, to ascertain expected attitudes and their social value. They evaluate the authority of adults as it is represented on the screen. This school also integrates the fact that the television system, as an institution, seeks to have a social impact, and actively offers models and representations. Production companies, for example, have developed targeting strategies that incorporate their own vision of the public they hope to seduce. However, research has found that effects are not necessarily mechanical and above all, they are not where expected. They tend to be diffused over time, and concentrated in relation to the level of media consumption, or "cultivation," to use the phrase coined by Professor George Gerbner in the 1970s. The issue of violence is a case in point: violence doesn't tend to make people more aggressive (except in some instances of imitation that are over-represented by the media), it makes them more fearful, especially girls who are often represented as victims.

The school of uses and gratifications tends to posit that television (and media in general) don't have any impact. It claims that every individual appropriates in a very autonomous and personal manner what he sees and hears, without any harmful consequence on his/her behaviour. Apparently, the individual produces his/her own antidotes to the influence of media by means of social and intellectual activities. It also considers that there is no trauma of the image (a stance that has been recently modified by psycho-paediatricians). The messages of the producers are reviewed and recycled by a variety of publics, and they are used differently in their everyday lives. Reception studies, as proposed by Professor Stuart Hall, in the 1980s, have illustrated this. Reception can be hegemonic (there is perfect fit between the producers and their target public), oppositional (there is no fit) or negotiated (there is only partial fit).

In fact, these two schools consider the phenomenon of influence from two different perspectives and levels of appreciation and they are rather complementary than antagonistic. The effects school takes its stance at the macro-level of the political economy of media, with a special focus on the cul-

ture of producers and broadcasters. The uses and gratifications school concentrates on the micro-level of individuals and reception, with a special focus on the culture of the various publics.

The notion of socialization tries to find a position between these two extremes useful to media education. It takes into account the pressures of the production system and its deep understanding of the publics as well as the degrees of freedom that the publics have at their disposal. It doesn't rely on a single method for critical thinking and tries to propose a rationale for vigilance and indignation as well as for participation and best practices. Socialization considers the reception phenomenon as a combination of influence and resistance, that is complex and can vary from individual to individual according to time and situation. Media education can become the best tool and the best filter, by which adults may help young people build their own awareness of the complexities of media texts and contexts.

#### **Why is television at the receiving end of such constant criticism?**

It should be noted that no other means of communication had ever reached this prominent place, in individual and family life and in society at large, not only in terms of its presence (the radio had achieved that as well) but also from the point of view of the attention and interest TV aroused around itself. On the one hand, the popular saying "seeing is believing" took another dimension. Formerly, one would argue that something was true because one had read it in a newspaper. Now, one could go further: every one could have the notion that he or she had seen it with his or her own eyes. The feeling of reality became much more palpable. On the other hand, television asserted itself as a major fiction storyteller. Making use of the languages and expressions of theatre, cinema, cartoons and romance, it had the advantage of depicting the stories through animated images. With the stories came the plots and adventures of heroes and, through them, the materialisation of the viewers' need for identification and projection. We



know that the narrative dimension is one of the most ancient ways of telling about life and the world. Television grasped that dimension, and worked to master it.

Some criticisms of television are recurrent, in the sense that they are similar to those that other media, before and after television, have aroused. Note should be taken that the idea of alienation, which some use to describe the relation of individuals with today's media, was already, to some extent, present in the platonic legend mentioned above on the invention of writing. Radio itself was actually seen by some as a threat to privacy. It was considered that the radio soap episodes, or the lyrics of songs, could have negative consequences. On television, everything is intensified—or exacerbated—by the fact that we actually see the things, persons and situations. By presenting fictional versions of everyday life scenes, sometimes in their most extreme and their most hidden aspects, the world, so to speak, became wide open. Take, for example, the issue of the relationship between the sexes or of sexual relations themselves. In former times, it was possible to control and postpone until late in the development of a child the unveiling of the secrets of adult life. Today, that is impossible. Some see in that disclosure, and its endless repetition, not only a dilution of the boundaries between generations but also a dramatic downgrading in the lives of individuals and communities. Others see the gains and the enrichment to be derived from it, as sensitive matters can be more freely discussed. Every one has the right to an opinion, taking into account the need for balance in the relationship the media maintain with society: it is not certain at all they are the cause of all evils and they bring real gains but they also offer representations that can exert a gripping authority on the mind.

**Concerns over the effects of TV are focused on sex and, particularly, on violence, isn't that right?**

These are the two most visible problem areas. However, there is another one which, albeit to a lesser degree, is also a reason for concern: advertising and the incentive to buy. A language problem exists

too, which, while apparently irrelevant in some countries like France, is a major concern in others, like the United Kingdom. The reason for these types of concern is basically the same, i.e., the influence that may be exerted on the most vulnerable social groups, children in particular. Moreover, there are those complaints which, from the beginning, have supposedly been related to the effects of TV-watching: school failure, passivity, eyesight problems, obesity, lack of reading habits, and so on. In this case, it's not so much a given type of contents or programs that are questioned, but television as such, with everything it is deemed to represent. Not surprisingly, a considerable part of these objections are already being passed on to the use of the Internet.

Before discussing in greater depth some of these issues, it is worthwhile looking at the conclusions of research studies on the consumption of TV by children. The first point to be made almost states the obvious: large majorities of children spend a significant part of their day accompanied by television. In quantitative terms, this should be roughly three hours daily, with a bigger or lesser increase on weekends. If we take into account that this is an occupation that, in most cases, has neither weekends nor holidays, we can say it is the activity that occupies more time than any other, if we don't count the time children spend sleeping. It should be remembered, however, that we are speaking of average times: there are many children who don't watch much television and many others who watch it for much more than the average number of hours.

Such data show that the younger children spend more time in front of Television than with their parents or teachers! It's no wonder then that Television is commonly referred to as the babysitter or the "electronic granny." However, one must not jump to conclusions, for consumption should not be mistaken for the time during which the Television set is switched on, nor does all television consumption take place in the absence of adults. There are, of course, those television programmes which children, just like the grown-ups, will do any-



thing not to miss and which they watch with deep devotion and delight. But it is also true that, during much of the time, television is just company, a kind of fireplace which one is half-absently aware of. Should there be other interesting ways of occupying one's time, television is put aside.

**Does that mean that the stereotype of the mouth-gaping child transfixed by the screen, as if he were an addict, is exaggerated?**

Such cases exist but they correspond to specific moments or to children living in particular circumstances (of isolation, neglect, etc.). Such cases, worrying as they are, are not a majority. Television addiction, rather than a consequence of television, might be, in the first place, a symptom of a serious problem, a sign that something wrong is going on, to make the world of television more gratifying and welcoming than the world of direct relationships, the so-called real world. Fortunately, this does not happen with most children. That doesn't mean that the younger ones cannot feel fascinated by a story, a series, or a hero, just as adults can feel.

**ON MEDIA AND FAMILY**

**What factors are likely to contribute to a bigger or lesser television consumption?**

There are countless factors, and they depend on the fare from the different available channels just as much as on the conditions and circumstances at the reception end. As far as television fare is concerned, one has to consider both the programming grids and rituals (like a series transmitted on a specific day of the week, at a given time) as well as specific and once-off events (like the broadcasting of a football match). Relevant factors at the reception end may range from individual characteristics (age, stage of development, sociability networks) through time lines (hour of day, day of the week, season) to the weather conditions, the availability of alternative activities, habits and routines, the characteristics of the house, and the family's lifestyles and cultural practices. The presence of elderly

or unemployed family members in the home also tends to increase television consumption. School attendance times can also have an impact, as well as the holidays: on average, children who attend school only in the morning or the afternoon watch much more television than others who spend both the morning and the afternoon in class. During the holidays this can be all the more intensified as most networks tend to modify their usual scheduling to accommodate the presence of the young public. It is not surprising, come to think of it, but the implications are quite considerable.

**To what extent is the type of television use by the parents likely to influence the children's television practice?**

A great number of researchers consider the environment and lifestyle in which the television is set as decisive for the way in which the children relate to the media. It is an indirect form of mediation which can be very powerful. It is exercised through example, continuity, routine. Mind you, it is not only the television that is at stake here. The television is only a strand—albeit eventually very expressive—of a wider fabric that also includes the family's social attitudes and practices, the leisure time activities and general culture. All this contributes towards creating the cultural environment in which the children grow.

**Is the multiplication of TV sets in peoples' homes positive or negative?**

The presence of more than one television set at home is not, by itself, a positive or a negative factor. What can be problematic is the uses and the practices that may arise from more or fewer sets. Multiple sets solve, momentarily, the coincidence of different programmes that two or more members of the family wish to watch. But it is a very different thing when systematically each member of the family retreats into his or her little corner, and the context and space of interaction and assembly disappear. The issue, however, is to know whether it is the television and its multiplication in the home that produces this "privatisation" or if the latter is the expression of a deeper and wider lack of communica-



tion. There are some who say that the organ makes the function: just as there are families who deliberately decide not to have television at home—an attitude that can be seen either as respectable or as questionable—there are others who decide, deliberately, to have only one set, placed in a common area of the house. The television set in any case does contribute to structuring the family's time and space.

**Can it be said that a child who practices other activities, besides school, is less TV-dependent?**

If there are other activities that force the child to go out and occupy his or her time, TV consumption will tend to decrease. Some researchers, though, have come across cases where extremely busy children were also great TV consumers. The relation between TV consumption and the frequency of other activities is neither simple nor straightforward. In some cases, the frequency of other activities is influenced by TV. In other cases exactly the opposite happens. A French scholar, François Mariet, wrote in this regard: “ *One criticises television for preventing children from doing other things, but it is precisely for a lack of other things to do that they watch television.* ” In any case, it is a positive thing that children be given the possibility to experience different contexts and situations and the opportunity to organise their own fun and games activities, with some autonomy. To that end, however, the families and local communities, and particularly the local authorities, have to arrange convenient spaces, not excessively formatted but with the necessary safety conditions, for children to be at ease. One great aspiration that children express is the possibility to perform outdoor activities: practicing sports, riding a bicycle, travelling, playing, etc.

**Is it acceptable to say that the influence of television is more powerful than any other factor in a child's life?**

Such cursory assertions are easy to make because the variables to take into account are numerous. There is a relative consensus around the idea that, in normal circum-

stances, nothing is more powerful than direct human relations with the child. The emphasis then is on the quality of human interactions. They are the most efficient in helping the construction of the child's personality and the creation of references that allows him or her to evaluate situations. They can play a decisive part in diluting, filtering and digesting aggressions that will come from the environment, including the television fare. The situation worsens if the child sees (and feels) that these interactions are diminishing or even disappearing. In such a case, his or her vulnerability is far greater, especially where television is concerned.

**Is there a marked difference between the violence depicted in fictional programmes and the violence depicted in news bulletins?**

When a child (or an adult) has a minimum command of the codes of a given programme and knows that what he/she sees is fictional, he/she still experiences the emotions and feelings inherent in the action. That experience occurs in a sort of game of make-believe. There is in it something analogous to our dreams and to the cruelty or violence that sometimes come to the surface in them. Watching the images of news reports implies a command of the respective codes: real persons committed certain acts, others fell victim to those acts; some people were marked physically as well as mentally, and possibly died, as it can occur in terrorist attacks or at war, for example. This is why news reporters and editors are required to be sensitive to codes and to be extremely careful to act, in this case as well, in a balanced and sensible way. They must not indulge in morbid explorations of horror and cruelty that are easily filmed everywhere in the world. They must adhere to certain codes while still informing and raising awareness among the public.

ON MEDIA AND

YOUNG PEOPLE

**Children don't perceive images the same way, at all ages. What is the impact of television and media according to different age groups?**

Up until recently, it was thought, incorrectly, that most dimensions of development were acquired by children between 5 and 7 years old. Such was the case of visual trauma, mostly attached to infancy (and therefore not attributable to media). It was also thought that the relation to images was linear and progressive. In other words, children progressively learn to establish the difference between reality and fiction. Cognitive sciences and other research provide us with a much more complex picture, however. The brain continues to develop up to 25 years of age, and some lifelong extensions are possible. Moments of cognitive regression have been noticed at certain stages in the child's development, induced mostly by his or her encounter with the arbitrariness of adults (in family, at school, on digital networks, according to social context, etc.). Certain stages, like pre-adolescence and adolescence, have been identified as particularly crucial, as they are likely to call into question values and references that seemed totally integrated before. Such stages are characterized by emotional crises, in which potentially harmful behaviour can occur.

In general, in most countries, television tends to offer animated cartoons for the little ones, up to 5 or 6 years old. This is adequate for their understanding of a world full of action and interactions. What matters most is movement. Cartoons, mediocre as some may be, deliver that. Seven to twelve year old children fully discover the world in which they are evolving and its social values and expectations. They also fine-tune their self-perception and self-control and they understand the interplay between reality and fiction. From 12 on, they assert their own identity and their relation with others, especially their peers. Television can then lose some importance to the advantage of music and the rituals of encounter to which it is associated (facilitated as they are by portable phones and walkmans). Emotional intelligence is at its most active during adolescence, which makes young people rather fragile. The media can play on this fragility by presenting them modes of behaviour and values likely to solicit their narcissistic tendencies.

### **Are the television programmes adapted to children and teenagers?**

There is a discrepancy between what is supplied to children and their cognitive development. Until they are 7, most television programmes aimed at them tend to be cartoons which are relatively congruent with the expectations of their age group. But beyond that age, and especially after 12, few shows are made for them. As a result, children are confronted with the same kind of arbitrariness of the adults on television as they meet in school. They can only find reality programming or series normally intended for adults. They rarely find programmes dedicated to their specific interests or in congruence with the cognitive expectations of their age group. This is particularly striking in relation to news and scientific or cultural documentaries.

### **How do media represent young people and what are the consequences?**

The identity construction of teenagers is a dynamic process that carries them through childhood to the adult world. It revolves around the progressive elaboration of their identity and their relationship with others. Identity refers to one's self image, in reference to one's personal history and private space. Identity is built in relation to others, in interactions and comparisons with the image others reflect back (recognition, respect, rejection, etc.). It has extensions in the sense of belonging to a collective, a society in which the social fabric is relatively coherent with values, often conveyed by media.

The representation of young people in the media is often negative, especially in news programs. A study that was carried on in France, at the initiative of the Conseil National de la Jeunesse (Youth National Council), *La Jeunesse : une arlésienne télégénique ? (Youth, an impossible representation?)* shows without any ambiguity that there are very few positive news items on young people (5%). The remainder that address youth issues deal mostly with violence and delinquency or else with potentially harmful content (anorexia, bulimia, suicide...). When these programs allow young people to speak, they do so in the heat of



action and emotion. Their speech is always accompanied by the speech of experts or representatives of institutions for control (police, school, hospital). As a result these appear in a situation of power and authority, to the detriment of the younger ones.

Patrick Huerre, a psycho-paediatrician, notes this media paradox: "If we continue watching those 5% teenagers who are in trouble, we are going to doubt that the 95% remaining ones are doing well. Teenagers who are not violent, drug-addicts or who haven't had sexual relations as portrayed in pornographic movies are going to end up thinking that they are not "normal." And that's what's new: such negative images as are shown in the media might induce young people to think that transgressive behaviour is the norm."

The representation of young people in media is a reflection of how adults view them, with consequences in reality. Stigmatising young people can sadly affect a whole society. In fact, behind this image of troubled youth, there lurks the question of the responsibility of adults and of the viable and acceptable forms of authority they can exert. Recognizing the place of young people, valuing their actions, modifying their "bad" image can contribute to re-establishing the intergenerational dialogue and to giving more optimistic future perspectives to them. Media education can contribute to it fully, be it only by putting the representation of young people in a balanced perspective.

**How can we account for the increased presence of multimedia games and devices in our society?**

Traditionally, medias have fulfilled three functions: observation (monitoring the environment), correlation (for exchanging and bonding) and transmission (socializing to the norms and values of a culture). Then other functions were added: transaction (selling services), entertainment (enjoying leisure time) and acculturation (adjusting for cultures in contact and globalisation). These new functions have been extended to satisfy primarily the increased commercial needs of large corporations in media and telecommunications.

Multimedias games and devices have emerged from this recent step of technological and commercial convergence. They can perform all these functions, while increasing their capacity because they can play on several modes of expression and representation (written, oral, visual, physical). However, in the marketplace, where specific publics are targeted, multimedia have become specialised and they tend to favour one or two functions over others. Such is the case with educational software (the transmission function) or for on-line action games software (the entertainment function) or else for instant messaging (the correlation function). Some allow for enclosed navigation (CD-Roms) and others for open navigation (internet sites with on-line games), others even allow for mobility (the portable phone, the palmpocket...)

The current period seems to show an acceleration of the development of hybrid media and means of representation. It is very unsettling for some people as it blurs our traditional hierarchies and expectations. An impression of instability and uncertainty tends to prevail, reinforced by the feeling that the media no longer aim at building consensus or social bonds. On the contrary they tend to create fissures within age groups and between the generations, putting social cohesion at risk.

**Why are young people so attracted to multimedias devices and games?**

For young people, these functions parallel their developmental needs. This partly explains why they seem to understand the technology with a special intuition, even as it has become more user-friendly to everyone over time. These functions correspond to their need to explore the world, to pay attention to others, and to experiment with distance and vicarious devices. The success of simulation games must be seen in this perspective. They provide adventure and broaden geographical, historical and cultural horizons. Having access to various modes of communication via a single media enhances capacity-building, self-presentation and self-broadcasting. A paradoxical relation to the others, parents and peers, is thus established: very externalized, extro-

verted and gregarious on the one hand, very internalized, narcissistic and individualistic on the other hand.

For the externalized dimension of their sociability, when navigation goes beyond the walls of their home, young people need a public, if not publicity. They allow themselves to be seen, by ostentatiously using multimedia devices in public spaces like the street, the train or the coffee-shop. Their presence is thus felt in common areas where they rarely occupy a legitimate and recognized place. They claim recognition, heedless and ignorant of any etiquette, chatting away, to insist on their increasing emancipation. Their favourite multimedia devices (mobile phone and walkman) are eye-catching signs of their changing status. They emphasize their will to choose an elective family and to move away from their biological family. For them, the added social value of these devices comes from their being public indicators of this identity transformation,—which has characterized adolescence for generations.

