

Newsletter on

Children, Youth & Media *in the World*

No. 1, 2009

Published by **The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media**
at
Nordicom, University of Gothenburg, PO Box 713
SE-405 30 Göteborg, SWEDEN

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Announcement from the Clearinghouse

Invitation to Join the Clearinghouse Network

[Announcement from the Clearinghouse]

The value of the Clearinghouse rests in the breadth of its coverage and the commitment of its participants. In short: *the more relevant information we gather, and the more who contribute, the better our services*. Many of our readers are already participants in the Clearinghouse network. For those of you who are not - we would hereby like to invite you.

A prime purpose of the Clearinghouse is to provide a forum where all aspects of the relationships between children, young people and media can be penetrated. Greater knowledge will, it is hoped, contribute to more effective policies and practices worldwide in order to enhance children's and young people's media competence.

The Clearinghouse is highly user-oriented. By building up an international network of contacts and publishing a newsletter and a yearbook, we seek to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge relating to children, young people and media between researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, voluntary organizations, teachers, and other interested individuals. More details on our activities can be found on our web site.

Since the start in 1997, the Clearinghouse has built an extensive global network of research information and dissemination, today including about 900 people and organisations in more than 100 countries all over the world. Membership in the network is free of charge.

We sincerely hope that you will want to join the Clearinghouse network. Your participation would be greatly valued.

The information we seek may, for example, be recent or current research relating to children, young people and media; data on young people's media access and use; research and practices regarding media education and children's/young people's participation in the media; measures, activities and research concerning children's and young people's media environment; global, regional and national agreements and regulations relating to young people and the media. Notices concerning upcoming events, seminars and conferences are, of course, of particular interest — as are reports from past such events.

We look forward to hearing from you, not least regarding any requests or suggestions you may have concerning Clearinghouse services. And we hope that you will come to appreciate our efforts — as a means of making your own work known in wider circles, as a way to keep abreast of others' work, and as a source of inspiration for new initiatives within research and other activities relevant to children, young people and media.

If you are interested in joining the Clearinghouse network, or would like to share any information you may have, please contact us: clearinghouse@nordicom.gu.se

Special Section

The 2010 World Summit on Media for Children and Youth: The Breaking of a New Dawn?

[Special Section]

by Per Lundgren
Director
2010 World Summit on Media for Children and Youth
Karlstad, SWEDEN

In search of smarter grownups offering media insight, knowledge and skills to children and youth, the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth in Karlstad will be the number one meeting place in 2010.

The World Summit Movement works to ensure that the needs of children, as an audience and as participants in media production, are met. World Summits are held every three years and are attended by media, technology, policy and education professionals dedicated to children's services. Each Summit provides a unique and fertile environment for global networking and the sharing of ideas and information. World Summits involving young people and adults are catalysts for communication, collaboration and international exchange.

World Summit Karlstad aims to:

- Strengthen education and leisure staff, placing them at the core of the media and information society
- Support media education development on scientific grounds
- Support policy-makers, giving them access to recent research results
- Provide media industry content producers and distributors with updated information and knowledge for use in development processes
- Improving the status and availability of media education.
- Increase children and youth participation to influence media content positively
- Support demands from children and youth, resulting in education about and with media
- To give the media industry working in media for children stimulating and inspiring opportunities to discuss the creative, financial and regulatory challenges to face today and tomorrow. To present snapshots of international developments within the field from all over the world.
- Create and develop an increased dialogue between the following constituencies: media production/content creation, media education/educators, media research, policy-making and children and youth participation in the media

On 14-18 June 2010, the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth will be hosted in Karlstad, Sweden. The programme offers more than 100 sessions, addressing all parties interested in children's well being with a focus on children, youth and media. International top quality experts will hold keynote speeches, panels, round table discussions, lectures, seminars and workshops. Of these 100 sessions, 40 have high quality professional relevance to children and youth specialists such as teachers and leisure time staff, researchers and youth NGOs. The full programme will be presented September 15 at www.wskarlstad2010.se

The following are some examples of programme topics:

- So sexy so soon – the sexualisation of children and youth in today's media
- Growing up with interactive media tools – gaming, the social web, the blogosphere and mobile phones
- How children and youth are represented in the news – and how they want to be represented
- How children and youth express their digital media competence – creating a personal profile of themselves and their friends on the Internet
- From spectator to active role player – when staff from education and leisure time claim a place in the media and information society
- The new curriculum on media and information literacy and how to improve relations between children, youth and the media industry
- The new competencies, digital resources and media tools strengthening children and youth

In the Summit's Research Forum, an international representation of qualified scholars will meet to discuss the following:

- Communication for Social Change
- Media Literacy and Education
- Media Ethics and Social Responsibilities in the Media
- Media, Consumption and Health

Research Forums in four sessions are planned to build around the strands mentioned above. The purpose of this is to illustrate the status of knowledge in the year 2010 within research, thereby increasing knowledge in these areas. The sessions will address all World Summit delegates (media professionals, policy-makers and regulators, media educators, researchers, etc.) and will be integrated into the general programme. The research forums will represent research from a global perspective and researchers from all continents will be invited to participate. At the same time, the Nordic researchers' representation will be clear and present Nordic perspectives in the world.

Visit www.wskarlstad2010.se for the latest news about the summit preparations. Stay updated with the progress of the 2010 World Summit – subscribe to the newsletter at www.wskarlstad2010.se/ws2010.php

We look forward to seeing you in Karlstad 14-18 June 2010!

www.wskarlstad2010.se
info@wskarlstad2010.se

The World Summit and Media Literacy

[Special Section]

by Per Lundgren
Director
World Summit on Media for Children and Youth 2010
Karlstad, SWEDEN

*"We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."
John Naisbitt, Megatrends*

During the past decade, a set of terms has been used that takes into consideration the new cultures emerging from the information society: ; Media Education, Digital Literacy, Information Literacy or 21st-Century Literacy, Media Studies, Media Ecology. Here, Media Literacy Education will be used to discuss the bridge -building between cultures in school, leisure time and daily life and the development of the information society.

One important example of great interest for this bridge-building is the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Media Literacy Education Clearinghouse (www.aocmedialiteracy.org), which brings together content from organizations, university departments, associations, groups and individuals who are developing new pedagogical tools, strategies and theories that take into consideration the challenges of the information society. The UN presents its point of view on this web site, saying that children and youth from industrialized societies spend at least double the time immersed in electronic media (television, Internet, video games, DVDs, radio, cell phones, etc.) than they do receiving a formal education in school. They explain the problem this presents, stating that much of the media that children and youth consume is aimed at selling them products or ideologies, and that this generation of young people frequently spends half as much time as the previous generation participating in "family" conversations. Given this, a number of questions arise that should concern all who care about children and youth: Who is educating our youth? Who is imparting to them ethical and social values? Who is supplying them with role models to emulate?

Developments Through Policies

Media education has been discussed under the auspices of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg "Human Rights in the Information Society", yearly since 2005), UNESCO (for example, the UNESCO Media Education Conference in Paris, France, June 2007), and by the United Nations at the World Forum "Alliance of Civilizations" (Madrid, Spain, January 2008 and in Istanbul, Turkey, April 2009). Media education is either a perspective within other subjects such as history, mother-tongue language, social science, etc., or a subject of its own. Individual projects with media educational themes are found almost everywhere in the world.

Media Literacy Education in the Nordic Countries

It is concluded that although there are certain Nordic perspectives, we are influenced and inspired by world developments, facing similar problems in our efforts to develop media education. Media education as a research field is defined as the crossing point of educational and media studies. The media education thinking here is based on the concept of media, whereby media as a tool is seen in relation to media content and culture. The idea of media as a factor that constitutes culture sets the teacher in the position of cultural worker. Media education is thus the renovating way of society: it strengthens students' cultural competence and future orientation.

Promising Examples from Around the World

The following brief overview introduces a few well known samples of these global developments.

NAMLE, the **National Association for Media Literacy Education** (formerly AMLA) in the US asserts that the field of media literacy education has matured over the past 25 years, its focus having evolved from *what is taught* to *how we teach*. NAMLE and several organizations in Canada have long time been early inspiring developers of media education (<http://namle.net>).

International information sharing is better than ever – for example, **The Communication Initiative** (CI) network (www.comminit.com), an online space for sharing the experiences of, and building bridges between, the people and organizations engaged in or supporting communication as a fundamental strategy for economic and social development and change. This occurs through a process of initiating dialogue and debate and giving the network a stronger, more representative and informed voice with which to advance the use and improve the impact of communication for development. This process is supported by web-based resources of summarized information and several electronic publications, as well as online research, review and discussion platforms providing insight into communication for development experiences. Currently, The CI network process includes *The Communication Initiative: Global* (in English), with a worldwide overview and focus.

