Yearbook 2005/2006

IN THE SERVICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

STUDIES AND REFLECTIONS ON MEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

EDITORS:
ULLA CARLSSON & CECILIA VON FEILITZEN

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media

NORDICOM
Göteborg University

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Studies and Reflections on Media in the Digital Age

Editors:
Ulla Carlsson, Cecilia von Feilitzen

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We would like to acknowledge the support of UNESCO in producing this publication

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Foreword

During the past decades, the media landscape and media culture have undergone major changes. Modern information technology has given rise to a constantly increasing supply of media products through many new channels, and our perceptions of time and space, of the bounds between private and public, central and peripheral, have changed. A good share of the people in this world – albeit far from all – have access to an abundance of information, entertainment and games via television, films, radio, books, periodicals, the Internet and mobile telephones. Convergence, fragmentation, diversification and individualization are characteristics frequently taken up in the debate on our contemporary media culture.

Communications satellites, digitalization and advances in online services – especially the Internet – have meant an enormous expansion of the global market for media products. The categories information, entertainment and advertising are no longer clear-cut; neither are the bounds between hardware and software, and between product and distribution. An interactive media society has grown up alongside the traditional mass media society. Young people around the world have already opted into it. These technological changes have made truly global flows of information possible, while they have also opened up transnational markets for global media companies. The production and distribution of media products are heavily concentrated, with respect to both ownership and content.

Without media and modern information technologies the globalization we speak of would not be possible. Access to a variety of media, telephony and online services are increasingly recognized as vital factors for political, economic and cultural development, and in the midst of the global development of communication and media are children and youth.

But research shows that the situation of children's and young people's programmes on radio and television in most countries is deteriorating rather than improving. Likewise, spaces dedicated to children and young people on the Internet are overwhelmingly created by agencies driven by avarice rather than young people's interests.

At the same time, children use adult programming and adult sites from an early age – meaning that many come into contact with too much media violence and other potentially harmful media traits not addressed to them. Although persons under the age of 18 constitute one third of the world's population (in some countries more than half), they are also severely underrepresented in the media output (apart from in advertising) – they are seldom seen or heard, and their participation in media production is negligible or non-existent.

Thus in national public media, freedom of expression is reserved for a small number of society members, mostly adult members of the economic, political and cultural elite. Regarding private commercial media, which aim at selling as large an audience as possible to advertisers, the issue of freedom of expression may be generally questioned – it is the freedom of the media and not that of media users and citizens that is safeguarded.

Even if there are huge divides as regards access to media and information, people's everyday lives are increasingly medialized in most corners of the world. However, the current media globalization process favours the interests of richer countries and, above all, the interests of

media conglomerates based in the U.S. and to a certain extent in Western Europe and Japan. Countries with fewer resources, such as many nations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, often testify to having been taken by surprise or unawares with regard to this swelling media flood. These countries have few possibilities to counteract or balance the flow through regulations or by producing relevant national media contents that can fulfil the country's basic needs for education, cultural identity, democratic development, etc.

How, then, can television, radio and the Internet in different countries pay proper attention to the rights of children and youth? Might, for example, the public service ideal of certain national Western media contain elements that could serve as a source of inspiration to cultures or nations – or a source of critique that, on the contrary, gives rise to new thoughts on how media can become, to a greater extent than they are today, platforms for increased freedom of expression and democracy for all population groups?

Media in the service of the general public *and* young people should be available for all, make available to all the information and knowledge necessary to be citizens in a democracy, and provide for all users' many varying interests. Media in the service of the general public *and* young people should provide freedom of expression for all, thereby facilitating continuous communication through the media – participation in the media by all groups in society is one of the foremost prerequisites of democracy.

At the same time, media for the general public and young people shall protect the young from injurious information and material. Many parents, teachers and policymakers are concerned about the negative influences they believe media exert on children and adolescents. Such concerns have been voiced as long as mass media have existed, but the concern has grown in pace with developments in media technology. There is particular concern about depictions of violence in the media and

in computer games. Concern is also expressed about pornographic films and images, and other potentially harmful content that is being distributed more widely via satellite/cable television, the Internet, computer games and mobile telephones. The content takes the form of violent and pornographic fiction and non-fiction, offensive and too many advertisements, stereotypical and disrespectful depictions of young people, women and minorities, hate-mongering messages, and so forth. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use. Safety risks are much the same wherever we are: at school, or home, or at the café – or on Internet. With Internet and other online technology we cannot see or be seen by the person at the other end of the communication.

How to limit and prohibit the spread of content-related media harm and offence in relation to young people? The approaches to protecting minors from harm and offence in media content largely boil down to, on the one hand, law and regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation of the media. No one instrument of regulation is sufficient; today and in the future some form of effective interaction between all three kinds of media regulation — that is, between government, the media and civil society – will be required to reach satisfactory results. All the relevant stakeholders – within government, the media sector and civil society – need to develop effective means by which to collaborate.

On the other hand it is necessary with a focus on viewers' and users' perspectives. Only then will an essential piece of the puzzle fall into place, namely, the importance of more widespread media and information literacy and awareness in society at large. Children and youth, parents, teachers, media professionals and other adults, all are equally important in this regard.

This state of things has been emphasized in much research, and has been paid increased attention to in a series of international meetings and world summits on media and young people. Attention has grown in particular during the last ca. fifteen years – the period when new information and communication technology, especially satellite television, the Internet and computer games, have spread like wildfire across the globe.

The yearbook 2005/2006

For the present yearbook the Clearinghouse tried to assemble contributions by researchers from different parts of the world in order to shed light upon issues of vital importance that arise when dealing with a subject such as 'media in the service of young people'.

The Yearbook work has ran parallel with another UNESCO project about efforts to reduce violence in electronic and digital media. The two projects are tangential in several respects, and cross-pollination between them was both inevitable and welcome. The fruits of the interaction will be apparent in both publications that are released in 2006.

This book, *In the Service of Young People,* consists of two parts. The first part contains articles by eminent scholars active in different continents. These articles exhibit theoretical visions and empirical examples of what constitutes – and what does not constitute – media and media contents in the service of children and youth. The researchers also reflect on measures of how to improve young people's media situation in the digital age.

In the second part of the book The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media presents different kinds of efforts at raising media and information/Internet literacy among young people, parents, media educators and media professionals through examples of activities, projects and resources in many countries. We also offer examples of best practices with a focus on children's and young people's own media production as one of the more effective means to raise their level of knowledge and awareness.

Let us conclude by thanking, on behalf of the Clearinghouse, all the contributors who have made this yearbook possible and whose articles put focus on important areas. Thanks also to UNESCO without whose financial support the book would never have seen the light of the day.

Göteborg in June 2006

Ulla Carlsson	*Cecilia von Feilitzen*
Director	Scientific Co-ordinator

Public Service on Digital Media

Letting Young People's Situation Determine the Timing and Format?

Divina Frau-Meigs

Compared to the utopian years of the early 1990s, digital media have turned from virtuality to the reality principle, partly spurred by the need to localize the global, partly spurred by the explosion of the dot.com bubble. This trend has given nation-states and their public broadcasting services a new occasion to evaluate their missions, after the strong criticism they underwent in the 1980s as deregulation and privatization extended worldwide (Frau-Meigs 2005a). The technocratic trap that seemed to capture most of the thinking then has phased away as governments and industry try to find the proper scale for human interaction and engagement.

This move from virtuality to reality is confirmed by some current trends on Internet, as regulation by nation-states re-enters the stage: Internet governance is increasingly government-driven, in spite of advocacy movements to make it global; Internet is being turned into a medium, and there are signs of its partial "broadcastization", as it is being normalized by commercial and societal uses and services that anchor it in territorial grounds; Internet is perceived as having unacceptable real world effects on people, because it is a vehicle for terrorism, cyber crime, spam and harmful content (Frau-Meigs 2005b).

What is at stake, for national and local communities, is the status of the public value in its relation to dominant commercial media whose role is not the protection of privacy or of the integrity of the person, especially the child. The old debates reappear in a new garb, as media are being criticized for their perceived failure in promoting public debate: How to set a regulatory model to counterbalance market forces whose priority is not youth protection and education? How to avoid the stalemate arguments that equate popular broadcasting with commercial media and public service with unpopular production? How to dispel the ambient mood that posits that publics built by commercial media are less coerced and more participatory than those built by public broadcasting?

Looking at the evolution of public service broadcasters and how they serve the young public in some specific places can illuminate the reality principle and hint at a possible renewal of public service missions. Initiatives are scattered and taking place in different areas of the world, though often led by countries with a strong tradition of public service. What are the on-line extensions of off-line public service broadcasters? What are the on-line extensions of public service obligations for commercial digital media? Are there new forms of public value emerging in the digital world, especially where children and young people are concerned?

The on-line extensions of off-line public service broadcasters

Recent research about on-line extensions shows that the on-going activities are still in embryo (Schejter 2005). The Internet is mostly used as window-dressing – to provide information about the available programs and schedules – with very little offer in news, scarce interactivity, and no particular interest in children's programming. The different public service cultures, those that have emerged in post-communist countries and in developing countries as well as the traditional European ones, tend to be reproduced on-line, to reflect national public service regulatory environments. Nonetheless, some trends are appearing on public service media on the Internet that hold promises of renewal and increased youth participation.

Blurring the lines between broadcast media and connexion media

Public service media tend to function on a grid and a schedule as they encourage family consumption and aim at a generalist, not a niche, audience. The way out of this gridlock on digital media has been to use discreet units of production, available at any time. With this move, traditional public service media have extended their archival and patrimonial capacities, as they have been able to draw from a rich fund of past and timeless programming that new generations can discover and enjoy. So Internet has become a platform for access to past broadcast, a connexion medium to make a lot of publicly-funded material available on the web, trying partly to erase the old, paternalistic, elitist kill-joy image of broadcasting, often used as a key argument to demote public service, if not public value.

This role of publisher is apparent in the United Kingdom as Ofcom, the new regulating entity, has made a proposal for creating a new public service organization that would mirror the BBC but only in a role of digital publisher. Ofcom is even thinking of extending this new Public Service Publisher (PSP) license to commercial operators, provided they respect the guidelines, with contracts for a ten-year period, <www.ofcom.uk>. While Ofcom's creation of an additional entity and potential rival body to the BBC is of concern, it nonetheless shows the trend

in public service broadcasting capacities in the future: Publishing and educational capabilities can be developed on-line, with materials produced off-line that can be given more visibility and availability for teachers and for children on the look-out for special materials free of rights. This can be a public service answer to commercial services that try to create total entertainment universes to keep the children in a state of net immersion.

The PSP extension has the additional advantage of potentially functioning like a digital archive, which has been explored by a series of public entities, like NHK in Japan, CBC in Canada, and INA (Institut national de l'audiovisuel) in France. The BBC has gone one step further to make its material available to the English public. Through its Creative Archive project, it is testing the possibility of letting license-paying Britons download radio and television materials, with software controls to stop downloads outside national borders. This test, if successful, would confirm that public value can remain territorialized, over-the-air as well as over-the-net, public broadcasters contributing to map digital territory on real territory.

Rediscovering radio

Radio is the medium of choice for pre-teens and teens who appreciate its flexibility and the relative lack of parental control of its consumption. The ubiquitous capacity of radio has been strengthened by Internet and other digital media, as it has become a multi-point medium using set top boxes and mobile phones as well as other wireless devices. The listening situation benefits teenagers, who are likely to connect at any time and any place, but mostly at night in the privacy of their room. Arte, the Franco-German hybrid public service broadcaster, has recently created a site that deliberately plays on time and space lag, removing any hint of scheduling slots, <www.arteradio.com>. Besides, it has adopted a Creative Commons license, that allows for the exchange of files and their multiple listening while preserving intellectual property rights, with no commercial use. This radio *à la carte* appeals to young browsers who tend to like the news programs about other young people and playful programs like *Ourapo* (Ouvroir de Radiophonie Potentielle). Contrary to the BBC, the trans-border media allows for worldwide listening, offering a trans-border vision of public value.

Radio Denmark and Radio Sweden have opted for yet other opportunities, allowing access to a lot of stock, with high definition quality sound, and facilitating local broadcasting to help young people fight isolation and find identity (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005). Digitization makes it possible for young people to have access to alternatives in sound and content, and to adjust their timing to their situation (Molgaard 2003, in Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005). It also allows the broadcasters to recycle and repackage valuable timeless content in a variety of formats and platforms.

Public service radio on-line still lacks opportunities for call-in participatory programs *live* but a few examples are promising that show the complementarities

between the various vehicles and the possibility for interactivity (person to machine communication), if not interaction (person to person communication, via a machine). In France, the case of the public service radio created for young people, Le Mouv, is interesting in that perspective. Its over-the-air call-in programs benefit from questions sent by e-mail and continued on chats on the site of the radio. In this case, off-line programs benefit from the time lag of on-line messages, before and after the actual airing.

Radio's situation stands in stark contrast with webtv, which has a harder time getting started, as tele-presence and streaming are still technologically difficult to deliver on-line. The current solution is being experimented in the Netherlands, which is testing a new platform for a public service portal, <www.omroep.nl>. It offers the capability to play video files on the Internet, and can thus recycle old programs on demand, adapting to the viewers' needs and situation. It aims at allowing a variety of content providers, mostly commercial ones, to offer valuable content, responding to public service quality, with the proviso that they do not place advertisements on those video programs and sites. It is one of the many experiments going-on in private-public partnerships, with the idea to allow independent and not just mainstream producers to have some visibility while not adding to public expenditure.

Fighting the "cursor effect" in media education

The "cursor effect" is particularly problematic for public service broadcasting: The more you elevate the educational or cultural level, the more you elevate the age of the viewer, according to Jean-Pierre Cottet, Director General of France 5 until 2004 (Frau-Meigs 2003). Culture and education in that sense can be deadlier filters than any encryption or regulation. And unfortunately the reverse is not true: Lowering the cultural level is no guarantee of bringing down the age of the audience. In many respects, the low-brow/high-brow divide is as strong as the digital divide and follows the breaking lines of private/public broadcasting. These mental representations run deep in situated cultures.

A case in point is highbrow France. The leading institution for that matter is France 5, the educational public channel, dedicated to children and young people, whose audience has increased in the last few years. Replacing commercial seduction by curiosity and proximity, it has developed a two-pronged strategy: Internet has been conceived as an extension of over-the-air programs, with sites like *Les Zouzous* (for children) and *Côté Profs* (for teachers); Internet has also been conceived as a channel per se, with its own programming via webtv for teenagers, a problematic audience that needs to be enticed away from appealing commercial broadcasting, especially reality-programming, <www.france5.org>. This channel is being developed in partnership with the Ministry of Education (SCEREN-CNDP) and teachers and students locally (in Marseilles, Créteil, Montpellier). France 5 brings its technical know-how and its images, while the

ministry negotiates rights and provides pedagogical tools and accompanying material in relation to the national curricula, <lesite.tv>. Schools can subscribe and have access to programs and pedagogical materials. The emphasis is on interactivity if not interaction, to help adolescents overcome their difficulties in expressing themselves.

More direct forms of curriculum broadcasting exist. England and India are developing initiatives in that direction. BBC was given government approval to create a "digital curriculum" via Internet in 2003. On-line teaching material suitable for the school curriculum will be offered, in audio or video format, without fee but with a publicly-funded budget of US$ 281 million over 5 years. However, 50 percent of funding resources are to be spent on commissioning services from the private commercial providers, which shows a growing trend to go into private-public partnerships, <www.bbc.co.uk>. Doordarshan, the Indian public service entity, has launched in 2004 the first direct-to-home satellite service, carrying 33 television channels and 12 radio channels, with the purpose to reach out to its rural, disadvantaged population, <http://ddindia.net>. In India and Southeast Asia, a variety of public service broadcasters try to combine yet another option – traditional media and new media for education in remote locations. Thailand's Ministry of Education and the Distance Learning Foundation are experimenting with a model of non-profit distance interaction as students in remote areas can work off-line with their teachers, and on-line by call-ins via telephone lines, free of charge (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005).

Despite the plethora of channel possibilities in the digital age, very few countries offer a youth channel, with programs aimed at the needs of young people, especially their curiosity for news and other cultures. It is easier for children, who are addressed via cartoons or puppet shows mostly, be it on commercial or public channels. The closest offer of this kind is PBS in the United States and ABC television in Australia, where PlaySchool programs have passed the test of time and of digital extensions, <www.abc.net.au>. The American Corporation for Public Broadcasting was given a mandate to develop high definition television programs in 2001, via the CPB Digital Kids Fund for interactive programming dedicated to children and teachers, <www.cpb.org>. The United States even developed a <.kid> domain name, with an interagency portal to highlight sites that are dedicated to children, but these sites have remained relatively underdeveloped, are very static and lack interactivity, <www.kids.gov>.

The experiences in different countries yield different results that reflect the importance and the faith in public service media, as well as the capacity for civil society associations to mobilize and influence regulatory policy. One of the challenges for public service radio and television has been the haemorrhage of the young audience away from audiovisual broadcasters toward wire line and wireless carriers, such as Internet and mobile phones. So the need to imagine digital platforms of interest to young people and especially adolescents has emerged among off-line broadcasters. As the Internet stabilizes, they have seen it as a means for reinvigorating public service missions because of the reduced time to find

and retrieve content, of the potential for storage and lowered transmission costs, as well as the possibility for new participatory modes more in synch with young people's listening and viewing situation, letting them determine the timing and format as boundaries between static and interactive content become porous.

The other challenge for public service broadcasters has been the trans-border dimension of the digital media, as it baffles their obligation to provide local and regional content, the proper scale for a community of place. By allowing for more participation and transmission windows for local production in their on-line offer, they have seen new opportunities to fulfil their mandate of inclusiveness, pluralism, creativity, service to minorities and children, and education in informal settings, while giving community broadcasters some visibility at the national public level, at relatively low cost.

By so doing, they are running the risk to spread themselves too thin, as most countries have added on-line extensions without changing the budget for public service broadcasters. The additional risk is that national regulating bodies are removing public service obligations under new digital licenses granted for commercial and public broadcasting, dwindling the pressure put on broadcasters to serve communities, regions and children, as in the case of Ofcom in the United Kingdom. The private-public push for partnerships can become a makeshift strategy to compensate for reduced public funding that can blur the identity and the image of public, non-proprietary services. This trend is visible in the public service website addresses, with URLs displaying <.com> or <.net> instead of <.org> or <.gov> codes. The <.kid> option still remains to be fully explored, as a strong signal for parents, educators and children that they have a commercial-free harbor on the Internet.

The public service obligations of on-line commercial services

The notion of a commercial-free harbor, discarded for a while on the digital media, is finding some new currency as it becomes apparent that the offensive of Internet and Mobile phone Service Providers is mostly on marketing for children, with a particular interest in the collection of personal data (Montgomery and Pasnik 1996). Indeed, on digital media, some of the traditional forms of protection of minors against harmful content are being challenged. Traditional forms were based on "safe harbor" hourly regulations (prime time family scheduling and broadcasting), parental advisories (to warn about presence of violence and pornography in programs) and control of advertising (ceiling of 12 minutes per hour and prohibition of program-length advertising for children). Those three fronts are being threatened by Internet and mobile telephony that aim at abolishing time barriers and at creating flow.

The new forms of marketing geared at young people

Many corporations dedicated to broadcasting entertainment like Nickelodeon, Fox Kids Networks or The Disney Channel are using digital media as complementary to television, whose programs and formats are still defining the media environment of young people, their heaviest consumers (Stranger and Gridina 1999). This allows them a rapid penetration in the household while creating a whole culture of coherent signs – with rituals and recurring characters that please and comfort children – that provide many possibilities for on-line merchandizing.

Children's behaviour on-line has been carefully monitored, to use as best as possible the state of flux created by surfing, which removes awareness of time lines, while following some of the main marketing precepts of childhood psychology: attachment, empowerment, interaction and self-modelling (*Interactive Marketing News* 1995). One-to-One marketing, with personalized attractions, is a principle used in many commercial sites directed to children and young people with such practices as giving children cybercash to entice them to go for prizes and other goodies on-line (Peppers 1999). In fact, traditional "interruption" advertising is out, while "flux" advertising is in: The whole content of trademark sites such as Hasbro, Mattel or Disney aims at maintaining the child in a state of blissful immersion (Montgomery 2001; Anderson 1999).

Besides promoting audiovisual materials, these sites tend to gather data on children's movements and activities via cookies, hidden files that register moves and transmit them to the web administrator. Spam, those unsolicited messages that pop-up in the users' e-mail is yet another e-marketing tool. Pop-ups are problematic, as they can disconnect the user from his or her site and lead him or her to a much pricier site. Other manipulative techniques aimed at teenagers are buzz marketing on specific chats, phishing (getting confidential data like credit card numbers under cover of an official institution), and viral communication by using early adopters to broadcast a trademark event on youth sites, as in the MSN card operation of November 2004 in France (Malher 2004). "Ringer" blogging aims at creating special blogs, pretending they are spontaneously produced by a young person while in fact there is an adult manipulating the process, to attract attention to a trademark.

Young children and teenagers are not aware of the potential risks of such information delivery for their privacy and individual liberties, not to mention their families. A Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enquiry led in March 1998 in the United States showed that most e-commerce sites (89%) compelled children to deliver personal information prior to accessing their services; only half of these sites provided some degree of transparency on how the data were used, while 1 percent asked for parental consent. And yet, half these sites either transferred or sold these data to their commercial partners. Another survey conducted in the United States in 2000 showed that among young people (aged 10-17), 65 percent were ready to deliver personal information in exchange for a present, 55 percent provided information on their parents' favourite brands, and 26 percent told about the leisure activities of the whole family, <www.ftc.org>.

What needs yet to be fully explored by public broadcasters is the pleasure of play that children and young people experience on the digital media. Broadcasters in the past have been through a variety of considerations related to their publics: from citizens to audiences to customers; digital media add the potential for seeing them as players (Syvertsen 2004). This playful activity is currently being equated with participation, still within a consumerist paradigm. Yet, the edutainment possibilities of some software and of some dedicated, commercial-free sites have already been proved and need to be explored some more, especially if the cursor effect has to be fought effectively. Public broadcasters have an ethical role to play, in defining formats and standards for how participants can be portrayed and in evaluating the risks they are invited to take. This role is especially necessary as many of the on-line participatory activities are aimed at young people, whose population is increasingly segmented into niche publics according to their age (0-4, 5-7, 8-12, 12-16, 16 and above), thus producing a very fragmented perception of youth, for the benefit of e-marketing.

The renewed debate on harmful content

This debate on privacy and data protection, especially of minors, has been fused, and often confused, with other issues related to children's protection, like harmful content potentially leading to harmful behaviour, as multimedia applications – especially blogging and mo-blogging (mobile blogging) – allow for more and more youth participation. The challenges posed to parents and educators are related to speed of diffusion, availability, and the children's adept navigation skills. Contrary to traditional media where the source of broadcasting had mastery over content, on-line broadcasting and production can come from the users-turned-producers, some of whom are children and young people. On-line media provide additional exposure to racist and xenophobic content and to adult activities aimed at children like digital stalking and paedophilia. These fringe activities are more carefully monitored than other harmful activities, such as on-line addiction, bullying, or incitement to commit suicide (in the case of sites on bulimia and anorexia whose original intent was to provide a hot-line for teenagers in distress but have been subverted or hijacked by apologists of such self-damaging practices). An additional risk comes from off-line activities that are shown on-line and can damage children's physical and psychic integrity, in actions imitating such programs as *Jack Ass* (shown on MTV and carried by national networks). Placing the emphasis on knee-jerk emotion and prejudice-as-fun, these programs have raised ethical concerns, as the behaviour they encourage is not necessarily more appropriate or more socially beneficial for young people, especially as future citizens.

Some on-line extensions of off-line legislation exist for the protection of minors, the courts taking into consideration the heavy penetration of the new media in the homes. In the United States for instance, the Court decided to treat obscene materials available on the Internet in the same way as videotapes, in the

case *United States v. Thomas* (1996), confirmed by *Reno v. ACLU* (1997). The FTC, after much lobbying from civil society movements like the Consumer Federation of America, has been given authority to establish some regulation about marketing aimed at children, via the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), effective as of 2000. The law requires of commercial sites aimed at young people below 13 years of age: 1) to inform parents that they are collecting data; 2) to obtain verifiable parental consent before proceeding to the data collection on children; and 3) to give parents access to the collected data and allow them to restrict their use. These measures are accompanied with an educational addendum for the training of web site operators, specialized publications for schools, and an official governmental website to inform the general public better on the protection of minors.

This trend has been followed in other countries that have pushed it further. In 2001, the Home Office in the United Kingdom launched a series of campaigns to sensitize young people and adults to the risks of Internet. Adolescents were targeted and reached via the media they use most, with radio spots, cinema releases, on-line messages and a dedicated Internet site, <www.thinkuknow.co.uk>, while parents were reached through the written press and a web page, <www.wiseuptothenet.co.uk>. In France, la Conférence de la famille, in 2005, made recommendations in the same direction, following previous recommendations of the Forum des Droits sur l'Internet. Besides parental consent, it calls for: training of webmasters managing teen-sites, information campaigns with a hotline and a reference portal with links to all accredited entities legitimate in children's protection, on-line or off-line, <www.familles.org>. The creation of a label "Qualité Famille" has been preferred to the <.kid> option, to inform parents on the quality of the services offered by the sites used by their children. The classification will be done by age, as in the traditional media. Such referencing will be left to the choice of the operators of services but the commission Famille Internet will establish the various criteria for getting the label and do the follow-up.

The Forum des Droits sur l'Internet has produced a series of reports on children and the Internet, that deal with issues of publicity, pornography, violence, as well as other, more positive uses of the internet (2004, 2005). It has worked in close collaboration with partners from different sectors (industry, research, civil society) and has allowed them to be present at the design stage of recommendations rather than at the implementation stage of policies. This strategy points at a possible redirection of the whole notion of public service, often criticized for its paternalistic smugness in relation to the various national publics: Instead of being managed by decision-makers from a top-down perspective, it can be the result of a wider consultation of actors, experts and users from a bottom-up perspective. The state acts as guarantor of democratic values such as the protection of minors, but the whole network of people around young people (educators, parents, developers, service providers, etc. – and the children themselves) have an early say in the matter.

In the same line of thought, the European Union has been promoting the principle of co-regulation, which implies cooperation by all members in the chain of responsibility around the child. Coined in France in 1998, the word has two meanings: in its narrow perspective, it implies "regulated self-regulation", and in its wider perspective "multi-stakeholder partnership". The latter is visible through the work of a variety of fora, like the European Internet Coregulation Network (EICN) that has issued policy statements to feed the on-going debate around the revision of the 1998 Recommendation on the protection of minors in audiovisual and information services. The Council of Europe has established a media section in its human rights General Division (DGII) with a Pan-European Forum that involves a variety of partners and aims at making recommendations for Information Society policies, <www.coe.int/media>. In this context, the human rights of children are considered in continuation, not in rupture, with the human rights of adults. As a result there seems to be the premises of an emerging notion of an on-line private life of children, which would require privacy protections.

The lure of technical devices instead of public service watchdogs

The regulated self-regulation perspective of co-regulation appears when the focus is put on the social responsibility of the industrial sector. Harmful content, especially directed at young people, has caused a series of social and moral panics as the community of adults caring for children has become aware of the risks incurred. They have agitated for the public policies in use on traditional media to be transferred on digital media and have thus reactivated both public service models and public service obligations for commercial providers. Private digital services have been compelled to put in place self-regulatory measures, while protesting that this could have chilling effects on their capacity for innovation and freedom of expression.

The preferred on-line solution for the industry is technological, through electronic devices and encryption techniques. Commercial software like CyberPatrol <www.microsys.com>, SurfWatch <surfwatch.com>, and SafeSurf <www.safesurf.com> are among the most popular among parents. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like Prodigy or Compuserve also have their own filtering devices, on a voluntary basis. In the United Kingdom, the Direct Marketing Association enforces a Code of Practice for Commercial Communications to Children On Line that has published a series of guidelines, especially about getting parental consent before allowing children to purchase costly goods and services, <www.dma.org.uk>.

The tendency is to call for the social responsibility of ISPs as a means to encourage them to endorse basic public service obligations where children are concerned, so as to develop trust in e-commerce. A case in point is the on-line privacy program TRUSTe, a trustmark displayed on home pages to inform users of security practices conducted at the site. The other two best-known seals are

BBBOnline and WebTrust, all created in the United States, but with a limited amount of industry subscribers. A more ambitious program for visible banners and logos has been established by 3WC (World Wide Web Consortium), with the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS). It has been developed as a labelling tool to prevent children's access to offending and harmful content, yet within the realm of a free Internet paradigm, <www.w3.org/pub/WWW/PICS>. An alternative model has been developed in the European Union with PEGI, a classificatory system for video games at first with current extensions to Internet. In 2000, the two federations have agreed on "safe harbor" provisions to make sure that the differences in privacy law and children protections (that are tighter in the European Union) are met for trade purposes, though the United States government remains very reluctant about such infringements to its laissez-faire politics, <www.europa.eu.int/information_society/activities>.

But the idea of using technology as a means to enhance privacy protection and of replacing public service obligations remains very dubious, as seals and logos present a variety of leaks that have failed to establish e-trust. A lot of the content ratings going along with these filters are done by the industry itself, and there is a real risk of conflict of interest and lack of objectivity. Another serious shortcoming of such technological devices and industry labels is that there are no sanctions attached to infringement, as they actually favour self-management over self-regulation (Ang 2001). Also, the ratings often do not reflect the content of the program or the site with accuracy (especially when it comes to violence, profanity and sex). As a result, parents – when they are not completely unaware of the ratings criteria – often tend to seek other independent rating systems to make their opinion (Pew Research Center 2000). Besides, a technological privacy label may blunt the users' awareness of the actual problems and blind them to the appearance of new ones.

Other human-centered solutions, geared toward more interaction among various actors, call on grassroots initiatives. They tend to interpret co-regulation as multi-stakeholder partnerships and involve civil society entities, often in association with the state, around issues of media literacy. Some grassroots solutions have been developed that tend to compensate the lack of public service relays in relation to this expanding educational necessity. A network like the Canadian Réseau Education Médias has a government mandate to monitor and promote media education, be it on traditional vehicles or digital ones. The network has developed a three-pronged program, that teaches children how to confront typical situations on the Internet, and aims at making them develop their critical thinking while surfing. A variety of activities are offered, including workshops for teachers, librarians and parents, to acquaint them better with young people's on-line practices, <www.education-media.ca>.

Another civil society initiative has emerged, to take into account the trans-border and global dimension of on-line media. The need for action beyond national frontiers has lead consumer groups in the United States and the European Union to create an international forum, the Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue, <www.

tacd.org>. This large entity is elaborating a worldwide agenda for international protections against abusive marketing practices aimed at children; it has proposed a set of principles on children and e-commerce that have been accepted by the European Union within the framework of its "Safer Internet" program. This emphasis on safety, associated with the "Safe Harbor" solution, heralds yet another anchoring of digital media into reality and real world concerns, with an adaptation of prior public service obligations proposed for traditional commercial media.

Conclusion: options for the future

The examples and situations of public service broadcasting for children show that public service on-line is focusing on missions that are not provided by commercial media: patrimony and memory instead of immediacy and motility (a composite word for mobility and ubiquity). It offers on-line and off-line combinations, especially in developing countries, where the ultimate technologies are not always available. Public service entities are trying to position themselves as cross-platform media with hybrid funding and subsidies. There may be some advantage in independent programme sources out of broadcasters control, if attention is paid to call on small businesses and other collectives as a source of alternative productions. But it also implies to monitor private-public partnerships carefully, as public broadcasters must make sure they do not contribute to third-party profits and make the public pay twice for the same product.

The dominant trend, however, is for commercial backing and for weak regulation, but this creates fragmentation and calls for renewed media ethics in the digital age. The new responsibilities for public service broadcasting over-the-net indicate a need to develop these ethics, especially for education in simulated playful environments and for interaction between peers and between adults and young people. There is the potential for a renewed social contract in which children and young people can be more implicated, thus revisiting notions of empowerment and participation. Participation of children can take a variety of forms, from integration in decision-making to grassroots initiatives (Rowlands 1997; Riepl and Witnersberger 1999). Increasingly, it seems to imply letting their viewing and listening situation determine the content and the format of public service productions.

These examples may show the way of the future for public service as a whole. Some unchanging principles are staying, such as distance from vested interests, commitment for education, and competition for quality standards and not for audience shares (Tracey 1998; Garnham 1983). New ones are being tested and added, that avoid the pitfalls of public sphere mantras and the championing of media practices that some perceive as increasingly irrelevant (Jacka 2003). There is indeed still a lot of symbolic and cultural capital to be expended digitally, as the low-brow/high-brow hierarchies are shifting as well as the private/public

boundaries. The emergence of civil society actors in the debate over public value indicates that between state and markets there is the need for relational goods, beyond commercial services, with a large and varied non-profit third sector.

These new actors in the process, especially all members in the chain of responsibility around the child, posit that media as common, relational goods are grounded on diversity and on forms of regulation that should aim at some protection (from markets), some obligations (to relational goods), and some controls (by a variety of actors, not necessarily the state only). They herald the need to change who the gatekeepers are, and claim their involvement in the design stages as well as the implementation stages of rules and policies. As such they are moving public service beyond its stale image of paternalism, beyond a reified understanding of democracy and of public interest, and beyond mere consumer sovereignty, towards more democratization and better understanding of user needs.

The new principles of public service that are emerging thus revolve around the idea of co-regulation, showing that democracy is a changing process in which the people are still willing to invest, with forms of identity formation and cultural practices that can be agreed upon in a given society (Garnham 2000): ensure participation, by promoting interaction rather than interactivity; ensure balance between public-private partnerships; ensure media education and digital literacy; pay attention to the young persons' listening and viewing situation and their role as players; and attach public service to relational goods, with a promotion of what looks like an alternative to public service over-the-net – the creative commons model, where public service is defined by users-producers (in opposition to the current commercial common carrier model). Falling short of these principles brings the risk that public values will not be maintained, especially if they do not involve young people, as the under-25s are the heaviest consumers and the potential tax-payers of the future, in virtuality and in reality.

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Additional web links:

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcast Development: www.aibd.org.my
British Broadcasting Corporation: www.bbc.co.uk
Broadcasting Regulation and Cultural Diversity (BRCD): www.brcd.net
COPPA kids awareness site:
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/kidzprivacy/resources.htm
Corporation for Public Broadcasting channel: cpb.org and also pbskids.org
Délégation Interministérielle à la Famille (DIF): www.familles.org
Electronic Media Forum: www.wemfmedia.org/documents
European Union, Safer Internet: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/
Forum des Droits sur l'Internet: www.foruminternet.org
US Government Interagency Kids' Portal: www.kids.gov and also www.cybercrime.gov/rules

When Childhood Gets Commercialized, Can Children Be Protected?[1]

Juliet B. Schor

In 2004, a significant debate about the effects and even the ethics of marketing to children emerged in the U.S. The catalyst has been the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and the related rise in medical diseases such as hypertension and type II diabetes (Surgeon General 2001). Children's advocates have argued that food marketing is a major cause of the shift to unhealthy diets dominated by added sugar, fat and salt. They point to the billions of dollars of food advertising and marketing which children are exposed to, on television, in schools, on the Internet, and in the grocery store (Nestle 2002, Brownell and Horgen 2003).

Although it did not gain much traction before the recent attention to junk food marketing, the critique goes beyond food to include other addictive substances such as tobacco and alcohol, as well as the marketing of violence, unhealthy body images, and materialism. Social scientists and pediatricians have compiled an impressive array of research results about the impact of various aspects of consumer culture on children. (See Robinson et al. 1998, 2001, Sargent et al. 2001, Kasser 2002, Strasburger and Wilson 2002; and Schor 2004, among others.) Activists have argued that children are suffering from 'marketing-related diseases' (see commercialalert.org), and that marketers are engaging in a 'hostile takeover of childhood' (Linn 2004, see also Nader 1996). In addition to their opposition to particular products and messages, many critics believe that advertising to children is inherently unfair, even exploitative, because children are unable to understand ads or resist their persuasiveness.

The critics are motivated in part by adverse trends in child well-being. Youth are suffering from rising rates of obesity, obesity-related diseases, mental and emotional disorders such as depression, substance abuse, suicide, attention disorders, mood disorders, behavioral disorders, and eating disorders (Kelleher et al. 2000). Record numbers of children are on drugs to address these problems. The average level of anxiety among American youth is now equivalent to the rate recorded among children admitted to psychiatric facilities in the 1950s

(Twenge 2000). And in 2001, self-reports of physical and emotional health among college freshmen reached their lowest level in 16 years of surveying. (Sax et al. 2001). While the 1990s economic boom yielded gains in well-being by reducing child poverty rates, middle class and wealthy children are now increasingly at risk.

In addition to the critiques of researchers and activists, action from the legal community has focused attention on activities of junk food producers. A number of lawsuits have been filed against fast food companies, for marketing addictive and dangerous products to children. Some of the lawyers active in the fight against Big Tobacco have turned their attention to junk food marketing. Throughout both the activist community and the industry, there is a common view that junk food could be 'the next tobacco' (Branch 2003).

Industry has responded on a number of fronts. Politically, it has enlisted the support of the Bush Administration to forestall legislation, and to shift the focus of the debate from food to exercise. (For a discussion of this point, see Schor 2004, and also a series of press releases on Bush Administration actions at commercialalert.org) In 2004, before the Congressional recess, the food industry was able to get a bill through the House that protects them from liability for consumer harm. It was not taken up by the Senate, but it is likely it will be re-introduced.

The food corporations have also tried to control the discourse by making some concessions, and through skillful use of public relations concerning those concessions. For example, Kraft recently got wide coverage for an announcement that was interpreted as a commitment to stop advertising a subset of its most unhealthy products to children, although the actual change will likely be less significant than was widely interpreted (Mayer 2005). McDonald's garnered widespread positive attention for an announcement that it was abandoning the use of trans-fats, a shift it has failed to carry out. The Center for Consumer Freedom, a group originally funded by Phillip Morris, which also receives funding from restaurant chains, soft drink companies and other food corporations, has engaged in substantial public relations, advertising, research and lobbying activity in order to discredit food industry critics (see Schor 2004, Sargent 2005). In January 2005, industry formed the Alliance for American Advertising (AAA), a new organization whose purpose is to protect companies' rights to advertise to children. The Alliance includes Kellogg, General Mills and Kraft, and has openly questioned the link between advertising and obesity, a reprise of tobacco strategy (Ellison 2005). The formation of the AAA should be interpreted as a sign that the critics are making progress – however, the current political environment is hardly favorable.

The commercialization of childhood

The debate about marketing has developed not only because of food, but also because what industry participants call the 'children's space' has become one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing areas of advertising and marketing. Children, by which I refer to persons in the zero to twelve age range, are a segment of the consumer market with rapidly growing purchasing power. It is currently estimated that children command over US$40 billion in direct purchasing power, and that number is expected to rise to $51.8 billion in 2006 (marketresearch.com). Direct purchasing power is money children themselves have control over and spend. The leading product category children spend on is food and beverages, followed by play items, apparel, movies and sports, and video arcades (McNeal 1999, p. 57).

As a result of their growing market power, advertising and marketing to children has risen dramatically in recent years, and is now estimated to exceed $15 billion a year in the U.S. (Schor 2004). Food accounts for the lion's share of total expenditures. As markets for many adult products reach saturation, the advertising industry has averted disaster in large part by doing work for drug companies and corporations that target children.

Marketers' interest in children goes well beyond the $40 billion that fills their piggy banks. Their greater attraction is that children are influencing a far larger slice of consumer purchasing, through what industry analysts call the 'influence market', or their role in determining parental purchases. The influence market is estimated by McNeal to be more than $670 billion (McNeal 1999 and communication with author). Influence ranges from a child's request for a particular brand of cereal to weighing in with on the brand of minivan their parents should choose. The growth of child influence is enabled by more democratic styles of parenting, but it is propelled by an increasing volume of direct-to-child ads for food, cars, hotel and restaurant chains, tourist destinations, and consumer electronics, which are placed on children's media. An initial opening of influence identified by marketers has been capitalized on by an intense targeting effort. This triangulation among child, parent and marketer is altering basic family dynamics in complex and not always healthy ways.

The transformation of family purchasing dynamics has been most consequential in food choices. Children now request not only long-advertised products such as sugared cereals, but new items such as entrees, dairy goods, special luncheon items such as Oscar Meyers' 'Lunchables', salty snacks, sugared snacks, desserts and even condiments. (Some famous industry examples in this category include Heinz' green ketchup and Parkay's blue margarine.) Indeed, marketers have found that children have moved beyond the traditional product request model ('Mommy, I want this', or 'Buy me that!') to 'train' their parents to purchase the items they prefer. Children who have trained their parents exercise more control over total purchases because most parents limit children to a certain number of product requests. These changes have become central to the deterioration of children's diets (Schor 2004, see also Nader 1996, and on diets, Muñoz et al. 1997).

The proliferation of ads

Parents are probably most aware of, and certainly policy makers have paid most attention to, television advertising, but innovation and expansion in the targeting of children is increasingly happening outside the TV box. Advertisers and marketers have opened up a number of new fronts for capturing children's attention and imaginations. Indeed, television advertising represents only a fraction of total marketing expenditure. New advertising frontiers include the Internet, movies, cultural institutions, schools, playgrounds, social service organizations, and even private homes. These venues are in addition to the ongoing commercialization of public space that is targeted at both adults and children (McAllister 1996). Examples include corporate naming of stadiums, the growth of advertising in sport, advertising on subways and buses, the airport and hospital channels, advertising in restaurants, and other place-based advertising such as the illumination of sidewalks with ads, and the growth of street advertising such as product giveaways and what are called 'guerrilla teams' doing marketing on the street. Real life product placement is another growing trend, in which companies pay people or even enlist volunteers to use, tout, or otherwise promote a product in everyday life.

The Internet has become a highly commercialized medium, which includes very few non-commercial sites for children. A wide range of problematic practices, which violate industry guidelines for advertising to children, have been discovered on the Internet, only some of which have been eliminated (Center for Media Education 1996, 2001, Aufderheide 2001) A growing practice is advergaming, in which companies create branded game environments (e.g., Nabisco's Chips Ahoy game, or Nike's Slam Dunk contest). Delineation between ads and content is often very weak on the Internet, in violation of a widely accepted basic principle of children's advertising. Movies have become another growth area for advertising, as paid product placements have become ubiquitous in children's films, and because commercials are now routinely shown before the coming attractions.

In the non-electronic world, advertising to children is also growing rapidly. Zoos and museums are increasingly offering corporations the chance to sponsor exhibits and in return giving them opportunities to market their brands and products. In the last decade, schools have opened their doors to advertisers in a major way. Examples of in-school advertising include so-called 'sponsored educational materials' or ads in the guise of free curricula provided to teachers; Channel One's in-classroom 'news' broadcast and daily mandatory viewing of commercials; ads on school hallways, buses, and gymnasium floors; branded product giveaways (such as Phillip Morris's 'free' textbook covers); the sale of naming rights for gyms and even schools to corporate sponsors; exclusive soft-drink contracts; corporate art, homework, and other contests; and field trip programs which introduce children to particular stores (e.g., a trip to Petco rather than the zoo). Schools have also offered their pupils as participants in market research exercises in re-

turn for small sums of money. (For details on in-school advertising see Schor 2004 ch. 5, Molnar 1996, 2002.)

Marketing is also infiltrating social institutions and social dynamics in unprecedented ways. For example, non-profit organizations such as the Girl Scouts and the Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as churches, are now collaborating with marketers. The Girl Scouts offer a 'fashion adventure' badge that consists of a trip to the mall, and an introduction to the 'Limited Two', a clothing store which targets pre-teen girls. The national Boys and Girls Clubs are collaborating with market research firms to provide children who will serve as 'consultants' and 'informants'. Ministers and youth service workers who participate in sports leagues are enlisted by footwear and apparel manufacturers to test out products with the children they work with (Schor 2004). Finally, marketers entice kids themselves to practice what is called 'viral' marketing, or word-of-mouth advertising to their friends, relatives and acquaintances. The firms operate by finding trend-setting, popular kids and recruiting them to serve as marketing 'agents'. The children are instructed to market particular products or extract consumer information from their friends. One company, active among tween girls, claims to have organized thousands of slumber parties in 'agents" homes, at which girls provide market research to client companies and gain access to new products (Schor 2004). Proctor and Gamble has 250,000 youth involved in Tremor, its word-of-mouth arm (Vranica 2004).

I include these developments in some detail because they are important for understanding the broad context in which current debates about marketing to children are taking place. Marketing and advertising have moved out from the bounded world of television, and even the world of media, to virtually all the spaces and places inhabited by children. The nature of an 'ad' is also changing, as companies are utilizing many types of communication to convey brand messages to children. This of course complicates efforts to regulate, control or alter the advertising and marketing, and it increases the areas and types of influence advertising is having on children.

The case against marketing and advertising to children: ads are exploitative

There are two major lines of criticisms of marketing to children. The first is that all advertising is problematic because children are unable to adequately understand and resist its messages. This position relies on theories of development that argue that children's capacities to understand the world around them develop gradually throughout childhood. The second identifies negative impacts of particular advertised products, and opposes advertising because it increases the consumption of these products. A related harm argument is that ad messages themselves often have negative effects because they promote unhealthy behaviors and attitudes.

The view that ads are inherently unfair and exploitative comes from a series of research studies begun in the 1970s whose aim was to assess what children can understand about ads and how they receive them. The studies ask questions such as: At what age can children discriminate between advertising and programs? When do they understand the purpose of advertising? When are they able to understand the notion of 'persuasive intent', that is, the idea that commercials are attempting to persuade viewers to buy products? The critics' argument is that because children cannot adequately understand ads and their purpose, they cannot resist ads' persuasive powers, and therefore the practice of directly targeting children is inherently unfair and exploitative. Many believe that the all advertising to children under 12 should be banned on these grounds, regardless of the product being advertised (Kasser and Kanner 2004).

On the first question, the age at which children can discriminate between TV ads and programming, the evidence varies to some extent with research design, however reviews of the literature typically conclude that by age five, most, but not all children are able to differentiate (Roedder John 1999, Gunter and Furnham 1998, Young 1990, Strasburger and Wilson 2002, Kunkel 2001, Macklin and Carlson 1999, Martin 1997). At five years, children are usually able to describe the differences between ads and programming in very limited terms, noting that ads are shorter, or funnier. Advertising is mainly seen as entertainment or unbiased information. The research also shows that the usual practice for differentiating ads from programs, the insertion of a separator, is not effective as a signaling device for this age group (Strasburger and Wilson 1992, Comstock 1991). Similarly, disclaimers and explanations such as 'assembly necessary' or 'batteries required', that are designed to prevent unrealistic expectations have also been found to be ineffective with young children (Comstock 1991).

A second question is whether children can articulate the purpose of ads, once they can identify them. At early ages children typically say things like 'ads show you a product' or 'they are to sell a product'. Deeper understanding of the persuasive intent of ads occurs by about age eight. One study in which children were asked 'what is a commercial' and 'what does a commercial try to get you to do', found that 53 percent of first graders (ages 6-7), 87 percent of third graders (8-9), and 99 percent of fifth graders (ages 10-11) noted the persuasive dimension of ads (Roberston and Rossiter 1974). A 1992 study found that only 32 percent of four to six year olds mentioned that ads try to sell products, instead noting that ads are there to entertain or give information (Wilson and Weiss 1992). Other research finds that watching more ads does not lead to earlier or more complete ability to discern advertising intent (Faber, Perloff and Hawkins 1982).

By eight, children also recognize that ads do not always tell the truth and they have begun to figure out why. The research also finds that as they age, children become less trusting of ads (Roedder John 1999, Mangleburg and Bristol 1998). In a study of middle-school students, most agreed with statements such as 'Advertisers care more about getting you to buy things than what is good for you', and 'TV commercials tell only the good things about a product; they don't tell

you the bad things' (Bousch, Friestad and Rose 1994). Industry practitioners point to this mistrust as proof that children cannot be influenced. But the available research finds that the presence of skepticism does not affect desire for the advertised product, even for nine and ten year olds. Despite expressing doubts about ads, kids remain vulnerable to their persuasive powers (Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg 1998, Roedder John 1999). Furthermore, although media literacy has been encouraged as a solution to some of the problems raised by children's inability to watch ads critically, at least some research finds that it does not affect children while they are actually watching ads (Roedder John 1999). In one study of nine and ten year olds, exposure to a media literacy film did not subsequently affect their thoughts while they viewed advertisements, because they did not retrieve the consumer knowledge they learned from the film (Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg 1998). In recent years, advertisers have studied children's skepticism and tried to use it to their advantage, allying themselves with the skepticism, by lampooning advertising, admonishing kids not to trust celebrity endorsers, or imparting a gritty realism to commercials. These tactics are often successful in breaking down children's defenses, and fooling them about what is and is not an ad.

There is debate among scholars of media and advertising about the theoretical underpinnings of these findings. Most researchers follow a Piagetian developmental framework, which has distinct stages for ages 3-7, 7-11 and 11-16 corresponding to the ability to perform mental tasks such as abstraction. Some critics, such as Young (1990) and Davies (1997), argue for a linguistic framework, which looks at when children can understand things like metaphor, ambiguity, irony, and so forth, a perspective which yields a different timetable for understanding (see also Buckingham 2002). In my view, the universalist stage-oriented approach characteristic of most child development theory has been cogently critiqued and empirically undermined, although it remains highly influential in the field of child development (see Keating 1990). I believe this is part of the failure of this approach to gain adherents.

Most of the research noted above was done some time ago, when the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) was interested in these questions. Today, the public stance of those in industry is that children are savvy, more sophisticated than in the past, and incapable of being fooled by advertising. (They rarely address the ability to withstand ads' persuasive powers.) Whether industry is right that children today are unlike those of the 1970s and 1980s, is an unexamined, although reasonable point of view. Developmentalists discount that argument, because their models rely on 'biological' categories, which see children as unchanging, at least over short periods of time. However, it is curious that privately industry professionals are closer to the developmentalist psychologists than they admit in public. A 2004 Harris survey of 878 children's marketers found that the age at which they believe young people are capable of making 'intelligent choices as consumers' is 11.7 years (average response), not far from the 12 years that psychologists identify (Grimm 2004). The survey also found that the average age at which marketers believe it is 'appropriate to begin marketing to children' is 7 years, the

age at which children can view advertising critically is 9.1 years, and that the age at which children can begin distinguishing between 'fantasy and reality in media and advertising' is 9.3 years. Of course, actual practices diverge substantially from these beliefs.

The case against marketing (II): the production of harm

In contrast to the previous argument, which has gained relatively few adherents in recent years, arguments against marketing based on the harms done by marketed products have attracted attention and proponents. As noted above, opposition to food marketing has become significant. Food companies are estimated to spend thirty-three billion a year in direct advertising, and increasingly those dollars are targeted to children. Seventy percent of expenditures are for convenience foods, candy and snacks, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts. Fruits, vegetables, grains and beans comprise only 2.2 percent (Nestle 2002, p. 22). McDonald's, the world's largest fast food restaurant chain, reportedly spends $500 million a year on ads, of which approximately 40 percent is targeted to children (Horgen et al. 2001 cited in Strasburger and Wilson 2002). Virtually all children's food advertising is for junk food, and in addition to child-targeted ads, children are heavily exposed to food advertising nominally directed at adults (Byrd-Bredbenner and Grasso 1999). Nationwide, schools are reported to receive $750 million a year in marketing dollars from snack and processed food companies (Egan 2002).

Decades of studies show that food marketing to children is effective (Goldberg 1990). In the 1978s, Marvin Goldberg studied differences between children who saw and did not see television advertising and found that sugared cereals were more likely to be present in the homes of the former (Gorn and Goldberg 1982). H.L. Taras and colleagues (1989) found that for children aged 3-8 weekly television viewing time is significantly correlated with requests for specified advertised products as well as overall caloric intake. More recently, Dina Borzekowski's and Thomas Robinson's research (2001) on low-income preschoolers found that even brief exposure to ads led the children to choose advertised food products more often. And a study of fourth and fifth graders found that higher television viewing is related to poor nutritional habits, even controlling for social and other factors (Signorielli and Lears (1992), cited in Strasburger and Wilson 2002, p. 245).

Food advertising is contributing to major changes in eating habits. Snacking among children has increased markedly over the past two decades, and the fraction of calories that comes from snacks, rather than meals, has risen by 30 percent (Jahns, Siega-Riz and Popkin 2001; see also Cullen et al. 2002 on deteriorating diets). Marketing has also boosted sugar consumption, especially through soft drinks. The roughly 45 g of added sugar in each drink is just about the total daily recommended limit for added sugar (see Ludwig 2001 on soft drinks and obes-

ity). The fraction of calories consumed outside the home, with their higher fat and sugar content, has also risen markedly, to about a third of the total. By the mid-1990s, fast food comprised 10 percent of kids' daily caloric intake, up from 2 percent twenty years earlier (McLellan 2002). The marked rise in unhealthy eating is central to understanding what the Surgeon General has called an epidemic of obesity among U.S. children (Surgeon General 2001). Over the long term, food marketing is likely to prove to be the most harmful commercial influence on children, because it will affect so much a large fraction of children, with such serious consequences for their health and well-being.

Alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful products continue to be extensively advertised to children. In late 2002, the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth reported that not only are underage youth viewing large numbers of alcohol ads, but they are also more likely to see certain ads than adults (ibid.) The companies are in clear violation of the voluntary guidelines the companies agreed to not to air ads when underage viewers comprise more than half the audience (Schor 2004). Tobacco companies' print advertising to youth reached record levels after the settlement outlawing youth marketing, as they stepped up ads in youth magazines (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids 2003). Children are also exposed to alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs in television programs, films, and music videos. A major content study found that alcohol and tobacco appeared in more than 90 percent of the 200 most popular films from 1996 and 1997 and illicit drugs appeared in 22 percent (Roberts, Henriksen and Christenson 1999). In fact, smoking and alcohol use are more prevalent in film and television than they are in the real world. While illegal drugs are not formally 'advertised' in the media, there is accumulating evidence of marketing and promotion of performance-enhancing illegal substances such as steroids through athletic coaches. Drug companies are also beginning to advertise prescription drugs to youth. Johnson and Johnson has an extensive marketing campaign for acne remedy Retin-A Micro, and anti-anxiety drugs such as Paxil have ads which are as appropriate to youth as adults. Children have also been heavily exposed to many other drug ads.

The companies are also using street marketing campaigns, which inevitably reach the under-aged. In 2000, Sky Vodka hired Look-Look, a trends research firm founded by 'cool-hunter' DeeDee Gordon, which conceived a campaign to propagate the urban myth that Sky Vodka didn't cause hangovers. Sales among young people rose almost instantly (Goldstein 2000). Other street marketing tactics used by alcohol companies include paint wraps on subway cars in metropolitan areas, postering, and T-shirt giveaways. Tobacco companies have also expanded beyond traditional media. In 2001, a group of child advocates and public health organizations requested an investigation into millions of Philip Morris textbook covers distributed in schools.

There is now a considerable body of evidence showing that children and adolescents are more likely to smoke, drink and use drugs when they are exposed to ads or programming depicting these products. Major new longitudinal studies by researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research show that

advertising has a strong positive influence on demand, especially for girls, in contrast to earlier studies based on far cruder data (Saffer and Dave 2003 on alcohol, see also Saffer and Chaloupka 1999 on tobacco). In a California study of 9th grade students, Thomas Robinson et al. (1998) found that each extra hour of MTV watched per day was associated with a 31 percent increased risk of starting to drink alcohol over the next 18 months, controlling for a variety of factors. Furthermore, each additional hour of any television programming watched led to a 9 percent higher likelihood the student would start to drink during the following 18 months. A study of nearly 5,000 students in grades five through eight by James Sargent of Dartmouth Medical School found that the most important variable predicting whether a student would try a first cigarette was the amount of time spent watching Hollywood movies. This was true even after controlling for parental smoking and attitudes, personality traits, self-esteem, and propensity to take risks (Sargent et al. 2001, see also Pierce et al. 1998). Given the high prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug use among American youth (beginning, typically in grade eight), and the use of millions in taxpayer monies for anti-drug advertising, the continued tolerance of widespread explicit and implicit advertising to youth for these harmful, addictive substances is remarkable.

These products (junk food, tobacco, alcohol and drugs) do not exhaust the list of harmful or potentially harmful items marketed to children. There is an extensive literature on violent products, media and messages, which I do not have the space to detail (see Schor 2004 for some citations, also Ravitch and Vitieritti 2003). Other issues on which research now exists include the marketing of unrealistic body images and their connection to eating disorders, the adverse impact of media exposure on academic achievement, the promotion of early and risky sexual activity through highly sexualized products (fashion, music, media), and the continued media prevalence of harmful racial, gendered, and heteronormative stereotypes.

In recent years, a new literature on harmful commercial influences has emerged, which addresses whether the commercialization of childhood is contributing to materialism and the adoption of consumerist ideology. While advertising and marketing promote particular products, they also convey cultural messages. Common themes include the view that products lead to social validation (or being 'cool'), that they yield happiness and well-being, and that it is important to be rich. These consumerist or materialist values are prevalent throughout both advertising and the media programming that is increasingly intertwined with ads. Surveys of children and teens suggest that they are more materialistic than previous generations, that being rich is currently the most popular aspiration of American youth, and that youth have an unprecedented level of brand awareness and passion (for data on materialism among youth, see Schor 2004).

In the first study of its kind, I (Schor 2004) developed a model of 'consumer involvement' in which media (and advertising) exposure affects how psychically and, to a lesser extent, behaviorally, children become involved in consumer culture. (Scale items include aspirations for wealth, attitudes toward shopping, ads, col-

lecting, and designer labels, the importance of being cool, the intensity of social comparisons of money and goods, and the strength of ongoing desires for products.) The model finds that media exposure (measured as time spent with television and other media) predicts higher consumer involvement. Consumer involvement in turn predicts higher rates of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic complaints such as headache, stomachache and boredom, as well as lower self-esteem. The model was tested on 300 children aged 10-13 across the socio-economic spectrum, using a structural equation model that is designed to illuminate not merely correlations but causal relations. The interpretation of these results is that the general consumer environment, rather than merely individual harmful products, has become an important part of what is ailing America's children.