For the internalized dimension of their sociability, young people need to satisfy their needs for self-discovery and identity construction. Multimedia devices participate in that territorial marking, in the secrecy of their bedroom, forbidden to adults. This can lead to paradoxical situations of individuation: in order to lead the life they feel like leading and to be different from others, teenagers need to have access to media similar to those owned by their peers, so as to be able to imitate or reproduce their contents. They must be able to sing the latest songs downloaded via internet, to reproduce the moves of the Lolitas seen on television and to know the tricks to move forward in some video games.

**Are there any risks connected to these different uses of multimedia devices by young people?**

This double movement, between internalization and externalization, has been very well understood and exploited by the industry. Aiming at young people, the multimedia sector has elaborated a large complementarity and circularity among products. It has

fostered the creation of a total universe of very coherent signs around audiovisual programmes and their merchandized products. It should come as no surprise that some walkmans make it possible to download musical pieces that are at the top of the charts on the music channels; internet is often used in association with television and radio programmes, with young people as targets because they are malleable and avid for new knowledge.

The driving forces that allow multimedia games and devices to cross over between the fictional universes and the real one are still not well understood. The same applies for acculturation processes and their impact on young people's identity construction. But researchers observe some positive tendencies and some negative ones. The universes that are simulated in some games efficiently empower spaces for informal learning. Other universes provided by these games can represent very violent imaginary worlds that tend to mobilize the players' attention on repetitive scenes of aggression. They can feed on some young players psychic impulses and induce ill-mastered addictive behaviours.

There are dangers of potentially harmful behaviours, not to be neglected though they tend to be over-mediatised, such as paedophilic predation, illegal or illicit toxic drug selling and unprotected sex relations (with risks of infection by Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including AIDS). In general, most young people are not affected by such behaviours and relations. Those who are marginal, fragile, or else very curious, are more at risk. Surfing on the internet and searching for autonomy can in fact either lead an adolescent to be exposed to these phenomena, even when not looking for them, or induce a balanced teenager to take a risk. Such a teenager may be under the impression that such a risk is limited and at a distance as it is mediated.

**Are there any safeguards and who should apply them?**

The solutions to prevent such risks are varied. They imply putting some amount of pressure on industry producers as well as





revising some of the consumption habits of the various publics. They can range from self-regulation to co-regulation. In all cases, it is important that adults should accompany young people, for, contrary to what is usually assumed, they are expecting their elders to show some authority or to act as role-models, be it only to measure themselves or to rebel against that authority.

Adults are notoriously ill informed about the contents of what is broadcast on commercial multimedia devices most used by young people. They don't question them and tend to contribute to their expansion: they finance the purchase (or undertake the transaction themselves). They often do so with the hope that a product will boost their child's advantage by direct connections to modern times. They also hope to buy themselves a good conscience and make up for the lack of time they devote to their progeny. To keep the great benefits provided by multimedia modes of communication, as well as their extension on digital networks and the internet, the answer is not to promote censorship but to foster vigilance and verbalized criticism, with adults and young people in lively dialogue. Face to face communication still holds out the possibility of some benefits.

ON MEDIA AND THEIR

RELATION TO THE

INFORMATION SOCIETY

**The information society is expanding through the internet and digital networks. What are the implications for young people?**

Up until recently, young people and adults too have been considered in three ways, in their relation to media. These still co-exist in various shapes in whatever country: the young person as a would-be citizen, the young person as a prescriptive consumer, the young person as a more or less educated user. One additional angle tends to be neglected, though it is enhanced by the potential of digital networks: the young person as player, with the value that play can have in education in terms of elaboration of

knowledge, of vicarious simulation of experience and of varied learning postures. This dimension is totally under-estimated. It is urgent to give it more currency, to acknowledge it as one of the main benefits of the participatory potential of the internet. It can promote cultural identity, fairness for all and, most importantly, it can both make young people feel more responsible and more empowered, in readiness for the future society they'll live in.

**What does "being informed" mean on the internet and in the information society?**

The word "information" has been enriched by several meanings with the extension of networks. The traditional value is still there, connected as it is to the presentation of news. But information as data mining and transmission has been added as well as chatting, a user-friendly type of information that relates to interpersonal conversation, with the notion of sharing knowledge among peers.

These three types of information are all present at once on the internet and this can lead to confusion because they don't have the same social uses. The first one, news, aims at monitoring the environment; the second one, data, aims at producing an economic added value; the third one, chat, refers to another kind of goods, the common good in a relational society, on an informal basis. In practice and daily use, the separation between these three types of information is not that clear: as everything is juxtaposed on the internet, by clicking on a link, one can move from one type to another, surfing from a chat room to a commercial site for example. It is always important to remember that the networks are public spaces, even in the case of chats and that "being informed" for some people may be a means of "providing information about oneself" for others.

**Are there any risks?**

As for other media, some types of harmful behaviour have appeared on the Internet. They are related to the mistaken perception on the part of young people that the net-

works are spaces for interpersonal and private exchange when in fact anything they post on them is immediately made public and profitable to some. That's how chatting is a type of communication that exposes some young people to new forms of harmful behaviour. They can broadcast their portrait on the internet without suspecting that it can be altered by others; they can provide their personal data without noticing that they can be used for teen marketing and targeting.

The potentially harmful types of behaviour between adults and young people have alerted public opinion and are especially worrying to parents: paedophilia, pornography, cyber-violence... Other potentially harmful types of behaviour exist among young people, like mouse-slapping or cyber-bashing (symbolic violence to others) or, more dangerous, encouraging suicide by mis-appropriating hot line sites for disorders like bulimia, anorexia, etc. Finally there are also sites that are detrimental to the dignity of the human person, where xenophobia and racism are presented as games without the caveat that they go beyond the boundaries of what is socially tolerated.

Another potential danger is that young people are targeted by the industry. E-marketing tends to be mostly teen-marketing, with commercial practices that are clearly conceived as "one to one" marketing, aimed at creating a trusting relationship with each young consumer. The attendant practices can include creating cyber-cash for youngsters, unbeknownst of their parents, and even phising, which consists in obtaining the family's personal and financial data under the guise of official entities, without the children being necessarily aware of the ensuing risks. In this case, the protection of privacy and property is at stake, to which all users have to be sensitized, in order to maintain people's trust in the networks.

**What can be done to preserve the benefits of Internet while avoiding the risks?**

It is the task of educators but also of all those involved in the networks to build trust and to clarify as much as possible the

advantages and the drawbacks of internet uses and of the various forms of practices, ethics and types of involvement that are available on-line. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Rather the existing solutions are the result of a mix of self-regulation, regulation and co-regulation strategies and policies. Media education, if it focuses on the differences between being informed and informing about oneself, can also contribute strongly to the distributed intelligence of networks. The added value resides in the networking dimension. All the good practices related to it need to be published, emphasized, taught in schools as well as at home and among groups of peers.

**In relation to information, much has been said about downloading, presented as piracy and a violation of copyright laws. Are the families and the young people who download information to be treated as criminals?**

The right to privacy as it concerns the participation of young people in media, requires an urgent initiation process concerning the rights and responsibilities of all on the internet. Otherwise, a number of valuable and hard-won human rights may lose their validity and credibility. Young people often are ignorant of these rights and responsibilities. At best they have an abstract notion of them, provided in the civics classes of some countries. They are unaware of the implementation policies and the concrete applications of these rights and responsibilities. They often don't know anything about provisions for the protection of minors on the internet and in media in general. They are not alerted to the fact that their image on internet is publicly available. Anybody can take it, modify it, and set it in a context where it can be abusively used by some adults. So young people need to be prepared to develop ethical relations with professionals and, conversely, adults must pay attention to the protection of minors.

The abuse is not all one-sided. Young people can make inroads into the rights of adults, and more specifically of creators. This is the case of piracy, especially illegal downloading of intellectual property, like music. Creator rights are infringed upon to a lesser extent when the integrity of infor-





mation is distorted in such a way that it lends itself to rumour or libel. There is an on-going debate in many countries on the status of downloading. Some people liken it to private copy or note-taking, and as such find it acceptable, especially if no commercial transaction is foreseen. Others liken it to robbery, and see a violation of copyright laws. In either case, treating young people and their families as criminals is not a solution easily acceptable to a whole society and it may cause tension. All the actors involved need to realize that with Internet and the promises of the information society, a new cultural compact is slowly taking form, with new practices that will develop alongside the old ones. It is important to keep an open mind and to consider flexible and negotiated solutions, most probably within the framework of co-regulation.

on media and

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strategies

**More and more countries are adopting parental warning systems. Are there good practices attached to such systems?**

Parental warnings have been denounced by producers and broadcasters as an infringement upon their freedom of expression. It is a kind of self-regulated regulation since the networks classify their programmes themselves. In their everyday practice, they anticipate the warnings in their new productions, ensuring that they are in conformity with the parental standards. A number of channels even practice voluntary censorship by cutting some movie scenes that they consider too violent or indecent. Others modify their programmes to give them a family-oriented dimension. Such an attitude shows the reactivity of the industry and its capacity for adaptation to the social environment.

In the everyday practice of parents, warning systems have become instruments for decision-making. Some families refer auto-

matically to them and parents can discuss them with their children. Mostly it seems that children understand that, when they are watching a programme not adapted to their age, they are trespassing some boundaries. This is thought by some to entice young viewers to such programmes. Others see it as an advantage as the warnings sensitize young people to the shared social norms within their own culture.

Such warning systems are not perfect. In some countries for instance, the reason for warning is not stated. Not all countries have adopted visual logos (indicating the presence of sex, violence, drugs, or other objectionable material), alongside the logos indicating the age limit. It is to be noted that such warning systems have been extended to other media: they can be seen on video tapes and internet sites which can offer encrypted systems for blocking access. The presence of warning systems, however, cannot replace the vigilance of parents, educators and civil society associations. The media companies are always looking for strategies to bypass them... as are young people! Certainly, such systems cannot replace the dialogue between generations in families nor media education.

**In some countries, having a V-chip (a violence-chip installed in the Television set) is mandatory, to block violence and other potentially harmful content. Is it worthwhile investing in such a technical device?**

The v-chip is a device (an integrated circuit) that can be incorporated in a television set to allow parents to block some programmes that have previously been coded. This device was conceived to filter violent content but can also be applied to other types of content. Invented in Canada, it is actually in use in that country and in the United States. Following up on the Directive "Television Without Borders," the European Union has considered introducing the v-chip into its territory. Studies commissioned by the European Union, however, point to the fact that this solution would be of little interest. It seems that its performance needs to be assessed in the countries that already use it (Canada for instance).

It is to be noted that the v-chip can be used as a stopgap measure or an avoidance mechanism (legitimated by technological factors) by politicians and decision-makers to maintain the status quo. The v-chip may lead to two perverse effects, both of them worrying. On the one hand, it can remove responsibility from parents who will defer to the technology and will stop paying attention to their children's use of television. On the other hand, it can rid operators of their guilt feelings as they will feel freer to broadcast anything. The v-chip calls for initiative and availability on the part of parents, which is precisely what so often is lacking in day-to-day life. Moreover, some research indicators suggest that, in practice, the parents who use this device tend to be over-relaxed and that the ones who prove to be more vigilant are precisely those who, without the v-chip, are already quite zealous as to the media consumption of their children.

**Should one support a recommendation that would prevent children under two from watching television, as the American Academy on Paediatrics has suggested?**

This suggests a kind of parental self-regulation. This kind of approach has the advantage of raising awareness to the problem of isolation, and even abandonment, of many children and, consequently, to how important it is, or might be, for these children to have an effective interaction with their parents. The same Academy, together with the children's medical, psychology and psychiatry academies, bluntly asserted that there is a causal relation between violence on TV and the increase in violent behaviours in society. It recommended that parents do not permit children to have a TV set in the bedroom.

It is difficult to adopt such positions as universal rules, but they underline the difference between a world under ideal control and the one we actually live in. It is probably more productive to consider such positions as the expression of shared concerns that might have different answers, depending on the situation. They are, first and foremost, a warning sign that we must pay

attention to our children, and not push them towards the television. Above all, balance and good sense must prevail. All in all, it is probably better to follow that popular saying according to which "If you have to live by the sea, it is better to teach your children to swim, rather than building a wall around the house." The rule established by the American Academy is the wall around the television. Promoting critical skills might be a better solution... and moving away from the beach yet another one (though it may seem desirable to live with media the way it can be desirable to live by the sea!).

**Isn't censorship one of the major risks taken when systems of regulation or co-regulation are set up?**

Freedom of expression and of the press is a fundamental right, that needs to be recalled consistently. In the past, censorship was an attribute of the State, today commercial censorship has become a growing problem. In any case, any trespassing on the rights and responsibilities of the journalists by other actors needs to be carefully monitored. This doesn't mean that the freedom of expression of the users must be silenced. The freedom to express indignation and criticism, be it positive or negative, also needs to be defended. Hence maintaining independent media that reflect multiple and diversified points of views requires our urgent attention.

To avoid censorship, all the opportunities for communication and cooperation between the media and the general public should be negotiated and facilitated. Any solution or policy should aim at explaining itself and should elicit support for the implementation of the principles of freedom and independence of journalism and communication, while reminding everybody of the ethical dimensions and the social responsibilities of the media. Such a solution allows the general public to become familiar with the responsibilities of media and also with their inner constraints (time, resources, need for revenue, shareholder pressure). Important issues for democratic participation are at stake, but the participation itself may help dispel people's distrust, and even prevent a general denunciation, of the



media, whose loyalty and independence they feel has run amuck.

**Considering the complexity of media and of the interactions among the various actors, does co-regulation stand a chance?**

Co-regulation is a process that shouldn't lead the various actors implicated in it to believe that they renounce their missions and responsibilities. The state needs to remain fully involved and so do the other parties, for co-regulation to work well. Creating the conditions of a healthy dialogue, that leads the different actors to express their expectations, is key. Thus the conditions for the creation of a common culture around media education may be elaborated clearly. If these conditions are met, at the end of the process, they can facilitate the various forms of civic participation of young people.

**on media and media education**

**Shouldn't media education and visual literacy be part of the permanent school curriculum?**

Such a notion has a number of supporters. They insist that media education should be included in the initial basic training of teachers. Few countries do this. Where it exists, this initiation takes place on an individual basis, because of personal interest or as a result of a short workshop (one or two days). One of the hardest obstacles these days seems to be the school administration rather than the teaching body, though there is reticence among some teachers due to the lack of training. The lack of recognition and validation of some initiatives by the decision-makers can be a chilling factor, as well as the absence of user-friendly tools (such as manuals). Teachers also perceive media education as an additional constraint that takes precious time away from the fulfilment of curricular demands in the other more classical disciplines. Besides, multi-disciplinary projects and cross-disciplinary work are not always encouraged in some institutions, and the

evaluation of media education has no reliable criteria yet.

Media education is not a universal panacea. It is necessary to think about it carefully. When it comes to visual literacy and the way images can be used and manipulated, lasting effects on the emotions of children are at stake. One should not play the sorcerer's apprentice in being too precipitous.

Teaching is a very complex job. In the case of media education, it implies that the teacher has to manage his or her relation to the programming as well as the relationships of the students by channelling their questions. A lot of attention has to be paid to formal mechanisms, like school curricula. Teachers cannot be told to do or not to do such or such a thing without preparation. Media education cannot be prescriptive, it should offer some key-concepts that can then be adapted according to the local needs. Key-concepts like production, languages, representations and publics allow the teacher to tell the students that an image is always a construction, that a media text is never neutral, without necessarily giving it an ideological reading. In all curricula, in all disciplines, media education should be allocated a space, which meets fully with the expected duties of all contemporary schooling. Deep at bottom, the issue revolves around the new role of the schools that needs to be defined. All the educational community is concerned, within the walls and without.

**Aren't the expectations towards New Information and Communication Technologies in Education too high?**

If media literacy is increasingly used in training modules for secondary school teachers such is not the case with new information technologies for education. These require an additional kind of training, with a technical level that may scare teachers, not considered mechanically-or technically-minded. Besides the technical mastery, such training needs to be supplemented with a specific pedagogical approach to collaborative methods of learning as well as to their cognitive and developmental stakes. Such training entails a

formal approach to navigation skills and will lead to new roles for teachers—as resource persons and mediators—which implies a reviewed conception of his or her authority in the classroom.

Basic training is not very strong, and continuous or lifelong training is not much better in the current situation. Self-training (in software for design and production of multimedia materials with a specific theme or method) is not fully recognized or validated, though it is extremely time and energy consuming. For the moment, in most countries, confirmed teachers don't receive a basic initiation in web navigation, site design, on-line course building, or other basic functions. They are not even trained to evaluate the quality of the existing sites and other tools at their disposal.

When used best, the new technologies for communication tend to promote modes of access that can be synchronous or asynchronous, on-line or off-line. These are not always compatible with established traditional school schedules. Technologies and schools seem to operate along the lines of disjointed time frames. They also seem to operate from disjointed spaces. On-line navigation allows students to escape the confined area of the classroom. Meanwhile, within the classroom itself, the computer can foster affinities among peers, a communication relationship that doesn't exist in the classical master-student relationship. Interaction can thus be choreographed differently, as the audiovisual and navigational codes bring about proximity functions, learning patterns and expectations that provide an alternative to the authority of a single adult accredited from the top.

This kind of knowledge acquisition, that is evolving and tailored to individual needs, that implies an active participation of the student within a logic of media appropriation must not be set against traditional knowledge acquisition based on hierarchical, stabilized notions, and a logic of reproduction. The school systems must allow the teachers to play upon these dual time frames and dual spaces. It is also necessary for private sector producers and publishers to work in partnership with teachers and other specialists of sound, images and

computer science, so that the use of educational software can become widespread as the scepticism about their pedagogical quality subsides. When these conditions are not met, the result is a feeling of waste and failure that is perceived in many countries, as audiovisual and digital equipments are under-used, owing to the crucial lack of support by untrained teachers and to the absence of technical maintenance staff.

**What benefit is there in producing images or media texts by and for oneself? Isn't it a way of getting rid of the problem?**

The French researcher Jacques Gonnet likes to tell this story: in 1924, an ordinary school teacher, Célestin Freinet, decided to bring into his classroom a printing press; he wanted to create a newspaper. He bet on the notion that the children would find an interest in it and discover many things by themselves. The students discovered block letters, asked themselves questions about spelling, worried about their readers, and many other publishing concerns. Thus Freinet gave birth to a very important movement in the schools, which has since then evolved into a variety of differentiated pedagogies, which include access to the production tools.

The Freinet Modern School movement teaches us the importance of fostering the student's self-reliance, enquiry-based learning and the inductive method. Authentic learning by using real life experiences of production needs to be encouraged, with young people as much as with adults, because the trial and error process allows them to test things as insiders. Any process that can place the learners in situation and enhance their understanding of production and their capacities for decoding and raising questions is crucial.