The newsletter *La Iniciativa de Comunicacion: Latin America* (in Spanish) offers a worldwide overview and focuses on the Latin American experience and context, reporting on developments in Latin America, especially Brazil, Argentina and Chile.

Soul Beat Africa – a newsletter (in English) managed by CI, with a focus on the African experience and context. *Soul Beat* looks at media and children – more specifically, it looks at media *for* children, *by* children, and *about* children. The experiences, research papers, and materials highlight how radio, television and print are being used to increase awareness of human rights and health issues related to children (www.comminit.com).

Media education is constantly developing in Europe and specifically in the Nordic countries. The Mediterranean countries are implementing an educational programme called **Mentor**, emphasizing the issues and challenges of media literacy, and **MED**, the Italian Media Education Association, recently followed its tradition and organized its seventeenth summer school in 2008. The Balkan Kids For Kids Festival is a regional festival of films made by and for children and is a meeting place for young filmmakers, media experts and the interested public. This film festival is managed by the Media Education Centre, Belgrade, and the Balkan Kids For Kids Festival (KFKF), (www.balkankkffestival.eu), a part of Global KFKF, managed by CIFEJ.

Cinesparks – the Australian Film Festival for young people and *Screen Education* is the magazine mostly read by Australian media teachers; its Queensland e-mail list alone comprises approximately contacts who have expressed an interest in aspects of media literacy. Many of these people are media teachers in the State of Queensland, although there are also members from throughout Australia, New Zealand, and New Zealand media projects are frequent as well (www.cinesparks.com.au).

China's recent developments in media education have raised interest, for example the **Media and Children's Culture Forum 2008** (MCC 2008), hosted by the Children's Culture Institute under the auspices of the Zhejiang Normal University in the city of Jinhua and its Scientific Committee, inviting world-renowned scientists from eight countries as speakers, covering the entirety of media and children.

The **Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership** has developed the Media Literacy programmes "The Global Conversation" and "Get the Message?" in its series on Analyzing Media, looking specifically at content producers and the decisions they make in framing a message (www.discoverygloaled.org/index.html).

Developments Through Classroom Tools

Divina Frau-Meigs at Unesco Global Education (1) shows that there is great need for international Media Literacy Education developments, as well as for teacher training and student teacher education. With this in mind, a Media and Information Literacy curriculum will be released by Unesco in 2009.

Good tools are available for classroom work to develop media literacy education (2). Professor Alexander Fedorov, in Russia, suggests that media education must be an integral part of the development of critical thinking and that it is in fact our responsibility as media educators to work in line with media education within a cultural context to become a catalyst for citizenship development based on knowledge about responsible media use, critical thinking skills and creative communication. In the Russian Media Education Journal *Mediaobrazovanie*, Fedorov states that extensive research confirms that media education contributes to the development of students' perceptive, creative and analytical abilities, and improves their knowledge of media and media education. As a bonus, the learning process itself becomes

more varied, interesting and creative, Fedorov says (3).

When we take on the task of bringing the world together for the next summit, we realize the challenges in the world of young people's communication, to not only raise the quality of children's media, but also develop media literacy education and embrace culture. Many of the proposals to the WS programme committee show that Media Literacy Education is a growing movement around the world and that this constituency is ready to bring forward their work to create crossroads between media researchers, media educators, media professionals and all who work for the well-being of children's.

From a Nordic point of view and in a European context, the next World Summit on Media for Children and Youth will offer sessions to create crossroads across borders, which will hopefully lead to the creation of new global visions supporting cooperation and strategies to make local use of global policies in daily life.

Notes

1. www.coe.int/t/e/integrated_projects/democracy/02_activities/d_democracy_forum_2008/Frau-Meigs_E_word.asp
2. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001492/149278e.pdf>
3. www.ifap.ru/projects/mediamag.htm

The Voice of Children and Youth at the World Summit

[Special Section]

The organizers of the 2010 World Summit are preparing for the involvement of children and youth in Karlstad through the Global Youth Council project. The Council involves a number of international youth groups representing all five continents, currently from Australia, India, Cambodia, Malaysia, South Africa, Nigeria, Gambia, Zambia, Egypt, Colombia, Italy, Ireland, Slovakia, Sweden and the US. They will all work together to present their own perspectives in a new Youth Declaration.

Through a group chat forum in the social networking community *Facebook*, the youth groups will discuss a number of questions related to media and the summit in order to prepare for the new Youth Declaration:

- How are children and youth represented in the media?
- How do children and youth want to be represented?
- How should the vision of a better media world for children and youth be realized, according to the children and youth on the Global Youth Council?

The Youth Declaration will be processed and presented at the 2010 World Summit, and involving the children and youth and their voices in Karlstad is important work. This declaration will not be a scientific one, but will offer an amazing opportunity for the children and youth to express their opinions and tell the world about their visions concerning mass media.

The Council is coordinated by the Karlstad Youth Council, a group of six young Swedish students who are interested in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 17 about mass media, and how to bring forward perspectives of and stimulate interest from children and youth.

Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness

Media Literacy Training Empowers Indian Girls

[Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness]

by Vedabhyas Kundu
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Nineteen-year old Ratna Kumari now aspires to contest the local panchayat elections (local self-government in India). A firm believer in Gandhian values, she feels it is only the

committed youth who can bring about a change in society. A resident of Kumarbagh Brindavan Ashram, a backward village in Bettiah, West Champaran, Bihar, India, Ratna stresses the importance of girl's and women's empowerment in the process of social development.

The exuberance and confidence with which Ratna speaks is now not an isolated example in the society where she lives, which for generations ensured that the women had absolutely no say over their lives. Mostly confined within the four walls of their houses, the women in Ratna's village could never have imagined of going out and advocating issues of social concern like dowry, education of the girl child, health and sanitation. This has become a reality now, however. More than 80 girls like Ratna have emerged as social advocates, besides using their own media in highlighting local concerns.

Training in Media Literacy

It all started in 2006 with the launch of the Gandhi Media Literacy Programme in the Rastriya Buniyadi Vidyalaya in Kumarbagh Brindavan Ashram, a school started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1939. The media literacy programme is an initiative of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the national Mahatma Gandhi memorial in New Delhi, India. The programme aims to develop a critical understanding of the media and facilitate the use of communication for social change. Intertwined with a Gandhian approach to service and values, the programme aims to involve its participants in various social issues. The Samiti adopted the school in 2002.

Ratna is candid when she says that it did not happen overnight that she thought of contesting the local elections. "Earlier we would hardly read the newspaper or listen to the radio. As there is still no electricity in our village, television is out of bounds. But after we got involved in the programmes and activities of Gandhi Smriti, especially the media training programme, we started reading the newspaper critically. We had scant interest in what was going on around us, but now we firmly believe that we need to bring about a change. We realize how those who are running the system are taking poor people for a ride. If we young people continue to be indifferent, the situation will slump further." Her view on the need of young people to work to bring about a change is shared by a majority of other girls who have been part of the media literacy programme.

Many girls in the area are now aspiring to new opportunities, and Ratna is no exception. Sapna Kumari, another participant of the programme, who is now in college, says "Many of us are now inspiring other girls in the area to go to college. Earlier very few girls would think of going to the college in Bettiah town."

Sapna points out, "Previously we could be manipulated by everyone but now we don't take things for granted. Instead we believe in questioning. The practical workshops have given us the wherewithal to express ourselves." This assertion is reflected by the girls' demand on the local sarpanch (elected village headman) to furnish the list of families below the poverty line (The local self-government furnishes a list of families living below the poverty line, who receive specific benefits from the government.).

"It was one of our first interviews. The sarpanch was visibly annoyed at our demand," recalls Sapna, "He could not furnish us with the list. Later we learnt that several of his kith and kin featured in the list so that they can usurp all the benefits."

Milan, 18 years old and a student of class XII recalls the reaction of the sarpanch when the girls approached him for an interview for the radio capsule they were trying to produce. "He and other villagers were flummoxed when they saw us with a recorder. They could have never imagined that girls of the area could question the menfolk," she underscores.

Impact of Media Training

How training in media helps ordinary adolescent girls in not only articulating but also highlighting issues of social concern is reflected in *Brindavan Darpan*, the newsletter created by the girls from Brindavan Kumarbagh Ashram. Though not published regularly due to lack of proper funding, it raises social problems and the development in the area. "To bring out *Brindavan Darpan* we have to interact with a large number of people in the area and the local authorities," says 18-year-old Meenakshi Kumari; "This brings us face-to-face with immediate issues that concern all of us."

