Research on Media and Data Literacy

[REPORT]
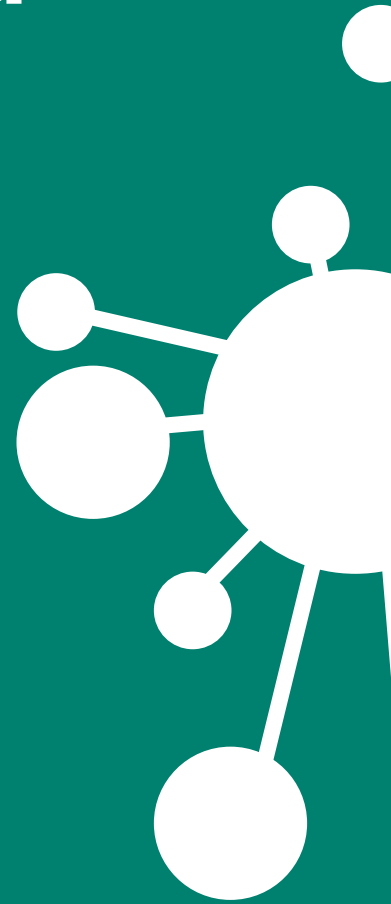
FREEYOU NE—XT

Co-funded by
the European Union

Table of contents

Credits

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era where information permeates every aspect of our lives, promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has emerged as a critical necessity. With the overwhelming abundance of data and the rapid spread of misinformation, fostering MIL skills has become imperative to empower individuals as discerning consumers and producers of information. Recognising this need, several organisations from across Europe have united in a collaborative search to explore and present projects that exemplify excellence in media and information literacy.

Our group research for the FreeYou Next European Project is a collective effort by [Dataninja](#), [FZC – Zaragoza City of Knowledge Foundation](#), [Gluon](#), [INOVA+](#), [MEET | Digital Culture Center](#). Each participating entity has curated three exemplary case studies, illustrating projects that have effectively addressed media and information literacy challenges. These case studies shed light on diverse approaches, methodologies, and interventions undertaken by organisations from different countries, reflecting the richness and diversity of MIL initiatives.

The primary objective of this joint research is to comprehensively investigate the strategies employed by these projects in promoting media and information literacy. By dissecting the mission, methodologies and tools, we seek to derive valuable lessons that can inform future MIL commitment, both at regional and global levels. By examining the projects through a holistic lens, we aim to identify common trends, best practices, and innovative techniques that can potentially be replicated or adapted to suit various contexts.

As we embark on this research journey, we anticipate discovering an array of innovative and impactful initiatives, all dedicated to advancing media and information literacy across Europe and beyond. Through this collaborative effort, we aim to contribute significantly to the ongoing discourse on media literacy and strengthen Europe's position as a leader in promoting informed and responsible media consumption.

2. CASE STUDIES

2.1. Austria

Project: FAKE OFF

Website: https://www.fake-off.eu/

MISSION

The Fake-Off project is dedicated to combating the growing threat of fake news and misinformation, particularly among young people who spend significant time on the Internet and social media platforms. The project's threefold mission is to increase young individuals' participation in critical debates surrounding news and online content, develop their capacity to assess and evaluate information effectively through media literacy and critical thinking skills, and provide a systematic approach to digital literacy, ensuring safe and responsible navigation of the digital landscape.

TEAM

The Fake-Off project is a collaborative effort, with partners from Austria, Germany, Italy, and Spain coming together to address the challenges of fake news and digital literacy. The team consists of esteemed organisations, including bit schulungscenter, Future Balloons, YEPP EUROPE, GoEurope, Jonathan Cooperativa Sociale, Österreichisches Institut für angewandte Telekommunikation (ÖIAT), and LOGO! Jugendmanagement. These partners bring diverse expertise and perspectives, ensuring an effective and comprehensive approach to empowering young individuals against misinformation.

TARGET

The primary target of the Fake-Off project is young people, along with teachers and professionals who work closely with them. Recognizing the susceptibility of young individuals to fake news and misinformation, the project aims to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to critically evaluate information, make informed decisions, and navigate the online world responsibly.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

To achieve its goals, the Fake-Off project offers an array of tools and resources:

- **General Didactic Concept:** A tailor-made concept that fosters media literacy in diverse educational settings, including youth work and youth information centres. This concept empowers young people to question and evaluate information, promoting an active engagement with news and online content.
- **Digital Learning Package:** A resource toolbox website designed for youth workers, providing access to didactic materials developed within the project. This empowers youth workers to educate young people about fake news and digital literacy effectively.
- **Youth-Centric App:** A specialized app for young people featuring game-based activities, specialized content, and a communication platform centred on fake news. This interactive approach engages young users and strengthens their media literacy skills.

- **Training Materials:** Comprehensive training materials for youth workers and teachers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to address fake news and improve Internet literacy among young people.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Fake-Off project emphasises sustainability through collaboration and diverse partnerships. By combining resources and expertise from different countries, the project ensures a lasting impact on media literacy and the fight against fake news. Additionally, the project aims to secure continued support and funding to maintain its initiatives and resources for the long term.

DISSEMINATION

To spread awareness and reach its target audience effectively, the Fake-Off project utilises various communication channels and dissemination strategies. These may include online platforms, social media, conferences, workshops, and collaborations with educational institutions. By actively engaging with the public and stakeholders, the project maximises its impact in empowering young individuals against the dangers of misinformation and fake news.

2.2. Belgium

Project: MOLENGEEK

Website: https://molengeek.com/

MISSION

The media literacy project's core mission is to foster digital technology accessibility and empower young individuals in Brussels with media literacy skills. By raising awareness of entrepreneurship and providing opportunities for employment, business creation, and career building, the project aims to equip individuals of any age, gender, or location with essential skills, without prerequisites or certification requirements.

TEAM

The project was initiated in 2015 by visionary entrepreneurs Ibrahim Ouassari and Julie Foulon, both passionate about new technologies. Over the years, experienced coaches have joined the team, guiding students on a daily basis. The team collaborates closely to ensure the success and impact of the media literacy initiative.

TARGET

The media literacy project primarily targets job seekers aged 18 to 30 in Brussels. The focus is on offering opportunities to individuals who may not have previous knowledge or experience in the field. All applicants need to show proof of registration at Actiris, the regional employment office, to participate in the free courses.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The media literacy project encompasses various poles of learning, providing comprehensive educational experiences to the participants. These poles include:

- **Coding School:** A dynamic training program that immerses trainees in computer coding through hands-on exercises and real-life scenarios.
- **Marketing Lab:** Trainees acquire digital marketing skills, covering web development, video editing, social media strategies, SEO, and copywriting.
- **Webmaster 360:** Participants explore the diverse aspects of the digital ecosystem, including content creation, traffic management, and advertising.
- **AWS re/Start:** A three-month intensive training focused on technical skills for Cloud management, enabling graduates to excel in junior positions with AWS technology.

Additionally, shorter training sessions under "ICT Training" aim to boost trainees' skills in various areas such as Photoshop, WordPress, Adobe Pro, Social Networks, Google Analytics, and HTML.

All courses are conducted on-site, promoting community-based learning, and allowing for better support and interaction among participants.

SUSTAINABILITY

The media literacy project operates as a non-profit organisation (ASBL) with strong support from Bruxelles Formation Centre. By collaborating with the regional employment office and leveraging funding opportunities, the initiative ensures the continuity of free courses, enhancing the long-term sustainability of the project.

DISSEMINATION

To reach its target audience effectively, the media literacy project utilises various social media channels, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Through these platforms, they disseminate content, engage with the young public, and raise awareness about the opportunities available. This enables them to extend their impact and connect with potential participants and partners in the digital world.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

Project: DATABUZZ

MISSION

The DataBuzz is a revolutionary 100% electric, mobile lab with a mission to enhance data literacy among teachers and students, enabling them to navigate confidently in our digital society. The project offers a diverse range of workshops, equipping participants with essential skills to collect, analyse, and visualise data. It also provides insights into the role of data and Artificial Intelligence, fosters critical thinking about digitalization, and offers tools to tackle challenges in a smart city environment. Ultimately, the DataBuzz aims to empower individuals to protect their online identity and make informed decisions in the digital age.