These findings are in line with a now very substantial literature on the adverse effects of materialist values on teens and adults. (Virtually no materialism research has been done with children, see Kasser 2002 for a survey of this research.) These studies, done by psychologists, find that materialism is highly correlated with a large number of negative outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, low 'life vitality', poor social functioning, psychosomatic medical conditions, risky behaviors in youth, and psychological disorders. To the extent that consumer culture is cultivating materialist values in children, this literature suggests that those values may well become a source of problems.

Conventional responses: self-regulation and ad bans

In response to the critics, industry has been vigilant about fending off government regulation and control. In cases where industry accepts the need to 'protect' children (e.g., alcohol, violence and other adult content), it has turned to 'self-regulation' and voluntary ratings schemes. Typically, these rely on parental oversight. (This is consistent with an over-arching industry position, which is that the responsibility for protecting children lies mainly with parents, not corporations or the government. I return to this point below.)

After years of experience with 'self-regulation' of alcohol and tobacco ads, and ratings systems for movies, television, and video games, it is clear that these efforts have not lived up to their ostensible goals of protecting children. Consider, for example, the guideline that alcohol advertising should not appear in programming where over 50 percent of the audience is underage. On the one hand, the alcohol companies have repeatedly violated this guideline, with little or no response from the FTC. But even if they were in compliance, the guideline is ineffective. Underage youth, defined as those aged 12-20, comprise just 15 percent of the population. As a result, only about 1 percent of the 14,359 cable and network programs surveyed by Nielsen Media Research are excluded under the 50 percent rule. Furthermore, many youth watch adult programming. For example, in 2001, 89 percent of youth were exposed to alcohol advertising (Center on

Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). As noted above, underage drinkers are more likely than legal age drinkers to be exposed to alcohol advertising. Clearly, the current guidelines are not a serious attempt to avoid exposing children to alcohol ads.

The media ratings systems have also been major failures (Bogart 2005). In general, the ratings systems are designed to inform parents about violent, sexual, profane, or other 'adult' content. In the case of movies, the very existence of these ratings fairly quickly led to increased market demand for higher-rated content (PG-13, parents strongly cautioned; some material may be inappropriate for children under 13, and R, restricted), which in turn led producers to artificially increase 'adult' content in order to obtain coveted PG-13 and R status. This is known in the literature as the 'forbidden fruit' syndrome (Grier 2001). An example of the perversity of the current system is what happened after the Clinton Administration, through the FTC, exposed the studios' widespread marketing of R-rated movies to children as young as nine (Federal Trade Commission 2000). Embarrassed, industry tightened up, and theaters began requiring parents to accompany kids to R movies. But quickly, adult content, including a disproportionate rise in smoking, migrated to the PG-13 category, where many films are now often equivalent to what R-rated films were before the FTC investigation (Bogart 2005, Kennedy 2002). More generally, the institution of a rating system has been accompanied by a significant increase in adult content, across a variety of metrics. By contrast, the television and video game ratings schemes have had less effect, but that is because adults are far less aware of them. The V-Chip has been difficult to understand, program, and use, and parental awareness is very low (Bogart 2005).

Failures like these, as well as industry's unwillingness to self-regulate in important areas such as junk food and violent and sexualized products has led to calls for outright bans on direct advertising to children under 12 (Linn 2004). There are precedents for such bans in some Western European countries, such as Sweden, which prohibits television advertising to children under 12, as does Quebec in Canada. Bans have some certain appeal, but with some exceptions, they also have significant drawbacks. The two most obvious are the legal and political feasibility of such regulation. With respect to the former, corporations are claiming First Amendment protection for direct targeting of children (see Ellison 2005). Of course, the courts have a long history of protecting children, and have been willing to restrict speech in various areas, but recent decisions (e.g., Lorrillard versus State of Massachusetts) are not encouraging. Prohibitions on junk food marketing may be more feasible to enact than comprehensive bans, at least if the case for harm and addictiveness of these foods can be made cogently. In any case, the likely outcome of such legal issues is complex, and beyond the scope of this article. However, even if the legal barriers were to be overcome, the political obstacles to enacting regulation are significant, a point I return to below.

There are also logistical and practical questions associated with advertising bans, especially given the size and power of the corporate entities that are involved. For example, the expansion of advertising beyond television, radio and print

venues raises the question of what media a ban would apply to. While television has been the major focus of advertising bans, and it is a relatively easy medium to regulate, even television bans are not without challenges. In Sweden, children are exposed to ads through the growing presence of unregulated satellite television. However, much of the logic of banning ads applies to all types of marketing, including Internet, place-based, and word of mouth. Given that companies are already active in these areas, it will be more difficult to police and enforce generalized bans than it would have been where these practices had not taken root. (And, as one word of mouth marketer noted recently, 'I can't begin to imagine how one can regulate an industry that thrives on its covert nature' (Vranica 2005). However, if bans apply to only some media (e.g., radio and television), the companies can easily shift their expenditures to other outlets, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the ban. The example of the tobacco industry's decision to pull television advertising decades ago shows that companies can continue to market, attract youthful new customers, and thrive without television. Would Big Food have a similar experience?

Bans also raise the possibility of negative unintended consequences. For example, if a ban on advertising to children were to be enacted, it would reduce the financing available for children's programming. If the quantity and quality of their programming declined, children would be likely to watch more adult media. This, in turn, would expose them to other types of inappropriate advertising and content. At the very least, government regulations on advertising need to be coupled with adequate financing mechanisms for quality children's programming.

My pessimism about advertising bans recognizes one important exception – schools. These are proving to be both popular and logistically feasible. Large majorities of parents and even nearly half of all marketers believe that advertising in schools is inappropriate (Schor 2004 on parents, Grimm 2004 on marketers). Schools are bounded environments with workable mechanisms of control, and advertising is a marginal revenue source. This makes the logistics of school bans easier than in other venues. In recent years, a significant number of states, cities and districts have enacted regulations on soft drinks and other junk food marketing in schools. The Seattle School District has gone farthest, outlawing all forms of advertising as well as the provision of junk food (defined in terms of percentages of added sugar, fat and salt). This may be a rare wedge issue that has the potential to galvanize children's advocates.

An alternative to ad bans is counter-advertising. This approach is not common in the traditional children's advocacy community, in part because of the longstanding belief by developmentalists that advertising is unfair, whatever its message. The counter-advertising strategy is also currently a major thrust of Big Food's response to its critics. For example, the first response of the Bush Administration to the obesity crisis was to give millions of taxpayers' dollars to the ad agencies and media corporations that represent Big Food in order to produce ads that touted the benefits of exercise. As the debate has evolved, the companies themselves are committing advertising dollars to nutritional messaging. Re-

cently, McDonald's announced a global ad campaign encouraging children to get the proper 'energy balance' (Sanders 2005). These developments have rightly led activists to be cautious about a solution that is premised on more advertising.

But the anodyne messages of Kraft and McDonald's about exercise and 'eating right' should not blind us to the possibilities for hard-hitting campaigns which tell the truth about the properties and effects of junk food, or even broader messages that cast doubt on the consumer culture itself. The graphic and powerful anti-tobacco ads of more than 30 years ago were widely credited for leading the tobacco companies to withdraw from television, and the equally powerful ads of the Truth campaign are credited with reducing youth smoking. (Research by the National Bureau of Economic Research finds that industry anti-smoking campaigns are associated with either no change or an increased likelihood of smoking, but that government sponsored campaigns significantly reduce smoking, Saffer and Choulapka 1999.)

The counter-advertising approach comes from theories of culture in a post-modern age (see for example, Baudrillard 1994, Lasn 1999). Because media and advertising have become so dominant in the construction of everyday life, especially for youth, post-modern theory argues that it is only through media and advertising that people can be reached. However, only some counter-advertising is effective. Messages must either be emotionally powerful and hard-hitting enough to pierce the zone of complacency about consumer culture that is characteristic of everyday life. Or they must be humorous and undermine the legitimacy of ordinary advertising, as in the genre of 'sub-vertising' or 'spoof ads' practiced by Adbusters.

To date, this strategy has been stymied by the fact that truly powerful anti-ad messaging is difficult to get on the airwaves and almost impossible to sustain. The Truth campaign was ended quickly. The networks have repeatedly refused to show Adbusters anti-consumerist ads, in part on grounds that they will offend their advertisers. Surprisingly, there are no First Amendment rights for groups that want to promote an anti-consumerist message. Media outlets are corporate entities that depend on other corporate entities to earn profits, and they have historically resisted messages that jeopardize that relationship.

The problem of corporate power and the new realities of public policy

The drawbacks of the standard responses to the problem are ultimately due to the larger economic and political environment in which they are being proposed. Today, the bulk of advertising to children is done by a small number of multi-billion dollar corporations. In many of the major product categories, the market is dominated by a small number of companies, sometimes only two. In soft drinks, it is Coca-Cola and Pepsico, in toys Mattel and Hasbro, in fast food McDonald's

and Burger King, in candy Mars and Hershey. In beer, Anheuser-Busch and Miller dominate. In food there are more than two, but few – Kraft (Phillip Morris), Nabisco (RJR), General Foods, Pepsico, Unilever and Nestle are major players. Among media companies, rapid consolidation has occurred, and children's media is dominated by Viacom, Disney, Fox, and Time Warner. Indeed, it is estimated that five media corporations now control the majority of U.S. media outlets (Bagdikian 2004). The annual revenue streams of these companies are enormous – Viacom, for example, has reported annual revenues exceeding $25 billion; last year Coca-Cola earned just under $22 billion. The companies themselves are valued at hundreds of billions of dollars.

These corporations not only have enormous economic power, but their political influence has never been greater. They have funneled unprecedented sums of money to political parties and officials. For example, between 1995 and 2002, Phillip Morris gave more than $9 million dollars to the two political parties, with the bulk ($7.8 million) going to the Republicans. Time Warner gave more than $4 million, Disney $3.6 million, and the U.S. Sugar Corporation gave $2.3 million (Schor 2004). For three decades, corporate power and influence have been expanding.

The power wielded by these corporations is evident in many ways, from their ability to eliminate competitors to their ability to mobilize state power in their interest. Consider developments relating to food. In 2005, the expert panel advising the government on revisions to federal nutrition guidelines, a majority of whom had strong links to industry, proposed guidelines that made no mention of limiting sugar consumption, despite its role in rising obesity. While sugar did eventually appear in the final guidelines, after protests by activists, it is buried inside the report under carbohydrates (see OMB Watch 2004). The sugar industry has also bullied the WHO with threats that their anti-obesity initiative would result in a withdrawal of U.S. funds to the industry. Agriculture and food lobbies have pushed through food disparagement laws in twelve states where they are politically powerful. Oprah Winfrey was sued by a group of Texas cattlemen under their 'veggie libel law' after she did a show on Mad Cow Disease. Biotech giant Monsanto not only used its clout to have recombinant bovine growth hormone approved by the Food and Drug Administratio, despite the fact that it is banned in every other industrialized country for its links to cancer and early puberty, but the company has pressured the United States Department of Agriculture to prevent farmers from informing consumers that they do not use the hormone (Mohl 2003, Schor 2004). In schools, the soft drink companies have demanded exclusive access. The companies tout 'nutrition education' as the solution to poor diets and obesity, but have fiercely resisted government attempts to require labeling on their products. (For more on the political clout of Big Food, see Nestle 2002, Schor 2004.)

Recent actions of the FTC also illustrate the growing reach of corporate power. In early 2005, the FTC dismissed Commercial Alert's petition to require disclosure of product placements in television. The rationale for the petition was that

product placement is a form of advertising, about which consumers have the right to be informed. The FTC's refusal to act not only violates its longstanding view that advertising should not be deceptive, but also that ads to children should be clearly marked and identifiable as such. A second example is the failure of the FTC to take action against alcohol companies in the face of evidence that they have failed to comply even with their own voluntary guidelines (Schor 2004). Meanwhile, at the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), the agency only belatedly acted on the fact that major networks have routinely been in violation of rules regulating the maximal amount of ad time per hour.

If the earlier arguments about harms are correct, then children's enhanced market clout has earned them a powerful set of enemies. And as childhood becomes more completely commercialized, or more accurately, corporatized, those harms are likely to grow. Indeed, I argue a strong version of this point. *The unchecked growth of corporate power, and its fusion with state power, has led to a situation in which children's interests and well-being cannot be adequately ensured.* What children eat, the programming they watch, the toys they play with, the curriculums they learn in schools, perhaps the name of their school gymnasium (or school), and even the books they read (M&Ms or Cheerios counting book) are provided by companies whose commitment to their welfare is minimal or absent. Furthermore, even corporations whose products are relatively benign are deeply and profoundly entwined through licensing, co-branding, and other financial ties with companies whose products are not (e.g., Big Food). Political developments since 2000, and since November 2004 especially, have made children more vulnerable. Public policy to protect children, which for decades has been the basis of society's response to problems generated in the market, will not be forthcoming. This is the new reality that children's advocates must confront.

Corporate and state abdication of responsibility is rationalized on the grounds that responsibility for adverse child outcomes (e.g., obesity, psychological disorders) lies with parents. Both the ad agencies and their client companies take this point of view. The corporation's mandate is to make money, the government's is to help them do so. While sometimes corporations act in superficially pro-social ways which might seem to indicate responsibility (e.g., funding exercise programs or positive nutritional messages), they are usually quite open about the fact that they are acting to forestall regulatory action, and avoid adverse publicity, rather than because they are willing to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. However, the industry position relies on an excessively 'heroic' view of parents, and their ability to prevail against the corporate giants. Indeed, parents are losing control over their children's environments in profound ways. This is due to a number of factors, including the concerted attempts of the corporations to wrest that control. At the core of the corporate strategy is the attempt to undermine parental authority, through direct targeting of children, so-called 'nag factor' marketing, deliberate anti-parent messages, and infiltration of parent-free environments such as schools. (See Nader 1996 and Schor 2004 for details on the

deliberate undermining of parental authority.) These activities are the components of the 'transformation of family dynamics' discussed above and they reveal that industry's stance is self-serving and hypocritical.

Economic pressures, such as the need for households to work many more hours to support themselves have also undermined parental control. Between 1979 and 2000, the average married couple aged 25-54 with children added 388 hours of work to their annual schedule (Mishel et al. 2003, Table 1.27, p. 100). Furthermore, the parental responsibility position does not protect the millions of children whose parents are either unable or unwilling to shield them from corporate-induced harms. Does the state not have a responsibility to those children? It acknowledges its role when parents fail to prevent or engage in violence, neglect and sexual abuse, situations that rarely directly involve a corporate role. The refusal to address corporate-induced harms is inconsistent, and a powerful example of corporate power.

Where does this leave us? Conventional remedies such as ad bans may be heuristically useful to build support for more broad-reaching measures. But activists need to be clear about the scope of the problem and the profound structural changes that are necessary. I would argue that doing well, indeed, even the lesser goal of doing right by children now requires a direct challenge to the status, legitimacy and power of the corporations that sell to them. The liberal assumption that the harms of the market can be mitigated by state policy is no longer tenable. There is ample evidence that these harms are not being addressed, nor will they be any time soon. Children's advocates who have failed to confront industry need to re-think their strategies. The National PTA's (Parent Teacher Association) acceptance of a large donation from Coca-Cola and putting Coke's top lobbyist on its board, and the Pediatric Dental Association's acceptance of money from Coca-Cola are examples of actions which will make these organizations part of the problem, rather than part of the solution (Burros 2003). But even advocacy organizations that are not in danger of being corrupted by corporate monies need to recognize that the policy environment has shifted dramatically, and take on the power of the companies directly.

There is already a nascent movement against corporate power, which includes groups trying to revoke corporate charters, Nader-connected entities such as Commercial Alert, and elements of the global social justice movement such as the International Forum on Globalization. For those of us concerned about children, it is time to join it. It is also important not to legitimate the strategies the junk food companies have been pursuing to deflect attention and blame, but to ratchet up the pressure on them. One way is to expose the ties between the pariah corporations (tobacco companies) and those that still enjoy considerable public good will (packaged goods). As academics, we should refuse to take corporate monies for our research and oppose the rapid corporatization of the university. It is time to Just say no to developments such as junk food funded chairs (e.g., Kentucky Fried Chicken Professorship of marketing), and exclusive soft drink contracts. And we should do so explicitly on grounds of rolling back corporate

power and influence. Some of the groups active on this issue have had success organizing market-based campaigns against major corporations (see, for example, commercialalert.org, newdream.org, dadsanddaughters.org and commercialfreechildhood.org). The corporations are exquisitely sensitive to consumer pressure and bad public relations, which provides opportunities for activism.

And what of the political landscape of this issue? Clearly, the Bush Administration, the Republican Congress, and the Republican Party represent corporate interests and are using the state to further those interests. But this is not a simple Republican-Democrat divide. While some Democrats have been stalwart advocates of children (Kennedy and Harkin has been particularly good on these issues), many are taking money from the corporations who are the problem. The Democratic Leadership Council, which has dominated the Democratic Party since the beginning of the Clinton Administration, is as tied to corporate cash and influence as is the Republican Party. The Clinton Administration did virtually nothing to prevent corporate induced harms to children. In a recent speech that addressed how children are affected media and marketing, Hillary Clinton called for industry guidelines, rather than government action, a stance for which she drew praise from an ad industry spokesman (Teinowitz 2005). While Democrats may ultimately prove to be allies, it will only be if the grass-roots activism awakened in the 2004 election translates into a substantial shift away from corporate influence within the party.

Intriguingly, religious and social conservatives have been allies on some of these issues. James Dodson and Phyllis Schafly have participated in a number of anti-commericalism efforts. Conservative religious groups have been active against Channel One. The right wing family values movement has long criticized Hollywood for content (on issues connected to sex and profanity); it is also unhappy about negative depictions of parents, and marketers' successes in undermining parental authority. Richard Shelby, Republican of Alabama, co-sponsored a children's privacy act with Christopher Dodd that passed in 2000. Substantively, there is considerable common ground between the right and the left here. However, since Bush took office in 2000, the Administration has consolidated control over these groups, and the space for joint action has narrowed. The corporate agenda is once taking precedence over the social one, which means that religious conservatives' concerns will be pushed aside. Whether the grassroots of these movements understand that shift and are willing to respond to it remains to be seen, however, that seems unlikely.

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Harmful to Children?*

Drawing Conclusions from Empirical Research on Media Effects

Sonia Livingstone & Andrea Millwood Hargrave

What harm and offence do the media cause?

Teenage boys shooting classmates, fears of increasing xenophobia, rising levels of obesity or appalling murders with sexual elements are commonly linked back to the (mis)use of particular types of media content, be they delivered by film, television, the internet, advertising or even print. That is the public face of the moral panic about media influence. The academic and policy debates that parallel, and respond, to public concerns, focus on the evidence for media harm, particularly that which may be caused to children through viewing inappropriate, especially violent, media content.

Policy makers and regulators are seeking to understand the changing parameters of the possible given the growing convergence of media delivery platforms which offer faster, easier access to material that was hitherto difficult to find. In this process, the concepts of 'harm' and 'offence' are gaining prominence. The *2003 Communications Act* changed the broadcasting standards debate in the UK by moving from the previously held concepts of 'good taste and decency' to offering 'adequate protection... from the inclusion of offensive and harmful material'. These concepts echo those in the European Union's *Television without Frontiers Directive*, currently being debated in a revised form. Although the debate continues to centre on the exposure of minors to potentially harmful or offensive material, there are other sensibilities to be considered, such as offence or harm caused to those from minority groups.

While harmful and offensive material is, in principle, distinguished from that which is illegal (obscenity, child abuse images, incitement to racial hatred, etc), it is not easy to define the boundaries in a robust and consensual fashion. What content is considered acceptable by today's standards, norms and values, and by whom? Borderline and unacceptable material may include a range of contents, most prominently though not exclusively 'adult content' of various kinds, and these

may lead to considerable public concern. While norms of taste and decency can be tracked with some reliability through standard opinion measurement techniques, methods for assessing harm are much more contested and difficult. Arguably too, the research evidence – of which there is a huge amount – is concentrated on a media environment and a regulatory regime that is now rapidly changing, rendering the evidence potentially out of date as regards its usefulness in policy formation.

With the arrival of newer media, particularly the internet (though also digital television, mobile phones, etc.), it is not clear how far the public recognises or feels empowered to respond to the expanding array of content on offer. It is likely that these newer, more interactive media pose a challenge not only to regulators but also to ordinary families. Can they apply familiar domestic practices of regulation and restriction to newer media? What range of concerns do people have regarding new media forms and contents? What do they need to know about whether or not the greatly-expanded range of contents now available to children have been shown to cause harm?

Policy debates attempt to balance the often-conflicting concerns over possible harms against other concerns, most notably, civil liberties and freedom of speech, economic competition, children's rights to exploration and privacy, and parents' capacities or otherwise to regulate their children's media use. Difficult issues arise. How do we draw the line between the offensive and the harmful? Is it a matter of particular kinds of contents, particular forms of media, particular groups of children? What kinds of harms, if any, have received robust empirical support? What is the evidence for offence across diverse sectors of the population?

It was to explore these questions – to give industry, the regulators and, indeed, the public a clear view of the evidence – that we conducted a critical literature review regarding harm and offence across media forms (Millwood Hargrave & Livingstone, 2006). Recent research on television, radio, music, press, film, games, internet, telephony, advertising, as well as the regulation associated with each of these, was evaluated in order to assess the potential for harm and offence in media content, and to identify where future empirical research is needed.[1]

In the present article, we offer a brief overview of findings for each medium in turn, and then present our conclusions. The volume on which this article draws provides a full discussion of the many research findings summarised here, including an extensive and up to date bibliography. There, we distinguish theories of short-term and long-term effects, direct and indirect effects, and harm and offence. We also review the advantages and disadvantages of the main research methods in use (experiments, surveys, qualitative social research), noting the ethical and political issues that structure the field of research and stressing the value of integrating or comparing qualitative and quantitative research findings.

A summary of findings from the research literature

Television

Significant research effort has been expended on this ubiquitous and accessible medium, and many studies of other media are based on those from television. There is also a body of research that examines the benefits of exposure to television content but this is not considered here unless it also refers to a consideration of harm and offence. Methodologically, one must accept that much of the research evidence is flawed. Moreover, much of it derives from a different cultural and regulatory environment (most of the research was conducted in the US). However, it is important to evaluate what the findings are, focusing on those studies that have minimised the methodological and other difficulties so as to understand the indications of influence and effect that they provide.

The evidence suggests that, under certain circumstances, television can negatively influence attitudes in some areas, including those which may affect society (through the creation of prejudice) and those which may affect the individual (by making them unduly fearful, for example). Thus, it seems that television plays a part in contributing to stereotypes, fear of crime and other reality-defining effects, although it remains unclear what other social influences also play a role, or how important television is by comparison with these other factors.

The primary subjects of research have been children and young people, as they are thought to be most vulnerable to negative influences which may, in turn affect long-term attitudes or behaviour. However, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that there are also vulnerable groups of adults who may be negatively affected by certain types of media content; for example, people with particular personality disorders.

Many of the studies use experimental methods, and have been subject to considerable criticism. They demonstrate short-term effects on attitudes and behaviours, among a particular research sample (e.g. college students) and under particular conditions. Too little of the research evidence examines the viewing of age-appropriate material, although a number of studies use content popular among the target group being examined. Other studies use content analysis techniques to examine the nature of content, making assumptions about the way in which the images might be received. In the UK and elsewhere, qualitative and social research techniques show it is valuable to talk to audience groups to understand their reasoning and reactions to content they view.

The review of research showed the importance to the audience of certain variables in making sense of or justifying a portrayed act. These include the context within which the act is set and the importance of identification and empathy with the protagonists. Transmission time remains an important variable within audience attitudes towards current television content, with established conventions designed to reduce the potential for offence. Much of the research evidence shows that most audiences are generally able to distinguish fact from fiction. The

evidence also suggests that the viewing of fictional content does not diminish the distress that may be caused by violence in real-life.

There are clear audience differences based on gender (in particular, boys seem to be more influenced by violent content) and age; but also family settings, a predisposition for a particular programme genre, the way in which the content is used and other such variables all appear to play a part in the way content is viewed and assimilated. Much of the research has been less equivocal in demonstrating evidence for areas of offence caused (such as with regard to offensive language, violence or the depiction of sexual activity) in comparison with harm, and contextual and demographic variables are seen particularly to affect the levels of offence felt.

Radio

Despite being the background to so many people's lives, little recent research on radio was found in relation to questions of harm. Such concern as does arise is concentrated particularly on talk shows and similar programmes based on call-ins or user-generated content, and in relation to the lyrics of popular music. Research shows that radio is found to be offensive on occasion by a substantial minority of the audience – particularly in relation to the treatment of callers by presenters, offensive language and racism.

Music

There is little research which examines harm and offence in relation to music. The research that exists is mainly content analytic rather than based on audience reactions, except for occasional opinion surveys, and is mainly focused on popular music lyrics. These studies reveal consistent messages in music lyrics that may be harmful and are that considered offensive by some – including messages promoting violence among boys/men, homophobic messages, or those encouraging early sexuality among young girls/women. Some argue that these are particularly damaging for ethnic minority audiences. There is a small body of experimental evidence suggesting that, as for other media, these messages can negatively influence the attitudes or emotions of their audience.

Print

The history of the print media and the precedents set in terms of policy making have helped frame debates about other media and have also provided a framework for the way in which much media content is regulated. Research suggests the print media, especially the press, can frame public discourse, providing important civil information. The potential complicity of the media in misinformation is identified as problematic in many studies. Such harm as may result not only affects the individual but also has broader consequences for society. How-

ever, the importance of the public or private nature of different types of print media (e.g. bill boards versus magazines) has not been widely researched, although the evidence suggests that how strongly one is affected by print content is closely linked with this distinction.

Film, video and DVD

The empirical research evidence for harm and offence in relation to film has been concerned primarily with 'adult' or relatively extreme sexual and violent content, such material being more available, though restricted by age, on film and video than – at present – on television. Although concerns are consistently raised regarding the reality-defining (McQuail, 1987) or stereotyping effects of film, we found little recent research on this. Evidence for emotional responses to film, particularly fear, exists and is relatively uncontentious, though whether this constitutes longer-term harm is more difficult to determine given the absence of longitudinal research studies.

Considerable attention has been paid to pornography, focusing variously on harm to those involved in production, to male consumers, to children, and to society (especially, attitudes towards women) more generally. The evidence for harm to men viewing non-violent (or consensual) pornography remains inconclusive or absent. However, the evidence for harm from viewing violent (non-consensual) pornography is rather stronger, resulting in more negative or aggressive attitudes and behaviours towards women as well as supporting the desire to watch more extreme content.

The evidence that viewing pornography harms children remains scarce, given ethical restrictions on the research, though many experts believe it to be harmful. Other vulnerable groups have been researched, however, with some evidence that the harmful effects of violent content especially are greater for those who are already aggressive, for children with behaviour disorders, for young offenders with a history of domestic violence and – for pornographic content – among sexual offenders.

Public attitudes to film content are, generally, more tolerant than for television. This is partly because the public is aware, and supportive of, current levels of regulation in film, and partly because people understand the decision process behind choosing to watch violent or sexual content. Tolerance is lowest (or offence is greatest) for the portrayal of sexual violence. Studies of audience interpretation of potentially harmful or offensive content in film throw some light on the complex judgements made by the public in this area. Nonetheless, as the conditions for viewing film – both at home and in the cinema – are changing, too little is known regarding the conditions under which people, especially children, may gain access to different kinds of potentially harmful content.

Games

Although research on electronic games is relatively new, it is strongly polarised between the psychological/experimental approach that argues that electronic games have harmful effects, and the cultural/qualitative approach that tends to defend games as merely entertaining, even beneficial on occasion.

In the psychological/effects approach, a growing body of research is accumulating which suggests harmful effects, especially for games with violent content, especially on the boys or men who play them. However, this research remains contested in terms of how far it can be applied to aggressive situations in everyday life. It also remains unclear how much this evidence concerns media violence in general and how much it is video-game specific. One empirical comparison across research studies found that the effect of violent video games on aggression is smaller than that found for television violence. However, more research is required to compare the effects of, for example, violent television and video games. On the one hand, it has been argued that television imagery has hitherto been more graphic/realistic and hence more influential (although technical advances in video game technology are allowing them to 'catch up'). On the other hand, it has been argued that video games require a more involved and attentive style of engagement – a 'first person' rather than a 'third person' experience – which may make games more harmful.

Internet

The widespread accessibility of the internet, along with its affordability, anonymity and convenience, is seen by many to increase the likelihood of media harm and offence. While some argue that there is little new about online content, familiar contents merely having moved online, most disagree, expressing concern about the accessibility of more extreme forms of content that are, potentially, harmful and offensive.

The lack of clear definitions of levels or types of pornography, violence, etc on the internet, where the range is considerable, impedes research, as do (necessarily) the ethical restrictions on researching the potentially harmful effects of online content, especially but not only on children. As many defend online pornography as suggest it to be harmful. There is a growing body of research – though still small – suggesting such content to be particularly harmful for vulnerable groups, specifically people who are sexually compulsive and/or sexual abusers.

For children, despite the lack of evidence (and the lack of research) on harm, there is a growing body of national and international research on children's distress when they accidentally come across online pornography and other unwelcome content. There is also a growing literature on the potentially harmful consequences of user-generated contact. This includes everything from the school or workplace bully to the grooming of children by paedophiles. It has become evident that many children and adults experience some risky contact.

Further, research shows that when people – adults and children – receive hostile, bullying or hateful messages, they are generally ill-equipped to respond appropriately or to cope with the emotional upset this causes. Similarly, parents are unclear how they can know about, or intervene in, risky behaviours undertaken – deliberately or inadvertently – by their children. As for pornographic content, the consequences of exposure seem to be more harmful for those who are already vulnerable. People's responses to 'hateful' content tend to be more tolerant, on the grounds of freedom of expression, though they find it offensive. Little as yet is known of how the targeted groups (mainly, ethnic minorities) respond.

In general, the case for further research seems clear, firstly in relation to the characteristics of vulnerable groups (including strategies for intervention) and secondly in relation to the ways in which the internet seems to support or facilitate certain kinds of harmful peer-to-peer activity.

Mobile telephony

There is growing evidence that mobile telephony may cause harm through the creation of fear and humiliation by bullying, for example. Although it is evident that new communication technologies are being incorporated into practices of bullying, harassment and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication, it is not yet clear that these technologies are responsible for an increase in the incidence of such practices.

There is little substantive academic evidence for the potential risk of harm or offence caused through access to the professionally-produced content market for mobiles, although inferences are being made about such possible effects from other media. It is questionable whether mobile technologies are used in the same way as other fixed media, particularly because they have rapidly become personal and private forms of communication. This is an area where the lack of research evidence is especially felt.

Advertising

There is a moderate body of evidence pointing to modest effects of both intentional (i.e. product-promoting) and incidental (i.e. product context) advertising messages. This suggests that advertising has some influence on product choice, and that the nature of its portrayals has some influence on the attitudes and beliefs of its audience. Specifically, a range of reality-defining effects have been examined in relation to the stereotyping of population segments and, most recently, in relation to obesity and other products with health consequences. Research tends to show modest evidence for harmful effects of advertising, particularly on children, although this remains contested. Since the influence of advertising is not large, according to the evidence, research is needed to determine what other factors also influence these harmful outcomes (stereotyping, obesity, smoking, etc).

This question of intent has implications for media literacy. In relation to advertising, the intent to persuade is generally considered acceptable provided the public recognises this intent. In relation to children, considerable research exists on the development of 'advertising literacy' with age, though it has not been clearly shown that more media literate, or advertising literate, consumers are less affected by advertising (or other media), nor that interventions designed to increase literacy have the effect of reducing media harm (Livingstone & Helsper, in press). Little is yet known of how all audiences – adults as well as children – recognise advertising, sponsorship, product placement etc in relation to the new media environment. There is also a body of research linking advertising to offence. This research reveals the considerable cultural variation, both within and across cultures, in what content is found offensive and by whom.

Drawing conclusions

Producing the above summaries has been more difficult that producing the lengthy account of the research on which these are based because the body of research on media harm (less so for offence) has long been subject to considerable contestation on theoretical, political and, particularly, methodological grounds. There can be, therefore, no uncontentious summary of research findings, nor will there be any simple answer to the question of media harm nor any definitive empirical demonstration or 'proof'. Consequently, our strategy in the review was been to incorporate, and balance against each other, the different kinds of findings, based on different methods (from experiments, surveys and qualitative social research) and different perspectives on the debate over media harm and offence, while accepting the different cultural and regulatory perspectives from which they derive. Further, though we do consider that more evidence is needed, especially for new media and for vulnerable groups, we note that the precautionary principle suggests that judgements may be reached assuming probable influence rather than postponing regulatory decisions to await the outcome of further research. On this basis, our conclusions are as follows.

Distinguishing harm and offence

In policy discussions, 'harm and offence' is often used as a single phrase. It is not clear, however, just what the difference between them is taken to be, nor how they each relates to legal and regulatory frameworks. Similarly, harm and offence are often not clearly distinguished in terms of research evidence. Indeed, other than in relation to legal or philosophical discussions of the terms as used in regulation, we have not found these terms used very much at all in the academic literature.

While there is a large literature on harm (usually labelled 'media effects'), we have found little academic research on offence. Our assumption is that this is because, on the one hand, experimental researchers are unimpressed by the self-report methods used, necessarily, to assess offence (i.e. they would identify problems of reliability), while on the other hand, cultural researchers fear that research on offence opens the door to a culture of censorship. Nor have we found any theory relating to 'offence' (though there are many theories of media influence), this also helping to explain the lack of research on offence.

From a regulatory or industry point of view, however, 'offence' provides a route to acknowledging and responding to audiences' or users' concerns about media content precisely without framing this as 'harm'. These bodies have, therefore, conducted a fair body of research, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, charting the extent and focus of 'offence' among the public, including some longitudinal tracking studies.

It follows that the distinction between harm and offence (or their relation to taste and decency) is not always clear. However, we suggest that harm is widely (though not necessarily) conceived in objective terms; harm, it seems, is taken to be observable by others (irrespective of whether harm is acknowledged by the individual concerned), and hence as measurable in a reliable fashion. By contrast, offence is widely (though not necessarily) conceived in subjective terms; offence, it seems, is taken to be that experienced by and reported on by the individual, and hence is difficult to measure reliably (and, equally, difficult to deny in the face of claimed offence).[2]

The terms vary in other ways. It may be argued that media harm can affect both the media user themselves and others around them. Harm may last for a short time or longer (though the evidence is largely lacking for the long-term effects generally hypothesised by media effects theories). The risk of harm may apply at the level of the individual, group or society. Offence, by contrast, may be thought to affect only the media user themselves (or, perhaps, group of individuals), and it is assumed to apply only in the moment (i.e. offence is not taken to last a long time, though it may be remembered). One implication is that it is easier potentially to demonstrate offence than harm, harm setting a high threshold in terms of evidence. Another is that the risk of harm merits greater attempts at prevention than does offence. A third is that the market may be assumed to address offence (since it damages the brand) while public intervention may be additionally required to prevent harm.

Each of these implications and assumptions can, of course, be contested: our point here is that the terms 'harm' and 'offence', although widely used, have attracted surprisingly little discussion or clarification. Interestingly, harm and offence, are generally discussed differently in relation to children and adults. Harm is assumed to vary by vulnerability, being greater for children and for vulnerable adults. Considerable research attention has, therefore, gone into identifying the risk factors for harm, and most research is concentrated on the at-risk groups (typically, children). By contrast, offence is not seen as related to vulnerability.

Older people and women are generally shown to find more media content offensive; yet this is not apparently related to vulnerability except insofar as differential levels of media literacy may make it harder for these groups to control their exposure to certain contents. Notably, there is little research on whether the media offend (rather than harm) children, and only recently is there some research on the response of marginal or low-status groups (adults and children) to the at times negative representations of them in the media (and whether this concerns harm or offence is unclear). This results in some inconsistencies when relating research findings to regulation: for example, if a child is upset by viewing violence, this is taken as evidence of harm; if an adult is upset by the same image, this is likely to be seen as offence.

Limitations of the evidence base

This review has noted a range of theoretical, methodological and political difficulties in researching the possible harm and offence in relation to media content. In many respects, the evidence base is patchy and inconsistent. Many questions remain difficult to research. Particularly, research can only offer evidence towards a judgement based on the balance of probabilities rather than on irrefutable proof.

Persistent questions remain regarding how far the largely American findings in the published academic literature may be applicable to the situation in any other country, given differences in culture, in regulatory context, in the media content available (and researched). Also, doubts persist regarding how far the largely experimental research findings may be applicable to ordinary contexts of media use, given the often unnatural circumstances in which experiments expose people to media content and the ways in which they tend to measure the effects of such exposure; similarly, questions remain as to how correlational evidence (from surveys) relates to causal claims regarding media effects, for few studies eliminate the possibility of alternative explanations.

One must also ask how far the largely television-based research may be applicable to other, especially newer media, given the likelihood that different expectations, knowledge and concerns attach to different kinds of media and communication technology. Other problems also exist. For example, in certain domains (e.g. rap music lyrics or gender stereotyping in advertising), the main body of evidence is based on content analyses; yet qualitative social research consistently shows that different people (e.g. children vs. adults, fans of a genre vs. those who only occasionally view) do not interpret content in the same way, making it risky to draw conclusions about effects from content analysis.

Definitions of media-related harm

A wide range of definitions of harm are suggested in the research literature (McQuail & Windahl, 1993), including:

- Changed attitudes or beliefs affecting the individual (e.g. fear of crime) or society (e.g. stereotypes of the elderly)
- Changed behaviours, particularly the increased propensity to harm others (e.g. aggressive behaviour, this damaging both the perpetrator and his/her possible victims) or for self-harm (e.g. anorexia, obesity, suicide)
- Emotional responses, affecting both self and others, including fear, upset and hate which may lead to harm if they are long-term in effect. Such responses may, arguably, be more appropriately regarded instead as 'offence'.

Of these, we suggest that more attention is often paid to the first two than to the third, yet there are, interestingly, many studies showing that the media can have negative emotional consequences, often but not only in the short-term. It is clear that this is recognised in many policy-related decisions and we recommend that greater consideration is given to emotional responses in future research and policy regarding harm and offence.

Much of the debate about media harms starts from the argument that the negative influence on an individual will, in turn, create harm to society. This view of an inter-relationship between influences and effects has been taken up by the popular media – in reporting crimes, for example, which are linked to supposed (though not always established) media exposure. Those harms that are caused to the individual through the perpetuation of unfair or stereotypical depictions are not much publicly discussed (though they are recognised both in the research literature and in content producers' Codes of Practice. We suggest it would be valuable to distinguish risk of harm to the individual exposed to media content, risk of harm to other people and, third, risk of harm to society in general.

Nevertheless it should be accepted that there may be inter-relationships between these possible harms. For example, to the extent that watching television violence encourages aggressive behaviour among boys, this risks, first, harm to those particular boys, second, harm to those against whom they might be aggressive (e.g. peers in the playground) and, third, harm to society (as aggression, and fear of aggression become more widespread). However, the processes involved, the consequences, and the potential for intervention differ for each kind of harm.

We also note that, among regulators and interest groups there is a call for care in the portrayal of violence or sex, especially to young people (as in the debate over in/appropriate role models for example). Interestingly, a children's rights perspective is beginning to be asserted to complement or counter the view of children as potential aggressors in society; this perspective has become particularly salient in relation to online and mobile media, including the new problem of varieties of user-generated or peer-to-peer harms (Finkelhor & Hashima, 2001).

There are other media-related social harms that are recognised through the regulatory process. For example, the regulation requiring the principal broadcasters in the UK to present balanced and impartial news programming is based on a notion that the audience must be fairly informed so as to make their own judge-

ments. There is evidence, however, particularly from the USA, that the news media negatively affect public opinion (e.g. encouraging a fear of crime by over-representing violent crime), and little is known yet of the potential effects of online or alternative sources of news (for example, research is needed into the effects of misleading or unreliable health care information).

A risk-based approach

When television first arrived in American homes, the founding father of media effects research declared:

> ... for some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful. For some children under the same conditions, or for the same children under other conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children, under most conditions, most television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial (Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961: 11).

We suggest that, after a vast amount of further research findings, on the basis of 'a balance of probabilities', this remains a fair summary of the evidence, even if much of that evidence has been collected under a differently regulated media environment. Hence, this review has argued that the search for simple and direct causal effects of the media is, for the most part, not appropriate. Rather, this should be replaced by an approach that seeks to identify the range of factors that directly, and indirectly through interactions with each other, combine to explain particular social phenomena. As research shows, each social problem of concern (e.g. aggression, prejudice, obesity, bullying, etc) is associated with a distinct and complex array of putative causes.

The task for those concerned with media harm and offence is to identify and contextualise the role of the media within that array. The result will be a more complex explanation of what are, undoubtedly, complex social problems. This should, in turn, permit a balanced judgement of the role played by the media on a case by case basis. In some cases, this may reduce the focus on the media – for example, by bringing into view the many other factors that account for present levels of aggression in society. In other cases, it may increase the focus on the media – for example, in understanding the role played potentially by the internet in facilitating paedophiles' sexual interest in and access to children.

A risk-based approach seeks to take into account a wide range of relevant factors, as these establish the conditions under which any particular factor (such as media exposure) operates. Many such factors are culturally-specific, including national traditions of content regulation, approaches to parenting, and moral frames for judging content or determining offence. In addition to such factors, and in addition to the important differences across the media and hence across media access conditions, we have also sought to stress that content does not affect all audiences equally. Research suggests that there can be greater negative influences

on those who are 'vulnerable'. No standard academic definition of 'vulnerability' exists, but research findings do suggest that vulnerable audiences/users may include children and young people, especially boys, together with a range of other groups among the adult population (including psychologically disturbed individuals, people who are depressed, sexual offenders, young offenders, etc).

Findings reviewed on a case-by-case basis

As indicated in the medium-by-medium review undertaken in each chapter, the evidence points to a range of conclusions depending on the social problem at stake.

For example, there is a sizeable body of evidence that suggests that televised portrayals of aggression can, under certain circumstances, negatively influence the attitudes and behaviours of children, especially boys. Similar findings exist as regards aggressive content in film, video/DVD and electronic games, though the body of research evidence is somewhat smaller. These media are, at present, all highly regulated in most developed countries through labelling and age-restrictions (or scheduling restrictions in the case of television). It seems likely that the risk of harm will be greater when children view content inappropriate for their age (i.e. intended for those older than them), though research does not always adequately link the effects of exposure to the specific nature or age-appropriateness of the content. However, we suggest that viewing is not always to age-appropriate material and these varying factors should be taken into account when 'reading' the research.

At stake is the likelihood of risk rather than of inevitable harm, for, as the research also shows, not all in the audience are affected equally and many, it appears, are not affected at all. Broadcasters, regulators and parents must continue to make balanced judgements of the likely risk to some children, bearing in mind the conditions of access (e.g. scheduling, intended audience, narrative context) and conditions of mediation (e.g. role of parental discussion of content or restrictions on access).

Taking a different case, we note that there is mounting evidence that internet-based and mobile communication technologies are being incorporated into practices of bullying, harassment and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication. However, it is not yet clear that these technologies are responsible for an increase in the incidence of such practices. This is partly because of a lack of sound data from, say, ten years ago, against which to compare present findings. However, research on the conditions of access points to a relative convenience and ease of use which, combined with highly personalised, private and often anonymous conditions under which these technologies are used, suggests that cyber-bullying, cyber-harassment, etc may introduce new kinds of problems for users, as well as exacerbating old ones. In some ways, it seems, online and offline communication work differently; but in key ways also, they work together. Thus, offline bullying or harassment can be continued or extended online, rather than

remaining entirely distinct. Given the difficulties faced by parents in understanding how to manage the conditions of access to these forms of content and contact, the implications for regulation should be judged in terms of balancing the responsibility across the industry, regulators, parents and children for controlling access and exposure.

For some putative harms, the evidence is generally lacking. For example, despite widespread public concern over the exposure of children to adult or pornographic images, there remains little evidence that such exposure has harmful effects, with the notable exception of material that combines sexual and violent content. This lack of evidence partly reflects the methodological limitations of the evidence (one cannot ethically expose children to certain images, there is no agreed definition of pornography, it is difficult to measure long-term psychological disturbance, etc). But it may also suggest that, at least in our present largely regulated content environment, the images available to children are not harmful, though they may be offensive or even briefly disturbing. If less regulated contents become more accessible to children (e.g. through the internet), researchers will need to find a way to overcome these methodological difficulties, particularly given the apparent growth in material that does combine sexual and violent content.

For yet other putative harms, the cultural context is crucial. Researchers have long pointed to the media's role in relation to reality-defining effects, arguing that the media provide the frameworks or expectations with which the public understands the world around them. This has been, in various ways, considered harmful – potentially reinforcing stereotypes of marginalised groups, providing a biased account of current affairs, exacerbating a fear of crime, promoting a commercialised culture of childhood, encouraging the early sexualisation of girls, and so forth. In general, the evidence for reality-defining effects generally shows modest effects on social attitudes or beliefs across the population. In other words, the findings show that media exposure explains a small proportion of the variation in attitudes or beliefs across the population. By implication, other factors also play a role, though these are not always well-researched. Reality-defining effects are theorised in terms of cultivation effects (the 'drip-drip' effect of repeated messages), agenda setting (defining what people should think about) and mainstreaming (making certain views 'normal' or standard, while marginalising other views). However, here too, the evidence is patchy and, by and large, not very recent. The difficulty here is that, as noted above, any effect of the media operates only in combination with many other social influences, and the effect is to be measured not in terms of an immediate impact on an individual but rather in terms of gradual shifts in social norms over years or decades. While few would suggest that the media play no role in socialisation or cultural influence, it remains difficult to obtain convincing evidence that the media play a primary causal role.

Putting media effects in context

We have evaluated the research on the potential role of the media in contributing to a range of social problems and drawn conclusions where possible. But it is important to note that we have avoided over-arching conclusions to be applied across all media and all segments of the public, for the evidence does not warrant such conclusions. To those who fear, then, that the media are responsible for a growing range of social problems, we would urge that the evidence base is carefully and critically scrutinised, for such findings as exist generally point to more modest, qualified and context-depending conclusions. To those who hope, however, that the media play little or no role in today's social problems, we would point to the complex and diverse ways in which different media are variably but crucially embedded in most or all aspects of our everyday lives, and that it seems implausible to suggest that they have no influence, whether positive or negative.

Overall, it seems that the research literature points to a range of modest effects, including effects on attitudes and beliefs, effects on emotions, and, more controversially, effects on behaviour (or the predisposition towards certain behaviours). Effects on emotions have, we suggest, received less attention than they should perhaps command, most attention focusing on attitudes and behaviours; yet running through the literature is a series of findings of people being made upset, fearful or anxious by the media.

However, as we have also been at pains to point out, in each of these areas, there are some studies that find no effects, and most published studies have been contested in terms of their methodology and findings. It is particularly difficult to be clear about the scale of these measured media effects since unfortunately these are rarely compared with other putative effects (e.g. of parenting style or social background). Although it is widely argued that the effect of the media often depends on other factors also operating in the situation, the evidence here is generally weaker partly because there is no single theory of how indirect effects occur, partly because indirect effects are difficult to measure, and partly because indirect effects are often held to occur at the level of the culture not the individual (e.g. advertising → peer pressure → consumerism in society). Nonetheless, media effects appear to be one among many factors that account for the various ills in society (e.g. poverty, violence, fear of crime, stereotyping, etc.). Since, unfortunately, it is rare for research to identify or encompass these other factors within the same study, we cannot draw clear conclusions about which of these factors are more or less important.

Although effects are generally treated as direct (exposure to content → effect), increasingly researchers seek to identify mediating factors (exposure → mediating factor → increased or decreased likelihood of effect); such mediating factors include personality, age, gender ethnicity, parental influence, stage of cognitive development, viewing conditions, etc.[3] This process of mediation renders the measured relation between exposure and effect to be indirect but no less significant. For example, Browne & Pennell (2000) report that, although the evidence sug-

gests that violent media → aggression, it fits a more complex story better. This states that poor background → choice of viewing violent media → distorted cognitions → aggressive behaviour. Note that this explanation is also more accurate than the simple claim that poor background → aggressive behaviour. In other words, each intervening step, showing indirect as well as direct effects of the media and other factors, is important.

Consequently, we have recommended turning around the central question in this field and asking not, do the media have harmful effects, but rather, do the media contribute as one among several factors to the explanation of a social phenomenon (violence, racism, etc.). On a balance of probabilities, it seems less contentious to say 'yes' to the second question than to the first. But this also requires that any claims for media harms are contextualised in relation to the other factors also contributing to the explanation. For example, to understand the role that television food advertising may play in children's diet, one must also examine the role of parental diet, school dinners, peer pressure, and so forth. To understand the role that television violence may play in levels of aggressive play among, say, primary school boys, one must also examine parental treatment of aggressive behaviour, the rewards and punishments operating in the playground situation, gender norms in the peer group, the difficulties experienced by some children at home, and so forth.

Which groups may be more vulnerable?

Many research studies suggest that content does not affect all audiences equally, there being more negative influences on those who are 'vulnerable'. In most cases, this concept of vulnerability is applied to children and young people who are in the process of forming attitudes and behaviours for later life. But it is also applied to other groups of people who may be vulnerable, for example, because of specific personality traits or disorders (this includes research on psychologically disturbed individuals, people who are depressed, sexual offenders, young offenders, etc.).

Findings on specific vulnerable groups may be summarised as follows. There does seem to be evidence that young males may be more consistently affected by media content, and so they can be considered among the more vulnerable of the groups. They seem more likely to respond to violent media content with aggressive behaviour than girls, for example, and the data suggest they evince greater changes in attitude when presented with various potentially harmful contents (violence, advertising, pornography, etc.), though there are a fair number of studies where girls also seem to be influenced negatively.

More attention has been paid to the reality-defining effects on girls of stereotyped or sexualised portrayals of gender; to the extent that these studies do show negative effects, however, they seem to occur for both genders. Reality-defining effects are sometimes shown particularly to affect minority or less socially valued groups (women, the elderly, etc.) – harm may thus be understood as en-

couraging negative attitudes both in the majority (e.g. racist stereotypes) and the affected minority (e.g. low self-esteem).

Research has examined different hypothesised harms in relation to different age groups. For example, concerns about the harmful effects of advertising tend to be investigated in relation to young children. Similarly, the effects of violent content are examined across the range from young children to young adults, though for specific media, research tends to follow usage patterns (e.g. film and games are researched for teens/young adults, television among younger children). The risks of malicious or harmful peer-to-peer contact online or by mobile have mainly been researched among teens and adults, although attention is turning to younger children.

Since different studies examine different age groups (often spanning very broad age ranges), evidence is sparse regarding developmental trends over the age range, making it difficult to pinpoint particularly vulnerable ages in relation to different media. It should also be noted that, for the most part, since research examines the effects of media on 'typical users', little is known about the effects on those who are not part of the typical or intended user group – further, ethical issues often preclude investigating the effects of exposure of younger children to material intended for older age groups.

Is there evidence that media contents may be offensive?

While academic research has focused on harms and the effects of the media, research into areas of offence has been conducted mainly by regulators and lobby or advocacy groups. Looking across all media, the research evidence suggests variable levels of offence. For example, in relation to television, around one in three have found something on television offensive, this more often being – as for most findings on offence – women and older people. This overlaps to some degree with our discussion of the risk of emotional effects or harms: recent research on self-reported emotional affects on being portrayed negatively as a marginalised groups (women, the poor, gay and lesbian people, ethnic minorities, the elderly and children) suggests that these groups are often angry and upset at being so portrayed in the media. Further research is needed to track the concerns of marginalised and minority groups.

Intriguingly, little research has been conducted into the offence that might be caused to children, although there have been intriguing projects which have spoken to children about their attitudes to a range of material (e.g. Nightingale, Dickenson, & Griff, 2000). Most of the work on offence is focused on adults. While there may be ethical reasons for this disparity, the research evidence does show that children may be offended by certain depictions, in particular but not exclusively, sexual activity.

Most research shows that, despite a substantial minority being offended, most people are tolerant of others' rights to view such material. The exception to this tends to be the combination of sex plus violence (as in violent pornographic

material), though even for such content, audiences seem to prefer to judge offence (and any regulatory responses that might follow) in relation to the narrative and aesthetic context of the portrayal. Generally, rather than calling for more restrictions on media content, the public is more inclined to call for better and more user-friendly access controls so that they can control what they see. Public support for content restrictions is highest in relation to the protection of children.

New forms of media are discussed more widely currently in relation to regulation than are the more established media for which, in many respects, the public is broadly supportive of the current regulatory framework. However, the findings are mixed on whether people are satisfied with (or even aware of) the available processes for making a complaint about media content.

Comparing evidence across different media

This review has shown that much of the research undertaken has been technology-specific, i.e. applied to particular media. There is relatively little work that has looked at the overall consumption of a particular type of content across the media although some studies have sought to do that, particularly in areas such as sexual depictions and violence.

In recognition of this, many of the regulatory structures are set up with particular technologies in mind. Studies show that consumers of different media forms often approach the content on one platform differently from the way in which they approach similar content on another platform. Nonetheless, there is an avowed determination, in Europe certainly, to move towards technologically-neutral regulation. One of the principles behind this is that the platform will become irrelevant to the consumer as the same or similar content is delivered across different platforms.

However, in a context of converging technologies and media content, we are particularly concerned at the lack of evidence providing a secure basis for making comparisons across media platforms (although see Ofcom, 2006). As we have noted, comparisons across different media regarding the nature or size of effects are difficult in methodological terms, though such research could and should be attempted. For the most part, then, in seeking evidence for harm and offence across media, one can only compare findings conducted for different media in different studies. Research has tended to extend the approach developed for television to video, games, internet etc. – asking similar questions, and using similar methods, in relation to such potential harms as violence, sex, stereotyping, etc. Where a research study has encompassed or compared across several media, the findings for effects tend to be inconsistent – some research finds the effects of television to be greater than for games; in other studies, the reverse is found.

Therefore, we would question the argument that people respond to content irrespective of platform. Rather, the evidence suggests that people's response to media content is strongly shaped by the particularities of each medium, making it difficult to generalise across platforms, because:

- Different access conditions and different public expectations (linear/nonlinear, push/pull, chosen on purpose or accidentally, culturally familiar or novel) mean that audiences anticipate and self-regulate their media exposure in different ways.
- Differently regulated content makes it particularly difficult to generalise from research on highly regulated content to content where there is no regulation (e.g. do the levels of violence on regulated, terrestrial television affect audiences in the same way, and to the same degree, as the levels of violence accessible through non-regulated media such as the internet?)
- Broadcast (linear) media can be regulated in relation to the programming/scheduling context of particular portrayals (e.g. violence): this is important, since the context in which potentially harmful or offensive content is portrayed has often been shown to make a difference to media effects.[4] Yet both narrative/programming contexts and temporal/scheduling contexts are difficult to regulate for new (non-linear) media, especially where short extracts are likely to be viewed (e.g. internet, mobile telephony): the consequence is a greater unpredictability of audience response.
- Older media, in the main, comprise professionally produced, mass market content, and this too is different for new media, where a growing proportion of content is user-generated (peer-to-peer, spam, blogging, forms of self-representation), unregulated, niche-content that may be amateur in production and potentially imbalanced.

In short, there are many difficulties with the premise of regulation that is technology-neutral, because the public does not treat different technologies as equivalent, and because the social and cognitive conditions of access also vary. Indeed, research on the conditions under which people access and use media in their daily lives in the UK makes it clear that many contextual variables are important in framing the ways in which people approach the media – prior familiarity and cultural expectations about a medium, the degree of choice or selection involved, the domestic and technological conditions of access, including media literacy (or technological competence and critical awareness), and the presence or absence of an interpretative context or frame (within the text) – all affect how people approach and respond to different media.

If the mythic hypodermic needle had been accurate (i.e. if content was simply 'injected' into people), then perhaps we would have concluded that violence is always violence, or advertising is always persuasive, whatever the platform. But, since research persistently shows that many factors mediate between the media and the public, increasing or decreasing the possibility of media influence, for better or for worse, we must conclude that different kinds of harm and offence may result from different kinds of media contents and use.

This is evidently the case even for older media – the findings for television, for example, differ from those for print. One might point to the power of the

image compared with the printed word. Others have argued that film is more potent than television, partly because of the conditions of viewing in the cinema, partly because of the power of a lengthy narrative. Others argue that the daily repetition of short messages on television or in computer games is more influential, or that the interactivity in computer gaming may make effects stronger. These arguments remain unresolved, and few research studies have directly compared the influence of (harmful or prosocial) messages across different media. For new forms of media, the differences are also considerable, and even less is known about them, at present.

Regulation often draws on and is legitimated by reference to a complex base of media- and audience- specific research evidence. The balance to be struck between individuals (often, parents) and institutions (industry, regulators) in managing conditions of access should, we have suggested, vary for more established and newer media. Clearly, as homes become more complex, multi-media environments, and as media technologies converge, it must be a priority to develop and extend the available evidence base, so that we sustain our understanding of the differences across, and relations among, the changing array of media and communication technologies. The challenge is to seek ways of minimising risks, while also enabling the many benefits afforded by these technologies for our society and for the socialisation of our children.

New media, new challenges

One purpose of the present review was to determine what lessons could be learned from research on older media to apply to new media, especially since there is very little research on new media as yet, by comparison especially with research on television. However, such evidence as has been produced suggests that new media may pose some new challenges. In consequence, empirical research on new media is now specifically required.

One of the main differences between many of the established media (television, radio, film, press and even advertising) is that of context (meaning, the framing of a portrayal within the text); when content is delivered in a linear way, it comes with a context that tells a story or establishes a framework of expectations that is recognised by and makes sense to the consumer. The research evidence suggests that this contextual setting affects how the content is received – and accepted – by the viewer. For example, the moral framework of a setting which contains violence will affect how 'justified' the violence is considered and, consequently, how it is received.

The newer technologies (including video but also the internet and mobile communications) allow content to be seen out of context. One may see sets of trailers rather than the storyline in which to put the content. There is no research evidence to show how those trailers may be received, although some work on video has shown that certain groups (in this case violent offenders) chose to watch violent scenes repeatedly. It is therefore difficult to project forward the research

evidence from one medium into another. There has been research undertaken on specific areas within internet use, especially areas thought to be harmful to the young such as pornography, anorexia sites or suicide sites. Many of the concerns raised by these studies (and popular discourse) are being applied to the mobile telephone. The evidence is not available to support this view, and it may be argued that the mobile telephone is quite a different technology, with particular characteristics. The chief of these is the personal and private nature of the mobile handset, quite different from a computer that may be shared or accessed by a number of people, or a fixed line telephone.