Some excesses in the use of the Freinet movement have lead people to believe that the media and new technologies promote inductive methods as if this pedagogy depended on the machines alone. In fact induction may be taught by other means. The feeling that differentiated pedagogies are technology-dependent may have a



chilling effect on teachers, loath to adopt them on their own initiative, which is a pity as they can bring change and innovation in the classroom. The human factor has to be put forward, even in the use of machines. Their role has to be set in the proper framework or become counter-productive, exhausting budgets through purchasing equipment for schools, and people who are reluctant to use them and have few means to appropriate them.

Such appropriation has become easier with portable equipment. Nonetheless, there is a remaining pressure that hampers the adoption of such tools, due to time constraints on teachers. They already have a lot of demands to juggle with (programmes, school projects, etc.). Asking teachers to allocate time for collaborative production, when children could work in the presence of parents, may turn out to be an additional burden with little incentives.

This is why it may be rewarding to encourage the extensive use of tools or pedagogical kits that have already been tested and standardized, and integrated into the teachers' culture. In the beginning, most of teachers will conform to the use of such kits, much as they do with traditional school manuals. But then, little by little, adapting to circumstances, news or the student contributions, they will tailor those tools to their own use and appropriate them fully. Such tools and kits exist, but they are not widely known or widespread. Besides, one last obstacle remains, related to intellectual property rights: very often, the expansion of such tools and their tailored adaptation to classroom use are hampered by the lack of adequate copyright laws. It is to be noted that, in some countries, a series of actions are being led by educators and teachers: they lobby in favour of an education exception to copyright or of a fair use of audiovisual and digital materials, in the context of non-profit schooling and tutoring.

As far as media education is concerned, learning audiovisual techniques can also be done within the family. It is a way to have access to the tool very early, with light, portable equipment. It provides an alternative way for children to learn about decoding media, to be less affected by the impact of images, within the context of cultural and aesthetic practices that are their own. This can be particularly interesting for children who have difficulties learning how to write but are good with the visual language or with multimedia tasks. With such tools, they can express many of their feelings and their questions while being empowered by their use both as learning and communication devices.

**Isn't there the risk of a high tech/low tech gap, which is to say a growing divide between the technical evolution of media in the private sector (always smaller, more portable, more performing) and the capacity for the schools to buy such tools?**

Media education tends to be focused on the contents and the specificities of each media (sounds, images, texts...), as well as on the representations they convey and their attendant rational and emotional impact. Education to new digital technologies, especially the Internet, tends to be focused on processes and modes of connexion and access as well as on navigation and induction. Neither of them necessarily implies the use of *high tech* tools. *Low tech* tools can be quite sufficient, for the mastery and understanding of key concepts. A hyper-technical approach is not necessary and can have a chilling effect. Beyond media and new digital technologies, education must not be confused with or reduced to utilisation: utilisation is only the most basic level of appropriation (which doesn't mean that it has to be neglected, especially where girls are concerned as they are often stereotyped as mechanically inept). In the end, the target remains a broad, encompassing education to all media, old and new.

This selective glossary refers to basic terms used in the various handbooks offered in this kit. It provides explanations on terms in the lexical field of media techniques and educational techniques. Additional elements of analysis have been drawn from the most usually used terms in current media and communication theories. These theories are called here “critical positions” because they are seen only in their reference to the media, without attendant value judgments or in-depth reference to their authors. The glossary is not exhaustive and every user is encouraged to complete it. The definitions suggested are propositions, which every user is encouraged to modify, to elaborate upon and to fit to his or her specific needs. The terms in italics refer to complementary notions in the glossary.



**GLOSSARY**  
OF SELECTED TERMS  
FOR MEDIA EDUCATION



**Access.** A basic right of the citizens and one of the rights of children, often linked to participation. In media education, students are encouraged to determine whose voice is listened to, whose is excluded and for what reasons. *See civil society; vertical integration.*

**Activities.** In media education, *creative* activities (for example, taking photographs) are distinguished from *analytical* activities (for example, the study of adverts or news). Among the exercises for students, there can be discussions led in small groups or with the whole class, role playing and simulations, textual analysis, essay-writing and media production, with a hands-on approach. *See media education.*

**Advertising.** The persuasive messages intended to sell products or ideas. Advertising is the economic base of most commercial media, because the sponsors finance the production of programs or shows with the money they pay for the broadcasting of their spots and ads. *See production; public service announcements.*

**Alienation.** The feeling of separation from the others or from one's own nature, due to the lack of control over one's social conditions (economic, cultural, political). It is also any process, sometimes media-driven, that can cause the separation from self. The skinny fashion model ideal can interfere with a normally built woman's image of herself and her cultural and sexual roles. In psychoanalysis, alienation refers to a split subjectivity, due to the fact that the person doesn't feel in total control of his or her actions because of unconscious or stifled desires. *See psychoanalysis.*

**Analogical process.** The use of a physical process to describe or record data on a continuous scale as they are collected. Analogical signals will record movement in its variability, in levels of speed and light (for example in real time), giving a feeling of physical reality to the observer. The digital process, where the data are gathered in discreet units, to be recomposed later, has a contrary effect. *See digital technology.*

**Animation technique.** A process by which inanimate objects or images seem to come to life. This effect is achieved by a series of manipulations of the objects or of the drawings recorded and rapidly projected so that the brain interprets them as in movement, thanks to the persistence of vision.

**Appropriation.** An activity of the public which consists in interpreting the messages of the media for their personal and differentiated use. It implies a strategy of active reception. It is part of the "uses and gratifications" school of media reception theory, usually seen in opposition to the "effects" school, that considers the public as passive. *See uses; effects.*

**Audience.** The group of consumers for whom a media text was produced as well as other groups which can be exposed to it. It tends to be measured statistically, by taking into account the numbers of persons watching or listening to a particular media during a given time slot. *See public.*

**Auteur.** The person who creates a media text. The notion alludes to a French critical position which considers that an individual, usually the director, is responsible for the program or for the film which he or she made. In other analyses, the producer or a corporate collective is responsible for the program. Auteur theory allows identification of personal styles but masks the whole production process around media texts. *See production.*

**Authenticity.** In the current media system of mechanical and digital reproduction of master texts, it emphasizes what is original and therefore cannot or should not be reproduced or copied. It is also a quality that can be detected by textual analysis, to highlight what deserves to be believed in or what is in conformity with truth if not reality (witness accounts, historical narratives, truthfulness). *See realism.*

**Block-booking.** This kind of marketing strategy forces small media distributors or broadcasters to purchase a whole bouquet of productions without choice as to the details of its content. Through block-booking a producer can sell a combination of big successes and of poor quality programs. *See vertical integration.*

**Blockbuster.** The holy grail of commercial cinema. Producers hope their product will break box office record. To achieve this result they invest heavily in promotional, marketing and merchandizing strategies. Blockbusters tend to share certain characteristics: spectacular effects, roller-coaster action, and violence. They can benefit from a longer shelf-life by being integrated in secondary or derived markets (videotape, DVD...). They participate in the globalisation phenomenon, aiming at large profits on a limited amount of products. In theory the production of a blockbuster allows Hollywood companies to finance less heavily budgeted material. In practice, it can produce colossal failures and a smaller number of films produced per year. *See production; merchandizing; by-products.*

**Blogs.** Coined from two words, web and log. Refers to on-line diaries in the public sphere, on personal, institutional or thematic sites. The meaning relates to the navigation metaphor characteristic of the Internet but also to the notion of monitoring progress so as to improve performance and storage. The rise of the blogosphere has been noticeable since September 11, 2001 and has demonstrated the interactive dynamic capacities of the digital media.

**Brand.** Distinctive name, often expressed as a logo, that is used to mark the products of a company. Applying the brand to a successful product in advertising and marketing can build "the brand image" of the company with the public.

**Bricolage.** A cultural practice that consists in modifying the meaning or the original intent of media texts or merchandized products to make them one's own by giving them a new reading or a distorted, and even oppositional, use. In the classroom or at home, it can be turned into a

task whose technique is improvised, using low cost materials at hand (paper, video...). *See appropriation; commodification.*

**Broadcasting.** Over-the-air transmission of radio and audiovisual contents across broad spectrums of electro-magnetic waves, to reach wide audiences.

**Cable.** The tele-broadcasting of audiovisual contents by coaxial cable or optical fibre. By extension, the audiovisual system which permits the reception of any type of program by subscription and by selection of a bouquet of channels. *See television; production.*

**Call-in program.** A show format allowing users to express themselves and to give voice to their questions and their contradictory comments. It increases the feeling of participation among the members of the public. *See MAS.*

**Case study.** Educational strategy which encourages learners to explore in depth a media topic of their choice. Independent research and inquiry have an important role to play in media education. Learners can focus on production, marketing and the consumption of a given text. They can study a specific issue through several media, like a political election or an important sports event, concentrating on the diffusion process. They can consider the public involved by elaborating questionnaires and taking field notes or conducting interviews. *See analytical strategies; pedagogy.*

**Censorship.** In its strictest sense, an *a priori* condemnation of a media text or of an opinion, preventing its publication or broadcast. Censorship can also refer to an *a posteriori* decision, after publication or broadcasting. Self-censorship is considered as a limitation to expression that professionals exert on themselves; it can relate to self-regulation. *See self-regulation; regulation; co-regulation.*

**Characterization.** The development of characters in a narrative. The characters can be either well developed (round) or un developed and stereotyped (flat). *See narrative; story.*

**Choices.** In textual analysis, they can either be paradigmatic (a selection among a series of equivalent elements) or syntagmatic (the grouping of various elements to form sequences or combinations). *See language ; grammar ; key-concepts.*

**Church/cult.** *See religious organizations.*

**Civil society.** Associations composing civil society tend to be either consumer or professional groups that have added the media and communication to their general agenda. It can include groups specifically focused on media and communication like viewers' associations. Civil society organizations do not want to be confused with vested political powers or the dominant commercial powers. Their legitimacy rests on a demand for direct participation in the democratic process, of which the media are perceived as an essential part. *See regulation; co-regulation.*

**Classificatory system.** Classifies programs before their distribution or broadcasting according to their contents, by indicating, if need be, the presence of violence, pornography or other types of messages likely to hurt the sensibility of young people. It can be associated or not with scheduling rules, and even to bans on broadcasting. *See regulation.*

**Code of ethics.** *See ethics guidelines.*

**Code.** The conventions and the intrinsic characteristics of various forms of media languages involved in the construction of a given message. They imply a shared social practice, which allows the public to decipher the message encoded by the author or the producer. In media education, learning to recognize and decipher codes sensitizes learners to the need to find the verbal equivalents of sound and image effects that are used in any media text. *See constraints; language; grammar; semiotics.*

**Commodification.** The process reflecting the transformation of social relations into marketable goods or relations with exchange value. Notions as close to personal identity as gender and sexuality can be commodified, that is to say that they can be inserted into a relation implying a monetary value. In other words, media can cause a person to alienate a part of him or herself. *See alienation; market.*

**Communication.** A dynamic relation which takes place in the exchange between a transmitter of signals and a receiver of these signals, by means of technical tools and of semiotic resources (images, sound, written language). By extension, all the media techniques used to transmit a message, to inform public opinion or to maintain the reputation of a company or corporation. *See information; medias.*

**Community Media Centres.** Places of public access for the members of a given community. They provide some media vehicles and resources, as well as the technical support of tutors and trainers. They aim at re-enforcing the education of the people while responding to local needs. *See co-regulation ; tele-centres.*

**Commutation test.** In media education, it consists in asking learners to imagine how the meaning of a text would change if one of its elements were modified—for example, if the producers had used a different person, another piece of music, or another iconography.

**Competence.** The integration by a person of the grammar and the lexicon of a language, which allows him or her, virtually, to produce an indefinite number of correct occurrences and to understand those of other people. Competence is effectively measured in the person's performance of communication acts. Media education aims at making the learners acquire a general competence, whose object is not just confined to the printed word but also to the other symbolic systems made of images and sounds. *See media education; performance.*



**Complaints Bureau.** An entity located either in a media company or the national authority for media regulation. It receives the criticisms of the public and whose task consists in referring them to the programme managers and news editors. Its existence is connected to the right to correct information, to the respect of the public image of a person, and to the possibility of rectifying or replying to information. *See regulation.*

**Comprehension.** In media education, the mastery of a set of “key-concepts”. This approach has several clear advantages. It does not specify particular objects of study (a standardized “canon” of texts included in a school program for example) and can thus adjust to the interests and the passions of the learners. It does not specify either a set body of knowledge, which would quickly become obsolete. *See media education.*

**Computer processing.** All the techniques for collecting, storing, treating and distributing data automatically treated by programs or software via computers and servers. *See digital technology; internet.*

**Conditions of contract.** Document establishing the modalities of execution and completion of products for public markets, with description of the expectations and schedule of due dates, as well as the public service obligations expected from the media institutions. It is generally established by the media regulation authority, in its capacity to manage public airwaves and bandwidth. *See regulation.*

**Connotation.** In semiotics, the social, historic and ideological values which are added to the literal meaning of a text, sometimes through the experience of the spectator or the listener. *See denotation; semiology.*

**Constraints.** Requirements given by the management of a particular media or specified in the conditions of contract of media companies. In textual analysis, the possibilities which are inherent to each media are not only determined by their intrinsic characteristics: they also depend on the context of production and on the targeted public. *See code; context; production.*

**Constructivism.** A critical position which considers that facts and events do not exist by themselves but are the result of a social framing, with implications connected to ideology, to economics and to the balance of power in politics and language-use. Systems of representation, notably those conveyed by the media, have no meaning separate from human interpretation. Such systems help people make sense of the world around them. *See phenomenology.*

**Consultative councils (for programming).** Multi-stakeholder platforms, that incorporate the presence of users or experts coming from education and from paediatrics. They can refer to state of the art research and concrete situations, with debates that do not confine themselves to the decision-makers only but which often include pro-

ducers and broadcasters. It may result in the drafting of recommendations related to some cultural or political value or content, to editorial strategies, and to specific formats in conformity with the expectations of a given community. *See co-regulation.*

**Content analysis.** Involves the quantitative analysis of a relatively important corpus of materials, identifying the recurrence of predetermined codes or categories. For example, learners can estimate the respective proportions of image and text that can be found in a variety of newspapers, or the quantity of space dedicated to advertisement. They can also “count” the number of men and women who appear in ads or tally the types of social roles they play. Content analysis can be time-consuming in the classroom but it allows the students to test their hypotheses and to identify major trends that appear in a large sample. *See textual analysis; repertoire of pedagogical strategies.*

**Contents.** Messages which are produced by the media texts, and are then sent to widely or narrowly-targeted publics. Content analysis is a specific method which tends to take numerous texts and to analyse them with quantitative criteria, so as to provide a statistical evaluation in the end. *See message; content analysis.*

**Context.** Making apparent the links which unite particular forms of media language with two other key-concepts in media education, namely, production and the public. It is possible by focusing on the opening and final sequences of a media text, which provide indications on production and on the targeted public.

**Convergence.** A tendency to combine technologies visible among companies as they merge with each other to produce a multimedia system. It results in products that perform many tasks (computer, fax, telephone) to produce a multimedia system. In the technical sense, convergence can be also interpreted as a general tendency toward digitization, to the detriment of paper or analogical systems. *See vertical integration; production; technology.*

**Copyright.** Refers to the laws which require compensation for the use of the intellectual property and information published by artists, journalists and media producers. Certain exceptions are accepted, according to countries, such as “fair use” or the right to quote a brief extract without asking for permission. Copyright rules must be taken into account in case of use or of broadcasting of any media text in the classroom or in any non-commercial setting.

**Co-regulation.** Either a regulation of self-regulation, or a negotiation among multi-stakeholders. In a context of governance, it implies a more active dialogue between the State, the industrial sector and the other actors of society, namely, among others, parental groups, consumers’ movements, family and teachers’ associations, research organisms. *See regulation; MAS.*

**Corpus (of knowledge).** A set of facts or of contents which must be learnt and which is the basis for the more complex elaboration of analysis, as well as criticism and interpretation of media texts. *See media education; curriculum.*

**Course sequence.** A series of units of work that extend over several lessons including a variety of activities for the class, and aiming at setting up the key-concepts of media education. It should offer analytical and creative activities and be followed up by an evaluation. *See media education; key-concept.*

**Coverage.** The way media deal with an event or report it. It can strive for objectivity criteria or, on the contrary, be criticized for an excess of bias or subjectivity.

**Credits.** Can appear at the opening or the end of a media text. They contain information on the persons who produced the text, on the companies which own it or which distribute it, on the various tasks which were mobilized for making it. Tracking down this information can allow the learners to pay attention to the financial interests (and sometimes the ideological ones) that lie beneath the text. *See production.*

**Critical Position.** *See formalism; post-modernism; psychoanalysis; realism; semiotics; structuralism; phenomenology.*

**Criticism (or Critique).** A considered position about the meaning of messages and their value, that aims at bringing to the foreground explicit and implicit contents. It is also an attitude in reception in which the viewer or listener distances himself or herself from the simple consumption of media texts, in order to analyze the results consequent upon their uses. *See reading; reception.*

**Cross Cutting.** The alternating of shots from two sequences, to make the transition between two scenes or two audio sources. It can create the impression of simultaneity of two actions or, on the contrary, allow for a change of place, mood or atmosphere. *See grammar.*

**Cultivation.** The way people are socialized to media by the media. Cultivation can vary from person to person, from group to group, and throughout the life of an individual. It implies that media consumption habits have an impact on the interpretation of messages, besides considerations about the social milieu and the education levels of the users. *See effects.*

**Cultural diversity.** An outcome of the debate on "cultural exception" which posits that the works of the mind, and in particular film and television productions, are not similar to other products and thus should not be marketed in the same way as any basic consumable, because they are part of the identity and the patrimony of a given country. An international convention, under the aegis of UNESCO, was ratified in 2006, making the expression of cultural diversity into a State right. *See cultural goods; commodification; globalization.*

**Cultural good.** A product whose commercial value is inferior to its symbolic value. Information and media are supposed to be cultural goods, whose status is not the same as the status of commercial goods and services as they contribute to the sense of identity of a society or a community. *See civil society; cultural diversity.*

**Cultural imperialism.** The way lifestyles are exported by a hegemonic country to other territories, by means of cultural goods and media texts. The United States are often considered to be in a position of cultural hegemony and thus imperialistic because of their massive export of popular programs and the strict control they keep on production and diffusion in the domestic market. *See globalisation; vertical integration; cultural diversity.*

**Curriculum.** The body of knowledge to be taught in a cycle of studies covering a given subject. In media education, the curriculum introduces key-concepts (production, representation, language and public) in an integrated way, each key-concept being, at least potentially, an access point to the others. *See media education.*

**Cyberspace.** The representation of space as defined by computers and virtual technologies, especially on the Internet. It is a geography of networks that is made possible by servers, websites and hypertext links. It creates a digitalized environment allowing the transit of information and data as well as the various types of communication between people and computers. *See navigation; Internet.*

**Cyborg.** Coined from two words, cybernetics and organism. Refers to the moving frontier of human-machine relations mediated by technology. This machine anthropomorphism permits technological systems to experience mental states and, conversely, human beings to accept the idea of prostheses being inserted in their bodies. This virtual entity underlines the dependence of contemporary societies on media and new technologies, and as such is often represented in media texts, especially in science-fiction.