In fact, one fundamental change that the Gandhi Media Literacy programme has brought about in its participants is the 'urge to question'. Broadcaster and media expert Professor T.K. Thomas, who has been spearheading the programme in Champaran, says "When we started the programme in 2006, the girls were low in confidence. They never thought they could question anyone. Their lives were that of muted silence. So our first task was to make them realize that they too were capable of doing things. Developing their communication skills was of utmost importance."

Professor Thomas points out that through getting involved in media production, the trainees had the 'opportunity to challenge established rules of social interaction and power relations by asking instead of answering questions'. "Against the backdrop of a patriarchal society like the one which the trainees come from, it was rare that a group of girls approach a senior person like the sarpanch and ask him to furnish lists," he asserts.

Developing Citizenship Skills through Media Training

To summarize the experience in the backward village of Bettiah, Champaran suggests that media literacy training can be used as a tool for the development of the citizenship skills needed to strengthen democracy. It shows how media training can help in the construction of one's own identity and in being a social advocate. The programme has also been able to develop social and interpersonal relationship skills in the girls. Through the process of being involved in media production, the trainees were able to question elders, especially men. The media training, with its emphasis on improving communication skills, has certainly helped in enhancing confidence amongst the girls, who would otherwise have remained within their shells.

Is the Language Arts Curriculum of Ontario, Canada a Model Curriculum for Media Education Studies?

[Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness]

by Rosemarie Manalili & Johann Rehnberg

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Gothenburg, SWEDEN

The result of a qualitative content study conducted at Gothenburg University, Sweden, finds the Ontario Language Arts curriculum – which is comprehensive and explicit – a model curriculum for teaching about the media in compulsory schools.

The study, entitled *Media Education in the Swedish Compulsory School – a comparison of the Swedish curriculum documents with the leading countries* (1), aimed to find out how media education is reflected in the Swedish school curriculum documents vis a vis Canada and the UK. Its focus included subjects at the compulsory level within the age range of 5-11 years. The study provides input to the current discussion on how media education and media literacy can be successfully implemented and sustained in Swedish compulsory schools. The Ontario curriculum indeed provides examples that language teachers can use to either design their curriculum or design lesson plans to achieve the overall goal of media education – that is, to empower young people to become informed citizens and active participants in our society.

Does the Explicit Inclusion of Media Literacy Aspects Help?

The explicit and comprehensive treatment of media literacy/media education in the Language Arts curriculum of Ontario, Canada, is what sets it apart from the two other countries. The treatment of media literacy's in this curriculum is attributed to the fact that it is included as a separate strand in the subject of Language Arts. Specifically, the main part of the curriculum document gives comprehensive details on how the subject should be taught, by outlining overall expectations for each grade and strand (the Language Arts curriculum outlines four strands: Oral Communication, Reading, Writing, and Media Literacy), and specific expectations for each grade and strand in detail, together with examples and teacher prompts. The following examples state specific expectations for first-grade pupils when it comes to understanding media texts/responding to and evaluating text: *Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works (e.g. state whether they like or dislike a character cartoon, song, or movie; draw a picture of the character in the story).*

Immediately following this expectation is a teacher prompt: *What do you like/not like about the story told in this movie? What was your favourite part? How did it make you feel? Did the characters in this cartoon use violence to solve problems? Was the violence funny? Is this a good way to solve problems?*

With the inclusion of media literacy as the fourth strand, the different key aspects/key concepts of media literacy and media education outlined by media literacy experts (e.g. D. Buckingham, L. Masterman, etc.) are covered explicitly and comprehensively with the critical approach in focus. These include *language, representation, audience and production*. Nonetheless, the curriculum consistently covers the skills and competencies that pupils should develop – that is, *the ability to access media texts; the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media; and the ability to produce media.*

Meanwhile, the UK curriculum contains an important feature of media literacy. The UK is the only country of the three in focus in this study that presents ICT as a subject on its own, and all other subjects include a section that states how ICT knowledge should be integrated into the subject. The following statement, taken from the ICT curriculum, is included in all other subjects as a statutory requirement from stage 2: *"Use of ICT to support their learning in all subjects...find things out from a variety of sources, selecting and synthesizing the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias and plausibility...using ICT tools to amend and refine their work...exchange and share information...through electronic media; review and evaluate their work, reflecting critically..."*

With these formulations, the UK underlines the potential of ICT in creating media texts. Treating ICT as a domain of its own allows teachers to clearly and explicitly see where references to media relate to the technology aspect and where it relates to media literacy.

Adopting a different approach, the Swedish curriculum can be described as a goal-oriented curriculum, and its formulations about media literacy, with the eye of a "media literacy expert", implicitly refer to media education, for example: *"Learn to plan their finances on the basis of...examine and assess information and advertisements..."*, *"...understand differences between information and advertising..."* and *"...they meet English in a variety of contexts: on TV, in films, in the world of music..."*, *"...ability to...critically examine sources of information"*. With this approach, we find "small islands" of media literacy references throughout the curriculum documents.

What Challenges Does the Swedish Goal-Oriented Model Face?

The Swedish curriculum tends to be goal-oriented, and this approach thus requires that a Swedish teacher have extensive knowledge about media literacy. We believe that teachers fear that they do not know enough about the media and media literacy to be able to apply any experience and skills they may have about the media. Besides this is the fact that the media industry is continually developing, and with the convergence of media taking place the task may seem understandably overwhelming.

Ontario's curriculum does not only outline the goals and targets, but also describes in detail the different areas that should be covered together with examples and teacher prompts. All the 'Whats' and good examples of 'Hows' are provided to teachers. A teacher's only responsibility is to select the appropriate content and examples that would jibe with the learning needs of the students, and does not have to rely on his/her own competence in terms of outlining what areas should be covered as well as how the subject should be taught.

In addition, the learning progression of pupils in terms of media literacy makes Ontario's curriculum worthy of emulation. Media education starts in the first grade with simpler activities/lessons and takes on increasing complexity in the upper age range. Sweden and the UK integrate media literacy into other areas of various subjects, but it is only at later stages that media education is more explicit.

Assessment – Still an Area for Improvement

The inclusion of media education in the school curriculum requires a form of assessment and evaluation for examining whether the expected knowledge, skills and competencies are attained. Canada's curriculum includes assessment/attainment targets, although these are not specific to media education. Some references are included, and then in general terms implicitly relating to media literacy. In the Swedish curriculum the assessment aspect is similar to those in Canada and the UK, with a few explicit formulations about media literacy. One reason for this is that media literacy is a new subject, and the process has only started in many countries.

Finally, the good practices that cropped up from this study are indeed useful resources for educators in evaluating their curricula. The study provides an in-depth analysis of how different countries teach about the media, taking into consideration not only the use of ICT in teaching but also the different aspects of media including the media skills and competencies children should develop. Making media literacy a separate strand in the subject of Language Arts, if not a subject of its own, provides educators the opportunity to tackle media literacy in its entirety.

Note

1. The study was conducted in 2008 by Rosemarie Manalili and Johann Rehnberg, undergraduate students at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Gothenburg, and can be read in its entirety at the following web page www.uppsatser.jmg.gu.se/uppsats/mkv/Examensarb/666.pdf

Recommendation on Media Literacy from the European Commission

[Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness]

On August 20, 2009, the European Commission issued a recommendation on media literacy. According to the Commission, all EU countries and the media industry need to increase people's awareness of the different media messages they encounter in form of e.g. advertisements, movies or online content.

To succeed in this work, the Commission recommends that member states develop and implement co-regulatory initiatives and promote self-regulatory initiatives, promote systematic research on the different aspects and dimensions of media literacy in the digital environment. Further more the Commission recommends an open debate in public events on the inclusion of media literacy in the compulsory education curriculum and awareness raising and educating efforts regarding risks involved in processing personal data through information and communication networks.

The media industry is asked to increase its commitment, among other in spreading knowledge through information campaigns on how content is produced, edited and distributed in the digital world including how search engines work, and also to spread information on techniques used for commercial purpose like product placement etc.

The importance of media literacy is stressed when it comes to the ability of European citizens to fully participate in today's information society. Media literacy also plays an important role in enhancing awareness and interest in the European audiovisual heritage and cultures. Media literacy is considered fundamental skills not only for young people but also for adults and elderly, as a part of key competences for lifelong learning.