While the content issues often remain the same (e.g. violence, pornography, stereotyping), the new media allow faster and more convenient access to these contents. They also allow access to more extreme content that would previously have been difficult to access; there are few effective controls available or in use to prevent such access, including by children. The newer media offer greater opportunity to self-select. In terms of the way in which offence is caused there is some research evidence to show that self-selection makes a difference to the way in which content is perceived – people are far more likely to be offended by content on free-to-air channels than they are to content available on a niche channel that they themselves have selected, that is clearly signposted and that they are paying a subscription for. Similarly, some of the research into video games suggests that the self-selecting and active nature of playing may act as a distancing mechanism from the content in a way that passive viewing of television does not. Another key difference that the newer media bring is the ability to produce and widely disseminate user-generated content which has little or no regulation applied to it. The flexibility offered by camera telephones, with both production and diffusion capability, is quite different from hand held video cameras. Similarly, the technologies can be linked so that images from mobile cameras can be downloaded on to the internet and disseminated well beyond one's address book. However, there is little research into these areas as yet.

The importance of conditions of access

Conditions of access strongly influence the research agenda. Television, generally free to air services, is the most researched medium and has received such attention because of its ubiquity and accessibility, because it is a linear (i.e. push) medium, and because of its positive public potential (i.e. there is no real option for audiences to switch it off without missing out). The internet, the newest focus for research, partly merits research attention because of the ambition of ubiquity and public value – again, in an information society, it is increasingly not an option for people not to use it. As a largely unregulated medium, the internet could provide access to a much greater range of potentially harmful and offensive content. This limits the applicability of findings from research on highly regulated media (such as television) to the internet. However, the strictures of research ethics limit the potential to conduct research for this new medium.

Research on the internet, unlike that for television, makes a fundamental distinction between potentially harmful material accessed accidentally and that which is sought deliberately. However, it is not clear whether this makes a difference to the degree of harm caused, though it does suggest different types of user or motivations for use (e.g. the child who seeks out pornography online may differ from the child who is upset because they found it accidentally: however, too little is known about user motivations or the consequences of different kinds of exposure). For material accessed deliberately, attention has instead centred on the user's motivations, with evidence suggesting that the search for violent or pornographic contents may contribute to the psychological disturbance for certain individuals. However, for both adults and children, some research suggests that, irrespective of whether content is found accidentally or deliberately, harm may still result (especially from violent pornography). Similarly the paucity of research for mobile telephony rests in part on the relative novelty of the technology. This means that research from the internet is being used to make assumptions about the possibility of harm and offence in this area; whether or not this is valid remains to be seen.

At present, research finds that filters and other (physical) access control mechanisms are rarely used by users or, in the case of children, children's guardians. This seems not to be because people are not concerned– it is evident that the internet especially occasions the greatest concern of all media among the public. Rather, it is because people lack the knowledge and awareness of how to choose, install and use access controls or they feel such mechanisms are not necessary within their own families. Within the UK's Code of Practice for on-demand services, for example, the use of PIN codes and other access management systems are repeatedly advertised and marketed to the user.

The evidence suggests that the children's response to certain media contents can be lessened or heightened by the ways in which families interact and discuss what is seen. Evidence is lacking, however, for the claim that an increase in media literacy will reduce the potential for harm, although this is widely believed (and so should be the subject of future research). We have noted that the evidence for possible harm from violent content is stronger than that for sexual content (with the exception of violent pornography). This might explain why in response to portrayed violence, the public is more likely to call for content regulation, while for portrayed sex, people may or may not object personally but they tend to call for tolerance (respecting the rights of others to view diverse or niche content); the right to view violence appears more difficult to defend, it seems, than the right to view pornography. Given this, it is curious that most research on new media contents have addressed sexual content (especially pornography) rather than violence, there being particularly little on the potentially harmful effects of exposure to non-sexualised violence (this may reflect the ways in which public concern, rather than theory, sets the research agenda).

Looking to the future

The issue of common definitions remains. The concept of 'harm' is implicitly understood but rarely formally defined. Hence, it is not possible to provide clear advice or a check list to regulators or content providers about specific harms. However, the concept remains a valid one; it has a legal foundation and attempts should continue to be made to define and identify it. The concept of offence is more clearly understood. While there is little academic research into this area (though we note the substantial body of regulators' work related to offence, plus the potential of such circumstantial evidence as complaints and other participatory expressions).

The research evidence also suggested some links between offence and harm. In reality-defining effects, for example, on the one hand, opinion research (on offence) shows that certain groups resent their representation in the media; on the other hand, experimental and survey research (on harm) suggests that media representations perpetuate such stereotypes among the general population. Another borderline area between offence and harm concerns user-generated content – racist or sexist messages are offensive to some and harmful to others in ways not yet well understood; nor is it yet understood how processes of offence and harm differ when the message source is a peer rather than a powerful broadcaster, for example. Some of the research also pointed to the crucial role of the media in creating an informed civil society and suggested that this role will need to be monitored, particularly as the information environment expands and innovates faster than the public's critical literacy (to determine reliability or authenticity of information) can keep up.

In general, this literature review has shown that the evidence for harm and offence caused is constantly qualified and such contingent answers do not make life easy for regulators, policy-makers or the industry. Nonetheless, when dealing with complex social phenomena (violence, aggression, sexuality, prejudice, etc.), many factors – including but not solely the media – must be expected to play a role. Given the complexity of this field of research, we would urge researchers and policy makers to ask specific questions of the evidence base, as follows:

- What specific social, cultural or psychological problem is at issue?
- Which media contents are hypothesised to play a role?
- Which segments of the public give rise to concern?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods used to generate the relevant evidence?
- Under what conditions are these media contents being accessed in everyday life?
- What kinds of risk, and what scale of risk, does the evidence point to, if at all, and for whom?

- Given a public consensus in favour of proportionality in regulation, what kinds of intervention, and by whom, are most likely to be effective in reducing the risk, and what advantages and costs might be associated with this?

There is a growing call for arguments that go 'beyond cause and effect', as more and more commentators are frustrated by the simplistic polarisation of censorship versus freedom of expression or regulation versus laissez faire (depending on one's position). Boyle (2000) argues, for example, that the pornography debate must be reoriented towards addressing male violence in society, rather than distracted by arguments over experimental methods. In a similar vein, Adams (2000) draws on philosophical as well as legal arguments to argue that the claim that pornography plays a causal role in rape does not, or should not, 'let the rapist off the hook'. Rather, multiple causes are at work, as they are in many domains of life, and the assertion that pornography plays a causal role does not in any way assume that pornography is the sole, or main, cause and nor that it works in the same way on all its consumers; consequently, 'evidence' for the effects of pornography need not be large or consistent.

Similar arguments have been advanced in other domains. For example, in relation to advertising of foods high in fat, sugar or salt to children, Livingstone (2005) argued that the problem with causal claims is not the question of causality per se but the nature of the question asked (see also Gauntlett, 1998). Instead of asking whether advertising causes children to make unhealthy food choices, the question should be turned around to ask: what are the influences on children's food choice and what role if any does advertising play in this multifactorial explanation?[5] Kline (2003) develops this approach through taking a public health approach: 'rather than the causal hypothesis, the driving force behind the risk factors approach is the quest to understand what it all depends on'. Research should, therefore, focus more on establishing the range of relevant factors contributing to an outcome, identifying how important each is in explaining that outcome.

So, it is more useful, we have suggested, to turn the question around and ask not whether the media harm children but ask instead, of the many causes of particular social ills, what role do the media play? This more contextualised approach is increasingly adopted by those who are looking at vulnerable groups, in particular, and argues for a more public-health facing approach, which advocates the examination of the media's role (and the amenability of media exposure to intervention) as part of a more complete picture of influences and effects (see, for example, Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Kline, 2003; Savage, 2004). Editorial context has always been important in content regulation guidelines, but it may prove difficult to build into parallel guidelines for new media. Since it appears, from research on children's accidental exposure to pornography on the internet, that unexpected and decontextualised content can be particularly upsetting, this poses a challenge for regulators.

The future research agenda

A key aim of this review has been to pinpoint gaps in the existing evidence base. As a result, we identify the following priorities for future research:

- Research on the range of marginalised and/or vulnerable groups (including the elderly, gay, ethnic minorities, and those with psychological difficulties). Too often, the population is not adequately segmented: beyond examining differences by age and gender, research must include ethnicity, sexuality, psychological variables, and so forth when investigating possible harm and offence; even for age, too little is known about the effects of media on different age groups as children develop.
- Research on reality-defining/stereotyping effects that relates to recent changes especially in nationally-originated media content, as well as imported content.
- Longitudinal or long-term panel studies, to follow up the effects of short-term harm, to track changes in levels and kinds of offence, and to identify changing expectations and understandings of media (including the access conditions) among the public. At present, most if not all longitudinal studies of media influence are US-based, though there are tracking studies on media access and use in other countries. The lack of studies of media influence, incorporating content variables that allow replication over time, makes it difficult to examine in combination the matrix of content viewed (amount and type), media platform, personality traits, life stage and other demographic variables.
- In the shorter term, there is strong evidence that triangulated methodologies, bringing together different data collection systems, may work most effectively to give an insight into the way in which the media and users interact, but these too, need to be combined more effectively with other variables, such as those affecting personality. Some methods have been particularly creative – the use of citizens' juries, for example, or the development of the news editing method – but these tend not to be reused, perhaps because they are more effortful or expensive; nonetheless, they reap dividends in terms of research insights.
- Research on the under-researched media, particularly radio and music among the 'established' media and the internet and mobile telephony among the newest delivery systems. For example, music attracts some concern over its lyrics, yet has barely been researched in this regard. As the content available even on familiar and well-researched media changes and diversifies, research must continue to track the possible consequences.
- Research on the new issues arising from new media, particularly in relation to user-generated and malicious peer-to-peer content and contact. For example, research is beginning to accumulate on the harm and offence caused

particularly by unwanted and unsought exposure to inappropriate material on the internet: this agenda must now be extended to include mobile and other emerging digital platforms (research from the advertising literature suggests such effects not only occur but may be harder to defend against). Similarly, little research has examined the effects of interactivity, for example, on the way in which content is chosen and received (note that it is not clear as yet that the active selection of content makes a difference to media effects). Further, research on the commercial or promotional aspects of new media technologies (especially internet, mobile, other new and interactive devices) and new contents (interactive content, new forms of advertising and promotion, niche/extreme content).

- Research that puts media effects in context, seeking to understand how the media play a role in a multi-factor explanation for particular social phenomena (e.g. violence, gender stereotyping, etc.), this to include a comparative account of the relative size of effect for each factor (including the media) in order to enable regulatory decisions based on proportionality.
- Research that directly compares the public's responses to the 'same' content when accessed on different media (e.g. violence on television, in film, in computer games, online) so as to understand whether and how the medium, or the conditions of access to a medium, including the regulatory environment, make a difference. Although it seems clear that the public brings different expectations to different platforms and technologies, as noted earlier, more research is needed on how the respond to the same content when delivered through different media platforms.
- Research on the range of factors that potentially mediate (buffer, or exacerbate) any effects of media exposure (e.g. level of media literacy, role of parental mediation, difference between accidental and deliberate exposure, etc.). Particularly, to inform the regulatory agenda, research is needed to produce a clearer understanding of how regulation can work with other mitigating or buffering processes (such as family mediation or communications literacy) to reduce any negative impact of inappropriate media content. Research on the range of possible mitigating factors remains patchy, being mainly focused on television, and must be updated as users (especially parents) continue to adjust to the changing media environment.
- Similarly, users need to understand how, and when, they can use the self/in-home regulatory tools they are provided with by many of the new delivery systems, such as filters or PIN codes, and more research is needed on whether and when these are effectively used, and why they may not be.

It must be acknowledged that calling for multimethod, long-term, cross-media, culturally-relevant research on a diverse range of audience/user groups is to call for expensive research. Just as regulation increasingly requires a multi-stakeholder

approach, it may be that research also requires the cooperation of government, regulator and industry groups, together with the expertise of the academic research community. Finally, we would stress the importance for evidence-based policy and academic knowledge of sustaining a body of research that is culturally- or nationally-relevant, that is up to date, that has undergone peer-review, and that is available in the public domain.

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Notes

1. Note, however, that we did not encompass research evidence for the positive or pro-social benefits of the media, nor other issues of public health currently being debated, such as the potential for physical harm caused by media content triggering epilepsy for example, or the possible effects of using mobile telephone handsets.
2. To call these 'objective' and 'subjective' measures is perhaps too simple, for the judgements of observers are subject to biases (being a form of self report, and influenced most notably by the third-person effect), and the judgements of individuals concerned may be the only available method (how else can fear be assessed?). Of course, there are some studies that rely on self-report for evidence of harm, especially when the harm at issue is emotional, as there are some studies of offence that rely on more objective measures (e.g. letters of complaint).
3. Several studies show greater media effects for already-aggressive participants. Others have shown greater effects of exposure to media violence among clinical populations (Browne & Pennell, 2000). Findings for offenders are more mixed: see Hagell and Newburn (1994) but also Browne and Pennell (2000) who argue that it is the violent backgrounds of young offenders that creates the vulnerability. Among children and young people, the most studied groups, cognitive and social development accounts for different (and various) findings. In many studies, especially of violence, the effects are found to be less, or even absent, for girls. Further, many American studies show different (and various) results for participants of different ethnic backgrounds.
4. Perhaps curiously, both psychological and culturally-oriented researchers agree on the importance of textual (or programme) context, arguing that a violent or sexual act must be interpreted in relation to its narrative and genre context and, more importantly, that people indeed do interpret content in context, this affecting how they respond to content and whether it upsets or influences them.
5. For an influential illustration, in the field of children's food choice and obesity, see Story, Neumark-Sztainer, and French (2002). In an approach that could be applied also in other domains, they suggest that the factors influencing food choice operate at four distinct levels. (1)

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Individual – psychosocial, biological and behavioural factors. (2) Interpersonal – family, friends and peer networks. (3) Community – accessibility, school food policy and local facilities. (4) Societal – mass media and advertising, social and cultural norms, production and distribution systems and pricing policies.

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The Arab Child and the Information Society[1]

Mustapha Masmoudi

Researching media and their various impacts is a lengthy task. What we are concerned with here are that the media have become part and parcel of the process of upbringing. They broaden children's cognitive horizons and help children to recognize the components of their surroundings. The media entertain the child through materials that also may help in the actualization of the tensions and psychological disturbances the child may be suffering from. There is nothing strange in searching today for the Arab child's status in the myriad of worlds opened through globalization and digitization. The child is also an active element in this new global paradigm.

In the first part of this article, I will attempt to analyze the relation between the child and the media that was prevalent in the past decades. In the second part, I will focus on the status of the Arab child in the age of the digital revolution. In the third part, I seek to make some conclusions arrived at from the documents issued by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as well as the regional plan to enforce this modern society in the Arab region.

The Arab child and the media in the past decades

Culture, as we know, is a set of distinct signs particular to each community. They include patterns of lifestyles, production modes, values, beliefs and go beyond the parameters of arts and literature, to become the pivot for a society's vivaciousness, and a tool for its survival and renewal. The culture is also the conceptualization of the reality as lived by the human being, after s/he has added his/her own perspective to it.

Some may think that the functions of culture complement the functions of the media to a great extent. Others may perceive the functions of culture as differing

from those of the media, so that culture and media have come to an inevitable confrontation. In the latter view, the use of modern media is a way of denying the cultural specificity of societies or communities. One consequence of such a generalization would be a standardization of models, opinions, tastes and lifestyles, imposing the blind imitation of these through advertisements and serials, in particular if they are directed towards children and teenagers. All this is bound to disable the creative and innovative capacities of the human being, limiting his/her mental faculties, especially those for criticism and analysis.

The media may affect the values and principles arrived at by the human being at some point in history. They are values, which can be used for construction, just as they may be used for destruction. In addition to their modernity, they are in strong competition with traditional means of expression, such as the oral narration of children's stories, transmitted from grandparent to grandchild, children's choir recordings, and short plays. Hence, modern media – in the view of some theoreticians – weakens the structure of harmony within societies. For instance, imported media contents may smother the values of cooperation and solidarity, which have been known since the dawn of history. In this sense, the media contribute to redirecting the desires to artificial needs, causing the emergence of a mentality in the child that does not agree with the societal potentials, its natural atmosphere, and its inherent capabilities.

At the same time, the advocates of drawing a distinction between culture and the media do not deny that there are aspects of complementation and homogeneity between the two sectors. They admit that communication technology has many advantages, considering the media to be the sensitive spot for culture inside every society, the major backbone for cultural development, and the motive for creativity in the fields of art, literature, painting, sculpture, theatre and cultural variety.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the cultural tools themselves, such as the media, cannot be tied to culture in its sublime meaning. Yves Eudes analyzes in his book *La conquête des esprits*[2] this perspective, focusing on the conceptualization some politicians make of the role of cultural tools and the content of the cultural message. They consider that every cultural product should have a clear ideological message, regardless of its form or type. It is possible that culture may be acknowledged as a coating for a political message.

The exchange of every cultural output should occur on a basis of equal opportunities and mutual respect. It is this that enhances the load of the responsibility shouldered by the media tailored for children, as well as the delicacy of their functions. The media should not be limited to the transfer and dissemination of the cognitive content, but should also select their content and the degree of creativity in it to be suitable for children's ability to comprehend, depending on the child's age and maturity.

Therefore, the functions of the media and culture, respectively, should be integrated in all societies, in particular the developing countries. This integration may be more prominent within the Arab societies, due to their unity of language,

history, religion and traditions. It also depends on what media and culture can offer for strengthening the ties between the Arab countries, beginning with childhood.

Arab childhood and traditional media

Many international and regional researchers have written about the relations between children and visual, audio and written media. These studies, conducted during the past decades, have come to a number of conclusions, which may be summarized as in the following.

The press

The printed press has contributed to endorsement of the concepts we seek to bring our children up to in accordance with the values and aspirations of our Arab societies and cultural heritage. The press provides information, develops orientations, and sets the bases for sound and objective communication. The press has played a great role in bringing up the pre-television generation of children in the Arab world.

This generation used to follow attentively the issuing of S*indbad Magazine* and *Samir Magazine*, because these two publications were the means of communication between the Arab children at a time when it was difficult for them to meet (due to the presence of colonizers and their hegemony over all Arab States). At that time, the school was the primary tool for education and upbringing of children, second to the family. Hence, the press for children developed with the issuing of a good number of magazines in the Arab world. The first magazine for children to come out was in Egypt in 1870, and *The Iraqi Pupil Magazine* was issued in 1922.

There are a number of reasons why these magazines were stopped, such as financial crises, which were made worse by the limited distribution; the poverty of the published material; the limited number of specialists; and the termination of governmental subsidies supporting the publication of the magazines, whether the support was monetary or meant buying up large numbers of the published issues.

There was also a great discrepancy between the number of state-subsidized magazines or those issued by cultural institutions (38% of the publications) and the number of magazines published privately (62%). It is observable that the magazines subsidized by the state or issued by cultural institutions are the ones that survived. This is a manifestation of the importance of the civil society in addition to the state concerning the development needed in this sector.

The Arab countries also used to import various magazines such as *Superman, The Incredible Hulk* and *Batman*, named after the superheroes, who later on took the cinema and television screens by storm, and were soon to invade all corners

of the earth. These magazines, in the view of some, have not contributed major additions, nor have they achieved what we seek to realize through science-fiction stories, expressing the aspirations for what may be in the near or distant future, and speculating about what happened in times of the past. These stories do not provide the Arab children with sound scientific thought. Indeed, some of the magazines include translated stories that have no connection with Arab children's environment.

Children's press includes an entertaining component of great importance to the formation of children's personalities, since playing and fun are essential basics for the child's growth (such as reading humorous episodes, participating in drawing pictures available in the magazine, taking part in competitions, pen-friendships, etc.). The press also enriches children's knowledge through certain scientific or historical articles, introducing children to important personalities. The children, hence, discover their past and present, developing their desire for more knowledge and wider horizons.

Do the magazines available at present provide for children's social, mental and psychological needs? A group of researchers have undertaken an examination of the content of a set of children's magazines, such as *Qous Qasah* (The Rainbow) from Tunisia, *Riyad* from Algeria, *Maged* from Kuwait, *Basem* from Saudi Arabia, *Usama* from Syria, *Magallaty* (My Magazine) from Iraq, and *Sunduq el-Dunia* (The Peepshow) from Egypt. The researchers found that the sample did not meet the Arab children's needs satisfactorily. The magazines handled the imagination in various ways. Some of them simulated the Western exposition of space-stories, without any consideration of the fact that the junior Arab reader is unprepared for such stories. Other magazines dealt with imagination as a supplementary component for the child's reality, with the risk of submerging the child in a life of daydreaming, in which they imagine that they are the real heroes of those stories. In fact, some stories in these magazines were rather abstract, while other magazines did not observe that they address a certain age group. Many magazines presented children who live in the city and enjoy good social standards, neglecting the children of rural areas.

The sample also revealed that most magazines present selected information without proper planning of the objectives, that is, without the intention to develop the child's mind, and to provide the child with a repertoire that is strongly related to the environment in which s/he lives as well as to the aspects of modern life, enabling him/her to grasp the phenomena which occur in life scientifically. With such an intention the child is enabled to invest the impressions for a positive impact on his/her environment in the future.

The radio

There is no doubt that for a long period, the benefits reaped from the radio for children have remained limited. For the radio to play its role in bringing up children, it should be seriously directed towards presenting cultural, scientific, social

and artistic materials, both in terms of the intellectual content presented and the manner of presentation. It is noticeable that the number of radio programs for children is very small and in most Arab countries do not receive sufficient attention. The number of programs in which children participate both in production and presentation is even less.

Television

The results of a study conducted by the American University in Cairo showed that the child of today spends 33 hours/week in front of television, which exceeds the time spent in playing, at school, in the company of parents, or studying at home. The average number of hours spent by the family watching television daily is six hours, and is expected to increase proportionately with the rapid spread of videos at home, in clubs and in cafés. This means that more of the family members' time is spent in favor of watching television than for studying, resting or working.

The increase in children's television viewing and the close connection between children and the set are not necessarily a result of the contents broadcast. There are several other significant reasons for watching, for example the fact that the TV set is within the child's reach, why exposure requires no effort.

The television has successfully imposed its control in the Arab countries on many of the positive and negative activities of children. Also, the number of sleeping hours has decreased significantly, whereas the time spent in doing homework or in outdoor activities has decreased only limitedly. Concerning the performance at school, empirical indicators are few. Some such indicators maintain that the intensity of television watching and the grades at school are inversely proportional. In other words, children who fall behind at school are children who watch much television. According to psychologists, the intensity of watching television may be a sign of psychological problems and emotional tension.

The development of child-oriented media in Tunisia

I still remember when my grandfather would await my return from school so I would help him tune in to the BBC, which used to broadcast the news in Arabic on the short wave. It was not easy for him to shift from one wavelength to another, and to tune in to a clear reception on his own with weak spectacles. Sixty years ago, children were enthusiastic about the radio and its programs, in particular programs broadcast for them. The following generation, 30 years later, got incurably attached to the television programs. My daughter, who was then six years old, spent more than five hours a day glued to the screen. In other words, she spent in one year more time in front of television than she spent at school, studying at home and playing. Her son, in turn, is not bothered with the radio, and is not as attentive to television programs as he is to digital media and games. At an early age, he is keen on the electronic book and children's sites on the Internet. I have even been able to make use of his help in solving some of the

digital problems I face, just as I used to help my grandfather in overcoming some Hertz-obstacles 60 years ago. Thus, media for children have witnessed a great qualitative and quantitative evolution.

In Tunisia, a radio-channel especially dedicated for children and youth, and a TV channel specialized on education and youth affairs have recently been established. Also, Channel 7 of Tunis and the private Hanbaal channel have dedicated great attention to children's programs. Channel 21 and the Youth Station on the radio have succeeded in covering a wide range of children's and youth's needs. Both channels offer daily programs, services and entertainment in addition to sports. Channel 21 has also launched its own web site. This site, as well as other new multi-media tools, provides extra opportunities for the youth to express their opinions, and to contribute to the development and creation of programs. The new communication technologies have developed the relationship with the media, in the sense that young people have transcended the stage of receiver to the stage of interacting with the media messages. Young people have proven their ability to contribute to the production of media material for them.

It is obvious that the first objective in the informative approach that brings together emerging interests and the media is, in fact, to establish the values of solidarity, citizenship, and freedom, especially preparing the children and the youth for the information society. However, some shortcomings still remain in the Tunisian media directed at children. These are, for example, the commercial approach adopted by certain media. It is also obvious that there is a lack in the services provided in youth media, despite the development in this sector so far. This calls for intensification and dedication of greater space for these services, as well as making the efforts exerted by the youth, and the procedures, decisions and rewards undertaken for their benefit more widely known.

Preliminary conclusions

Many specialists consider that children's programs and what is related to them are originally the concerns of pedagogues. They are responsible for the education of children in such a manner as agrees with the society's needs and traditions. However, the pedagogues were not willing to perform this task, the reason being the estrangement between them and the media-people. It was necessary to qualify the pedagogues to be media-people, and the media-people to become educators, so that both parties may meet according to a comprehensive and integrated plan that sets the educational aims accurately, listing their priorities in the light of field studies, and cooperating to realize these aims through television and radio programs. It is also important to identify the audience and its various classes, as well as the type of expected change and the degree to which it has been achieved after broadcasting.

At first, the authors in the Arab world were not able to write good television programs for children. Then, some of them were able to write acceptable programs

only for the radio. Mostly, the authors who wrote for children imposed on the children what the authors wanted, not what the children wanted. Hence emerged the awareness of the fact that the media-people in charge of children's programs, as well as the directors and publishers, are in need for retraining. The Arab specialized institutions were rare and therefore compensated by foreign institutions.

Most Arab television companies' budgets did not include financial dedications to children's programs suitable for the immensity of the mission and the efforts needed to achieve it. Good intentions cannot replace funding, which is a basic element for qualification, preparation and production. However, the issue of funding changed with the appearance of Arab satellite channels and the entrance of the private sector into this arena. This helped in surmounting some of the obstacles and meant some improvement in the programs for Arab children. Despite that, the impact of foreign media and the lack of a clear quantitative and qualitative Arab production remain forceful factors.

The impact of foreign media on children

The exaggerated import from western countries, which is becoming a phenomenon particular to the private Arab channels, calls for further research. The language of financial profit and broadcast of excessive commercials often replace educational aims. Whether the media space is public or private, childhood is fundamentally a joint guardianship, which is the responsibility of all levels and civil institutions of society. Children are affected by televised commercials and the new consumerism advocated by them. Commercials also stimulate unrealistic expectations in children, especially since they follow the commercial flares intensely.

Many local Arab channels resort to filling the slots dedicated for children with imported foreign programs. The children, exposed to these programs, do not know that they are imported – that they do not originate from the environment in which the child exists and to which s/he belongs – in particular when the programs are dubbed addressing children in their mother tongue. Hence, the children watch a foreign program and presenter who is very different from them, but they often cannot grasp that difference. The children accept the programs indiscriminately in fascination, exploring through them quite different human archetypes and stereotypes which, even if attracting them, also cause them to experience feelings of deprivation, since the environment does not permit the children to dress, play or behave in the manner of the foreign children presented in the programs. In this case, the children require a justification for what they imagine they are deprived of.

Thus, the children become negatively accepting, whereas the main aims of these programs ought to encourage children to interact, to get to know their peers, and to participate in those competitions that have primarily educational and pedagogical objectives. The programs also ought to offer possibilities for dialogue through which children are empowered to express their opinions concerning various topics, to be heard, and to develop their abilities in communicating with others.

These programs, like commercials, result in stimulated desires that do not agree with the children's reality and environment. If one is to take a close look at the content of imported children's programs, one would notice a stark discrepancy in comparison with what we are aspiring to. In juxtaposition with these alluring scenes on Arab television channels, are the faces of children and teenagers who seek martyrdom, and whose mothers wail and weep in mourning and sorrow.

Televised commercials

The makers of advertising flashes have become the most skilled in using the language of art. Many researchers maintain that the best formulation for the potentials inherent in television lies in the televised commercials. Modern visual technologies, such as enlargement of the product and careful choice of colors, are bound to further attract the child's attention, creating a sense of ecstasy for him/her whenever s/he watches the advertising flash. The advertising industry also depends on the décor, which creates a magical world that carries the child into myths just as his/her grandmother's stories used to do. This is in addition to the choice of modern fast music, which delights children with its beat.

Children love commercials and are fascinated by them. The most obvious evidence is the child's ability to constantly remember the advertising slogans, and the ability to sing the songs used in commercials. The advertising flash has become a source of pleasure and happiness for the child, because the commercial represents an impressive and beautiful world in which the child is able to realize some of his/her dreams. The images appeal to him/her, making the child feel like a king/queen who rules a group of adults, or that s/he owns great quantities of sweets or chocolates. The advertising flash characteristically recurs which in itself presents a source of pleasure and happiness, as it allows the child to comprehend the text, the music, and the image. Humor is also a distinguishing feature of the advertisement, which delights the child.

The child is affected by the basic values embedded in commercials, such as the call to a break with outdated lifestyles and values, as well as welcoming the new consumerist lifestyles and products. An advertisement has a clear message to deliver, namely that material prosperity is the basic cornerstone for life. An advertisement also seeks to stimulate expectations and hopes, and may even foster aggressiveness and delinquency. This is one way of how foreign values, which are totally contradictory to those of the family, the school and the social environment, get a hold among children, something which may result in a psychological conflict within the child.

Animated pictures

Arab children are attracted to cartoons, or animated pictures, more than to any other media contents. Animation is considered to be the most important content contributing to shaping the child's personality. Animated pictures also contribute

to broadening the child's scientific and intellectual horizons, activating his/her imagination and strengthening his/her ability to retain information.

However, nowadays the interaction with the cartoon is slightly different. Animation crystallizes reality and fiction in the child's mind. At the same time, the child remains hooked on the image of heroism and distinction. The child constantly seeks to appear in the image of the adventurous and courageous hero, creating for him-/herself, through the animated pictures, an internal world of adventures and heroic acts. In this case, the cartoon is a provider of imagination for the child, who finds him-/herself gradually isolated from his/her environment. We may observe in children who are addicted to cartoons a weaker eagerness to explore and to observe the real things around them.

The programs most popular among teenagers are serials, foreign films and Mexican soap operas, since they are perceived as "a breather, and a kind of escape from reality". The number of hours teenagers spend watching these programs, without any censorship on the part of the parents, is constantly increasing. Most teenagers watch these dramas in the company of the family in the evening. This age period is characterized by psychological disturbances, since the child develops a desire to distance him-/herself from the family and to depend on him-/herself. Misunderstandings and a constant feeling that the teenager is treated as a child, perceiving him-/herself in fact to have matured, cause a rift between the teenager and the surroundings. Girls and boys at that stage begin to think of marriage to prove their sense of responsibility, and their emotional, mental and physical independence. However, these thoughts clash with the teenager's financial dependency on the parents.

The relationship between the child and the hero/heroine of the serial develops to the extent that the child is often searching for the hero in his/her real society, and then in him-/herself. The child begins to imitate the hero's way of dressing, walking and talking, until the distinctive features of the child's personality dissolve in the paradigm of the globalized human archetype. This human archetype wears the latest fashions and listens to western music. The adolescent child in particular is very concerned with his/her appearance and may become a victim of the stereotypes presented by television.

The media and the globalization of education

Media education is one of the modern essential disciplines, which the child of today is in need of, especially in the light of the multitude of educational technologies and the variety of sources of knowledge. Modern communication technologies have swept through the educational field, which have joined the era of distance learning as well as using the Internet and other means of communication for accessing information.

Though it is true that resorting to communication technologies cannot precede the acquisition of reading and writing abilities or indeed replace them, yet we do perceive communication technologies to be incentives, which encourage this

acquisition, and to be a means for enhancing this knowledge and broadening its horizons within various spaces.

With this new approach to education, in particular if using multi-media, children develop their senses and mental faculties. However, distance learning as a basic means for the formative stages of the child is not widespread in the Arab countries. It is obvious, that children's enthusiasm for modern digital media in the field of education is not sufficient when compared with that of their counterparts in the countries of the North. In addition to the limited use of the modern means of communication in pedagogy and education, the Arab child thrives basically on a foreign-derived educational system due to the absence of a satisfying local Arab product. This situation has resulted in a number of problems, the most important of which is the child's distraction between a lived reality, which has distinguishing characteristics, and information and educational models imported from a distant reality. This is particularly true of the field of human sciences, which are affected by the historical and social environment.

On the other hand, there remains the most serious problem, namely the incompatibility between the educational programs directed at the Arab child in the traditional school systems and the educational revolution witnessed by the world. The globalization of education has today become a tangible reality, just like the globalization of the economics and of the cultural output.

Specialists in the educational sciences maintain that parents are wrong to orient their children towards the same methodologies and curricula that they were educated to. Children should learn in accordance with the concepts that are suitable for their future. This may be the reason behind the rise of educational claims, which contend that the education and cultivation of children should begin 20 years before they are born, through the education and cultivation of their parents in such a way that they become qualified to raise their children.

Conclusion

If a conclusion could be drawn here, it will state that addiction to television is an infection that parents pass on to their children. It is the parents who first help the children when they are babies to watch television, so that the adults may apply themselves to their household chores. The parents encourage their children to watch programs dedicated to children, but also allow the children to join them in watching many of the programs rated for adults.

Whatever is said about the negative impact of television and the computer, it must be admitted that current developments in the means of communicating knowledge, as well as the nutritious composites for children, have helped in promoting the rate of maturing and level of vitality in children. Their physical and intellectual rates of development have increased, to the extent that a nine-year old child of this generation enjoys the capabilities of the fourteen-year old of the previous generation. Hence it is not possible to treat the child of today in

the old manner, nor can the impact of television be abolished through, for instance, a governmental decree.

The solution lies in establishing a dialogue with the children, allowing them to participate in the search for solutions to the various issues which mankind, with all its generations, is confronting at the outset of this new age.

It is inevitable to recognize these new spaces, which have been created by globalization. There is no escaping the acknowledgement of the role of the media in effecting the changes, which have taken place in human behaviors in this age where there are no more cultural or artistic barriers. The media have invaded every home and become man's companion everywhere.

However, the analysis of the Arab reality will remain incomplete without an in-depth study of the impact of digital globalization. The project of the global village that awaits us is not a mere abstract political concept – it is simultaneously a socio-economic and cultural concept. Hence it is imperative that the new society is established on a basis of ethical values, which ensure humanity peaceful co-existence, dissemination of the values of tolerance and solidarity, and rejection of violence, haughtiness and the inclination to hegemony. It is culture that enables us while practicing our daily life activities to achieve higher social goals, such as the maintenance of family values, and the protection of civil institutions in a rapidly changing world that is witnessing many behaviors that do not agree with our cultural heritage.

The Arab child in the age of the digital revolution

To scientifically enable children to integrate into the information society and interacting with and affecting it positively is a vital preoccupation of family, educators, researchers, writers and all those responsible in the society and the country. Great importance is lent to the matter by more advanced societies, where the paradigm of education and teaching beside the cultural institutions and civil societies, play a major role in preparing children for the new age by making it the central focus of learning.

Phrases such as "the information society", "the society of knowledge" and "the media-oriented society" have become part of our daily contemporary jargon, a language that is a key to deciphering many of modern man's problems and issues, and that explains why so much is done in order to implement this new society. No wonder that the first international symposium for the information society – the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) – was decided to be held in December 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland, and the second one in November 2005 in Tunis. WSIS was sponsored by the heads of states with the collaboration of all concerned parties representing both private and public sectors, international organizations and the civil society, including NGOs concerned with issues of childhood, and people in the book business (from writers to publishers

to graphic artists to distributors and finally librarians), all taking upon themselves the sizeable responsibility of connecting the child and youngster to the information society and to the aims and goals of the Summit.

Hence the question: Which would be the notions to be considered when investigating the future of the child in this new and novel society?

From the primary attempts at defining the information society, it is deduced that it is the society following the industrial revolution that flourished during the colonial era and thrived on the cruel manipulation of the resources of weaker countries. In the industrial society, man focused his interest on the importance of quantification at the price of the good of mankind and the whole of humanity was overlooked. So the information society is the natural result of the conflict between communism and capitalism and the cold war that took place throughout the second half of the 20th century.

Man in this new society depends on communications and information technology in order to facilitate the possibilities for information gathering from low-cost high-powered digital networks. This society would be built on a humanitarian foundation aiming at avoiding the manifestations of inequity particular to the preceding society. With the spread of information, the acceleration of scientific inventions and the generating of knowledge will become a decisive factor in developing societies and promoting cultural productivity, utilizing patents and putting scientific research laboratories to the best of use, thereby enabling ordinary man to accomplish a number of economic, social and cultural services remotely. So, too, would decision makers be able to employ those facilities in matters of politics, diplomacy, civil defense and other strategic sectors. However, the final conceptualization of the information society stemming from this digital revolution will take place only in the long run, with conflicting theories attending from the very start.

The place of the child in the information society

Building the information society represents an intrinsic inclination and basic choice from within a variety of options in all regions that have consciously chosen to follow in the path of modernization. To this end they have set out within a framework of total rapprochement that takes into consideration the various political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, relying on communications and information technology in order to enhance development and promote the competitiveness of national economies, implementing this to serve the different components of society.

Since building an information society has its definite humanitarian dimensions, efforts have focused from the beginning on spreading the digital culture as widely as possible to make it available to all in the scope of informed conscious interaction with other cultures, taking into consideration respect for the values of solidarity and forgiveness between nations and reinforcement of the twinning of

the economic and social dimensions, in addition to combating the existing threat resulting from the digital divide suffered by all societies and all social sectors.

The relationship between communication organizations and the developing process is an integral civilized one aiming at improving living conditions morally and materially, thus strengthening national society against subservience, while at the same time rendering it interactive on the international level putting into good use all its cultural, economic and intellectual potential.

However, although modern communication technology has made a wide scope of services available in the realm of transmitting and processing needed information, paying particular service in more advanced societies to those with special needs such as the elderly and the handicapped, the picture is wholly different in less affluent societies where it is still up to them to face up to these novel challenges.

All things considered, since the child is the nucleus of civil society, researchers have given a great deal of thought and importance to the need for ensuring his/her safety in dealing with the new technology and his/her interaction with the new media society. So, where formerly the responsibility fell on the family to nurture and shape the child's behavior, and schools offered the space necessary for his/her mental development, we need to address those functions differently and in the light of the new demands made upon us by the age. The real challenge is to find new and original ways of thinking within the school system itself, as well as new ways of organization in the heart of the family. This is a challenge with which all societies are faced.

Admitting however, that recourse to such technology can in no way precede the ability to read and write nor for that matter replace it, we have found in technology an incentive for the development of those very skills and a just means for enlarging their scope in various realms. Children with special needs and, in particular, the impaired and handicapped gain a great deal of benefit from the new technology in general and the Internet in particular, since it helps them manage their daily preoccupations keeping them in touch with others and offering them great chances of improving their living standards and job expectations. Furthermore, this new technology will be of great service to the children of immigrants, enabling them a minimum degree of interconnection with cultures and necessary links with their origins and parents' and grandparents' native countries, and in so doing also acquiring the Arabic language.

The problem, however, rests in the difficulty of obtaining a fair balance between our need to penetrate into the science of technology and intellectual productivity with the least cost and without protective boundaries on the one hand, and protecting our own scientific input when we bet on exporting our scientific capital by providing the necessary finance for its livelihood. It may also be worth reminding one of the conclusions which estimate that more than 50 percent worth of yearly expenditure for education in different societies will have to filter through the Internet before the end of the next ten years, that the national management will lose its educational power, and that – in spite of our conviction with the global

aspect of science and encouraging the youth to join the major universities worldwide for post graduate studies – it is none-the-less impossible to disregard the merely commercial aspect taken by some of those institutions that aim at nothing other than pure material gains and a quick buck in the name of a higher educational mission.

The Arab child in the global village

Cyber space is a whole new world-invisible without boundaries or rule or dominion, unfathomable and unseen. According to a recent book by the Japanese researcher Kenichi Ohmae entitled *The Invisible Continent*,[3] globalization has resulted in the creation of this political entity with no constitution or specific order, but functioning rather under a code entitled "Independence in the Wake of Complementary and Peaceful Co-existence". To this continent belong a number of settlements in all states with similarities indicative of known geographic continents, such as area, population, total productivity rate, per capital income rate, etc.

Ohmae argues that although man has yet to unravel the various hidden aspects of this continent he can still grasp its major features from four different perspectives or dimensions, namely a) a visible dimension, b) a hypothetical dimension, c) a shifting dimension, and d) a trans-frontier dimension.

Hence, a person will do with all four dimensions during his/her day, dealing with the first as when buying a meal, with the second when using a magnetic card, touching on the third when dealing with the stock exchange, and entering the fourth when s/he sits to watch TV or at the computer gaining benefits of various management and commercial services. Attached to this wide-ranging trans-Atlantic continent are added facilities like bridges connecting its various extremities but with no likeness to those known to man in the industrial age. Dominating and running this new entity are procedures and consumers as different in their aims as they may be, with no specific single direction but with the single purpose of quick profit and invading new markets and fierce competition. The bridges for their part are mostly satellite TV channels, information networks, Internet, Microsoft, cable and satellite with embedded conditions that allow for discrimination in treatment between different factions of that one huge entity, deviousness and disrespect of principles of equality, trespassing the borders of ethics and decency, where anyone wishing to join the continent of his own free will is spurred by ambition or simply is under the impact of impression and temptation.

The question to every Arabic thinker should be: What are the benefits of dealing with this new global space and where do we stand in this invisible continent? To what degree are we able to interact with its inhabitants? What is the extent of the Arab contribution to that continent whence the possibility for acquiring a position therein? And in what manner and to what extent will the Arab child express willingness and inclination to share in that new world?

Unfortunately we have entered a world of violence and terrorism generated to a large extent by the removal of barriers, the aggravation of the tendency to fanaticism, need and poverty even within wealthy societies, all of which have left humanity in search for adequate solutions to deal with new issues and specific international laws and moral dictates to abide by.

The acquisition of a digital culture

To some, the information culture is what a person is able to grasp and share with the rest of the members of his/her community, concerning communication technology and its various applications and machinations and its reflection on the different components of social life. All this began gradually in history with a realization of the notion of the information revolution and the electronic highway, passing through a grasp of the background of the Internet and the extent of its interaction with local communication webs, with the development of the technology of virtual image and the progress anticipated in the realm of activating the various senses remotely.

The present topic poses the question: What content does the culture provide? What is its reference? What is the minimum technical and social know-how to grasp its deeper implications? What is the adequate behavior to join in building this digital society?

With the term "digital culture" widely used, the differences as to its actual meaning still remain in the minds of its users. The meaning perceived depends on the specialization of the user and the connection to his/her field of work, because to some it stands for scientific awakening in the informatics, while to others it means the ability to use the computer acquiring Internet and local web skills, thus making use of a wide range of services. To others still it would mean excelling in computer and mathematical sciences and algorithms reaching higher degrees of digital creativity. All these reasons require us to unify our definition of the term.

It is needless to stress the impossibility in the 21st century of being technologically illiterate. However, the term digital culture resides not only in technical knowledge but also in the merging of scientific imagination and technical skill. The relation, therefore, between the global paradigm and the notion of civilization in the information society needs further analyses of a more profound nature. Moreover, it must be always remembered that the information society does not necessarily mean an addition to cultural wealth. Information is not knowledge and knowledge is not culture. The real challenge is how to create a real culture from what is still a mix of technologies and information, why we have to question which cultural formation to address: the local content we have inherited generation after generation or a cyber culture that will adapt society into a new from. And is it possible to discuss the relation between culture and the media from a traditional vantage point? Or do we connect a new definition of culture

with the modern information networks and digital tools that by far exceed human intelligence and creative powers with an ability to impact man's behavior and change his needs in form and content directing creative channels towards another future, thus making its mark upon those very media organizations that long left their mark upon it? Considering that impact so apparent on the elderly, what then of that same influence on children and adolescents? Cyber culture is also one of those fields where new mental and cultural behavior patterns are wrought, patterns liable to embody a notion of universality both tangible and scientific.

We can, therefore, define "cybernetics" as a culture well equipped to help meet the challenges set on the international scene which is a framework within which a culture can flourish befitting the ethics of the international information society. Cyber culture cannot be truly worthy of this title, unless it manages to embody the deeper aspirations of all citizens of the universe. "The ethics of the information society" are not new ethics but rest, rather, on basic ethical principles that time and experience have proved worthy of following, having likewise stood the test of time such as equality, freedom and human dignity with the sole difference of putting them to practice within the parameters of the new international information community – a community in which, no doubt, the Arab world is a part, for whose children we need to create the necessary atmosphere in order to adjust them to become major players acting and reacting with this cyber culture. Hence the question is: Is the Arab public ready to assimilate this new culture? And is the traditional Arab mass media ready to acknowledge its new definition?

Some legal and legislative considerations

Broadband networks will soon obliterate borders helping to enhance an international culture that reflects the tendency of economic globalization. To begin with, there is absolutely no risk to be feared from depending upon these pathways and developing cultural interaction and rapprochement between peoples. Notwithstanding, we have to realize that the delicate balance between traditional values and their modern counterpart in developing societies will no doubt be subject to change in direct proportion to the extent of its exposure to broadband and new information horizons.

This new reality necessitates a good deal of consideration and scientific concern with the influence of culture – keeping in mind, however, the negative background and side effects of this process of which the manifestations are many and varied, dealing mainly with issues of faith, religion, language, national identity, history and heritage. Among these may be negative applications, ranging from those inciting religious fanaticism on the one hand, to total aberrations of moral behavior and obscenity on the other. So have some negative influences targeted both the individual and society through digital networks and the acquisition of patents to specific electronic games that invite racism and encourage it especially in certain categories of children in whom they implant hate and loathing for one another.

It has now become normal for a totally innocent child to mistakenly press the wrong key or push the wrong button (no matter how alert the parent), a matter which calls on us to more fully respect children's rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, both in order to ensure his/her rightful claims to knowledge and to consolidate protection of the child. Thus, with the increasing aspects of damage with regard to media networks, how do we reconcile those two conflicting considerations? And are we up to the challenge on the international front without falling into the pitfall of censorship and moral quarantine?

Granted, too, nations may feel a threat to their national security in the event of their citizens gaining familiarity and interacting with international and universal cultures and issues more than with their own local preoccupations and concerns with the fear that a less fortunate childhood condition will be more inclined to compare its living conditions with that of their affluent neighbors, generating feelings of envy and resentment, which in their turn lead to an explosion of refusal and revolt.

The spread of web technology is not flawless or problem free. Many negative aspects attending it can lead even to crime. It has been noted that computer crimes reaching varying degrees of seriousness, posing threats of more or less importance, and dealing with national economic and electronic security, have been committed also by perpetrators between the ages of 10 and 18. This, eventually, makes a minimum degree of censorship more acceptable than would otherwise be, only to ensure a margin to safety and security. If the widespread use of new technological devices will entail the incidence of crime, then it is our duty to debate which is the lesser evil: censorship and prohibition or outright harm? In this instance it is the duty of society as a whole to decide for itself and conclude the matter.

Despite the basic principle of freedom of expression, there is a general belief that the liberalization of the communication sector, as well as of electronic commerce on a global scale, requires a harmonized legal and legislative framework and a common registered code of ethics to secure electronic services and to regulate the interaction through the Internet on equal footing, in addition to protecting the intellectual property rights with the aim of encouraging intellectual output. This is a real challenge, which resides in the difficulty of striking a balance between the general direction of the market economy and the freedom of enterprise on one hand, and the need for developing legislation and management preparations in different fields on the other. The equation would not be complete unless humanity is able to overcome the difficulties and problems arising on the international scene concerning the necessity of managing between the freedom of the mass media, as defined by Article 19 of the International Declaration of Human Rights and the responsibility of the individual citizen towards his/her country and society as referred to in Article 29 of the same Declaration, and in particular those declarations concerned with the human rights of the child.

Concerns for the protection of cultural and media freedom are paralleled only by that for protecting youth from all aspects of delinquency. The UN Convention

on the Rights of the Child emphasizes this consideration, dedicating three articles to the media. Article 12 reiterates the absolute right of the child to express him-/herself on all matters concerning him/her. This right, in accordance with the terms of Article 13, involves the right of freedom to seek, receive and impart all kinds of information and ideas regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of the child's choice. Article 17 maintains the recognition of the importance of the different functions performed by the media which make it possible for the child to access whatever information from whatever national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, the State Parties shall:

- Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child [...].
- Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources.
- Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books.
- Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous.
- Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being [...].

The Arab child in the WSIS documents

So is it, then, that the information society is no longer a matter of national or regional concern but rather the focus of international consideration to which governments and heads of states lend great importance? No, the World Summit on the Information Society was prepared and held in order to set an all encompassing plan to pave the way for the mobilization of all vital sources in the community. Preliminary sessions were held in all continents with the help of all vital parties, especially NGOs and private and public sector organizations. The first part in Geneva issued two main documents:

- A Declaration of Principles – which is the minimum unanimously agreed upon by *all*.
- A Plan of Action – for implementing the principles.

The main objectives of the meeting were to build an information society with special emphasis on the importance of abiding by a commitment to work in tandem to build a new society whose main concern is the good of mankind, devel-

opment of all and equal opportunities for access of information for using and sharing. The Declaration broached on a number of crucial points with reference to the digital divide and funding to bridge the existing gaps, as well as private ownership, Internet control systems, the role of mass media in building the information society, cultural multiplicity, moral and ethical perspectives and the issue of human rights.

As for the dictates concerning the child, item (a) in paragraph 8 in the Declaration deals with teaching, education and the role of informatics in shaping large numbers of children starting from their pre-school years and ending usually with high school. Paragraph 11 deals with the commitment to carry out the joint vision, taking upon itself the welfare of the child in view of his/her importance as a future adult member of society. All passages stress the importance of providing the new generation with information, making all the modern means of teaching available to them, with special care to the deprived and those who have not yet been fully exposed to the technology and thereby are unable to make full use of it as researchers. This same passage ensures respect for child protection according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the well-being of the child with regard to communication and information. Paragraph 59 of sub-item 10 states that the information society prohibits all forms of child abuse and child pornography, as well as all destructive influences, and calls on all parties involved, including governments, to take the necessary preventive measures to face any breach of the recommendations, namely the manipulation of children for degrading purposes.

As for the media, the Declaration has taken into consideration a number of matters dealing with the different generations, since the responsibility of the Internet does not stop at the limits of journalism but extends to include the child's right to access information and communication and necessitates a minimum of precautions to ensure those rights as well as those of the author and the consumer and all financial transactions through the web.

The participants at the Summit expressed their commitment to the principles of the freedom of journalism and information, the principles of independence, multiplicity and variety in mass media. They considered the access to knowledge, its transmission and its utilization for different purposes to be of foremost importance in the information society.

Media circles were encouraged to use information in such a way as would reflect a strong sense of responsibility towards both children and the society according to the highest professional and moral standards, acknowledging, moreover, that all forms of existing traditional mass media still have the ability to play a very important role in this emerging society. For this reason, information and communication technologies should seek to endorse and support the media in addition to encouraging the expansion of the ownership of media in accordance to national regulations while abiding by relevant international agreements, as well.

The participants also unanimously agreed upon the importance of minimizing the international imbalances in the mass media especially those concerning infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills. In addi-

tion, NGOs have decided on a declaration of their own after encountering the impossibility of including a number of ideas in the official list of recommendations. This includes a great deal of emphasis on the importance of enabling societies to use open source software liberally and freely and has likewise warned against granting intellectual monopolies to the private sector in the name of protecting intellectual property rights, insisting, thereby on linking any advantage to the direct benefit it can have in the field of creativity for the general good, recommending that the problems of childhood should occupy a more central position in the second round of the Summit in Tunisia.

The Geneva Plan of Action came in the form of inviting and encouraging governments to lay electronic strategies with the help of other concerned parties in order to build information infrastructures, widening the prospect of implementing and developing curricula, encouraging related scientific research and developing human resources. The plan also asked all concerned to take the necessary steps for building confidence and ensuring safety of use of methods in question. The last passage in the work plan catalogued the issues worthy of attention in order to build an information society on an inclusive international level, bridging the digital divide and implementing the work plan on the national, regional and international levels with the collaboration of all parties concerned including societal organizations concerned with childhood matters.

The Arab role in the preparation for the second part of the Summit

A specialized Arab committee has closely followed the different stages of preparing for the Summit contributing ideas and suggestions. So have Arabic NGO representatives, some of whom have participated in the work of national committees and created a team (CAUCUS) in order to negotiate and take part in important consultations preceding the Summit. Topics discussed have been, for example, the right to continuous human development, the need to find resources for digital development, and the position of the family in the Arab civil society in endorsing the dialogue between cultures in order to give globalization a tint of civilization avoiding the negative image given to Arabs and Islam.

The main objective of a preparatory meeting in February 2004 for the second phase was to investigate the progress of the work set by the Secretary General of the United Nations requiring a set of suggestions as to the future of the Internet and means of financing ways of dealing with the digital divide. The work group also paid special attention to the Internet Protocol calling on Arab governments to accredit the sixth protocol in order to gain maximum benefit from technological progress and new services endorsed by it. As for domain names, the representatives of the Arab civil society called on concerned parties including governments, NGOs and businesses to follow up the discussions and formalize the needed solutions for the use of Arabic domain names on the web.

All Arab countries met in May 2005 in Cairo with the goal of setting a comprehensive Arab program embodying the aspirations and ambitions of the Arab groups from East to West, in collaboration with representatives of Arab countries and both international and regional organizations as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society and a number of Arab and international personalities in the field of information and communication.

The meeting discussed the preparatory process for the Summit in Tunis in November 2005 focusing, among other things, on what importance informatics can have in providing opportunities for overcoming the impediments of progress and development, and to help reach the developmental goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[4] To that end, the convening parties also investigated the work plan issued in the document entitled "Towards the Implementation of The Geneva Work Plan: A Regional Vision to Enhance and Develop The Information Society in the Arab World". They also referred it to the Arab governments to further enrich and look into it before the Summit.

It is noteworthy that this Arab document can be considered an essential reference embodying the resolutions of the "International Symposium of The Information Society in the Arab Region", being a regional strategy that includes all projects and initiatives of a regional nature, with hundreds of recommendations encompassing a variety of sectors of which one chapter deals with the development of human resources, education, training, eradication of illiteracy and spreading a digital culture. This chapter also calls for increased attention to technological awareness among all social groups with special reference to children, youth, women and persons with special needs. Moreover, particular attention is given in this document to the subject of teaching and illiteracy, not only by importing technological innovations but also by manufacturing its content, as well as by updating school subjects and curricula in innovative ways.

However, it is also worth mentioning that the question of children's media and Internet culture was not given its full due importance either in the first part of the Summit or in the preparatory Arab documents, which makes it necessary to stress these matters in the next stage of the Summit. A special work group, "Caucus de l'enfant", was brought together for this purpose in Geneva in February 2005.

What place does the Arabic language take in the information society?

The Arab child has become increasingly threatened by national and cultural alienation, because of the absence of digital material available in Arabic. So in addition to being exposed to foreign satellite channels and other media, the child finds him-/herself obliged to use an essentially foreign paradigm of information in order to widen his/her horizons and look up information not readily attainable from school. This western invasion into the cultural world of children has resulted in their acquisition of a new lexical amalgam worthy of serious studies

by language specialists. It has also caused the child to live in a dual reality: tangible social reality and an imaginary virtual reality.

The combination of original and intrusive languages results in a hybrid ethnocultural mix, which requires intellectual maturity and a responsive awareness in the best interest of the child. A child is not equipped to take on that task alone. It is, therefore, increasingly important according to children's rights to take necessary precautions against exposing children to foreign media material that can result in the annihilation of the Arab child's sense of citizenship and identity in the future. The Arabic language, a cornerstone in shaping national affiliation and cultural identity, therefore requires special attention in the Regional Arab Program, which will take place throughout the decade from 2005 to 2015.

Consider, for instance, that the English language represents from 50 to 70 percent of the language used in the sum of material on the Internet, and that a great many companies worldwide find common and necessary benefit in using the interactive digital media and its functions to attract new products and services to the market all of which are usually carried out in English. Where, then, does Arabic stand in the digital industry?

Since journalism, in its written medium, is capable only of reaching those who can read and write, children cannot always benefit from its services. Radio material is subject to delivery in a specific language, which makes it privy to specific geographic and intellectual borders. But other mass media, such as television, the Internet and computer programs, know no boundaries since interaction and industry go beyond the language barrier by being basically image-oriented.

All recent sessions preparing for the upcoming Summit have stressed the importance of increasing efforts in the direction of fulfilling children's needs in terms of mass media, entertainment, and education based on specialized studies of Arab origin, which does not mean the isolation of all that is Arabic or local, but rather that we acknowledge and meet the child's need for being better prepared and trained to criticize and distinguish between the positive and the negative incoming output in order to better protect his/her identity and sense of national and social belonging.

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity issued by UNESCO[5] was a starting point for laying an Arab strategy for the endorsement of the production of an Arab content. Several parties have taken upon themselves projects for producing this Arabic content and for preserving the heritage, of which one proposed suggestion was "forming a work team for research on digital content in Arabic and the means of developing it". The suggestion is, among other things, concerned with developing research engines in Arabic on the Internet since it has been shown that no such engines existed. The main objectives of developing such search engines are:

- Increasing the rate of distribution for the project in the Arab region.
- Bridging the digital divide between Arab and western countries.

- Facilitating access to Arabic digital information.
- Increasing Arabic and Islamic digital content.
- Promoting Arabic publishing on the Internet.

However, many persons seek to use colloquial informal local Arabic versions of the original classical form of the language (considered more uniformly used across the whole Arab region) with dialectic differences and idiosyncrasies on television, radio and the press. But sacrificing "Foshha" Arabic (the classical original) to the colloquial really means doing away with one of the few remaining strong holds of Arab cultural nationalism and unity. What we need is, rather, using the media to propagate for the use of "Foshha" in our daily life in such a way as to end the duality resulting from using both forms of the language. This requires a well set and graded plan laid down by educators, writers, linguists and psychologists. For it is no longer acceptable that "Foshha" be assigned only to the *Quran* and *Hadith* and it is up to us to deal with this duality in all possible ways – through poems, songs, proverbs and quotations, tales from folklore and verse plays.