**Debate.** In media and public opinion, the expression of contradictory and minority opinions, associated to pluralistic views in the news. In media education, debate entails an analytical activity, where the learners are offered a series of judgments on a program or a subject, with positive and negative reviews. They are then asked to evaluate these propositions. *See activities; course sequence.*

**Deciphering.** The process of deconstructing a media text, sometimes undertaken by the producers and the broadcasters themselves. In media education, the analytical activity where the pupils read a series of judgments expressed on a program, in order to discuss them, proceed to an evaluation, and even produce a synthesis of the points of view. *See course sequence; activities.*

**Decoding.** The process of interpreting texts and cultural goods according to the codes shared in





a given culture. Factors such as the technological mediation, the context of reception, the production conditions and the social situations of the members of the public inform this process and account for the fact that the message will not necessarily be decoded as expected by the author or the producer. *See code; production; reception.*

**Deconstruction.** A process by which a media text is subjected to a variety of decisions during its conception, for a specific public. It is also a process in reception which consists in criticizing the modes of production of this message as well as the possible postures of reception. *See reading; reception; postmodernism.*

**Demographic profile.** All the recognizable characteristics of media consumers such as age, sex, education and income. It is a part of marketing strategies for segmenting and targeting various publics. *See marketing ; merchandizing.*

**Denotation.** In semiotics, the literal and evident value of a media text. *See connotation; semiology.*

**Device.** The technical constituents of cinema or other media conveying the idea that they influence the psychological perception of the public. Can contribute or not to an impression of reality, and even bring about the immersion of the viewer in the text. *See realism.*

**Digital technology.** As opposed to the analogical process, the use of an electric or electronic intermittent code (on/off, present/absent) to describe or record a dynamic phenomenon like movement and light. It guarantees the exact reproduction of data entered data, with a decrease in variability. This entails a loss in the sensation of realism for the observer, when compared to an analogical process. *See analogical process.*

**Director.** The person in charge of the global supervision of an audiovisual text or a film. He or she manages the *mise-en-scène* and makes the decisions in editing and montage. *See production; producer.*

**Discourse.** That which is not a part of the narrative and the story in a media text but requires clarification, notably in terms of explicit and implicit meaning. Refers to the production of knowledge which defines and also limits a subject and what can be said about it. It applies to wide bodies of social knowledge, such as the discourse on technology, on economics, etc. Discourse analysis is a specific method that tends to take specific texts and evaluate them by using qualitative criteria. *See message; content analysis.*

**Dissolve.** A visual transition between two shots, in which the second shot is superimposed on the first one which gradually fades. Helps create an atmosphere and conveys the feeling of time passing. *See grammar; production; interpretation.*

**Distribution.** Allocation of films to movie theatres, and by extension, all the work of promotion and broadcasting of media texts on the pri-

mary market (cinema houses) as well as on the secondary markets (tapes and DVDs). *See vertical integration; market.*

**Docudrama.** Coined from two words, documentary and dramatization. Refers to a particular form of audiovisual storytelling. It is a media text which combines elements of fiction and elements extracted from real news or historical facts. *See genre; realism.*

**Documentary.** A more or less full-length film presenting authentic documents, with educational and didactic purposes. Its content can either be balanced, including different points of view, or subjective, offering the point of view and the impressions of the director.

**Double encryption.** Scrambling and locking technological system, that prevents the signal to be seen in clear. *See MAS.*

**Dramatic tension.** In narrative structure, the combination of conflicts that drive the rising action. The moment of a story when the conflict reaches its climax, and the balance of the action is disrupted also marks the moment of highest tension.

**Editing (*Montage*).** Choices made by the directors, on the various techniques to be used, on the positioning of the camera, on the selection of images and sounds. Linear editing obeys precise rules that relate to smooth transitions between what is in the frame and off the frame. Non-continuous editing combines shots to suggest feelings and ideas rather than literal time and space. *See cross-cutting; mise-en-scène ; narration.*

**Editorial.** An article which emanates from the staff of a newspaper underlining the point of view adopted by them or their management, on an issue of general order or of particular interest. It is unlike other articles that strictly report the facts and aim at objectivity.

**Educational objectives.** Preparing learners for analysing the media. They promote the use of deductive and inductive approaches, to ensure that they use the material at their disposal to reach their own conclusions. Such objectives assume that learners have to be encouraged to think systematically about complex questions, without forcing them to adhere to any predefined position. One such objective is to encourage debates that relate to the everyday life of learners and users or to their life as citizens. *See media education.*

**Educational television.** The activities and services that transmit programs in which educational values are more important than entertainment values. In some countries, whole channels are dedicated to the broadcasting of such programs, in others, special slots are dedicated to them within the framework of public service obligations.

**Educator.** A professional who received a specific pedagogical training, often linked to a specialized subject matter, in charge of the education of

children or teenagers. By extension, any resource person taking part in the reference circle close to young people (librarians, teachers, college counsellors, parents).

**Effects.** A critical position which posits that media representations change the way the public understands specific social groups or social issues such as stereotyping and racism, even if it remains very difficult to separate this influence from that exercised by the other institutions, such as the school or the family. *See ideology; cultivation; reception; representation.*

**Ethics Committees (or liaison committees).** Partly composed of members from outside the media sphere (teachers, therapists, community leaders,...), they foster debate on the respect for the public, the democratic debate, the respect for human dignity, children's welfare and the responsibility of the media in the socialization of young people. *See self-regulation; MAS.*

**Ethics guidelines/standards of good practise.** Focus on questions of objectivity, equity, protection of sources, independence, conflicts of interests, political clientele or nepotism, etc. Some charters produce guidelines that include the rights of viewers and users as well as the duties of professionals. They complement the values of freedom of expression. *See MAS.*

**Event.** A fact that is important enough to a given society that it needs to be reported in the media and be the focus of important coverage (in print or broadcasting media).

**Exhibitionism.** The perversion of the pleasure derived from being looked at. It can also be applied to media texts which tend to show the body of the actors (notably the feminine body) to arouse voyeuristic instincts in their consumers. *See scopophilia; voyeurism; pornography.*

**Family.** The group of close relatives living under the same roof. By extension, it also includes persons who share some kind of relationship (by adoption, by brotherhood, by cousinhood, by remarriage...). In media education, it refers to the social entity which includes the children and their care-givers in the household.

**Fan.** Derived from fanatic. The admirer, often young, of a star or of a program, who expresses his or her enthusiasm by specific patterns of behaviour and choices of social interaction, such as can be found on fan sites connected to a television show or to a famous actor or actress.

**Feedback.** The process of communication by which a person can return to a message or a text, to express disagreement, ask for explanations, or make suggestions for modification. *See communication.*

**Fetishism.** Exaggerated admiration for an object that substitutes possession of that object for a relation, often sexual, with the person or object or idea represented by that object. The fetishist tends to confer on this person or this object

magical or ritual powers that allow him or her to compensate for a psychological loss or lack. In the case of media, the poster of a movie or of a star can give the fan a feeling of possession or proximity that cannot be fulfilled otherwise. *See commodification.*

**Fiction.** A creation stemming from the imagination of an author, as against a reproduction of reality. It draws on a certain number of semiotic resources (sounds, images, etc.) and on media whose specific codes are mastered to give life to imaginary worlds. *See story; narrative.*

**Film.** The process of production used to record images and sounds in cinema. By extension, the spectacle created by the storytelling elaborated by these images and sounds, even if the medium and the aesthetic forms produced through it do not share the same properties.

**Filter.** A technical device that allows certain unwanted elements in a program or a show to be eliminated on the basis of classifications and cryptograms. Sometimes, the persons or the entities (writers, broadcasters, channel owners...) that have the power to select or to reject a media text. Electronic filters exist on the internet as well, such as search engines.

**Flow.** In broadcasting, and also on Internet, programs that are short-lived because their contents are perishable, for example talk-shows or TV news. In spite of interruptions created by the advertisement breaks, they tend to give the public an impression of continuity or of immersion. Flow programs are opposed to stock programs, like series or movies, that can be broadcast several times and circulated on other media. *See production; programming; stock.*

**Formalism.** The theory which describes the formal aspects of a text, be it in literature or media. It can combine this perspective with an approach of the activity of reading in reception which feeds on cognition and on sensual perception (contrary to psychoanalysis). The members of the public are perceived as active, with a capacity for making hypotheses as the text develops, by using their prior experience as viewers or their own personal experiences and their expectations about genre and format. *See structuralism; realism.*

**Frame.** The way an image is composed, in relation to its edges but also to the process by which these edges are decided upon and to the objects that are chosen inside and outside such boundaries. *See mise-en-scène ; montage.*

**Freedom of expression.** A human right, which has historically been used to protect media messages against censorship and all sorts of regulatory attempts to limit them. *See human rights; self-regulation.*

**Game (or play).** Physical or mental activity which is related to entertainment and pleasure. In the media, play can be organized as an activity with rules defining winners and losers, gain or loss. The members of the public are increasingly con-





sidered in their role as players, and not only consumers or citizens. In education, play is one of the most important dimensions of learning, especially with simulations and role-playing, as they allow the learners to experiment vicariously with media texts without going out of the classroom. *See media education; repertoire of strategies.*

**Gaze.** A term used to account for the centrality of acts of looking and being looked at, in the dynamics of desire as they are staged by media texts. It can be connected to fantasy and to the mirror phase, in psychoanalysis or, in sociology, to relations of power of panoptic total surveillance. The relationships between persons within a network of power are governed by the acts of looking as a means to negotiate and to impose a vision in a given institution or society. Admitting them into this network of power is a way of disciplining people's behaviour. The media, as institutions, can be analyzed as trying to induce normalized behaviour among professionals as much as among the members of their publics. *See production; reading; publics; reception; mirror phase.*

**Genre.** The classification of the contents according to conventions and recognizable formulas that lead to the production of specific types of texts. Series, docudramas and gangster movies are all genres. The genre of a text induces the viewer to build a set of expectations about its contents, aesthetics and plot. *See code; production.*

**Global Culture.** *See globalization.*

**Globalization.** A new relationship between the local, national and international financial, labour and wholesale markets which induces economic, social and cultural changes. The global media companies dominate the market and offer a common international culture, based on individualism and consumerism. This domination produces inequalities in access to information and media technologies. It can lead to strategies of resistance and decentralization. *See cultural imperialism; vertical integration.*

**Governance.** A form of government which aims at establishing new bases for the democratic exercise of power, proceeding by directives and recommendations rather than by penalties. It implies the interaction of multiple actors, at local, national and regional, even international levels. *See co-regulation.*

**Grammar.** An organization of rules and selections to generate coherent messages. Media languages allow the creation of texts by operating on two sets of rules. Paradigmatic choices imply a selection among a series of equivalent elements. Syntagmatic combinations permit the grouping of various elements to form sequences or combinations. Such rules help create the different genres of media formats that can be modified, hybridized, etc. *See key-concept; language.*

**Graphic design.** The technique of representation with visual elements (such as pictograms, fonts

and type, symbols, photographs and geometrical figures), used to convey specific pieces of information to the public.

**Habitus.** *See lifestyle.*

**Hardware.** The physical devices that make up computers, other data processing systems or broadcasting systems (both central units and peripherals). It allows the interface between messages stored in the software and in the virtual digital realm to have some human readable form on screen or paper that can be conveyed from a sender to a receiver. *See software; computer processing.*

**Human Rights.** Defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, they are natural and inviolable rights. Among these are freedom of expression as well as the access to information and knowledge, by all the members of society including women and young people, all around the world.

**Hybridization.** Applied to the notion of genre, stresses the process by which the contemporary media use classic conventions but remix them to make new categories, with fluctuating borders such as the docudrama, or more recently reality-programming. *See genre.*

**Hypertext.** A format for presenting computer texts which allows the user to move between one text and another through links. It facilitates the users' navigation in the depth of documents proposed to them on the networks. *See internet.*

**Icon.** In semiotics, the sign which establishes the closest resemblance between reality and its representation, as the portrait of a person for example. *See index; symbol; semiotics.*

**Iconography.** A system of recurring visual motifs which allow the viewers to understand various levels of meaning concerning plot, setting and character. It helps them to build their own set of expectations. *See genre; graphic design.*

**Identification.** A complex process that can take various forms. The first identification can be made with the camera apparatus itself, as a way of seeing through the camera eye. Mostly identification involves the characters or the actors of a media text as the viewers are immersed in the action and the situation described by the media text. Identification can also partly account for some of the pleasure derived from media consumption. *See narrative; interpretation; pleasure.*

**Ideology.** The set of beliefs and values shared by the members of a given community at a certain point in time. It accounts for the fact that these beliefs and values seem to be natural and inevitable, especially when they have a dominant and hegemonic dimension. However they can be disputed by minorities in the population and other sets of beliefs and values can compete with them and resist their hegemony. Media texts may contribute to the construction and diffusion of beliefs and values. In media education, it is important to

take into account ideology when interpreting a text, to identify the meaning of the message. *See influence; representation.*

**Index.** In semiotics, the sign which relates most to the imagination as it establishes a distorted resemblance, often linked to contiguity, between reality and its representation, while keeping nevertheless a causal link or a physical connection. For instance, smoke is an index of fire or a photograph is an index of its subject. *See icon; symbol; semiotics.*

**Industrial sector.** In broadcasting and telecommunications, refers to the institutions and the companies which are involved in the technical production and the commercial distribution of a media text. *See vertical integration; market.*

**Influence.** *See effects; cultivation; uses.*

**Information literacy.** The use of all the pedagogical and educational tools that are appropriate to ensure that every person navigating on the digital networks can be informed and can inform about himself or herself. It implies, on the one hand, to be able to find data, sort them out and evaluate them and, on the other hand, to produce data and publish them. It is a part of media education. *See media education.*

**Information.** Fact, message or opinion brought to the attention of the public by means of words, sounds and images. It can also refer to the action of forming public opinion by reporting events or to the decision-making process. In computer processing, information can be an element transmitted by a combination of digital signals, packaged as data. *See communication; Internet.*

**Inlay.** The electronic technique which inserts one image into another one, inside a definite outline or border.

**Innovation.** In the context of commercial production, refers to the different assembly stages of a product or a media text before being massively exploited: from the experimental invention to the development of a prototype to the final distribution according to the norms and standards of the industrial sector. Often, innovation is characterized by the hybridization of genres or the formulaic spin-offs from a successful genre or text. *See production.*

**Interaction.** Inter-personal relations that use the machine to establish person-to-person communication. *See interactivity.*

**Interactivity.** Person-to-machine communication by way of the screen, giving access to the capacities of the computer system for calculations, games, connections, etc. *See interaction.*

**Interface.** That portion of the design of the computer software which establishes the interactivity with the users or between machines. It allows them to make choices, to select tasks and to navigate the system by using visual rather than textual elements. *See Internet.*

**Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs).** Interstate organized entities, belonging to the United Nations system. They are thematic (health or agriculture, for example). UNICEF and UNESCO are those that monitor media, culture and education with a special focus on children and youth. They elaborate recommendations and produce annual reports reflecting the state of the world. *See co-regulation.*

**Internet.** A network of computer networks which functions by file transfer between a variety of servers and personal computers. It uses a series of protocols for addressing and exchanging files that allows different pieces of software to receive packages of data and to communicate between them. More and more, Internet tends to be a multimedia platform that can receive all kinds of media texts. *See media.*

**Interpretation.** The process by which the members of the public decode or deconstruct, individually or collectively, the sense of messages and the meanings of a media text. *See representation; key-concept; meaning.*

**Intertextuality.** In broadcasting, alludes to quotes or references of one text within other texts, in an aesthetic, ironic or playful fashion. In media education, intertextuality is a strategy for textual analysis that consists in encouraging the learners to think of other texts (or other genres) to which the text under study can refer to. *See textual analysis; repertoire of strategies.*

**Journalism.** The profession whose main functions consist in monitoring the environment, collecting information and reporting the news to inform the public so that it can develop an opinion. Journalism exists in all media: print, broadcasting, or the cyber-press. It includes a certain number of tasks, such as reporter, editor, columnist, editorialist... *See media.*

**Key-Concepts.** In media education, these encompass production, languages, representations and publics. They supply a theoretical framework which can be applied to all media alike, old and new. *See media education.*

**Label.** Marker or tag that appears on the jacket of a product or is shown on the screen. Inclusion, omission and design of such labelling often rely on voluntary decisions of producers and broadcasters. *See MAS.*

**Labelling system.** Classifying device enabling media monitoring. Can be either voluntary, or imposed by the regulatory authority in concert with the publishers and the producers. *See self-regulation; MAS.*

**Language.** Every media possesses its own "language," or a combination of languages (visual, sound, and written) which is used to communicate meanings. To produce a meaningful statement in these media languages, it is necessary to make paradigmatic choices (a choice among a series of equivalent elements) and syntagmatic combinations (the grouping of various elements



to form sequences or combinations). There are some linguistic rules that can create specific combinations that are easily identifiable. Such rules can also be broken to produce stylistic effects. *See grammar; reading.*

**Layout.** All the elements which surround a media text, and integrate it into the programming of a given channel (jingle, credits, anchor...). These are often used to introduce programs of foreign origin and are particularly obvious in children's programming. The layout is an important part of the communication strategy of the media to impress an identity onto the public. *See production.*

**Learning.** Supposes both deductive and inductive approaches. It posits that the learners already possess a large knowledge on the media, that needs to be tapped and verbalized. The relationship which unites existing knowledge and newly acquired knowledge, as well as the implications of this relationship for learning are essential. They are valid for lifelong learning and adults can benefit from them as well. *See media education.*

**Lifestyle.** The models which direct and structure the preferences, the tastes and the choices of the public. They are a product, largely (but not exclusively), of the milieu, the education level, the social class, etc. They are not natural abilities (like disposition or character) but situational capacities (related to education, class and context).