Further Steps

In 2009 the Commission will continue to promote the exchange of good practices and consider it to be of great importance to create and foster European networks for this purpose. A study to develop criteria for assessing "media literacy levels" has been launched in consideration of the reporting obligation introduced by the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive. By 2011, the Commission will report on media literacy levels in all member states.

Source

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/index_en.htm

Global Perspective on Media Education

[Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness]

For well over two decades, media educators around the world have been promoting media education and media literacy. But it is not until recently policy-makers shaping national education programmes have become aware of the need for media literacy. Media literacy is considered a necessity in the developing of the analytical skills needed when understanding media, and a principal tool in becoming an active and informed citizen. In the foreword, Marc Scheuer, director of the United Nations-Alliance of Civilizations, declare that the publication *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World. Visions, Programmes and Challenges*, aim to provide inspiring sources of reference and information on best practices that hopefully will lead to implementation of media education programs in their respective countries.

In their articles the contributors to this book, representing 16 countries from all continents, present different examples of media education and media literacy efforts and thereby give a variety of tools and approaches to find inspiration from in the development of new pedagogical documents.

Mapping Media Education Policies in the World. Visions, Programmes and Challenges. Editors: Divina Frau-Meigs and Jordi Torrent. Published by The United Nations-Alliance of Civilizations in co-operation with Grupo Comunicar and in partnership with UNESCO and the European Commission. www.unaoc.org

Media Education in Asia

[Media Education/Media Literacy/Awareness]

Media education in Asia is a relatively young but rapidly developing part of the curriculum. The dominant models of media education are mostly Western and from English-speaking countries. Does a similar pattern exist in Asia, where there may be differences in culture, beliefs, values and education policy as well as in pedagogy? Are educators in Asia developing their own way or following the Western model? This recent book, *Media Education in Asia*, edited by Chi Kim Cheung, hopes to provide a platform for readers to examine this issue in an Asian context where the contributors give examples of and perspectives on media education in several Asian countries.

Media Education in Asia, Cheung, Chi-Kim (Ed.), 2009, 225 p., ISBN: 978-1-4020-9528-3

Media Contents and Media Production

The Yamuna - A Platform to Enhance Critical Thinking Abilities amongst Indian Children

[Media Contents and Media Production]

by Vedabhyas Kundu,
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The Yamuna is a children's newspaper published by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the national Mahatma Gandhi memorial based in New Delhi. Gandhi Smriti is the hallowed place where Gandhi was assassinated. *The Yamuna* is part of the Samiti's Gandhi Media Literacy programme, which aims to develop critical understanding of the media amongst children and promote active citizenship amongst the student community (1).

The eight-page quarterly newspaper was founded in 2003 to mark the centenary year of *Indian Opinion*, the journal founded by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa in 1903. Occasionally a special issue is published, focussing on an important theme. The motto of the newspaper is what Gandhi wrote in his Autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*: "In the very first month of *Indian Opinion*, I realized that the sole aim of journalism should be service".

Trying to be Different

Society today has reached a new level of modernization, and with the high degree of technological advancements, virtual reach has broken through geographic barriers to reach every part of the globe. Standing now on the threshold to the third media age – that of converged digital media, we are faced with a new dimension of problems as this age will see the removal of all restrictions of limited consumer power that were present in the first age of scribal or interpersonal media and the second age of mass media. Over the years there has been a transformation in the sole aim of the media, from welfare maximization to profit maximization. In this age of changing media trends, we at *The Yamuna* try to produce a media product that abides by the ethics of journalism so as to form a socially responsible media unit. In every issue, in accordance with the theme, we write not just about what is wrong but also about how we can set it right. We give not only the problems but also their solutions. We try to, as Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world". The media are the most potent form of expression, and it is hence necessary that we abide by the ethics that guide the profession.

"With increasing cases of sensationalism and the whole web of media spin, somewhere down the line the quality of media products has deteriorated over the years. Trivialization seems to hold the roost. We are trying to set an example of a good media product so that others see our example and try to realize the change that we wish to see in the media products", says Keshava Dilwali, a student reporter from class XII.

The Yamuna has reporters not only in several cities in India but also in Mexico City and Nepal. The aim has been to develop *The Yamuna* into a children's platform where they can write on issues concerning them and their immediate society.

Impact of Being Part of *The Yamuna*

For Alphy Geever, Bipra Biswambhara and Ishita Thapliyan (all students of class XI), writing for the newspaper gives students the necessary in-depth understanding of the issue they are writing about. Presently involved in content analysis of how the girl child is represented in the media – both print and electronic – Alphy says, "Earlier I had a superficial understanding of the issue. But now as we are looking at 15 newspapers and numerous television channels our perspective on the concerns of the girl child has widened. We are not just looking at problems of urban girls like us but are able to understand the complexities of rural societies, especially those which consider the birth of a girl as a bane."

"Almost all of us who are part of the team have developed better communicative skills and enhanced our cognitive capacities. We are also learning the craft of developing questions and conducting interviews," Bipra stresses. "We are in a position to handle many day-to-day issues both in school and at home in a better manner," she adds.

Aiming to be a Global Platform

Sonia Deotto of Ora World Mandala, the organization that coordinates the Gandhi Media Literacy programme in Mexico City, says children at the schools involved in the programme are excited to be part of *The Yamuna*. "They feel in this age of globalization it is important to connect with children in other countries and share their thoughts and ideas. It also gives them a platform to understand culture and social concerns of other countries. "

Over the years, the student reporters of *The Yamuna* have been writing about a variety of issues ranging from climate change to violence against women. The issues are mostly decided by the editorial team, guided by the officials at Gandhi Smriti. Editorial meetings of the student reporters in Delhi are organized regularly to discuss story ideas, illustrations, roles and responsibilities. The meetings are coordinated by the editor, who assigns responsibilities.

However, the students lament never being able to organize a full-fledged editorial meeting involving children from different parts of India, Mexico and Nepal. Due to this shortcoming, few students outside Delhi are involved in the decision-making regarding what issue to take up. These students are usually told about the decision of the Delhi editorial team and given specific responsibilities.

"We have a long way to go in making *The Yamuna* a truly inclusive children's newspaper. We want to somehow bridge the gap between the privileged and disadvantaged children. We aim not just to write about the disadvantaged children but actually involve them in the editorial team," Bipra says, summarizing one of the newspaper's main goals.

Note

1. www.gandhismriti.gov.in

Internet, Clips, Action! Facilities for Children's Own Media Production on the Web

[Media Contents and Media Production]

by Jacqueline Sánchez Carrero
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First it was only the word, but soon the chalk and slate were added. The instrumental resources in education keep evolving with time: flash-cards, slides, transparencies, photographs, videos, newspapers, films and now the Web, blogs, animations, Web quests, etc. The children of this generation have been said to be digital natives. They use the digital media in their daily activities, which is why it is necessary to help them develop good aptitude for the media environment and become conscious and creative when facing the screen.

Today there are also websites that facilitate the process of technical and narrative learning about audiovisual production. I will give examples of such websites that I find do a good job of

combining audiovisual education and recreational interactivity, and that I use in my workshops on media literacy with children. Media literacy is becoming increasingly recognized as an important issue in society, and several media educators and institutions assert that media literacy education also must include learning by doing, that is, being able to produce media oneself. For instance, the European Commission has adopted a Communication on [media literacy](#) in the digital environment, in which media literacy is defined as 'the ability to access, analyse and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages [...] as well as to communicate competently in media available on a personal basis'.

[Film Street](#) (www.filmstreet.co.uk), designed by Atticmedia in the UK, is in my opinion one of the most educational sites on the Web designed for children under 12 years of age. It initiates them in an interactive adventure through the world of cinema and animation. The most impressive part of the site is *Street*, where each section is presented by a different character who serves as a guide. In the *Cinema* section, kids can view different types of films and write reviews. In *Animation*, children can move parts of the characters' bodies on the screen and learn 2D and 3D techniques. *Film Studio* is a production booth, where the user selects the camera shots and sees the final result of the scene. The user can also experiment with special effects, choosing backgrounds with chroma key and inserting sound in pre-designed scenes. The same happens in the *Costume* section, where kids can dress the characters from head to toe. There is also an interactive section for the scriptwriter with references to the storyboard and other writer tasks, and a *Library* that defines and shows the different audiovisual types.