TEAM

The DataBuzz project is a collaborative effort, brought to life through the partnership of the imec-SMIT research group at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and the Flemish Community Commission (VGC). Gluon is a valuable partner contributing to the development of the proposed workshops. The project is driven by a dedicated team of DataBuzz coaches, experts, and educators who work together to deliver engaging and informative workshops.

TARGET

The DataBuzz project is designed to benefit various educational settings, including schools, youth organisations, festivals, and other events. The target audience includes primary and secondary education students. Workshops are tailored to specific age groups, focusing on different aspects of media literacy, data protection, digital balance, and the ethical implications of artificial intelligence.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The DataBuzz project offers a comprehensive selection of 10 workshops, each catering to specific age groups and educational objectives:

- **Escape the DataBuzz:** A playful escape game for primary and secondary school students to learn about personal data protection.
- **Netiquette and Cyberbullying:** An interactive workshop addressing netiquette, cyberbullying, and online conduct for primary and special primary education students.
- **Breaking News:** Introduces students to data journalism, inspiring critical thinking about data in the press.
- **How Smart Is Your Phone?:** Raises awareness of smartphone use and helps students find a digital balance.
- **AI-AI-AI?:** Explores the strengths, limitations, and ethical implications of artificial intelligence.
- **Cookies & Bubbles:** Offers insights into cookies and filter bubbles, emphasising the influence of data collection on reading and buying behaviour.

- **Facts or Fiction?:** Teaches students how to recognize and combat fake news through engaging activities.
- **Bye Bye Bias:** Addresses artificial intelligence and confronts prejudices and stereotypes in society.
- **AI & Media:** Deepfakes: An interactive workshop focusing on AI and its relation to deepfakes, promoting media literacy in handling manipulated content.
- **E-Health & Smart Devices:** Introduces e-health and smart devices, encouraging critical thinking about AI and data collection in the health sector.

SUSTAINABILITY

The DataBuzz project is supported and funded by the VGC, ensuring its continuity in providing workshops at Dutch-speaking schools in Belgium. Festivals and events can also rent the DataBuzz for a maximum of 3 days through their online platform. This sustainable approach allows the project to reach a broader audience and contribute to the development of media literacy over the long term.

DISSEMINATION

To spread awareness about the DataBuzz project and engage with the public, the initiative maintains an active presence on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. By leveraging these channels, they can connect with schools, organisations, and individuals interested in participating in their workshops. Additionally, interested parties can reach out to them through their email, databuzz@vub.be, for further information and collaboration opportunities.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

Project: KIKK

Website: https://www.kikk.be/

MISSION

KIKK's Media Literacy Project is a non-profit initiative established in 2011 in Namur, Belgium, with the mission to promote digital and creative cultures. Through various major projects, including the renowned KIKK festival, TRAKK Creative Hub and Fab Lab, and The Pavilion exhibition space, KIKK creates bridges between art, culture, science, and technology. The project aims to explore and experiment with new technologies in a cross-disciplinary manner, prefiguring the challenges of a rapidly evolving world. At the heart of their activities lies the artistic production platform, feeding into other projects to foster openness, exchange, and discovery.

TEAM

The Media Literacy Project at KIKK is led by a dedicated team of about 20 individuals with diverse proficiencies. The team consists of art curators, artistic directors, event managers, production managers, and volunteers' managers, all working collaboratively in a supportive and creative environment.

TARGET

KIKK's Media Literacy Project is aimed at various actors, including the general public and professionals. The project offers diverse events during the KIKK Festival, held over four days in October-November, such as the KIKK Market, KIKK In Town art exhibitions, and workshops that link science, art, and technology, catering to different age groups.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The Media Literacy Project employs various tools and modalities to promote media literacy and creativity:

- **KIKK Market:** A free event during the KIKK Festival where the public can discover innovative projects by talented Belgian and international entrepreneurs. Attendees can interact with unique objects, fostering hands-on engagement with new technologies.
- **KIKK In Town:** The city of Namur becomes a creative hub with art exhibitions in 20 different indoor and outdoor locations, showcasing monumental and interactive installations. This provides an immersive experience in digital and creative cultures.
- **Workshops for Youth:** KIKK organises workshops linking science, art, and technology, offering children the opportunity to explore new technologies and techniques. These workshops may require a fee per child, encouraging active participation and learning.
- **Pro Events:** Through conferences, workshops, masterclasses, and B2B meetings, KIKK engages professionals in various topics, including creative coding, data visualisation, AI, branding, VR/AR, and design. It creates a space for representatives from different creative ecosystems to present their work.

SUSTAINABILITY

KIKK's Media Literacy Project receives funding from various levels within Belgium, including the city of Namur, the Wallonia Region, the Federation Wallonie Bruxelles, and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. This support ensures the sustainability and continuity of the project's initiatives and activities.

DISSEMINATION

To reach its target audience effectively, KIKK utilises various social media channels such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Through active communication on these platforms, the project disseminates information about upcoming events, workshops, and exhibitions, engaging with a wider audience and promoting media literacy within the digital and creative communities.

Co-funded by
the European Union

2.3. Germany

Project: THE GLASSROOM

Website: https://theglassroom.org/
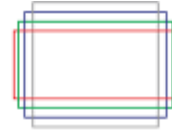
MISSION

The Glass Room is a public intervention that aims to demystify technology through immersive, thought-provoking and self-learning exhibitions. The Glass Room began as a large-scale exhibition, travelling from Berlin to New York, London and San Francisco between 2016 and 2019.

Each Glass Room took the form of a space designed to look like a fancy technology shop, but where nothing was for sale. Instead, visitors found a place where they could talk freely and critically about technology. The objects presented explored data, privacy and our relationship to the technologies and platforms that have become so commonplace in our everyday lives.

Artworks produced as part of these larger Glass Room exhibitions are still touring the world, with a current exhibition in Austria.

TEAM

Tactical Tech is a Berlin-based, international NGO that explores and mitigates the impact of digital technologies on society. Their mission is to give people the resources they need to make sustainable change in their digital lives, encouraging online privacy, autonomy, and a creative use of technology. Tactical Tech launched The Glass Room project in 2016 to address a growing public awareness around data and privacy, subsequently reaching over 352,000 people in 61 countries and generating a global conversation about the impact of big data.

TARGET

The Glass Room comes in various formats from large-scale exhibitions, like those in Berlin, New York, London and San Francisco, to a portable version that can be set up by libraries, schools, festivals and exhibitions around the world. The Glass Room has already hosted 471 exhibitions and workshops around the world and can be hosted virtually anywhere.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

What's inside the Glass Room?

- Data Detox Kit: Launched for the first time for The Glass Room London, the Data Detox Kit has accompanied the exhibitions, distributed at the Data Detox Bar. The Data Detox Kit, both in print and online, provides visitors with simple tips and tricks so they can start taking control of their privacy, security and wellbeing. The Data Detox Kit is available for free in over 35 languages and offers articles on a wide range of topics including health misinformation, screen time and voter data. An interactive version of the DDK for our younger audience can also be downloaded and is available in several languages. Detox *x Youth* is an activity book to help young people take control of their technology.
- Exhibitions: A growing need for public interventions and information about technology led Tactical Tech to design Glass Room Community Edition, a lightweight pop-up exhibition that is translated into 30 languages and can be sent around the world to community spaces, schools, libraries and festivals. We support our partners in creating critical spaces where

communities around the world can join the global discussion about privacy, data and the impacts of technology on society.

The first release in this series was <u>The Internet of Things (IoT) Edition</u>, exploring the risks and benefits of the everyday technologies we use in our homes and lives. In <u>La iniciativa Juventud y Tecnología</u> Tactical Tech has adapted and converted the content of The Glass Room Community Edition into a thought-provoking experience for visitors of all ages. The Glass Room Community Edition has been dedicated to enhancing media and digital literacy through the latest <u>Misinformation Edition</u>. Joint efforts with the Youth and Technology project have made all Glass Room content accessible and relevant to younger audiences.

- [Workshops](#)

SUSTAINABILITY

The Glass Room is a public intervention that aims to demystify technology through immersive, thought-provoking, self-learning exhibitions. The Glass Room began as a large-scale exhibition traveling to different countries between 2016 and 2019. A growing need for public interventions and information about technology led Tactical Tech to design the Glass Room Community Edition – a lightweight, pop-up exhibition which is translated into 30 languages and can be shipped worldwide to community spaces, schools, libraries and festivals.