**Locking system.** A technical system for encoding messages, useful to parents who would like to receive scrambled programs so as to forbid their children access to shows or sites which do not correspond to their age. *See self-regulation; MAS.*

**Logo.** The symbol used to represent a company, a brand or an individual.

**Market.** In the media, the sum of all the supply and demand concerning cultural goods and the attendant services. By extension, a media market encompasses the conditions for production and sales in a specific geographical area. In some countries, the market has monopolistic tendencies and encourages vertical integration, in other countries it can be subjected to regulation by means of anti-trust laws. *See vertical integration; globalization; production.*

**Marketing.** Actions that analyze the media market and that stimulate or at arouse consumer demand. Marketing techniques are varied, ranging from merchandizing to advertising, sampling and providing after-sales services.

**Mass broadcasting.** Media which broadcast messages from a central entity to a multiplicity of points. This process allows an easy invoicing of the services offered. Television and radio are thus supposed to reach a mass audience. Narrowcasting does the opposite, seeking a specific audience. *See media; production.*

**Mass Culture.** Refers to popular culture as it has appeared since industrial production was linked to mass communications for mass consumerism. It is characterized by an ever-increasing urbanization and the consumption of cultural goods and media services. It often conveys a negative connotation, as the massive distribution of messages is equated with cultural homogenization, conformity and diminished quality. It has been criticized for reducing differences among various groups of publics within the mass. It is often contrasted with high culture. *See quality.*

**Mass Media.** Refers to those media which make mass culture possible producing messages to create popular representations of facts or persons. The most important ones are television, radio, cinema and the press. The new media related to computer processing and to digital networks, such as the Internet, video games and multimedia telephony, have the potential to become mass media, even though their capacities for feedback and for participation are distinct from those of older mass media. *See communication ; information ; popular culture.*

**Mastery.** The goal of media education. Validates the students' knowledge and capacity to recombine media "reading" and "writing" skills in a meaningful way. *See media education.*

**Meaning.** The search for significance in written, verbal, sound or visual signs. In media education, it implies an active involvement and exploration by learners in interpretative tasks, taking into account the contents and contexts of media texts. *See language; polysemy.*

**Media Accountability System (MAS).** Expression which refers to all tools developed by media professionals for internal management and for relations with the public. They clarify the value system on which the profession is based, as some of these tools relate to self-regulation, applied and elaborated by professionals themselves, to express their ethics. Such an effort acknowledges some sense of their social responsibility. *See self-regulation.*

**Media critique.** A television show that examines critically the content of other shows, mostly news, often introducing a variety of points of view, including those of media professionals. In its own contents, such a show analyzes techniques of inquiry and reporting. It can sometimes condemn programs that show little respect for the ethics of journalism. *See MAS.*

**Media education.** The process of training and learning about media, by acquiring a general competence in the production and reception techniques of the industry. It is not limited to the printed text but also encompasses other symbolic systems (images and sounds). It endows the learner with the capacity to analyze media texts (written, audiovisual and digital productions) so as to understand their meaning and evaluate their values. This process which includes interpretation and appropriation actively combines critical and creative methods. It allows young

people to build their own analysis and pass informed judgments as media consumers. It also gives them the capacity to become media producers themselves.

**Media library.** Collection of data carried by the various media vehicles. By extension, the place where this collection is available for consultation and put at the disposal of the public, often in association with the school or municipal library.

**Media monitoring entities.** Structured bodies, well-established in many places that allow grassroots associations to monitor the media and, through reports, to sensitize the public. They can stimulate and diffuse research, foster dialogue among media owners, state decision-makers and researchers. They play an active role in keeping tabs on the media and the regulatory and self-regulatory entities. See *co-regulation*.

**Media Specialist.** In schools, performs a wide range of educational roles. It can describe the technician who looks after the audiovisual or digital equipment, the librarian providing information services, a professor formally trained in media education or an outsider who brings his or her competences and resources to the teachers.

**Media.** The plural of "medium," refers to any vehicle which can convey or transmit information. Applies to all modern communication means: television, cinema, video, radio, photography, newspapers and magazines, music, video games, Internet and mobile telephony.

**Merchandising.** An element of packaging and marketing of a product intended for broadcast product or a media text. An analysis of the behaviour of the public as consumers aims at increasing sales, on any sorts of media-related vehicles. The use of famous characters appealing to young people and inoffensive to their parent, such as Mickey or Babar, on clothes, school material or breakfast cereals, is an example. See *market*.

**Mimesis.** Representation as a mirror of reality. Its opposite, *poiesis*, is pure invention and not the imitation of reality. By neither taking into account processes nor incorporating devices that construct the interpretation of representation, *mimesis* is limited to sending what he or she knows back to the viewer. See *poiesis*; *realism*.

**Mirror phase.** In psychoanalysis, the child's first experience of alienation, when he or she understands his or her difference and separation from the others. This occurs when looking at a mirror body-image (the mother's...), without it being a literal body image as reflected in a mirror. In media analysis, it is a notion used to account for the power of emotion invested by the public in images, as a reminder of that phase of alienation and of split recognition. See *psychoanalysis*; *gaze*.

**Mise-en-scène.** Composition of the image or the textual frame giving expressiveness to the various elements of the set (space, volumes, etc.). It aims at being natural and transparent. It tries

to maintain the attention of the spectator on the plot or the main character. It must not be confused with the editing process, as this composition takes place before the media text is recorded. See *editing*.

**Motivation.** The justifications of a sequence or a program. They can be aesthetic and based on style, realistic for the sake of authenticity, narrative meeting the needs of the story, or intertextual playing with genre conventions. In media education, an awareness of motivation helps learners look for different meanings in a text and propose their own interpretation of the messages under analysis. See *narration*; *formalism*.

**Multimedia.** Digital technology that integrates on the same vehicle a variety of media resources, such as sound, text, still or moving images and the possibility of interactivity.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships.** Coalitions of interested groups influencing governance and co-regulation. They come together in multi-level negotiation fora, where the representatives of the State, the media and telecom industries as well as the representatives of civil society meet to reach consensual solutions and draft recommendations. See *governance*; *co-regulation*.

**Narrative structure.** See *narrative*.

**Narrative.** The organization of events, characters and plot so as to produce a story. Plot and story refer just to a series of sequences whereas narrative relates to this more complex process, involving the purpose of the author or the producer in the stage setting and the editing as well as the expectations of the members of the public who draw on their knowledge of conventions and experience of plots to elaborate the narrative line in their minds. See *mise-en-scène*; *editing*; *story*; *plot*.

**Narrowcasting.** Media which broadcast messages at the local level or via platforms which identify specific publics, according to their age, their income, their gender, or interests. It is often associated with audience segmentation. See *media*; *production*.

**Naturalism.** A critical position that evaluates representations and texts according to their mimetic relation to reality, keeping to the outward appearances, and making the codes and conventions that create this effect of reality invisible. It can apply to the register of an actor or an actress, who aims at authenticity in his or her characterization. See *authenticity*; *formalism*; *mimesis*.

**Navigation.** The means of consulting data on digital networks, notably via servers and search engines. See *Internet*.

**News item.** Piece of information often from the police blotter or social notes. Contrasted to events, in the sense that its importance for a given society is very short-lived and anecdotal. See *event*.



**News.** Information that reports real facts, and their objective representation, in the print media as well as in the electronic media. Fiction, an arrangement of invented facts, is not news.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).** Independent organized groups that have stated interests and missions (improving development, journalism integrity, child welfare, for example). Among these are civic rights associations that monitor carefully the rights and duties of the media in different countries. They can use research based on international comparisons and precise actions in the field. The consequences of their analyses, if they consider that rights have been violated in a particular place, is the denunciation of these violations. In this way they influence or even form public opinion. See *co-regulation*.

**Objectivity.** An ideal, that information producers such as journalists strive to reach to legitimize their work. To this end, they establish norms of impartiality and minimization of bias. Faithful reproduction of the facts or the representation of multiple and balanced points of view on the facts are two strategies for approaching this ideal. See *subjectivity*.

**Ombudsmen.** A journalist who acts as liaison between the users and the media, trying to settle the complaints or pass on the suggestions of the public. He or she calls attention to some basic rules of the profession: journalistic interest of a subject, perspective, attention to the broadcasting schedule, application of guidelines and recommendations. See *MAS*.

**Parents.** See *family*.

**Parody.** A derivative media text which uses humour and satire to deconstruct another more serious text, while maintaining a credible plot and an autonomous narrative structure, based on and including elements of the original.

**Participation.** Active involvement in production or criticism of a media product. Media education fosters a learner's critical participation in the media, but direct participation per se is not one of its priorities. From the perspective of parents and educators, whose social role requires an involvement at the decision-making level, direct participation becomes desirable. See *access*; *repertoire of strategies*; *production*.

**Pedagogy.** Learner-centred educational methods that aim at developing intellectual training. In media education, a continuous negotiation between existing knowledge and new knowledge, sometimes by the direct transmission of information, sometimes by the inductive search for information. Media education fosters a pedagogy that tries to make the learning process move from passive acquisition to active utilisation. See *media education*.

**Performance.** In linguistics, an act of communication, as effected via spoken words or written texts, by a process of encoding or decoding. By

extension, in media education, a means of evaluation to ascertain the learner's capacity for interpretation or production of media texts. See *competence*.

**Phenomenology.** A critical position which centres on the subjectivity of the human experience. It insists on the importance of the body and the five senses taking into consideration an individual's situation in a specific time and place. Experience is not seen as determined by gender, race, language or social status but by direct contact with reality. In relation to media, phenomenology examines closely the properties of each medium and the way in which they modify the experience of various parts of the public. See *presence*.

**Photography.** A mechanical device and process that has the capacity to fix the image of a person, an object or a landscape by using the action of light on a prepared surface (emulsion, photo-conduction...). By extension, refers to the finished result of this process, with the connotation that it is an exact reproduction of the real-life model. Also the art and science of this practice. See *realism*; *analogical (process)*.

**Pleasure.** A dimension of emotional life, which consists of a combination of sensation and emotion. It creates a feeling of satisfaction and of gratification connected to the exercise of a pleasant activity, like the consumption of media texts. In media education, this notion makes it possible to pass "quality" judgments on a given text, as it evaluates for the author's efficiency in putting forward a convincing or stimulating argument. In this sense, "quality" can be part of an aesthetic pleasure. Such an analysis should allow students to understand why a text has succeeded or not in producing a strong emotional appeal, or in eliciting a sense of energy and fascination, for instance. See *public*; *reception*.

**Plot.** The order of events as they are presented in the narrative structure of a media text, allowing it to move from scene to scene, thus creating a logical and causal structure for the spectator or reader. See *story*; *mise-en-scène*.

**Poiesis.** Invented and imaginary worlds. See *mimesis*.

**Point of view.** In narrative, refers to the position of the character, omniscient or subjective. Can also refer to the level of expectation and interpretation of the public, in relation to the media text they are watching or listening to. See *narrative*; *interpretation*.

**Polysemy.** The capacity of a sign, and a media text, to have several meanings. Can lead to ambiguity and allow for different interpretations, by different parts of the public.

**Pornography.** The deliberate representation of obscene material about the body in order to create sexual arousal. Media texts tend to represent *eroticae* and *exoticae*: *eroticae* being the description of detailed aspects of sexual relations; *exoti-*



*cae* representing perversions and deviations like sado-masochism, zoophilia, necrophilia, paedophilia, etc. *See exhibitionism; voyeurism; scopophilia.*

**Post-modernism.** A critical position that questions concepts such as authenticity, authorship or stylistic progression. Implies strategies of reflexivity, parody, and discontinuity in the identification of the spectator to the hero. *See deconstruction; parody; reading.*

**Post-structuralism.** A critical position which criticizes structuralism, and lays the stress on the deconstruction of the meaning of a text, and on the demoting of the central status of the work of art and of the main hero. *See structuralism; formalism.*

**Practice.** *See uses.*

**Preparation.** A method in media education that consists in *preparing* the children to understand the media culture which surrounds them, and encourages them to participate in it actively. This approach emphasizes analytical and critical understanding as well as focusing on media productions that come from the work of the learners themselves. It is contrasted with methods that emphasize protection. *See media education; protection.*

**Presence.** The opposite of representation and unlike human or technical mediation. Refers to the immediacy of experience, and to the idea that a person can be in direct contact with reality, through the senses, unmediated by the social contraptions of language, ideology, or the cultural production of meaning. Presence can explain the pleasure experienced in consuming media texts that encourage immersion and emotional involvement. *See representation; phenomenology.*

**Press Council.** Meetings between the press and some representative citizens, on a monthly or fortnightly basis. Citizen complaints are examined and solutions are carefully considered. These solutions are sometimes printed in the columns of the newspaper to which the press council is attached. *See MAS.*

**Privacy.** A right which implies the respect for the intimate life of the person, when news and journalism are concerned. *See regulation.*

**Prize (award).** Reward given to mark the recognition of the profession for the quality of a media production. Prizes motivate and encourage creativity while garnering publicity for the recipient and the awarding organization. *See MAS.*

**Producer.** The initial and final authority in the elaboration of a media text. Depending on the country, the producer can be just a person or a company that provides the financial support for a production or the person who conceives a show and manages to make it with the available financial and technical means. *See production.*

**Production Values.** The elements of a media text which can attract and comfort the consuming

public, besides the plot and the narrative. These elements can be the stars, the costumes and accessories, the décor and the technical perfection of the product as it is reproduced (sound quality, colour continuity...). *See pleasure; production.*

**Production.** The industrial process that creates texts as well as the persons engaged in this process. It implies the recognition that media texts are fabricated with a conscious purpose in mind. Most media texts are produced and distributed by groups of persons, who often work for large companies, with commercial interests and activities that are conducted on a local, national and global scale. *See key-concepts.*

**Professional Ethics Workshops.** Places of debate between professionals and users, notably in the print media. They introduce the citizens to the work of the daily press and bring members of the public to discuss editorial choices, modes of inquiry, and issues of objectivity and pluralism. *See MAS.*

**Professional journal.** Contributes to the self-criticism of the profession and stimulates the standards of practice of journalists. It can publish examinations of news stories and can analyze their treatment. It can expose censored or suppressed documents. It also addresses relational issues of the editorial board (discrimination in terms of gender, race...) and, in certain cases, denounces the conflicts of interest between the board and the management of the media company. *See MAS.*

**Professional practice.** Following rules of procedure in letter and spirit either within a group or within a profession. The social phenomenon of media ethics is made visible in codes of conduct and charters. *See MAS.*

**Professionals.** In media, practitioners of the various branches of the broadcasting and the computing industries, such as the journalists, the technicians, the advertisers, the producers, the programmers, the software developers, etc.

**Programming.** In media, the organization of the schedule of media products on the channels in cinema, on radio and on television. Programming is fixed according to time slots and to the supposed presence of a target audience. In data processing and computing, programming is also the codification of a series of operations forming a program. *See production.*

**Promotion.** Techniques for marketing and distributing a media text to the public. They use such vehicles as TV guides, video catalogues, shop windows, advertising spots, film posters, Web sites, trailers and press releases. These commercial techniques use several media and a variety of specialized companies are involved in the process. *See marketing; commodification.*

**Propaganda.** The broadcasting of political messages by means of the mass media to build public opinion in support of a government, a party or





a person. It gathers support by using methods from journalism (quoting official sources, contrasting points of view...) but also subvert these methods with disinformation and brainwashing.

**Protection of minors.** Laws and rules that aim at protecting the physical and moral integrity of young under age people. They imply the attempt to create an appropriate context and to favour a specific environment for the young, including the right to one's own image or the right to privacy. Applications can range from encrypting images for the protection of anonymity to requiring permission before broadcasting news or fictions where children are portrayed. *See regulation.*

**Protection.** A method in media education that unmasks the misleading messages and the false values sometimes conveyed by the media, and encourages the learners to recognize, criticize and sometimes reject them. *See media education; preparation.*

**Psychoanalysis.** A critical position that considers systems of representation in the light of the role of the individual's unconscious and of repressed processes which shape the actions, the feelings and the motivations of a person. It relies heavily on language and on the various stages of the child's development, such as fetishism, the mirror phase, voyeurism, pleasure, etc. *See mirror phase; voyeurism.*

**Public Service Announcements.** Media spots that inform the public about questions of security, health, community services or the public affairs. They are produced and scheduled as commercials, but for non-commercial purposes.