Conclusion

The World Summit of the Information Society, in its first stage, has been subject to differences of opinion between industrial countries wishing to limit the issue of establishing the information society within the boundaries of total liberalization for the exchange of information through the Internet, and developing and emerging countries that have strived to look into possible means of implementing modern technology for development and outlining the responsibility of rich countries in supporting the process. These differences have lead to the postponement of the resolution of a number of issues to the second part of the Summit. Among the most prominent of these issues are that of "Internet management" and that of "the financing of digital development projects".

Moreover, NGOs were not altogether satisfied with what was included in the official regulations dealing with some of the main concerns that did not take their fair share of attention – such as problems of the handicapped and impaired, and problems of childhood. For it is not conceivable to investigate the future of humanity without in-depth scrutiny of the future of the child. Hence, the paramount importance of the Tunisian Summit lies in that its recommendations will set the path to be taken by the World Wide Web and answer the ultimate question: Will the Internet fulfill its promise of spreading knowledge and enhancing connections between people or will it serve the interest of certain countries over others, and reinforce a global culture at the cost of other cultures?

Hopefully, the international community will emerge from Tunis in concurrence on a group of strategic objectives that help energize the information society in all geographic regions – a matter humanity is not much accustomed to, having joined

the industrial society ad hoc, and having surpassed it even without preparation or arrangement.

The rights of the child will hopefully be respected, as well.

All WSIS outcome documents from Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005, as well as its preparatory documents and its implementation and follow-up, are available at http://www.itu.int/wsis

Notes

1. This article is a translated and slightly abridged version of the paper "The Impact of Foreign Media on the Arab Child in the Era of the Digital Revolution" presented by the author in Arabic at the international conference "The Arab Child Subjected to Cultural Influences", held at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt, 25-27 September 2005.
2. Yves Eudes, *La conquête des esprits*, Maspéro, Paris, 1982
3. Kenichi Ohmae, *The Invisible Continent: Four strategic imperatives of the new economy*. New York, HarperBusiness, 2000
4. http://www.unhabitat.org/mdg
5. http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13066&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Divided City[1]

Information Poverty in Nairobi's Slums

Rasna Warah

In the last few years, more and more development agencies are recognizing that knowledge and information can mitigate risk and improve the livelihoods of the poor. Not knowing about their rights, services they could access, plans for their areas or options available for tackling certain problems puts the poor at a disadvantage and increases their vulnerability. One study in India, for instance, found a high correlation between access to newspapers in a region and its ability to avert floods or droughts (Besley and Burgess 2000).

The Internet is prompting a sea change in international development thinking. Many governments, donors and multilateral organizations are radically reshaping their policies in the new information age. This has led to the "informationalization" of development initiatives. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are now seen as the key to economic development and tools of political empowerment that can transcend traditional North-South, rich-poor divisions.

Evidence suggests that when ICTs, including mobile phones, are placed in an enabling environment and adapted to the needs of those who use them, they can improve livelihoods. A recent report, backed by the U.K. mobile phone giant Vodafone and the Centre for Economic Policy and Research, showed that African countries with greater mobile use had seen a higher rate of economic growth. The report found that a developing country, which has an average of 10 more mobile phones per 100 population between 1996 and 2003, had 0.59% higher GDP (gross domestic product) growth than an otherwise identical country (BBC News 2005). In Bangladesh, GrameenPhone Ltd. has helped thousands of poor rural women to earn a living and improve mobile phone connectivity in the remotest parts of the country. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Viva Favela, a donor – and private sector –funded web site devoted to the interests of the city's slum dwellers has enabled hundreds of impoverished youth to find employment and get the latest health information. Because of their ability to raze geographical, social,

economic and cultural barriers, ICTs have the potential of overcoming inequalities and becoming a catalyst for development. Sam Pitroda (1993), India's visionary technologist, referred to ICTs as "the most democratizing tool ever devised".

However, while new information technologies have the potential of breaking social, economic and political barriers and creating more egalitarian societies, they have also had the net effect of increasing political, economic and social divisions. The "digital divide" is getting wider, resulting in what Manuel Castells calls "the Fourth World" – large sections of the world's population, concentrated mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, who remain untouched by the new information and communication technology revolution, and therefore passive victims of global forces, rather than active participants or key players (Castells 1998, 2000:68).

The costs and benefits of globalization are unevenly distributed not only between cities of the North and South, but also *within* cities. Enclaves of "superconnected" people, firms and institutions, with their increasing broadband connections to the world via the Internet, mobile phones and satellite television, exist side-by-side with large numbers of people who have never made a phone call or used the Internet.

In many cities, the urban poor now have to deal with another form of social exclusion. Language, education and infrastructure barriers continue to ensure that the poor in cities such as Nairobi remain untouched by the information revolution. Because connectivity and informational capacity will determine wealth and power in our time, the urban poor risk being even more marginalized and impoverished. Their poverty will not just be measured by their income or their assets, but also by their ability to generate, process, receive and disseminate information, or what I refer to as their "information poverty".

Africa's digital exclusion

With the exception of South Africa (which has a high level of industrialization and a more diversified economy), most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been bypassed by the information and communication technology revolution altogether. Africa lags behind every other continent in the use of media tools and technologies. In 2000, out of a total of 800 million people, only 1 in 4 had a radio, 1 in 13 a television set, 1 in 40 a telephone and 1 in 130 a computer (Mutume 2003).

In 2000, only 0.4 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africans had used the Internet, compared to 54.3 per cent Americans (UNDP 2001:40). If one excludes South Africa, this percentage drops drastically to 0.04 per cent or less than 3 million people (Mutume 2003). Not only is Africa the least computerised region in the world, it does not have the skills and knowledge required to make use of computers. Most countries lack the educational and training facilities needed to help people acquire the proper computer skills. Only a handful of countries offer university-level education in computer science (Odedra 1993).

Africa's digital exclusion is intimately linked to its lack of infrastructure to support technological innovations. Access to electricity and telephones remains dismally low in most parts of the continent. In 1994, Africa accounted for only 2 per cent of the world's telephone lines. Rural electrification remains a dream yet to be realised in most parts of the region (Hall 1995). Poverty and a poor telecommunications infrastructure mean that Internet access is largely restricted to the urban elite. In 2001, there were only 500,000 Internet users in Kenya, out of a total population of 32 million people (World Bank 2003).

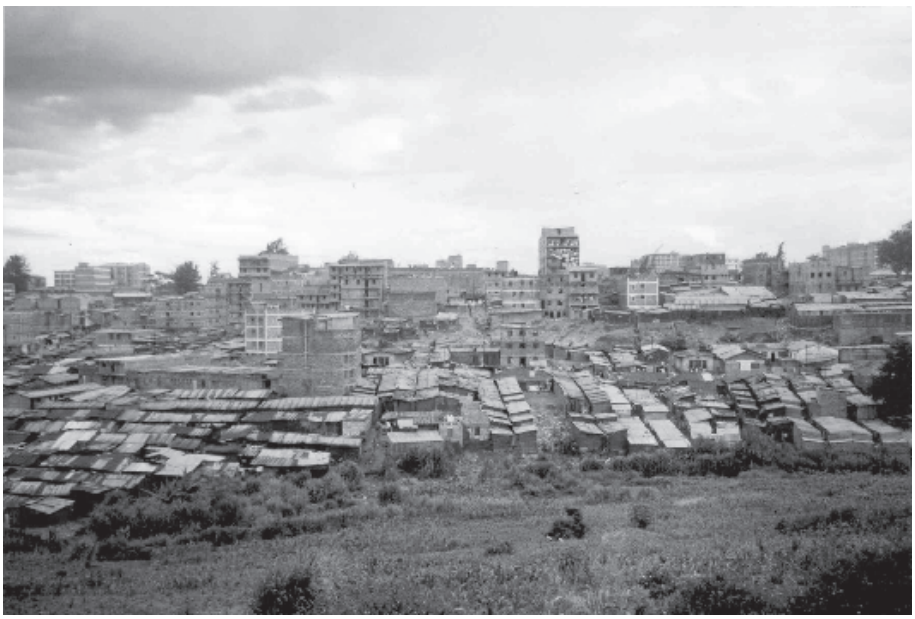
The cost of personal computers also remains out of the reach of most Africans. Telecentres and cyber cafés may have made Internet access more available, but the cost is still only affordable to the middle and upper classes. Cheap computers with non-propriety software, designed to be shared at public libraries, cyber cafés and telecentres, could bring Internet access to more people in Africa, but these options have not yet been fully explored or implemented.

However, while Internet access is costly and heavily dependant on the existence of infrastructure such as electricity and land telephone lines, other ICTs, such as the mobile phone, appear to be becoming a more powerful force of change on the continent. The number of mobile subscribers on the continent has grown dramatically to 34.3 million (www.cellular.co.za), mainly due to the fact that mobile phone operations are cheaper to build than fixed line systems and also because the costs of handsets are dropping everyday. In 1999, Uganda became the first African country to have more mobile than fixed-line customers. Today mobile phones outnumber fixed lines in Africa at a higher ratio than on any other continent (International Telecommunications Union 2002). A 2005 report found that in South Africa, 85 per cent of small businesses run by black people rely solely on mobile phones for telecommunications (BBC News 2005).

Once a status symbol, the mobile phone has over the years become a democratising influence in Africa's rural and urban areas, and also an important investment for entrepreneurs in the informal sector. The typical mobile user on the continent is more likely to be a taxi driver, a farmer, a cow herdsman, a market trader, a plumber or street hawker rather than a corporate executive (Ashurst 2004). The mobile phone has extended telephone services to those who survived outside the formal economy, and has enabled many to improve and extend the services they provide.

However, radio still remains the most accessible medium in most African countries, reaching an estimated 60 per cent of Africa's population (Chetty 2003), which makes it the most powerful medium of communication on the continent.

Nairobi: divided city



The world is becoming increasing urban: more poor people live in urban areas than ever before. By 2001, an estimated 47.7 per cent of the world's population was urban (United Nations Population Division 2002). Almost a third of this population lives in life and health-threatening conditions, with little access to basic services or adequate housing, i.e., in slum conditions. It is estimated that in 2001, 924 million people, or 31.6 per cent of the world's total urban population, lived in slums. In the next 30 years, this figure is projected to double to almost 2 billion unless drastic policy changes are put in place to alter this projection (UN-HABITAT 2003a:xxv). The spatial landscape of poverty is increasingly urban in nature.

At 71.9 per cent, sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of the urban population resident in slums. Although in terms of sheer numbers Asia hosts the largest number of slum dwellers (554 million or 60% of the world's total in 2001), Africa is rapidly becoming a continent of slums; 166 million out of a total of 231 million urban residents in sub-Saharan Africa are classified as slum dwellers (UN-HABITAT 2003a: 14).

Slums represent the "invisible" or informal part of the city, denied services and resources that are available to the "visible" or formal part, even though in many developing countries slum residents represent over 50 per cent of the city's population. Yet, most governments do not recognize slums, or informal settlements, in their urban plans, which makes the situation of slums even more precarious. In addition, there is generally an absence of data on slums in official statistics: they represent "zones of silence" in terms of public knowledge (UN-HABITAT 2003b: 54).

The state of Nairobi's slums

The population of Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, has grown more than ten-fold since 1960, from approximately 219,000 people to an estimated 2.31 million people in 2000, or 7.7 per cent of Kenya's total population (DFID 2000). An estimated 60 per cent of the city's population lives in slums and informal settlements (Government of Kenya/UNCHS 2001:1).

Between 1971 and 1995, the number of informal settlements and slums within Nairobi rose from 50 to 134, while the estimated total population of these settlements increased from 167,000 to some 1,886,000 individuals (UN-HABITAT 2003a: 219). The size and densities of these settlements vary from a few hundred people to hundreds of thousands of people. Kibera, the largest one, estimated to have a population of between 700,000 and 1,000,000, is considered the largest slum in Africa, if not the world. Today, both natural growth and rural-to-urban migration continue to contribute to the growth of Nairobi's slums and informal settlements. These slums provide a large proportion of the formal and informal labour force in the city and, it has been argued, play a useful role in providing cheap housing for those who cannot, or, as likely, will not, want to spend any more on housing than they possibly can.

Life in Nairobi's slums is not easy by any standard. As many as 1,200 people live on one square hectare, most in shacks as small as 10x10 feet. Tenure for many who live and work in the settlements is insecure. Slums occupy only 5 per cent of the residential land in the city, half of which belongs to the state. However, individuals have over time negotiated informal arrangements with the authorities to erect structures and collect rents. Most slum dwellers do not own the structures in which they live (Government of Kenya/UNCHS 2001:1).

The majority of slum dwellers in Nairobi are tenants, paying between US$ 3 to US$ 45 for a room. The average monthly salary of a slum dweller in Nairobi is US$ 40, slightly above the official poverty line of US$ 39 per adult person per month (Central Bureau of Statistics 2000).

Provision of basic services in slums is extremely scant or non-existent. As many as 400 people can end up sharing one toilet. Slum dwellers have dug up pit latrines in slums, which pose additional health and environmental hazards, besides eroding the dignity and self-respect of residents. Water, electricity, cooking fuel, schools and other services are in short supply (Government of Kenya/UNCHS 2001:1).

The Nairobi City Council, the main authority charged with the provision and management of services within the city, cannot cope with the problem due to a combination of factors: the poor economic situation in the country; rapid urban growth; limited resources; inefficient revenue collection; and corruption, among others.

Moreover, most of the services provided through government channels are not targeted at the urban poor. Most basic services, such as roads and electricity, barely extend to the informal settlements. As these do not fall under the official "planned

areas" of the city, and are generally regarded as "illegal", the authorities have no statutory obligation to provide services to these areas. Slum dwellers have no choice but to make their own arrangements to gain access to services, such as through water kiosks and by "stealing" electricity from the mains. Some church and non-governmental organizations have tried to fill in the shortfall in services, but clearly demand outstrips supply.

Growing polarization and conflict

The growth of slums in an era of unprecedented economic prosperity can, and does, contribute to tensions that can threaten local, national and even global security. Evidence suggests that cities that are unable to bridge income inequalities and manage social integration are likely to be more violent and insecure than those less polarized and more integrated. Growing polarization between the rich and the poor has contributed to the growth of "gated communities" in cities, a new type of social apartheid in which the rich and the poor appear to belong to different worlds and inhabit separate spaces.

This "social apartheid" has been the source of innumerable conflicts in Nairobi, where violent clashes between the authorities, private developers and slum dwellers has been a feature of urban life for many years. In June 2003, thirteen members of a hired eviction squad were battered to death by residents of a low-income settlement in Nairobi when the squad forcibly tried to evict tenants who had not paid rent for two months (Muiruri 2003).

Slum residents have also been targets of extreme violence by the state and greedy landlords. According to Odindo Opiata (2003), Coordinator of Legal Services and Community Partnerships at Kituo cha Sheria, a legal aid NGO in Nairobi, lack of information flow between the authorities and slum dwellers threatens to polarize residents even further and result in more disputes in Kenya's major cities.

If information and communication can avert conflict and promote development, then it is important to know how the poor obtain information and what channels of communication are available to them.

Methodology

The study reported on in this article focused on the issue of access to traditional media and ICTs, trying not to make judgements on the knowledge and capacity of those who do or do not have access to media and ICTs. Information poverty is thus defined as "deprivation in access to traditional media and information and communication technologies".

The questions posed were:

a) If access to traditional media and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) is a prerequisite to development in the information age, then what is the level of "information poverty" among Nairobi's slum dwellers?

b) Assuming that there is limited use of traditional media (newspapers, radio and television) and ICTs (wireless and computer-based technologies, including mobile phones and the Internet) in Nairobi's slums, what other mechanisms have been developed to overcome "information poverty" and to reduce the information chasm between the "connected" and "unconnected" sections of the city's population?

Due to the small size of the sample, this study does not pretend to be scientific in its findings. However, it is presumed that they are a somewhat accurate reflection of the state of information poverty in Nairobi's slums. They apply to the sample surveyed, but could apply to slum populations within the city as a whole, as the sample was representative of the total population from which it was drawn.

The study does not focus specifically on children and youth, although in African cities, they comprise the majority of slum dwellers.

A combination of methods was used to determine the level of information poverty in Nairobi's slums:

- *Literature survey*: This was conducted to determine major trends in the field of communication for development. Of particular interest was an international research project, implemented by ITDG (the Intermediate Technology Development Group) and funded by DFID (UK Department for International Development), which explored the knowledge and information systems of the urban poor in three countries – Peru, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka (Schilderman 2003). This report informed and confirmed many of the findings of my own research.

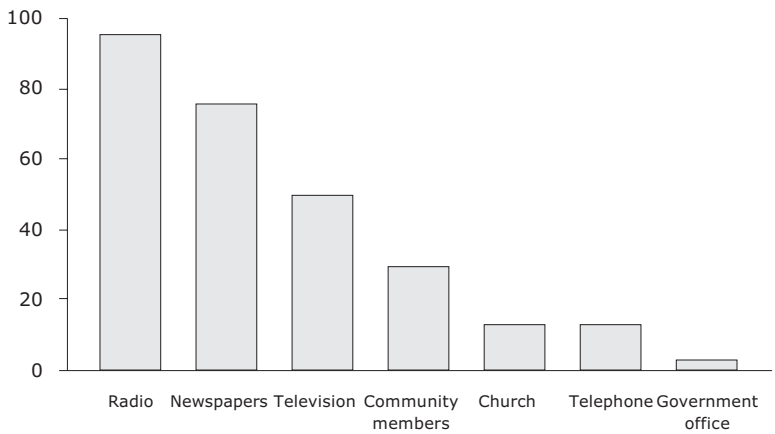
- *Questionnaire*: A questionnaire in both English and Kiswahili was prepared and distributed to 30 slum dwellers attending a meeting held on 25 September 2003 organised by Kituo Cha Sheria to engage slum dwellers and government and other stakeholders in discussing a draft housing policy for Kenya. Thirty respondents from slums around the city filled out the questionnaire. The sample was drawn from a cross-section of Nairobi's slums. Their work/professions ranged from skilled to semi-skilled jobs. Their incomes ranged from US$ 30 to US$ 220 a month. 22 of the respondents were male; 8 were female. This imbalance, unfortunately, did not allow for accurate gender analysis of the responses. The questionnaire asked the respondents about three main things: their main sources of news; their main sources of housing information; and whether or not they had access to the Internet.

- *Semi-structured interviews*, or "friendly conversations", were conducted with some of the respondents to clarify or elaborate on responses given in the questionnaire. In addition, between October 2003 and January 2004, interviews via e-mail and in person were conducted with Odindo Opiata, Coordinator of Legal Services and Community Partnerships at Kituo cha Sheria, the above-mentioned NGO, whose main clients are the rural and urban poor.

Results and analysis

The questionnaire results showed that traditional media (radio, newspapers and TV) are the most important sources of news on current events among slum dwellers (Figure 1). 29 out of 30 (96%) said they got their news from radio; 23 (76%) said they read it in newspapers; and 15 (50%) said they saw it on television. Nine (30%) respondents said they got the news from community members, 4 (13%) said they heard it in church. 4 (13%) said they got the news over the telephone. Only one respondent each cited a government official or their employer as sources of news. (Note: percentages do not add up to 100. Since respondents were asked to tick 3 sources, not 1, there was significant overlap.)

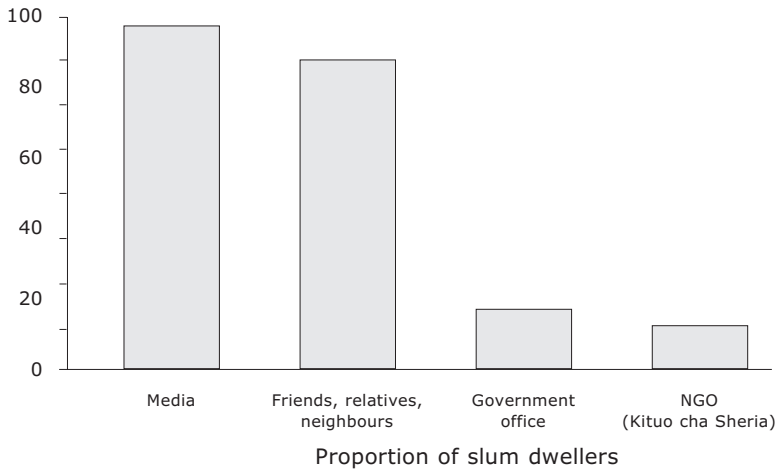
Figure 1. Sources of news/current affairs information



However, when it came to housing, the role of traditional mainstream media became less important, although over a third of respondents still relied on these sources for information (Figure 2). In this case, social networks (friends, family, neighbours, community and church members) became more important. Of the 26 people who responded to Question 2, 10 (39%) said they learned about where to find a house from the media (newspapers and radio). Five (19%) said they

asked Kituo cha Sheria, the NGO that had organized the meeting that they were attending. Two (7%) said they got the information from the government or local authority. The rest (9 out of 26, or 35%) cited friends, relatives, neighbours, community members and the church as the main sources of information on housing. If NGOs are included in the social network of slum dwellers (along with friends, relatives, neighbours, community members and religious organizations), then social networks became more significant as sources of information on livelihood issues, with over half of the respondents (54%) citing these networks as the main source of information on housing.

Figure 2. Sources of housing information



One respondent explained how he got to live in his one-room house in Kangemi (translated from Kiswahili):

> The first thing you have to do when you come to Nairobi is to move in with relatives from the village who already live in the city. Then you begin to look for jobs. Once you have found a job, you ask people in the neighbourhood if there are other houses in the area that you can rent. This is how I got to find a house near my brother in Kangemi.

When asked why he chose to live in that particular house in Kangemi, the respondent said that not only it was close to where his brother was, but also large enough to accommodate his wife and children from his village in Western Kenya, who visit him in Nairobi once a year.

The findings show that government institutions are not the main sources of information on housing. The poor often have to rely on non-governmental organizations (who take on the role of *infomediaries* or key informants) or their

own social networks to obtain accurate information on housing issues. The government is often seen as a source of disinformation, and this can be the source of suspicion and conflict. Recent slum-upgrading initiatives in the city are a case in point. The authorities often failed to inform the residents of the plans for their areas, which led to violence and protests in slums, and even to riots in which people were killed.

On how NGOs such as Kituo cha Sheria go about improving the information/communication gap between slum dwellers and the authorities, Odindo Opiata (2004) of Kituo cha Sheria had this to say:

> Our sessions with slum dwellers are aimed at ensuring real as opposed to symbolic participation. Before any session, we normally hold informal meetings with the leaders during which we share with them relevant information so that at the sessions they are able to make informed contributions and assist in guiding the discussions. We see our role as merely intervening to give some technical input and we deliberately ensure that the slum dwellers are the main speakers. Above all, we insist that all participants speak Kiswahili, including our NGO partners, for our experience shows that in most of the meetings where slum dwellers are invited, the language used (English) alienates them. […] we have now also institutionalized the process of making available important information accessible to the slum dwellers. […] We have also decided to have all our publications on housing done in Kiswahili. These initiatives may have in some way contributed to the slum dwellers' ability to engage directly with the authorities.

Surprisingly, a total of 6 (20%) respondents said they had access to the Internet. Of these, 4 were civic and human rights educators and trainers, who had access to the Internet through their affiliation with NGO networks, and as part of their job. The 2 others had access in their neighbourhood or at their place of work. Three respondents admitted that they had never heard of the Internet and did not know how to respond to this question. Said one respondent:

> I don't know what this Internet thing is. I have never come across it.

The results of the questionnaire show that radio is the most important medium of information on current events among the urban poor. This finding confirms many other surveys, which show that in Africa radio is still the most important medium, and will remain so for many years to come.

The surprising finding was that a large proportion of the sample relied on newspapers and television for news. Subsequent interviews revealed that while few slum dwellers purchase newspapers, they do have access to them at their places of work. Similarly, while few own their own television sets, they do have access to television in their neighbourhoods, either at bars, community centres or police stations (which serve as community centres in some areas) or via TV

and video halls within slums where residents pay a small fee per hour (an average of US$ 0.25) to watch television or films.

Also, while fixed landlines are virtually non-existent in slums, the majority (3 out of 4 or 75%) of the respondents that did cite the telephone as a source of information were self-employed. This suggests that their telephone access was via mobile phones or telephone booths, as none of them worked in an office or in the formal sector, where land telephone lines would be more accessible. Mobile phones have also contributed to sustaining rural-urban linkages alive. For instance, one slum dweller has distributed his employer's mobile phone number to all his relatives in the village from where he comes. This way, when there is a tragedy in the family or when the sugarcane is ready for harvesting, the employer gets a text message on his mobile phone, which he conveys to his employee, the slum dweller. In the slum dweller's village there a few, if any, fixed telephone lines, and the mobile phone has offered a valuable opportunity to those who previously relied mainly on postal services to keep in touch with their families in urban areas.

Internet access, as expected, remains low in slums. Those that do have access do so through their work, mostly with NGOs and civic education bodies.

Key findings

Social networks, or social capital, can make the difference between relative information poverty and absolute information poverty in slums, and can be the basis of personal, relational and collective empowerment. Slums with the highest social capital are also the most effective users of media and ICTs.

Social capital refers to the presence of multiple networks of civic engagement that, through upholding norms and generating trust, facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit.

Links to family-based networks, occupation-based groups of mutual help, rotating savings and credit groups, and other groups and associations to which a household belongs – all part of the household's social capital – can be the source of transfers in cash or kind in the event of a calamity or job loss. Social capital, therefore, is one asset on which the poor rely to improve their livelihoods, avert catastrophe or stay informed. It can also help develop individual consciousness and confidence, increase one's ability to negotiate with the authorities and influence political processes.

This study demonstrates that social capital plays a key role in determining who is informed and who is uninformed in slum settlements, particularly on livelihood issues.

In most informal settlements, or slums, there are a multitude of local associations and networks on which the urban poor rely to obtain information, and which can be mobilised in order for the communities to gain access to land, resist eviction, provide themselves with water, manage savings and credit, or to raise funds

for a particular project. The associations can be formal, informal, religious or ethnicity-based. They can manifest themselves through kinship ties, religious organizations, city-based federations, NGOs and even political parties.

These networks serve to fill the communication and information gap between slum dwellers and the authorities and are often an indicator of the level of poverty and deprivation in a community. Communities with strong social networks tend to be better informed than those where such networks are non-existent or have broken down.

Modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) have not played a major role in the lives of the urban poor, but have the potential to impact the urban poor in positive ways. Mobile phones, in particular, have resulted in tangible benefits that have improved the livelihoods of slum dwellers.

Mobile phone use is growing faster in Africa than in any other continent in the world. In Nairobi, the urban poor are increasingly relying on mobile phones to conduct their small businesses, to keep in touch with rural families, and to obtain other information that will improve their livelihoods. Although this study had no way of verifying the numbers of mobile users in Nairobi's slums, it is evident that the mobile phone is the only telephone service available to the urban poor in the city, as most slums, where the urban poor reside, lack the telecommunications infrastructure to support land lines. Regional trends and indicators show that mobile phone use on the continent has surpassed land telephone lines. This has improved connectivity in rural and urban areas, and also given the poor in both rural and urban areas an opportunity to improve their livelihoods, e.g., by gaining access to more timely information on markets and gaining direct access to customers. The mobile phone is predicted to become the most significant interactive medium available to Africans. However, while mobile phone use is set to increase among the urban and rural poor in Africa, the Internet still has a long way to go, and is not likely to impact the lives of the poor in the immediate future.

Radio is still the main source of news and information among the urban poor.

Before we dismiss traditional media as out-dated and irrelevant in a globalizing world, it is important to note that radio is still the main source of news and information in Africa. It is the only medium that is transmitted to the remotest corners of the continent, and often the only source of news among some rural and nomadic communities. Almost all the slum dwellers surveyed cited radio as a source of news. Development interventions, particularly government campaigns, have recognized this fact, and do indeed use radio as a key channel for transmitting information on national development issues and priorities.

The way forward

Mounting empirical evidence does lend support to the argument that ICTs are a powerful tool of development. The strong correlation between ICT access and GDP per capita is undeniable, even for African countries (Chetty 2003).

Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, ICTs have created new inequalities and new forms of social apartheid. "Connected" and "unconnected" segments of the population live in worlds separated by access to these technologies. Large proportions of the world remain untouched by the information revolution, and are doomed to further marginalization. Cities that do not make use of these technologies risk being relegated to "Fourth World" status, unable to reap the benefits of global trade and real-time information flows.

With the largest proportion of slum settlements in the world, Africa's cities are the sites of extreme deprivation and poverty. Yet, in the right environment, these cities can overcome further exclusion by consciously seeking to improve ICT access, particularly among the urban poor.

The recommendations that follow are not meant as prescriptions for urban poverty alleviation; they will not solve the problem of poverty in Nairobi, which has multiple causes and is complex and multidimensional. But they can go a long way in raising the standards of living and the informational capacity of those currently leading sub-human lives in the city's various slums.

African countries need to improve their informational capacity. Not doing so will lead to further impoverishment and marginalization of the continent.

At the regional and national level, countries need to improve their informational capacity, i.e., their ability to operate in the new informational paradigm, which is technology-driven and infrastructure-dependant.

Lack of investment in the ICT sector in Africa is likely to relegate Africans to always being consumers of technology, rather than producers. Moreover, importation of ICT technology and expertise from abroad is likely to increase the socio-economic disparities on the continent (Chetty 2003). Countries such as Kenya must not only be able to operate efficiently in the new system with other countries in other parts of the world, but between and within its cities and between "connected" and "unconnected" sections of the urban population. Apart from making public investments in education and training in ICT research and development, the government must dismantle barriers to promoting the telecommunications sector. This requires investment in more efficient telecommunication systems and opening up of the telecommunications sector to more Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with a view to breaking the monopoly of the state in this sector.

ICTs must be integrated into development plans, including slum-upgrading initiatives.

Improving ICT access in slum areas may seem like a luxury in an environment where access to basic water, sanitation and electricity is a still a major ob-

stacle. For this reason, most slum upgrading initiatives tend to focus more on improving the physical condition of housing, and at improving water and sanitation facilities, rather than improving telecommunications systems within slums. However, this approach is short-sighted and risks further marginalizing slum communities. Provision of telecommunications infrastructure in slum settlements must be part and parcel of slum upgrading projects.

At the national and local government levels and within civil society, advocacy is needed to encourage institutions and organisations to incorporate and prioritise ICT into development plans, in line with NEPAD's (The New Partnership for Africa's Development) development agenda.

Non-governmental and civil society organizations often provide a vital link between the urban poor and people who have power, influence, authority or resources. Their catalytic role as *infomediaries* makes them ideal advocates and implementers of ICT initiatives in slum communities. Organizations working with slum communities should be empowered and encouraged to fill the information gap between the urban poor and the authorities and to introduce ICTs in their own development projects, with a view to making them self-sustaining.

Note

1. This article is based on the author's Master thesis, "Divided City: Information Poverty in Nairobi's Slums" (June 2004). An earlier version of the article was published in the web magazine *Globala Tider,* No. 1, 25 May 2005 (http://webzone.k3.mah.se/projects/gt2/about.aspx), which granted permission to print this revised article. For the current issue of *Globala Tider*, visit www.globalatider.nu

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Dream Worlds and Media Worlds

Using Drawings for Insights into the Lives of New Zealand Children

Geoff Lealand & Ruth Zanker

As two New Zealand academics teaching and researching contemporary media, we collaborate on substantial studies of the use of media by New Zealand children and adolescents, aged between 8 and 14 years. The outcomes of these studies, conducted in 1999 and 2002, and again in 2005, are designed to provide public, comprehensive and detailed information on the role of media in the lives of young New Zealanders (Lealand, 2001; Lealand and Zanker, 2003).

What makes our research important for children's media policy in New Zealand?

Our research is designed with a public audience in mind. We aim to explore the media use with young people – their pleasures and frustrations (personal, peer and family) – in order to inform and shape media policy and media provision for young people in New Zealand. We find that our results challenge some common sense or prevailing myths about the way that children engage and use media in their lives. We also find great value in comparing our findings in New Zealand with those of researchers in other nations. This enables us to tease out how different cultures, economies and policy environments shape children's media provision and opportunities.

Our research also pays particular attention to the experience of young New Zealanders growing up in a small South Pacific nation, where attention shifts between producing sustaining cultural productions (TV, radio, music, film) that tell local stories (for 'Kiwi kids'), and accounting for the global worlds that children move in. There are other important considerations we continue to explore – such as how local production reflects the bi-cultural life of New Zealand (where Maori accompanies English as an official language), and the growing importance

of multi-culturalism. These are particularly important cultural inflections for local producers and policy makers to be informed about.

Forced to run a parallel industry event!

Yet, despite our sense of its importance, it is difficult for academic research to gain the attention of local producers and policy makers, especially when they are driven by short-term goals and outcomes. When we found that no space for our interests was provided at the annual New Zealand Film and Television Industry conference in November 2004, we decided to run a parallel seminar (with Dr Katalin Lustyik, Research Fellow at the Auckland University of Technology) in order to place children and their media environment on the agenda. This event coincided with the introduction of the Television New Zealand Charter, with its legislated requirements for children's television. Our seminar drew a respectable audience of 60 interested producers, researchers and policy makers, and received important media coverage on National Radio.

The New Zealand children's media research context

Debate over the impact of media on children's lives in New Zealand is characteristically short on facts or substance, whilst being highlighted, all too often, by emotionally over-charged press coverage. Public debate continues to be captured by the press releases from single-issue lobby groups – a situation shared by other researchers in other nations.

This situation has not been helped by theoretical blind spots. It can be said that, until relatively recently, there has been neglect of media issues within the sociology of childhood, and childhood within the sociology of the media. This unfortunate state of affairs is gradually being rectified as researchers in a range of countries analyze how children's shared cultural experiences are increasingly mediated, whilst at the same time children use the media in different ways in different cultural contexts.

As a result there is growing consensus that children's lives have become saturated with media messages, icons and narratives, and that children everywhere increasingly share pleasure in a global, popular consumer culture (Kline, 1993; Buckingham, 2000; Livingstone et al., 2001). Much of the evidence is generated by the impressive outputs of northern hemisphere researchers. Nevertheless, our research is designed to ensure that there is careful, localised field-work with children in New Zealand for media producers and policy makers to draw on.

It is difficult to find funding for such research in New Zealand. Our research continues to be modestly financed by our respective academic institutions because it does not appear to fit the priorities of (and financial pressures on) the several social science research funding bodies in New Zealand. It is a daunting

task to push 'media use' up the hierarchy of 'issues' considered important to investigate in children's lives. Too often 'television viewing' is treated simply as the one media-related variable within much larger studies of influences on children's development. We find this unfortunate when our evidence suggests that children have a lot more to say about how their social and converging media worlds interweave.

In contrast to limited public research funding sources, proprietary commissioned research into children's media choices and preferences is a growth industry in New Zealand. Research companies pitch for work funded by commercial media (television, telecommunications and Internet) and their advertising and marketing clients. The resulting studies are not publicly available because they are commissioned to provide market advantage in the highly competitive New Zealand children's media environment. Somewhat ironically, it is often difficult to inflate the costs of academic research, to match the budgets of commercial research, as much social science research on children can be done inexpensively!

The television channel charged with public service outputs (TVNZ) is also locked into commissioning confidential audience and programming research to give them the market edge because they are also reliant on advertising income.

Our ongoing research

In our various reports, we have emphasised the need for this kind of research to be continuous – or, at least, revisited on a regular basis. Following our own advice, we have replicated the research design in two sites (in the Hamilton region, in the upper North Island of New Zealand, and in Christchurch metropolitan area, in the South Island of New Zealand), as well as being currently involved in a third phase of research.

It is our contention that research on young people and their media use is most effective and productive when it has an on-going life, taking in account the rapid shifts in the availability and innovations in media technology. In our two previous research studies, for example, we pay minimal attention to newer digital and mobile technology (such as cell-phones, MP3 players) but the latest round of research has a particular focus on these new elements in children's lives.

We have maintained our attention on the role media technology in the lives of young New Zealanders, aged between 8 and 14 years. This has enabled us to sustain a research relationship with a number of schools, over six years. These schools provide privileged access to a large cohort of students. In addition, the schools we have access to provide a diversity of student cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and a corresponding range of media experiences.

Using drawings in research with children

On all three occasions, our research has followed a fairly conventional research design of a widely distributed questionnaire on media ownership and use, followed by a series of focus/discussion groups on school sites. These group sessions have also been invited to draw and create 'art work' to express their relationship to media of choice.

Even though drawings are used in some areas of research into children (in exploring area of emotional disturbance or psychological damage, for example), they have not been used much in media research, since the pioneering work of Patricia Palmer in her 1986 book *The Lively Audience: A study of children around the TV set*. This is a little surprising, given that media research is most often interested in exploring understanding of visual media forms and texts.

We interpret the drawings done by children within this study as a 'fluid text', and expressions of these children's peer group cultural aspirations. The drawings map flows of consumer culture and media use (both 'old media' and 'new media') within the cultural imagination of these children.

The rest of the article outlines the benefits of moving from the limitations of textual or oral reports, to the liberation of creating drawings, mind-maps and 'illustrated day-dreams' in order to explore children's media use and aspirations.

Tracking interactivity

We interpret the drawings in order to make some tentative conjectures about what interactivity is beginning to mean in the media worlds of New Zealand children.

For example: How does the Internet fit into the media ecology? To answer this question it is important to first reach some understanding of how Internet fits into the evolving cross-platform global media and marketing system. Many claim that it is a paradigm shift in technology and therefore qualitatively different from the impact of previous new media. It is the harbinger of convergence.

As Buckingham (2000) puts it, convergence is at its most unproblematic as *technology* – the digitalising of different forms of communication – text, image, music, and sound speech. But its greatest impact emerges when it is married with neo-liberal economics to enable new marketing synergies from the convergence of once different *media* so that they become *platforms* for marketing content. The business of branding sees television becomes the promotional portal for launching movies, computer games, comics, videos, books, CD-ROMs, DVDs, toys and other licensed merchandise (think *Pokémon* and *Teletubbies*). The Internet, it is claimed, effectively breaks down the distinction between mass and one-to-one communication for everyone with access.

The 2002 drawings of real and dream bedrooms

In our 2002 research project, we wanted to explore these emerging issues of interactivity and marketing. We provided participants with art-paper pads and packets of felt pens. These drawings materials were to provide two early outcomes: The students had a small reward for their participation, and initial drawing exercises encouraged a relaxed research environment.

As the research project progressed, the drawings produced unanticipated results. The students were asked to produce two drawings: a ground plan of their bedroom and all it contained (which enabled another check on media ownership), and a drawing of their 'dream bedroom', where there were no financial or social constraints impeding access to media technology, and cultural adornment. These drawings provided unique and often sharp insights into the real and imaged lives of the research participants.

The first drawing of their *real bedroom* provided a simple means of confirming what technology was available to children in their bedrooms. These drawings also told us about who they shared their bedrooms with: most often siblings, but in some cases siblings and grand parents or parent(s). These drawings are characterized by neat and sparse layout. Detail is preserved for special features: prized collectables (Hotwheels, teddies, CDs, Eminem posters, scooter) and configurations of media equipment (radio, CD player, X-Box, TV, stereo system and speakers). Almost all bedroom arrangements included radio or audio-replay, far fewer contain more elaborate 'leisure centres' comprised of a screen (computer terminal and/or television monitor) and proprietary 'add ons' (X-Box, PlayStation 1 & 2, Nintendo, Sega, Sky pay television). This contrasts with the British findings of Livingstone et al. (2001), which indicate that children have access to a richness of ITC in their bedrooms.

Fantasy/dream bedrooms

In the second drawing we invited the children to design what they would like to have in their *fantasy bedroom*. These drawings are quite different, characterized by a joyful, expansive and exuberant consumerism. The children appear to have thoroughly enjoyed letting their imaginations 'run wild' as they 'mind-mapped' their entertainment desires. It is suggested that these dream bedrooms, in fact, illuminate their shared imaginative horizons.

Snapshots from children's drawings of *dream bedrooms*

Piri designs her bed-pit (full of teddies) and her spa pool (full of friends) to be within comfortable viewing distance of her semi-circular video/Sky TV/DVD/big stereo system console.

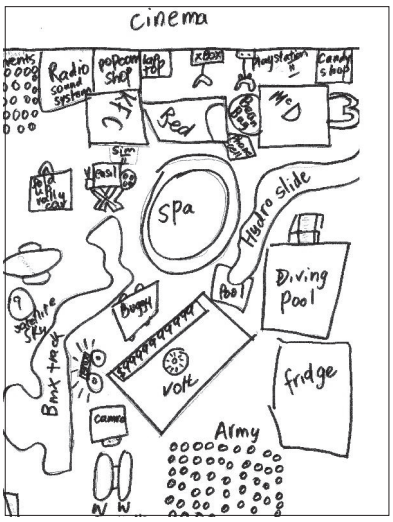
Aliesha's bedroom is dominated by a heart-shaped bed. Next to it is a walk-in, wall-long wardrobe the front of which is a computer/TV/cinema screen/mirror, off which is an exit to a private mall.

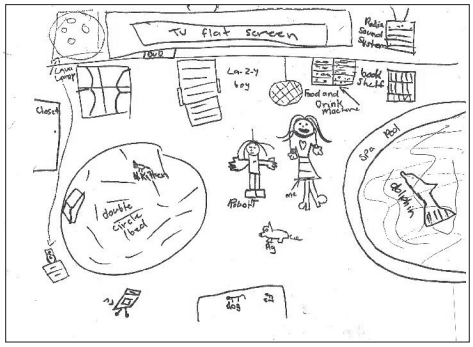
Rod draws a bed with pizza phone, facing a circular console that combines X-Box, PlayStation 1 & 2, subwoofers, DVD and a 'secure computer' with shredder.

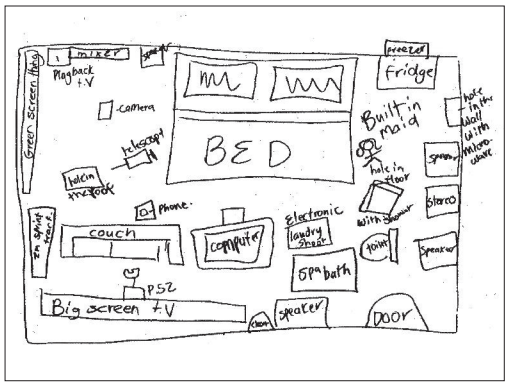
Liz' bedroom pool comes complete with dolphins and seahorses. In an annex there is a popcorn machine and private cinema. A 'spy cam' shields her room from the rest of the house.

Fili has a basketball hoop and Michael Jordan resident as his personal coach, a skate track connected to a private McDonalds and KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken), and an escape hatch to 'best friend's house' via a computer console.

Example of drawing of dream bedroom







We used the following three schemas to analyze the children's drawings in this study:

1. Dreams of conspicuous consumption
2. Dreams of Privacy, Power and Mastery
3. Sculpting of interactive personalized spaces

1. Dreams of conspicuous consumption

Hamelink (2002) suggests how emerging children's media culture has been shaped by three key dimensions over the last two decades. The first is the global spread of multimedia entertainment conglomerates, the second is the spread of the 'Billboard society' designed to promote consumption of popular culture, and the third is the tightening of global enforcement of intellectual and creative copyright. These three developments, he suggests, work overwhelmingly to the advantage of global entertainment corporates. It is interesting to see how much 'corporate branding' marks the drawings.

Brands

It is clear that corporate brands mark the drawings in a range of ways. At the simplest level they signify peer group 'cool': what is hottest, newest, most desirable consumer items. Boys' drawings include contemporary artifacts such as *Dragonball Z*, *Beyblades* or *Battledroids* (Asian boys include numchukkas and swords). Girls' rooms are marked by more colour and interior 'décor' (hearts on duvets). One girl has a walk in wardrobe with a 'personal mall'. Walls sport posters of hot music artists. One girl places herself as 'Disco Diva' in the middle of a giant sized heart shaped bed – with a cell phone next to it.

Phones

Cell phones (sometimes called sell-phones!) appear in most every drawing. For girls this is universally next to the bed. Some display existing text messages, as though a snapshot has been taken mid-chat. Boys, too, place cell-phones next to their beds but also like a phone close to hand near the game console. One boy requests a dedicated 'pizza phone'. Many do away with this necessity by having McDonalds, KFC, pizza and popcorn shops on hand in the bedroom. Brand names are used synonymously with emerging media platforms and interactive technology.

Media centres

Much of the finest detail is reserved for the high status objects in bedroom spaces – in particular entertainment centres. Media centres are elaborately detailed. The

screen is always large (50 inches or more). In several fantasies the screen is disguised as a mirror to the built in wardrobe. Boys lean towards carefully designed 'workstations' – often with large games and DVD libraries. Only Sky pay television is favoured but (ominously for free to air national channels) no free-to-air TV is mentioned. Computer access is a mix of laptop and large screen and being 'online' is key. Two boys' drawings provide a bank of record facilities. The X-Box features in a majority of boys' drawings followed by PlayStation 1 and 2, Sega and Nintendo. In many boys' drawings all possible interactive brands were included, including Gameboy and GameCube. Girls also favoured X-Box. Several requested a private cinema with surround sound and sound quality was important. Radios and CD players still stood alone on bedside tables. But stereo speakers were drawn very large. Some drawings were even more prescriptive asking for subwoofers, turntable equipment, and surround sound.

References to sporting heroes or sporting opportunities were frequent, and pets (real or robotic) were a favoured element in these dreams of well-equipped private spaces.

2. Dreams of Privacy, Power and Mastery

We had a hunch that the children's drawings might explore solutions to perennial tensions between attachment and separation. We noted the number of ingenious ways of ensuring Privacy, Power and Mastery over their environment. Many drawings demonstrated that bedrooms were considered spaces where it was important to hold sway and have control. Many drawings feature 'security cameras' or 'spy cameras' over entrances. Several incorporate 'traps' or exit chutes for unwanted or unwary visitors. Passwords are commonly required for entry. One boy requests a secure computer and shredder and several require locked safes. Access to the rooms is sometimes heavily disguised as 'hatches' or 'portals' and even one 'drop down escalator'.

There is, in fact, something of the flavour of a website design to these layouts: security surveillance, passwords, 'buttons', layers and 'secure zones'. A number of rooms inhabited by girls also provided space for 'chat', often in the spa pool or sunken cushion pit.

3. Sculpting of interactive personalized spaces

We observed that many drawings present us with 'mind-maps'. Elements connect like pages on a website, thus linking important cultural and entertainment zones, spaces and places in each child's world. The other domestic routines of the home do not exist. Rather we are presented with ingenious interactive connections (tunnels, chutes, portals, trapdoors) between sports zones, passive entertainment zones (cinema, TV, CD, DVD), gaming zones, eating zones (in one

case the bed is topped and tailed by KFC and McDonalds) and social zones designed as places for chat. This might be in the form of cushion pits, spas and sitting areas designed into many girls' dream bedrooms, or signified by the omnipresent cell-phones which promise instant interactivity. What is striking is the number of entertainment zones, which are privatised and demand paid admission, such as bowling alleys, hydro-slides and cinema screens.

Discussion of the 2002 drawings

Is it possible to detect a growing interactive sensibility in these drawings? We think so. They are suggestive in several ways. Clearly they tune into the latest corporate gossip of the 'Billboard society'. Brand names saturate their bedroom landscapes and signify the cultural capital of popular culture for their peer group. Secondly the children who drew these dream bedrooms are tuned into, and clearly enjoy, the way that consumer culture and peer group entertainment is now being delivered across a range of media platforms. They consume and still want the old mass media of cinema and TV, but they also want the flexibility of new one-to-one delivery of the Internet, to very large and 'sticky' websites such as *Neopets*, or *Suzy's World* (a NZ-produced science programme on the New Zealand network TV3) or *Pokémon*. They also relish interactivity in the form of gaming (on-line, Nintendo, PlayStation 1 & 2, X-Box and GameBoy) and chat (msn, chat rooms), even though their parents might be more cautious or rule imposing. It appears that they have few problems understanding the benefits of interactivity and are hungry for as much of it as they can cram into their current bedroom arrangements.

In the meantime producers, for good or ill, are learning that they can have ongoing conversations with children in order to adjust and design new products and the Internet has become the most intimate means of streamlining the marketing to the last, great untapped audience – children. Montgomery (2002) describes an emerging 'digital marketing paradigm' (p.193) as consisting of 'empowering one to one conversations with children', 'the integration of advertising and content', 'branded environments', and 'on-line selling or e-commerce'.

The 2005 research

Given that this form of research provided such insightful material in 2002, we are currently including drawings again in the next research phase currently underway in the same North and South Island sites. This will be included during the third phase of research, in conjunction with another cross-schools questionnaire, followed by focus groups.

A focus on computers and mobile technology

This time our attention is closely focused on mobile technology and computers. Our discussion groups are designed to gather knowledge on uptake and use of such technology. We have selected groups with high media use and others with low media use in order to compare reality and fantasy worlds. Our research assistants are in final year of a communication degree or post-graduate media students and have some background in active audience studies.

We are hoping that drawings will again enable the children to escape the constraints of written language, thus giving them permission to illustrate their interconnectivity with friends, family and institutions. We are less interested in the private sphere of their bedroom this time and more focused on resources and networks enabled by computers and a range of mobile digital technology. These are kids who are on the move using mobile technology (if not in reality because of cash-strapped parents, certainly in terms of aspirational fantasies). We aim to encourage them to draw their web of real and desired connectivity. Early analysis of the recorded discussions and 'art-work' in Christchurch is already offering some tantalizing new directions for theorizing and discussion, as in the following.

What is a medium in a converging world?

A research assistant working with a group of boys commented during a research debrief:

> I always knew a medium was: It was 'the radio' or 'the television' or 'the music centre'.

She was surprised how difficult it had been to explain 'a medium' to the children in her group:

> For example, how does one classify pxt and video on phones… or, for that matter, music on computers in the form of CDs (bought and ripped), downloads and streamed?

Perhaps it is easier to talk about being 'in the centre' of access to content and connections and opportunities for play. Other researchers are finding that it is easier to discuss the tracks of 'brands' (music and stars) *across* media and within peer groups as fans.

Parents as digital immigrants

Another strong theme emerging from our current research is from students who come from homes rich in media sources. There is considerable quick-witted (and sometimes positively damning) anecdote as they swap anecdotes about their parents' media habits. There is much hilarity at parental ineptitude (easily shared with our young researchers who are themselves digitally literate). One boy commented about how he came across his dad watching 'rude things' and how his father 'played the same trick' on him as he (the boy) did with his mother: 'Quick, quick… minimize, minimize!'

Tweaking the research tools

There remains a degree of experimentation in our research. Early results from Christchurch focus groups indicate, for example, that providing drawing templates (the child at the centre of a web of speech bubbles) tend to produce written responses, rather than the detailed visualizations of connectivity we are seeking. We are currently tweaking our research tools because we wish to encourage children to create drawings of their current media use, as well as their dreams of connectivity. We still believe that drawings provide a powerful non-verbal insight into their media pleasures and aspirations.

In addition to gathering a rich and diverse body of knowledge about the role of media in the lives of young New Zealanders – as they move through an increasing globalised and mediated world – this latest phase of our research also confirms that researchers who venture into the worlds of children's culture should be ever willing to experiment with research approaches, and extend knowledge-gathering beyond observation, and written or verbal reporting.

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Bulgaria: Television versus Children

Lilia Raycheva

Bulgaria is one of the countries marked with population ageing as one of the most distinctive demographic features in the second half of the twentieth century. Although all data show a steady downward trend in the fertility rate in the last fifty years the world over, the correlation in Bulgaria is quite disheartening: 2.5 for 1950-1955, 2.2 for 1975-1980 and 1.1 for 2000-2005 (UN, 2002). While the 15-59 years group remains comparatively stable (a little over 60 percent), the number of children under 14 is sharply going down, while the percentage of people above 60 years of age has nearly doubled. In these indices Bulgaria ranks with the advanced countries of the world. The number of men and women in retirement age is double the number of children under 16 (National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2003).

Bulgaria's population amounts to 7.7 million (in 2004), grouped into less than 2.9 million households. It consists of Bulgarians (84%), Turks (9%), Roma (5%), and others (2%). The large majority of the population (84%) professes the Eastern Orthodox faith, while 12 percent are Moslems. The population has decreased by over one million since the last population census prior to the period of transition (1985), mainly due to ageing and emigration (http://www.nsi.bg/population).

Since the beginning of the eighties the average number of members per household has been decreasing, as well. Of all households in the country, a significant proportion, 70.5 percent is without children. Households with children under 16 are classified as follows: 18 percent with one child, 10 percent with two children, 1 percent with three children, 0.3 percent with four children, 0.1 percent with five children, and 0.06 percent with six and over children. The index of the negative national increase per 1,000 inhabitants of -5 is a disturbing tendency (http://www.nsi.bg/population).

The period of transformation to democracy and market economy, which started in 1989, has posed significant social challenges to the population in Bulgaria. The

transition was slowed down by delayed legislation, aggressive political behavior and underdeveloped markets. All this caused a rapid impoverishment, a high rate of unemployment and a loss of established social benefits like free healthcare and free education. Dramatic changes occurred in the parameters of GDP (gross domestic product), standard of living, real incomes, as well as care for children. Thus, the country lost its momentum generated by the quick start of the democratic reforms, missed the chance to get integrated with the Central European countries into the European structures, and entered the 21st century under the already launched Currency Board.

Since the turn of the new century, Bulgaria has begun to improve its legislative, economic and social situation. It has joined NATO in 2004, signed the EU Accession treaty in April 2005, and is expected to become a member of the European Union in 2007.

Childhood in transition

The social anomy that has spread over Bulgarian society during the last 16 years manifests itself most clearly in the crisis of values, which regulate the individual behavior of the citizens. The family and the school are the major institutions for socialization of children.

In terms of family life, the social transformation processes place the children-parents relations in a very delicate and complex situation. Keeping close to the patriarchal values quite often places the child in a disadvantaged position compared to the elderly family members, who direct children's development, plan the priorities of their personal time, etc. Intensive living and stress, accompanied by 0 poor financial status, regretfully, do not encourage the establishment of harmonic family relations. Children become very often treated as objects, as victims of circumstances. They can neither choose their family nor the society they live in. On the contrary – they are obliged to conform to their parents' choice or to the choice of those who are taking care of them.

Actually, the social transformation affected most strongly the well-being of children. It is regretful that some children are forced to perform hard labor, to beg or to prostitute. This has a negative effect on the performance of their school obligations and such children quite often remain with a low education level (Raycheva et al., 2004).

Tradition shows that obligatory primary education was introduced in the country in 1891 and obligatory basic education in 1921 (Hrusanov et al., 1976). The transition, however, proved a grave challenge for the educational system, as well. A stable tendency towards decreasing of schools and students is observed, as well as a steady trend towards dropping out of school for a variety of reasons. An even greater problem poses the increasing number of children (especially of the

Roma extraction), who do not go to school at all. Dropping out of the education system has proven a powerful factor for getting into a risk group.

The media landscape

Over a decade of political, economic and social upheavals in Bulgaria directly conditioned the profound changes in the system of mass media and the trends of its development. Of all institutions, the mass media were the quickest and most flexible to react to the transformation to democracy after 1989. The processes of decentralization, liberalization and privatization began spontaneously and in a short time a completely new journalistic landscape was formed in which different patterns of media consumption and new advertising strategies were introduced. However, similarly to the politicians, former and newly hatched, journalists were not ready to shoulder to the full their new role and the subsequent responsibilities of the Fourth Estate in a society under transformation (Raycheva and Petev, 2003).

The new Bulgarian Constitution adopted on July 12, 1991, was the first legislative act that abolished the party-state monopoly of the electronic media. The first commercial radio stations began operation on a local level in 1992. The advent of private television occurred two years later.

In contrast to the turbulent transformation in the print media, the changes in the electronic media were slower, incomplete and lacked general consistency. After seven years of unfruitful discussions of several bills, the National Assembly adopted in 1996 the Radio and Television Act, which was amended several times afterwards. According to it, the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) is the official body to deal with program licensing, program monitoring, sanctioning of irregular advertising practices, appointing the chairpersons of the public radio and television, and enforcing the compulsory norms for pluralism, protection of minors, right to reply, etc. The other control body – the Commission for Regulation of Communications – is responsible for the technical licensing.

The Republic of Bulgaria has signed and the National Assembly has ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television, which became part of the Bulgarian media legislation. The Radio and Television Act was harmonized with the Television without Frontiers Directive. Bulgarian practices in the media sphere also meet the terms of some protocols and decisions of the Council of Europe and the European Commission in relation to media policy and media developments.

In 2005, there were about 209 television and 118 radio channels available in Bulgaria, offered by a large number of national, regional and local radio and TV operators. The offer includes three national TV channels and two national radio stations distributed on air. These and other channels are additionally distributed

by more than 1,800 cable networks and more than 20 nation-wide satellite networks. Two telecommunications operators provide a digital package of program services. Radio and television broadcasting on the Internet is still in embryo (Current Developments of Radio and Television Activities in Bulgaria, 2004). In 2002, advertising expenditures amounted to 200 million BGN (102 million Euro) for television. Advertising expenditures in the media are expected to mark a steady growth in the coming years (*World Press Trends*, 2004).

Several development trends can be distinguished in the radio and TV system over the years of transition:

- fundamental restructure of the radio and TV system at local, regional and national levels;
- commercialisation of the radio and TV broadcasting;
- development of regulation and self-regulation of the electronic mass media;
- diversification of program supplies in emerging audio-visual markets;
- increasing segmentation of the audiences;
- maintaining a higher degree of audience credibility than the print media;
- development of new styles, formats and standards for presenting media content.

CEM is broadly open to the professional media organisations, to the civil sector and to society in general. The Council regards the policies of regulation as a public pursuit, as a commitment to the development of civil society and the process of Euro-integration. CEM has been working in an open manner: On important social issues it has been holding public sessions.

The fray in the box

The virtual world, which merges time and space and offers provocative amusement possibilities, is of great interest to the Bulgarian children. Various research studies show that children spend a substantial part of their time watching TV programs, being in front of the PC, and playing and surfing on the Internet. The new media and information technologies have with no doubt positive effects on children's maturing and development. According to the facts, however, the audiovisual and cyber space is not yet a safe shelter for children.