[Zimmer Twins](#) (www.zimmertwins.com) teaches small users to make their own film from pre-established animated scenes. The site belongs to Qubo, a US network of children's television and digital media. The website's motto is: "What happened later? You decide!" Two brothers and their cat are the main characters of the narrative sequences that the users must choose amongst in a great variety of situations. The editing stage is the most important contribution of this site. In an environment surprisingly similar to reality, the child has the support of an instructor, space for the project – with clips of video and sound, effects and captions – and a timeline, the place where he or she will finally drag the clips and edit his or her film.

The BBC, on its children's website CBBC, offers [Me and My Movie](#) (www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/meandmymovie/), an audiovisual production learning system. In the *How to* section three kids enter the scene, in a TV set or outdoors, explaining the process of making a film. They describe the meaning of the shots, ways to light up a scene, ways to plan production, lenses and outstanding effects, and how to choose background music. There is also a section for downloading special sound effects. Finally, the site invites kids to view and evaluate other short films created by children, and to upload their own films in order to take part in a film contest. Furthermore, children can learn about audiovisual edition on a screen similar to a real editing system, with sounds and video clips of subjects tailored to their age.

For teenagers there is [My Pop Studio](#) (www.mypopstudio.com), a site on feminine design created by the Media Education Lab of Temple University in Philadelphia, USA. Its purpose is to show the 'behind the scenes' of everyday media, such as magazines, music, television and digital media. On this website, girls transform themselves into producers by publishing their own reality show with pre-designed scenes about situations that emphasize feminine and masculine stereotypes. The girls must learn to identify and choose the options in order to subsequently ponder them. The site can also be used by high school teachers and parents. It specifies learning outcomes in media literacy as well.

Other sites, like [Kids Work!](#) (www.knowitall.org/kidswork/etv/index.html), provide a way to get to know the inner world of a television station. The site is hosted by Knowitall.org, which is ETV's educational Web portal with a collection of websites for K-12 students, teachers and parents. On this site, children will find information about the history of telecommunications and the technical and production roles of workers in the media trade.

Other websites seek to educate children about the different kinds of communication on the Internet. An example is the UK-based [KidSMART](#) (kidsmart.org.uk), a site by Childnet International that tells about the advantages and risks of the Internet, as well as the healthy way to use Net resources from chats to social networks.

20th Edition of CIAK Junior in Treviso, Italy

[Media Contents and Media Production]

In May 2009 the 20th edition of the international TV film festival was held in Treviso, Italy, organized and hosted by Gruppo Alconi, a company dedicated to children's media production. CIAK Junior is an international TV project which aims at initiating children aged 10 to 15 years to the language of audiovisual media.

The festival screened short films (10 minutes each) with stories written by children which have been produced by TV networks of the participating countries. The films produced in each

country will be made available by each TV network for broadcasting in all the other participating countries.

The working teams of each country follow the same guidelines which e.g. consists of creating a panel of for example directors, psychologists, teachers to select the stories to be produced and engaging a professional crew to work in close co-operation with the children who wrote the script.

More than 250 films, covering a wide variety of different topics, have been produced to date. To this day, CIAK Junior has included broadcasters from more than 20 countries in Europe as well as from most other continents. Participating countries have the opportunity of broadcasting films presented at the festival which focuses on the experiences, dreams, troubles and hopes of today's children and teens.

The festival catalogue give synopses to the films presented and there is also a DVD where the competing films are included.

For more information, please contact: ciakjunior@alcuni.it or go to www.alcuni.it

Media Access and Media Use

Child Reporters Investigating Children's Opinion on Media in India and Abroad

[Media Access and Media Use]

Previously published in *The Yamuna*, the children's newspaper by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, September 2008 under the heading 'Media Redefined'. Reprinted with permission from *The Yamuna*.

by The Yamuna News Bureau

"Children are like mud and get moulded easily according to what they see and hear. They may not be able to differentiate between right and wrong, reality and fiction. Negative things shown in media greatly influence them and they start copying what they see in television," says Savyata Khanal of Hindu Vidyapeeth, Balkumari, Lalitpur, Nepal.

Savyata and hundreds of other children were interviewed in a unique study by child reporters in several cities including Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Koraput (Orissa), Solan (Himachal Pradesh), rural areas of Belgaum (Karnataka), Delhi, Guwahati (Assam), and Bikaner (Rajasthan). Besides child reporters from Lalitpur (Nepal) and Mexico City (Mexico) joined in the study to understand children's perceptions of media influences, their media habits, the portrayal of children in media and the importance of media education. However, the study was not conducted scientifically and the number of children varied from 30 to 150 in each of the places.

Children across the cities in Nepal and Mexico unanimously asserted that media influenced them greatly. Itishri Pradhan, a class X student from Forest Colony UP School in Koraput said, "Media has great impact on children. They try to follow the actions, language and behaviour shown on TV". The children in Solan said that as children are at an impressionable age and are unable to have good judgement regarding what is shown in the media, they easily get carried away.

Great Differences in Media Habits

According to the study, as far as media habits are concerned there was a great difference between rural and urban children. In the rural areas of Belgaum (BIRDS, Naganur, Belgam), only 15% of the children had access to a newspaper, as the parents did not subscribe. About 33.3% said that they watched television, with 6.1% only having access to the national channel "Doordarshan". Only 10% had broadband cable. Significantly, only 1% possessed a radio and 0% of the rural children had access to the Internet. On the other hand, a majority of the urban children and children from the Koraput district of Orissa who were interviewed said that they preferred to read the newspaper to update themselves with the latest events in the world, closely followed by those who preferred to watch television. Most of the households subscribed to at least one newspaper, and most had cable connections for their television. The third most preferred media in the urban areas was the Internet, pushing radio into the least preferred position.

Combining both the rural and urban preferences, television placed itself as the most preferred

media among children. A majority of both the urban and rural children said that they watched television to see news rather than serials or movies. A unique fact that the study conducted in Hyderabad showed was that children had a great interest in religion, as most of them preferred watching QTV (Quran TV) to any other channel. Reality shows and soap operas were also among the children's favourite programmes. Surprisingly again, sports channels did not figure at all in most children's lists of favourites.

Children's Own Ideas for Television Programmes

The real revelations and expectations of the children regarding the media came to light when the child reporters from *The Yamuna* analysed what kind of programmes the interviewed children would make for the electronic media if given a chance. The analysis proved that most of them wanted to make programmes that educated children and improved their general knowledge and awareness, and helped them in their holistic development.

"I would make programmes for developing the inner potential of children", said Archana Panda of Pujariput UP School, Koraput. Sumitra Kumari Sabat of ME School Koraput said, "I would make programmes that pointed out the real needs of children and in turn helped them make a change in the society".

Some said they would make something humorous and comical. "I want to make programmes that enrich knowledge and generate happiness among children", said Sonali Sipra Hial of SE Railway UP School, Koraput.

The study clearly shows that children want to see things much different to what they actually see on television. They watch news, serials and reality shows but would make educational, humorous, cultural and patriotic programmes if given the chance.

Media Responsibility

Meanwhile, regarding whether the media was socially responsible, the students in the various places had mixed reactions. While some felt that the media exposed corruption at higher levels and took up causes of the common man, others felt that the media were mostly involved in trivialization and sensationalism.

On the issue of the portrayal of children in the media, for instance, the respondents in Solan believed that the media consist of human beings who have their own family and children, and thus before highlighting any issue regarding children should consider the effect it would have on their own children. Adopting this approach, no media person would portray children in a negative light. Media persons should be well versed on the rights of children and should write accordingly. The social welfare departments and media institutions should conduct orientation workshops for students and working journalists on regular basis so that they are well informed on children's issues.

Finally, the contemporary media is far from feeding children what they actually crave, and are instead merely casting a strong negative influence on the young minds. This surfaced as the general concern of all the children interviewed in India and abroad.

New Publication: *Young People in the European Digital Media Landscape*

[Media Access and Media Use]

In connection with the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, a conference on the theme *Promoting a Creative Generation*, was held in Gothenburg, July 2009. For this conference Nordicom and the Clearinghouse produced a booklet of data that give an overview of young people's media use in the digital age. Our aim has been to present, to the extent possible, comparable data for the countries of Europe.

The publication, *Young People in the European Digital Media Landscape*, begins with an article by Sonia Livingstone and Leslie Haddon. Among other projects, Professor Livingstone initiated – and in recent years has directed – EU Kids Online, which will complete its work in 2009. At the end of the publication, media habits of young people in Sweden and some other Nordic countries are described in a broader perspective.

www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse

Note: The booklet *Young People in the European Digital Media Landscape* was sent out to network participants with European addresses only. Anyone outside Europe interested in the publication may send an order to anne.clæsson@nordicom.gu.se

Internet, Computer Games, NICT

COST Action on Cyberbullying

[Internet, Computer Games, NICT]

by Peter K. Smith, Professor &
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COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. COST contributes to reducing the fragmentation in European research investments and opening the European Research Area to cooperation worldwide.