In total, they have hosted 471 Glass Room events in 61 countries around the world.

DISSEMINATION

352,000 Visitors. More than 352,000 people have visited the Glass Room exhibitions and Glass Room Community Editions around the world.

471 Events. The Glass Room has hosted 471 exhibitions and workshops in libraries, schools, festivals and organisations worldwide.

61 Countries. The Glass Room can be hosted virtually anywhere. Host your own exhibition and join the growing Glass Room global network which has been in 61 countries.

2.4. Italy

Project: SAPERE DIGITALE

Website: https://www.saperedigitale.org/

Libraries are the cultural centres of our cities, the focal points for the development of citizenship skills. It is therefore crucial that digital literacy pathways are also developed in libraries.

Sapere Digitale
Educazione civica digitale
in biblioteca

MISSION

Sapere Digitale is a public network created to support and promote the crucial role that libraries play in the cultural development of citizenship. In particular, the project aims to emphasise the role they can play in supporting digital civic education, information literacy and the development of digital skills.

TEAM

Sapere Digitale was born in Piemonte (IT), thanks to funding from the Region and Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, which has expanded its dissemination to include library networks in Valle D'Aosta region as well.

TARGET

The project's main target audience is librarians and staff involved in the regional library network. At a second level, the project targets schools, given their close relationship, and the entire citizenry, including through co-designing courses to initiate specific activities.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The project's goal was to move beyond the information literacy and reading promotion on which library networks were based to develop an ecosystem aimed at media education and digital skills development, starting from the European principles and the methodologies indicated by Digicomp. At the heart of Sapere Digitale, training paths for library staff are therefore developed with consultants and realities capable of developing skills and enabling the use of digital devices and tools. The themes the project focuses on are digital skills, identified by the European Union and taken up by the Buona Scuola reform and in particular the Ministerial project Generazioni Connesse. Over the years, themes such as the use of digital to promote reading, a constructive approach to disinformation, and the use of technologies for research and documentation have been addressed, including through training courses co-designed with Open the Box.

SUSTAINABILITY

The training modules are free and about 30 places are available for each course, 20 reserved for librarians, 10 for teachers from the two regions involved. The training started out in-presence, then the covid-19 pandemic caused everything to move online, and actually this modality has been effective.

DISSEMINATION

Collaboration with projects such as Open the Box, which began as e-learning projects, has facilitated large-scale dissemination of the interventions, as well as more direct use of digital tools already during training hours.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

The project is disseminated nationwide through the website, blog, and social channels Facebook and YouTube.

IMG credits: *Sapere digitale. Educazione civica digitale in Biblioteca* sustained by Compagnia di San Paolo, Obiettivo Cultura, Missione Sviluppare Competenze.

Project: OPEN THE BOX
Website: https://www.openthebox.io/

MISSION

Open the Box is a media and data literacy project aimed at girls and boys aged 11 and over.
The main objective of the project is to combat fake news and online disinformation with a constructive and long-term approach. Its mission is to attract, train and empower a community of 10,000 young "fact- and data-checkers" throughout Italy.
After following the Open the Box training course, the young people will be able to take an active role in combating disinformation by engaging more effectively with their peers in the social networks they frequent every day.

TEAM

With their background in journalism, fact-checking and data literacy, the organisers of Open the Box have developed an innovative, inclusive and scalable educational programme. Open the Box stems from Dataninja experience in the field of media education and data literacy. Dataninja has been promoting data culture in Italy since 2013 through award-winning journalistic investigations and an online educational offer called Dataninja School.
Since 2016, some of Dataninja members have developed specific media education projects focused on fact-checking, such as the Galactic Guide for Young News Explorers, which has reached over 5000 students across Italy through in-person workshops and online resources.

TARGET

The project aims to reach girls and boys aged 11 to 18 through training courses that are aimed at their teachers, educators and trainers.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

Its innovative approach is based on the inquiry-based learning approach, which involves a high rate of interaction with students through quizzes, group activities and peer challenges.
Topics covered in the course include media literacy in order to learn about web languages and the types of content that can fuel misinformation, and data literacy, to understand what data is, how to read, interpret and represent it.
Each lesson includes a training module to introduce the topics and show the tools to be used independently in the classroom. They use Kahoot which it's particularly useful and creates engagement within the class.

SUSTAINABILITY

Open the Box is independent and has no political affiliation. It was entirely developed by Dataninja and received co-funding from Open Society Foundations.
The majority of the courses are free prior to a login on the website. Only an introduction course of 3h has a cost of 39 euros. They are mainly referring to an educational market segment, in particular the middle and high schools, including teachers.

DISSEMINATION

They communicate their activities and courses via their website and with the newsletter, due to the fact that it's mandatory to access any information to log in. They also have a Twitter, Instagram and Facebook account. The project is also scalable, from the launch in 2020 they have reached 5.000 teachers, who have involved at least 30.000 students.

Project: OPEN THE BOX EXTRA!
Website: https://www.openthebox.io/cosa-si-puo-fare-con-open-the-box/

Not just schools! Media and information literacies are necessary also in everyday life. It could be possible to do MIL training after school as well!

MISSION
Open the Box EXTRA! is an extended version of Open the Box, created for extra-school contexts. It's a pilot project designed to cooperate with associations, cooperatives and social organisations and create special training courses for different contexts.

TEAM
Thanks to the support of Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, the open the box team collaborated with the educators of the organisations that joined the project in order to design ad hoc paths according to their needs.

TARGET
The project's main target audience are the pupils who join the organisations involved. In particular, the pilot project was developed with Cooperativa Esserci e la Diaconia Valdese CSD, hosting minors at risk of deviance, school drop-outs and migrants.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES
The project's goal was to disseminate digital skills in extra-school contexts. Using Open the Box' training courses as a starting point, the first part of the project was to coordinate and co-design tools and modalities with the educators, who know the pupils, their needs and the best strategies to engage them.

SUSTAINABILITY
The training modules were free for the educators and the pupils of the organisations involved, thanks to the funding of Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation.

DISSEMINATION
Open the Box EXTRA! was the pilot project that aims to become a model for new co-design projects with associations and social organisations. This is why it is necessary for each route to guarantee a planning period before the strat, so that content, tools and methodologies can be adapted to the needs and requirements of each group.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy
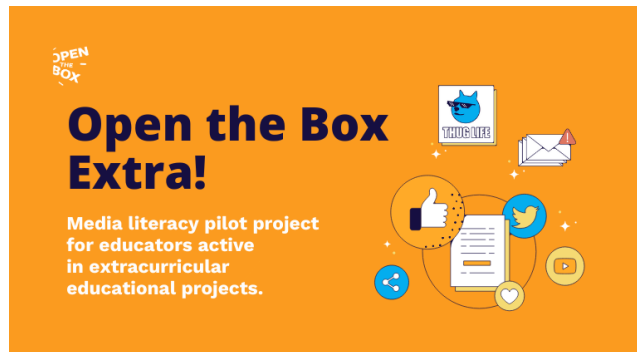
Project: IDMO Italian Digital Media Observatory

Website: https://www.idmo.it/

IDMO - Italian Digital Media Observatory is a national hub that supports and implements the work of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). It is part of a multidisciplinary community that brings together researchers, fact-checkers and experts in social media and digital narratives. The project partners, including TIM, Rai, Gedi, the University of Rome Tor Vergata, NewsGuard, Pagella Politica and T6 Ecosystem, join forces and expertise to combat disinformation. The coordination role of the entire hub is entrusted to the Luiss Data Lab, a research center of the Luiss Guido Carli University.

MISSION

Their main goal is to fight against disinformation thanks to a community of fact checkers, experts in digital literacy, researchers coordinated by LUISS Data Lab, research center of LUISS University. Their objective is to create a network of national hubs on digital media analysis. Thanks to the support of the European Commission, IDMO is now the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO). Each national hubs (8 in EU countries) fights against disinformation by studying its impact on societies and disseminating positive practices in the use of digital media through e-literacy and fact-checking. It's mandatory in order to impact the community in a positive way to provide a strong culture of leadership and involvement within the involved actors.