**Public service obligations.** Duties imposed by law for the right to broadcast. Applied in news through measures like the candidate access rule, the personal attack rule, the political editorializing rule. In fiction, notably in advertisement, and in youth programming, they are fulfilled with educational and documentary products. They tend to be part of a channel's licensing requirements. They reflect the various rights and duties of the media before their publics. *See regulation.*

**Public service.** Refers to both a collective and social utility, and to the entity that regulates it. In some countries, media were historically considered as public utilities. Public service obligations exist in the commercial media, like the obligation to carry news. *See regulation.*

**Public sphere.** A variety of spaces, real and imaginary, where the citizens can meet to discuss and form their opinion. It implies diversified means of distributing information and media concerned about the public interest, in a non-commercial perspective. *See public service.*

**Public.** Refers to all persons who can receive a media text. At different times and according to different critical positions, various conceptions of the public have been put forward: audience, citizen, consumer, player. The postures of the public are also multiple: active, passive, critical,

oppositional, militant, participative, for example. Studying the public requires to take into account how people are being targeted and measured, and how they respond to the messages aimed at them. In media education, it is necessary to debate on these various conceptions of the public and to think through the implications of the different postures available. *See key-concept; reception; audience.*

**Publishing.** Production or reproduction of a written or audiovisual piece of work by a publisher or a media company. Computers increasingly facilitate the processing of materials for publication and reproduction. *See market.*

**Pyramidal structure.** The typical structure of the narrative of news, presents the facts by going from the least important points to the most important ones. In the case of the "inverted pyramid," the least important facts come last, so that the editors can easily cut them if constraints of space occur. *See news.*

**Quality.** A value judgment, that estimates the efficiency of a text as it convinces an audience of its statements or communicates its meaning. Can refer to a form of aesthetic pleasure as it allows for several degrees of meaning and produces emotional and cognitive enrichment. The references to high brow culture continue to influence such judgments, as against attachment to low brow culture, which is interpreted as a bid for popularity. *See mass culture; pleasure; reception; textual analysis.*

**Reading.** Exercise which implies the analysis and the evaluation of codes and production constraints of media texts. According to reception studies, reading can be dominant-hegemonic (the public receives the message as planned by the producer), oppositional (the public does not accept the initial message), or negotiated (the public modifies and adapts the message). *See writing; production.*

**Readings in reception.** Three stances, at least, on the part of the public: the dominant-hegemonic reading, the oppositional reading, or the negotiated reading. *See reading; reception.*

**Realism.** A critical position which refers to the place of representation between truth and authenticity. Various degrees of realism are present in media texts, from mimesis (which can be enhanced by an analogical process) to naturalism and formalism. Poiesis, on the contrary, refers to fantasy texts. In all cases, realism implies the presence of a system of codes and conventions. In media education, a discussion of realism stimulates thinking about the various criteria used to pass judgments on authenticity, truth, even objectivity. It allows learners to examine texts that clearly claim their imaginary dimension, and texts that play with the distinction between fantasy and reality, or else texts that assume a documentary style. *See representations; ideology.*

**Reception** (studies). An analysis focused on the public of a text rather than on its structure or in its semiology. According to researchers, reception can be passive or active. The upholders of media effects insist on the weight of representations and their cultivation in relation to the consumer habits of the public. The upholders of uses and gratifications consider that there are several publics, and several reading postures and strategies, with differentiated uses according to the individuals. *See incubation; reading; effects; uses.*

**Reflexivity.** A practice which consists in making the public aware of the means of production used to make a media text, by including them in the narrative process itself. This can be achieved by intertextuality, parody, humour, irony, etc. Viewers learn to maintain some distance from the illusion of a media text, by recalling that they are watching a construct that manipulates the conventions of realism in its representation. In media education, reflexivity is a strategy that allows learners to work on production issues. *See postmodernism; realism; production.*

**Regulation.** Establishes a buffer of intermediary agencies, with members coming from the state, the industrial sector and, sometimes, grassroots associations. Their mission is to keep watch over broadcast standards, to discuss the licensing of public airwaves and to make sure that ethical codes and public service obligations of the channels are being respected, under conditions of transparency. *See MAS.*

**Regulatory authority.** An administrative entity, whose mandate is to solve conflicts before or after legal decisions, using the authority of the State. In the media, such authority supports the principles of pluralism and cultural diversity and maintains the balance between diverse opinions, different rights and the expectations of different sectors, private or public. *See regulation; MAS.*

**Religious organizations.** They have played a central role in the promotion of media education aside from the formal educational system. Their motives are diverse. The "theology of liberation" has considered media as a means of providing popular education. At the other end of the spectrum, the "moral majority" has fretted about the spectacle of immorality offered by the media. *See co-regulation.*

**Repertoire of teaching techniques.** In media education, there are six techniques mostly, though they are not exclusive of others: textual analysis, contextual analysis, case studies, translations, simulations, and production. *See media education.*

**Representation.** The portrayal of an absent or abstract object, by means of semiotic resources (images, sounds, words). The media are a vehicle for representation, as they relate to reality. Mimesis as distinct from simulation or from poesis give representation its claims to reality, using signs (icons, indexes, symbols). In media education, discussing representation makes the

learners remember that the media offer a constructed version of the world, by selecting and combining events and characters. *See key-concepts; realism; mimesis.*

**Reproduction.** The act of providing a faithful equivalent to an original work and of multiplying copies of it by a technical process. This possibility is present in the analogical and digital media and can lend itself to merchandising as well. The impact of mechanical reproduction is seen as having the capacity of modifying the meaning of the original, as in the case of Mona Lisa, as famous for its copies as for its place in the Louvre and the formal quality of its painted surface. *See representation.*

**Resistance.** Action of counteracting pressure or fighting intimidation or violence. In the context of media reception, reading strategies of the public, who can decide to avoid or to oppose dominant or hegemonic messages. Parody or bricolage count among the most visible strategies of resistance, to subvert the commodification of values and persons by the media. *See bricolage; parody; reading.*

**Scenario.** A working draft of the action-line, narrative and dialogue planned for the production of a media text. In pedagogy, refers to a strategy that gives learners a series of still or moving images which they have to select and organize in order to reconstruct the editing of a cinematic or photographic sequence. This activity allows them to explore ways in which montage can be used to create an emotion or an atmosphere, and to study how several types of narratives can be built from the same material. *See repertoire of strategies; narrative.*

**Scopophilia.** The pleasure of the gaze and of the act of looking, particularly when watching erotic or sexual forms of entertainment. Its general character, devoid of perversion, keeps it distinct from voyeurism. It is one of the main motivations to watch a media text. *See voyeurism; pleasure.*

**Scrambling.** A technical system for coding programs. The media industry uses it to manage viewer access to subscription or pay-per-view shows. Parents can use it to filter the programs which they do not wish their children to see, on the basis of a pre-established classification. *See MAS.*

**Script.** The scenario of a media text, that includes directions for technical editing as well as dialogues and interactions. It provides the sequence for each stage of the plot. A script is also a cognitive means of representing knowledge based on narrative routines, that the spectator or reader recognizes. *See narration.*

**Search engine.** A tool for navigating the Internet, that allows users to find websites via keywords and referencing systems. *See filter.*

**Segmentation.** The production of a text meant for a limited audience and tailored to their specific needs. *See narrowcasting.*



**Self-evaluation.** An intellectual attitude encouraging students to think about their practice with media and the relationship between intent and result. They can thus realize fully the complexity of the process for creating meaning with media. Instead of reducing production to a simple illustration of a notion or a principle, this attitude can allow them to reach new levels of theoretical understanding. It requires writing reports during and at the end of the production process. *See pedagogy; repertoire of strategies.*

**Self-regulated monitoring entities.** Voluntary associations of members of a media industry, such as the software producers or the advertisers. They aim at producing recommendations valid across a variety of vehicles in their line of business. *See MAS; self-regulation.*

**Self-regulation.** Solutions to problems and rules adopted by the media professionals themselves, often referred to as "Media Accountability Systems" or MAS (such as ethical charters, standards codes, etc.). This process fosters trust with the public providing for transparency, inside as well as outside the profession. It establishes the standards and the rules which communicators must respect in their work while asserting the importance of freedom of expression. *See MAS; regulation; co-regulation.*

**Semiology.** The study of the signs and the rules that combine them to produce meaning. Related to structuralism, with the idea that media texts function as a language, with writing and reading processes involved. Meaning emerges from the interaction of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic combinations, as well as the relationship between signifier and signified. It is useful in media education to introduce learners to textual analysis. *See structuralism; interpretation; textual analysis; signs.*

**Semiotic resources.** All the forms of language: sound, image, text, music, body movements, etc. They contribute to the creation of meaning and produce knowledge and representation. They activate cognitive structures in three dimensions—rational, emotional and spiritual. They match signs with knowledge to show social phenomena not in isolation but in a network of relations. *See language; representation; semiotics.*

**Semiotics.** The study of the signs and their meaning, based on the idea that signs are more or less connected to reality. From icon to index to symbol, the relation becomes more distant. Meaning emerges from the interaction of the various semiotic resources creating knowledge and representation (language, sound, image, text, music...) with society's codes, values and representations. *See semiology; interpretations; semiotic resources; signs.*

**Shot.** Arrangement and composition of the moving or still image, recorded continuously. The great number of shots creates a visual grammar: close-up, medium shot, semi-close-up, wide angle shot, panning shot, for example. They allow visual transitions. This grammar is made into visual sequences in the *mise-en-scène* and the editing process. *See grammar; visual literacy.*

**Sign.** In linguistics, a unit of meaning made of the relationship between a concrete part, the signifier (word, image, object), and an abstract part, the signified. In a given society, by convention mostly, signs represent a complex reality. The media participate in the production and in the distribution of signs, whose significance varies according to the context. *See semiotics; semiology.*

**Signified.** The abstract part of a unit of meaning, its conceptual dimension and its contents, which can be denotative or connotative. For instance, an ad for a video game can signify, according to the context, either freedom or speed. *See semiology.*

**Signifier.** The concrete part of a unit of meaning, as materialized by such vehicles as words or images. For instance, an ad for a video game can locate the game in an arcade or a theme park, to be a signifier for authenticity or gregariousness. *See semiology.*

**Simulation.** Action or process which makes what is not real appear as reality. Within the media framework, simulation allows the creation of total and complete universes, notably in the video games. Simulation multiplies the difficulties in keeping clear borders between the original and its copy in the era of analogical and digital reproduction. In the context of the classroom, simulation takes place as role playing, a creative activity where groups of learners imagine a situation and define its main directions, which can go as far as to produce a media text. This activity trains them to think about the way various publics are targeted through various texts. It presents the additional advantage of providing them with hands-on experience of some dimensions of media that are otherwise difficult to tackle in class. *See course sequence; repertoire of strategies.*

**Socialization.** The processes which surround the child and introduce him or her to acceptable rules and behaviours in a given society. Media intervene in this process as they propose selective versions of the world, and not a direct access to it. They present ideas, images and representations, fact-based or fictional, that inevitably mould any vision of reality. *See effects; uses.*

**Software.** All the procedures and the digital programs necessary to run a computer or a data processing system. It can be used for the systems operation, for problem resolution (spreadsheet, word processor) or for basic tasks (compiler, interpreter). The software developed for schools is either plainly didactic or with its learning purpose embedded in play. *See hardware; computer processing.*

**Special effects.** Film or digital processes that simulate visual or sound elements to intensify the drama or suggest a realistic insertion of diverse fanciful or even supernatural objects or persons. They are numerous in blockbuster movies and video games. Digitalization has made it possible to blend them seamlessly with the other elements of the background. *See realism.*

**Spectacle.** A representation or a mise-en-scène which offers itself to the gaze. To call ours a "society of the spectacle" refers to the notion that representations dominate mass culture, be it high brow or low brow. All the social relations seem to be mediated by images and sounds without or within the entertainment industry or show business. *See gaze; representation.*

**Stereotypes.** Social mechanism providing shortcuts for identifying other people, either negatively or positively, by the association of stable elements about a nation, a social category, etc. In media education, it is important to examine the various functions of stereotypes, as they are used by producers and members of the public, and to be aware of the argument according to which media either tend to ignore minorities or cast them in a bad light. *See ideology; representation.*

**Stock.** In broadcasting but also on Internet, it refers to long-lasting programs, with federative contents that are not likely to become dated with the passing of time. Series and films last over time, whereas flow programmes do not. *See production; scheduling; flow.*

**Story.** The combination of plot and mise-en-scène, as events are arranged in sequence in the time and space of the media text. *See narrative; plot.*

**Story-board.** The editing plan, in the form of drawings, visualizing the various shots in a film or an audiovisual production. Organized in sequences, it produces a first impression of the final product. *See scenario.*

**Strategy.** In the media, the operations chosen to implement the company's predefined policies. The scheduling grid, for example, shows the way a media institution tries to structure the time and the behaviour of the public. Other strategies for sales and communication are also used in merchandizing and marketing.

**Structuralism.** A critical position that applies the principles of linguistics to the analysis of texts. It holds that discrete units function in relation the each other, to produce meaning. Meaning is seen as constructed on binary oppositions, like presence/absence or good/evil, and also on paradigmatic and syntagmatic combinations. In media analysis, it has been used to identify recurrent patterns and formulas in genres. *See formalism; grammar.*

**Style sheets.** In journalism, standards, guidelines and recommendations for representing information. *See MAS.*

**Subculture.** That culture fostered by different subsets of the public, that define themselves in opposition or in resistance to both the dominant elite culture and mass culture. The members of these subcultures recognize each other by their practices, their lifestyles, their bricolage of media texts and fashion, as well as their subversion of daily consumer objects. *See fan; resistance; reading.*

**Subjectivity.** The mental state which gives primacy to an individual's states of consciousness in the interpretation of a text. It implies that any media text is analyzed through the individual's filter of values and specific beliefs. *See objectivity.*

**Surveillance.** The careful monitoring of a certain person or of a certain space. The technologies of the screen are used for purposes of distant and unobtrusive surveillance. It is one of the means through which a community exerts social control over its members. *See gaze.*

**Symbol.** In semiotics, the most arbitrary sign, on the path between reality and representation. The relation between the two is the result of cultural conventions, like the word "channel" to represent a media company, which bears no resemblance to any existing channel and is therefore not iconic nor does it have a real physical presence, an essential quality of an index. *See icon; index; semiotics.*

**Synergy.** The dynamic and coordinated action of various sectors of media and telecommunications industries. Allows media corporations to use both strategies of vertical integration between production, distribution, services, on television, cable and other vehicles, and strategies of horizontal expansion, over all kinds of local and international territories. *See market; vertical integration.*

**Target.** The clients aimed at by agencies specialized in marketing, which try to reach the spectators which correspond best to a certain media message or product. Consumers are mostly targeted on the basis of their demographic data, their patterns of media use, zip codes and income levels. Client details are packaged and sold to sponsors who wish to place ads on the media that have been identified as the best vehicle for them. *See market; advertisement; publics.*

**Targeting.** Process that prepares the parameters that determine the public for which a message or a text is addressed. In media education, it consists in analyzing how the media aim at certain publics and in decoding the parameters used to seduce them. *See target; public.*

**Technological determinism.** The belief that machines are unavoidable and that technological codes are all powerful, and do not depend on their social construction and their use. The opposing view, technological relativism, holds that the human factor comes first and that the role of machines must be set in the context of their social uses. In media education, this determinism leads to a tendency to believe that the inductive methods promoted by new technologies are solely embedded in them whereas, in fact, the stress laid on the personal research, the learner's autonomy and the trial and error process comes from a pedagogical strategy that has evolved outside the technological realm.

**Technology.** The tools, machines and processes necessary to produce a media text. The new





communication technologies are machines which can produce discourse (blogs for instance) while being machines facilitating discourse (computers as hardware, for example). In media education, technology plays a large role in the construction and the connotation of a text. *See production; key-concepts; technological determinism; discourse.*

**Tele-centres.** A space where computers are made accessible to communities, thus triggering a process of education and training of children and adults alike. *See access; co-regulation.*

**Television.** An audiovisual device which uses the spoken and written language, as well as the "language" of still and moving images and broadcasts them widely. By extension, all the processes, activities and services that transmit news and entertainment to a large number of viewers. *See media; vehicle.*

**Text.** The programs, films, images, Web sites, etc., carried by the various means of communication. In their use of codes, they function in the same way as language. They are constructs and their different parts can be broken down and analyzed. *See writing; reading.*

**Textual analysis.** Differs from content analysis in that it produces in-depth scrutiny: it tends to focus on specific texts and examine them in detail. The chosen texts are often very short or have limited reach. Such analysis generally begins with a *description*, identifying elements like the shots and the rhythm of editing. Then it reaches the stage of defining the meaning of the text, including connotations, associations and mood, as conveyed by the various associations between its elements. Finally learners move on to a third stage, and they are encouraged to make judgments on the text as a whole. These judgments may relate to the values or ideologies they have identified in the text. *See media education.*

**Translation.** An educational strategy essentially interested in the differences which appear when a given source text is transferred on a different media or a different genre. This approach can be analytical as well as practical. Learners are asked to examine the treatment of a given issue in two different media, or for two different audiences, such as the film adaptation of a novel or the transformation of a news item into a docudrama. This kind of activity shows how the intended audience of a text can affect the ideological or moral message it carries. *See repertoire of strategies.*

**Transparency.** An aesthetic quality characteristic of some media texts which aim at making invisible or natural the codes and the conventions of their production to achieve a strong degree of realism. It is often applied to Hollywood productions, such as films or television series. *See editing; realism; shots.*

**Unit of work.** *See course sequence.*

**Use value.** The function originally attributed to an object. It is often contrasted to exchange value,

which refers to its price in a market constrained by supply and demand, and to labour value, evaluated on the work necessary for its elaboration and production. These notions often appear in advertising, where, for instance, an object like a car can have a use value as a means of transportation but also an exchange value as a luxury item, as in the case of a red sports car, and labour value because of the hand-crafted leather seats for instance.

**Uses.** The various ways in which the public appropriate the media in their daily life, with specific habits and practices. It implies an active attitude toward reception, which can reach forms of oppositional or negotiated reading. *See public; effects.*

**Value.** Understood either in the moral or social sense, as the template for making judgments or adopting behaviour, or in the general anthropological sense of what constitutes the rules of life in a given society at a given time. In media education, it is also the quality of a text that has effectively produced the desired effect.

**Vehicle (or medium).** Refers to the medium rather than the media, that is to say the material process used to record words, images and sounds. Can be paper, analogical or digital. It does not have the same properties as the aesthetic forms to which it lends materiality. *See media.*

**Verisimilitude.** The means of getting closer to truth and authenticity. It uses codes that are close to realism and adds to those codes a value which the public can find in a message. This value leans more towards a sense of what feels acceptable than towards what is real. *See realism.*

**Vertical integration.** An industry practice. A company buys up related companies and resources to control all the steps of production. In the media, the tendency is to concentrate three functions within one corporation: production studios, distribution networks and on-line services. This can increase market shares and reduce competition. Recently, vertical integration has led to a wave of mega-mergers and the reduction of the number of competitors. This has affected the supply of programs and its diversity. *See production ; globalisation.*

**Video game.** A recording of images and sounds that creates a virtual time and space, in which the movements and the choices of the players are controlled electronically (mouse, joystick, etc.), via a display screen. By extension, it refers to the contents itself, that allows the player to immerse himself or herself into simulated universes with very precise rules. Video games can be self-contained (DVDs) or evolving on-line.

**Video-tape.** A form of analogical recording that makes it possible to duplicate audiovisual programs rapidly and cheaply. *See reproduction; vehicle.*

**Viewing Committees.** The deciding voice in terms of purchasing shows and in programming

them. Decision-makers responsible for the channel's objectives or in charge of specific units of programs are assisted by members coming from the public (parents, psychologists, therapists...). *See regulation.*

**Violence.** Power struggle or intimidation forcing somebody to act against his or her will, and sometimes resulting in death. The media tend to represent violence in various ways : physical or armed aggression, psychological or moral pressure. Violent scenes are often present in action movies and are the object of spectacular special effects. The impact of represented violence on children is subject to controversy: effects research considers it as traumatic, uses and gratifications considers it as harmless. *See effects; uses.*

**Virtual reality.** An interactive system of simulation, by means of computer generated images. It creates a time and space universe which is neither tangible nor physical and yet in which objects and persons can move as in the physical and material time and space. It is often used in video games to offer universes of coherent signs on which players can act. *See cyberspace; digital technology; simulation.*

**Visual literacy.** The methodical development of the capacity to look at visual information and to

interpret it so that the visual elements contribute to the meaning of the whole. Included in media education, as either integrated in the whole exercise, or taken as a discrete aspect of it. *See media education.*

**Voyeurism.** A form of perversion of the pleasure in the act of looking. The spectator can sometimes have the feeling of being forced into such a position. *See exhibitionism; scopophilia; pornography.*

**Writing.** An exercise which implies the appropriation of the codes and the constraints of the production of media texts to generate personal, original texts. *See production; code; reading.*

**Youth.** A vague age group that varies according to context, and tends to include several sub-groups : toddlers (until 4), children (until 7), pre-teenagers (from 8 to 12) and teenagers (from 13 to 18 +). These groups tend to be presented either as innocent victims of the media, or as autonomous and critical members of the public. *See publics.*

**Zoom shot.** A camera movement and change of focal length that suggests a sense of rapid closing up or backing off that takes the audience by surprise.





# REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND GOOD PRACTICES

These references, resources and good practices refer back to various sections and guidebooks. They are meant to encourage networking among the community of media educators, so that they can exchange experiences and pedagogical tools and documents. They are not exhaustive and need to be completed by each user. When possible, the language of access is given in brackets.

## I. BIBLIOGRAPHY CITED BY THE CONTRIBUTORS

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The version of the handbooks for teachers and students has drawn substantially on original publications produced by the English and Media Centre (London, England) and the British Film Institute, particularly:

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- > *The English Curriculum Media*. English and Media Centre.
- > *Secondary Media Education*. British Film Institute.
- > *Moving Images in the Classroom*. British Film Institute/English and Media Centre/Film Education.

**Useful further reading** may be found in:

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- > Buckingham, David and Julian Sefton-Green. *Cultural Studies Goes to School*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994.
- > Lusted, David. *The Media Studies Book: A Guide for Teachers*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- > Marsh, Jackie and Elaine Millard. *Literacy and Popular Culture*. London: Paul Chapman, 2000.

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## 2. RESOURCES

### Media Education

- > **Children Now (USA)**. Non-profit organization which provides an elaborate directory presenting resources and links on issues related to "Children and the media". [ENG]
- > **CLEMI -Liaison Centre for Education, Media and Information-France**. Organization associated with the national centre of pedagogical documentation under the supervision of the Ministry of Education of France. Designs and develops training programs to help students develop critical skills about the media by incorporating them into education. [FRA, ENG, SPA]
- > **Educators Net (Canada)**. List of websites for developing media related activities. [ENG]
- > **Educnet (France)**. Organization overseen by Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research of France, providing information about the use of information and communication technologies in France's education system. [FRE, ENG, SPA]
- > **Media Education Foundation -MEF-(USA)**. Educational organization dedicated to media research and creating resources for teachers. [ENG]
- > **Media Literacy Review -MLR -at the Center of advanced technology in education of the University of Oregon (USA)**. Website supported by the Media Literacy Online Project (MLOP) offers links to media education resources such as; curricular maps, study guides, and educational institutions, among other information. [ENG]
- > **National Centre for Educational Information and Communication-CNICE-(Spain)**. Resources and information about projects focused on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). [SPA]
- > **Public Broadcasting Service-PBS-(USA)**. Website which offers materials to help parents and guardians educate their children about using the media correctly. [ENG, SPA]
- > **The British Film Institute (UK)**. Conducts research and offers training programs for media education. [ENG]
- > **The English and Media Centre (UK)**. Develops documents and training tools for media education. [ENG]
- > **The European Schoolnet (EU)**. International association, made up of more than 26 European ministries of education, working towards the educational use of information and communication technologies. [GER, ENG, FRE, SPA, DUT]
- > **The Media Awareness Network-MNET-(Canada)**. Organization that develops media literacy programs and resources for educators, parents and guardians. [ENG, FRE]
- > **TV&ME (Canada)**. Program launched by official organizations and government which offers interactive resources and a collection of materials for educators and parents to teach their children to critically analyze media messages. [ENG, FRE]
- > **Youth Media Corps-KGED-(USA)**. Organization which works with Media Education professionals to improve young people's media literacy skills. [ENG]

### Digital Education

- > **ActDEN (USA)**. Digital network for parents and educators on teaching children how to use the Internet. Provides distance education and on-line tutorials. [ENG]
- > **Aldea Digital (Spain)**. Project by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, aimed at integrating rural schools in communication networks. Offers resources and instructional guides in technology and education. [SPA]
- > **British Educational Communications and Technology Agency-BECTA-(UK)**. A government agency's support website for national organizations using and developing information and communication technology. [ENG]
- > **Media Communications Association International-MCAI-(USA)**. Organization focused on collaborative networking, forum development for education, and resources for information. [ENG]
- > **National Centre of Communication and Information Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports (Spain)**. Instructional digital resources classified by educational level and type: support materials, thematic websites, educational software, and dictionaries. [SPA]
- > **The Windsor School's Virginia Wing Library (USA)**. Centre that offers a list of bibliographic references and links related to Education and Communication. [ENG]
- > **TV Ontario (Canada)**. Documents, articles, and resources for teaching the Internet and television. Guidelines and important themes about children and the Internet and television. [ENG]

### Media education On-line Curricula

- > **Inclusive Curricula 2000: OISE at University of Toronto (Canada)**. Documents, strategies, and resources for developing basic curricula in primary schools and colleges. [ENG]
- > **National Centre of Communication and Information Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports (Spain)**. Instructional digital resources corresponding to different levels in the Spanish education system: Preschool, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Vocational Training, etc. [SPA]
- > **Public Broadcasting Service (USA)**. Website offering instructional and informational materials to parents and guardians to help them educate their children. [ENG, SPA]
- > **Quebec Ministry of Education Instructional Materials Site (Canada)**. Documents about information and communication technology and integrating them with the Internet. [FRE, ENG]
- > **Teaching Online (USA)**. Materials for distance education development for different disciplines. [ENG]
- > **The Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation (OSSTF-FEESO)- (Canada)**. Educational website directory including programs and curricula, general and specialized search engines, and instructional materials. [ENG]
- > **TV Ontario (Canada)**. Curricular content for different educational levels, allowing one to search by subject and/or key words. [ENG]

## 3. INSTITUTIONS AND

## GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED IN COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

### Academic centres

- > **Asian Media Access (USA)**. National organization located on the campus of the Minneapolis University dedicated to designing Media Education programs for Asian citizens in the USA. [ENG]
- > **Centre for Media Studies (USA)**. Located at the School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Amongst other information, focuses on research about Youth and Media Education. [ENG]
- > **Centre for the study of Children, Youth and Media (UK)**. Media research centre at the Educational Institute, University of London. [ENG]
- > **European Association of Distance Teaching Universities-EADTU- (EU)**. Association focused on the development and research of distance education and e-learning in Europe. [ENG]
- > **International Association of Youth Researchers of Communication-AIJIC-(Spain)**. Forum for collecting and sharing resources and ideas about communication. This is a project of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. [SPA]
- > **Office of Communication and Education at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)**. Research group specialized in developing Communication and Education projects, specifically in Media Education. [SPA]
- > **University of Vermont (UVM)-Burlington (USA)**. List of universities and other organizations working in the Communication and Education field. [ENG]

### Official Organizations

#### Africa

- > **Ministry of Education (Algeria)**. Documents about the national curricula and the education system in Algeria. [FRE]
- > **Ministry of Education (Egypt)**. Information about the national curricula for education and characteristics about the education system. [ARA]
- > **Ministry of Education (Morocco)**. Official documents, research, validated regulations in education, and links to the ministries of education in the Moroccan provinces. [FRE, ARA, SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education (the Island of Mauritius)**. Information related to the country's education system. [ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (the Republic of South Africa)**. Documents about the country's education system, and links to publications and reports related to education. [ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (Tunisia)**. Links to different governmental departments which work in areas related to education. [FRE]
- > **National Institute for Educational Development-NIED-(Namibia)**. Publications, research projects, information about education-

al developments in Namibia, and other aspects about the country's education system. [ENG]

#### America

- > **Department of Education (USA)**. Information about the national curricula, official documents and information about the education system, and projects and research programs in education. [ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (Brazil)**. List of educational programs and instructional materials for different educational levels. [POR]
- > **Ministry of Education (Chile)**. Information about the reforms and recent news in Chile's education system. Includes links to the on-line library and other on-line educational services. [SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education (Guatemala)**. Official legislative, statistical and updated information related to the education system. [SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education (Mexico)**. Official documents, information, and a selection of news focused on Mexico's educational panorama. [SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education (Peru)**. Official documents covering educational regulations, databases with statistical educational information, and information about educational programs. [SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education (Venezuela)**. A large overview of the country's educational projects and plans. [SPA]
- > **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Argentina)**. Official documents, research, validated regulations for educational training, and links to the ministries of education in the country's provinces. [SPA]
- > **National Technological Institute of Nicaragua-INATEC- (Nicaragua)**. Official documentation, regulations, and programs for the Nicaraguan education system. [SPA]

#### Asia/Pacific

- > **Department of Education (Hong Kong)**. Educational information about teaching methods and educational projects in Hong Kong. [CHI, ENG]
- > **Department of Education (Macao)**. Information about the education system, student materials, references to research centres, and a detailed graph of educational structure. [POR, CHI, ENG]
- > **Department of Education (Malaysia)**. Information about the education system and official documents about formal education training. [IND, ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (Australia)**. A description of the objectives of the national curriculum, information about training programs in media education, resources and link. [ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (Brunei)**. Information about the structure of Brunei's education system, directory of their schools, and their contact information. [ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (China)**. Updated news and information about the education system in China. [CHI]
- > **Ministry of Education (India)**. Information

about educational policy, structure of education system, and links to reports and documents about the educational developments in India. [ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (New Zealand)**. Official documents about New Zealand's education system. [ENG]

#### Europe

> **Ministry of Education (Austria)**. Information about academic programs, the education system, and a list of educational centres in Austria. [AUS, ENG, FRE]

> **Ministry of Education (Belarus)**. General characteristics of the country's education system, and interesting news and information. [RUS]

> **Ministry of Education (Belgium, Dutch-speaking community)**. Information about the Belgian education system, official documents, publications and information about educational projects. [DUT]

> **Ministry of Education (Belgium, French-speaking community)**. Official documents about the different levels of education, resources for professors, training for educators, Internet activities, and links to interesting websites. [FRE]

> **Ministry of Education (Belgium, German-speaking community)**. Information about the education system and links to research articles on Communications. [DUT, FRE, ENG, GER]

> **Ministry of Education (Bulgaria)**. Information about current regulations in education training, includes instructional materials and resources. [BUL]

> **Ministry of Education (Czech Republic)**. Data and documents about the structure of the country's education system. [CZE, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Denmark)**. Information about the educational system, level by level, also includes documents related to current legal regulations for education training. [DAN, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Estonia)**. Information about structure and the different educational levels. [EST]

> **Ministry of Education (Finland)**. Information about the Finnish education system, official documents and projects, and instructional resources. [ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (France)**. General information about characteristics and structure of the French education system. [FRE]

> **Ministry of Education (Germany)**. Information about structure and characteristics of German education system. Permits access to educational services and German educational organizations. [GER, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Iceland)**. Education levels and the objectives of Iceland's education system. [ENG, ISL, SWE]

> **Ministry of Education (Ireland)**. Information related to education, legislative documents, and main objectives for the different educational levels. [ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Lithuania)**. Information and official documents related to the country's education system and its main educational objectives. [LIT, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Luxembourg)**.

Information about education system, and links to the educational centres in the country. [FRE]

> **Ministry of Education (Macedonia)**. General information about the country's education system, objectives, and how it functions. [MAC, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Malta)**. Official documents and information about country's education system, links to those governmental and non-governmental organizations and educational institutions who participate in national education system. [ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Poland)**. Information about the education system and basic characteristics of academic levels. [POL, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Portugal)**. Official documents and information about the education system, legislation pertaining to educational institutions, and references to important educational publications. [POR]

> **Ministry of Education (Romania)**. Information about structure of Romania's education system, and documents for education training. [ROM]

> **Ministry of Education (Russia)**. Information about Russian education system, the structure, and main objectives. Presents current news in education. [RUS, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Slovakia)**. Official documents and information about Slovakian education system, and notices for seminars and events related to education. [SLO]

> **Ministry of Education and Culture (Cyprus)**. Information about the structure and other characteristics of the country's education system. [ENG, GRE]

> **Ministry of Education and Science (Albania)**. Official information and documents about the various educational levels in Albania, the roles of the national organizations in education system, and facts about current educational programs. [ALB, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports (Spain)**. Major documents describing the Spanish education system. [SPA]

> **Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (Slovenia)**. Publications about education, official documents about the Slovenian education system, and current education news. [SLO, ENG]

> **Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (Greece)**. Official information about the Greek education system, and interesting facts about the state of education. [GRE, ENG]

#### Middle East

> **Ministry of Education (Bahrain)**. Information about the country's educational aspects, statistics, official documents, and courses of study for different educational levels. [ARA, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Israel)**. Information about the education system, and its most important programs. [HEB]

> **Ministry of Education (Jordan)**. Information about Jordanian education system, its educational projects, and a database of statistical information. [ARA, ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Kuwait)**. Updated news and information about the national education system. [ARA]

> **Ministry of Education (Lebanon)**. Official

documents about the country's education system, statistical information and references to important educational publications. [FRE, ENG]

- > **Ministry of Education (Turkey).** Official documents about structure of national education system, a database of statistical education information, and instructional teaching resources. [TUR, ENG]
- > **Ministry of Education (United Arab Emirates).** A brief description of the objectives for the country's education system. [ENG]
- > **Palestinian Academic Network (Palestine).** General information about aspects related to education and the Palestinian culture. [ENG]

#### 4. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- > **APTE (France).** Association dedicated to promoting media literacy in education. [FRE]
- > **Canadian Association Of Media Education Organizations-CAMEO-(Canada).** Organization focused on developing critical skills and media literacy. [ENG]
- > **Center for Media Education-CME-(USA).** Non-governmental organization dedicated to creating a quality electronic media culture for family and their youth. [ENG]
- > **Center for Media Literacy-CML-(USA).** Organization dedicated to, among many aspects, promoting and supporting media literacy education. [ENG]
- > **Children Now (USA).** Organization dedicated to encouraging positive and correct use of the media, and fostering Media Education for parents and children. [ENG]
- > **Citizens form Media Literacy-CML-(USA).** Non-profit interest group from North Carolina, linking media literacy with concepts and practices of good citizenship. [ENG]
- > **Education Network-KGED-(USA).** Organization which offers resources and instructional material to foster Media Education. [ENG]
- > **Institute of Educational Technology-IET-(USA).** International research centre dedicated to teaching, investigation, and developing projects for integrating technology and education. [ENG]
- > **International Society for Technology in Education-ISTE-(USA).** Organization whose objective is to develop and implement new technologies in primary and secondary education. [ENG]
- > **Media Ed (USA).** Foundation dedicated to media education pedagogy for formal and informal education. [ENG]
- > **Media Education Foundation-MEF-(USA).** Organization dedicated to Media Education research in order to provide alternative pedagogical methods. [ENG]
- > **Michigan Association for Media Education-MAME-(USA).** Association made up for more than 1,400 media education specialists encouraging different initiatives in this field. [ENG]
- > **School of the Future of the University of São Paulo (Brazil).** Multi-disciplinary laboratory which studies how technology improves education. [POR, ENG]
- > **The international centre for distance learning-ICDL-(UK).** European research

centre based in the Open University. [ENG]

#### 5. SITES PROVIDING DATA ON STUDIES AND RESEARCH ABOUT COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- > **Department for Education and Skills (UK).** National and international statistical information about different educational levels classified by: context, age, level, etc. Includes links to other education websites. [ENG]
- > **EdStats (UNESCO and WORLD BANK).** Statistical studies on topics in education. A project from the World Bank's Education Group of Human Development Network (HDNED) and the Development Economics Data Group (DECDG) in connection with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the OECD and other agencies. [ENG]
- > **Educational Resources Information Center-ERIC-(USA).** Department of Education information system for national and international education community. Includes databases, publications, and other educational services. [ENG]
- > **E-STAT (Canada).** Statistical information about different topics and fields of study in Canada, especially related to teaching and learning tools focused on the Canadian education community. [ENG, FRE]
- > **Eurydice (EU).** Statistical outcomes from basic indicators for incorporating new communication technologies in European education systems. [ENG]
- > **General Secretary of the Andean Community (Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia).** Statistical data about education and the use of communication technologies in these countries. [SPA, ENG]
- > **International Archive of Education Data-IAED-(USA).** Project funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Collects and analyzes data related to education in the USA and other countries. [ENG]
- > **Israel Science and Technology Homepage: Education Databases (Israel).** Israeli science and technology database which includes links to other international databases and offers statistical information about Israel's educational panorama. [ENG, HEB]
- > **Office of Statistics of Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (Spain).** Statistics about educational and cultural aspects from the Office of Statistics (MECD) and Statistical Services from the Autonomous Communities Departments of Education. [SPA]
- > **UNESCO Institute for Statistics-UIS-(UNESCO).** Statistical information about education, science, technology, culture and communication. [ENG]

#### 6. PORTALS AND SEARCH ENGINES ON MEDIA

- > **Excite.** Search engine with media directory classified by country, language, and area. [SPA, GER, FRE, ITA]
- > **Kidon Media Link.** List of European, North American, Latin American, Asian, African, and Australian media links classified by countries,



and type of media. [ENG, SPA, FRE, GER, ARA, RUS, CHI, DUT]  
 > **Media UK.** On-line media directory which provides links to radio stations, television channels, newspapers, and magazines. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport-MECD-(Spain).** Documents about media regulation in Spain, links to principal educational television programs in Spain and Latin America. [SPA]  
 > **Newslink (USA).** Directory of different media in the world, classified by media type and geographic location. [ENG]  
 > **Portal Mediosmedios.** Directory of different media in the world, organized by countries and media type. [SPA]

## 7. SITES WITH OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS ABOUT CURRICULA IN MEDIA EDUCATION

### Media Education

> **Media Awareness Network (Canada).** Interesting facts about Canada's Media Education curricula, offers detailed information about Media Education programs in the country's provinces. [ENG, FRE]  
 > **School Media Curricula: Minneapolis Public Schools (USA).** Media Education curricula for Minneapolis, Minnesota school district classified by ages (5-9, 9-14, 14-18). Provides official documents about assessment and evaluation for Media Education. [ENG]