COST does not fund original research, but it does fund a range of networking and dissemination opportunities. These include: management meetings; scientific workshops and seminars; short term scientific missions; training schools; and publications. Some priority is given to helping Early Stage Researchers (ESRs: within 10 years of their doctoral or last relevant degree).

COST IS0801 is a COST Action in the Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH) domain that started in late October 2008. It will continue for 4 years. Its full title is '*Cyberbullying: Coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings*'. The Chair of the Action, Professor Peter K Smith, is at Goldsmiths, University of London, U.K. (p.smith@gold.ac.uk); the Vice-Chair is Professor Georges Steffgen, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg (georges.steffgen@uni.lu). The COST Secretariat is Ms. Ruth Sittichai (pss02rs@gold.ac.uk).

What Is This COST Action About?

Cyberbullying refers to bullying and harassment of others by means of new electronic technologies, primarily mobile phones and the internet. There has been much research and action on traditional forms of bullying in schools, with some success, but cyberbullying has arisen and increased in recent years. Researchers, pupils, parents, teachers, unions, and local, regional and national authorities, are all in various ways grappling with the issues involved in cyberbullying, in consultation with mobile phone companies and internet service providers. There are also positive uses of new technologies for relationships in schools; for example, using a school intranet for peer support services.

COST IS0801 has the aim of sharing expertise on cyberbullying in educational settings, and coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies. The more detailed objectives are:

- Sharing of developing expertise in knowledge base and measurement techniques across researchers
- Sharing of input from outside the research community; specifically, from legal experts; and from mobile phone companies and internet service providers
- Sharing of already nationally published guidelines, and recommended coping strategies, in different countries, including positive uses of new technologies in the relationships area; moving towards a common set of guidelines applicable for the European Community.
- Increased awareness of the issue, and of the outcomes of the Action, to likely beneficiaries of the Action.

To date (May 2009) the Action has 23 participating COST countries(1) plus non-COST participation from 2 institutions in Australia. Altogether 55 persons are on the Management Committee (MC). It is still possible for other countries to join the Action, and for other persons to join the committee.

Working Groups

Much of the activity is managed by Working Groups (WG), made up from members of the MC. There are six Working Groups in COST Action IS0801:

- WG 1: Co-ordinator : Professor Ersilia Menesini, menesini@psico.unifi.it, Sharing of developing expertise in knowledge base and measurement techniques across researchers; organisation of Workshop 1

- WG2: Co-ordinator : Ms. Natalie Noret, n.noret@yorksj.ac.uk, Sharing of input from outside the research community; specifically, from legal experts and from mobile phone companies and internet service providers; organisation of Workshop 2.
- WG3: Co-ordinator : Professor Maritta Valimaki, mava@utu.fi, Sharing of already nationally published guidelines, and recommended coping strategies, in different countries, including positive uses of new technologies in the relationships area; organisation of Workshop 3
- WG4: Co-ordinator : Ms.Vera Boronenko, veraboronenko@inbox.lv, Actively initiate and organise short exchanges, co-supervision of students, and any additional small workshops or meetings that may be necessary
- WG5: Co-ordinator: Dr Sonja Perren, perren@jacobscenter.uzh.ch, Sharing of research on coping strategies, in different countries, and of research that will inform the work on guidelines carried out by Working Group 3.
- WG 6: Co-ordinator: Professor Angela Costabile, a.costabile@unical.it, Positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings.

Workshops and Conferences

The 1st major Workshop of the Action will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 22 - 23 August, 2009. The theme is on the first objective: "Cyber bullying: definition and measurement issues". Guest speakers include Prof. M Ybarra (USA), Prof. P Slee (Australia) and Prof. D Cross (Australia). For details, (www.ecdp2009.com/index.php?id=117), or contact Professor Ersilia Menesini, menesini@psico.unifi.it

In preparation are Workshop 2, in 2010: Sharing of input from outside the research community; Workshop 3, in 2011: Sharing of guidelines, and recommended coping strategies; and a Final Conference: in 2012: General dissemination of the outcomes of the Action, to likely beneficiaries.

The Action Website is at www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/is0801/ and www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=233&action_number=IS0801

Note

1. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom

The Digital Generation in Estonia – Hype or Reality?

[Internet, Computer Games, NICT]

by Andra Siibak, MA
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According to Bruckhard Schäffer (2003), every generation grows up with its own specific style of media usage and culture, which helps to differentiate that generation from previous ones. Present-day children and young people are often defined by their relationship to technology with a variety of labels for this new generation, e.g., the "digital generation" (Papert 1996), the "Net generation" (Tapscott 1998), the "digital natives" (Prensky 2001a), the "electronic generation" (Buckingham 2002), or "generation C" (Bruns 2006), where "C" stands specifically for "content creation" and more generally for "creativity" in relation to the new media technologies. Although no universal label has been created, or an agreement made, upon the concrete age parameters, the majority of the authors have agreed upon the basic characteristics of this new generation. The rapid changes in the technological gadgets youngsters own, as well as the new practices offered by the invention of the Web 2.0, are now used to characterize the new generation. Hence, as claimed by David Buckingham (2008: 13), these advocates of the digital generation regard technology as a liberating force for young people, helping to create a generation that is more open, democratic, creative and innovative than any other generation before them. Furthermore, it is claimed that the members of this new generation have occupied the role of "*produser*" (Bruns 2006) as they are often viewed as the striving force behind user-led content creation, for example blogs, wikis and online journalism, as well as various creativity websites like Flickr and YouTube (cf. Lenhart & Madden 2005, Bruns 2006).

The Aim of the Research

The present article gives a short overview of some of the results of the studies carried out as part of my doctoral thesis entitled "Self-presentation of the 'digital generation' in Estonia"(1). Although it is a tiny nation with 1.3 million inhabitants, Estonia is considered a high-use country in terms of Internet penetration, ranking third after the Netherlands and Denmark (Hasebrink et al. 2008:14). Internet usage is especially high among young people, reaching 99.9 per cent among 11 to 18-year-olds. The active usage of new media by the young, i.e., the supposed digital generation, is also one of the reasons that make Estonia an interesting country to study.

The aim of my thesis is to question whether the online content creation practices of Estonian youngsters actually match the large-scale hype about the new generation, as well as to consider whether the self-presentation strategies youngsters use in the online environments can be viewed as something revolutionarily new that could not have been used by the members of any previous generations.

Methods and Sample

The present overview provides an overview of the quantitative studies carried out for my thesis (2): (a) A questionnaire survey, "Youth and the Internet" (2007), with multiple-choice questions, was conducted among 11 to 18-year-old pupils (N=713). The questionnaire included 316 indicators, among them measures of pupils' online activities on, attitudes towards and opinions about the Internet, reasons for being or not being engaged in online content creation, and self-evaluated computer, Internet and English language skills. (b) Several studies on the most popular social networking site in Estonia, *rate.ee*, were carried out during 2006-2008 in order to analyse which self-presentation strategies the youngsters use in their visual self-displays. Content analysis methodology was combined with a method of "reading images" (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996). Methods previously used for studying gender representation in advertisements (e.g., Goffman 1976) were also applied to build up the categories for the visual content analyses.

Results

The main results that emerged from the questionnaire study are as follows (3):

i) Estonian youngsters are more engaged in content creation practices in online environments that are limited by the technological interface and rules of their peer culture (e.g., social networking websites, news portals, forums) than in online platforms that provide more freedom of expression (e.g., personal homepages, blogs).

ii) Lack of specific motivation, unequal skills of individual users and lack of time are the main reasons youngsters are not actively engaged in producing content online.

iii) The main motives for creating content in more structured environments are clearly socially oriented, whereas in the cases of the less structured online environments the motives are more self-centred and derive from the need to be original and distinct from others.

iv) Schoolchildren aged 11-13 years are most likely to engage in online content creation – the activeness in creating content online decreases as the children get older (4).

The main results of the visual content analyses of the SNS (social networking site) *rate.ee* indicated that:

v) Youngsters use gender-neutral as well as gender-specific visual self-presentation strategies when constructing their virtual selves. The images of young women mainly conform to the traditional gender stereotypes about ideal female beauty. Young men, however, combine different types of masculinity in their online visual self-presentations, which may indicate changes in traditional gendered thinking patterns and *habitus*.

vi) Youngsters view the online environments as playgrounds where they can creatively form their textual and visual practices by combining the knowledge they have gained from adult culture with the distinctive features of their peer culture. The young are well aware of the values and norms prevalent in the online field, and form their self-presentation strategies accordingly. However, when constructing their visual self-presentation strategies, the youngsters rely on the representations of gender in traditional media and advertisements (5).