Bulgarian children spend on the average three hours a day watching television. Usually this happens at home and since not many families may afford a second TV set, children share TV watching with their family. This, however, does not mean that a parent or an elderly family member controls every program that the child watches. Due to parents' work schedule children spend a big part of the

day alone at home, which makes them free to watch whatever they want, no matter what effect that will have on them. The technical methods for filtering TV programs with harmful contents are not yet popular in Bulgaria and the culture of preventing the children from harmful TV influence is still at an embryonic stage. Of interest in this context remain the issues what exactly the children prefer to watch and whether the programs of the TV operators guarantee the protection of children's interests (Raycheva et al., 2004).

The liberalization of the country's audiovisual market gives the children who live in a household with a cable TV (about half of the households in the country are subscribed to cable TV) the chance to watch apart from the three national terrestrial channels (BNT, bTV and Nova) a variety of foreign satellite and Bulgarian cable television programs. The question is whether the supply guarantees the possibility of a wide choice. It rather does not, because the variety of genres is reduced to a minimum, which can hardly satisfy the cultural, aesthetic and information needs of the audience. Once again, the typical paradox of the contemporary society is observed – quantitative supply, reduced quality, lack of variety and a limited choice. In the context of TV production for children such a mixed situation speaks of at least two disturbing tendencies: reduction of the child audience's possibilities of educational and personal development through television, and its transformation into a consumer commodity. The problem gets even worse when it comes to children with intellectual, mental and physical disabilities. They are not included in any audience ratings and no TV station produces programs especially designed to satisfy their needs.

The approach of the Bulgarian television stations as a whole towards the child audiences is subordinated mainly to the entertainment function. Television programs include far less cognitive and educational issues. A good exception in this respect was the satellite educational television ESET, which was launched in 2003. However, its distribution throughout the country by the cable operators was insufficient and due to financial reasons this channel had to close down.

A disturbing tendency is the limited production of quality children's programs. Domestically produced quality programs for children are becoming more and more rare among the Bulgarian acting TV operators. Imported film production (American as a rule, mostly cartoons) prevails in the child-oriented program modules. The transatlantic priority as regards the selection of children's programs for the Bulgarian television channels raises the topical issue of developing an effective TV monitoring.

A successful move to fight this disturbing situation was triggered in 2002 by the Parents' Association against broadcasting the *Raw Force* and *Smack Down* wrestling shows in the daytime programs of the largest private TV operator – bTV. CEM organized a public discussion on the matter, which resulted in withdrawing the shows from the daytime program. CEM also initiated an agreement for marking the TV programs considered harmful to the child audiences. This agreement was signed by the three national terrestrial TV operators and it is encouraging that they observe it (*Council for Electronic Media Bulletin*, 2002). These were

some of the major achievements in the process of media self-regulation. In addition to that, under the initiative of CEM a recommendation of the Standing Committee on Transfrontier Television on pornography broadcasts was adopted in 2004 (*Council for Electronic Media Bulletin*, 2004).

The insufficient production of educational programs in the country raises the issue of the extreme commercialization of the TV landscape. It is mainly the public channel BNT that is dedicating a large amount of professional efforts to children's program making. Otherwise, 0 distinct inadequacy of TV programming of the commercial operators in respect to children's lifestyle is observed, although television has turned into an important part of children's life. A study shows that the youngest viewers in Bulgaria watch TV basically in the morning between 8 and 10 a.m. and in the evening from 6 till 8 p.m. Every fourth child, however, keeps on watching TV after 8 p.m. (http://www.eststbg.com/bg/researches/BNT).

In the absence of good quality content appropriate for their age and adding the lack of sufficient control in the family, children are subjected to the risks brought by the spectacular cheap film productions full of sex and violence. This situation accounts for the major part of the movie programs of the Bulgarian television stations, especially those distributed by cable. The under-age population that is in the process of building up its personal identity is notable for its greater suggestibility and succeptability to these screen risks, higher psychic vulnerability, higher credulousness, higher curiosity, and high activity as consumers of the audiovisual media.

In addition to all that, it is obvious that regarding the practices of TV operators no clear statutory requirements exist, which should guarantee children's protection from inappropriate content as well as their right to watch programs designed for them, thus stimulating their development and provoking their talents. All this combined with the disharmonic actions of the institutions, the civil sector and the media in Bulgaria confirms the child's position as a victim to circumstances but not as a member of the society, enjoying equal rights of choice and protected interests.

The virtual reality

The relationships between 'virtual space' and 'real space' require enhanced thoroughness, especially when children are placed in the middle of the two spheres. Analyses usually concentrate on the answers to the questions why and how children and teenagers turn to and use the virtual space and what is most powerful: the interactive cybernetic world (which skilfully applies manipulative techniques to its young users) or the choice of the children (who through the challenges of TV programs, computer games or chatting, create their own virtual universe, thus gaining their best from the offer of the contemporary information and communication technologies). The answers obligatorily contain arguments for the benefit

of both sides as well as examples of temporary victories of each of them (Raycheva, 2003).

It has been proved that the virtual world is rich in positive and negative behavioristic models, which children, due to the peculiarities of their psychological development, transfer into the real environment too quickly. Their preferences for certain types of models change with the progress of their maturity and it is exactly during the puberty that they become extremely vulnerable and unpredictable in respect of their choice. Quite often Bulgarian children apprehend the audio-visual and the cybernetic space as a shelter, where they feel free from the daily stress, fear and loneliness. The TV set, the computer or even the mobile phone display provide them with the opportunities for dialog and social contacts, which they are missing or which are insufficient to them in the real world.

There is no doubt that the information, which children receive from the TV screen or from the Internet increases their average intelligence quotient. Despite the allegations that illiteracy abounds, that children do not read books, that children are killing their time and that this is bad for their health, surveys show explicitly that in the cyber era children are much more practical, know more and adapt to their environment much easier. Furthermore, being acquainted with the virtual world, which to a great extent is an imaginary projection of the everyday life, makes children feel as an important and integrated subject of the real world.

The medal, of course, has another side – the virtual display information may damage children's eyes, debauch their innocent consciousness, promote antisocial behavior and create further a number of indecent habits, the results of which children bear in accordance with the real life rules.

Challenges to society

The transition to a civil society and market economy involved a number of issues in children's welfare. These included the general insufficiency of financial, technological and professional standards in managing children's complex of problems. Family and school as traditional mainstays in children's life have dramatically lessened their significance, especially in cities. The growing influence of television through numerous broadcasting and cable outlets combined with the invasion of the new information and communication technologies tend to shape predominantly the everyday existence of children. The problem is whether the virtual world acts versus or pro children.

It is but a sad truth that although Bulgaria in 1995 ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in 2000 adopted its Child Protection Act, as well as is applying some other ratified documents providing for a number of children's rights and for mechanisms for their observance, the Bulgarian children practically constitute one of the most underprivileged social groups (http://www.paragraph 22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/31973.html). Children are treated

like objects for moralizing, education and punishment rather than like subjects in interpersonal relations, whether in the family or in the society. Thus, the easiest way out of this situation for them is to assume the position of a victim by adopting aggressive and antisocial models, which many juveniles and minors choose to do.

Substantial attempts towards the improvement of social well-being are encouraging signs in the transforming Bulgarian society, so as to make it a comfortable and secure home for the children. At present numerous programmes, projects and initiatives are under way, such as the National Programme for Protection of the Child (2005), National Strategy for Protection of the Child (2004-2006), National Strategy for Protection of Children on the Streets (2003-2005), and National Action Plan against Sexual Exploitation of Children for Commercial Purposes (2003-2005).

CEM, the Council for Electronic Media, initiated in October 2005 with the support of UNICEF a round table with broad participation of TV broadcasters, NGOs, and representatives of state institutions. The main objective of the discussion is to outline more effective measures to guarantee children's access to media and to protect them from inappropriate TV programming.

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Does Polish Television Support the Socialization of Children and Youth?[1]

Lucyna Kirwil

The focus of this article is a content analysis of the potentially supportive function of television in the socialization of children and youth. Together with family, siblings, peers, school and church, television plays an indirect but powerful role in the socialization process. Television as a socializing agent may work in agreement or in conflict with other socializing agents. If we understand socialization as a process of social learning according to which a child starts to internalize the system of values, attitudes and basic beliefs held by dominant institutions and representatives of society and to identify with them, then television is an important socializing agent. If we regard socialization as a process of acquiring knowledge, and of acquiring values, language fluency, social skills and social sensitivity, which allow a child to become integrated in society and respond to it in an adaptive way, television is an important socializing agent as well. In the sense that is commonly understood, socialization is the process that instills socially approved values in children and teaches them social roles.

Television – like other mass media – influences children's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors in both intended and unintended ways (Gunter & McAleer, 1999; Harris, 1999; Singer & Singer, 2001). The most often observed intended effects are from advertisements, parliamentary and presidential elections campaigns, multimedia campaigns associated with a global change in lifestyle, political indoctrination, and the popularization of rituals of social control (such as campaigns related to AIDS, drug use, smoking, and reports from Word Championships in sports – cf. Francuz, 1999). Also belonging to this category of TV influence are the effects of educational TV programs (for instance *Sesame Street*) (Kirwil, 1999).

Unintended effects occur as the impact of programs that were not produced to influence viewers in a well-defined direction. Usually these programs belong to entertainment genres and show asocial or socially controversial patterns of behavior. Producers of these programs do not want viewers to imitate these behaviors, but it is well known that child viewers acquire behavioral patterns

shown on television through observational learning (Anderson et al., 2003; Bandura, 1977; Braun-GaBkowska & Ulfik, 2000; Bushman & Huesmann, 2001; Gunter & McAleer, 1999; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Kirwil, 1998, 2000b, 2002; Liebert et al., 1973).

Unintended media influences are often studied by means of establishing relationships between factors such as: TV violence and viewers' aggression (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Gala & Ulfik, 2000); under-representation of certain social problems on television and viewers' lack of perception of these problems in society, for instance problems of the elderly or minorities (Greenberg et al., 2002); biased representation of social roles on television and stereotypes held by viewers (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000); erotica and pornography on the TV screen and sexual arousal in males (Harris & Scott, 2002) or the social behavior of children and youth (Malamuth & Impett, 2001); media styles (formative features of messages) and cognitive processes such as attention, perception and memorizing (Kirwil, 1999, 2000a); and television use in general and ways of processing information and thinking, for instance, more automatic processing or less creativity (Miron et al., 2001; Valkenburg, 2001).

New attitudes among TV viewers as a consequence of unintended influence are rare. However, it is well established that TV messages reinforce existing attitudes and firmly established behavioral patterns (cf. Manstead et al., 1996, Groebel, 2001). Sometimes the mass media may change existing attitudes, ideas and behavior, especially those less established, and this is more likely among young viewers. But this kind of influence is subtle and difficult to measure, the main difficulty being to establish what media content in what contexts leads to such effects.

Society's behavioral patterns and value systems consist of a variety of phenomena: from everyday family practices and intimate relationships, through expectations related to age, social position and gender, to an understanding of society's structure and the development of social norms. Learning how to function socially means not only building solid knowledge about the world and its rules but also developing personal responsibility and the ability to act. It means, for instance, a transition from obedience and dependence to autonomy, readiness to forgo personal needs, gratification for the sake of the needs of the group, and acting to help other people instead of harming them.

It is impossible to control and measure all potential unintended TV influences on children and youth. However, according to previous research, the image of the world and the people presented on the screen, along with their interactions, life goals, life aspirations, lifestyles, value systems and social behavior, may in certain contexts be important in the socialization of young people. Thus, content analyses and evaluations of TV programs have to focus on selected spheres such as these.

Purpose and method of the study

The purpose of this study of the content of TV programs in Poland, undertaken in autumn 2003, was to establish

1) what television messages were broadcast during times when children and youth watch TV, and
2) to what extent these TV messages could be considered to support the socialization of the younger generation.

The study was conducted while TV programming for children of school age and adolescents was being dramatically reduced on the four most popular channels in Poland. The general idea of the study was to evaluate whether patterns of behavior and belief systems that children may learn from television could be assumed to support children in becoming members of Polish society under circumstances of systemic transformation.

The content analysis covered only those TV programs on the four main TV channels – two public and two commercial ones – that were rated as attractive to an audience of children and youth and that were broadcast from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the last two weeks of September.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. All programs (1,604 programs or 891 hours recorded on videotapes) were evaluated from the perspective of whether they may be watched by children and adolescents 3 to 16 years of age. News, announcements, advertisements and TV shopping programs, as well as typical conversation not addressed to children, were excluded, after which there remained 707 hours and 15 minutes of the material. The next stage included judgments of potential negative influence on children and youth according to the Polish broadcast law prohibiting programs harmful to children and youth (Article 18 of the Statement on Radio and TV Broadcasting). In the third step, evaluations were made of whether program content was attractive to younger audiences, which resulted in 1,003 programs or 452 hours and 16 minutes for more detailed analysis (see Table 1).

Six competent judges (four psychologists and two experts in social sciences and socialization) served as raters. They watched every TV program and evaluated the probability that it would be viewed by at least one in three children aged 3 to 16. Each rater passed courses in media psychology and the impact of media on children and youth and was trained in rating.

Five judges received (randomly chosen) 18 percent and one judge 10 percent of the entire recorded material from the four TV channels under study. The mean for inter-rater reliability of evaluations on the scales made by every two judges was .60 (the Pearson correlation coefficient ranging from .49 to .90).

After that, frequencies of the appearance of messages considered important for the socialization of children and youth were counted and categorized. Frequencies are an indicator of the level of exposure to a given message. According to learning theory, more frequent messages on television mean more repetition

Table 1. Sample and material analyzed in the content analysis

Steps of analysis	Channels A Public	B Public	C Commer-cial	D Commer-cial	Total
Total time of programs aired over two weeks	220h	224h	224h	223h	891h
Total number of programs aired over two weeks	429	378	384	413	1,604
Total time of programs judged as potentially being watched by children and youth	182h12′	184h35′	155h42′*	184h46′	707h15′
Total time of programs that underwent content analysis, i.e., programs that were judged as attractive to children and youth	95h8′	85h6′	116h1′	156h1′	452h16′
Number of programs that underwent content analysis, i.e., programs that were judged as attractive to children and youth	230	166	257	350	1,003

* Total time of analyzed programs was less due to defects in the tapes.

in the learning process and a higher probability that they will be noticed and remembered by viewers. Thus, it may be assumed that more frequent messages influence the socialization of young viewers to a greater extent than less frequent messages.

Image of the world and of people's interactions on television

Thus, 1,003 programs both judged as being potentially watched by children and youth 3 to 16 years of age from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and judged as being attractive to young people in this age span were analyzed in detail. What did the content analysis show as regards the image of the world and people's interactions presented in the programs, and as regards different aspects of values in the same programs?

Image of the world

The image of the world was evaluated based on five continua of:

- friendly vs. violent (Do messages about the world tell a young viewer that the world is cruel, violent, threatening, neutral or friendly?, cf. Gerbner et al., 2001; Kirwil, 2000a)

- dominating emotional tone (Is the world shown as sad, neutral, in a good mood or happy?, cf. Kirwil, 2000a; Aaciak, 1998)
- stressfulness (Is the world very difficult, rather difficult, rather easy or easy to live in?, cf. Gala & Ulfik, 2000)
- competitiveness (Is the world very competitive, rather competitive, rather cooperative or very cooperative?, cf. Gala & Ulfik, 2000; Kirwil, 2000a; Aaciak, 1998)
- social polarization (Is society very diverse, rather diverse, rather not diverse, not diverse at all?).

There were 1,522 features regarding the world in the material that could be evaluated along these five different dimensions, meaning 5,257 indications in all. The image of the world on television constructed after this categorization may be described as: bringing troubles and worries (338 indications); being friendly (224) and cheerful (199); being organized (204) or partly organized (117); being rather changeable (197) or very changeable (110) or very differentiated (185); being threatening (191); offering good prospects for the future (176); being rather difficult (168) or very difficult to live in (98); being rather competitive (127) or very competitive (171); being sad (135) and pessimistic (117); and functioning according to social stereotypes (126).

In sum, this world image is ambivalent with dominant negative features. Living in this world is difficult even if it may be seen as friendly and cheerful. 729 features (13.8% of all indications) were related to 'friendly vs. violent' world. Based on these features, the world is shown as violent relatively often (56.7%) compared to friendly (32.8%) or neutral (10.6%) – see Table 2.

Table 2. The image of the world in the TV programs according to the 'friendly-violent' continuum (number and percent of all indications)

Placement on the friendly-violent dimension	Number	%
cruel, violent, aggressive	111	15,2
hostile, threatening, dangerous, unpleasant	302	41,4
neutral	77	10,6
friendly, safe	239	32,8

N= 729

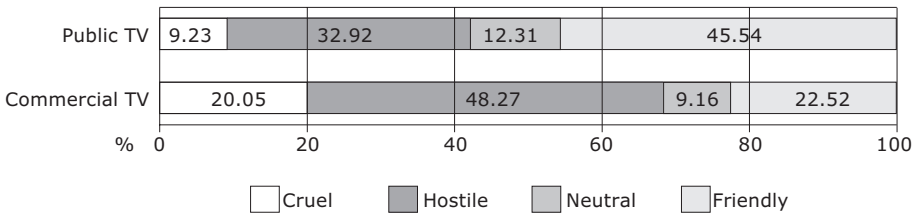
The fact that children may be exposed to more hostility, cruelty, threats and unpleasantness than friendliness or neutral features of the world agrees with previous research findings (cf. Gerbner et al. 2002; Bushman & Huesmann, 2001; Kirwil, 1997). Nevertheless, it is surprising that more messages show the world is cruel/violent/aggressive (15.2%) than neutral (10.6%).

Thus, the image of the world on television is threatening rather than safe. One must bear in mind that this world image does not come from dramas and thrillers

shown at night but is broadcast by television between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. in programs judged as attractive to children and young people.

A significant difference between public and commercial television was found as regards their world image (see Figure 1). Public television places the world two times more often at the positive end of the continuum (friendly/safe) than commercial television does, while commercial television places it two times more often at the negative end of the continuum (cruel/violent/aggressive) than public television does.

Figure 1. The image of the world on the 'friendly-violent' continuum in programs on public and commercial television (percent of indications)



Chi-square=55,53, p<0,001

In general, findings confirm what we know from the research literature on exposure to violence on the TV screen, namely, that threats are frequent on television (Gerbner et al., 2002; Oliver, 1994) and that screen violence has a negative impact on young viewers, while at the same time violence and sex do not seem to not sell products (Bushman, 2005). In spite of that, television for today's generation repeats the television experience of older generations by offering viewers too many negative characteristics of the world. Exposure to such a world image continues to teach inappropriate social attitudes and norms to young people at risk and promotes aggressive behavior (Anderson et al., 2003) or anxiety, withdrawal, and passivity in social contacts (Cantor, 2001).

Image of people's interactions

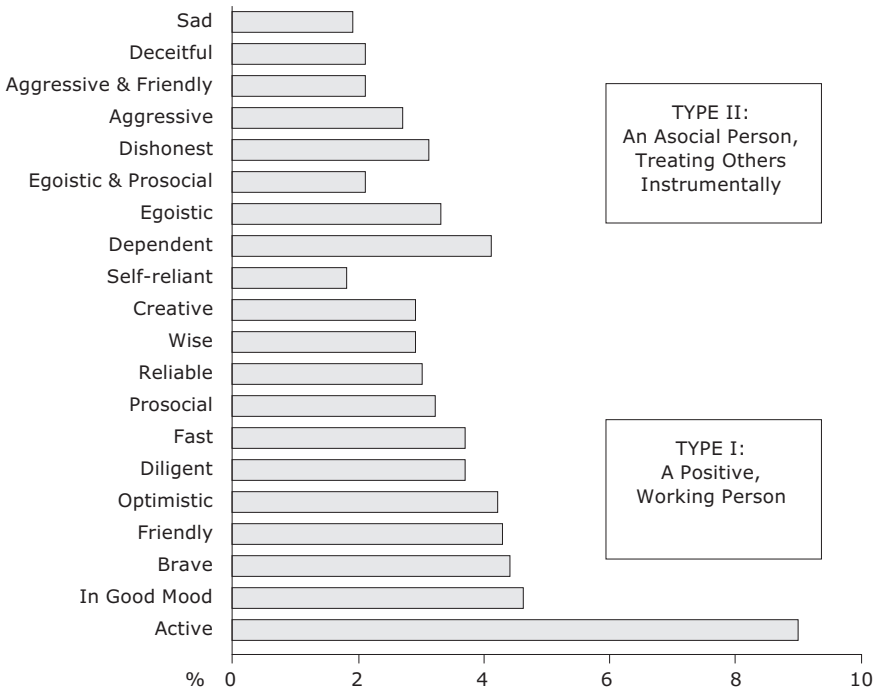
The image of people interacting with others in the TV programs was analyzed based on dimensions of:

- egoism vs. altruism (cf. GaBa & Ulfik, 2000)
- pessimism vs. optimism
- social passivity vs. activity
- dependence on vs. independence of other people

- aggressive vs. helpful behavior (cf. GaBa & Ulfik, 2000; Kirwil, 2000a)
- hostile vs. friendly attitudes toward others (Kirwil, 2000a).

In contrast to the negative image of the world, the most frequently shown characteristics of people interacting with others in the TV programs were positive. An analysis aimed at finding a 'typical' image of a person with the most frequent features revealed two constructed types. The first type has characteristics of a 'positive working person': an active individual (497 appearances in the programs), fast (204) and brave (243), friendly (235) and in a good mood (252), diligent (204) and reliable (165), optimistic (230), creative (162), wise (162) and self-reliant (100). The second type – an 'asocial person, treating others instrumentally' – depends on other people (228 appearances), is egoistic (181) or changes from egoistic to pro-social behavior (114), is dishonest (171), aggressive and cruel (149) or changes from aggressive to friendly (113), is deceitful (116) and sad (106).

Figure 2. Features of the two most frequent images of a person interacting with other people in the TV programs (percent of all features)



While the first image of a person is socially approved, the second one is definitively a negative model for young viewers. Activity is the only feature that was observed much more frequently than the other features. The other features, both

positive and negative ones, were shown almost equally infrequently. But this suggests that both types may have almost the same level of distinctiveness and 'weight' in influencing young audiences. 'Activity' may not be enough to attract attention among young viewers.

In concluding this review of the findings, it should be added that the analyses also included a search for the image of the child and her/his place in the world. When the 1,003 programs (those judged both as potentially viewed by children and youth and rated as attractive to children and youth) were analyzed, a very small number of messages about the role and importance of children in the world were registered and they did not constitute a sufficient basis for conducting a statistical analysis.

Values and life goals on television

Value systems, life goals, needs and aspirations form various life styles. A wild, riotous style or a consumerist style, for example, or a life style of benefiting from life at no cost, is generally not considered suitable for children in the course of socialization. Life goals such as sacrificing oneself for work or devoting oneself to one's family or homeland may be approved – or disapproved – because they may become adaptive or maladaptive life styles in particular cases. Life goals such as being active, producing, and being imaginative are probably always considered good for young people because they contribute to children's self-improvement.

Messages on various values, life goals and life styles were searched for in the content analysis.

Value systems

Positive values of friendship, love and giving social support to other people were the values most frequently shown in the television programs analyzed. However, the observed predominance of values such as success, popularity, material gain, a rapidly-advancing professional career, money and consumer goods over knowledge, education, self-improvement, law and order, justice and honesty may suggest to young viewers that the latter values are less important than the former ones (see Table 3).

The analysis further showed that public television directs its attention at socially approved values more often than commercial television does, while the commercial channels more often direct attention to a person's own success, egocentrism, adventure and a convenient life than the public channels do. A life oriented to luxury and the instrumental treatment of others was also clearer on commercial television.

Table 3. Values in the TV programs (percent of all values)

Rank	Value	%
I	Friendship	9.80
II	Love, feelings	9.52
III	Help, support of others	7.42
IV	Success, popularity, victory, professional carrier	6.23
V	Family, marriage, always thinking of children first	4.67
VI	Money, consumer goods, convenient life, material gains	4.58
VII	Konowledge, education, science	3.30
VIII	Sex, attracting the other gender	2.47
IX	Law and order	1.92
X	Acceptance and understanding others	1.92
XI	Justice	1.83
XII	Honesty	1.74
XIII	Health	1.74
XIV	Power	1.65
XV	Goodness, kindness of heart	1.65
XVI	Instrumental treatment of others	1.56
XVII	Physical strenght, physical fitness	1.56
XVIII	Loyalty	1.46
XIX	Overcoming own weaknesses, work on self, self-improvement	1.37
Other	Less frequently appearing single values	33.48

N= 1,092

Life goals

The rated occurrence of seventeen specific life goals in the TV programs under study indicates that the most frequently appearing goals were typical of adolescents: friendship, ideals and values, and adventure. The frequency of an alternative peaceful life was lower (ranked 4th). A life devoted to other people (altruism, family) was even less frequent in the TV messages (ranked 6th and 7th). A free life, a life in wealth and a life in comfort were ranked 8th to 10th. Lower rankings were given for values such as education, creativity, sacrificing oneself for the good of children, power and politics, ecology and faith, which communicates to a certain extent that these values do not play important roles in society (see Table 4).

People may well agree that in the knowledge-based society (to which we aspire), lower exposure to the latter group of values in such a powerful medium as television means that television is a weak supporting factor for bringing up the younger generation for a world with more developed technology, better organized society, a longer life and a better future in general.

Table 4. Life goals in the TV programs (percent of all programs)

Rank	Life Goal	Percent
I	Friendship, social relations (winning friendship and popularity)	62.7
II	Ideals and values (realizing important ideals and values)	58.9
III	Adventure (a varied life, filled with adventure and strong stimulation)	55.3
IV	Peaceful life (being provided with a peaceful life without nasty surprises)	49.2
V	Achievement (being promoted and gaining wide recognition; achievements)	46.4
VI	Altruism (living for the benefit of others)	42.5
VII	Happy family life (having a good loving family)	38.0
VIII	Freedom (having freedom and feeling free to do what one wants and live in a way one wants)	36.4
IX	Wealth (having a lot of money, affluent life)	34.5
X	Life in comfort (use of all benefits that are brought by progress in technology and civilization; a convenient life rather than a life in accordance with nature)	30.8
XI	Education (getting an education and improving vocational qualifications)	20.6
XII	Creativity (contributing something new to culture through scholarly achievements or artistic work)	19.1
XIII	Children's good (sacrificing oneself for the sake of the children)	19.6
XIV	Power (winning a managerial position and having a decisive effect over a wide range of people)	12.1
XV	Ecology (living with nature, protecting the environment, and especially caring for nature even at the cost of one's convenience)	10.8
XVI	Politics (engaging in politics and influencing societal and political matters)	5.0
XVII	Faith (living in accordance with requirements of religion, being saved, salvation)	4.8

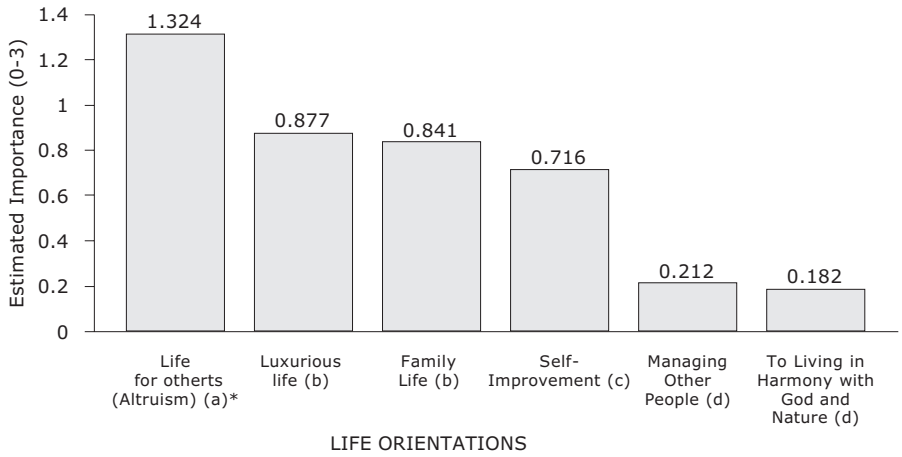
N= 1,003

Life orientations

In order to study what life orientations are promoted by television, the seventeen life goals mentioned in the previous section were rated on a 4-point scale (from 0, 'not important at all', to 3, 'very important'). According to the raters, all life goals were shown relatively seldom or indistinctively, which means that they were communicated in a way that probably does not attract young viewers or that shows they are not an important object for television.

After that, the measures of importance of the seventeen life goals underwent factorial analysis. The factorial analysis revealed a six-factorial structure, which we called 'life orientations promoted by television'. Orientation to *life for others* was shown as significantly more important than other orientations. Orientation to *a luxurious life* and orientation to *family life* were less important, as was orientation to *self-improvement*. Least important were orientation to *managing other people* and orientation to *living in harmony with God and nature* (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Average importance of life orientations promoted in the TV programs



* Life orientations assigned with various letters are statistically different as regards importance at p<0.001 level (t-test pairs).

The marginal importance and visibility of values and life orientations in the TV programs may make the formation of normative beliefs and value systems more difficult for children and may not support them so they can function effectively in society and cope with everyday hassles and stress.

Life orientations that may positively influence the social development of children and youth – pro-social, affinitive, and emotionally stabilizing values aimed at maintaining social ties, functioning in social groups, or related to belonging to a small social group, preparing the younger generation to life among others and for others – were communicated with greater importance than other life orientations.

The second salient group consisted of egocentric values, aimed at self-enhancement, the individual's self-interest and egocentrism in social relationships. This group was visible on all channels in the relatively frequent number of messages on success, a successful career, popularity, victory, wealth, a convenient life at no cost, and promotion of a life orientation towards a luxurious life and self-improvement together and an egocentric orientation. The same level of importance of orientation to family life suggests that these two orientations may compete in influencing viewers. Promotion of these two contradictory life orientations may cause conflicts in ambitions and motivation and bring chaos into the development of the value system in young viewers.

It is worth noting that knowledge, education, science, creativity, achievements, law, justice, honesty and loyalty are less important in the TV messages than a luxurious life. Together with a marginal occurrence of the value of work, this may form a conviction that material and consumption values are superior.

The messages broadcast in the programs studied lacked such values as truth, democracy, homeland, peace, patriotism, independence, human rights, dignity,

social equality, and solidarity. Society cannot function if the members of society do not adopt these values. If the televised messages do not give enough support to these primary values, this may have a negative long-term impact on society's functioning, because the members of society must undertake activities for the sake of group interests based on these values. Thus, in the material analyzed, values serving an orientation to the individual's interest were too strong at the expense of values serving as a basis for group and societal interest.

In addition, values related to social, public and political life were so marginally represented in the TV programs that this also calls into question the function of television in supporting the younger generation as they prepare for their role as citizens. Of course, various channels promote various values with different intensity. But what children and youth will receive depends on which channel they watch. Public TV channels, being closer to the mission of communicating more socially appropriate values, probably fail in the competition with more attractive formats offered by programs on the commercial channels. The output of the public TV channels is often boring in comparison with that of commercial channels.

The findings show that television mostly communicates messages on values important for close relationships, a luxurious life, one's personal career and family life. This life orientation has some resemblance to the real life orientation of the adult Polish population but is not the same. The majority of the population is oriented towards a happy family life (72%), love and friendship (62%) and a convenient life (50%). Making a fortune (36%), having a successful career (33%) and devoting one's life to others/helping others (17%) were valued less than family/social values in 2001 in Warsaw (Grzelak & Zinserling, 2004). Improvement in the quality of life and life satisfaction in the Polish population are thus positively related to intrinsic values of family, love and friendship but negatively related to extrinsic values of money, fame, and socio-economic status (Skarzynska, 2004).

The conclusion is that extrinsic values (a career, professional success, social status, popularity and money) have more importance in TV messages than among the members of society, who are more oriented to intrinsic values (family). Too frequent positive evaluations of wealth, financial success and popularity on the TV screen may have a negative impact on the socialization of children and youth. Ascribing too much importance to external values in the TV messages puts the younger generation at risk in bringing up a new young generation that is disappointed with life and frustrated because of their struggle for social status and at the same time less healthy, both psychologically and socially.

Even if such values and orientations as friendship, love and other positive feelings, helping others, supporting others, altruism, family, marriage, sacrificing for the good of children, and having a happy and safe life predominate in the TV messages, the low importance and indistinctiveness of value systems and life orientations generally may make it difficult to choose a pro-social and better life orientation. From the viewpoint of the socialization process, the findings presented

here indicate that the support of television for a process of value hierarchy formation that may serve as a basis for functioning well in adulthood is insufficient.

Secure vs. risky life styles

'Life style' is a unique relation of the individual and her/his environment (Reber, 2002). It is understood as a pattern of behavior, habits and actions learned in a process of socialization and a way of living that is characteristic of an individual or a social group developed in the relationship between individual life circumstances and socio-cultural factors. Life style is defined by the way people use their time and resources, what they think is important in their environment, i.e., interests, and how they evaluate themselves and their environment (Przybylowski et al., 1998). Life style changes according to social changes and transformations in society, for instance, when it comes to family life style, sexual life style or eating habits. The social functioning of individuals, their physical health (excess weight or hypertension) and psychological functioning (stress, boredom, depressive moods) depend on the life style of an individual (Sek, 2001; Wosinska, 2004). It can be assumed that in the ongoing socio-political systemic transformation in Poland, important changes in life style could be related to competencies, individual resourcefulness, autonomy, and responsibility, on the one hand, and to transformation into a free market, which demands more ambition, achievements, and competition, on the other hand.

Part of the study was to establish whether life styles presented in the TV programs that are attractive to children and youth are secure or risky. On the most general level, a secure life style was defined as one leading to physical and mental health and facilitating the socialization of children and youth by other agents. A risky life style puts a person's mental health and life at risk and makes the socialization of children and youth by other agents more difficult.

The registered messages about life styles formed 29 various styles. As predicted, television depicts many different life styles among which life for consumption and play is presented more frequently (23.6% of the messages about life styles) than other life styles evaluated as being positive for social development, for instance, a creative and explorative life style (19.3%) or an active life style (13.1%) (see Table 5).

More than one third of the messages in the TV programs analyzed presented risky life styles that are less appropriate as patterns of social behavior or models of life for young viewers. Socially approved and secure life styles were presented more often (almost two third of the messages), encouraging the audience to self-sacrifice for the family or devote themselves to a certain idea or passion, to justice and work.

Moreover, risky life styles were shown significantly less often by public television (23.5% of the messages) than commercial television (44.2% of the messages) (see Table 6).

Table 5. Secure vs. risky life styles in the TV programs (number of messages)

Rank	Secure life styles	Risky life styles	Total
I		Consumption, oriented to taking advantages, having fun	305
II	Creation, discovery, exploration		248
III	Activity		169
IV	Devoting oneself to others, family		93
V		Passivity, unproductivity	63
VI	Devoting oneself to an idea, mission		61
VII	Devoting oneself to work		60
VIII	Devoting oneself to struggle against social problems, a fight for social justice		44
IX		Rotious, dissolute life	26
X	Healthy, peaceful, safe		25
XI	Devoting oneself to love		24
XII	Devoting oneself to both work and family		22
XIII	Responsibility		18
XIV	Useful, in accordance with approved social norms		15
XV	Devoted to passion (music, sport)		14
XVI		Asocial, contrary to law, pathological, criminal, plundering	13
XVII		Unreliability	11
XVIII		Egoistic	8
XIX		Risky, adventorous	7
XX	Cooperation		6
XXI		Without engagement	5
XXII		Competitive, fighting	5
XXIII	Having sense of humor		4
XXIV		Devoted to wining money	4
XXV		Servile	3
XXVI		Worrying	3
XXVII	Life for God or homeland		3
XXVIII	Orientation to self-actualization		1
XXIX	Other		18

N= 1,288

Thus, all channels showed risky life styles less frequently than secure life styles. The former life styles, however, were over two times more frequent on commercial television than on public television.

All styles considered in this study as risky (i.e., consumption and concentration on material gain, a non-productive, passive life, delinquency, fighting, egoism, irresponsibility, taking high risks in life) suggest that viewing television may lead to deficient socialization among young people, reinforcing inappropriate attitudes towards work and other people and contributing to marginalized, aso-

Table 6. Secure and risky life styles in the programs of public and commercial television (number and percent of all messages)

Kind of television	Secure life styles		Risky life styles		Total	
	Number of messages	Percent	Number of messages	Percent	Number of messages	Percent
Public	424	76.5	130	23.5	554	43.0
Commercial	411	55.8	323	44.2	734	57.0
Total	835	64.8	453	35.2	1 288	100.0

N= 1,288

Chi-square [1]=58,33 , p<0,001

cial or antisocial roles in society. For this reason, frequent viewing of such messages on television may be considered one of the contemporary threats to children and youth.

At the same time, television promotes secure life styles and socially appropriate life styles – such as living for a happy family life, love, passion, justice and work – which means that television may reinforce both pro-social and asocial life styles.

Copying strategies

An analysis of copying strategies included activities undertaken by the heroes in the TV programs in situations of stress, conflict and threat. Two kinds of stress were considered: that resulting from interactions with other people and that arising from solving difficult tasks. It was assumed that in appropriate socialization an individual is ready to coexist with others, non-antagonistically overcoming difficulties based on co-operation and not losing her/his autonomy. The evaluations in this respect aimed at establishing whether copying strategies presented on the TV screen tend to support or hinder what other socializing agents teach children and youth regarding how to cope with social conflicts and everyday hassles.

Copying strategies presented in the TV messages may be located on nine continua:

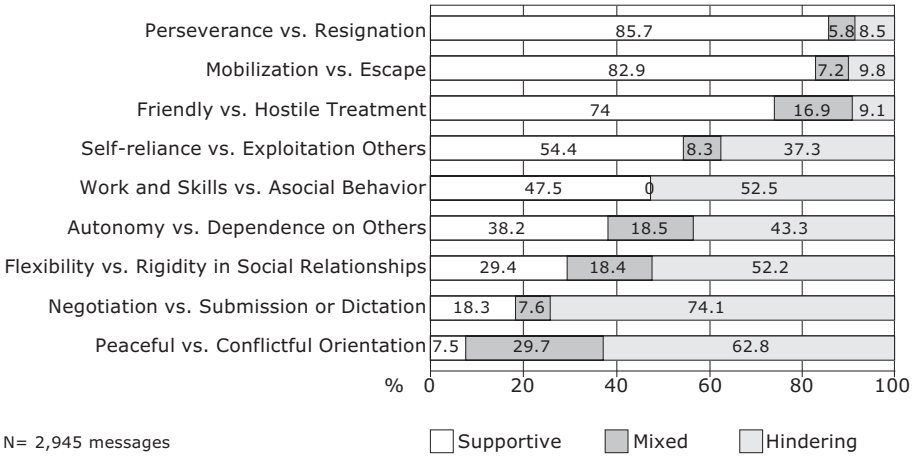
- independence vs. using the help of other people
- solving one's own problems independently vs. through exploitation of others
- orientation to peaceful conflict solving vs. orientation to conflict, aggression, rebellion
- friendly treatment of other people (liking, sympathy) vs. hostile treatment (threatening)

- solving problems using one's own skills and work vs. using asocial or antisocial strategies (lies, fraud, denunciation, manipulation)
- being flexible, agreeable vs. being rigid, tough and harsh when interacting with others
- negotiation vs. withdrawal or dictating one's own demands in a conflict situation
- persistence vs. resignation in overcoming difficulties
- problem avoidance vs. mobilization to solve problems.

It was assumed that strategies at the left end of these continua represent supportive strategies, while strategies at the right end tend to hinder the socialization process among children and youth. It was difficult to find strategies of conflict resolution or problem solving strategies addressing real co-operation.

The copying strategies shown most often were based on perseverance, mobilization, and orientation to rebellion and conflict accompanied by a tendency to asocial behavior, great independence and instrumental treatment of other people (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Copying strategies that may support vs. hinder socialization of children and youth in the TV programs (percent of all messages)



The large proportion of strategies based on friendly attitudes toward other people in the TV programs analyzed allows the conclusion that life success may be a function of openness to other people, great activity and independence – but only up until the moment a conflict starts. Then, copying strategies oriented towards fighting to a bitter end, strong motivation to have one's way, competition at any expense, and asocial – even antisocial – behavior seem to be more appro-

priate, according to their frequency on television. In this context, even kindness is rather an instrument to achieve one's own goal than a value in itself.

Once again, the image of solving problems and conflicts emerging from a variety of copying strategies shown in the TV programs lacks strategies specifically useful to children and youth. The TV programs do not provide sufficient patterns of copying strategies useful in an open society. They tend to represent models of life orientations and copying styles typical of an early stage of capitalism. The fact that there is such a small number of educational programs directed at young audiences supports the prediction that the younger generation tends to be socialized to a competitive aggressive behavior, egoistically oriented to one's own interest, rather than to co-operation and bringing one's creative input to the public interest of society. The patterns of copying strategies presented may contribute to the belief that exploiting other people, aggression and rebellion when a conflict arises are justified ways of overcoming difficulties.

Does television support socialization of the young?

The content analysis of value systems, life goals, life orientations and copying styles shows that television communicates messages which may probably not substantially help young viewers toward self-realization, critical thinking, balanced and satisfactory relationships with their environments, or toward developing socially appropriate behavior.

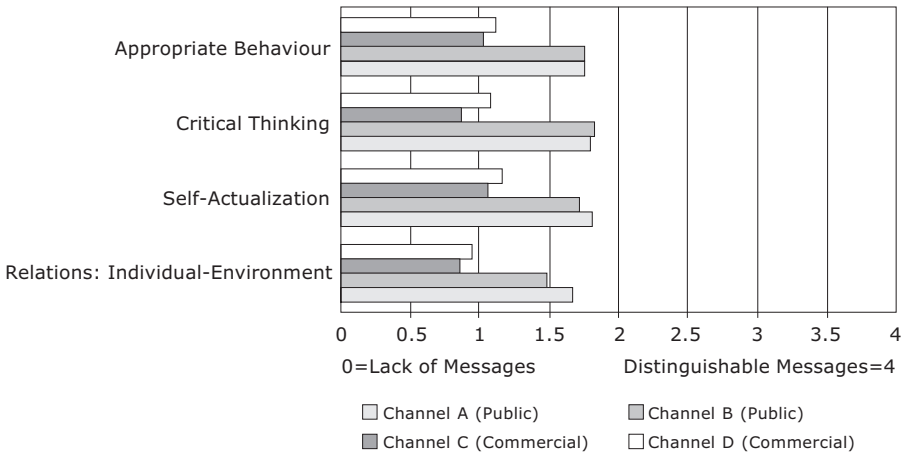
A final judgment was made in order to establish whether the messages analyzed supported four important outcomes of the socialization of the younger generation by other socializing agents – satisfactory relations between the individual and the environment, self-realization, critical thinking, and appropriate behavior (cf. BrzeziDska, 2001; Manstead et al., 1996). In this regard, the program content was rated on scales to answer the following questions:

- Do the TV messages support young viewers' need to search and find a position in the society?
- Do the TV messages show young viewers that the need for self-realization is important, as are ways to fulfill this need?
- Do the TV messages enrich children's knowledge about themselves, the social environment and the world, and empower the development of children's mental abilities and readiness for critical thinking?
- Do the TV messages support the development of appropriate social behavior, skills, habits and self-control among children?

In other words, to what extent does Polish television (the four channels studied) support the socialization of children and youth?

These four important aspects, which ought to be outcomes of the socialization process, were found to be weakly distinguishable in the messages of the TV programs studied (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Average distinctiveness of messages supporting socialization of children and youth on the four channels ('To what extent do the channels support children's and youth's socialization by other agents as regards the four aspects?')



Messages supporting socialization were slightly more distinguishable on the public TV channels – but the differences between the ratings for public TV and commercial TV were not significant.

Such a finding is not surprising. When there are few TV programs directed at children because the young audience is not considered important, there seems to be no need to produce TV programs that make the socialization process of children and youth more efficient.

What can we do for young TV viewers?

Television for children in Poland is similar to that in many other countries, i.e., programming for children and youth is deteriorating rather than improving. Time devoted to children's and youth's programs has decreased and children watch television aimed at adults, in which children's life problems and child heroes appear very sporadically. Therefore, the young audience is exposed to values presented to the adult audience, whether they are understandable or not, positive or negative, worthy of modeling or not (cf. Olech, 2004). This means not only that children are exposed to harmful content on the TV screen but also that

it has an even broader negative impact, or rather a lack of positive impact, on the young audience, which is the opposite of what ought to result from the supportive function of television as one of the important socialization agents (the others being parents, school, church, youth organizations and other social groups with which children interact directly).

Children and young people have been neglected very often because of false interpretations of audience ratings of children's programs. If the sample of children viewing a TV program directed at children is of a certain age, the proportion of child viewers of this exact age – not of all children – should be the valid index of the audience size, something that seldom is the case. For example, the programs in Poland for children aged 3 to 5 were viewed by over 80 percent of the population in this age span (cf. Jasny-Mazurek, 2004). In addition, the audience of children's programs is multiplied by the number of child cohorts that watch them. This is not just the case of *Sesame Street,* which children have viewed episodes of for over 35 years. Every year, children's programs gain new young viewers as children grow older. Thus, it is not economic reasons that eliminate children's programming.

It is rather because of a lack of concern for children and a neglect of children's rights to decent, valuable and attractive TV programs that children are exposed to inconsistent adult images of the world and of people on television, and of the value systems, life goals, life styles, etc., found in the content analysis. They influence children when making choices although the viewing children are not yet cognitively prepared to make these choices.

What can we do to protect the rights of children and youth to media content that is appropriate for them and supportive of their social development?

Solutions should include decisions about a proper amount of programming for children and youth according to the mission of public television – as well as budgets for realizing this mission. The Polish producers of cartoons for children propose that television should devote not less than 20 percent of its total budget for film production to the production of attractive new cartoons for children.

It is even more important to make clear to adult members of society how important the production of TV programs for children is to the process of effective socialization of the younger generation, because children and young people are the most sensitive, creative, promising and worthy-of-investment segment of the entire population.

The ratio of time for broadcasting programs for children should be protected by legal regulation of broadcasting. This time should certainly not be filled with films alone. One proposed solution is to make TV production for children an especially privileged one ({mudzki & Wendorff, 2002).

To be effective, attractive television for children should explain rules of life. It should show the image of the world and people interacting in this world in many aspects and details. To what extent this television will be imaginative, artistic, aesthetic and responsible enough not to harm young viewers depends on pro-

ducers and scriptwriters but also on decision makers who must decide how children's rights should be protected.

Decision makers ought to realize that children and youth are the most valuable part of the population and begin protecting children's rights to active participation in the TV communication process. We should also expect that TV programs for children must be attractive to them both as regards content and form and that these programs must not interfere/be in conflict with the process of children's socialization. To realize this purpose, there is a need to train script writers, film makers, and producers of programs for children and youth in a very careful way with an awareness of what these adults have to offer the young viewer: humor, wisdom, attractiveness, and a true image of the real world.

Since children are exposed so much to adult-oriented TV programs and value systems, parents need to be educated about the possible negative functions of this for the socialization process. Parents should encourage children to watch children's television programs that have been reviewed positively. There is a myth that children prefer short magazine format segments and very rapid changes and that long segments are boring for them. The studies on *Sesame Street* and Polish children show that children like movable objects, loud music, a fast tempo, clear rhythms, and short elements. But they similarly enjoy the longer formats, which show and tell them important things about life, behavior and social relationships. They even like to watch interviews when the interviewer and the people interviewed allow identification based on age, language and relevant problems (cf. Kirwil, 2000a).

There are many ways to protect children's rights to good television – and greater concern for children and youth and protection of their social development generally are the first steps in all of these ways.

Note

1. Data presented in this article were collected for the report „Wspieranie socjalizacji dzieci i mlodziezy przez telewizj'. Analiza zawartosci przekazu czterech głównych nadawców: TVP1, TVP2, TVN i POLSAT z punktu widzenia psychologii wychowawczej' [Television as a Factor Supporting Children's and Youth's Socialization. Content Analysis of Programming on Four Main Channels: TVP1, TVP2, TVN, and POLSAT from the Point of View of Educational Psychology. Expertise prepared for a commission of the National Council for Broadcast, December 29, 2003, Warsaw, Poland. http://www.krrit.gov.pl/stronykrrit/raport/rapo04.rtf] (in Polish). Data were rated by Anna Fiszer, Katarzyna Komisaruk, Katarzyna Strus, Ewa Tlaga, Malgorzata Ulanowicz, and Anna Zielinska under direction of the author.

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Money, Ratings and the Kid*

Children's Television in Asia

Indrajit Banerjee & Kalinga Seneviratne

In Asia, political and opinion leaders very often talk about the child as the most precious resource of the country, and many countries in Asia have a large young population who will become the leaders of the future. Yet, when it comes to television, touted as the most influential media of our times, money and ratings seem to be more important than educational programming for the children, even though most Asian countries are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Rights of the Child convention was ratified by 192 countries and came into force on 12th February 2002. It has become a binding instrument for almost all countries in the world. The Convention's four guiding principles include: non-discrimination (Article 2), best interests of the child (Article 3), survival and development (Article 6) and participation (Article 12).

In the MDGs adopted by the United Nations member states in September 2000, are goals, which apply directly to children's welfare and development such as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empower women, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) undertook in 2005 a study of children's programme production and best practices in six Asian countries, to examine whether children's programming are contributing to addressing the principles and goals of the Rights of the Child convention and the MDGs. Also included in the research brief was to look at the impact of international or regional children's television item-exchanges on local productions and the diversity of children's programmes available on the selected channels.

The study covered Bhutan, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Bhutan – still in the infancy

Television only began in Bhutan in 1999 and owing to the short history of television in the Himalayan country, children's programming has not been subjected to any serious discussions, nor has there been any attempt made to improve the quantity and quality of children's programmes on the national network.

With the family unit holding very strong in the kingdom, and as a result the perception that children are well looked after, children's programming has become a low priority area in Bhutanese broadcasting. The women and children's programming unit is one of 12 units within Bhutan TV, which has to compete for limited funding. Thus, producers struggle to get funds to produce programmes for children. But a greater challenge in the long term is the lack of expertise in children's issues in the country to guide these producers.

India – quarter century of children's television

While India has had a quarter century of experience in children's television production, the producers are yet to realize the goal of providing wholesome children's programming. With television increasingly becoming commercialized in the sub-continent, both in Doordarshan – the national public broadcaster – and commercial channels, economic considerations continue to dominate decisions on contents production for children's programming.

While commercial channels in particular look at children's programmes in the context of their market share, rather than in terms of education and information dissemination, children perceive television as a medium of entertainment, especially those who are from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, the public broadcasters are gradually shedding their responsibility to the educational sector to provide children's programming, while many children now watch television in the company of adults, thereby exposing themselves to adult television.

Malaysia – children's television gets low priority

In the post-deregulated era of Malaysian television, the expanding television networks with its commercial focus give more attention to drama and movies than to children's television or informational programmes.

In this environment programmes have to rate and if not they will be scrapped. Thus, Malaysian children's programme producers also have to adhere to this principle, which results in many cartoon programmes – often from overseas – shown on children's programming slots which carries a lot of violence and less in terms of educational material.

While the commercial channels base most of their programming decisions on the target audience and how to maximize it, the public broadcaster – RTM – is required to produce children's programmes, according to guidelines set by the Information Ministry and these are previewed by special groups of people, like child psychologists, principals of kindergartens and representatives of children, before they are aired.

However, one of the biggest barriers to improving the quality of television in the country according to one producer is the lack of good scriptwriters for children's TV programmes and the difficulty of getting experts who work with children to collaborate with producers.

The research indicated that with the government broadcaster struggling to keep pace with its commercial rivals in the post-deregulated era, the position of children's television may become more complicated.

Mongolia – children's television improving, but funds needed

Right from its inception in 1967, Mongolian television has given high priority to children's programming. The research department of the public broadcaster – Mongolian Radio and TV (MRTV) – collects feedback on programmes and the children's programme unit follows up through phone conversation with children, who participate in their shows.

In May 2005, the government of Mongolia issued a decree to execute conducting of training aimed at providing good quality programmes of educational and discovery value to children. An Educational TV Channel has been set up with the objective of producing and broadcasting programmes of educational value to children and adolescents. Non-governmental organizations and professional production houses will also be able to produce programmes for this channel. A number of programmes have thus been produced related to children's rights, such as the trafficking in children by organ transplant racketeers – but none has been broadcast as yet.

The research indicates that the biggest problem for children's programme producers in Mongolia is the lack of sufficient funding to do well researched quality programmes. In addition, technical facilities and equipments available are insufficient. Need for extensive training of producers and managers is also an important shortcoming in the children's television sector, with very few opportunities available for international exposure.

Philippines – preponderance of imported programmes

The historic National Children's Television Act of 1997 proposed the establishment of the National Council for Children's Television tasked to formulate poli-

cies and priorities for government and private sector action towards the development of high quality, locally-produced children's TV programmes that will meet the developmental and informational needs of Filipino children. The council is expected to work in tandem with broadcast practitioners, the academe and child-oriented groups. The act also provides funding for high quality children's TV productions.

Today, nearly a decade after the Act was passed by the Philippines Congress, the accompanying National Children's Television Council has not been formally convened nor have the law's implementing rules and regulations been discussed in countryside consultations. The council was created, its members appointed, but no significant agenda has been passed. To date, the act and the council remain on paper, aching for funds and political will to be realised.

In the meantime, a preponderance of imported programmes fill the slots allocated for children's programmes, in both public and private channels. The national public broadcaster – National Broadcasting Network (NBN) – has been starved of funds in recent years, and whatever it gets is used to pay staff and maintenance of equipment. Children's programmes are thus given low priority because the government is keen to communicate its message to the adults via television.

In the 1990s, NBN (then known as PTV) has produced a number of very successful children's television programmes. One of them was *Arts' Sake*, which provided a vehicle to show case arts and culture to older children. Even schoolteachers across the country have used these programmes as supplements to classroom lessons. NBN as part of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Committee on Culture and Information was involved in the ASEAN Children's TV Series in 1995, where ASEAN nations showcased each other's rich culture and races of the region. The programmes have been very popular with children. Another programme was the *Eskwela ng Bayan* (School of the Nation), which was later adopted by President Gloria Arroyo as a component of her presidency's poverty alleviation programme.

But today, cash-strapped television stations are sending their executives to overseas festivals to purchase children's programmes, which could be requisitioned for a fraction of a local production.

The private ABS-CBN channel at the height of its rating success in the early part of this decade has created a foundation to produce educational programmes targeted at children. This channel has for a time filled the vacuum created by NBN, by producing programmes for children endorsed by the Philippines Department of Education. But lately, due to the depressed economy and the network's drop in popularity stakes, the foundation has virtually ceased from production of the children's programmes.

While the Philippines has a large reservoir of ideas and creativity for children's programmes, the research indicates that the biggest barrier is money and the lack of political will on part of television executives to risk commercial failure by putting on more children's programmes at appropriate prime-time viewing for children.

ABU's Children's Programme Item-Exchange – creating regional collaboration

The Asian-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) has been running a Children's Programme Item-Exchange scheme for 15 years, and in 2004 introduced a children's drama-exchange scheme.

The Children's Programme Item-Exchanges require members to bring their own programmes based on specified themes. Each participating broadcaster, who is ABU member, brings at least four items to share to the annual meeting. All programmes are screened and discussed during a three-day period, at the end of which members choose programmes to be included in the item-exchange. Thus, ABU members get rights-free quality programming that they want. In 2005, there were 42 participants at the item-exchange workshop representing 28 organisations.

The workshop format of the meeting helps producers to get feedback from other broadcasters about their programmes, which helps to improve the quality of the programmes offered for the exchange. Ms Hyunsook Chung from Korea, currently the chairperson of the Item-Exchange Coordinating Committee, says that a common excuse broadcasters give, when there is criticism about their programmes, is the lack of equipment or funds or lack of time given to develop the programme. She argues that it is wrong to say these are excuses, but the reality is that they do not have the opportunities to be properly trained, especially those who come from the less developed member countries.

While ABU's Children's Programme Item-Exchange scheme has been running for 15 years, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has had its own scheme for 31 years, while the African exchange is only 4 years old, the Latin American 2 years and the Middle East just begun. Thus, there is now ample scope for a global item exchange.

Drama series

The drama series is an ambitious project, which grew out of the annual ABU children's item-exchange meeting. The six members, who participated in the first exchange were CCTV China, RTM Malaysia, EBS Korea, MRTV Mongolia, RTHK Hong Kong and NHK Japan. The first series produced in 2004 has the theme of 'mental growth of children in different situations'. The series is targeted at the 7-9 year old age group. Each participating broadcaster brought two or three story outlines for an initial consultation. After a group discussion, the best one which had the potential to develop into a story that could go across the region was chosen. The project was coordinated by NHK (Japan) and the executive producer (Ms Chung) worked online during the script development stage with the producers. Once you finished one story, you got five more for free.

Children's programming and the needs

Ms Chung believes that the children's item-exchange programme could make a contribution to promote greater understanding among people of Asia, because if children get used to watching each other's programmes they will begin to appreciate and understand cultural diversity. This scheme is most valuable to poorer countries, where children may not get the opportunity to watch international programming of quality otherwise.

But to achieve this there is a need for greater cooperation among the broadcasters in the region, such as through seminars and symposiums on children's programming – and also through in-country training programmes – which could be implemented via the item-exchange scheme of the ABU.

Recommendations for follow-up projects

As a follow-up to this research project, AMIC would like to recommend the following:

a) *In-country training programme and training kit*
It is important to improve the skills level of children's programme producers in the poorer Asian countries. Thus, the best and most effective way to do it will be to conduct training programmes in-country (as recommended by Ms Chung), such as in Bhutan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, China and Cambodia. These programmes may be perhaps of two weeks duration followed up with programme development via online consultation with trainer.