TEAM

The Italian Hub is coordinated by the Luiss Guido Carli University (Master in Journalism and Communication and the Luiss Data Lab research centre), together with other important partners like RAI, TIM, Gruppo GEDI La Repubblica, Tor Vergata University, T6 Ecosystems, NewsGuard, Pagella Politica and with the collaboration of Alliance of Democracies Foundation, Corriere della Sera, Enel Foundation, Reporters Sans Frontières and The European House Ambrosetti.

TARGET

The project "Appuntamento con i digital media" is directly targeted to middle school and highschool students and teachers. It's a free programme dedicated to media literacy in partnership with TIM and RAI where individuals, classes or the entire school could participate. The majority of projects are dedicated to youngsters covering in particular middle, high school and universities. The project includes on demand contents, interactive games beside the main event dedicated to one particular topic (available calendar on their website to register).

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

Each project is offered on their website and official channels. Their projects offered 4 webinars each 15 days with experts, professors on disinformation with researchers from the LUISS Data Lab:

intergenerational debate starting from a different point of view. Additional contents are: short videos "Learning pill", resuming the contents of the main event and 4 interactive games.

SUSTAINABILITY

The courses are free. Each one of them is supported and created in partnership with RAI or TIM. The market segment is an educational one, in particular schools.

DISSEMINATION

IDMO communicates its reality and proposal through various channels, including their website, social media platforms, publications, and participation in conferences and events. They aim to reach a wide audience and engage with stakeholders. Their approach is both scalable, as they address digital media challenges beyond local boundaries, and local, with a focus on Italy.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

Project: DATA LIT (612561-EPP-1-2019-1-IT-EPPKA2-KA)

Website: https://datalit.pa.itd.cnr.it/en/partners-en.html

DATALIT is a joint research project coordinated by the "Istituto per le Tecnologie Didattiche" of the Italian National Research Council. Its main objective is to promote data literacy at the interface of higher education and business. The project is funded as a Knowledge Alliance under the Erasmus+ Program by the European Commission.

The project aims to integrate data literacy as a transversal topic in university courses by developing common syllabi and innovative teaching and learning approaches. To achieve this, a blended learning concept will be designed, consisting of transferable study units that can be integrated into various curricula, along with experiential learning projects in European enterprises.
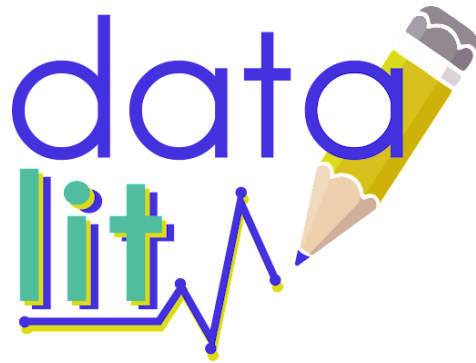
MISSION

Data Literacy can be defined as the ability to read, work with, analyse, and argue with data, in order to derive meaningful information and knowledge. Using data refers to the way we read, make sense and trust the data we get from hundreds of sources, including news, social networks, apps, just to mention a few. Making sense of data is no longer a must-have skill for data scientists or technology experts only, but it is an essential ability for all citizens.

The DATALIT project aims to spread data literacy at the interface of higher education and business. Through research, content creation, and pilot activities, the project aims to assess a common European curriculum for data literacy and define a certification process for these competencies.

Key aspects to cover will be the ethics of (big) data, also in view of a full compliance with GDPR, and the re-use of open data to enhance services, optimise processes, and ultimately increase profits.

TEAM

The consortium consists of 14 experienced partners from four EU countries (Italy, Germany, Portugal, Lithuania), one non-EU program country (Serbia), and one partner country from the Western Balkans (Albania). The consortium includes five universities, five SMEs, one educational centre, one EU network, and one umbrella organisation. This group will play a central and synergistic role in designing training resources that address the opportunities and risks associated with collecting, managing, and exploiting data in European enterprises and organisations.

TARGET

The approach will be piloted in both classroom and workplace environments, with 10-15 students from each partner country participating. Specialised training courses and resources will also be provided for higher education professionals and HR training managers to pilot the methodology.

Teachers, trainers, learning facilitators will be involved in DATALIT innovative teaching approach to foster data literacy and data skills as a new part of digital competencies.

Stakeholders such as counselors, assessors, process managers and other external observers will play a strategic role in the project.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The project aims to validate the new data literacy competencies and connect them to European validation and certification instruments. The development of related skills such as critical thinking and social and civic competence will be recognized and validated through the LEVEL5 system.

During the project, the partners managed their pilots, focusing on creating educational content and implementing the teaching methodology outlined at the beginning of the project. The consortium developed the DATALIT syllabus with course modules and configured the online learning platform. Additionally, training modules for trainers were created for the target groups. The partners shared their experiences during the pilots through a blog post, and all pilot content is available on the LEVEL5 platform.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project aims to sustain the partnership through creation of an umbrella organisation (e.g. EEIG, Network, European Cooperative or association) to maintain the substance and integrity of the project offer and implement more projects together. It will be a very innovative result for the project, considering that there are not similar organisations in Europe in the field of data literacy, meanwhile other sectors of the data economy have their own organisation such as Big Data Value Association.

The project also wants to train more academic staff in order to implement the DATALIT approach and make it scalable. Moreover, it aims to locate corporate funding and sponsorship at national level to promote the sustainable growth of the DATALIT approach across Europe.

DISSEMINATION

A dissemination plan will be carried out using the large partners network that will be in charge of specific activities to reach several thousand interested organisations: starting from social media, newsletter and reports to events and a final European conference.

DATALIT Objectives

Data Literacy can be defined as the ability to read, work with, analyse, and argue with data, in order to derive meaningful information and knowledge.

Competences

Using data refers to the way we read, make sense and trust the data we get from hundreds of sources, including news, social networks, apps, just to mention a few.

Key Actors

Making sense of data is no longer a must-have skill for data scientists or technology experts only, but it is an essential ability for all citizens.

Strategic Aspects

Key aspects to cover will be the ethics of (big) data, also in view of a full compliance with GDPR, and the re-use of open data to enhance services, optimise processes, and ultimately increase profits.

Become active on DATALIT

Explore the project website and results, in order to reuse our resources and key findings for your related research.

Share your most relevant experiences on data literacy for contributing to the design of a common European curriculum and syllabus on the field of data.

Test our methodologies and educational content in your educational pathways enforcing it with European minded backbone.

The Consortium

The consortium is composed of 14 experienced partners from 4 Programme EU Countries (Italy, Germany, Portugal, Lithuania), 1 Non-EU Programme Country (Serbia) and 1 Partner Country from Western Balkans (Albania). In particular we have 5 Universities, 5 SMEs, 1 Educational centre, 1 EU network, 1 umbrella organisation.

Data Literacy
at the interface
of higher education
and business

DATALIT is a joint research project funded as a Knowledge Alliance under the Erasmus+ Program by European Commission.
Website: https://datalit.pa.itd.cnr.it
Contact person: davide.taibi@itd.cnr.it
Project reference:
612561-EPP-1-2019-1-IT-EPPKA2-KA

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

23

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

Project: Our Digital Village – Co-designed digital education in rural areas (101087107)

Website: https://ourdigitalvillage.erasmus.site/

Rapid digital transformation has influenced education, work and life and the Covid-19 pandemic has only highlighted more the divergences linked to digitisation in some territories, especially between urban and rural areas, and the need for innovation in education to respond to these challenges.

For this reason, Our Digital Village aims to intervene in rural areas by promoting the acquisition of digital and transversal skills, preparing people to face the challenges of the future. It will do so by co-creating high-quality educational content that responds to the needs of the local context, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term transformation towards digitalization through active awareness raising on all levels of society.

MISSION

The European project "Our Digital Village" aims to promote digital inclusion in rural communities by bridging the digital divide and ensuring access to digital technologies and skills. The project addresses the lack of basic digital skills in rural areas, which is due not only to infrastructure limitations, but also to low motivation and awareness among the rural population regarding digital skills. Hence, the project aims to achieve the following objectives: develop digital and transversal skills; identify specific needs and increase motivation; create adapted educational materials; develop quality assessment tools; test and evaluate the project activity kit. In addition, the project aims to contribute to sustainable digital transformation in rural areas and to collaborate with stakeholders and policy makers at local, national and EU level through the organisation of ICT courses and info-sessions, participation in international events and definition of strategies to continue fostering digital skills in rural communities.

