



## POSITION PAPER

# MEDIA LITERACY

*A DYNAMIC, EDUCATED AND  
CREATIVE EUROPE*

*Investing in young people and  
education*

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction to Media Literacy .....	3
1 S&D Priorities and action needed .....	4
1.1 Possibility: These mainly include technical requirements of inclusion in the information society .....	4
1.2 Ability: Here the acquisition and development of skills are addressed, needed in different situations .....	5
1.3 Activity: Addresses the competencies to enable active use .....	7

## INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy is the ability to use media in the "right" and "appropriate" way. It is a key qualification in modern society, the key skill of the high-tech sector and a basic qualification in almost all economic environments even in a crafts sector.

The term should not be reduced to technical and manual skills. It also includes cognitive, affective and conative abilities, which every "media competent" individual should have. Promoting media literacy does not only develop basic skills, but also technical skills, critical analysis and problem solving skills, competences and social skills. Media literacy can not be acquired in one step because of the progressive media development. It must be developed permanently in lifelong learning.

The aim of media literacy should be to equip people of all ages and from all social backgrounds with the skills required to access, analyze, evaluate and produce the media content, across all platforms.

A media literate user is the one, who can creatively use various forms of media handling their own personal data responsibly and the data of other users respectfully. This user is aware of being a transmitter and receiver, consumer and producer, and apprehender and learner at the same time.

Media literacy begins at home with learning how to select from the media services available, in this regard media education for parents, who play a decisive role in the development of children's media-use habits is very important, and continues at school and during lifelong learning, and is strengthened by the efforts of national, governmental and regulatory authorities and the work of media professionals and institutions.

Media literacy is central to political culture and active participation by Union citizens - encourages active participation by citizens in democracy and the exchange of information. It offers instruments supporting integration and social cohesion and, furthermore, well-informed, politically mature citizens form the basis of a pluralist society. Digital technology is also an important learning tool for citizenship, facilitating the participation of many citizens living in peripheral areas and especially of youth audiences, allowing them to fully benefit from freedom of expression and online communication.

Media literacy promotes the dissemination of global and European culture, and intercultural dialogue.

Media literacy helps to meet the challenges posed by new media such as Internet, as it is the first and principal source of information especially for young people and the older still prefer the traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television. It is also important to realise the source of content in new media may also come from traditional type of media. So the sources and their message are what is important and what remains, just the medium is different.

Children and young people understand the Internet now as a natural instrument in their everyday life. However, they are stereotyped as the digital natives but they need guidance in developing digital skills. Media literacy strategies targeted at young people must reflect the diversity of media content and go further than children safety. It must be seen as an investment in their future and place in society.

While technical skills alone are not enough, they are still the basis for understanding and dealing with the new media. This raises the question of how different groups of people have the skills necessary to optimally exploit the potential of the Internet. Threats to the security of personal data are becoming increasingly insidious and manifold, thereby constituting a high risk for uninformed users.

In the current global environment, proper training in IT and media use enhances emancipation, autonomy and self-expression. A highly educated and literate workforce is also vital to achieve the goals of the EU 2020 Strategy for economic growth.

## 1 S&D PRIORITIES AND ACTION NEEDED

It is necessary to focus on 3 different levels of media literacy:

### 1.1 Possibility: These mainly include technical requirements of inclusion in the information society

1. ensure access to all types of media for everyone;
2. invest in media literacy on European, national and local levels;
3. narrow the digital divide between Member States, between towns and countryside by developing the information and communication infrastructure;
4. set up high quality and affordable broadband in areas not fully equipped;
5. recognition of the importance of media education;

6. ensure technical equipment and access to new technologies as school facilities, as well as facilitate the need to substantially improve them, to enable all schoolchildren to have access to computers, the Internet, and the necessary instruction;
7. invest in media literacy starting from early child education, through primary and secondary schools on all levels not only targeted at special media literacy classes but also being offered transversely throughout curricula;
8. establish media education departments at universities;
9. encourage media literacy education on the level of non-formal and informal learning;
10. promote respect and support also for traditional media;
11. promote respect for understanding different sources of content whether in traditional or new media;
12. accept that the individual management of digital identity will be a key skill in the future;
13. encourage eliminating cultural barriers against innovations;

## **1.2 Ability: Here the acquisition and development of skills are addressed, needed in different situations**

1. to define media literacy to better serve its purpose and make people aware of its meaning;
2. to educate not only with media but also about media;
3. importance of linking media literacy to general literacy;
4. increase presence of media literacy transversally in the compulsory education curriculum - on top of ICT skills as a broader objective which is related to the phenomenon of increasing communications and media convergence;
5. develop EU-wide strategy to foster media literacy;
6. develop media literacy programmes and to undertake a series of concrete actions by the Member States and the Commission in that field;
7. continue investing in successful EU media literacy related programmes (such as Safer Internet Programme);
8. EU-initiated support and awareness necessary to encourage national action and visibility at national level;
9. evaluate measures for media literacy promotion;
10. development of digital education concept by the Commission;

11. acquisition of technical skills (dealing with hardware and software, basic understanding of the structure of the Internet) aimed at understanding of relations and the ability for self-learning;
12. stronger networking of media education activities;
13. encourage creation of European media literacy networks, platforms for exchange of information and best practices, and ensure European visibility of national, regional and local initiatives;
14. stronger anchoring and binding media educational content;
15. strengthen the role of parental mediation and develop targeted work with parents: they need practical instruments they can include in their child's education;
16. develop and ensure better skills training for educators at all levels;
17. demand research on the impact of digital media on mental skills, on effective methods of self-control as well as on the success of serious game-based learning;
18. recognize computer-game-education as a part of media-education;
19. develop concept for a fair distribution of responsibilities on the Internet without controlling it;
20. ensure coordinated and progressive education on online safety in schools in the EU related to issues such as school curriculum, methods of teaching, specific teacher training and qualifications or cooperation between the educational authorities and other public or private organizations in the field including the Safer Internet Centres in the European countries;
21. educate about intellectual property and copyright, and the value of content, as well as about respect for authors' and producers' rights in order to decrease illegal abuse of those rights and bring the revenues to distributors and producers;
22. encourage active participation and cooperation of all stakeholders such as European Parliament and European Commission, regulatory authorities, media industry, and civil society, as well as UNESCO and Council of Europe;
23. encourage more media industry attention to media literacy - such as newspaper editors promoting press-education ties and online journalism in schools, film festivals that include media education activities, TV channels education activities (especially public channels), hard and software companies, etc.;

24. involve small local entities such as libraries, adult education centres, citizens' cultural and media centres, further education and training establishments and citizens' media (e.g. community media) that can make an active contribution to promoting media literacy;
25. ensure measuring results and outcomes of media literacy policies and defining competences;
26. closer examination of commercial risks;

### **1.3 Activity: Addresses the competencies to enable active use**

1. strengthen child-friendly offers in the Internet;
2. promote peer-to-peer learning;
3. facilitate capability to create own content (website, blogs, film, music) without copyright infringement;
4. develop skills for critical analysis of content (to assess sources, recognize intentions, awareness of advertising messages);
5. teach new media-literate users to be aware of the potential risks concerning IT security and the security of personal data, and of the risks relating to cyber-violence;
6. develop awareness of media content (costs traps, privacy, fraud, abuse);
7. appropriate management of information overload (basic understanding of how search engines work, avoid a one-sided information selection).