Conclusions

It has been proposed that theorists should be careful when labelling the younger generation "in terms alien to its members or in terms that construct its members as alien" (Stern 2008:88). The analysis of online content creation practices and self-presentation strategies of

Estonian youngsters reveals that one should be very careful in labelling the younger generation as members of the digital generation or of generation C, in particular. Rather than participating actively in producing content online, Estonian youngsters simply do not seem to have enough motivation to produce content. Those who are engaged in online content creation, however, are doing so in environments where their agency and creativity is limited by the technological interface and the norms of their peer culture.

Also, the visual self-presentation strategies Estonian youngsters use in online environments cannot be viewed as something revolutionarily new; it is rather the case that "remediation is a defining characteristic of the new digital media" (Bolter & Grusin 1999: 45). Although Estonian youngsters are heavy users of the new medium, they are for the most part "repurposing" the values, structures and norms familiar from the older media and reusing them in the new online field.

Notes

1. The preparation of the PhD thesis and this overview is supported by the research grant No. 6968, financed by the Estonian Science Foundation.
2. Some studies of my PhD thesis were based upon qualitative methods.
3. The analysis of the results has been done in co-operation with Veronika Kalmus, Pille Pruulman-Vengerfeldt and Pille Runnel.
4. More detailed and theoretical discussion of the results from i-iv will be published in articles in *JCMC* and *Journal of Children and Media*, written in co-operation with Veronika Kalmus, Pille Pruulman-Vengerfeldt and Pille Runnel.
5. More detailed and theoretical discussion of the results from v-vi can be found in *Cyberpsychology* (2007) and is forthcoming in *Young* (2009) and *Cyberpsychology* (2009).

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EU Kids Online Conference, June 11, 2009 – Conclusion and Commencement

[Internet, Computer Games, NICT]

Researchers, policy makers, industry, educators and NGOs gathered at the London School of Economics (LSE) for an international one-day conference on the 11th of June 2009, celebrating the conclusion of the first EU Kids Online project. This 21 country thematic network, directed by Professor Sonia Livingstone of the LSE, presented the results of three years' policy relevant research. From 2006 to 2009, EU Kids Online, funded by the European

Commission's Safer Internet programme, has brought together scholars to examine available research with children and the internet, producing comparative cross-national findings and policy recommendations.

Sonia Livingstone highlighted the necessity for evidence-based policy, and draw out from the evidence a series of focused recommendations for E-inclusion, education and the role of schools, awareness-raising, advising parents, media literacy and co- and self-regulatory codes of practice.

Besides several keynote speakers from within and outside Europe, there were parallel sessions with over 30 research papers being presented on cyber-bullying, risk management, children's perceptions of risk taking, emergent literacies, privacy, identity and evaluation of policy tools.

The reports from the project and information about the network's other activities are available on www.eukidsonline.net

A forthcoming book *Kids Online* was also announced.

Furthermore, the conference marked the commencement of EU Kids Online II (2009-2011), a two-year EC funded project geared to produce new comparable empirical data. This second project will consist of a quantitative survey with children 9-16 years old and their parents across EU member states, asking about online risks, degrees of vulnerability, the effectiveness of parental strategies and awareness-raising, children's coping responses to risk and their media literacies.

To keep up to date with the project, please sign up for periodic alerts, visit www.eukidsonline.net

Source: www.eukidsonline.net

Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU

[Internet, Computer Games, NICT]

A self-regulatory agreement, "Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU", was signed by 18 major social networking providers on this year's Safer Internet Day in February 2009.

Social networking sites (SNSs) are an emerging social and economic phenomenon estimated to attract 41.7 million regular users in Europe. By committing to the Principles, developed by social networking services providers in consultation with the European Commission, the SNS providers recognize their responsibility to improve the safety of users under the age of 18. Potential risks include cyberbullying, grooming and risky behaviour like revealing personal information. The SNS providers aim to limit these risks by, for instance, making sure that the full online profiles and contact lists of web site users registered as being under 18 are set to "private" by default, ensuring that private profiles of users under 18 are not searchable, and by providing an easy to use and accessible "report abuse" button. The full text of the principles can be found here: [Link](#)

As of June 2009, an additional two companies have sent in their self-declarations. Thus far, the following companies have taken a step forward in keeping their online services safe: Arto, Bebo, Dailymotion, Facebook, Giovani.it, Google, Hyves, Microsoft Europe, MySpace, nazaklasa.pl, Netlog, One.it, Piczo, Rate.ee, Skyrock, StudiVZ.de, Sulake/Habbo, Tuenti, Yahoo! Europe, Zap.lu.

The European Commission will monitor the implementation of the Principles and will publish the results of its assessment in February 2010.

Source:

ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/social_networking/eu_action/selfreg/index_en.htm

Call for Proposals under the European Safer Internet Programme

[Internet, Computer Games, NICT]

The European Commission's Safer Internet Programme launched a call for proposals on June 11, 2009.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Safer Internet Programme has adopted two complementary approaches. It funds the Safer Internet Centres that are developed at national level to take into account national sensitivities and needs and are co-ordinated at European level. It also funds pan-European projects, with partners in some or all EU Member States, which aim at gathering information and coordinating pan-European and international activities in the field of safer Internet.

The Commission awards grants to projects selected following the adoption of the annual Work Programme and the launch of a call for proposals.

The call for proposals under Safer Internet programme are open to all legal entities established in the Member States. Legal entities established in EFTA States which are contracting parties to the EEA Agreement (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) may also take part. Legal entities established in other countries may take part under specific conditions. The call has a fixed deadline of November 19, 2009.

Media Influences

New Publication from the Clearinghouse on Influences of Mediated Violence

[Media Influences]

We are pleased to present the publication *Influences of Mediated Violence. A Brief Research Summary*.

Many parents, teachers and policy-makers are concerned about the negative influence they believe media exert on children and adolescents. Such concerns have been voiced as long as mass media have existed, but the concern has grown in pace with developments in media technology. There is particular concern about what we call harm and offence in media content – violent and pornographic fiction and non-fiction, but also about offensive advertisements, stereotypes, hate-mongering messages, and so forth. Interactive media such as the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use.

Different parties turn to Nordicom and the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media with questions on the influences of especially mediated violence. There are various types of mediated violence and various types of influences. From time to time the Clearinghouse has highlighted the main conclusions that can be drawn from research regarding such issues. In this publication, Dr. Cecilia von Feilitzen, scientific co-ordinator at the Clearinghouse, has attempted to classify research findings into a more concise form than is perhaps common. We hope that this publication, will answer some of the questions so often asked by various groups in society.

www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse

Note

The booklet was sent out to network participants in August 2009.

Young People and the Media: Special Issue of the *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* March 2009

[Media Influences]

Guest Editors: Kevin Durkin, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK, and Mark Blades, University of Sheffield, UK

by Kevin Durkin

This Special Issue brings together a variety of current perspectives from developmental psychology on the ways in which young people use (or sometimes avoid), live with, react to, learn from, and learn about the ubiquitous communications tools of contemporary life. Developmentalists have contributed substantially to research into children and media, yet this remains a minority topic area within the field. The Editors propose that the ubiquity and popularity of the media among the young mean that they warrant more extensive attention.

Television is still the pre-eminent medium of choice for young people and their caregivers. The issue contains several papers on the conditions under which children learn and do not learn

from television/ video (Elizabeth Zack and colleagues, Michael Robb and colleagues, Sook-Jung Lee and colleagues), showing that television viewing and reading habits are formed early in life and reinforced over time, and that infants as young as 15 months can learn new actions from TV displays. A large scale field study conducted by Deborah Linebarger and Jessica Piotrowski shows that television story programmes can support preschoolers' narrative skills.

A perennial area of concern in children's media exposure is dealing with advertisements, and the Special Issue presents valuable new reports on children's understanding and on what parents can do. Avril Nash and colleagues reveal that school age children turn out to be quite knowledgeable and rather fond of the humour in TV alcohol commercials, perceiving them as effective. Moondore Ali and colleagues report that children in the same age range are less adept at distinguishing ads on the Internet – only 10-year-olds recognise readily that price tags provide clues about why the illustration is on the website. Those interested in counteracting advertisers' ploys will find reassurance from an ambitious study of parental mediation of food ads by Moniek Buijzen, identifying strategies that can be effective.