TEAM

The project is coordinated by CENTRO PER LO SVILUPPO CREATIVO "DANILO DOLCI", a non-profit organisation located in Palermo operating for more than ten years mainly in the educational sector in collaboration with schools, universities, institutions, associations and social groups both at local and at international level. The other partners are profit and non-profit organisations from different countries, dealing with Innovation, Education, Training, Research and Technological Development.

TARGET

The target groups are the educational staff, such as teachers, trainers, educators and other staff from different educational institutions or community organisations; the students (from secondary school onwards, including VET students) and the adult learners.

The project is implemented in rural areas of seven EU countries. Rural areas are defined simply as non-urban areas, however inhabited enough to have educational and organisational structures. The project will develop educational resources tailored to the needs of each of the above-mentioned groups in each rural community.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The main tools and methodologies of the project are:

- Self-analysis workshops using the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach (RMA): a dialectic method of inquiry that examines people's needs and desires through participatory processes in which knowledge is built together.
- Co-creation: co-design of educational materials together with the teachers and trainers in each implementing country.
- ICT courses using innovative technologies and software.
- ICT challenges and learning-by-doing: teaching materials will promote autonomous learning on the learners' own pace through ICT challenges.
- Info-sessions to raise awareness on the importance of digital skills in various dimensions.
- Helpdesk to support the community in digital tasks and challenges.
- Participatory approach throughout the project to engage with different actors and ensure the impact of the project, e.g., indicating solutions/ideas for learning digital skills through self-analysis, co-designing process with teachers and trainers, engagement of policymakers and stakeholders, evaluating and monitoring role in co-evaluation meetings.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project is co-funded by the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Union. All activities organised for the rural communities are free of charge for the participants.

The project Sustainability component entails the development of a Long-Term Action Plan for sustainability with input from partners.

DISSEMINATION

The project includes digital and physical communication tools and channels, both at the EU and at national level. To find more information you can search also on the Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

2.5. Spain

Project: AULACHECK

Website: https://aulacheck.ibercivis.es/aulacheck/

AulaCheck is a project in which students from 30 schools across Spain, will collaboratively create an online scientific newspaper with a national scope.

MISSION

AulaCheck is a transformative media literacy project that aims to address the challenge of fake news and misinformation, particularly among young people in Spain. The project's mission is threefold: to increase scientific culture and encourage interest in science, to provide students with the tools to critically analyse information on social media, and to promote collaborative learning and teamwork through the creation of an online scientific newspaper. By fostering critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible use of social networks, AulaCheck seeks to empower students to navigate the digital world confidently and engage with scientific content responsibly.

TEAM

AulaCheck is a collaborative effort involving students, teachers, and various partners from 30 schools across Spain. The project team consists of educators, research groups, media partners, and the organisation coordinating the initiative. This diverse team collaborates to ensure the success and impact of AulaCheck, providing ongoing support, workshops, and resources to participating teachers and students.

TARGET

The primary target audience of AulaCheck is students in 3rd, 4th ESO, and 1st Baccalaureate from 30 schools across Spain. The project recognizes the vulnerability of young individuals to misinformation and aims to equip them with the necessary skills and methodologies to critically evaluate and analyse information on social media and various media sources. Additionally, the project promotes the development of scientific culture and encourages students' interest in science and technology.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

AulaCheck utilises various tools and modalities to achieve its objectives:
- **Scientific Newspaper**: The project involves the collaborative creation of an online scientific newspaper with two sections. Participating centres produce news, interviews, and scientific infographics related to research centres or their environment. They also analyse and debunk potential hoaxes found in different media sources.
- **Training Workshops**: Teachers receive three workshops on AulaCheck's contents, methodologies, and tools, providing them with the necessary knowledge to guide students effectively.
- **Ongoing Support**: The organisation offers ongoing advice and support to teachers, resolving doubts and providing teaching resources throughout the project.
- **Telegram Community**: Teachers have access to a Telegram channel where they can share experiences, content created by participating schools, and news about the project.

SUSTAINABILITY

AulaCheck emphasises sustainability through collaboration and support from research groups, media partners, and educational institutions. This collaboration ensures the continuity of the project, enabling the dissemination of research results and continued engagement with scientific content.

DISSEMINATION

The project utilises various dissemination strategies to reach a wide audience. Through media partnerships, participating centres have the opportunity to share their research results and content related to citizen science. Additionally, AulaCheck opens a participation forum, encouraging knowledge sharing and fostering discussions among participants on various published topics. By actively engaging with students, teachers, research groups, and media partners, AulaCheck maximises its impact in promoting scientific media literacy among young people in Spain.

FREEYOU Next – Research on Media and Data Literacy

Project: DESENREDA

Website: https://exitoeducativo.net/desenreda-un-proyecto-de-alfabetizacion-mediatica-para-el-alumnado-andaluz-de-secundaria/

MISSION

The main objective of the project is to promote media and information literacy in secondary schools in Andalusia, with the help of journalists with experience and training in this area.

TEAM

DESENREDA is a joint initiative of the Regional Ministry of Education and Sport, the Andalusian press associations, and the Professional Association of Journalists (CPPA) which is being developed within the framework of the Programme for Educational Innovation 'ComunicA'.

TARGET

Forty secondary schools are taking part in this first edition, with the help of journalists with experience and training in this field.

The schools responded to a call open to all schools included in the ComunicA Programme: one from Jaén, three from Almería and three from Málaga, four from Huelva, six from Córdoba, and six from Granada, eight from Cádiz and nine from Seville.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

The project, which ran from February to May, consisted of three training modules, each lasting two hours, taught by journalists with experience and training in media literacy.

The first, "Journalism vs Disinformation", aims to familiarise students with journalistic fundamentals and the responsibility and social function of journalism and its professionals in democratic societies, as well as to provide students with the necessary tools to be able to critically analyse the information they receive, generally through social networks, and to verify its veracity.

In the module "Social Networks and Engaged Journalism", we will delve into digital platforms, how they become the main agents for the propagation of hoaxes and fake news, and how the media and social networks perpetuate certain stereotypes regarding the representation of women or the phenomenon of migration.

In the third module "We are journalists", it is the students who take the initiative. They will be able to produce their own content with the notions acquired in the workshop, which will form part of a website where the blogs of the centres will be uploaded with the news and information produced by the students, and which will be the meeting point for the participating centres in all the Andalusian provinces.

SUSTAINABILITY

The second edition was conducted in 2023, with the participation of 40 schools from various regions of Andalusia, building upon the success of the inaugural edition. Each workshop session has a duration of six hours and accommodates groups of approximately 30 students.

This initiative is an integral component of the ComunicA program, an innovative educational endeavour spearheaded by the Department of Educational Development and Vocational Training within the Regional Government of Andalusia. It is noteworthy that these training modules are offered at no cost to participants.

The Desenreda project places a strong emphasis on sustainability, achieved through fruitful collaborations with media partners and educational institutions. This cooperative approach plays a pivotal role in fostering the project's mission and objectives.

DISSEMINATION

The organization's primary objective is to reach a broad and diverse audience, facilitating the promotion of media literacy through educational programs. This mission is made possible through strategic collaborations with schools, educational institutions, press associations, and policy makers. The extensive and varied network of partners contributes significantly to the effective dissemination of the project's goals and initiatives among students.

2.6. United Kingdom

Project: NewsWise

Website: https://theguardianfoundation.org/programmes/newswise

MISSION

What is the mission of Newswise? To create a generation of news literate young people.
The project is focused on news literacy, with three strands: understanding, navigating and reporting news. Skills include identifying trustworthy sources, distinguishing between fact and opinion, understanding how information is targeted, managing feelings about news, holding power to account, as well as journalistic skills in reporting news.