AMIC, in consultation with Ms Chung at ABU, will be able to develop a training kit which will, in addition to technical matters, also include information on principles of programming for children, in the context of the Rights of the Child convention and the role of such programming in the achievement of the MDGs. This may be produced in the language of the country in which the training takes place (if funding is available for the translation).

b) *Development of "how things are done" educational resources*
Choosing programmes from ABU children's programme item-exchange under the theme "How Things Are Done", these features will be compiled into a CD-ROM, which will also include written information on the product, its origins, historic development and its contemporary applications, as an educational resource for primary schools. This may be produced in different languages and distributed by AMIC, UNESCO, ABU and other relevant organisations.

c) *Development of participatory programmes with children at local level to promote MDGs*
Exploring with Ms Chung and ABU, a pilot series at in-country level, where programmes may be developed for the 7-12 year old age group, to pro-

mote MDGs. These programmes will employ participatory communication style of programming where the children may even act as reporters.

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Child Protection Issues in Chinese Media[1]

Bu Wei

In China, the issue of the growth of vulnerable children is gaining more and more attention from the State and society. *The National Program of Action for Child Development in China 2001-2010*, issued in 2001, states that we shall

> pay close attention to girls and children with special difficulties, and ensure that they have equal opportunities of enjoying healthy growth and participation in development.

Therefore, we should

> provide better conditions for the healthy growth of orphans, children with disabilities and abandoned infants through increasing the input to child welfare efforts and improving facilities and services,
>
> strengthen the establishment and management of relief and protection centers for street children, and
>
> strengthen the construction of formal rehabilitation institutions for children with disabilities.[2]

In recent years, an increase has been observed in mass media coverage of the issue of child protection. The issue has entered public spheres through the 'agenda setting' of the mass media. Given the important role and influence of mass media in China, it is necessary for us to survey mass media coverage of vulnerable children, so as to urge society to pay more attention to this issue and take due actions.

However, there has been very little research on mass media coverage of child protection in the communication field. The sources searched showed that merely 12 articles on this topic were published in the major periodicals of journalism

and communication in China's mainland during the period between January 1990 and June 2003, including *Journalism and Communication* (sponsored by the Institute of Journalism and Communication, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), *Modern Communication* (sponsored by the Beijing Broadcasting Institute), *TV Research* (sponsored by the CCTV – China Central Television), *China Radio and TV Academic Journal* (sponsored by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television), *Journal of International Communication* (sponsored by the School of Journalism, Renmin University of China), *Journalism School* (sponsored by the Fudan University in Shanghai), and *The Journalist Monthly* (sponsored by Wenhuixinmin, United Press Group).

One of the 12 articles was published in 1997 and entitled 'Media and Protection of the Rights of the Child'.[3] Here, the author explores mainland China's laws and regulations on media and the protection of the child and their practice. In Section Four, 'Journalists' Consciousness of Protection of the Rights of the Child', the author found that some reports on violence against children, child labor, sexual abuse of children, abduction and trafficking of children, and abandonment of babies mainly consisted of denouncements and sensational descriptions, neglecting the legal content of the cases and showing a lack of consciousness of protection of the rights of the child.

The other eleven articles are all narrations of the reporters' experiences during the coverage, published in *The Journalist Monthly*. Of these, three are about the journalists' experiences during their interviews with impoverished children, and how they sympathized with and helped the children.[4] Two are about how one can call on society to save children suffering from serious diseases[5] – for example, a serial report on children with leukemia gave prominence to the formulation of local regulations on insurance for children's hospitalization in Shanghai. Five are summaries of experiences in the coverage of 'cracking down on abduction and trafficking of children', where the reporters helped the abducted children contact their parents, rescued the children together with the police, and sent the children back home, all through news and serial reports such as 'Action of Returning Children Home'.[6] Another document is an analysis of a case of a son killing his mother,[7] where the author criticizes the violations of the Law of Protection of Minors in the coverage, including revealing the minor's name, the school he went to, his mother's name and other private information.

The other two important articles, 'A Research Report on Girls' Image Reported by Chinese Mainstream Newspapers'[8] and 'Child Labor Issues in the Chinese Media,'[9] were published outside the communication field. Both are results of content analyses. The former, using a sample of reports on girls from six mainstream newspapers, analyzes from a gender perspective the achievements and problems of girls reported on in mainstream newspapers. The latter, surveying all the reports on child labor from http://www.people.com.cn, attempts to explain the phenomenon of child labor in reality by analyzing the frequency of media coverage of the issue of child labor, number of child laborers, their jobs and living conditions, and ways to save them, in order to explore ways to solve the problem.

The study

From the limited material, we can see that child victims of violence, child labor, abducted children, children suffering from serious diseases, impoverished children and discriminated girls have entered the visual field of researchers and journalists, who are trying to promote social protection of these children through research and reports. But research in this area has rarely included children affected by AIDS, disabled children and abandoned babies. A series of questions require more systematic studies, such as the exact number of reports on vulnerable children in the mass media, how the media describe the issue of vulnerable children, and public attitudes toward the issue. As the problems of vulnerable children are usually based in China's impoverished areas and in the marginalized populations of cities, one significant aim of the study summarized in this article was to analyze in more detail the issue of vulnerable children and public attitudes in the media contents.

By way of content analysis, this study, sponsored by UNICEF China, describes and analyzes how child protection issues have been or have not been addressed by Chinese media, and how media have reported on these issues. The study therefore explores Chinese society's awareness of the situation, as well as the nature of, causes of and solutions to the problems of vulnerable children.

Research questions and method

The study defines vulnerable children as child groups whose survival, development and rights are being threatened.

According to this definition, vulnerable children include:

1) disabled children
2) abandoned and orphaned children
3) children of migrants
4) street children
5) children trafficked within the country and across borders
6) child laborers
7) sexually exploited children
8) violated children, i.e., child abuse including physical, psychological, and sexual violence from family and relatives, school teachers, peers and community
9) girls with survival or developmental obstacles due to gender discrimination (including higher school drop-out rate among girls, unequal treatment by parents of a boy and a girl at home, the higher birth rate of boys, gender stereotyping)
10) children and youth who abuse drugs

11) children with HIV or from AIDS families
12) children of poor families
13) children of criminals and drug addicts
14) children in conflict with the law and juvenile justice.

Information presented on television and in newspapers related to the above-mentioned subjects was collected and analyzed. The study also measured children's background in relation to each of the fourteen categories:

1) ethnic background of the children in the media coverage
2) age group of the children in the coverage
3) gender of the children in the coverage

Questions

The main research questions of the content analysis were the following:

1) Issues and context: What issues or problems are Chinese children in the media actually facing? What are the causes and wider socio-economic context that give rise to the problems? And what is the family/public/government perception of these issues?

2) Legislation and law enforcement and their effectiveness: Which laws related to the issue are mentioned in the media? Does the report mention whether there are enough legislative measures to address the issue and how effective they are? Is there any report on law enforcement?

3) Action taken: What kind of action to address the issue is reported on? Who is responsible for the action, where and how? Is there any mention of support from the public, community institutions, alternative care (i.e., foster care) and NGOs?

The measures of media coverage include:

1) frequency of coverage in the media
2) date of distributed issue
3) page of coverage and its title
4) kind of content (news, drama, documentary, talk show, etc.)
5) ratio of domestic incidents/contents from abroad
6) ratio of urban/rural coverage
7) geographic presentation
8) treatment of children as a victim, as a participant, or the like
9) length of the coverage (and follow-ups)
10) attitudes toward/perception of the child issue
11) protection of the child's identity.

Sample

According to *Statistical Communiqué of The People's Republic of China on the 2002 National Economic and Social Development*[10] released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2003, there were (in 2002) 306 broadcasting stations, 770 medium- and short-wave radio transmitting and relaying stations (with radio coverage of 93.2% of the population), 360 television stations (with TV coverage of 94.5% of the population), and 96.38 million cable television users reached throughout the mainland of China. In 2001, 2,111 newspapers and 8,889 magazines[11] were issued.

It was impossible to cover all media in our study, which is why we could only select some representative media. When making the selection, we mainly considered the following elements: (1) the media coverage – both national and local media should be considered; (2) the media type – comprehensive, professional and segmented media should be considered; (3) the media category – television and newspapers should be included; and (4) the circulation – high circulation and low circulation media should be included. We selected the following media for the study, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Media Sample

Medium	Coverage	Media Type	Media Category	Circulation Number of Average Issue[12]
CCTV Xinwen Lianbo	National	Comprehensive	Television	Estimated 0.1 billion audiences
People's Daily	National	Comprehensive	Newspaper	High circulation: 1.77 million
Beijing Youth Daily	Beijing	Segmented	Newspaper	Mid circulation: 449 thousand
Wenhui Daily	Shanghai	Comprehensive	Newspaper	Mid circulation: 293.8 thousand
Yangcheng Evening Paper	Guangzhou	Evening paper	Newspaper	High circulation: 1.5 million
China Women's News	National	Segmentation	Newspaper	Low circulation: 106 thousand
Legal Daily	National	Professional	Newspaper	Mid circulation: estimated 400-600 thousand[13]

We should point out that this is not a standard representative sample. As national media, *People's Daily* and CCTV Xinwen Lianbo have an incomparable influence on the public. Inevitably, they are the media we should pay close attention to. However, how many reports in such media are actually related to child protection issues? *China Women's News* is also a national medium, but its circulation is much lower and, furthermore, it is a segmented newspaper sponsored by the National Women's Federation. As 'women' and 'children' are often associated with weak groups in China, *China Women's News* reports a great deal on child pro-

tection issues. Particularly, it has a special page – 'For the Children' – on each Wednesday. *Legal Daily* is the only large national comprehensive daily newspaper circulating in domestic and overseas markets, which focuses on promoting democracy and legislative construction. It may concentrate some of its reports on child protection issues. Therefore, *China Women's News* and *Legal Daily* were our study targets, as well.

It was difficult for us to select a sample of local newspapers representing the more than 2,000 newspapers in the country due to our limited budget and other concerns. As a result, the selection of local newspapers was mainly focused on Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the top three flourishing areas in China. The selected newspapers in these three areas include one daily, one segmented and one evening paper. *Wenhui Daily* in Shanghai mainly targets intellectuals with its emphasis on such areas as education, technology, literature and arts, hygiene, theory, science, sports and travel. *Beijing Youth Daily*, sponsored by the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League, reports specially on news that concerns Beijing youth. *Yangcheng Evening Paper* is one of the evening papers with the highest circulation in the country. Like other evening papers, it is closer to the lifestyle of common people. Owing to the characteristics of these three local newspapers, *Beijing Youth Daily* might have more reports related to child protection than do the other two papers.

The study included all reports, news, articles, comments and pictures on issues of child protection in the seven media, published from January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2002. The unit of analysis (the smallest element of the content analysis) was the entire article or story with an independent caption. There were 1,509 units of analysis.

The method of selecting these units was as follows: (1) select all reports according to keywords related to the 14 kinds of vulnerable children mentioned previously, as well as keywords related to the rights of the child, the interests of children, child protection, and protection of minors; (2) read these reports and select those that included a child protection issue in more than half of the space allotted to the report; (3) download these reports and organize them.

Main findings

The purpose of the research project was, thus, to analyze the social awareness of and attitude toward the existence of, conditions of, quality of life of, origins of vulnerable children and the solutions to their problems. We can claim that recognition in the media is fairly consistent with social reality on the ground that the media and society are under control of the same ideology. We made careful deductions concerning the findings of the content analysis. The main findings are summarized in the following.

Reports on vulnerable children

The problems related to vulnerable children were covered on a rather small scale by some of the major media, and they were treated in the CCTV news as if they were global problems or problems only existing in foreign countries. This shows that vulnerable children are still not one of the focal issues of society. In 2002, however, there was an increase in activities aimed at improving the living conditions of these children, which could mean that society has become more sensitive to vulnerable children.

Among the six newspapers, *Legal Daily*, *China Women's News* and *Beijing Youth Daily* were most likely to have reports about vulnerable children. Next came the evening newspapers, while the comprehensive daily newspapers seldom had such reports. At the same time, we made the following observation: *China Women's News* often placed news about vulnerable children on the front page or in the news edition, *Legal Daily* had a special column for such news called 'Young people and Law', while the comprehensive daily newspapers usually put such news on the page for education, science and culture. This shows that vulnerable children's problems are treated as educational problems in comprehensive daily newspapers, as legal problems in *Legal Daily*, and are comparatively important in *China Women's News*. But the latter paper has a low circulation and is run by the Women's Federation, which is why it has limited influence in comparison with those papers that can represent the government's attitudes, such as *People's Daily*. This also indicates that women are seen as the ones who should solve the problems of vulnerable children. 'Protect the legal rights of women and children' is not a slogan set up by the nation, but usually by the Women's Federation. Moreover, women's rights and children's rights are often mentioned simultaneously – women and children are not treated as two independent social groups. This also contributes to the observation that children's problems are regarded not as the nation's problems, but as the Women's Federation's problems.

Vulnerable children living in rural areas were scarcely covered, only in about 7 percent of the cases. In fact, we believe that most of the children facing problems live in the rural areas, as poverty is one of the main causes of their difficult conditions. Thus, reports in the mainstream media stray away from social reality. This can primarily be understood from the following three perspectives: First, most of the media exist in urban areas or are urbanized media. Second, the audience of most of the media are urban dwellers, so the media try to cater to these people. Third, those people who can offer help to vulnerable children are most probably urban dwellers, which is why they become the main characters in the urbanized reports. A large number of reports on children's problems are reports on the 'good deeds' of these urban people. Therefore, the real problems of the vulnerable children are most often overlooked. This finding on the misleading reports of the media is also a reflection of the values of mainstream society.

Another finding related to the above-mentioned one was that reports on children in poverty were the most frequent of the fourteen categories of children in diffi-

cult positions. And the number of reports on abandoned and orphaned children was ranked among the leading four categories. This is connected to the 'charitable donation' of the city dwellers. Children were not the main characters in the reports on vulnerable children or on abandoned and orphaned children, but the main characters were enterprisers, philanthropists, noted public figures, and laborers from other social strata. People care more about 'who' offers help to these children and how much he or she spent on this help than about the difficult conditions the children are living in.

Child abuse, especially sexual abuse, and adolescent criminals were the problems mostly reported on as worthy news. These reports were full of moral condemnation, indignation, exaggerated feelings, etc., but they were lacking in consideration for child rights, gender equity, and law.

Reports on other children in difficult positions, such as children of drug addicts, child laborers, drug-abusing youngsters, sexually exploited children, street children, and children of migrants, were given comparatively less attention in the media. This can also be explained by the involvement of city people and the values usually held by the media, something that reflects the different social attitudes toward children in various kinds of difficult positions.

Social capital of vulnerable children

The identity of vulnerable children entails living with and developing in the face of the problems confronting them. Street children have poor health, safety, and educational resources; sexually abused girls are not only physical and mental victims, but are further pressed by the traditional culture. There is limited social capital available to them for changing their destiny.

Social capital is defined as the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These social resources are developed through networks and connectedness, membership in more formalized groups and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges (DFID Sustainable Livelihoods guidance sheets, 1999). In the World Development Report 2000, the World Bank discerns different ties:[14]

- Bonding social capital – the strong horizontal ties which connect family members, neighbors, close friends and business associates (people who share similar demographic characteristics)
- Bridging social capital – the weak horizontal ties which connect people with different ethnic and occupational backgrounds (people who share broadly comparable economic status and political power)
- Linking social capital – vertical ties which connect poor people with people in positions of influence in formal organizations (banks, agricultural extension offices, the police).

According to our research findings, every kind of social capital is limited for vulnerable children. Most of the social capital vulnerable children can use is *bonding social capital*. For example, the girl violated by her stepfather asked her aunt for help, because the aunt had a friend who knew something about the law; the girl raped by her teacher asked her mother for help, and so on. However, such social capital is also vulnerable for the following reasons: (1) vulnerable children are from poor families, and their family and friends themselves have limited social capital; (2) for children abused by family members, sexually abused female children, street children or child laborers, etc., the family and neighbors cannot be their social capital – on the contrary, these persons may drive the children into further trouble, at the same time as these children lack other social capital.

We also found in the study that vulnerable children can obtain *bridging social capital* through receiving various types of aid, legal aid, relief, training, etc. In a report in the *China Women's News*, 4th January 2001 issue, all circles in Fuyang City provided aid to the Funan female children classes. In the 22nd August 2001 issue, there was a report on street children in Wuxi joining the training course of 'protecting the rights of street children'. In the *Legal Daily's* 22nd October 2001 issue, the Nanchang Women's Federation opened a hotline to provide impoverished children with legal support. In the *Legal Daily's* 23rd February 2001 issue, an old man in Yimong adopted five babies discarded by their parents. In the *Beijing Youth Daily's* 9th April 2001 issue, college students provided a free of charge second classroom for street children. In such conditions, when impoverished children receive aid, abandoned and orphaned children and disabled children may have access to bridging social capital. But if the aid is one time only, it may not give these children a chance to contact the aid-provider, and in this sense such social capital is unreliable. As seen from the reports, when some of the social capital is one-to-one and when aid-providers keep regular contact with vulnerable children, the aid-providers can be social capital for the children. The aid-providers bring not only money, but also strong support for the children's mental and physical health.

Some reports showed that vulnerable children have access to *linking social capital*. For example, the *Legal Daily's* 1st July 2001 issue reported that the director of the police office in Yongnian in the Hebei Province helped the children of convicts to continue their study in school. The *China Women's News'* 28th May 2002 issue reported that the governor of the Liaoning Province visited orphans and handicapped children. But this kind of relationship is unstable and vulnerable children are still in a negative and passive position.

We saw in the reports that some vulnerable children made positive use of the indirect social capital in order to change their condition, such as through reading and studying law and legal magazines. However, this only happens under certain conditions, for example, when the children grow older, leave the origin of their troubles or obtain certain knowledge. Therefore, generally speaking, vulnerable children need social capital to protect themselves as a consequence of their vulnerable state.

Solutions in the framework of social protection

Social protection comprises all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized, with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups.[15] For different vulnerable people, social protection has different ways of intervening. The above-mentioned findings of the content analysis of reports regarding child protection in the media were put into the framework of social protection.

We saw that in the media reports the most frequently recommended solution – offering charitable donations and aid – belongs to the category of 'social assistance'. The second most frequently recommended intervention was social insurance. Few reports suggested interventions belonging to the category of social equity. According to the framework of social protection analysis, the following important actions were overlooked:

- Propagating for changing social attitudes and promoting social equity in order to build up an optimal environment for the healthy growth of children. Propaganda and education on social equity are especially needed in communities and families in which vulnerable children live.
- Providing mental and physical medical aid to abused children in order to help them return to society in a state of good health. For example, after being violated, many girls drop out of school or run away from home under the pressure from society and family, causing their social vulnerability and loneliness to increase.
- Encouraging children's participation in society and enhancing their ability through training and special actions.

Action takers and social exclusion

According to the mass media, most of the action takers who are trying to improve the environment in which vulnerable children grow up are the public and individuals, departments in local governments, NGOs, the judicature, the nation, enterprises, schools, media, and the military. Generally speaking, governmental departments play a key role in legislation and policymaking, while the public and individuals, NGOs, and other bodies usually adopt an intervention policy that involves transfering social support, such as a 'donation'. However, these two kinds of movements are unilateral adult movements – there is no room for children to take part or be heard.

This is a kind of 'natural' social exclusion of vulnerable children. However, we made the following observations in many media reports: First, the real re-

quirements of vulnerable children have not been presented and met – for example, people overlooked the requirements of children who endure long-term suffering from domestic violence and sexual abuse, which is why these children remain in helpless conditions. Second, without any help, the children might take possible action to protect themselves from the persecution, and some more courageous ones might even search actively for social resources to improve their living conditions, but their activities are often ignored. Third, if given proper instruction and education, vulnerable children can become very different; for instance, it was reported that homeless girls who received training on child rights became more willing to air their views.[16]

In short, we should let these children join in on the process of taking intervening actions and making policies concerning the improvement of their lives.

Significance of intervention from public rights and law

The content analysis showed that when the perpetrators of sexual abuse are fathers, stepfathers and teachers, the reports often used such language as 'beast', 'animal' and 'more cruel than the tiger which loves its whelp'. For example, the raping of a 13-year-old girl by the man who was adopting her was described as 'Suhebater raped Wendulari beastly'.[17] Another report with the title 'Demon father was caught raping his little girl' described how a 14-year-old girl had been repeatedly raped by her father for nearly seven years and that she was found several months pregnant.[18] What is more, expressions such as 'beast teacher' and 'the sinful hand of the old teacher' were also common in the reports. It should be stressed that such expressions reveal the moral requirement of the society, but have nothing to do with the child's rights and the state law. One of the reports in the *China Women's News'* issue on 17th July 2003 is called 'Wicked mother forces her daughter to be prostitute'. The 12-year-old girl had been raped many times since she was 5 years old. Although this report does not belong to our sampled reports, it is typical in that all villagers were aware of the crime and condemned the family, but none of them thought they should take any actions or report it to the authority. That is to say, the public lacks the sensitivity to use citizenship to intervene and simply avoids such 'vice' through their moral indignation. Therefore, the girl's living conditions become even worse. The angry expressions such as 'beast' actually mean that sexual violence is regarded as a kind of personal affair, instead of as a human rights abuse of children in a wider sense. Moreover, in reports in which stepfathers and teachers were also husbands and fathers in other contexts, some people questioned those sinners and asked what they would do if the victims were their own daughters: 'His own daughter is of the same age as Anan. What would his reaction be if his daughter were persecuted like Anan?'[19] This is a typical example of traditional logic – 'you shouldn't force the other to do things you yourself don't like to do'. This way of thinking regards child rights abuse on the basis of social morality.

No matter whose daughter she is (including the criminal's), she should never be the target of sexual abuse and her rights should be protected.

We ought to understand that violence and abuse directed at children are usually regarded as 'inhumane' household affairs, which is why many children in difficult positions are forced to keep silent under the intangible pressure given by feudal virginity and the idea of 'keeping the scandal within the household'. The media affirm 'natural' and 'normal' behaviors (e.g., raping one's own daughter is beastly) so as to maintain the existing social order. But this maintenance is harmful for children and keeps them from getting on their feet and struggling for their rights. For example, the mother who forced her daughter to be a prostitute was treated as a 'scoundrel', and the villagers stopped all relations with her family. When the media reported this as a normal phenomenon, they overlooked two important factors that might have brought change to the child's living conditions: First, the villagers estranged the mother as a 'scoundrel', resulting in the child having even less access to social help and becoming more and more isolated. Second, the fact that the villagers estranged the mother as a 'scoundrel' shows that they viewed this crime only as an immoral scandal instead of an abuse of child rights, making the girl even more vulnerable. Therefore, what the media and the whole of society must do is relate vulnerable children to citizenship and use the law to maintain children's rights.

The nature of children in difficult positions and the cause of these positions

According to the media reports, most of the difficult positions vulnerable children are in are caused by long-term poverty. In 54 percent of the 633 reports in which causes of children's vulnerability were mentioned, it was stated that 'economic poverty' is the reason. But economic poverty alone cannot cause economical problems; also involved are a shortage of social resources used for sustaining development and shortage of social capital used for maintaining bilateral relations. Economic poverty, thus, may contribute to exclusion from the personal environment of vulnerable children and to their difficulty in getting out of their vulnerable positions. The economically poverty-stricken group has the highest risk and is the frailest group in society. Many of the vulnerable children are forced into difficult living conditions for some incidental reasons, such as being kidnapped and sold, being raped, suffering from domestic violence, being handicapped, being infected by AIDS, etc. The environments in which these children find themselves are poverty-stricken in terms of economy, backward in culture, poor in domestic protection, exclusive with regard to the personal environment, lacking in usable resources, and almost without awareness of child rights. In these respects, changing these children's environments requires support at all levels: national, social, and legal.

The cause of the problems – that there are children in difficult positions – lies in the fact that no efficient system for the protection of child rights has yet been

established. In most cases, the right to survive, the right to development, and the right to being protected, which should be enjoyed by all children, are treated as an individual problem, a domestic problem, a problem related to personal morality (such as the traditional idea of respecting the old and loving the young, and the idea of helping the poor and supporting the weak) or social morality (such as that it is forbidden to commit incest). This is why public and legal intervention are absent. We have already seen that it is difficult to make any change in living conditions and develop the environment of children by strengthening this kind of traditional support model.

Recommendations

Based on the above analysis and conclusions, this research study makes the following recommendations:

1. Set up beneficial living circumstances for children in difficult positions by

- using national movements and media propaganda to further education on child rights in the whole society, realizing that the problem is not only one of the Women's Federation but also a problem of the nation and the entire society;
- urging relevant authority departments and policy makers to shoulder the responsibility of protecting and improving children's rights, and on top of that increasing purposeful and planned changes;
- increasing opportunities for vulnerable children to be reported on by mainstream news through training media professionals, and encouraging the media to report on children in difficult positions from the angles of child rights, gender equity, and law;
- strengthening the education of people in the community, schools and families in which children in difficult positions live, so as to help people treat these children venerably and build up a friendly and suitable environment for them to grow up in.

2. Cultivate vulnerable children's ability and strengthen their rights by

- increasing activities that can help these children acquire social capital – for instance, setting up personal relations that go beyond cities and towns or areas, building up all kinds of social nets that can help protect the children, helping them to join proper organizations and helping their families to develop social capital;
- ensuring that children in difficult positions have the right to information, regarding public resources as their social capital in an indirect way, and providing children with knowledge related to legislation and child rights;

- through study and surveys, trying to find and meet these children's real requirements, listening to their voices, and forming an efficient system through which they can be heard by relevant departments and media;
- making strategies to ensure that these children will become social participants, and increasing their ability to make decisions to change their fate;
- training and activities, increasing the children's capability to take part in and change their situation and the societal process – in this way they are empowered.

3. Make social intervention happen by

- increasing the intervention activities of social insurance;
- increasing intervention activities concerning social equity, spreading propaganda about social equity and gender equity in these children's families, schools, and communities;
- setting up agencies, such as centers supporting children in difficult positions, in order to provide psychological and somatic medical services and to help return them to the society with a healthy body and heart;
- engaging in actions that relate vulnerable children to citizenship, using the law to protect their rights, and intensifying society's sensibility with regard to child rights protection.

4. Report on children in difficult positions by

- showing vulnerable children's right to be anonymous, to maintain their privacy and dignity;
- realizing that these children, especially those unfortunately injured and killed ones, all have the right to their dignity – therefore, no naked photos of these victims should be used in the reports and no photos in which these children are improperly-dressed or are belittled;
- not only reporting on the case itself, but investigating underlying causes so as to reveal the main source of child discrimination, thereby making society reflect on the issue;
- standing on the side of and protecting these children and reporting in a serious and accurate way so as to decrease all titillating details and to avoid denouncement of the victims;
- interviewing the vulnerable children and letting their voices be heard in the report;
- trying to find and report on how children themselves can take part in and take action to change their life, and avoiding a lifeless description of vulnerable children.

Notes

1. This article is based on a longer report by the author. Ms Liu Xiaohong, Associate Professor at the Institute of Journalism Communication of CASS, contributed her efforts to data statistics in the study. Ms Zhang Qi and Pang Minghui, graduate students in the CASS, contributed collection and registering of the data.
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Lebanese Youth and the Media[1]

Social and Political Influences

Magda Abu-Fadil

Perhaps there is more common ground between Arab and Western youth than one would think, notably given the plethora of satellite television channels offering a wide array of entertainment, news and documentary programming in a multitude of languages. All a viewer has to do is zap through music, sports, horror movies, game shows or news channels that seem to mushroom with every passing year.

"They design, we wear", or "that's what the public wants", wrote Lebanese analyst Ziad Sayegh commenting on two opinions offered on the state of television production at a media forum. He lamented:

> Political parades, receptions lines, professional dubbing, borrowed creativity, shallow entertainment, cultural banishment, star gazing, marketing of senseless dancing and music, overdoses of sports, what do you think of all that? [2]

As for former *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* correspondent Youssef Ibrahim, Arab media sift news through a vantage point of fear, disguised as if it were the standard and cloaked in civility and political correctness, enveloped as guidelines from ministries of information turning reality into fiction.

He attributed this phenomenon to a quality acquired from the media environment, whereby a journalist is the product of unilateral and hereditary rule and power, the rejection of a culture of democracy, and, the control of men over women, which excludes the female gender from equal treatment, as well as the kissing up to centers of power to get ahead.[3]

Lebanese media

An examination of Lebanese media reveals newscasts are primarily evening events, except for short bulletins during the day or breaking news events, and aimed

mostly at adults, presumably those who have returned from work or are homemakers. There are no accurate statistics on the number of youths in the news audience, probably due to the boring manner in which newscasts are presented.

Anchors spend a good part of the newscast detailing how senior officials receive counterparts from "brotherly" nations to discuss "issues of mutual interest" but fail to mention issues of interest to viewers. So is it any wonder young people are turned off by politicians who sidestep crucial matters like economic, environmental and social problems?

Ditto for radio broadcasts offering an array of local or foreign music shows interspersed with news fashioned after the requirements of political parties or religious groups that finance them.

The print media are beholden to local and regional political interests but enjoy a slightly wider margin of freedom and are used by journalists to launch attacks on politicians and the government or to kowtow to those in authority, each according to a set agenda.

The media are also used by "the powers that be" to launch tirades against each other about their respective inability to run the country's affairs, about their enemies' treachery against the rulers, and only occasionally to inform citizens of what they need to know.

That is why young people are nonchalant about politics.

Lebanese media are noted for their disregard for accuracy. Journalists use columns to spread rumors or float trial balloons using such terms as "secrets" or "behind the scenes". Although these segments are relatively small in newspapers, they attract the most readers.[4]

Dr. George Kallas, a communications professor at the Lebanese University, argues that language is often a hindrance to verification of information, particularly when journalists are not well versed in it. I would like to point to the mediocrity of many translated texts that exacerbate matters in news interpretation and political context.

But in all fairness, certain groups of young people are fully engrossed in critical matters like human rights, the environment and in helping the underprivileged negatively affected by the economic recession gripping Lebanon in the last few years and that has not been given equal coverage to that accorded the politicians.

Despite legal and financial harassment to which the media are often subjected, Lebanese youth have more access to news and information than their counterparts in other Arab countries. Arab and foreign satellite channels, for example, invariably offer wider choices and vehicles to broadcast what may be banned in local media. The Internet, for its part, complements the fare by providing countless cyber outlets that bring the rest of the world closer through chat rooms and e-mail.

Equally significant is the use of mobile phones, cellular photography and SMS messaging, which in Lebanon is very widely used. The use of cell phones is expected to rise in the Middle East and North Africa to exceed 70 million consumers in the coming five years, thereby creating one of the fastest growing and most profitable markets worldwide.[5]

Lebanese youth are also exposed to the latest cinema fads, despite a few months' delay from the time of a movie's release in Hollywood, for example, but make up for the time lag through pirated DVDs and music CDs of the latest releases, since originals are often beyond their budgets.

That also applies to computer software sold at dirt-cheap prices, since original applications and programs are mostly too expensive for university students already burdened by daily expenses and school fees, let alone computer luxuries.

What helps alleviate the burden of globalization is the proliferation of Internet cafés in various parts of the country that enable economically deprived citizens stay abreast of technological advances.

Youth programs and supplements

Youth programs on Lebanese TV are almost non-existent. There is an obvious lack of political youth shows on official Tele-Liban, due mainly to the lack of resources and to the government's canned presentations.

Private TV stations, on the other hand, may offer youth programming dealing with educational and social problems but are miles apart in tackling earth-shattering political issues that young people wish to raise frankly and directly, according to Rosette Fadel in an analysis on Lebanese youth and TV.[6]

The director of programs at Future TV, owned by the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, admits that political programs are limited to newscasts and that only one show was addressed to all audiences. But the channel "has succeeded in spawning a department specialized in awareness campaigns aimed primarily at the youth", she said.[7]

However, content for youth programming focuses on entertainment like Formula I races, basketball and soccer/football matches, talent shows like *Super Star*, game shows and all manner of music offerings.

An offshoot of Future TV was another channel called Zen (pronounced Zain), which was aimed at young people with a special trendy newscast based on speed, young reporters and editors, and a "cool" studio where journalists spoke in a language closer to that used by their contemporaries. But the channel failed to draw the requisite number of viewers for news or any of the talk shows, so it redesigned its programming to rely more on video clips and recorded songs.

New TV, owned by an entrepreneur known as a political rival of the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, relies heavily on entertainment, educational shows, video clips, sports and awareness campaigns. But programs dealing with issues that matter to young people, like the military draft, were halted after only four episodes for unspecified "special reasons", according to the program's director.[8]

The heavily watched Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation's (LBC) TV channel, originally founded by a Christian militia during Lebanon's 15-year civil war, is owned by business people and politicians for the terrestrial arm of the opera-

tion, whereas its satellite station is partially owned by Saudi businessman billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal. LBC tackles controversial issues in its talk shows and news programs that attract a roster of political figures, intellectuals and occasionally young participants, but rarely dedicates political programs to the youth. LBC is noted for being a trailblazer in entertainment, music shows, dubbed foreign soap operas, and adaptations of popular adventure programs like *Survivor*, which was shot in 2004 in Kenya.

The National Broadcasting Network (NBN), owned by Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, "does not dedicate programs to the youth but considers its variety shows applicable to all segments of society and feels they relate to Lebanese and Arab youth".[9]

Al Manar TV, owned by Hezbollah, focuses on educational, social and political issues. Its director of general programming said that production of any youth program should be aimed at addressing "the other" across Lebanon's religious and regional strata. Al Manar's programs are centered on sports, game shows, social issues and religion.[10]

Tele-Lumiére, owned primarily by the Maronite (Catholic) Church, dedicates up to 40 percent of its cultural, spiritual, social and athletics programming to the youth and produces a heavy dose of guidance shows. But given the license issued the station, it is not permitted to engage in political programming, and cannot support any political party or doctrine.

There is no shortage of televised entertainment, featuring singing, dancing, and the promotion of anatomical beauty for both sexes. But as analyst Ahmad Abu-Merhi wrote about Lebanese youth and TV, bodies have become an obsession in Lebanon, splitting viewers into proponents and opponents. He noted that a third category that does not fit into the two classifications is that of shredded and dead bodies (under the rubric of news) and that do not attract the youth's attention.[11]

But on the matter of gyrating performers, TV variety show producers rent out young people to act as delighted audiences to applaud singers in contests and participants in game shows. The producers and directors manipulate the rented teenage and college student audiences to promote their shows for a fee that helps supplement the spectators' meager incomes and provides them with an opportunity to escape their humdrum existence and miserable living conditions by creating "jobs" that may lead to real work in the media.[12]

Sadly, the similarity of all the variety and news shows is a reflection of very little creativity and lots of imitation. The content and visual effects of video clips are stale. But since original documentary production requires fieldwork and big budgets that are not always cost-effective, TV channels often shun them for purely economic reasons.

The predominance of such programming is due to the existence of over 200 TV channels in the Arab advertising market, although ad revenues do not exceed US$ 1.2 billion since about half of the channels are state owned.[13]

Analyst Tawfik Ako slammed Lebanese television stations for promoting intellectual decadence, and wrote that young people spend hours watching "reality

TV" since real news repels them by brilliantly turning off future prospects for them. He added:

> With few exceptions, to be counted on one hand, I haven't come across organizations that have monopolized the production of sloth, stale entertainment and human superficiality as I have TV stations in Lebanon after the (civil) war.[14]

Writing in *An-Nahar*, Rosette Fadel said the Arabs' grave was their inability to change "because the Arab nation only sees change for the worse, or when we succumb to imported strange temptations that strike our minds and lives like a bolt of lightning".[15]

Ghassan Rizk scrutinized the phenomenon of Arab video clips, noting that critics in several Arab countries had pointed to the lavish settings in which those clips were shot, in grave contradiction to the harsh economic and social reality most Arabs experienced. He added that the element of excitement generated from the scenes of women's bodies was met by the sad reality of an Arab culture that suppressed women's freedom by force.[16]

So can we say that TV in Lebanon has been transformed from a tool for education and culture into a vehicle promoting sex, violence and distorted images as appeared in a press report? Yes, according to media and advertising expert Ramzi Najjar, who said television was suffering from a state of "total improvisation" and accused it of lack of planning and vision.[17]

Fast songs like Macdonald's fast food and talent shows like *Super Star* and *Star Academy* have made a clean sweep of the viewing audience and become more popular than any shows we have known "in a society with a short memory span where the new wipes out the old, and so on".[18]

Of note is that a youth presence on local channels has increased in recent years, particularly on newscasts, as presenters and producers. Just like in the West, Arab youth aspire to fame and recognition but the limited labor market finds the new generation of journalists searching for jobs in the Gulf or the West, if the possibility presents itself.

However, this increased on-air youth presence does not necessarily mean a grasp of the issues or the requisite professionalism because media organizations' resources do not allow for adequate training and neither do public universities' curricula.

In print media, *An-Nahar* has been the trailblazer in tackling youth issues, followed by *As Safir*, *Al Mustaqbal*, *Al Hayat* and others. According to Jordan-based AmmanNet (online radio), youth supplements in Lebanese papers are barely a decade old.

The report said *An-Nahar's* first supplement was called "Hyde Park", in reference to the London public garden sought by all who wish to express their views freely. It was later changed to "youth supplement" and its production was turned over to young people. But other papers restricted the actual editing to professional journalists, which created major disparity in the presentation of these supplements.

Daily newspapers dedicated pages to young people following the Lebanese war since during the painful 15-year conflict all attention was on the battles, politics, parties and militias.

During the war, readers saw the proliferation of 88 daily, weekly or quarterly newspapers or newsletters in what was known as "Moslem West Beirut" and "Christian East Beirut".

How did this press affect the Lebanese people, including its youth?

> The war's papers mirrored the war. They lied, made up stories, promoted conspiracy theories, relied on foreign help and resorted to all manner of unprofessional behavior, and, did not shy away from meeting the needs and ambitions of the war.[19]

These wartime papers reinforced religious, factional and party differences and promoted provocation and hatred, leading to the emergence of illegal print and broadcast outlets that later spawned the unofficial media that became commercial private media after the war, although most of them are still considered beholden to political interests from the war days.

Moreover, the Lebanese press sustained major losses during and after the war in the Arab market when countless journalists and publishing houses moved to the Gulf and various European countries, thereby turning into competitors of local media long considered mouthpieces for Arab and foreign regimes.

The traditional press also found competitors in the colorful and trendy publications that increasingly began drawing young people with their "light" news about celebrities, athletes, clothes and the latest in the high-tech world. Additionally, the availability of local and foreign satellite channels on cable and via dishes as well as endless radio broadcasts have contributed to the near-elimination of print media and the sharp reduction of their advertising and reader share.

According to Hazem Al Amin, the editor of *Al Hayat's* youth page, cited in an AmmanNet report, youth journalism in Lebanon is still in its infancy and still undergoing unsteady experimentation.

Diana Moukalled, who oversaw the Zen newscast for Future TV attributes the failure of the youth channel to the lack of reliable research about young people before the venture was launched. She added:

> This failure reflects the general confusion we're living in the Arab World vis-à-vis this large segment of society that is not being factored into politics or freedom.[20]

It should be noted that the convergence of media and political interests in Lebanon may have exacerbated the confusion since key politicians are also major shareholders in the media and whoever does not own a paper or TV station constantly tries to own journalists through gifts, bribes and manifestations of conflict of interest or lack of media ethics.

Academic/analyst Nahawand Al Qadry Issa, in a detailed study, pinpointed the elements that have affected the press, including finances, the shortage of

resources, politics, the profession per se and technology. Regarding politics, the researcher said the print media had failed to play an effective role given their bias towards politicians at the expense of civil society organizations. She added:

> Socially, print media have been unable to push citizens to be concerned with what's going on and have failed to steer them away from boredom or to rescue them from their nonchalance. They try to attract young men, but fail to attract young women.[21]

That may explain young people's turning to alternative sources and vehicles for news such as e-mail, chat rooms, personal websites and blogs. Such venues have attracted Lebanese youth who have expressed their views in ways unrestricted by grammatical rules, journalistic or editorial guidelines and political constraints. So blogs more closely resemble electronic newspapers.[22]

Lebanese youth and the Western view

"In any country, when the state is a key partner in the media, or somehow linked to them, there's no hope for liberal media to operate", wrote Lebanese media professor and analyst Jean Karam. He added that regardless of the state's liberalism, openness and democratic stance, there is no hope it will give up its hegemonic attitude, notably when it senses its political or economic plans or diplomacy are threatened by every journalist's legitimate free expression.[23]

So what can youth expect when media and political credibility are lost and journalistic professionalism disappears?

According to Nahawand Al Qadry Issa, economic and political authorities have the ability to impose their reading of events in an age of advanced communications, and newspapers are unable to stand up to them. Issa believes that in an age of depression and nonchalance, alternative journalism and flexible media are the way of the future, since they are more able to renew themselves and raise their staffers' standards through regular training. "In short, our print media need to be transformed into a school for new media and will not recapture their allure unless they attract thinkers and become arenas for their discourses", she said. [24]

But in view of media that focus on violence and demagoguery, how do we interpret objectivity? How do young people deal with politicized media in their country and abroad, where the very choice of news determines its importance and the terms used determine the identity of the news' recipient?

If Lebanese or Arab youth wear the traditional headdress, for example, will they be referred to in the West as disguised terrorists, even if their only aim is to cover up from the sun or cold, or to express their Arab identity? It is sad that media terminology zeroes in on wrapped heads or video clips of beautiful women but does not offer young people enough of an opportunity to correct this stereotypical image of them.

Are the same standards used to define politics, religion, democracy, freedom of the press, the truth, culture and society?

Writing about a roundtable at the Frankfurt Book Fair, author Mona Fayad said a participant noted that the separation of religion and state existed in Arab countries' constitutions, so he asked:

> Why is it then that when we refer to Middle East countries we speak of Islamic countries? Isn't it more accurate to refer to them geographically as we do with Europe, i.e., the West and the Middle East, and not the West and the Islamic countries? [25]

Remember statements by U.S. officials during President George W. Bush's first term and following his reelection about the seriousness of dealing with the Middle East peace process, reform, democratization and modernization? Lebanese media were quick to point out the double standards between what was said and what was being applied.

Even the U.S. media that were drawn into the war mood eventually rethought their positions and their mission.

No doubt contradictory reports and analyses in the foreign media landscape adversely affect Lebanese youth who have grown used to obfuscation in local news coverage. I think democratic countries that legislate for freedom of the press will help them formulate their political opinions.

The press in America is the front line in the battle for truth, opined Helen Thomas, dean of White House correspondents. Thomas, who is of Lebanese origin, was very critical of the performance of U.S. media before and during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. She said the media's failure to dig deep and to hold authorities accountable and demand transparency had led them to lose their credibility and led to the readers' and viewers' doubting all official statements.[26]

Lebanese youth, like their Arab counterparts, are influenced by what they see, hear and browse in various media. So we must use accurate terms in the news, notably political reports, because our children and youth are affected by our reactions and, therefore, contribute to the perpetuation of harmful stereotypical images that obstruct rational discourse between civilizations.

James Zogby, president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute, conducted a comparative study of political cartoons and other forms of popular culture in their imagery of Jews during the Roman Empire, before the Nazi era in Germany, and, of the portrayal of Arabs in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s. He found the cartoons similar in content and form, noting that Russian and German portrayal of Jews equaled that of Arabs in American cartoons. The ugly, fat Jewish merchant or banker was later replaced by the Arab sheikh who owned oil wells. The pictures of Arab terrorists and Jews differed only in their clothing.[27]

Zogby warned that the misrepresentation of Arabs and Islam stemmed not only from ignorance but also from what was being promoted as knowledge. "Experts" in Islam, the Middle East and the Arabs are rarely Arabs or Muslims or speak Arabic or live in Arab countries or mingle with their peoples.

We find that many of those who claim expertise are followers of anti-Islamic or anti-Arab ideologies, focusing on the negative and ignoring the positive, and have replaced the "red" (communist) fear with the "green" (Islamic) fear.

These stereotypical fears become so engrained that feelings become reality and this false "reality" becomes real in print, broadcast and online media.

Another warning was issued by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf who referred to the open wound in the Islamic psyche – Palestine – and said that despite some success in fighting terrorism, the danger lies in ultimate defeat if the world is not mobilized to battle oppression in the Islamic World.[28]

Writer Greenway, who reported on Musharraf, said the latter called for quick action before the Iron Curtain falls between the West and Islamic World. How ironic that we should be discussing an iron curtain in the formerly divided city of Berlin.

What is to become of reformers eager for change and modernism in the Arab World? How are youth to deal with the media's social and political impact? Will they be given an opportunity to express their views and implement their reform-minded projects to build better nations and keep step with the requirements of globalization in the 21st century?

Amy Hawthorne, who edits a publication on Arab reform at the Carnegie Institute for Peace, said that human rights and civil society activists in the Arab countries were divided into a minority calling for foreign interference to initiate change, another minority that regards the United States and its supporters as enemies, and a majority that seeks reform but in a moderate way, far from the arrogance and hegemony in demands for human rights and democracy, particularly given the United State's track record of support for dictatorships in the Arab region.[29]

Arab youth view the West's calls for press freedom and human rights as unserious, particularly since real practice is contrary to what is being preached and since Arab expatriates with dark skins who do not wear globalized clothes and speak foreign languages or practice different religious rites are always under suspicion in their host countries.

If what is sought is tolerance to address and accept "the other", such norms should be applied across the board, not selectively. If we are after dialogue between civilizations, we should teach our young people to be patient when addressing those holding different opinions and to accept differences without being obstinate and holding on to stereotypical ideas, pre-conceived notions and double standards.

Writer Youssef Ibrahim said that fear of change was inadvisable, since the Arab and Muslim World were undergoing momentous changes and had to adapt to them.

Theodore Kattouf, a retired American diplomat who runs the Amideast organization in Washington, told a Congressional hearing on foreign relations that liberal education was the best solution to inspire a new generation in the Arab and Islamic World. He stressed the importance of American students and researchers

traveling to the Arab World to study and understand the language, culture and political background of the region because failure to do so "could kill us".[30]

But journalist and analyst Rami Khouri pointed to the fear expressed by Arabs and Muslims of exploding violence and confrontations following the reelection of President Bush, given the convergence of forces that brought him back to power (including the media) and elements from within the ranks of conservatives and neo-conservatives.[31]

Recommendations

So, what is the right way to follow? How can we guide our youth vis-à-vis the media, society and politics and create an atmosphere of understanding and rational dialogue?

Here I would like to point to what is referred to in the West as media literacy and the importance of understanding how media function, how they influence people and how youth obtain information, how they are affected by it, how they analyze it, how they grasp who promotes it and the reasons behind its dissemination, to ensure that their understanding helps them contribute to their countries' political and cultural life.

Several international and non-governmental organizations encourage and promote media literacy by offering workshops for students, teachers and others. Most of these programs focus on awareness about, and discussion of, the impact of the media on society and their role in it.

UNESCO, for example, runs a program to help citizens participate in their countries' political and cultural life through optimum use of the media. UNESCO has organized several courses on the understanding of the media, media in the digital age, and cooperation between international and non-governmental organizations to follow up on these activities and to fund them.

The Casey Center on Youth and Family Journalism at the University of Maryland has conducted a study on coverage of children's news to draw attention to bad reporting and how such coverage can affect public opinion, children and youth. Through the study, the center aims at training journalists to raise their reporting standards on news concerning minors.[32]

The World Association of Newspapers conducts studies on children and newspapers to underscore the importance of reading and mental development as well as the acquisition of general knowledge, the teaching of democracy and the preparation of youth for political participation. It organizes partnerships between newspapers, schools and universities to analyze newspaper content and encourage communication between civilizations and countries.[33]

If we wish to attract members of the digital generation, we should address them in their language, in an attractive but uncontrived way. Their immersion in

the "new media", coupled with their purchasing power are two important and effective elements in the future social and political equation.

Young people do not pay much attention to social issues or participate in community activities or their country's interests. In Lebanon we find less faith in the government, low interest in politics, less knowledge about the political structure, fewer newspaper readers and fewer possibilities for youth participation in elections.

But if we are trying to formulate a citizenship identity, it is best we resort to all possible vehicles to guide such an identity through the media and educational institutions and to fully assume our responsibilities at home.

Media literacy provides us with a framework to obtain information, analyze it, and evaluate it through print, broadcast and online media. It creates better understanding of the media and builds needed skills like investigation, inquiry and self-expression – all necessary components of citizenship in democratic societies.

So I would like to suggest the following steps to encourage media literacy in Lebanon and the Arab countries and hope similar programs are undertaken in the West to activate a dialogue of cultures and create an environment of understanding between Arab and Western Youth:

1. Conduct a comprehensive study on who prepared the media message. What are the methods used to attract youth? How can others interpret these messages? What are the values and opinions represented in these messages, or deleted from them? Why were these messages disseminated?
2. Use videos, CDs, DVDs and Internet browsing in school and university classes to evaluate media messages, ask questions, explain meanings and ideas represented in messages.
3. Use media to exercise a sense of observation and self-criticism.
4. Identify misconceptions about a subject and how they are promoted in the media.
5. Develop awareness of credibility and bias in the media.
6. Compare different media covering the same topic and feature contradictions.
7. Analyze the impact of coverage of a given topic over the years through different cultures.
8. Use the media to develop and train in newspaper reading skills.
9. Use of the media by youth to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding of the world.
10. Use of the media as an instrument of analysis and evaluation.
11. Use the media to connect youth and students with society and to work together for positive change.

12. On the Internet, verify sources, credibility and freshness of content and whether there is a minimum standard of bias in dissemination, or whether what is meant is influencing public opinion.
13. Refer to stereotypical pictures, religious expressions and social and cultural stigmas to avoid using them.
14. Complain when false information is published or broadcast.
15. Cooperate with educational institutions to organize anti-discrimination and anti-stereotyping activities.
16. Have youth design websites and inter-active materials.
17. Involve communities in discussions via the media about their problems and interests.
18. Develop media literacy skills on the social and local levels.
19. Underline the importance of self-respect and respect for others.
20. Involve youth in decisions on news, advertising and popular culture that surround them.

Notes

1. This article is originally a lecture delivered by the author, Director of the Institute for Professional Journalists at the Lebanese American University, at the "German-Arab Media Dialogue" organized by the German Foreign Ministry and Institute for Foreign and Cultural Affairs in Berlin on November 29, 2004. The lecture was translated in 2005 by the author from Arabic for The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, at Nordicom.
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Learning from the Pioneers*

Development of Media Education in Hong Kong and Canada

C.K. Cheung & Lee Rother

Youth growing up in today's world are and will be equipped with a plethora of channels that enable them to be connected to the global village. Young people are spending more and more time interacting with media. A survey conducted in the U.K. showed that teenagers were spending around five hours per day exposed to the media (Livingstone & Bovill, 1999). A similar pattern was reported in the U.S.A. (McBrien, 1999). A study of young people in twelve countries by Livingstone & Bovill (2001) showed that media shape the meanings and practices of young people's everyday lives. In Canada, the Canadian Teachers' Federation conducted a study of almost six thousand children and teens from grades three to ten. The study, titled *Kids Take on the Media*, reported that watching television is a pastime for 75 percent of youth, that almost 60 percent of boys in grades three to eight play video games almost everyday, that 33 percent of grade three girls play interactive games everyday, and that 49 percent in grades seven to ten use on-line messaging (Filion, 2003). In an issue of *Newsweek* focusing on how technology is altering the next generation, a survey was conducted among young people throughout the world, and it was found that they spent most of their leisure time with the media (Guterl, 2003).

In Hong Kong, the 1998 Commission on Youth Survey found that most respondents considered television as a comprehensive medium, which was 'entertaining, informative, educational, credible and meeting youth's taste' (Leung, 1999, p. 7). The average leisure time per weekday for young people was 3.9 hours, much of which was spent in watching television. Television has now been joined by the attractions of the Internet, which is increasingly used by young people for communication, enjoyment, and obtaining information (Breakthrough, 2003).

Since the mass media are such a major influence on the lives of teenagers, they exert a powerful influence on students' ways of thinking about the world. In view of this, the innovation of a new curriculum, Media Education, has been recommended. Media Education has been adopted successfully in many coun-

tries (Bazalgette et al., 1990) and some have already included Media Education as components of universal education and have implemented it either across the curriculum or as a particular subject. Canada is regarded as a world leader in the development of Media Education curriculum, or Media Literacy as it is referred to in much of North America.

In Asia, Media Education has started to gain acceptance and in Hong Kong in particular has grown rapidly where there is an increasing number of schools adopting Media Education as part of the curriculum or extra-curricular activities in the form of campus radio and campus TV (Cheung, 2004, 2005).

It is essential to compare and contrast the development and implementation of Media Education in different parts of the world in order to provide a general framework for how Media Education might be effectively applied in different cultural and educational contexts. This article provides a comparative analysis of Media Education in Canada in the West with that of Hong Kong, an Asian city where East meets West.

Media education in the midst of education reform: the Hong Kong and Canadian experience

In the last ten years, there has been a move, world wide, to reform the education scene. These reforms, together with the wide-ranging introduction of information technology and media, have greatly influenced the development of Media Education in both Hong Kong and Canada.

Education reform in Hong Kong

From the Education Commission report, it was clear that the major motivation was to help Hong Kong to respond to unprecedented changes in the world (Education Commission, 1999). Apart from the traditional emphases on ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, schools in Hong Kong were expected to produce a new generation of students who could learn on their own, think for themselves, and explore new arenas of learning. They would learn to be citizens in a free and democratic society. To achieve these aims, the writers see the important role of Media Education as follows:

Media awareness

In the consultation document *Education Blueprint for the 21st Century* published in 1999, words like student-centered, self-learning, and motivation were mentioned frequently. Moreover, the document questioned whether the media are

'aware of their powerful influence on the formation of values and learning of language by the young people' and should the media 'disseminate information to the public, and help young people develop positive values, distinguish right from wrong and broaden their horizons?'. (Education Commission, 1999, p. 28) That sets the tone for Media Education where it aims to help students develop logical and creative thinking, through the critical analysis of the media messages that they are exposed to everyday. The nature of Media Education is student-centered and students are more motivated to learn through discussing the contents they enjoy. Furthermore, they could engage in producing media products in the form of campus newspaper, radio, and television creatively at a later stage.

Key learning areas and the new senior secondary curriculum

In the wake of curriculum reforms in Hong Kong, *A Holistic Review of Hong Kong School Curriculum: Proposed Reforms* (Curriculum Development Council, 1999) (abbreviated as the *Review* in this article) was published. The *Review* stresses a dynamic reform of the curriculum to equip students for 'the changing and interdependent world in the 21st century'.

With the recent education reform, curricular space will undergo significant changes. Instead of having fixed subject boundaries, key-learning areas are introduced. One of these key-learning areas is Personal, Social and Humanities Education. Media Education, a relatively new concept that had not earlier been covered in the Education Department's official guidelines, is here described as an element in cross-curricular programs. This is an indication of a growing awareness on the part of policy makers. Media Education is finally on the official agenda.

After the review of the academic structure of senior secondary education (Education and Manpower Branch, 2005), there is a new restructuring in subjects available to students. Among them, Liberal Studies will become a core subject in 2009, and Mass Media in Hong Kong will become an elective module. Media educators are encouraged to contribute to the teaching of this elective and the rest of the related syllabus through Media Education.

Education reform in Canada

It is important to understand that there is no national body in Canada that regulates education policies. Jurisdiction over education in Canada is the responsibility of individual provinces. Still, the Federal Government is responsible for providing monies to the provinces, which are in part allocated for social programs, like education. Agreements between the provinces and the Federal Government have resulted in national and provincial cooperation, but for the most part areas, such as education, have been left to the control of individual and/or the combined efforts of several Canadian provinces and territories.

So for example, the development of curriculum frameworks, of which Media Literacy is included, often occurs through the collaboration of the *Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education* (WCP), comprised of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the North West Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. In the east, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island made up the *Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation* (APEF). Ontario and Quebec are independent of these agencies and of each other.

The WCP and APEF have been instrumental in seeing that Media Education is part of education reform in their specific provinces and territories, as has the education ministries in Quebec and Ontario. While these agencies may have been instrumental, at least two factors were behind their efforts. The first stems from classroom-based initiatives developed by individual teachers. The success of their Media Education programs led many schools, school boards and ministry officials to recognize the potential benefits of Media Education in preparing young people for the 21st century. A second factor, related to education reform in Canada, which provided windows of opportunity for Media Education, can be traced to the move away from a centralized system of education in Canada school to more site-based management structures. This enabled many educators to take a flexible approach to the types and forms of curricula in their schools.

Further, and connected to the previous factor, many education ministries are revisiting their role in provincial education matters. It has been the tradition that provincial governments have the responsibility for both policy making and curriculum development. In recent years, some ministries are maintaining control of policy making, while relinquishing curriculum developments to school boards and individual schools. The factors above can best be illustrated in the case of Quebec. Curriculum in elementary and high schools in Quebec are currently in the process of reform. The Quebec Education Program (QEP) is the most comprehensive education reform to take place in Quebec in the last forty years.

Upon closer examination of the areas described above, it is evident that the QEP reflects many of the pedagogical practices already promoted in Media Education, including:

- cross-curricular approaches
- active learning
- development of competencies
- group collaboration
- respect for diverse learners
- inquiry and critical thinking
- expanded notions of literacy
- teachers and students as co-learners/co-researchers.

Under the QEP, the Quebec Ministry of Education is responsible almost exclusively to policy development; that is, individual school boards, and more precisely schools, are to develop the manner in which they implement the QEP curriculum. The benefit for Media Education here is that teachers are given more flexibility in incorporating the study about media into their domains.

Regardless of causes behind education reform in Canada, the end result has been that many provincial Ministries of Education and school boards across Canada have adopted Media Education as a legitimate facet of a student overall education.

From theory to practice – adapting media education

In order to understand the situation of implementing Media Education in Hong Kong more fully, some research was conducted. It is noted that Media Education has progressed through the years. For example, in a study of teachers' perspectives on Media Education in Hong Kong, Chau (1998) found that most of the teachers surveyed did not know what 'Media Education' means and most misinterpreted it as making use of mass media as teaching aids. A research study done by Lee (1999) indicated that though many schools emphasized the need for Media Education, few examples of activities, both class activities and extra-curricular activities, offered in their schools could be cited. Things have changed since then. A survey shows that quite a number of schools claim to have conducted Media Education in one way or another (Hong Kong Association of Media Education, 2001). A more recent research project (Cheung, 2004) was conducted against the background of recent curriculum reform, and aimed to increase our understanding of how Media Education is being implemented in Hong Kong and how it is perceived by teachers, who will play a crucial role in realizing the objectives of curriculum reform. The result was promising. Many schools claimed that they have implemented Media Education into their curriculum and the two most frequent means of practicing Media Education are through media lessons or conducting media production.