Pre-teens and adolescents are particularly fond of the media and the Special Issue contains new studies of their uses of computers and mobile phones for interpersonal, educational, and self-expressive purposes. Does the use of text language, in mobiles or emails, render young people at risk of communicative degeneracy? Are teenagers falling into solipsistic electronic existences, increasingly detached from families and friends? Beverly Plester and colleagues provide surprising findings about the impact of text language on literacy in late childhood. Olga Volckaert-Legrier and colleagues investigate the development of text language as a distinct register in 12- to 15-year-olds. Rivka Ribak analyses the complex ways in which mobile 'phones reflect and affect intergenerational communications. Kevin Durkin and colleagues examine the impact of language ability on adolescents' uses of new media for educational purposes, identifying an important group at risk of missing out, namely young people with Specific Language Impairment. In one of the first developmental studies of adolescent blogging, Kaveri Subrahmanyam and her team present a fascinating account of the interconnections between young people's online and offline worlds.

Contrary to popular mythology that media use is pervasively harmful or wasteful, findings reported here by show that the media are part of active, diverse and inquisitive young lives, serving many important functions in terms of the acquisition of skills, maintenance of peer contact, expression of identity and emotional needs. Parents, policy makers, educators, clinicians and young people themselves have regularly to make decisions about how best to use the opportunities that the media offer and how to deal with the hazards they present. Careful research by developmental psychologists can help inform decisions and debate, and this Special Issue provides a rich body of evidence on the ways in which young people and their caregivers are dealing with the opportunities and hazards of a mediated world.

Classroom Interventions to Reduce Impact of TV Violence in the US

[Media Influences]

A study conducted by researchers at Oregon State University in the US shows that classroom-based interventions with children who watch a great deal of violent shows and movies on TV are successful in reducing the amount of time spent by these children in front of the TV set. The period of TV time for children in the first to fourth grade (ages 6 to 9 years) decreased more than 18% following the interventions. The results also appeared to remain, according to a follow-up test conducted eight months later.

The classroom interventions consisted of 28 brief lessons during a seven-month period conducted by university staff. Four hundred and ninety-six children in 32 classes participated. Besides a significant reduction in violent TV-viewing habits, the researchers also noted that children showed a lower tendency to identify with violent superheroes and also expressed a more critical attitude concerning televised violence.

The results of the study are presented in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* Volume 30, Issue 4, July-August 2008, Pages 381-397:

"Television violence: An intervention to reduce its impact on children"
by Lawrence I. Rosenkoetter, Sharon E. Rosenkoetter and Alan C. Acock.

Images of Children and Young People

The Children's Rights Movement and the Construction of a News Agenda in Brazil

[Images of Children and Young People]

by Lidia Marôpo
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The relationship between the children's rights movement and the news media in Brazil is analysed in the research project 'The Childhood Media Agenda Construction' (A Construção da Agenda Mediática da Infância). The investigation, developed originally for a master's thesis and then published as a book in 2008 (1), explores the sense in which the children's rights movement in Brazil succeeded in becoming a credible source for the news. How was the movement's discourse on child issues, such as education and sexual violence, able to influence the journalistic production? At a time when the inefficient public schools were covered only sporadically by the media that were dominated by the government's voice, and sexual exploitation – usually an income for young girls and their poor families – was not a visible theme, how did the movement succeed in including this debate on the media agenda?

The research contextualized childhood in Brazil, reconstructed the exclusion process of millions of children, and showed the birth of the modern children's rights movement and its fight for visibility. The movement is seen as a process of civic mobilization, and its action as an attempt to construct public concerns in accordance with its conception of children as subjects of rights. In this context, journalism is fundamental for achieving relevance for children's claims and, consequently, they will have a higher possibility of also being included in the political agenda.

Despite people's unequal access to the media and the media's political and economic interests, journalism is a basic tool for democracy and needs to connect to civic movements, which then achieve social legitimacy. The research raised some questions about the relationship between social movements and the news media: Which structure and resources were needed to influence the journalistic discourse? Which strategies did the movement use? What was the social actors' knowledge about the media's working routines? Was there professional management of the media? Were there other forces that interfered in this relationship? What agreements and conflicts existed between the media and the movements?

Interviews with Representatives of the Children's Rights Movement

Based on interviews with social actors in the children's rights movement from Ceará, a state with one of the highest social inadequacies in northeast Brazil, the research concluded that:

1. The social actors in the children's rights movement used planned communication strategies (press releases, visits to journalists, events, denounce reports, divulgations of precise data); they often used a professional service for public relations (most of the NGOs do not have a communication advisor, but work in partnership with UNICEF and larger NGOs, which have relevant experts); and they regularly distributed information to the news media.
2. They showed a broad knowledge of media routines, using this not only to attract journalists' attention but also to influence the framing of children's issues. Some acted as journalists' 'advisors', clearing doubts about children's rights, and appropriating terminologies and approaches.
3. They realized the influence they could have on the media. It is believed that in the early nineties they contributed to changing unfavourable coverage of the new children and adolescents' Bill and stimulated more favourable news framing of it.
4. Shows of disrespect to the legislation sometimes happened – especially due to the journalists' lacking knowledge and when the issue was violence – and were the main cause of conflict between sources and journalists. On the other hand, the sources saw the media as a fundamental means of influencing the public and political agenda and achieving financial support.

Content Analysis of Newspapers – Education and Sexual Violence

To verify the sense in which the sources had actually influenced the news coverage, a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the two main state newspapers – *O Povo* and *Diário do Nordeste* – was performed. The data were collected for a period of four months over

three years and concerned two important themes for children in the region: education (1999-2001, 147 items) and sexual violence (2001-2003, 130 items).

Acting as a network, the movement was a counterbalance with a strong growing presence in the media about educational topics. The activists organized visits to schools, denounced the lack of school vacancies, and elaborated reports about the quality of the public schools. They made themselves a part of the news production routines, introduced fresh topics in the coverage and were at times quoted more than the educational authorities were.

Concerning sexual violence (abuse and commercial exploitation), the challenge was to give visibility to the theme. The growing presence of the topic in the news (from 12 items in 2001 to 69 in 2003) showed greater media interest; the children's rights movement played a fundamental role in this. The activists were frequently asked to comment on and analyse police actions, public policies and court decisions. The mobilizations, especially on the National Day against Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (May 18th), achieved great media attention with contextualized reporting. The movement also promoted a greater awareness regarding victims' privacy and the appropriate terms to be used (e.g., 'sexual exploitation' instead of 'child prostitution').

Conclusions

The children's rights movement was able to be a credible source of information, influencing the news discourse:

1. The activists acted as a network joining several organizations already recognized as credible by the society and the media.
2. Their actions were planned to adapt to the news values and the media routines.
3. The movement had a professional relationship with the media, including experts' advisors producing information regularly.
4. The movement's leaders (including lawyers and educators) had cultural capital able to attract media attention.
5. Lastly, these positions about education and sexual violence had social support and consequently attracted much more media attention than the movement's discourses on other themes, such as the violence perpetrated by children and adolescents.

Note

1. Lidia Marôpo (2008). *A Construção da Agenda Mediática da Infância*. Lisboa: Livros Horizontes

Resource Kit for Journalists for Reporting on Children

[Images of Children and Young People]

Within the Empowering Children & Media Project of the South African-based Media Monitoring Project (MMP), a resource kit has been developed for journalists for reporting on and interviewing children. After an analysis and assessment of how children are represented in South African news media, it was found that children are rarely featured in the media and if they do appear, they are often shown as voiceless victims.

With the resource kit, which is free to download, the MMP would like to provide journalists with the information they need to enable children's voices to become part of daily media coverage that respects children's rights, South African laws and international norms and standards.

Source: www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/

Conference on the Representation of Children in the Media

[Images of Children and Young People]

On 22 April 2009, ten years on from the Oslo Challenge ([read more](#)), a conference was held in London, UK, discussing the representation of children in the media. It included the following challenge to media professionals at all levels and in all media:

to work ethically and professionally to sound media practices and to develop and promote media codes of ethics in order to avoid sensationalism, stereotyping (including by gender) or undervaluing of children and their rights.

A number of speakers representing NGOs, the media and the research community gave speeches on child reporting – providing examples, presenting results from research and giving recommendations. The conference was a collaboration between the Norwegian Government and UNICEF, and was organized by the Institute of Education and the Open University.

To read the conference report, please go to www.crin.org/docs/oslo.pdf