TEAM

The team is composed of four people, with the support from the wider Guardian Foundation team, as well as of the other partners: National Literacy Trust and PSHE Association.
The background and work experience are various:

- **Head of primary education**: former teacher with over 10 years experience delivering media education projects
- **Programme coordinator**: project manager with experience working for educational charities
- **Education officer** (p/t): former teacher with over 10 years experience in primary education (children aged 7-11) in the UK and US
- **Project administrator** (p/t): prior experience in education outreach

TARGET

The main target of the project are children aged 7-11 and the main interventions are designed for children aged 9-11, as well as their teachers and families. The team is currently developing more resources for children aged 7-9 from schools in disadvantaged areas. The project is disseminated across the whole of the UK and in 2023 also began a strategy targeting specific regions, beginning in Birmingham.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

NewsWise delivers most of the work in partnership with schools. The full NewsWise project comprises a complete classroom project of 15 lessons delivered by teachers; teacher training; a workshop delivered by the NewsWise team; a Q&A with a journalist; opportunities for pupils' news reports to be published on the website. They also run family workshops integrated into the project as part of their place-based work in Birmingham. All resources are also available to download from the website.
The lesson plans are mapped to the curricula of the four UK nations, allowing teachers to build the programme into their existing timetables.
The project uses the learning-by-doing model and is designed to be taught in an immersive way, with children in role as journalists and all activities related to real life skills from the newsroom. Children analyse real examples of news and the outcome is for children to produce their own news report about a subject that matters to them.
The programme benefits from the combination of pedagogical and journalistic expertise and experience that the three partners bring.

SUSTAINABILITY

All the interventions are free for schools and families. NewsWise receives funding from a range of different funders, both private and public.

DISSEMINATION

The three partner charities have established networks of teachers. The offer is on the website and teachers must register before the team contacts them; this way NewsWise is able to ensure that schools meet their criteria. The team uses the newsletters of all three partners and publicises on social media including Facebook and Twitter. People also discover the project via events such as educational conferences. There is also communication to region-specific groups including headteacher groups, literacy networks, and local education authorities.

Credits foto: NewsWise/Mustard Yellow Photography

2.7.   United States of America

Project: NEWS LITERACY PROJECT

Website: https://newslit.org/

The News Literacy Project (NLP) is a non-profit organisation committed to promoting media competence and news literacy. Founded in 2008, the organisation's main goal is to educate people of all ages to become critical consumers of news, particularly in the digital age where access to information is vast and immediate. The News Literacy Project works with students, teachers and parents to teach them to critically evaluate news, distinguish facts from opinions, identify reliable sources and understand how the media play their role in society. Through educational programmes, online resources, interactive workshops and partnerships with schools, the NLP aims to educate informed and responsible citizens.

MISSION
NLP addresses issues related to misinformation, lack of critical thinking, and the challenges of the digital media landscape. Their objective is to promote news literacy and equip individuals with the necessary skills to navigate the information landscape effectively. They offer various media and information literacy activities, including educational programs, workshops, and online courses. Their approach covers topics such as source evaluation, fact-checking, understanding biases, and analysing the impact of social media on news consumption. They collaborate with educators to integrate news literacy into the curriculum and provide teaching materials. The News Literacy Project aims to empower individuals to become informed and engaged citizens who can critically evaluate news and make well-informed decisions.

TEAM
NLP is a non-profit organisation composed of experts in journalism, education, and media literacy. The team includes journalists, educators, and media professionals with experience in fact-checking and promoting media literacy. It is an independent, non-governmental organisation (NGO) that receives funding from foundations and individual donors. The mission of the News Literacy Project is to promote awareness of the importance of informed news consumption and develop critical thinking skills among students, educators, and the general public.

TARGET
NLP aims to reach a diverse audience with its courses and resources. While they prioritise students and educators, their offerings are designed to be accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. The courses are not limited to specific geographical areas or population groups, as the project recognizes the importance of news literacy for everyone in the digital age. Their goal is to provide valuable educational content that is relevant and applicable to a wide range of individuals, including students, educators, and the general public.

TOOLS AND MODALITIES

NLP offers paths to news literacy through various formats such as online resources, courses, workshops, and training programs. They cater to different audiences and emphasise practical skills and critical thinking. Their courses use inquiry-based learning and interactive elements to engage learners. Participants need internet access and sometimes specific tools. The courses focus on media analysis, information evaluation, and combating misinformation. The strengths lie in their comprehensive approach, fostering critical thinking skills, and providing practical tools for navigating the media landscape responsibly.

SUSTAINABILITY
NLP receives funding from various sources and offers a combination of free and paid courses. They primarily target the general public, with a specific focus on students, educators, and young people. Their mission is to promote news literacy and critical thinking skills to empower individuals in navigating the digital media landscape and combat misinformation.

DISSEMINATION
NLP communicates its mission and proposals through various channels, including its website, social media platforms, workshops and events, partnerships, and media coverage. The organisation aims to reach a wide audience and promote media literacy through a combination of online resources, educational programs, teacher training, and collaborations with schools and educational institutions. Their communication strategy is scalable as they strive to have an impact on a broad range of individuals and disseminate media literacy skills at the local, regional, and national levels.

3. INTERVIEWS

As part of our research, our team conducted a series of in-depth interviews with media and information literacy experts from various European countries. These individuals, renowned in the fields of media literacy, journalism and education, generously shared their expertise and experiences in promoting media literacy in their respective regions. Through these conversations, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, successes and innovative approaches used by these experts to promote critical media consumption and information discernment. Drawing on their diverse perspectives and wealth of knowledge, we seek to enrich our research findings and ultimately contribute to the collective advancement of MIL practices in Europe.

3.1. Inés Bebea González

"Empowering Digital Citizens: Insights from an Expert in Media and Information Literacy"
https://www.linkedin.com/in/inesbebea/?locale=en_US

About the expert

Telecommunications Engineer from the University Carlos III Madrid.

She got a Master's Degree in Educational Innovation, Training and Professional Development of Teachers, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and an Official Master's Degree in Communications Networks for Developing Countries from the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

Specialist in Digital Culture for the new Primary and Secondary Education Curriculum at Grupo SM (Grupo SM is a Spanish publishing house specialised in the publication of educational materials and children's, youth, and religious literature, with a strong presence in Latin America).

She is a telecommunications engineer, an expert in educational innovation, and a social entrepreneur. She has led the association Ondula "Technology is for people" for 10 years, and has collaborated with numerous universities, cultural institutions, and social organisations. She is the author of "Alfabetización Digital Crítica: una invitación a reflexionar y actuar" (2015), has been TEDx Speaker with the title "Repensar la tecnología desde el cuerpo" (2021) and has recently published the chapter dedicated to Digital Culture in the book "Nuevo Currículo, Nuevos Desafíos Educativos" (2023). He currently advises institutions and companies on Digital Culture.

What are the current problems of media consumption?

One of the main problems is that we don't realise how and how much we are influenced by the media consumption we make: in the way we perceive the world, in our self-concept, in the quality of our relationships, in the way we think, in our behaviour, our engagement and our anxiety.

Another problem is that we don't realise how we feed a voracious system: one that requires thousands of machines running 24/7, that consumes electricity and heats up, that gobbles up data that we don't know how it is being handled, that generates more economic benefits the more time we spend on the screen.

What skills does a citizen of today and tomorrow need in our information ecosystem?

The first skill we need now and shortly is critical thinking. We talk about it a lot, but in all the years I have been involved in educational spaces, I see that it is not practiced at all when it comes to technology and information systems. In the collective imagination, there is still a kind of magic associated with artificial intelligence, when it involves very mundane things like business, industry, workers, and machines. We need to question, reflect and make conscious decisions about how, when, and for what purpose to incorporate AI into our lives.

The second skill is self-awareness which emerges from emotional intelligence, from the observation of our thoughts and feelings, from the cultivation of personal power, from the perception and awareness of the body, and from the ability to connect with something bigger than ourselves. The danger of being in today's ecosystem of over-information without developing self-awareness is precisely to believe that you are what the data and algorithms you consume say you are.

The third skill is the ability to create, sustain and grow in authentic and healthy relationships with other people. The relational nature of human beings is key to their personal development as well as to their participation in communities, companies, and institutions. It is the basis of life in society. If we have a conversation with an AI, let us identify what specific value it brings, but let us avoid the temptation to believe that it replaces a human bond.

What is media education, and what are the main challenges that the latest developments in the field of data and AI pose to the media education ecosystem?

Media and digital education are learning experiences that enable us to understand what digital media are like, how they are constructed, how they affect us, and how best to use them. This implies a comprehensive understanding of technology, how technology companies work and how they drive the economy, how engineers and programmers work, what data centers are like, and what rules govern them. Media and digital education should be concerned not only with preparing us as users of technology but also as responsible consumers and citizens in a global world, on a planet of finite resources.