### General Education

#### Africa

> **Ministry of Education (Mauritius).** Primary education curricula, including objectives and subjects studied. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (South Africa).** Detailed information for formal education and administration training. [ENG]

#### America

> **Department of Education (USA).** Index of links for different education levels and their corresponding curricula. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Chile).** Detailed information about materials and objectives for each level of the national education system. [SPA]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Mexico).** Index of curricula for different levels in Mexican education system, and directory of schools and teacher training centres in Mexico. [SPA]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Peru).** Database of curricula for each level of primary education in Peru. [SPA]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Venezuela).** Brief description of educational plans and objectives for different grade levels in Venezuela's education system. [SPA]  
 > **Ministry of Education of Ontario (Canada).** Official documents corresponding to Ontario's primary and secondary education curricula. [FRE, ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education of Quebec (Canada).**

Official documents corresponding to curricula for the Canadian education system. [FRE, ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Argentina).** Official documents for requisites in educational training and the general education curricula. [SPA]

#### Asia

> **Ministry of Education (Brunei).** Brief description of different levels in the country's education system. [ENG]  
 > **Department of Education (Hong Kong).** Educational programs for different levels in Hong Kong's education system. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (India).** Curricula for different academic levels in the country's education system. [ENG]

#### Europe

> **ENIC (Albania).** General characteristics and information about different levels in the education system. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Culture, Education, and Sports (Spain).** Important documents identifying the Spanish education system, database of Spain's basic requisites for education since 1970. [SPA]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Austria).** Large index of general information about primary and higher education in Austria and documents about teaching in the country's education system. [GER, ENG, FRE]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Denmark).** Basic information about the education system and curricular content for different educational levels. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (France).** Curricula for primary, secondary and higher education as well as training requisites. [FRE]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Iceland).** Relevant information about curricula and methods for different academic levels in education system. [ENG, ISL, SWE]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Ireland).** Curricula for each subject area in Ireland's education system. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Luxembourg).** List of curricula from preschool to higher education. [FRA]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Macedonia).** Information about Macedonia's education system. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Malta).** Characteristics and objectives for different levels in the education system. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education (Russia).** Links to documents pertaining to the education system in Russia. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education and Culture (Cyprus).** General information and curricular content for each educational level. [ENG]  
 > **Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports (Slovenia).** General information about education system, objectives, and curricular content. [SLO, ENG]  
 > **Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (Greece).** Basic curricular design for primary, secondary and higher education in the country's system. [GRE, ENG]



> **National Curriculum Framework and Standards-KIDPROJ-(EU)**. Education standards, curricula, and links to ministries of education in different countries. [FRE, ENG, JAP, SLO, ICE, NOR, SWE, DUT, SPA, POR, ITL, FIN]

Middle East

> **Ministry of Education (Bahrain)**. Curricular description for pre-university and private studies. [ENG]

> **Palestinian Academic Network (Palestine)**. Curricular information about different levels in Palestinian education system. [ENG]

> **Ministry of Education (Turkey)**. Information about the structure and curricular content for the country's education system. [TUR, ENG]

### 8. MAIN RESEARCH CENTRES AND PROJECTS IN MEDIA EDUCATION

> **4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents (Brazil)**. An initiative of MULTITRIO, multimedia company based in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and the NGO MIACTIVA, a group made up of specialists in Communication and Education. [POR, ENG, SPA]

> **Center for Media Literacy (USA)**. Non-profit educational organization to raise awareness about Media Education. Provides resources for teacher training, and a catalogue of documents and articles about Education and Communication. [ENG]

> **CLEMI (France)**. An inter-ministerial entity (education, communication and culture), that conducts research and coordinates research projects in relation with other European countries and programmes. [FRE]

> **Institute of Educational Technology (UK)**. Part of the UK Open University; research centre working with new educational technologies. [ENG]

> **Mentor Classroom (Spain)**. Flexible, on-line distance learning course sponsored by the National Centre of Information and Educational Communication of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports. [SPA]

> **Office of Education and Communication, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)**. Research group specialized in developing Communication and Education projects, specifically in Media Education. [SPA]

> **Teaching Media in English (UK)**. Research group at the University of Southampton focusing on Media Education through the teaching of English. [ENG]

### 9. MAJOR PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO MEDIA EDUCATION

#### Journals

> **Comunicar (Spain)**. Group Comunicar's Magazine that presents documents and articles written by specialists from the Education and Communication areas. [SPA]

> **Digital Network, Information and Communication Technologies**. Educational Magazine, electronic publication about new

information and communication technologies. [SPA]

> **Media Literacy Review**. Electronic magazine associated with the Center for Advanced Technology in Education, at the University of Oregon, focusing on educational uses of new information and communication technologies. [ENG]

#### Reports

> **Audiovisual Media: The Third Educational Dimension. (EU)**. Documents on young people's learning practices and how they understand and control the impact of media. April 1991. [ENG]

> **The Place of Audiovisual Media Education in Curricula. (EU)**. Documents on the guidelines to follow when teaching about media and introducing young people to the characteristics of media. April 1991. [ENG]

> **The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Finnish report. (EU)**. Series of reflections on the report from the Finnish liberal group about media education. Discusses the importance of developing more curricula for media education. June 2000. [ENG]

> **Development of Media Literacy in Japan and Present Issues That We Face. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mrs M. Suzuki (Japan), referring to various media literacy initiatives, in Japan and elsewhere. March 2001. [ENG]

> **Media Education Module: Contents, Principles, Models. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mr Y.N. Zassoursky (Russia), referring to the key-concepts of media education in Russia. Describes the curriculum and the national strategies for integration. March 2001. [ENG]

> **Survey on Youth Media Literacy Survey Approaches. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mrs Kate Domaille (UK), summarizing the results of a survey conducted in 35 countries, about the state of media education at local and national levels. November 2001. [ENG, FRE]

> **Media Literacy in South East Asia for Young People. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mrs M. Singh, on the situation of media in South-East Asia, as well as the major changes undergone in the area. February 2002. [ENG]

> **Media Education-A Diversity of Approaches. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mrs C. von Feilitzen (Sweden) on various challenges to media education, from the introduction in the curriculum to the consequences on media themselves. February 2002. [ENG]

> **Media Education in Latin America. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mrs Tatiana Merlo Flores (Argentina) providing a general panorama of the situation in Latin America. February 2002 [SPA, ENG]

> **Media Education: A Global Strategy for Development. (UNESCO)**. Report by Mr David Buckingham (UK), offering guidelines for media education according to different ages and suggesting some ideas for regional, national and international implementation. March 2002. [ENG, FRE]

> **New Media, New Sites of Learning. (UNESCO)**. Report by par Mr David Buckingham (UK), on the role of media education outside the school, in formal and informal

settings. January 2003. [ENG]

## 10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### General documents

- > **Convention on the Rights of Children (United Nations)**. Official UN document establishing the Rights of Children as a means to encourage governments to take positive measures and initiatives in favour of this age group. November 1989. [ENG, FRE, SPA... ]
- > **Education and Fundamental Rights of the Child (UNESCO)**. Collection of legal texts and guidelines on the children's rights to education and protection. 2001. [ENG]
- > **European Convention on Transfrontier Television (EU)**. Guidelines on television and the broadcasting of programs agreed upon by the members of the Council of Europe. May 1989. [ENG] [FRE]
- > **Grunwald Declaration on Media Education (UNESCO)**. Outcome document from the international symposium on media education held in Grunwald (Germany), dealing with the means of introducing media education in the school curriculum. January 1982. [ENG]
- > **Implementation Reports on Recent IPDC Projects. (UNESCO, International Programme for the Development of Communication)**. Assessment on the projects for the development of communication and media to help countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Arab states and Europe. March 2003. [ENG]
- > **Recommendations Addressed to UNESCO on Youth Media Education (UNESCO)**. Main objectives of media education, in reference to the "Vienna conference" dealing with these issues. Offers functional definitions. February 2002. [ENG, FRE]
- > **Regional Priorities on Youth Media Education (UNESCO)**. Outcome document of the Seville conference on "Youth media education," establishing priorities for media literacy in various regions of the world. February 2002. [ENG, FRE]
- > **The Education For All Teacher Training Package (UNESCO)**. Working document based on the conclusions of the "World Conference on Education for All" (Jomtien, Thailand), that sums up a whole set of activities to satisfy educational needs. 1995. [ENG]
- > **The eLearning Action Plan: Designing Tomorrow's Education (EU)**. Document that examines the various possibilities of introducing e-Learning in cultural, political and educational communities. The purpose is to bridge the digital divide and allow for better social inclusion. March 2001. [ENG]
- > **The European Union Directive: "Television without Frontiers" (EU)**. Framework for the broadcasting of television signals in the Europe Union. It provides information on legislation related to television and children. October 1989. [ENG]
- > **World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet All Basic Learning Needs (UNESCO)**. Documents presented at the "World

Conference on Education for All" (Jomtien, Thailand). Provides guidelines and recommendations for the creation and implementation of curricula. March 1990. [ENG]

### Children and television

- > **Violence and terror in mass communication media (UNESCO)**. Report by Mr G. Gerbner (USA), that deals with the relation between the violence represented in the media and the collective and individual violence of contemporary societies. 1988.[ENG, SPA]
- > **The Younger Audience: Children and Broadcasting in New Zealand (UNESCO)**. Report by R. Walter and W. Zwaga (New Zealand), that casts some light on the children's consumption of radio and television in the family. February 2002. [ENG]
- > **Safer Internet Action Plan (draft) Work Programme 2003-2004 (EU)**. Guidelines and directives for informing young people about the use of internet and the means of protection against illegal content on the network. 2002. [ENG]

## 11. E-LEARNING TOOLS

- > **eSchola-European Schoolnet-(EU)**. An initiative of the European Schoolnet, an international organisation made of more than 26 Ministries of education, in cooperation with the European Union. It provides a space for European teachers to share projects on new technologies and to work with other educators across the region. [ENG] [SPA] [FRE] [ITA] [NOR] [POR]
- > **Media Training Programme (EU)**. European Commission Programme for professionals in the audiovisual sector so that they can improve their capacity-building on the international market. It fosters the exchange of knowledge and know-how between cinema and television schools, training centres, production and distribution companies. [ENG] [FRE]
- > **Leonardo da Vinci Programme: "Community Vocational Training Programme" (EU)**. European Commission Programme for the promotion of collaborative projects around vocational training centres, schools, universities and companies. The purpose is to enhance mobility, innovation and the quality of education in the European Union. [GER] [ENG] [FRE]
- > **Socrates Programme (EU)**. European Commission Programme for education, at all levels, from primary school to university and lifelong training. It is aimed at all the education personnel: students, professors, teachers, administrative staff and management. The Socrates programme includes 8 action plans. The first three correspond to the three stages of the educational process accessible to all: school, university, lifelong education. The five other ones are transversal in nature. [ENG] [SPA] [DAN] [DUT] [FRE] [ITA] [SWE] [FIN] [GRE] [POR]
- > **Virtual Campus at the Open University of Catalonia-UOC-(Spain)**. Distance education platform that offers comprehensive university programmes, at undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels as well as specialized courses,

including a doctorate on information society. [SPA] [CAT] [ENG]

## 12. THEMATIC FORUMS ON MEDIA EDUCATION

- > **Blogdir (Argentina)**. Virtual community with various monographic forums about Education and/ or Communication. [SPA]
- > **Children Media (UK)**. Open debate for teachers and professionals in Education. [ENG]
- > **Information Technology in Education (Argentina)**. Associated with the Secretary of State of Higher Education of Science and Technology of Argentina, which provides, apart from other services, a list of forums about new communication and information technologies. [SPA]
- > **Media Ed (UK)**. Virtual discussion about Media Education. Participants share their experiences and comments through themes related to Media Education. [ENG]
- > **Parents Television Council Community Forum (USA)**. Non-governmental organization. Members participate in forums to debate and share ideas about the situation of the media and children in the USA. [ENG]
- > **Pedagogy Association of Media and Culture of Communication and Culture-GMK (Germany)**. Association promoting debates and ideas about media education, culture, and communication. [GER]
- > **Radio Studies (UK)**. Topics for debate related to radio education, for example, studies about the use of media in schools. [ENG]

## 13. WEBLOGS

- > **Blig (Brazil)**. Ideas about communication and technology. Includes links to other weblogs, forums, and virtual communities. [ENG]
- > **Bloggng from the Barrio (USA)**. Information and links about education, pedagogy, virtual communities and educational organizations in the USA. [ENG]
- > **Faroeste (Portugal)**. Opinions and comments about cyber-culture, virtual communities, e-learning and the Internet [POR]
- > **Librarian and Information Science News: LISnews.com (USA)**. News updates and research about information sciences. [ENG]
- > **Planet@Media (Spain)**. Virtual space for practicing and learning about the Internet, digital journalism, and new media. Offers news, articles, and links about Communication and Education. [SPA]
- > **Randgände (Austria)**. Topics for debate about the use of media in education. [OST, ENG]
- > **Young People's Media Network**. Topics related to youth and the media. [ENG]

## 14. LINKS WITH VARIOUS VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

### Newsletters

- > **Apte (France)**. Association dedicated to promoting media literacy skills in education. [FRE]
- > **Center for Media Education (USA)**. Non-gov-

ernmental organization dedicated to improving the quality of the media culture for families and young people. [ENG]

- > **Center for Media Literacy (USA)**. Group working to develop student materials for providing them with a basis for critically evaluating media content. [ENG]
- > **Media Ed (UK)**. Media education website, dedicated to researching ways for incorporating the media into pedagogy. [ENG]
- > **Media Education Foundation (USA)**. Educational organization dedicated to researching and producing media to provide educators with alternative pedagogy. [ENG]

### Observatories

- > **Acrimed**. Non-governmental French association that adopts a critical stance and acts as a watchdog of information media. [FRE]
- > **Indymedia**. Collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage of news. It produces documents and thematic files on specific issues. It has local and national chapters in several regions of the world. [ENG]
- > **M\*A\*S website**. Maintained by the university of Missouri and is dedicated to media accountability worldwide. Lists more than 400 ethical guidelines and charters, and shows links to more than 250 sites on media ethics. Offers a world repertoire of press councils and many documents and statistics about Media Accountability Systems. [ENG]
- > **Mediawatch**. Organization focusing on media literacy and the challenging of stereotypes commonly found in the media. Actively campaigning for accountability and public participation in broadcasting. It has national chapters in several regions of the world. [ENG]

*nota bene : the references and resources mentioned above were last verified in January 2006.*

**They can be accessed directly on-line at <[www.mediamentor.org](http://www.mediamentor.org)>**

## CONTRIBUTORS

### **Modular curriculum.**

The curriculum was elaborated by all the members of MENTOR, a Euro-Mediterranean project financed initially by the European Union and by UNESCO. Its success was such that it led to the creation of an NGO, MENTOR (the international association for Media Education). Besides many other contributors, major participants are: Evelyne Bévort (France), David Buckingham (Great-Britain), Divina Frau-Meigs (France), Manuel Pinto (Portugal), Hara Prasad Padhy (UNESCO), Samy Tayie (Egypt), José Manuel Tornero (Spain), Matteo Zacchetti (European Union).

The section on the strategies of integration is from David Buckingham. *An invitation to media education*. Institute of Education, London university.

### **A handbook for teachers**

David Buckingham. *Questioning the media*. Institute of Education, London University.  
Edited by Divina Frau-Meigs.

### **A handbook for students**

David Buckingham. *Questioning the media*. Institute of Education, London University.  
Edited by Divina Frau-Meigs.

### **A handbook for parents**

Manuel Pinto. *Family, television and media education*. Lisbon: Ed. Presença, 2002.  
Edited by Divina Frau-Meigs.

### **Handbook for relations with media professionals**

Jose Manuel Perez Tornero et Manuel de Fontcuberta. *Communication and Education: Key-questions*. Université Autonome de Barcelone, for sections 1 and 2. Translated and adapted by Divina Frau-Meigs.  
Divina Frau-Meigs. *La palette des interactions : auto-régulation, régulation et co-régulation*. UNESCO 2006, for sections 3 and 4. Translated by Divina Frau-Meigs and Mark Meigs.

### **Handbook for internet literacy**

Reproduced by gracious courtesy of The Council of Europe. Major contributors and editors: Janice Richardson (editor), Andrea Milwood Hargrave, Basil Moratille, Sanna Vahtivouri, Dominic Venter et Rene de Vries. Upgrade by Betsy Burdick, Chris Coakley et Janice Richardson. Please send your contribution to the Council of Europe at: media.IS@coe.int.

### **FAQ. Frequently Asked Questions**

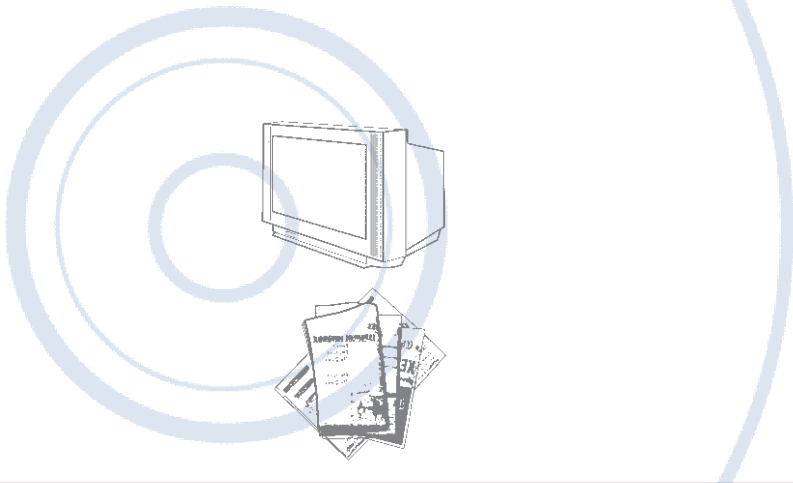
Manuel Pinto. *Family, television and media education*, for sections 1 and 2. Edited and completed by Divina Frau-Meigs, for all other sections. UNESCO, 2006. Translated by Divina Frau-Meigs and Mark Meigs.

### **Glossary of selected terms for media education**

Divina Frau-Meigs. *Glossary of selected terms for media education*. UNESCO, 2006.  
Translated by Divina Frau-Meigs and Mark Meigs.

### **Ressources, references and good practices**

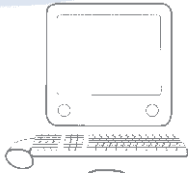
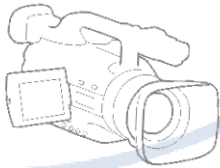
MENTOR. <http://www.Mediamentor.org>



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