Media Education practice in Canadian schools is predicated on several factors. One of these is the notion that media construct reality, put forth by Masterman (1992). In this instance, the role of Media Education attempts to assist young people in identifying the relationship between the images constructed in media texts with that which occurs in the immediate and distant socio-political realities. A second factor, as pointed out by Pungente (2000), has to do with the role of the mass media's influence in the socio-economic lives of young people in a capitalist, market society. A third factor, also noted by Pungente (2000), refers to the idea of citizenship and the function of Media Education in helping young people to identify who they are socio-culturally.

Media Education in Canadian schooling takes several forms. In many areas, Media Education is taught in a specific discipline, such as English Language Arts,

Social Sciences or Arts. Some schools teach Media Education as part of a larger communication course, often focusing on one medium or theme at a time – so a course may be offered in television, radio, print or advertisement. Still others integrate Media Education across the curriculum.

Media education as a means to inoculate and/or empower

When media becomes students' first curriculum and schooling comes in second, what can be done? An increasing number of educationalists regard Media Education as one of the attempts to return students to the influence of schools by encouraging them to take a critical stand toward the popular media (Lee, 1997). However, there are many approaches to Media Education with different reasoning behind each one. Many commentators criticize contemporary schooling for its inability to compete with the diversity, sensuality, and drama of the world. Compared to the ever-changing media, schools are indeed more marked by an 'essential sameness' (Henry et al., 1988, p. 60). Schools often take the social values of the real world as being hostile and the enemy of canonical learning. In many cases, Media Education will be employed as tools to inoculate, preventing students from the overexposure to media messages, helping them to say no to media.

In Hong Kong, a study was conducted from September 1998 to July 1999 (Chu, 2003), noting that informants, who were teachers and school principals, saw the media as a competitor to education and they took it as their mission to counteract the negative influences brought by the mass media. Two views emerged when it came to discussions about Media Education. One view saw Media Education as education *through* media, believing that more programs should be produced for 'good' educational purposes. Another view saw Media Education as education *about* media: Students should be able to tell the good from the bad after receiving such education. These indicate that informants had only a vague understanding about the notion of 'Media Education'.

In some ways Canada is similar still to that of Hong Kong in this area. Neil Anderson, a leading Canadian media educator and author from Toronto, Ontario, suggested, in an e-mail interview (August, 2004), that most teachers in Canada have a limited understanding of Media Literacy. Chris Worsnop, also from Toronto, a pioneer in the development of Media Literacy curricula in Canada, and a world leader in the assessment of Media Education, described, also through e-mail (August, 2004) that Media Literacy in Canada has since its conception in the late 70s been dependent on 'the enthusiasm of isolated teachers'. What is going on in response to the 'required' standards/expectations in the provincial curricula is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Continuing, Mr. Worsnop stated that 'Most teachers are seduced by the effects model and take Media Education to mean media bashing'. He went on to say that in order for Media Literacy to be further developed in Canada, it would be necessary to get 'people to take it seriously and make time for it in the overall curriculum'.

Mr. Gange, a media educator from New Brunswick, remarked through e-mail correspondence (August, 2004) that

> It seems a lot (of teachers) want to jump on the bandwagon, and they are only getting part of the answers right. I would like to see [Media Literacy] more widely spread. Not only is it applicable to Social Sciences and English classes, but also it needs to move to Science where great questioning skills on the part of the kids would make them wonder what was being sold.

The authors of this article have frequently been invited by schools in their respective countries to conduct training, or talk to students in workshops, in the name of Media Education, why media is bad. The schools' limited, if not biased, understanding of Media Education has been clarified after the talk or training when the authors identified the role of Media Education in curriculum reform, in particular the significance in helping students achieve the generic skills as proposed in the curriculum reform. Indeed, Media Education is a good means to empower students. In an age when people are bombarded with information, it is one role of schooling to help students develop their thinking skills to deal appropriately with the columns of information that exist within the public domain. Media Education curriculum enables students to construct knowledge and develop a global outlook to cope with the changing and interdependent world in the 2lst century, and develop students' lifelong learning skills (to enjoy learning, to enhance effectiveness in communication, to develop creativity, to develop a logical, critical, and an analytical mind) as stipulated in the aims of current educational thought. Both in Hong Kong and Canada, Media Education becomes an essential component in project-based learning where students are empowered through the acquisition of generic skills and a deeper understanding of the media messages conveyed when they are dealing with topics related to media. Furthermore, students' creativity is enhanced through media production, as discussed further in next section.

Student media production

Learning by doing is an important aspect of knowledge acquisition in the 21st century. Students must be encouraged to explore learning at a deep and meaningful level. Media production provides a platform for students to immerse in learning through exploring and doing. Frechette (2002) states that media production is vital:

> Just as it is necessary for students to learn to write as well as to read, it is invaluable for teachers to allow students to 'produce' media texts as well as deconstruct them through their own voice, ideas, and perspective (realizing, of course, the partial subjectively from which these voices emanate) (p. 114).

Other media educators also believe that media production is a desirable form of Media Education (Buckingham et al., 1995; Eiermann, 1997; Hobbs, 2004).

The idea of media production is consistent with the aims of UNESCO's Declaration on Media Education (quoted in OCR, 2005, p. 8):

> The school and family share the responsibility of preparing the young person for living in a world of powerful images, words and sounds. Children and adults need to be literate in all three of these symbolic systems. [We need] to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness […] and should include the analysis of media products, the use of media as means of creative expression, and effective use of and participation in available media channels.

In Australia, Quin (2003) points out that media production is a core element since the beginning of the development of media studies in the 70s. In the U.K., media production is included in the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance Examinations as well as a module in the syllabus of Media Studies both in Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts Examinations as stated:

> The purpose of production work is for candidates to put theory into practice, by demonstrating knowledge and understanding of technical skills in their own media production, as well as to engage them in creative, imaginative and aesthetic activity. (OCR, 2005, p. 1)

Many educators in both Hong Kong and Canada are aware of the value of student media production as a powerful means by which they come to understand the constructed nature of media texts. Previously, it was difficult for students to participate in media production owing to the fact that equipment was expensive and operational skills were complicated. This is no longer the case today. With advances in modern mass communication and information technologies, equipment has become more sophisticated in functions; yet easy to handle, combined with a drop in prices schools find media production compatible. Student media production is crucial in enabling students to both maintain their enjoyment of media, while at the same time understanding how, for whom, and why media texts are constructed.

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, besides teaching Media Education as part of the curriculum, a number of schools make use of student media production as part of Media Education. The reasons are many. The Asian economic crisis in late 1997 and the advancement in technology had brought the significance of creativity to Hong Kong people. Instead of copying what others have done, creativity sells and it is appropriate to learn creativity through media production. Media production gives

students a sense of satisfaction when products are created. Besides, the recent curriculum reform emphasized the importance of project-based learning, and part of the assessment criteria is the evaluation of students' creativity where media production comes in handy. Furthermore, the traditional mode of learning when teachers deliver knowledge in a dialectic manner has changed and now students, while holding the digital camera, or sitting on the control room to operate the panel, feel that they have some control over what they want to learn. Furthermore, not limited by syllabus, the flexibility is there for students to explore and every door may lead to further learning opportunities. The Media and Information Literacy Education Program (MILE) project by Breakthrough confirmed this when students are cultivated after learning Media Education through media production (Lee and Mok, 2003).

There are also cases when the Public Announcement System, one which was used by the principal to make announcement from the principal's office with speakers connected to each classroom, needs to be updated. Instead of using the schools' own resources to improve the system, some schools apply for Quality Education Fund, with the aims of setting up Campus Radio or Campus TV as reasons. When they get funded, media production comes in naturally. Finally, there are teachers who see student media production as a more direct way for students to experience with the media in order to learn about it.

Canada

Across Canada student media production is noted, either implicitly or explicitly, to be an integral part of Media Education curriculum. For example, the new Quebec Education Program states that students should be provided with opportunities to represent his/her literacy in different media. Unfortunately, many educators in Canada, especially those who are not aware that Media Education curriculum must include both media analysis and production, see student media production as technological education – that is, teaching that primarily focuses on the how it works rather than on thinking critically about the technology as a writing tool to create media messages and texts. Consequently, in many parts of Canada, the use of technology in schooling has been delegated to computer or technology courses that focus on teaching how to operate a specific hard/software. Indeed, it may be fair to say that in many parts of Canada, educators have fallen behind their students in understanding not only the mechanics of the new and converging technologies, but in recognizing the theoretical and production aspects of Media Education, which help students to demystify media texts. Often there is a lack of awareness in many educators of the links among the key concepts and framework and student production work in Media Education with new digital technologies and multi-literacies.

Partnership in media education

Besides the initiative from the education sector, Media Education draws the attention of many interested parties outside the formal education system, in local youth and community-based projects. Indeed, as observed in other countries, a strong partnership is essential in the development and implementation of Media Education. For example, Sister Thoman in the U.S. founded the Centre for Media Literacy (http://www.medialit.org) to provide leadership for a Media Education movement. In Europe, mediamanual.at (http://www.mediamanual.at) annually hosts a competition, the media literacy award for the best and most innovative educational media projects in European schools.

The development of Media Education may first originate in the minds of enthusiastic few but its successful progress will have to depend on the support of others. It is therefore important to look at the partnership in Media Education in both places.

Hong Kong

Media Education in Hong Kong has had a relatively brief career. It does not start off from a top-down approach with curriculum guides and teaching kits. Rather, it is a bottom-up initiative from people of various backgrounds who are concerned with the education and development of young people. The following are some examples:

- *Hong Kong Association of Media Education* (HKAME), formed in 2000, with its mission of promoting and developing Media Education in Hong Kong, as well as raising the media literacy standard of the youth, has been frequently invited by schools to act as speakers on teacher training programs on Media Education or consultations of Media Education projects. In 2001, the Curriculum Development Institute commissioned the In-service Teacher Education Program of the University of Hong Kong and HKAME to run a series of teacher training sessions for secondary teachers.
- *Hong Kong Education City* (EDCity) is a large-scale education infrastructure funded by the Quality Education Fund in 2000. When project-based learning becomes a major concern under the current curriculum reform, EDCity finds that Media Education demonstrates a very good showcase for project-based learning. It aims for promoting information and media literacy, which is the skill of experiencing, interpreting/analyzing and making media products. Students can acquire their language ability, writing skill, communication skill and critical thinking via the use of digital technology. Also, teachers can use the digital and media-rich Internet as an effective teaching and learning medium. With this objective, Media Campus Channel was established in EDCity in 2003 to educate students with media knowledge through web content, resources and online forum. A Media Education Resources Centre was also set up to provide quality-teaching resources for teachers.

- *Hong Kong Christian Service* is an organization doing social work to serve the community of Hong Kong. When the media environment deteriorated at the end of the nineties, concerns were raised and the organization recruited a Media Education officer to look after Media Education. In 2000, the organization was funded to conduct a Media Education Project. The project was comprised of two parts:
  1. 'Stand up show and talk tour' was set up in 35 primary schools introducing the concept of media awareness;
  2. 'Media Education Workshop' was conducted in eight schools (8 sessions each) to provide a chance to learn through experience – and through students' participation in inter-school drama performances, they learn to share their thoughts regarding the media and their impact on people.

  In 2003, the organization continued to conduct Media Education workshops at various primary schools and a book *Bringing Media into Classrooms – A Sharing on Lesson Plans and Teaching Experience*s was also published.
- *Society of Truth and Light* was established in 1997 aiming to care for society and serve the community through research, education, media watch, and service in accordance with the Christian faith. Its work on Media Education has been noticeable, ranging from giving seminars to schools and churches, producing teaching kits, publishing books and related materials, organizing Media Education camps for students, and conducting training programs for youth workers. The Media Education resources centre there also welcomes the public to drop by and find relevant materials. In 2001, a Media Education officer was employed full time to oversee the development of the associations work in Media Education. The association has been successful to receive different grants to continue its work in Media Education. In the future, the organization will put more effort to target parents.
- *Breakthrough,* another Christian organization, has a history of thirty years in serving young people in Hong Kong. Media Education has always been one of its major concerns. In 2000, Breakthrough was funded to launch the Media and Information Literacy Education Program (MILE) project with the target audience being teachers, students, and parents. Breakthrough's work on Media Education is recognized and in the future it will continue to promote Media Education through conducting workshops, producing teaching kits, publishing books and related materials, organizing Media Education camps for students, and conducting training programs for youth workers.
- *Radio Television Hong Kong* (RTHK) is the government radio in Hong Kong, aiming to inform, educate and entertain the audiences through multi-media programming. It received a funding from the Education Department to produce two series of Media Education television programs in 2000 and 2002.

Canada

Over the last three-four decades Canada has been fortunate in developing a number of partnerships. *The Jesuit Communication Project*, headed by John Pungente, SJ, (http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/JCP/resources/violence.html) lists a large number of organisations across Canada, for example the following four:

- *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* has a comprehensive database related to CBC radio, television and other media related services.
- *CHUM Television* is a division of CHUM limited, a leading media company based in Toronto, Ontario. CHUM TV works with educators to provide meaningful support for Canadian Media Education. Since 1989, CHUM has created innovative programming that encourages kids to think critically about music, popular culture programming and related social issues, even with study guides available to Canadian educators and students free of charge.
- *Media Awareness Network* serves as a clearinghouse of Media Education resources, research and reference materials.
- *Scanning Television* is a unique collection of short television excerpts, averaging six minutes in length, which support the development of media literacy skills. This unique collection offers teachers a wide range of examples that will promote classroom discussion, analysis, and understanding of the key concepts of media literacy.

Over the last decades, associations for Media Education have sprung up across Canada. The *Association for Media Literacy* (AML) in Ontario was formed as far back as 1978. In 1998, the AML was honored for its work in Media Education at an international conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where it received the World Council for Media Education Award. In May 2000, the AML organized an international Media Education conference, as part of the Summit 2000 conference held in Toronto, which brought together media educators from around the world.

Since 1978, every province has formed its own Media Literacy/Education Association. These include:

- The Alberta Association for Media awareness (AAMA)
- Media Literacy Saskatchewan (MLS)
- Manitoba Association for Media Literacy (MAML)
- Association for Media Education in Quebec (AMEQ)
- Media Literacy Nova Scotia (MLNS)
- Association for Media Literacy New Brunswick (A-4-ML NB)
- Canadian Association for Media Education British Columbia (CAME)

In 1992, several presidents of the above associations met in Toronto, Ontario to form the national association, *The Canadian Association of Media Education Organization* (CAMEO).

The future of media education in Hong Kong and Canada

Above we have outlined some of the similar issues in the development of Media Education in Hong Kong and Canada. Though progress in the development and implementation of Media Education in the two countries has been satisfactory, its continual expansion has to depend on a number of crucial factors.

Media education policy development

The development of Media Education curriculum policy in Hong Kong, still in its early stages, in many ways bears a resemblance to that of Canada. Indeed, although Canada has a long-established history in Media Education, many of the policy issues which currently exist in Hong Kong, described below, exist in Canada today as well.

When Media Education was first promoted in Hong Kong by an enthusiastic few, many primary and secondary schools responded. In the relatively short period of time to follow, many schools claimed to have either heard of Media Education, or even better, implemented Media Education in one way or another – as small as giving a talk in morning assembly, or have it done as part of extra-curricular activities, usually in the form of student media production, or have it implemented as part of the curriculum. But as long as Media Education is not officially in the curriculum, its full implementation is doubtful.

The timetable of schools is already very crowded and many subjects are fighting for space. Besides Media Education, there are other initiatives like Personal and Social Education, Environmental Education, and Civic Education, to name a few, claiming for that limited space in the curriculum (Cheung, 1999). When this is the case, there should be a policy stating the role of each in curriculum. The continual development of Media Education should no longer only be rested in the hands of those enthusiastic few. The grass-root movement should be transcended into an official agenda, with a careful examination of whether Media Education should be acknowledged as part of the curriculum.

Media Education is, as mentioned, a recognized part of the curriculum across Canada, in part due to the early efforts of the Association for Media Literacy (AML) in Ontario in the 1970s, and more recently the hard work of the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) and the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF), as well as provincial Media Literacy associations and its national umbrellas organization, The Canadian Association for Media

Education Organization (CAMEO). For example, in 1997 the WCP produced an English Language Arts framework, which included a Media Education component. In similar fashion, the APEF has produced 'The Foundations for English Language Arts for the Atlantic Provinces', which indicates that Media Literacy, Visual Literacy and Critical Literacy are crucial elements of English Language Arts. Ontario and Quebec have produced their own curricula.

Still, it is difficult to say to what extent Media Education is actually practiced by teachers, its form and/or place in the individual provincial curriculum. In part, and like Hong Kong, Media Education in Canada is competing with other subject disciplines for room in the packed school day. Again, the root cause of this dilemma can be traced, to some extent, to a lack of understanding by many educators regarding the nature of Media Education. That is, many view Media Education as either a course in its own right and/or something to 'enrich' their program. In the first instance, the value of Media Education is weighed against other courses, such as Languages, Mathematics and Sciences, considered to be the tenets of a 'basic' education. Furthermore, most Canadian curricula at the senior levels demand formal examinations at specific times in the school year; Media Education in this occasion is viewed as a frill. There is a lack of understanding by many that Media Education is an approach that is best exploited across and with disciplines, rather than as a separate field of study or an 'add-on' to an existing course.

In other words, while mandating Media Education in provincial curricula across Canada is a major step forward, like Hong Kong, Canada has along way to go in ensuring that Media Education is actually a part of young people's education.

Teacher training

Hong Kong

There are schools that want to implement Media Education into their curriculum but face the problem of finding the right teachers. Back in the eighties, teacher training has been identified by many as a key factor toward the development of Media Education. A similar claim is noted recently when the research of Hart and Hicks (2002) found that teachers with proper teacher training in the area of Media Education made a difference to the classroom methods and confidence in their work.

A regular Media Education teacher-training program is offered by the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong. But all an eighteen-hour training course can do is to give participants an introduction to Media Education, some exposure to the nature of different forms of media, and some tools to conduct Media Education in schools. Another series of teacher training was organized by the Curriculum Development Institute and Hong Kong Association of Media Education in 2001. This is not enough for curriculum innovation. In the U.K., teachers can receive various Media Education training courses, ranging from continuing professional development programs in Media Education (one-year full time courses and two-year part-time courses) to summer conferences in Media Studies for

teachers. Against this background, much needs to be done in the area of teacher training in Hong Kong.

Canada

Through e-mail (August, 2004) Chris Worsnop stated:

> Media Education is not an examined part of the curriculum, and so teachers – and more importantly – school boards, governments, teacher unions and colleges – do not see it as a priority for professional development. Enthusiastic teachers are always around in small numbers. They often teach excellent courses which die when they move on to another location. Much of the initiative for teacher courses, come from sources outside of education. It should be a priority of teacher unions, ministries of education and colleges of teachers, and since it is not, any other initiative will be an uphill battle.

Mr. Worsnop's comments above illustrate some of the difficulties in establishing Media Education programs for teachers. Pre- and in-service teacher training in Media Education at the university level in Canada is still in its formative stages and, indeed, is still struggling to find a place in teacher training programs across the country.

There are many reasons for the small number of Media Education courses in Canadian universities. These include, but are not limited to: 1) the decentralized nature of the Canadian education system, 2) unavailability of funding, 3) unavailability of and reluctance to use technology, 4) the still dominant focus in teacher education programs on developing young people's print literacy, 5) the feeling by some professors in faculties of education that Media Education has little value for teachers and their students, 6) a misunderstanding that teachers need to have broad knowledge of media and communication theory or high levels of technological competencies. Perhaps one of the principal deterrents to the development of Media Education in teacher training at the university level may be a misunderstanding of the difference between Media Education/Literacy on the one hand and Media Studies and Communication Studies on the other.

Consequently, the study of the media in higher education is often offered in faculties of mass communication and/or liberal arts, and in such departments as Journalism, English, Humanities and Media Arts, and in a few instances in Faculties of Education. In many instances where Media Education is offered in faculties of education, it is often introduced as a small portion of a course in methods and/or English language Arts and/or technology in education.

In some ways, the public school system is moving ahead of the universities in incorporating Media Education into their programs. For example, since Media Education is now mandated in elementary and high school curriculum across Canada, there have been many in-service projects at various school boards. These projects are often initiated by interested teachers, administrators, and most often

by educational consultants connected to the school boards. As a result of these projects, an awareness is developing that teachers do not have to be media specialists but rather need an understanding of the place of Media Education in student centered learning. Over the last fifteen years, the Canadian author of this article has been actively involved in providing short and long term Media Education training for in-service teachers in English school boards across Quebec.

Media education resources

While Media Education may find favour in the eyes of teachers in Hong Kong, the problem is they often lack the resources to teach it. As Media Education is not yet a subject in Hong Kong per se, teaching resources are rare. As mentioned, there are teaching kits produced by some youth organizations and funded projects. As also mentioned, RTHK has produced two series of programs on Media Education. Some teachers could produce their own resources, but many do not have the time to do so. This is especially true when Media Education deals with examples that change every day, if not every minute. If you teach Media Education, you have to revise your examples nearly every year, even when you teach the same topic. What was popular then may not be popular next year. It is like trying to keep up in a rat race. The resources are limited and teachers, though committed to teach media lessons, find it difficult without appropriate resources.

The situation in Canada is similar but since Media Education has been around in quite some time, more resources are available. For example, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) was, and still is, a source of many resources for elementary and high school students. Over the last several years, the NFB has reworked many of its earlier, archived productions, especially documentary products, so as to be used in a Media Education classroom environment. Excellent teacher guides are included with each of these resources, providing teaching ideas and/or critical issues related to a specific aspect of the media.

Private and public agencies have worked together over the years to produce many resources. Cable companies provided hardware and cabling that enable Canadian schools to receive and copy programs from a number of specialty channels. This allows teachers to have permanent or limited access to copyright free materials, thus bypassing Canada's complicated copyright laws. Another such joint effort is that of the youth programming channel YTV, which along with noted media educators, such as Neil Anderson, has produced several teachers' guides to accompany various programs. A truly collaborative project involves The Jesuit Communication Project, YTV, CHUM TV, Warner Brothers and the NFB resulting in *Scanning Television* mentioned previously, a unique collection of short television excerpts. This collection offers teachers a wide range of examples that will promote classroom discussion, analysis, and understanding of the key concepts of media literacy.

Many initial Media Education print resources used in Canada originated overseas in places such as Australia and Great Britain. These were quickly adapted

for a Canadian context. Many resources were developed by practicing Media Education teachers. For example, Barry Duncan, a pioneer in Media Education in Canada, has authored and/or co-authored several texts, including, two editions of *Mass Media and Popular Culture* (1988, 1996). As provincial ministries of education continue to include Media Education in their curricula, more and more teacher resource guides will be developed.

Suffice it to say that the number and quality of Media Education non-print and print resources are constantly growing and improving. Canada is fortunate to have a plethora of experienced educators to look to for providing enthusiastic educators with resources and materials that can guide them in integrating Media Education into their classrooms.

Conclusion

The discussion on Media Education has been on the rise in recent years both in a local and international perspective. More and more countries have adopted Media Education in their curricula in one way or another and research has and is being conducted to further examine different aspects of Media Education.

This article has compared the development of Media Education in Hong Kong, an Asian city where Media Education is fast growing, and Canada, a leading pioneer in the field of Media Education. We have noted a number of important points in the development of Media Education in both countries. Curriculum reform provides a platform for the entrance of Media Education and the development of Media Education is possible with the help of many partners. Still, increased concerted actions are necessary if it is to become a more widespread movement. Its continual expansion depends on a number of crucial factors, including, but not limited to, the commitment of teachers, teacher training, the provision of more resources, and most importantly, a comprehensive education policy giving Media Education a proper place in the curriculum.

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Youth Media and Media Education as Agents of Social Transformation[1]

Lee Rother

> From what we get, we can make a living; what we give however, makes a life. (Arthur Ashe, tennis legend)

For the last twenty-nine years I have been teaching Media Education to at-risk teenagers in an alternative program in a high school situated thirty kilometers north of Montreal, Canada. By at-risk I am referring to teenagers who struggle with conventional educational environments and practices and/or demonstrate behavioural difficulties.

For most of my teaching career the kind of Media Education curricula I have taught has involved students in the production and analysis of mainstream media texts. My experience has taught me that Media Education invites diverse groups of students such as these into a learning environment that is familiar and comfortable. At the same time, Media Education practices and pedagogy as I have used them have enabled me to gain insights into the literate behaviours of at-risk students Media Education (see Rother, 2000). However, a 'defining moment' almost three years ago expanded my understanding of at-risk youth and the role that Media Education might play in their lives.

A defining moment

> Most psychological theories were cast long before the advent of enormous advances in the technology of communication. As a result, they give insufficient attention to the increasingly powerful role that the symbolic environment plays in present-day human lives. Indeed, in many aspects of living, televised vicarious influence has dethroned the primacy of direct experience. Whether it be thought patterns, values,

> attitudes, or styles of behavior, life increasingly models the media. (Bandura, 1986, p. 20)

From July to September 2003, I worked for two months at the Ministry of Education in Amman, Jordan, on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), as a curriculum framework and learning outcome consultant. During my stay in Jordan I had the opportunity to speak with literally hundreds of educators as well as observe young Palestinian youth outside of a formal school setting – on the streets and in local 'hang outs', such as, of all places, Burger King.

A defining moment for me during my stay in Jordan actually did not occur in Jordan, but rather in the West Bank city of Ramallah. I was invited by a Palestinian friend of mine to meet with a group of fifteen teens and young adults who all belonged to the same youth group, of which my friend was the director. The aim of the youth group was to create a dialogue with their Israeli counterparts. Some of the youth had completed their secondary schooling a few months previously; others were university students, and still others were unemployed. What they all had in common, aside from being Palestinian, was that they were either children, teens or born during the first Intifada and witnesses or participants in the second uprising. Many were members of Arafat's Fatah Movement. Some had participated in violent confrontations with the Israeli military. Almost all of them had stories about relatives and/or friends who had been or were imprisoned. All of them were disenfranchised, angry and understandably depressed.

The dialogue between the youth and myself started slowly with the expected polite introductions, followed by an overview of the 'situation' in the region and how it had affected them personally. In fact, for the first half hour the youth seemed unexpectedly subdued. I started to worry that the meeting was beginning to resemble the first day of one of my university classes back home where the students refrain from being animated as they cautiously check me out. However, the atmosphere in the room changed when I asked:

> So, what do you think about how the conflict is reported in the Western media?

Suddenly, several hands went up all at once. Others spoke openly, not patient enough to wait for someone to call upon them to speak. Not unexpectedly, their response was:

> The media lie. It's always from the Israeli point of view; they make us all look like terrorists. The news media don't make a distinction between 'terrorists' and Palestinians. When an Israeli is killed it's a tragedy. But when a Palestinian is killed its retribution.

In other words, they saw the Western news media as supportive of the United States' pro-Israel lobby.

If I was not surprised by their response I was surprised by the passion in their eyes and the heated discussion that stemmed from my question. But what I found most interesting about what ensued was not so much how they spoke but rather that the discussion was not directed at me but at each other; after all as a 'visiting scholar' I was supposed to be the center of attraction. My understanding of the Arabic language is limited to functional literacy, so I relied on one of the group organizers to translate bits and pieces of the discussions that were happening all around me.

In any event, I was content at this point to be the observer. I began to get the impression that the Western's media's construct of the 'Palestinian situation' was a topic they had either not spoken of at length before or at the very least had not discussed in an open forum.

Perhaps it was the setting or that I had just read it before coming to Jordan, but as I watched and listened to the passionate discussions amongst the youth, I was reminded of a speech given by His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal to the International Conference at Northwestern University in Illinois, April, 2003. In the speech, titled 'Imagining the other in the Middle East: Jewish and Arab/Muslims', His Highness stated:

> Images are shapes reflecting particles of light, and perceptions are made of what is reflected and how we read by the mind. But the mind's reception has filters made of experiences and emotions, the learned, the inherited and the intuitive. In turn, images and learning shape these experiences and stimulate these emotions. The objective and subjective become intertwined, and it becomes difficult to separate them. Truth is seldom what it seems, and more significantly, images are what bind us, and also separates us. Thus the image- makers shape who we are, how we see others, and *mutatis mutandi* (His Highness' use of italics), how images of others about us are shaped, and how they see us.
>
> Individual perceptions are reflected in the collective perceptions of groups, which in turn are product of external as well as that group's conditioning factors.

His Highness' words seemed to have encapsulated the youth's discussion as it was translated to me.

I was so caught up in my observations of the youth that I was taken off guard when they asked me what Canadians thought of Palestinians. I explained that I could not speak for all Canadians, only for myself. Still, I admitted that the images in television news media indeed presented a negative image of male, rock throwing Palestinian youth. I also pointed out that such images of teenagers throwing rocks at armed Israeli soldiers seemed to me like a Goliath versus David confrontation. I explained that I was not angry with the teens themselves but rather with those Palestinian adults who encouraged them. As the dialogue continued, I realized that they were not so much looking to get me to side with the Palestinian cause, but rather were anxious to dispel stereotypes I may have acquired

through the Western media about the conflict and about the image of Palestinians in particular.

In retrospect, I am not sure what I really expected to gain from meeting with the youth, but the opportunity served to entice me with questions about the responsibility of the local and international media in conflict areas and more importantly what role Media Education with youth in such regions could have in developing critical viewers and creators of news media.

As a result of speaking, listening and observing the youth in Ramallah, I now realize that such settings offer unique opportunities for exploring how youth at risk, that is, those in regions of conflict, post-conflict and/or developing countries, consume the media and how the interaction of the situation in which they live develop young people's understanding of media. I knew that in the near future I would have to find the means and opportunity to get a clearer view of this phenomenon.

PYALARA

> We believe that in order to create media for young people, we have to invest in young people themselves to create their own media. Whenever young people are equipped with the right tools of expression, they can express themselves freely.
>
> [...] since our establishment has been keen on both reflecting the needs of different sects of young people, and further to always give attention to different groups of young people, without distinction of geographical, social, political or economic groupings. (Saleem, Assistant Director, PYALARA)

My opportunity came in July 2005. I and six other Canadians were invited to participate along with about eighty Palestinian educators in a conference titled Education, Democracy, and Identity in Conflict Areas at the University of Bethlehem. Around the same time, I learned about the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership And Rights Activation (PYALARA), a media youth organization located in the town of Ar-Ram, about forty-five minutes drive from Bethlehem.

I decided that the close proximity of Bethlehem to Ar-Ram was too tempting to forgo the opportunity to further tease my interest in youth media in the region. Through e-mail correspondence I was able to convince the Director of PYALARA, Hania Bitar, to agree to let me work with some of the young people involved in the organization. It just so happened that PYALARA had recently embarked on a project, which originated from a conference they co-sponsored in October 2004.

PYALARA was established in 1999 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip. PYALARA aims to provide alternatives to young Palestinians that will help to protect them from becoming marginalized or neglected by providing them with a platform for expressing their views and dialoguing about their rights. In this way PYALARA is able to channel and transform the energy of Pal-

estinian youth into constructive and proactive initiatives that contribute to democratic nation building.

PYALARA, in cooperation with a number of academic and media organizations in the West Bank, hosted the First Media for the Future Conference from October 9 to 10, 2004. The conference was an opportunity for Palestinian media students, journalists, academics as well as the general public to dialogue about their experiences with the Palestinian media and with media training institutions in the region. The conference's aim was to create a practical network for those interested in the state of the media in Palestine.

The Media for the Future Conference focused on the following themes:

- The future of media in Palestine
- The role of media in promoting democracy
- The Palestinian situation as constructed in the Western media including bias, perception versus reality
- Media Education in Palestine
- Media and social responsibility

Young people attending the Conference took it upon themselves to recommend the formation of a media program for Palestinian youth between the ages of 14 and 25 years old that would enable them to express their needs, issues and the problems confronting them. By the end of the Conference, PYALARA expressed its intent to assist, directly or indirectly, media students and young journalists through the development of counseling, networking, union protection, training and other forms of support. Consequently, in March 2005, PYALARA created TAWASOL: Forum of Young Palestinian Journalists. (*Tawasol* is an Arabic word meaning connectivity and communication.)

Throughout the summer of 2005, TAWASOL was put into action. Different training programs were held with the participation of young Palestinians. The scope of these training programs was to enhance the skills and abilities of the young journalists to further develop youth media, and generally Palestinian media. I was asked to lead one of these training programs.

During the second week of July, I led 12 youth in documentary filmmaking. The youth came from several areas in the West Bank, including Ar-Ram, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron and Nablus. Some were enrolled in media studies/journalism and communications at universities in the region, such as Birzeit University in Ramallah and Annajah National University in Nablus. Still others were in studies unrelated to media, such as sociology, economics and business.

For some the daily round trip from Nablus to PYALARA's office in Ar-Ram was a difficult and laborious journey involving military check-points and more than one means of transportation. Some days the trip took as long as two hours one way; there were a few days when one of the youth was unable to attend because of the long wait at the checkpoint.

The youth at PYALARA share a passion and a desire to be proactively involved in working toward positive social development in Palestine. One of the young people stated:

> The way I see it is life in Palestine is almost empty unless you do things with your life.

Another remarked:

> But most important is that we want to work hard and develop our country of Palestine.

In our first session I asked the youth their ideas of the image of Arabs in Western news media. They echoed many of the things I heard from the youth in Ramallah three years previously. We segued into a discussion of Arabs in mainstream Hollywood movies. Some considered that Hollywood reinforced the image of Arabs as terrorists, especially since 9/11. I decided to turn the question around:

> So what's the image of Westerners you have from the media of those in the West?

Their answer was:

> Westerners are self-centered. They are dominated by media.

Over the next week and a half, three teams produced three mini-documentaries. Each of the productions, *Living for the moment*, *I am a Palestinian* and *Dreams are born*, reflect the reality of the Palestinian Youth. I was glad to see that the youth did not completely focus on the hardships of their existence, but rather their productions took on a more constructive tone. That is, the themes and tones of the productions leaned toward peace rather than conflict. PYALARA intends to distribute the productions locally, regionally and internationally.

My work with the young people at PYALARA reinforced for me the importance of Media Education as a tool for local and individual transformation that has the potential to enable youth to make a positive and constructive impact on their communities and their families. In doing so, youth media can then move toward making an impact at the national and international levels.

What kind of media education?

I was correct in saying that working with PYALARA would further tease my interest in youth media in conflict areas. However, I still was not sure what Media Education would look like in such places. Still, I knew it would involve youth as 'cultural producers', i.e., producers of their own media texts.

However, I am still not sure exactly how to articulate the kind of Media Education I am thinking of other than to describe it as:

- social constructivist, i.e., based on shared social interaction and multi-discourse usage.
- an active and democratic practice.
- providing youth with opportunities to engage in developing critical awareness of local and global issues.
- developing involved, critical and informed citizens.
- not limited to a specific definition but rather determined by population profile, country context, issues of power and opportunity.

In fact, Media Education has always aimed at developing informed global citizens; however the global aspect is often overlooked in our teaching of Media Education in Canada and the Unites States. While I do not imply that such an emphasis is somehow selfish, I do have the sense that globalization and the knowledge economy are issues that are not given enough thought in Western schools. Mike Gange, a media educator in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, stated in an e-mail message:

> We need to celebrate world ideas, regardless of their origin. There are many fine ideas coming from African countries, from the Middle East, from India, from Korea. All of these places have fine teachers, and many thinkers, who deserve to be heard. As media educators, we need to truly think globally. We need to make contact with those teachers, and challenge them to have their students work, whether written or produced in a media text, shared on the Internet. We need to see those students' efforts, and be able to compare them on an individual basis, not on a nationalistic viewpoint.

I am starting to develop a notion of Media Education that has the 'courage' to be located in what Paulo Freire (1970) referred to in his native Portuguese as 'conscientizacion', translated in English as 'education as critical consciousness'. Conscientizacion has also been referred to by Freire as 'education for transformation' and 'liberartory education' (Freire, 1970). In a later paper Shor and Freire (1987) expanded the term 'conscientizacion' to include 'dialogic and pedagogy' and 'empowerment education'. In other words, I am arguing for Media Education that is situated within a Freirian framework and is intended to enable youth, especially those at risk, to move from a position of victim to advocates of positive social change.

I do not claim that the approach described above is a new idea. However, my 'defining moment' with the youth in Ramallah and my experience at PYALARA had an impact on my growth as a media educator. I realize now that the kind of Media Education I teach to high school students and pre-service teachers at McGill

University is two-dimensional and not the kind that I want to practice with youth in conflict. It just did not seem to be enough – whatever that means. And I am not alone in the belief that youth media has much to offer young people whose place contributes to their being at risk.

International recognition

> Media is increasingly gaining importance in the Indian scenario in line with the trend across the world. I guess it will be true of most third world countries. Access to media still remains a challenge in the hinterland, yet it's increasingly gaining momentum. However, the role of media gains greater significance when one may try and analyze its relation to youth. (Youth media worker, India, 2005)

In the last twenty years, there has been an increase in interest in Media Education worldwide. Actually, it seems common sense that there would be an interest in Media Education on the local, national and international level, considering that:

- Half of the world's current population is under the age of thirty.
- Young people are the largest consumers of mass media.
- The mass media have enormous influence on the beliefs, ideas and bias of young people.
- Compared to just a few years ago, new media technologies are relatively inexpensive, less complicated and more portable.
- Media images are being taken as role models by youth. This is a major reason for the growing popularity of the reality genre both in developed and developing countries alike.
- Commercial and entertainment programming have become the mainstay of the media as a result of the proliferation of cable and satellite channels worldwide.

At the International Symposium on Media Education in Grünwald, Federal Republic of Germany, January 1982, experts argued that the media are 'omnipresent' and that an increasing number of people spend a great deal of time interacting with media. The experts went on to say that government agencies, educational systems, community organizations and parents should not overlook the role of media in the process of personal and social development, as well as instruments for an individual's active participation as a citizen in society.

The outcome of the symposium was a concise declaration for the validity of Media Education. Recommendations of the Grünwald Declaration included:

1. Initiating and supporting comprehensive media education programs – from pre-school to university level, and in adult education – the purpose of which is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness and, consequently, of greater competence among the users of electronic and print media.
2. Developing training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and train them in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students.
3. Stimulating research and development activities for the benefit of media education, from such domains as psychology, sociology, and communication science.
4. Supporting and strengthening the actions undertaken or envisaged by UNESCO and which aim at encouraging international co-operation in media education.

The Grünwald Declaration did, at least in part, grasp the United Nations' interest in Media Education.

On November 20th, 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention provides for all children (under 18 years) a comprehensive set of economic, social, cultural and civil and political rights. It supports and legitimizes the needs of children and provides a basis for their well-being.

Important to the present discussion are the following articles as stated in the Convention:

> Article 12
> States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
>
> Article 13
> The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
>
> Article 17
> States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:
> (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;

(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

On the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 1999, UNICEF with the support of the Norwegian Government, called upon governments, organizations, and individuals working with youth, media professionals and industries, educators, researchers and parents to initiate and develop programs, projects and studies of children and media.

It is important to remind ourselves that the Convention's resolutions were ratified by all governments except the richest, the United States of America, and one of the poorest, Somalia.

Since the late eighties, UNESCO has sponsored several international conferences, including New Directions in Media Education in Toulouse, France, in 1990, followed by international conferences in, e.g., Paris (1997), Vienna (1999), Sydney (2000), as well as by international seminars and regional events. Thus, on the one hand it may be fair to say that many of the original Grünwald recommendations have been addressed. Within the last few years, UNICEF along with several international agencies have also created a website link to youth media around the world (see www.unicef.org/magic).

However, while there are many encouraging signs, Buckingham (2001) writes in 'Media Education: A global strategy for development: A Policy Paper prepared for UNESCO':

> In a developing field such as media education, diversity is to be expected; and a global organization such as UNESCO is bound to respect and seek to preserve such diversity. [...] media education needs to begin from the perspectives and experiences of young people themselves; and as such, it must take into account the needs and characteristics of their communities and cultures (p. 12).

Buckingham also states:

> [...] the overall picture of development has been uneven, not to say incoherent. There is great diversity in terms of the aims and methods of media education, the participants who are involved in it, and the contexts in which it takes place. The growth of international dialogues in the field has undoubtedly been of great value; but it is not always clear that everybody is talking about the same thing (p. 5).

Having participated in several national and international Media Education conferences, including Guelph, Ontario, in 1990 and 1992, and Toronto, Ontario, in 2000, I would venture to say that the situation described by Buckingham exists today. Admittedly the current article most likely adds to this criticism.

Youth media education: the prospects and challenges

> Media and media education are perhaps the most important tools for social change that exist. In developing countries the poor are marginalized out of the governing system and have little to no voice in directing the national policies and processes that affect their lives. The use of communications media should be an integral part of any strategy to promote social transformation through the participation of the most marginalized on local, national and international levels – providing the avenue through which they can bring their concerns to the table and the skills and possibility to pro-actively address those concerns.
>
> Using media and media education to help children build an agenda for social change can allow youth to impact policies and political agendas – not only at the local community level but, through alliances with regional, national and international media outlets, youth's impact can be scaled up to connect with other movements for social change. Plan India's program is an example of this. In this context, media education not only has a direct impact on individual children's lives, but youth can develop quality products that have an impact at all levels of society. A product such as a short film or a radio show developed by a child, and the message it conveys, often has a much deeper impact than the same product or message would if developed by an adult. Using media and marketing principles youth movements can achieve changes far beyond the reaches of adults. (Virginia Saiz and Robyn Baron of Plan International, Dominican Republic, 2005)

In fact, there is reason to be optimistic about the development of Media Education worldwide, including developing countries and regions of conflict and post-conflict.

Sheila Kinkade and Christy Macy (2003) provide, in their booklet *What Works in Youth Media: Case Studies from Around the World*, a sampling of youth media projects in Mexico, China, Zambia, Albania, and Vietnam. Well-known journalist Christiane Amanpour writes in the foreword to Kinkade's and Macy's text that the programs described:

> ...capitalize on young people's creativity, passion, and idealism, offering their valuable perspectives on some of the most critical issues of our times – education, the environment, human rights, child abuse, the growing divide between rich and poor, and the impact of globalization (p. 5).

While youth media in developing countries and regions of conflict have made significant advances, Media Education, at least in formal education settings, face considerable challenges. Poverty, conflict and social unrest upset the normal lives and development of children, of which formal education is a large part.

Tomlinson and Benefiled (2005) state that half of the 104 million children who do not attend primary schools live in countries of conflict or are recovering from conflict (p. 1). The same authors outline some of the challenges that face education in these countries (p. 6):

- Schools, educators and students are targets of violence, which leads to destruction of infrastructure. (In July 2002, the Palestinian Ministry of Education reported that for the school year 2001-2002, 216 students and 17 teachers were killed, 2,514 students were injured, 164 students and 71 teachers were arrested (see www.grassrootsonline.org/Palestine%20NOW/pal_0923/education.html)
- Lost schooling for the youth of conflict years results in a vulnerable society, affecting recovery and reconstruction.
- There is less investment in education during times of war.
- Fear and disruption are not conducive to learning.
- The legitimacy of governments and of their curricula is often suspect in times of conflict.
- The focus is on basic survival, not education.
- Schooling for large numbers of children during a crisis situation is costly in terms of money, time and labour.

To these challenges the following can be included:

- Sustaining existing media youth programs is difficult, as there is often a reliance on funding from several donors. Youth media programs in developing countries are competing for the same sources of funding.
- The transformation from emergency planning to strategic planning for the future is a long-term process.
- Levels of basic literacy in developing countries and conflict regions are often very low and thus seen as a deterrent to introducing not-traditional forms of learning and teaching.
- Gender issues in various countries make the notion of education for all problematic.
- Poor nations lack the basic resources such as textbooks, notebooks, pens, pencils and chalkboards.

- Technology considered in Western schools as 'low tech', such as overhead projectors, is a luxury in places of conflict and poverty, even if electricity was available. 'High tech' such as computers is more a dream than a hope.
- Drop out rates and limited access to educational services in poor countries is often very high.
- Staffing at educational institutions in conflict regions are inadequate and so little headway can be made in educational reform.
- Human, technological and financial resources at institutions of higher education in conflict regions are underdeveloped so that teacher training and research is lacking or non-existent.
- The digital generation divide within the developing countries is very stark. While the parents may not know how to operate a PC their children may be writing blogs. Therefore supervision in case of Internet usage is low or minimal which is exposing the kids to a whole new world – desirable and undesirable both.
- Due to the poor standards of living and overall low per capita income, many households in developing countries have one TV per household. Consequently, children become passive consumers of the media being consumed by the adults.
- The Internet is providing a mode of free expression in many developing countries on topics which are traditionally tabooed, thus resulting in resistance to Media Education from many adults in these regions.

An assistant director of PYALARA stated:

> One of the basic challenge we had as an organization is that the society does not believe in the role of young people. Young people are regarded in different countries and various parts of the world, as either little and are not important enough to be listened to, or as a threat, whenever they are empowered; in other words, they are either an outside factor in the society or a threat to the stability of a society. Young people are rarely regarded as partners and active members of the society.

The challenges to Media Education in impoverished countries suggest to me an obvious point. That is, countries that do not have the economic and human resources and/or infrastructures for basic education will understandably not be able to initiate nor sustain Media Education curriculum.

A global strategy

Media Education initiatives within the settings discussed in this article have a better chance of taking root as community youth programs, such as in the example of PYALARA described earlier. However, here too Media Education faces many challenges, some of which are similar if not the same, as those described in the previous section. To address these challenges Buckingham (2001; see also Buckingham and Domaille, 2004) advises, among other things, developing on the international level:

- dialogue to revisit and build upon such documents as the Grünwald Declaration and similar UNESCO policy interventions (see, e.g., Development of a Plan of Action for Education, below).
- a Clearinghouse on Media Education.
- a summer institute led by experts in Media Education.
- internships and teacher exchanges.
- accessible teaching and learning resources.

Along with the above, I argue that Media Education intervention in developing countries must be grounded in sound analysis and in grassroots or local communities. UNESCO's Development of a Plan of Action for Education: Methodological Brief (2003) may be a worthwhile framework for such an analytical tool.

Specifically, there is a need to develop strategic partnerships between different NGOs, educational institutions, politicians, religious and professional groups, media professionals, etc., whose aim is to:

- move beyond policy statements and identifying activities to prioritizing the actions, activities, and required resources.
- achieve a consensus on the concepts.
- define a small number of general objectives, and following from these.
- identify a plan of action.
- recruit and train of local people to deliver, support, and sustain community youth Media Education programs.

Of course, the above plan of action is woefully incomplete. But then again, a tree is not a tree until it breaks out from a tiny seed. We may one day look back upon the eighties and nineties as a time when Media Education in developing countries broke out of its seed. The next decade must enable Media Education, on an international level, to take root.

And yet, it is crucial to stress that Media Education as I argue for in this article is in the first instance a tool for social transformation that begins at the individual and local level. Too often we have a tendency to skip straight to the big picture,

the national and international, forgetting that the really powerful work starts at the individual level.

> The benefits of youth media are plenty fold. We are in the age of ICTs and IECs and what better way of talking and creating a platform for young people and adolescents alike to have their views and opinions heard and recognized. Personally I have grown a stronger female and do not feel intimidated by others. I have come to know my strong and weak points as well. That is what actually makes you successful when you admit your faults and mistakes, as difficult as it may seem. (Limpo N. Chinika, 20 years old, Youth Media, Lusaka Zambia)

Conclusion

It is widely accepted that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Youth in the 21st century need to explore and understand the world beyond local borders and the impact national actions have on the international level.

The questions that need to be answered are:

- What kinds of culture and intercultural understandings do youth in developing countries get from local and international media?
- What is the role for Media Education and youth media in helping youth in developing countries to construct these understandings?

I am convinced that Media Education has the potential for providing youth with the opportunities for such an exploration.

It is time for youth in developing countries and conflict countries to be given the rights they have been guaranteed in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. Media Education can play a role in meeting our obligations to youth at risk.

Note

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Democratic Practices as Learning Opportunities Conference, November 4- 5, 2005, The Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, U.S.A.

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Twenty-first Century Learners[1]

A Need for Tech-savvy Teachers

Bonnie Bracey Sutton

> Teachers may be forgiven if they cling to old models of teaching that have served them well in the past. All of their formal instruction and role models were driven in the past by traditional teaching practices. Breaking away from traditional approaches to instruction means taking risks and venturing into the unknown. But this is precisely what is needed at the present time. (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, U.S.A.)[2]

Dr. David Thornburg, U.S.A.,[3] likes to tell the story of a teacher revived from a hundred years ago, who is brought to a modern classroom and who does remarkably well considering the time she has been out of the classroom.

He tells this story in conferences and we laugh out loud at how little education has changed. But it is really not a laughing matter, and we know it. At these digital campfires we realize the problem of creating teachers who love the use of technology. Many teachers are trapped in their educational practices by a lack of meaningful exposure to good information on the use of technology and of how to initiate new ways of sharing information that will help them to move forward. Some are hindered by the lack of understanding and inexperience of those in their immediate learning community. Others are restricted to the use of only vendor-supplied solutions in information technology (IT) as selected by leaders in their educational community. Time is also a problem. Learning in many countries is a prisoner of time. Yet, there are foundations and groups around the world attempting to make change and to show examples.

What is technology?

To cite the U.S. National Academy of Engineering:[4]

> In its broadest sense, technology is the process by which humans modify nature to meet their needs and wants. However, most people think of technology only in terms of its artifacts: computers and software, aircraft, pesticides, water-treatment plants, and microwave ovens, to name a few. But technology is more than its tangible products. An equally important aspect of technology is the knowledge and processes necessary to create and operate those products, such as engineering know-how and design, manufacturing expertise, various technical skills, and so on. Technology also includes all the infrastructure necessary for the design, manufacture, operation, and repair of technological artifacts, from corporate headquarters and engineering schools to manufacturing plants and maintenance facilities.
>
> Technology comprises the entire system of people and organizations, knowledge, processes, and devices that go into creating and operating technological artifacts, as well as the artifacts themselves.

What is technological literacy?

Technological literacy encompasses three interdependent dimensions – knowledge, ways of thinking and acting, and capabilities.

Like literacy in reading, mathematics, science, or history, the goal of technological literacy is to provide people with the tools to participate intelligently and thoughtfully in the world around them. The kinds of things a technologically literate person must know can vary from society to society and from era to era.

The goal for teachers worldwide is to establish technological literacy. There are groups that are in place to help teachers achieve these goals, as well as ministries of education with programmes toward this goal. Some examples will be found in Appendix 1.

And Appendix 2 presents – as an illustration – online resources for the specific example of teaching and learning geography.

Creating a learning landscape

We can use resources to change teaching and learning. We can help teachers by giving them a different perspective, by involving them in meaningful activities, and by allowing them entry into the knowledge networks that define teaching and learning. Giving them the hardware, and some technical training, is the first

part of their learning journey. For some the journey is a hard slog. Mentoring helps. Friendly technical support and teaming also helps.

If we use the ideational scaffolding of Jennifer James, who has written about teachers moving toward the future with new eyes,[5] we can identify eight new skills that need to be taught to teachers:

- Seeing with new eyes
- Recognizing the future
- Harnessing the power of myths and symbols
- Speeding up your response time
- Understanding the past to know the future
- Doing more with more or less
- Mastering new forms of intelligence
- Profiting from diversity

Tomorrow's teachers will enter classrooms that will look and feel very different from the classrooms their education professors may have taught in 30 years ago. Globally, the ways we think about teaching and learning have been challenged and we need to establish new kinds of practice, and pre-service education. We also need to create an interface for those teachers already in the classroom, who will live out their teaching career with students so that they are up to the task and who should not be forgotten as the world of education changes.

Professional development using e-learning, and virtual opportunities, are among the ways in which some have attempted to change teaching and learning as a process.

Mastering new forms of intelligence requires an understanding of visualization and modeling, parallel computing, ubiquitous computing, and of the uses of technology.

What is ubiquity?

As Bob Tinker, President of the Concord Consortium writes:[6]

> In the rush to bring modern information technologies into schools, one group of technologies is being overlooked that can greatly improve learning. While people are starting to realize the huge impact that current desktop computer and network technologies could have on education, other extremely valuable information technologies are not being used or even being considered.
>
> Small, inexpensive, handheld computers and their associated communications channels and software tools could play an important role in education. The com-

putational power and communications capacities of handhelds are increasingly impressive. Many pack the raw computer power of desktop computers only a few years old while having increasingly good communication channels, either through a wired cradle, infrared beams, or radio frequency radiation. These channels can be used with software tools for a broad range of sophisticated productivity and browser applications. These handheld technologies could greatly enhance learning in and out of schools.

Yet this 'anytime, anywhere' computing goes beyond just handheld computers. Ubiquitous, mobile devices such as phones, wrist bands, wearable devices and intelligent structures are bound to impact the future of education.

What is going on? Understanding the past to know the future

Some good things are happening. A quiet revolution is taking hold in many schools of education all over the world. Criticized for offering programmes that are long on theory and short on practice, many schools have responded with new approaches to teacher education. Students in these programmes develop subject matter expertise, practice teaching in real classrooms, connect with mentor teachers and learn the skills to teach with technology as media.

Content has a new meaning, because of the information revolution. Depending on the skill of users, there is an abundance of information available. Students do not have to rely on the teacher for information in most subjects. Books are static, and while there are some learning places that have resource materials, many rural and distant groups of people do not have access to them. Moreover, there remain problems with training, access, resources, the hardware and software and the understanding of how technology should be deployed in most schools and learning communities.

Studies of the process of educational change show that access to new information, procedures or tools alone rarely leads to change. Teachers with limited reach cripple the future of the children they teach. Education policy often lacks a focus that encourages the integration of technology content into the learning landscapes of schools, in the standards, curricula, instructional material, and student assessments in non-technology subject areas. For technology to work well for students and schools, we must build human infrastructure at the same pace we are installing computers, systems, and hardware.

Personalization of technology by interactive use has taken place in digital storytelling. How many teachers labour to have children write, using the textbook? Project-based work, and digital storytelling, gets more of their attention.

Project-based work succeeds, because they learn children talking to other students and a different audience. It also builds communities of learning that link them with national or worldwide audiences.

Harnessing the power of myths and symbols

Storytelling, both digital and personal, has another appeal. Stories put us in touch with ourselves, with others, and with our surroundings.

There are many different definitions of digital storytelling, but in general, all of them revolve around the idea of combining the long-standing art of telling stories with any of a variety of available multimedia tools, including graphics, audio, video animation, and web publishing.

Using innovations in multimedia technology, student and adult audiences can make personal connections to visual art and museum artifacts through new ways of storytelling.

Digital storytelling is a new medium for this age-old practice and one that is humanistic, culturally rich, and globally relevant. The value of digital storytelling – for teachers and for museums or other learning places – is that the interactivity gives ownership to the creators. For some the personalization of media use is the key to learning. Many of us learn new technologies in projects and in learning circles.

There is great concern that the increased use of computers in education will only drive another wedge between rich and poor, exacerbating the 'digital divide'. While schools struggle with this issue, the ongoing revolution in information technologies continues: Computers will soon be very inexpensive and ubiquitous. Most people will own several, including toys, TVs, phones, pagers, handhelds, as well as general-purpose computers, and many will communicate through a ubiquitous network.

This means that the desktop computer and its close cousin, the full-featured portable, will represent just one end of a spectrum of intelligent personal assistants. Full-featured computers already have far more power than most educational applications need. Eventually, simpler computers with fewer options and compact operating systems costing a fraction of desktop computers will be marketed to meet the needs of learners.

Many countries have leap-frogged the technology and have transformed their communications technology using ubiquitous computing.[7]

It is important for knowledge networks to be developed that are inclusive of the people who are to use new ideas in teaching and learning, to bridge the educational communities. Education needs to be more inclusive as the depth of content available has been increased. This is best done by involving those who teach as a part of the team developing ideas.

The job is to turn information into knowledge that is meaningful. Informal education is using technological literacy to improve learning outside of the various ways in which we construct primary, junior and high schools or university settings. Formal learning needs to adapt the same ideas on technology. Technology is not magic and does not automatically make a powerful learning experience unless it is used with good teaching and curricula. There is no silver bullet.

Learning places such as museums, 'newseums', science and agricultural centres, and television, radio, newspapers, magazines and other media, comprise

the informal education system, which offers, to citizens of all ages and backgrounds, the opportunity to use, learn about, and be involved in a variety of learning experiences. We should build on those experiences by encouraging partnerships with parent and community groups, universities, and others who play a critical role in making schools true centres of learning in their communities, and in their nations.

As the Concord Consortium writes:[8]

> It is important to understand the difference between today's reality, where students occasionally use a computer in school, often as part of a group, and the future, where they will always have their personal handheld computer available. Few students and teachers today have sufficient exposure to computers to become fluid with them, to begin to use them to enhance personal expression and understanding. For most students, the term 'personal computer' is a misnomer; students use 'institutional computers'. Teachers have often even less time to incorporate the use of technology into practice.
>
> Low-cost handhelds should help bridge the 'digital divide' by putting affordable modern computational tools in the hands of all students. There is always the worry that some students will not take care of computers.
>
> Several studies have shown, however, that if the incentives are set up so the kids feel a sense of ownership, computers that travel home with students, even expensive portables, are handled responsibly in even the poorest communities.

How can technology help?

Technology is, and should be, a tool – the means to an end – not the end itself. Technology can be used as for inquiry, communication, construction, and expression.

As Bertram Bruce and James Levin (2005) write, regarding the interests of the learner:[9]

> We began to search for a way to organize the tools, techniques, and applications to accommodate better to a constructivist and integrated view of learning. We assumed that the ideal learning environment would, as Peter Marin once said, satisfy students or the learners' curiosity by presenting them with new things to be curious about. It would engage them in exploring, thinking, reading, writing, researching, inventing, problem-solving, and experiencing the world.
>
> Thus, the basis for learning would be what John Dewey (1943) identified nearly a century ago as the greatest educational resource – the natural impulses to inquire

> or to find out things; to use language and thereby to enter into the social world; to build or make things; and to express one's feelings and ideas. Dewey saw these impulses, rather than the traditional disciplines, as the foundation for the curriculum. The educational challenge is to nurture these impulses for lifelong learning.