Just a few months ago the Federated Associations of Families of Pupils in Catalonia (aFFaC) presented a report about BigTech digital platforms in the Catalan education system and children's rights, which shows important points that we need to review the ownership and exploitation of machines, data and algorithms that are operating in schools. This dialogue between families, schools, public administrations, and companies needs to develop and mature, as so far it is BigTech that is imposing its technology in formal and non-formal mass educational environments. Let's remember that Silicon Valley gurus take their children to schools where there are no screens and follow pedagogies such as Waldorf or Montessori, developing their body awareness, the arts, language and mathematics, and music as priority areas.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative Digital Literacy program?

Education about advertising, knowing how networks are designed, algorithms... Also having an impact on emotional and visceral intelligence, how we situate ourselves, including on a physical level. Generate safe spaces.

Midjourney, ChatGPT, and other generative AI tools: are they just a fad or a more radical innovation to consider in education?

It is the big tech companies that are defining fashion in technology. They have brought Artificial Intelligence to the forefront. And it is academia, the press, and cultural spaces that are following their lead. But I think our role should be different.ç

Of course, I think that students at the end of Basic Education should have notions and practical experience with AI, but also, and almost more importantly they should train in reflection and analysis on the personal and social impact of everyday AIs: the ones they use on their mobile or at school.
And above all, I believe that, like the gurus of Silicon Valley, we must start to bear in mind that education is above all learning to be people, on a personal and collective level. And that in the most tender stages of human development, machines do not help, they are secondary. The priority should be on experience as the basis for learning, critical and creative thinking, communication, and language, the body, others, nature, and the cosmos. That which makes us human.

Do you know of any innovative programs in the field of Data Literacy and Artificial Intelligence?

Ondula´s Critical Digital Literacy experience and the workshops around the Tactical Tech exhibition.

3.2. Fredo de Smet

"Navigating the Digital Crossroads: Insights from Futurist and Tech Entrepreneur"

About the expert

Fredo De Smet has been an entrepreneur in the digital sphere for more than a decade.

He has been organising conferences and meet-ups about innovation and technologies since 2010.

He has worked for the public broadcast (VRT) in Belgium, curated an exhibition on robots, wrote a book on the impact of technologies on our lives and what it means to be human.

More recently he developed a broader view of what the future may mean for humans. He has been talking more about what it is to develop new futures by using our imagination, and he has gotten more interested in the crossroads between art and science.

He also started a new membership organisation for entrepreneurs or leaders, the Long Term Society and he holds a weekly newsletter.

What are the main challenges that the last developments in the field of data and AI pose to the media education ecosystem?

There are many challenges so it is hard to say what *the* main challenge is.

To his understanding, the main challenge is *not* that everybody learns to develop or to code, but rather that people have a better understanding of how the world is today and how the digital technologies are radically changing the way we behave as societies, as communities.

There should be a broader sense of media literacy to understand what is happening as it is not just a new wave of innovation, but rather a switch to a completely new world and society. There is a need for more critical thinking and for a critical mindset towards the technologies. Even more need to broader societal philosophical sense. Next to that also an attitude and openness towards the paradox of technology: it is liberating and enslaving us at the same time

Many changes towards an **abundant**, **borderless** and **hyperpersonal** technological world, creating challenges which must be addressed:

- Technologies are **borderless**, they ignore our social systems and norms, they don't have physical borders either
- The **abundance** of data and content available makes us think that we need more and more information
- Digital technologies are guiding us towards being **hypercentric** through **hyper-personalised content**, filtering and tailoring content just for you (the user)

Therefore, these technologies are reshaping completely the way we approach society in a community vs individuals situation. The paradox however lies in the fact that for this abundant, borderless and hyperpersonal world to function, we need AI to process all the data.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative Data Literacy program or AI Literacy program?

1. To find people who can explain the really complex new world we are living in. It's easy to understand what AI does but to understand what the situation is underneath and explain the big mega-trends.
2. Technologies say they are social platforms, but they are web shops. So their goal is to sell our data to their actual clients, the big tech companies (e.g. the GAFAM). Their goal is not to be a platform for citizens, only for consumers.
3. To develop futurist literacy, described by UNESCO as one of the most important skills of the 22nd century, capability of using your imagination to describe multiple futures.
4. Our societies lack the imagination to think of multiple futures as if there is only one future ahead of us.

Midjourney, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools: are they just a temporary fashion or a more radical innovation that needs to be taken in consideration in the education field?

To De Smet, there is no way of turning back or to turn down the internet, but that doesn't mean we will be developing the same civilization as it is. In fact, we are evolving to a new civilization.
He reminds that it is important to see the difference between economics and technology, the first may be temporary, the latter is here to stay.
De Smet recommends that we all try out AI, but not because we might become a developer, but to counter a lack of imagination and creativity.
"Try it for the fun of it and to develop new scenarios. Acting like a creator or artist is exactly what we need to develop new perspectives."

AI taking over the jobs of people?

To De Smet the recent evolutions of AI will indeed lead to the disappearance of many jobs, and it might happen sooner than we think. This will reform the idea of having a job. And as our capitalistic system is burning down our natural resources, it is also leading to mental burnout.

What do we need to do now?

As an ecosystem of thinkers and changemakers we need to find space and time to develop several answers for the future. The goal is not to figure out 1 answer for the future of our societies but to develop multiple scenarios.

Last piece of advice! Look for futurist thinking...

Who is already doing that? Research institutions (e.g University of Gent), artists in the field of the arts (e.g. Studio Superflux), speculative designers, freelancers (e.g. Lien De Ruyck) or agencies who offer it as a service...
They all tackle the future from multiple perspectives, they create speculative design in a group effort. Get organised!

3.3. Roberto Beragnoli
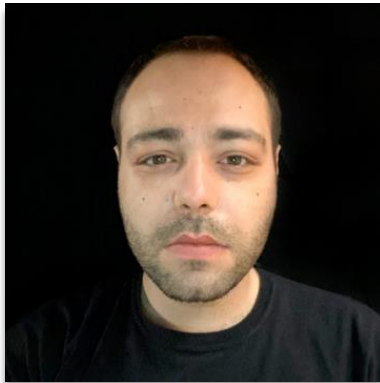
"Unleashing the Power of AI in Education: Insights from an Expert in Data and AI Literacy"
https://www.robertoberagnoli.com/

About the expert

Roberto Beragnoli was born in Florence, Italy in 1990. After completing his studies in Computer Science and earning a degree in Aesthetic Philosophy from the University of Florence, he embarked on a career in innovation, specializing in rapid prototyping, MVP development and AI training. This path led him to collaborate with Prof. Stefano Mancuso of the University of Florence and eventually to join the team at Mamazen Startup Studio, where he still works today dealing with idea validation and AI training.

His artistic practice is deeply rooted in his technical and philosophical background. One of his most recent works is the series "Journey to Italy," in which he uses AI tools to create alternative visions of Italy that rework its drama, charm and idiosyncrasies through the investigation of an "everyday" that never existed.

What are the main challenges that the last developments in the field of data and AI pose to the media education ecosystem?

Personalised education is a major challenge that requires attention. The one-to-many approach of mass education has left behind those with abilities outside the norm. Artificial intelligence could adapt to individual abilities and interests, but the importance of human interaction must be considered. The ability to ask appropriate questions is essential to discover new knowledge. AI may be forced to consider the peculiarities and differences of the people it encounters, challenging our own empathy.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative Data Literacy program?

It is important to teach people how to ask the right questions, as it is not possible to teach them everything. They have to learn to look for answers in the right way and to distinguish between information that is useful and true and information that is misleading. This is a concept that was already present with the Internet, but now becomes even more evident as we have access to an enormous amount of information. School has always been about teaching how to learn, not only in the area of artificial intelligence, but it is a theme that ties in with all of this. Learning how to search, how to ask the right questions and how to distinguish information is crucial.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative AI Literacy program?

It is important to distinguish which data to use for learning, considering the presence of bias and the opportunities and challenges involved. Although AI might have a guiding will, this is currently lacking, which is crucial to maintain manageability. It is up to us to judge and define the outcome we want to achieve. It is inevitable that human bias is present when handling training data or making decisions

on what to exclude. However, giving too much freedom to artificial intelligence can lead to further problems. At present, there are no definitive solutions to completely overcome these biases, and the issue remains complex.

Midjourney, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools: are they just a temporary fashion or a more radical innovation that needs to be taken in consideration in the education field?

It will remain relevant even more significantly than we imagine, because it is truly a great revolution. A lot of parallels have been drawn with photography, but in my opinion it is an even more powerful revolution that definitely needs to be integrated into the training, school and educational context.

AI taking over the jobs of people?

Yes, it is happening and will continue to happen more and more. While some jobs might be replaced by automation, we might find significant new opportunities for humans. Some argue that work should not be an absolute necessity and that we should focus on a better quality of life instead of working in traditional patterns. Creative jobs can be substituted, but it is important to distinguish between creative work that requires genuine ideation skills and the application of a style, and creative work that is mainly based on the application of a style.

Do you know any innovative program in the field of Data and AI Literacy?

Nothing comes to mind at the moment, but I can think of more. In my opinion, the most important thing is that the current school sees education as something positive and democratic, but in reality it tends to standardise and level students. It is essential to work on the specificities of each individual for real learning, perhaps with the help of artificial intelligence for customised learning programmes. School should teach how to ask questions and interpret the world, not just prepare for work.

3.4. Sara Pereira

"**Nurturing Informed Citizens: Insights from an Expert in Media Education, Data, and AI Literacy**"
https://milobs.pt/investigacao/sara-pereira/

About the expert

Associate Professor with Aggregation at the Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Communication Sciences, and researcher at the Communication and Society Research Center (CECS) at the University of Minho.

In 2020 she did her Aggregation exams in Communication Sciences and in 2004 she got her PhD in Child Studies, specialising in Media Education, at the University of Minho.

Her main research areas are children, young people and the media; the rights of expression and participation of children and young people; Media Literacy; and media publicity and practices. She has coordinated several national and European projects and is the author of several publications in these areas. Currently she is IR of the project "bYOU - Study of the experiences and expressions of children and young people about the media", funded by FCT (PTDC/COM-OUT/3004/2020) and co-IR of the project "COMEDIG - Competences of Digital and Media Literacy in Portugal", funded by FCT (PTDC/CED-EDG/32560/2017). Participates, as a team member, in the project "Verdad y ética en las redes sociales. Percepciones e influencias educativas en jóvenes usuarios de Twitter, Instagram y YouTube (Internética)", funded by the 2019 call for projects I+D+i of the Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades (Spain) (PID2019-104689RB-I00).

She was director of the Department of Communication Sciences between 2013 and 2019 and director of the MA in Communication, Citizenship and Education between 2010 and 2015. She has chaired the Media Education Research section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) since July 2019. She is co-coordinator of MILObs - Observatory on Media, Information and Literacy and coauthor of the radio programme Ouvido Crítico, broadcast weekly on Antena 1 since February 2018. She is a member of ECREA and IAMCR.

What are the main challenges that the last developments in the field of data and AI pose to the media education ecosystem?

I would say that media education has faced several challenges whenever new media, platforms, contents, or services are added to the media and communication ecosystem. I usually say "new media, old concerns", since the questions and concerns that arise from what is new and, at a certain time, still unknown, end up being recurrent, transferred from one medium to another. We need, however, to attend to the changes that have occurred in the understanding and action of the public. From an idea of completely vulnerable, dependent, amorphous and homogeneous publics, we have moved on to a vision of more active, selective and even more demanding publics. And it is on this vision that we need to continue to bet. In my view, the challenges facing the media education ecosystem, currently by Artificial Intelligence, continue to pass through here, the formation of critical and informed audiences, able to understand the advantages, risks and opportunities that data and AI systems pose to society and people, in order to make their choices and reflect on the benefits for humanity. I would emphasise the development of capacity and critical thinking as the tool that can

Co-funded by
the European Union

help to face the challenges of artificial intelligence systems that involve disinformation on a small and large scale, risks of loss and violation of privacy, creation of (un)information bubbles, radicalization of positions, difficulty of intercultural dialogue, propagation of hate speech, risks at the level of freedom to inform and be informed, among others. Without wishing to point out media education as the magic solution for these challenges, problems and risks, I defend it as an opportunity and as a key area of training for the exercise of citizenship.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative Data Literacy program?

An innovative programme is a programme that bets on and is based on the preparation and empowerment of people, that goes beyond protection and that goes beyond the discourse of fear, or of risk. It can start from here, but goes further, to reflect, question, analyse and understand the data system - how it works, what is behind it, its implications, its advantages, implications and risks. It seems fundamental to me that this programme is based on the development of those capacities, insisting on the importance of critical understanding and analysis. Without analysis, action can be empty.

What should be the main priorities of an innovative AI Literacy program?

The answer to this question is guided by what I indicated in the previous question. There are principles that are central and transversal to any literacy programme, be it data literacy or AI literacy. These principles are based on developing skills or competencies that are fundamental to literacy: being able to analyse, reflect, question, understand, evaluate and act/produce/participate. I would say it is the grammar of any literacy programme.

Midjourney, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools: are they just a temporary fashion or a more radical innovation that needs to be taken in consideration in the education field?

As long as they are new tools, or as long as they are new tools, they can be seen as a " trend/fad/fashion", but I don't think it is temporary. How we look at it will dictate whether it is radical or not. I am more certain about the fact that we have to think, explore and approach these tools in the field of education. There is no point and no point in passing over or trying to bypass them. These tools are available, they are in the hands of teachers and students, we need to think about them and discuss them together, to find new and creative ways to deal with their potentialities, and also with their risks, in pedagogical and educational work. They are tools that may require changing and transforming the way the teaching-learning process (which includes the assessment process) is developed. But this is a wider transformation that the new generations have been demanding from the school and the university. This may be an opportunity to do so. First of all, with the students themselves, talking openly with them about these tools, listening to what they have to say about them, their opinions, joys and fears, and doing exercises with them.

Do you know any innovative program in the field of Data and AI Literacy?

I don't know of an innovative programme specifically in this field (yet). But I have attended conferences, I have read exceptional articles and books, which open doors and show us this reality and how to deal with it. They are very inspiring to think specific data literacy and AI programmes or to integrate this domain in existing media literacy programmes.
In this regard, I can mention that the revised and updated version of the Media Education Benchmark for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education, prepared by a group of researchers from the University of Minho/MILObs (in which I am included) for the Portuguese Ministry of Education, includes dimensions of data literacy and AI, giving some guidelines for its exploration with students.

3.5. Stefano Moriggi

"Pioneering AI in Education: Insights from an Expert in Adaptive Learning Environments"

About the expert
Professor of Media Education and Educational Technologies
University of Milano Bicocca - Department of Human Sciences for Education

What are the main challenges that the latest developments in the field AI pose to the media education ecosystem?

The main challenge Gen AI poses to educational environments is the problem of educational environments themselves. In the sense that educational environments must once again become the problem, i.e. return to being the object of radical reflection and not to imagine strategies for integration in a traditional context, but to try to imagine, because of the potential (and limits) of Gen AI, what adaptive challenges in the educational sphere will be able to contribute to gradually defining future learning environments. Like all species we inherit environments and like all species we contribute to modifying them by inhabiting them. The educational challenge, therefore, cannot be left at the mercy of a "pedagogical common sense" that 'moderates' the use of such devices but must set itself the ambition of redesigning (possibly enriching) the scene of learning and relationships.

Midjourney, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools: are they just a temporary fashion or a more radical innovation that needs to be taken in consideration in the education field?

It is to be hoped that all these devices are not passing fads in the world of education and schooling. And not because these contexts should be 'computerised' on the basis of a naive and uncritical principle of updating, but because schools in particular - as indeed all educational agencies - have the opportunity in this historical phase to rethink their educational objectives within a new horizon of languages and tools. It is not, therefore, a matter of following the fashion of the times but of learning to design together unprecedented learning and interaction experiences (between human beings and beyond).

What should be the main priorities of an innovative AI Literacy program?
An educational urgency in this direction can be identified in the need to spread a digital culture in schools (both among students and teachers). Not to be confused with computer updating, digital culture should rather be understood as a pathway to understanding relational, expressive and cognitive horizons that can be realised within an appropriate design that, far beyond disciplines and contents, leans towards an ecological perspective. That is to say, towards a pedagogy capable of designing experiences from which a tissue of interaction and relations can gradually take shape that will shape the educational environments of a post-medial - not to say post-digital - society.