Active participation in learning

One great feature of the Internet is the democratic participation in media: People can finally be more than just consumers of information. With tools such as community networks and blogs, podcasting, digital storytelling, project based learning initiatives, video blogging and other new technologies, people can become *producers* of information, using the Internet for civic engagement, education, cultural prosperity and community development. The emerging new uses of technology such as Internet 2, Parallel Computing and new uses of serious games, computational science, as well as traditional uses in e-learning give interactive power to the participant.

Technical skills

Teachers need to be able to master the hardware, and use the software and resources available to them on the Internet in tech-savvy ways.

As schools continue to move into different phases of educational reform, one factor that is consistent is the need for professional development. Every school-improvement effort hinges on the smallest unit; in education, that is the classroom (McLaughlin 1991)[10].

As Linda Darling Hammond points out:[11]

> Educational reform requires teachers not only to update their skills and knowledge but also to totally transform their roles as educators. It establishes new expectations for students, teachers, and school communities that some educators may not be prepared to meet.

Seeing with new eyes

Professional development is a key tool that keeps teachers abreast of current issues in education, helps them implement innovations, and refines their practice.

As we extend the information revolution, education and the use of technology in education must be more than just an afterthought – as it still is for many

people. The explosion of new technologies has changed the way we live – from the way we do business to the way we communicate with each other. Technological advancements are also affecting the way we teach and learn. But there is one group of workers who may not be getting effective training, who touch the future in educating the children of the world.

Many teachers have little meaningful professional development. Students and teachers must learn new skills to live and work in this digital age. In many cases there is a tech person, but the teacher has had minimal use and training in technology use, at whatever level there is technology for their use.

In thinking about education, most people do not understand the impact that technology has on students in their daily lives. Technology in some schools is seen as an Internet connection or a 'wired' solution. Actually ubiquitous computing and the third wave of technology may allow some world communities 'leapfrog' stages of development, establishing new practices without employing the old.

Many of today's schools may have a wire that does not connect to anything. The ratio of computers to children is aggregated to make us think that students actually have hands-on technology in most schools. We know that the level of technology varies by country, and by the way the use of technology is taught. Many schools and students are missing out on the richness of this learning experience for various reasons.

Interactive multimedia technology

Today, interactive, multimedia technology can provide us with new ways to draw upon children's natural impulses. These new media hold an abundance of materials including text, voice, music, graphics, photos, animation and video. But they provide more than abundance. Bringing all these media together means that we can vastly expand the range of learning experiences, opening up the social and natural worlds. Students can explore the relations among ideas and thus experience a more connected form of learning.

Perhaps most importantly, these new media are interactive, and conducive to active, engaged learning. Students can choose what to see and do, and they have media to record and extend what they learn. Learning is thus driven by the individual needs and interests of the learner.

A quiet revolution is taking hold in many schools of education all over North America. Criticized for offering programmes that are long on theory and short on practice, many schools have responded with new approaches to teacher education. Students in these programmes develop subject matter expertise, practice teaching in real classrooms, connect with mentor teachers and learn the skills to teach with technology as media.

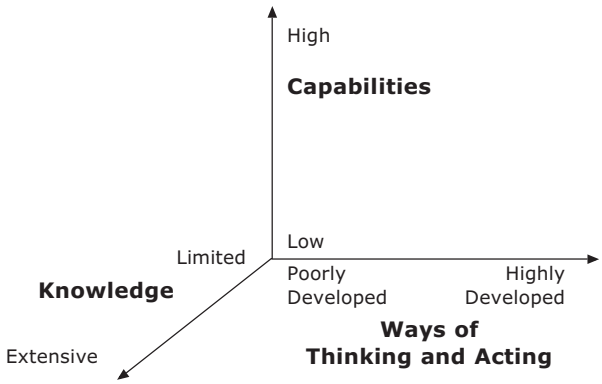
However, there remain problems with training, access, resources, the hardware and software and the understanding of how technology should be deployed in schools and learning communities. Studies of the process of educational change show that access to new information, procedures or tools alone rarely leads to change.

The U.S. National Academy of Engineering, in its report 'Technically Speaking: Why All Americans Need To Know More About Technology', addresses the question of fluency with technology as a national problem. However, the ideas represented are global in scope.[12]

All teachers do not have these skills. Children have grown up digitally and may be masters of the technology, but the teachers who touch their future have been handicapped with a lack of sufficient knowledge about the use of technology. Teachers who teach with limited reach cripple the future of the children they teach.

Missing in our education policy is a focus that encourages the integration of technology content into the learning landscapes of K-12 (Kindergarten to Grade 12), in the standards, curricula, instructional material, and student assessments in non-technology subject areas. For technology to work well for students and schools, we must build human infrastructure at the same pace we are installing computers, systems, and hardware.

Figure 1. Technological literacy



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Information literacy

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy is also increasingly important in the

contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources.

Because of the escalating complexity of this environment, individuals are faced with diverse and abundant information choices – in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media, and the Internet – and increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability.

So media literacy is needed, and a focus on the media as technology. As Bertram Bruce states:[13]

> At least three layers of meaning for technology are typically identified (see MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). First, there are physical devices, such as automobiles, telephones, or oil pipes. Second, there are the procedures, activities, or organizational systems that incorporate these devices. These may be represented in user manuals, but also in daily habits of users of the technologies.
>
> Third, there is the technical knowledge that enables particular activities, for example, the accumulation of experiences by a midwife constitutes a technology for assisting in births. The line between these layers is not sharp. Devices can reify procedures, organizations are mutually constituted by their artifacts, and activities can be viewed as both knowledge and practices. This is in fact precisely the reason why people studying technology cannot restrict their view to physical components per se.

Returning to the question of what aspects of education, if any, are technological, the layered conception of technology suggests that technology is not a separable component of educational practice, but rather, a perspective, or set of perspectives, one may adopt on all educational activity. One of the major perspective is this:

First, educational technologies can be viewed as texts, as symbol systems to be interpreted by users. This perspective has led to a variety of analyses in the tradition of literary criticism. The prevalence and power of technologies as bearers of meaning leads for example to Heidegger's question concerning the essence of technology. His concept of *Gestell* (enframing) inscribes technology as a mode of thought prior to the scientific revolution, one which 'reveals being' in a particular way. Thus, people are defined by the technological way of thought, and not simply users of technological devices.

However, not all interests are yet represented on the Internet. Communities need access to diverse and meaningful content in order for the Internet to have relevance.

Conclusion: the need for a knowledge society

Nationally and internationally, it is crucial to work in ways that can narrow the 'digital divide'. To quote from educators of the world, who issued this statement in July 2005 at a meeting held in Stellenbosch, South Africa:[14]

> Information and Communication Technologies are changing the World. We are now in the Information Society, a Society in which information is an essential and valuable commodity that one can buy, sell, store, or exchange. But this Society may also be the Society of the Digital Divide, enlarging the gap between the haves and the have-nots. As educators, we know that information and knowledge are not the same. We want not only an Information Society, but also a Knowledge Society in which Knowledge can be shared and distributed all around the world, enabling all children and all people to access Knowledge and to benefit from being educated. Education is a key issue in the Knowledge Society, and Educators have a major role and mission.

Notes

1. This article is reproduced with permission of the United Nations and was previously published in Bonnie Bracey & Terry Culver (Eds.): *Harnessing the Potential of ICT for Education – A Multistakeholder Approach*, UN ICT Task Force Series 9, ©United Nations, 2005, pp. 22-31 and 319-325 (available at http://www.unicttaskforce.org/perl/documents.pl?id=1570).
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Appendix 1: Some Examples of General On-line Resources for Teachers

African Virtual University
http://www.avu.org

The African Virtual University (AVU) is a first-of-its-kind, interactive, instructional telecommunications network established to serve the countries of Africa. The objective of the AVU is to build capacity and support economic development by leveraging the power of modern telecommunications technology to provide world-class quality education and training programmes to students and professionals in Africa.

Citta della Scienza, Napoli
http://www.cittadellascienza.it

In Italy, the Citta della Scienza in Naples is an interactive museum dedicated to scientific phenomena where the guest is involved in interactive itineraries, experiments, exhibitions and practical demonstrations.

European SchoolNet
http://www.eun.org/portal/index.htm

European SchoolNet's online community building tools are bringing together communities of teachers and learners from all over the continent.

George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF)
http://www.edutopia.org/foundation/courseware.php

In the United States, GLEF provides educators with free teaching modules developed by education faculty and professional developers. They can be used as extension units in existing courses, or can be used independently in workshops and meetings. Each module includes articles, video footage, PowerPoint ® presentations, and class activities. They draw from the wealth of GLEF's archives of best practices.

SchoolNet India
http://www.schoolnetindia.com

SchoolNet India provides programmes for diverse learning segments, for children with learning disabilities, corporate training and formal training courses. SchoolNet India will also provide teachers with Internet access to pass on information to students. While a part of the content will be directly sourced from Morgan

Media and adapted for domestic conditions, a new joint venture will also develop content specific to India, in subjects like history, geography, etc.

SchoolNet South Africa
http://www.schoolnet.org.za

SchoolNet SA is at the forefront of ICT implementation strategies in South African schools. It has developed a successful implementation strategy as a result of its experience and analysis of a wide range of past ICT implementation projects. As part of this process it has developed a teacher development framework that has seen its continued leading involvement in the education network, a distance-based ICT integration educator development programme.

Appendix 2: Using On-line Resources in the Classroom: the Example of Geography

Where in the world are you? How do I learn about that place? What is it like there?

In a time in which the world is connected in many ways, the understanding of global spaces and their connections, and the understanding of place, using media needs to be an art that young people use with facility, with the tools of technology, geography, GIS (geographic information systems), virtual libraries and online projects.

Below are two examples of online projects:

Earthwatch
http://www.earthwatch.org

Earthwatch Institute engages people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment. Students and teachers are involved and often scholarshipped to participate in stewardship of the earth by sponsors for Earthwatch projects.

The Global Teenager
http://www.globalteenager.org

In a world that is growing smaller and smaller and developing towards an information or knowledge society, new ways of learning are needed; learning aimed at developing respect and understanding for other cultures; learning aimed at developing skills to process information and turn it into genuine knowledge; learning aimed at using the tools that today's world offers for effective and efficient learning. Therefore the mission of he Global Teenager Project is: "To offer educational virtual exchange programmes to secondary school students worldwide, dedicated to promote cross-cultural understanding through new ways of learning, using ICTs."

Since the first pilot experiment in 1999 between South Africa and the Netherlands, the Global Teenager Project has expanded to 29 countries, each with a country coordinator. The project involves around 3000 teachers and students from 200 classes. The project is designed in such a way that it can be integrated in the school curriculum. The main activities in the project are Learning Circles and Understanding Diversity.

Here are two small examples of the power of online content:

Big Blue Marble
http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap030426.html
or:
http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap050302.htm

Geography matters

Information literacy is the key, and we will now explore how it can be used in teaching geography, with brief notes about resources for other science subjects.

> There is a basic ingredient for significantly improving decision-making that involves the location, distribution, or impact of people, places, and events in the world. Proximity of customers to a store location, the routing of emergency vehicles to an incident, and the change over time in a habitat – all share the common component of geography.
>
> Just about anyone or anything can be associated with a known location in the world – a street address, a service region, a climatic zone, a voting district, a latitude/longitude coordinate. Geographic information systems (GIS) software is the ideal tool for extracting the patterns and trends inherent in location-based information.
>
> Mapmaking and geographic analysis are not new, but a GIS performs these tasks better and faster than do the old manual methods. And, before GIS technology, only a few people had the skills necessary to use geographic information to help with decision-making and problem solving.
>
> Geography is information about the earth's surface and the objects found on it, as well as a framework for organizing knowledge. GIS is a technology that manages, analyzes, and disseminates geographic knowledge.
>
> GIS engages students and promotes critical thinking, integrated learning and analysis, and multiple intelligences and sciences at any grade level.
>
> With the use of ICTs to explore the world, learning becomes more powerful. GIS technology is one of the hottest new tools in education and research and is one of the fastest growing high-tech careers for students today. GIS training helps students develop computer literacy, analytical approaches to problem solving, and communication and presentation skills.[15]

The case for geography

Geography is not just an academic subject, it is a serious discipline with multibillion dollar implications for businesses and governments. Choosing sites, targeting market segments, planning distribution networks, responding to emergencies, or redrawing country boundaries – all of these problems involve questions of geography. Learn more about why geography matters.[16]

Geographic information systems (GIS)

GIS is a technology that is used to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective. The technology is a piece of an organization's overall information system framework.

GIS links location to information (such as people to addresses, buildings to parcels, or streets within a network) and layers that information to give you a better understanding of how it all interrelates. You choose what layers to combine based on your purpose.[17]

Teaching with GIS

Geographic information systems (GIS) can help learners of all ages understand the world around them. GIS helps students and teachers engage in studies that promote critical thinking, integrated learning, and multiple intelligences, at any grade level.

In classrooms across the country and around the world, educators are using GIS in the study of topics as varied as Environmental Studies, History, and Economics. The resources below show how GIS is being used in schools and by educational organizations, and to help you start using GIS in your own classroom.

Educational projects involved with GIS

Many of these projects or groups are making use of GIS in powerful ways for helping education. Some are producing data that is tailor-made for use with GIS. All of them work to help teachers engage their classes in activities that involve critical thinking about spatial information. Geography is global, of course. You remember the tsunami event and how it affected the whole world.

- NCGE – National Council for Geographic Education
- NGS – National Geographic Society
- JASON Project
- The GLOBE Program
- Journey North
- GEODESY – Berkeley Geo-Research Group
- TERC
- Various Sectors of the United Nations in specialized content
- Union Géographique Internationale
- International Network for Learning and Teaching (INLT)
- International Symposium for Learning and Teaching Geography

Some other online resources

World Wind
http://worldwind.arc.nasa.gov

World Wind lets PC users zoom from satellite altitude into any place on Earth. Leveraging Landsat satellite imagery and Shuttle Radar Topography Mission data, World Wind lets you experience Earth terrain in visually rich 3D, just as if you were really there.

Virtually visit any place in the world. Look across the Andes, into the Grand Canyon, over the Alps, or along the African Sahara.

Map Machine
http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine

National Geographic's redesigned online atlas gives you the world – your way. Find nearly any place on Earth, and view it by population, climate, and much more. Plus, browse antique maps, find country facts, or plan your next outdoor adventure with trail maps.

Google Earth
http://earth.google.com

Want to know more about a specific location? Google Earth combines satellite imagery, maps and the power of Google Search to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips.

Exploring Earth
http://www.classzone.com/books/earth_science/terc/content/visualizations/es0101/es0101page01.cfm?chapter_no=visualization

Exploring Earth provides animated resources and animation from NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center – Scientific Visualization Studio, Smithsonian Institution, National Science Foundation (NSF), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Global Change Research Project (GCRP), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Dimensional Media Associates (DMA), New York Film and Animation Company, Silicon Graphics, Inc. (SGI), Hughes STX Corporation.

IKONOS
http://www.spaceimaging.com/gallery/default.htm

Space Imaging's IKONOS earth imaging satellite has provided a reliable stream of image data that has become the standard for commercial high-resolution sat-

ellite data products. IKONOS produces 1-meter black-and-white (panchromatic) and 4-metre multispectral (red, blue, green, near infrared) imagery that can be combined in a variety of ways to accommodate a wide range of high-resolution imagery applications.

NASA Observatorium
http://observe.arc.nasa.gov/nasa/education/reference/main.html

NASA's Observatorium provides a number of on-line resources for science teachers, with a focus on remote sensing.

The WorldWatcher Project
www.worldwatcher.northwestern.edu

The WorldWatcher Project encourages students to use visualization tools for inquiry, for example, to compare temperature patterns in different places at different times. They also engage in communication, by sharing their visualizations and writing in a scientific notebook. The WorldWatcher Project also enables students to use scientific visualizations as expressions of their beliefs and hypotheses in three ways.

One is through the customization of the display of visualizations using the features for changing resolution, colour schemes, and magnification described under interpretive visualization. The second is through the mathematical creation of new data using techniques for analytical visualization. The third is through a direct manipulation interface using a paint metaphor.

Modeling and Visualization
http://faculty.ed.uiuc.edu/j-levin/taxonomy.html

From a 19th century scatter plot used to isolate the source of a cholera epidemic to supercomputer-based weather models, visualization tools have revolutionized problem solving, research, and communication in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. Today, researchers can explore and combine images of complex weather events like hurricanes, molecular structures such as pockets on the surface of proteins, or the environmental impact of factors such as deforestation. Advances in technology have led to personal computers capable of generating powerful visualizations and simulations in real time, while the rise of the Internet has increased access to the high end tools and datasets of scientific and engineering practice.[18]

Interactive web-based tools

AgentSheets
http://agentsheets.com

AgentSheets is a unique authoring tool to build interactive simulations in Java. It can be used to create interactive virtual worlds, modifiable simulations, training demos, and put them online fast with music, speech, video, and Java.

Maya
http://www.alias.com/eng/index.shtml

Maya is a high-end 3D computer graphics software package used in the film and TV industry, as well as for computer and video games, by Alias. Maya, used in most films today, is named for the Sanskrit word meaning 'lllusion' and is the industry standard integrated 3D suite, evolved from Alias PowerAnimator. Maya comes in two main versions, Maya Complete (the less powerful package) and Maya Unlimited. Maya Personal Learning Edition (PLE) is available for non-commercial use, and is completely free.

Berkeley Madonna
http://www.berkeleymadonna.com/features.html

Berkeley Madonna is a fast, general-purpose differential equation solver. It runs on both Windows and Mac OS. Developed on the Berkeley campus under the sponsorship of the U.S. National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health, it is currently used by academic and commercial institutions for constructing mathematical models for research and teaching.

Biology Student Workbench
http://bsw-uiuc.net

The Biology Student Workbench provides curricular materials centred around molecular biological investigations, links to educational, scientific, computational, and informational resources, and communication tools to bind together a contributing community of educators.

BugScope
http://bugscope.beckman.uiuc.edu

Bugscope is an educational outreach project of the Beckman Institute, University of Illinois for K-12 classrooms. The project provides a resource to classrooms so that they may remotely operate a scanning electron microscope to image 'bugs'

at high magnification. The microscope is remotely controlled in real time from a classroom computer over the Internet using a web browser.

ChickScope
http://chickscope.beckman.uiuc.edu

ChickScope, developed by the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois, allows students to raise chicken embryos in the classroom and obtain magnetic resonance images through the Internet.

ChemViz
http://chemviz.ncsa.uiuc.edu

ChemViz (Chemistry Visualization) is an interactive programme, which incorporates computational chemistry simulations and visualizations for use in the chemistry classroom. The ChemViz tools, developed by the U.S. National Center for Supercomputing Applications, include an image generator (Waltz), a structural database (CSD) and a molecular editor (Nanocad).

Interactive Tools for Physics and Maths
http://www.mathsnet.net/asa2/2004/tech.html

This website contains information about a number of interactive tools for teaching physics and mathematics, with links.

The Shodor Foundation
http://www.shodor.org

The Shodor Foundation is a non-profit research and education organization dedicated to the advancement of science and mathematics education, specifically through the use of modeling and simulation technologies. The Foundation provides interactive activities and instructional materials for students, educators, and parents.

National Science Digital Library
http://www.nsdl.org

The NSDL is a digital library of resource collections and services, organized in support of science education at all levels. It was created by the U.S. National Science Foundation to provide organized access to high quality resources and tools that support innovations in teaching and learning at all levels of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education.

Computational Science Education Reference Desk
http://cserd.nsdl.org

Computational science – using computers to do science – involves the appropriate use of a computational architecture (possibly a computer, calculator, abacus, dice, poker chips, etc.) to apply some algorithm, or method, to solve a scientific application, or problem. When students learn to build models of the world around them in an attempt to answer specific questions, they learn to inquire in an authentic manner, and build their own understanding. Computational science provides a content-rich method of putting inquiry-based learning into classrooms. The Computational Science Education Reference Desk provides more information and a digital library.

Alexandria Digital Library Geospatial Network
http://webclient.alexandria.ucsb.edu/mw/index.jsp

The Alexandria Digital Library (ADL) is a resource of the University of California, Santa Barbara. It contains more than 15,000 holdings, such as maps, images, and datasets, that are available online for public download over the Internet.

Together They are Strong?

Co-Regulatory Approaches for the Protection of Minors within the European Union

Wolfgang Schulz & Thorsten Held

Regulation in general and regulation within the media sector in particular has to face the fact that new technologies and internationalization have led to widespread and fundamental changes. These developments, which are often described as a change of former industrial societies into so-called information societies, represent a challenge for the regulating states. Traditional regulation, though successful and efficient in the past, might be unsuitable under changed circumstances. The role of the state needs to be redefined. This is even true for fundamental objectives like the protection of minors. While in most countries, the state has responsibility for preventing children from having access to content that might be harmful to them, this does not mean that regulation in this field is completely in the hands of the state. In some countries, the state has included non-state regulation into its regulatory concept. "Co-regulation" has become a buzzword when it comes to new forms of regulation. Even the proposal for an audiovisual media services directive explicitly allows for co-regulation as a way to implement the directive's provisions including those for the protection of minors.[1] According to article 3 of the proposed directive, the member states shall encourage co-regulatory regimes in the fields coordinated by the directive. However, the term "co-regulation" includes a variety of different approaches within different countries and different sectors. In a recently finished project, the Hans-Bredow-Institute and the Institute of European Media Law examined co-regulatory approaches in the media sector in the Member States of the European Union.[2] Most co-regulatory approaches that can be found in the media sector aim at the protection of minors or the protection of consumers (the latter mostly by regulating advertising). This article will give a brief overview on the theoretical background of co-regulation and will point to some examples of existing co-regulation in the field of the protection of minors in the media.

Co-Regulation: theoretical background and definition

When it comes to regulation, different concepts can be found. While command-and-control regulation and self-regulation can be seen as traditional forms of regulation, co-regulation seems to be a rather new approach that consists of more than just a combination of state regulation and self-regulation.

The growing interest in new regulatory concepts can be traced back to findings on failures of traditional regulation. Different studies have pinpointed the following main reasons for the failure of traditional "command-and-control" regulation.[3]

- Traditional regulation, such as 'command-and-control' regulation, ignores the interests of its objects, and as a result may engender resistance rather than co-operation; depending on their resources, the objects may be capable of asserting counter-strategies or evading regulation.[4]
- Furthermore, the regulating state tends to suffer increasingly from a knowledge gap.[5] The aim of the welfare state to improve the public good to the extent possible is doomed to failure in ever more complex and rapidly changing societies with fragmented knowledge.[6] Thus, an omniscient state cannot be envisaged as a model, but rather one that makes use of the knowledge of different actors. This means that cooperation with the objects of regulation, that possess the most complete knowledge of their own field, is essential.
- The above-mentioned knowledge gap appears even more dangerous for the regulatory state because information has become the most important 'finite resource' in modern societies and may become an important regulatory resource. However, in contrast to the resource 'power', information is not at the privileged disposal of the state.
- However, there are not only knowledge gaps but also gaps of understanding that cannot be overcome. According to systems theory, regulation is often an attempt to intervene in autonomous social systems, which follow their own internal operating codes. These autonomous systems include the economy, the legal system, education, the media, science and many others. It is impossible for the political system to control the operations of those systems directly.[7] Therefore, indirect forms of regulation have to be used (and have been used already).
- Moreover, traditional regulation does not seem to stimulate creative activities effectively. Initiative, innovation and commitment cannot be imposed by law.[8] Given that modern regulation has to rely on the cooperation of the objects of regulation to achieve its objectives, this aspect becomes significant as well.
- Traditional regulation tends to operate on an item-by-item basis only, not in a process-oriented manner such as would be desirable for complex regu-

latory tasks. If the state wants to influence the outcome of a process, it has to act before a trajectory has been laid out ('preventive state').[9]

- Finally, another obstacle to traditional regulation is globalisation. This facilitates international 'forum shopping' to evade national regulations (see the first point above). This trend is seen as a main reason for the failure of traditional state regulation. In addition, globalisation has created the further problem that, while the economic system now tends primarily toward multi-national or even global structures, legal regulation is still mainly the preserve of the nation state. Structures of non-governmental law now have to be taken into account by nation states.[10]

Against this background different lines of academic debate have highlighted the advantages of more indirect forms of regulation. While some academics refer to the above-mentioned system theory and doubt the ability of the state to directly intervene into autonomous operating social systems like the economy or the media,[11] others follow game theoretical findings and envisage regulation as a 'game' played between the regulatory body and the institution to be regulated.[12] The latter approach recognises that the objects of regulation – mainly regulated companies – have various strategies at their disposal, to which the regulator must respond or anticipate to ensure effective regulation. Including non-state regulation into the regulatory process can be done to avoid that the industry evades regulation or to mobilise 'countervailing power'.

The combination of state and non-state regulation can be considered as an indirect way to regulate the industry. As mentioned above different approaches of such combinations can be found. For the sake of examination and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of co-regulation, it has to be defined which kinds of approaches can be seen as co-regulatory and which not. In the recently completed study on co-regulation[13] the following definition of co-regulation was developed:

Co-regulation means combining non-state regulation and state regulation in such a way that a non-state regulatory system links up with state regulation.

According to the above-mentioned study, the non-state component of the regulatory systems includes:

- the creation of specific organisations, rules or processes
- to influence decisions by persons or, in the case of organisations, decisions by or within such entities
- as long as this is performed – at least partly – by or within the organisations or parts of society whose members are addressees of the (non-state) regulation

With regard to the link between a non-state regulatory system and state regulation, one can speak of co-regulation if the following criteria are met:

- The system is established to achieve public policy goals targeted at social processes.
- There is a legal connection between the non-state regulatory system and the state regulation (however, the use of non-state regulation need not necessarily be mentioned in parliamentary legislation).
- The state leaves discretionary power to a non-state regulatory system.
- The state uses regulatory resources to influence the outcome of the regulatory process (to guarantee the fulfilment of the regulatory goals).

Co-Regulation and protection of minors in the media

Protection of minors in the media has been identified as a field of regulation where the cooperation of the state with non-state actors might be useful.[14] Regulation in this field has to deal with the two horns of the dilemma. On the one hand, the protection of minors against interference that might impair their development is generally accepted as an important value and protected on an international level as well as in many national constitutions (in Germany under art. 2 (1) in connection with art. 1 (2) and art. 6 GG (Grundgesetz = Basic Law, the German Constitution). On the other hand, protecting minors against improper media content means no less than controlling the access to media content, which is restricted for the state since the freedom of opinion protects this communication process (see on a European level art. 10 (1) European Convention on Human Rights, in Germany as a national example art. 5 (1) GG).

Apart from this legal context, interfering in media content directly means to cope with rapidly changing formats of programs, and when it comes to internet communication, there exists a high number of completely different types of services and service providers. Furthermore, the power of the media actors is, as a rule, relatively high thus they are able to effectively establish counter strategies against regulatory burdens. Furthermore, there are no clear cut and eternal criteria to measure whether content might be improper for children of a given age. Therefore, protection of minors is a regulatory process in which the yardstick is continually redefined within the cultural context.

Some of the above outlined problems with regulating media content to protect children can be more effectively dealt with if the state is not the sole regulator but co-regulatory arrangements exist as described above. However, fundamental problems are connected with such a step. State procedures are legitimized democratically and follow the rule of law. For new co-regulatory settings, this cannot be assumed as a given fact. Debates revolving around the term "governance" show the relevance of those issues.[15] Entrusting the industry with regulating itself has, not withstanding several advantages, always the risk of setting the

fox to run the henhouse. When it comes to the protection of minors, the involvement of non-industry-actors like media watchdogs or associations for the protection of minors might not only be advisable to establish accountability and legitimacy but also to introduce the perspective of others than the industry into the process of defining what is harmful or disintegrating for minors.

However, several countries have already opted for co-regulatory settings to protect minors in the media.[16]

Co-regulation approaches for the protection of minors within the European Union

When it comes to the protection of minors co-regulatory approaches can be found in different European countries. The fact that the term "co-regulation" includes quite different concepts can be illustrated by looking at the approaches in the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the classification of television programmes, movies, videos and DVDs can be seen as a co-regulatory system. While on the state side the Commissariaat voor de Media (CvdM, Dutch Media Authority) is responsible for regulating the media, non-state regulation is performed by the Nederlands Instituut voor de Classificatie van Audiovisual Media (NICAM, the Dutch Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media), founded 1999 after the government had announced it would be willing to shoulder the costs of such an undertaking if all relevant media organisations were to participate.

The classification system, "called Kijkwijzer" (in the double meaning of "Watch wiser" or "Viewing guide") was developed by independent experts and launched in 2001 by NICAM. It introduces a uniform classification system for film, TV, video and DVD.[17]

In this system, classification is done by the broadcasters, and film and video companies themselves. Specially trained employees use a coding form to describe the content. They do so by answering several questions regarding the appearance of violence, frightening elements, sexual acts, discrimination, drug abuse and bad/ coarse language (possible answers are "yes" or "no" and "never", "once or a few times" or "often" respectively).

A Kijkwijzer computer programme then works out the classification of the given production.

By using special pictograms, broadcasters, film and video companies inform the viewers about the classification. In addition to an age recommendation (all

ages, 6 years, 12 years and 16 years), pictograms are used to display the reason for the recommendation: violence, fear, sex, discrimination, drug and/ or alcohol abuse and coarse language.

The pictograms can be found in television listing magazines, cinemas, film guides, film websites, advertisements, posters and on the packaging of DVDs and videos. The pictograms are also shown at the beginning of a television programme.

Television programmes classified with the classification "12 years" must not be broadcast before 8 pm. According to a second watershed, programmes with the classification "16 years" should not be broadcast before 10 pm.

As long as a provider is a member of NICAM, NICAM is responsible for supervisory compliance including the handling of complaints. It can impose the following sanctions: warnings; fines (the maximum has recently been raised to € 135.000), or revoking the NICAM-membership (only in the case of very severe or repeated violations).

As far as television is concerned, the Mediawet (Dutch Media Act[18]) contains specific requirements for the non-state regulatory system including NICAM: The Media Act states that programmes that may impair the physical, mental or moral development of persons under the age of sixteen, can be broadcast only if the operators are members of an organisation accredited by the government on certain criteria laid down in the Media Act, and are subject to the rules and supervision of that accredited organisation.

According to the Media Act, an organisation will qualify for accreditation only if:

(a) Independent supervision by the organisation of compliance with the regulations is guaranteed,

(b) provision has been made for adequate involvement of stakeholders, including in any event consumer representatives, establishments that have obtained broadcasting time, experts in the field of audiovisual media and producers of audiovisual media, and

(c) the financial position of the organisation ensures proper implementation of the activities.

Following the provisions of the Media Act, NICAM was accredited by a decision of the government of 22 February 2001. NICAM is funded by both industry and state. If NICAM failed to meet the legal conditions stated in the Dutch Media Act, the government could decide to withdraw the accreditation.

Broadcasters who do not opt for membership of NICAM fall directly under the supervision of the CvdM. In addition, CvdM has to supervise the absolute prohibition on broadcasting content that can cause serious damage to minors.

Recently the CvdM has been entrusted with the task of performing so-called "meta supervision" of NICAM. Each year NICAM will have to report to the CvdM on how it will safeguard the quality of the classification. In addition, NICAM will have to demonstrate to the CvdM to what extent the classifications are reliable, valid, stable, consistent and precise.

Great Britain

The Communications White Paper of December 2000 already recommended 'co-regulation' as a promising concept. Co-regulation was understood as a form of deregulation. Under the Communications Act of 2003,[19] the state regulator Office of Communications (Ofcom) is required to review its own activities to ensure that it does not impose unnecessary regulatory burdens on telecommunications operators and to consider whether self-regulation or co-regulation is appropriate.[20] Relative to premium rate services (mainly services that provide content transmitted by means of an electronic communications network, e.g. content that can be received via telephone), the Communications Act of 2003 envisions that there is an approved code of conduct and that there is an "enforcement authority", this being a body that under the code has the responsibility for enforcement.[21] Ofcom has approved the code of the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of the Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). Compliance with the ICSTIS code is a specific condition imposed by Ofcom on premium rate operators.

ICSTIS, founded in 1986, is a non-commercial organisation financed by the industry. The members of its committee have to be independent of providers of premium services. A secretary assists the committee. ICSTIS deals with complaints by the public, supervises the premium rate services, recommends measures to ensure compliance with the codes and publishes information on its work.

The non-state organisation issues a code of practice for providers of premium rate services, the tenth edition of which came into force on 1 January 2004, after the Communications Act had made it necessary to review the code.[22] It was amended in July of 2005 to implement recommendations of the Ofcom review and to include specifically tailored provisions for new forms of premium rate services such as directory enquiry services, subscription services and SMS chat services.[23] Each provider of premium rate services is bound to comply with the provisions in the code. The service provider has to forward its address and the range of numbers to be used to ICSTIS before launching the service. Some service providers are not allowed to start their service (e.g. those offering "live conversation") until written permission has been granted by the ICSTIS Committee.

The codes contain rules, which guarantee the 'legality', 'decency' and 'honesty' of the content. Thus, the objectives of the code are as follows: the protection of minors, the protection of human dignity, and protection of consumers as far as pricing information, etc. are concerned. The code also contains special rules for so-called live services, services for children, gambling services and online services.

Anyone can submit complaints to ICSTIS, which then initiates measures to enforce the requirements of the codes. The secretary also supervises the services and is authorized to submit complaints to the committee.

ICSTIS has three types of procedures at its disposal for dealing with complaints: an informal procedure for minor breaches of a code, a standard procedure and an emergency procedure for major breaches and in case of urgent calls for action. When using the informal procedure, ICSTIS informs the provider that there

has been a breach of code. If the provider accepts that the complaint is valid, it can take action to end the infringement. If it does not, ICSTIS moves on to the standard procedure. The provider is thereby requested to issue within a given period of time (normally five working days) the required information to ICSTIS. Based on this information, the secretary drafts a report and forwards it to a subcommittee of ICSTIS, the so-called complaints panel, which makes the final decision on whether there has indeed been a breach of the code. If immediate action is necessary, the secretary starts an investigation in respect of the complaint filed. It informs three members of the committee of the findings. If all three members agree that a major breach of code occurred, which must be dealt with immediately, the provider is ordered to discontinue the service. At the same time, a request is issued to the network provider to withhold all payments to the service provider. If ICSTIS does not succeed in informing the service provider, the network provider is requested to block access to the service in question.

Sanctions available to ICSTIS include formal reprimands, fines, an order to pay compensation, blocking of services and prohibiting companies or individuals from offering premium rate services.

As said above, the ICSTIS code was approved by Ofcom. The Communications Act contains criteria a code must meet to obtain Ofcom approval. One of these criteria is that there must be a person who, under the code, has the function of administering and enforcing it and who is sufficiently independent of the premium rate service providers. The provisions of the code must be objectively justifiable, must not discriminate unduly against particular persons, must be proportionate to what the provisions are intended to achieve and must be transparent in relation to what the provisions are intended to achieve.

If Ofcom later comes to the conclusion that the code is inappropriate to regulate premium rate services, it can withdraw approval.

The Communications Act gives Ofcom the power to set conditions for regulating the content and provisions of premium rate services. Such conditions are binding on premium rate service providers and may relate only to compliance with the premium rate services code approved by Ofcom or, in the absence of a code, an order made by Ofcom. The Office has, as required by the Communications Act, drawn up guidelines on penalties. The guidelines state that Ofcom should bear in mind a number of factors when imposing any penalties, including the fact that the company in question has already been subject to sanctions in connexion with the same conduct by another regulatory body.

With regard to commercial content accessed via mobile phones, ICSTIS has established a subsidiary, the Independent Mobile Classification Body (IMCB). This development was at the request of the six mobile telephony operators in the UK, which together established a code of conduct in January 2004.

The IMCB has responsibility for still pictures; video and audiovisual material; and mobile games, including Java-based games. The main function of the IMCB is to set a classification framework according to which content providers themselves may classify their content. IMCB does also have the function for the inves-

tigation of complaints about inappropriate classification. However, complaints in the first instance should be made to the mobile operator. Although a subsidiary of ICSTIS, IMCB is funded and run separately.

Germany

Protection of minors in the movie and video games sector

When it comes to the protection of minors in the film sector in Germany, non-state bodies have traditionally played an important role: they have been, and still are, responsible for age-classification. The federal Jugendschutzgesetz (JuSchG, Federal Act for the Protection of Minors) distinguishes between different levels of content: content that is harmful to children (jugendgefährdend) is classified by the federal Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien[24] (BPjM, Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons). Material that is classified as harmful to minors must not be shown in places where children have access and must not be provided to children. Content that is not harmful to children, but is capable of impairing children's development (entwicklungsbeeinträchtigend) is rated by the Oberste Landesjugendbehörden (State Authorities Responsible for the Protection of Minors). However, this age classification (suitable for all children and adolescents, 6 years and older, 12 years, 16 years, or not suitable for children and adolescents) has been handed over to non-state bodies: Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Filmwirtschaft[25] (FSK, Film Classification Board) is responsible for the age-classification of films. Age classification of video games falls within the responsibility of the Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle[26] (USK, Association for the Self-Monitoring of Entertainment Software).

Persons and organisations offering the respective content or granting access to it have to comply with classifications made by FSK and USK.

While prior to 2003, a non-state body classified films on the basis of an agreement between the states, the new JuSchG explicitly stipulates that age classification may be performed by non-state bodies ("Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle"). According to the JuSchG, the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors may agree on a joint procedure including decisions of "Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle" funded or supported by industry associations. This agreement may determine that decisions of "Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle" are seen as decisions of the state authorities as long as a state authority does not make a different decision.

Although FSK and USK are non-state bodies, there is some state involvement: The majority of the members of the examination boards of FSK is nominated by state authorities. A permanent representative of the state authorities is the chairperson of the examination boards. Representatives of the state and the federal government are also members of the advisory board of USK. In addition, a permanent representative of the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors takes part in the examination of video games. This person is responsible

for the official labelling of the video games subsequent to the decision of the USK.

According to the rules of FSK and USK, the state authorities that are responsible for the protection of minors may request a second examination of a film or a video game by FSK or USK. In this case, a so-called "Appellationsausschuss" consisting of seven members, decides on the rating of a film. The FSK committee consists of four representatives of the state authorities in addition to the chairman. At USK, all members of the committee are representatives of the state authorities. The rules of FSK and USK contain further provisions regarding a second examination: At FSK, the applicant or – in some cases – the overruled minority within the FSK may appeal a decision. In this case, a so-called "Hauptausschuss" decides on the case. When it comes to USK, the applicant and – in some cases – the permanent representative of the state authorities may appeal a decision. A special "Prüfgremium" decides on the appeal. The applicant and the permanent representative of the state authorities may appeal again (the so-called "Beiratsverfahren").

Compliance with FSK and USK ratings is enforced by the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors. Besides this, there is a non-state procedure: If a film is shown that is not in compliance with FSK ratings, a so-called supervision procedure (Überwachungsverfahren) is conducted by the association FSK is part of. This procedure may lead to a contractual penalty.

Protection of minors in the broadcasting and Internet sector

The enactment of the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag (JMStV, Interstate Treaty on the Pro-tection of Minors in the Media) in 2003 extended the responsibility of non-state bodies ("Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle") and their scope for decision-making. In order to secure compliance with the terms of the interstate treaty, it established a certification requirement for non-state bodies. In the television sector, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Fernsehen[27] (FSF, Organisation for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of Television) was certified under the new law. Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter[28] (FSM, Association for the Voluntary Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers) gained certification for the internet sector. On the state side, responsibility for the supervision of broadcasters and providers lies with the Landesmedienanstalten (State Media Authorities) and the Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz[29] (KJM, Commission for the Protection of Minors in Electronic Media). The KJM makes all decisions regarding the protection of minors to ensure the consistent application of the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag while the Landesmedienanstalten are responsible for executing these decisions.

For the broadcasting sector, it is the task of the certified " Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" to classify content and to ensure the enforcement of rules. Furthermore, it may make exemptions to the watershed regulation for the broadcasting of films, which had been given a rating by the non-state body for

film (FSK, see above) under the Jugendschutzgesetz (Federal Act for the Protection of Minors) in the past.

With regard to so-called "Telemedien" (telemedia, mainly internet services), content does not have to be submitted to an "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" beforehand. However, if there is a breach of the law, certified "Einrichtungen der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" have to deal with the matter. FSM has set up a code (Verhaltenskodex Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter e.V.), which refers to the rules of the state law, the JMStV. There is also a special code for search engines (Verhaltenssubkodex für Suchmaschinenanbieter).

Under the JMStV, instruments are in place to regulate non-state regulation, of which the most important is that "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" need certification. Certification is only granted if:

- independence and competence of the members of the control committees are ensured;
- adequate funding is guaranteed by a multitude of providers;
- guidelines for the decisions of the committees have been worked out in such a way that in practice effective protection of minors is ensured;
- procedural rules have been worked out on the extent of examination, on the obligation on the participating providers to submit relevant content to the "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle", on sanctions and on the revision of decisions (organisations responsible for the protection of minors must be given the chance to request a revision);
- it is ensured that providers are heard before a decision is made, the reasons for the decision are given in writing and are disclosed to interested persons and
- a body responsible for dealing with complaints exists.

Certification may be granted for four years, but may be renewed.

Certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" are supervised by the KJM. If the decisions of a non-state organisation are not in line with the JMStV, the KJM has the authority to revoke its certifications. The JMStV does not stipulate any other sanctions that can be imposed on the non-state organisations.

Where certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" exist, the powers of state regulatory bodies to impose sanctions on broadcasters are limited.

The state media authorities and the KJM may not impose sanctions on broadcasters as long as the following requirements are met: The respective broadcasting content had been submitted to a certified "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" before this content was broadcast, the provider had followed the decision of this non-state body and the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" had not acted beyond the scope of its discretionary power. When

the rules of the JMStV have been broken by the broadcast of content that could not be submitted to a "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" beforehand (e.g. live broadcasts) or by an internet service (Telemedien), certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" have to deal with the matter. As long as a provider follows the decision of the non-state body and this body does not act beyond the scope of its discretionary power, the state media authorities and the KJM cannot impose sanctions on the provider. However, in the case of broadcasting this non-state regulatory "shield" only gives "protection" if the broadcaster is affiliated with the licensed "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" (such affiliation is not necessary, if the respective content is submitted to the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" before the content is broadcast). Internet providers need not be affiliated to the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" to be protected by the non-state shield. For them it is sufficient to follow the decisions of a licensed "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" – irrespective of whether they are affiliated to this body or not.

When certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" "deal with the matter" this includes imposing sanctions. "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" will be certified only if they have issued procedural rules, including rules on possible sanctions.

Besides monitoring by the state media authorities, complaints help to find illegal content. "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" can be certified only if it is possible to file complaints with them.

Other co-regulatory approaches within the European Union

Co-regulatory approaches for the protection of minors can also be found in Austria, Italy and Slovenia.[30] In Austria, the non-state Jugendmedienkommission (JMK, Commission for the Protection of Minors against Improper Media Contents), which was founded to advise the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture, makes recommendations on age classification of movies, DVDs and CD-ROMs. The state authorities of the Bundesländer (states) that are responsible for age classification regularly follow JMK's recommendations. Some members of JMK are representatives of the federal government and of the states. All members of JMK are appointed by the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture. In addition, JMK is partly funded by the Federation (and partly by the film distributors).

In Italy, the Codice di Autoregolamentazione TV e Minori (Code for TV and Children) has been formally incorporated into a state law, resulting in its obligations being legally binding even for companies that are not signatories. Protection of minors in the internet is addressed by the non-state Code "Internet e Minori". A non-state Comitato di Garanzia per l'attuazione del Codice di autoregolamentazione Internet e Minori (Guarantee Committee) is responsible for supervising and enforcement of the Code. This Committee was established by an in-

ter-ministerial decree issued by the Minister for Communication and the Minister for Innovation and Technology. For mobile services, the principal Italian mobile phone operators have signed, under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications, the Codice di condotta per l'offerta dei servizi a sovrapprezzo e la tutela dei minori (Code of Conduct for the Provision of Premium Services and the Protection of Children). The Code mandates the establishment of a non-state Organo di Garanzia (Guarantee Committee), whose task is the coordination of the activities aimed at updating and revising the present provisions of the Code of Conduct. Some members of the Committee are representatives of the Ministry of Communications.

In Slovenia, Sveta za Radiodifuzijo (SRDF, Broadcasting Council) and the broadcasters of TV programmes signed an agreement regarding the television programmes not suitable for minors. The SRDF is an independent expert body in the field of broadcasting regulation and it assists state regulator Agencije za pošto in elektronske komunikacije Republike Slovenije (APEK, Agency for Post and Electronic Communication). The agreement has introduced two types of visual symbols for TV programmes that are broadcast between 5 am and midnight. One symbol shows that a programme is not suitable for children and minors under fifteen; the other symbol is used if a programme is suitable for children and minors only if they watch television in the company of parents or other adults.

Co-regulation approaches beyond Europe: the Australian example

Co-regulation exists also beyond Europe. The Australian approach may even be seen as a role model for co-regulation:[31]

Co-operative regulatory systems in the broadcasting sector were first introduced in 1992 through the Broadcasting Services Act of 1992.[32] The new Act created a new state regulatory authority called the Australian Broadcasting Authority. On 1 July 2005, the Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Australian Communications Authority merged to become the Australian Communications and Media Authority[33] (ACMA).

Key aspects of content regulation are the development of industry codes of practice approved by the state regulatory authority and the administration of a system of complaints submitted by members of the public.

According to the law, groups representing providers of broadcasting services develop, in consultation with the state regulatory authority, codes of practice that are applicable to the broadcasting operations of a certain section of the industry.

Each sector of the broadcasting industry has developed a representative group for developing codes: Free TV Australia[34] (FTA), Commercial Radio Australia[35]

(CRA), Australian subscription television and radio association[36] (ASTRA), Community Broadcasting Association of Australia[37] (CBAA).

The codes developed by the broadcasting industry deal with youth protection through various measures; the main one being age-classification systems and the related broadcast time restrictions for certain classified material. Partly, the codes deal with classification of programmes according to the film classification system (administered by a separate state body, the Office of Film and Literature Classification Board).

Once an industry group has developed a code of practice, the ACMA must include that code in its Register of Codes (and it becomes effective) if the ACMA is satisfied that:

- the code of practice provides appropriate community safeguards for the matters covered by the code; and
- the code is endorsed by a majority of the providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry; and
- members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code.

Once a code is included in the Register of Codes it applies to all licensees in that section of the broadcasting industry regardless of whether they have had a part in its development or not, thus making participation in the code system mandatory.

The ACMA reserves the power to create industry standards at any time if the industry does not follow the request for a code. This power may be exercised even if an industry code fails to a certain degree.

Members of the public have the right to complain about a breach of registered codes. The Act requires that the complaint must be made in the first instance to the relevant broadcaster. Only if the complainant has not received a response within 60 days after making the complaint, or receives a response that the person considers inadequate, the person may submit a complaint to the ACMA.

If the ACMA finds that a code of practice has been breached, it has no direct remedy available although the ACMA may stipulate that compliance with a code is a condition of a broadcaster's licence where it considers this appropriate. If that licence condition is subsequently breached, then the ACMA is able to issue a notice to remedy that breach within a period of up to a month. If compliance with that notice is not forthcoming, an offence under the Act has been committed for which a court of law may impose a significant fine.

Certain matters are still left regulated by stricter regulation, by way of standards made by the state regulatory authority itself and directly enforceable as licence conditions. The quota of Australian content and content suitable for children on television is regulated by standards.

Conclusion

The examples show that the existing co-regulatory approaches differ when it comes to the task of involved non-state regulation as well as the link between state regulation and non-state regulation. For example, in Germany there is a pre-rating of movies and broadcasting programmes done by non-state bodies. Rating is done by the publishers themselves in the Netherlands. Great Britain's regulation of premium services as well as broadcasting regulation in Australia rely on non-state codes including provisions for the protection of minors.

With regard to the regulatory resources the state uses to influence the outcome of the regulatory process to guarantee the fulfilment of the regulatory goals, different approaches can be observed as well: In Germany's broadcasting and internet regulation the non-state bodies that are involved in the co-regulatory process are certified by a state body if they meet certain requirements. The same applies to the NICAM-approach in the Netherlands. In Great Britain's regulation of premium rate services and Australia's broadcasting and internet regulation, the non-state code has to be registered. Other countries do not use the instrument of registration to regulate non-state regulation: Instead, state representatives influence the outcome of the non-state regulatory process by state representatives being members of the non-state bodies.

Are all these different approaches capable of preventing children from having access to content that might impair their development? Advantages of integrating non-state regulation into the regulatory concept can be seen in the division of work between state and industry (especially as applicable to huge volumes of content of different content providers as on the internet), greater acceptance of the regulatory regime within the industry and the fact that in some cases, non-state regulation might react more quickly to technological and social changes than state regulation is able to respond. On the other hand, there is the risk of non-state regulation being captured or being used as a smoke screen by the regulated industry that wants to avoid regulation. According to existing studies[38], the success of such new regulatory approaches depends on a variety of different factors like the existence of effective and graduated sanctions, incentives for the industry to participate, the culture of the respective country and the respective sector, the severity of possible failures, the existence of a "safety net" in case of failures and the convergence of interests of the different participants of the industry with regard to the regulatory objectives.

The recently completed study on co-regulation shows that there is no reason to believe that co-regulatory approaches are not capable of fulfilling regulatory tasks like the protection of minors.[39] However, the effectiveness of the approach has to be examined in each case. It is not possible to refer to the results of this study in detail in this article. However, one insight is that evaluation requirements are necessary to ensure the permanent adjustment of the existing system.

Another result is that traditional process objectives like openness, transparency and participation (e.g. of interests groups) are not always guaranteed when non-state regulation has been integrated into state regulation.

Overall, co-regulation has the potential to lead to a high level of protection of minors against content that might impair their development. However, it depends on the concrete shaping of the regulatory system whether minors are effectively protected. The approaches in place and their evaluation are capable of helping to learn more about the different ways to achieve the regulatory objectives.

Notes

1. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/modernisation/proposal_2005/index_en.htm.
2. The draft final report Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector* is available at www.hans-bredow-institut.de/forschung/recht/co-reg/Co-Reg-Draft_Final_Report.pdf.
3. For a summary of these findings see Schulz/ Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, pp 11+.
4. See Renate Mayntz, „Regulative Politik in der Krise?“, *Sozialer Wandel in Westeuropa. Verhandlungen des 19. Deutschen Soziologentages*, Joachim Matthes, (ed.), Berlin: 1979, pp. 55+.; Baldwin/ Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, Oxford: 1999, pp. 35+.
5. Jörg Ukrow, *Die Selbstkontrolle im Medienbereich in Europa*, München, Berlin: 2000, pp. 10+.
6. Karl-Heinz Ladeur, “Coping with Uncertainty: Ecological Risks and the Proceduralization of Environmental law“, Environmental Law and Ecological Responsibility, Gunther Teubner, Lindsay Farmer and Declan Murphy, eds., West Sussex: 1994, pp 301+.
7. See Mayntz and Scharpf, (eds.), *Gesellschaftliche Selbstregelung und politische Steuerung*, Frankfurt am Main et al.: 1995.
8. Renate Mayntz, „Politische Steuerung: Anmerkungen zu einem theoretischen Paradigma“, *Jahrbuch zur Staats- und Verwaltungswissenschaft*, Vol. 1., Thomas Ellwein, Joachim Jens Hesse, Renate Mayntz and Fritz W. Scharpf, (eds.), Baden-Baden: 1987, p. 98.
9. Gunnar-Folke Schuppert, „Das Konzept der regulierten Selbstregulierung als Bestandteil einer als Regelungswissenschaft verstandenen Rechtswissenschaft“, *Die Verwaltung, special issue* „Regulierte Selbstregulierung“ 2001, Beiheft 4: pp. 201+.
10. Gunther Teubner,“The King’s Many Bodies: The Self-Deconstruction of Law’s Hierarchy“, *Law and Society Review* 31, 1997: pp. 763+.
11. See, for example, Gunther Teubner, *Law as an Autopoietic System*, Oxford: 1993; Klaus Eder, „Prozedurale Rationalität“, *Zeitschrift für Rechtssoziologie* (ZfRSoz), Vol. 7 (1986, pp. 1+; Helmut Willke, *Supervision des Staates*, Frankfurt am Main: 1997.
12. See, for example, Ian Ayres and John Braithwaite, *Responsive Regulation*, Oxford: 1992, p. 17.
13. Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector.*
14. See the findings of Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector.*
15. See Gunnar Folke Schuppert: „Governance-Leistungen der Zivilgesellschaft“, *Zivilgesellschaft – national und transnationale*, Dieter Gosewinkel, Dieter Rucht, Wolfgang van den Daele, Jürgen Kocka (eds.), Berlin: 2004, pp. 245+, 253 focusing on the theory of legal pluralism; Hans-Heinrich Trute, Doris Kühlers, „Governance in der Verwaltungsrechtswissenschaft“, *Die Verwaltung* 2004, pp. 451+; James N. Rosenau: “Governance, Order and Change in World Politics”, *Governance without government: order and change in world politics,* James N Rosenau, Ernst-Otto Czempiel (eds.), Cambridge: 2001, pp. 1+.
16. For examples, see below, but also the various country reports in our study Hans-Bredow-Institut/ EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector.*

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17. See http://www.kijkwijzer.nl.
18. See http://www.cvdm.nl/documents/mediaact.pdf.
19. See http://www.communicationsact.gov.uk/.
20. See Communications Act of 2003, Part 1, Section 6.
21. See Communications Act of 2003, Part 1, Section 121.
22. See ICSTIS Report No. 97 of May 2003 available at www.icstis.org.uk/pdfs_news/IMR97.pdf.
23. The code of practise is available at www.icstis.org.uk.
24. See http://www.bundespruefstelle.de.
25. See http://www.fsk-online.de.
26. See http://www.usk.de.
27. See http://www.fsf.de.
28. See http://www.fsm.de.
29. See http://www.kjm-online.de.
30. For a detailed description, see Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*.
31. See Schulz/Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, pp. 22+.
32. The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 is available at http://www.comlaw.gov.au and http://www.austlii.edu.au.
33. See http://www.acma.gov.au.
34. See http://www.freetvaust.com.au.
35. See http://www.commercialradio.com.au.
36. See http://www.astra.org.au.
37. See http://www.cbaa.org.au.
38. See Ian Ayres and John Braithwaite, Responsive Regulation, Oxford: 1992, p. 81; Schulz/Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, p. 61+.
39. See Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*.

Violence and Pornography in the Media

Public Views on the Influence Media Violence and Pornography Exert on Young People

Ulla Carlsson

Modern information technology has transformed the media landscape dramatically over the past decade, offering a steadily swelling flow of material through many new channels. Potentially, we all have access to an enormous array of knowledge and diversions of many kinds. On television, in books, magazines, on the Internet, and in mobile telephones. At the same time, many parents, teachers and policy-makers are concerned about the negative influence they believe media exert on children and adolescents. Such concerns have been voiced as long as mass media have existed, but the concern has grown in pace with developments in media technology.

There are indications that the incidence of violence in society may be related to the abundance of depictions of violence shown on television, video, the Internet and in computer games. Greater accessibility of pornography in today's media is another factor that causes concern about young people's welfare and possible negative impacts on young people's development. For example, what ideas about sexuality does pornography instill? Various measures to limit the distribution of content that is believed to be harmful to children and youth have been discussed. These include both voluntary measures and binding legislation. Dialogues between authorities, media companies and members of the general public have been initiated with a view to establishing consensus on basic principles. These dialogues are taking place at national, regional and international levels.

Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides an international framework for policy with regard to such content. Governments that have ratified the Convention are bound "to ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health". Toward this end, the governments should "encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being". In recent

years we have seen a shift in emphasis from ideas about legislative regulation and prohibition toward an emphasis on parents' and other adults' responsibility for the well-being of children and young people. 'Protection' is now understood to be more than a question of keeping children away from certain television programs, but extends to strengthening young viewers in their roles as consumers and users of media.

In the SOM 2004 survey[1] a number of questions concerned questions about public perceptions of the influence media violence and pornography exert on young people, and views regarding various measures that have been proposed to protect children and young people from becoming exposed to harmful content on television and the Internet and in films and computer games are asked.

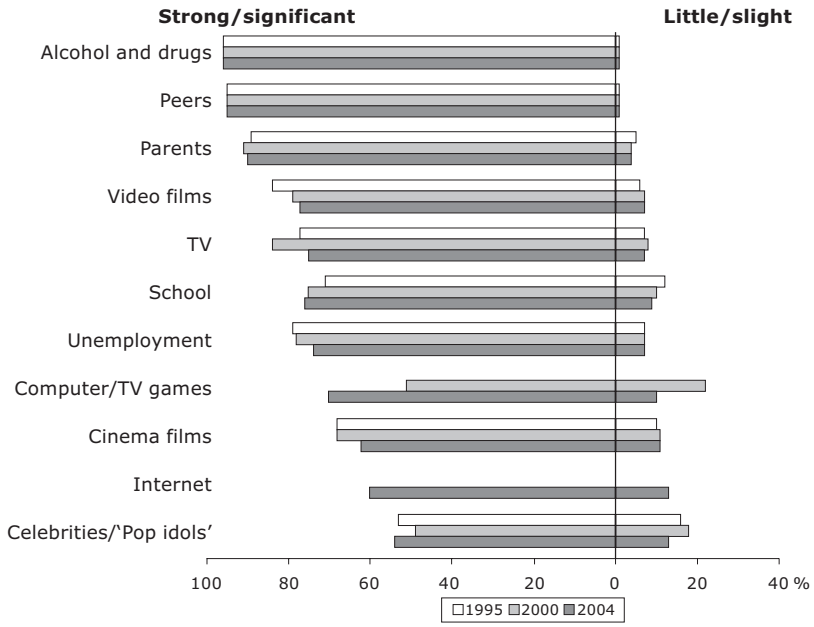
Mass media and the increase in violence in society

The SOM surveys in 1995, 2000 and 2004 have asked essentially the same questions concerning what people believe has contributed to the rise in violence, and particularly the importance they assign to mass media in this regard (Weibull 1996, Carlsson 2001). Other factors asked about, besides media-related factors – video films, television, cinema films, celebrities/ 'pop idols', computer and television games (from 2000 on) and the Internet (new in 2004) – are alcohol and drugs, unemployment, the schools, parents, and peer pressure and influence. The aim is to measure public perceptions of the importance of the respective factors, how the perceptions are interrelated, and changes in them over time.

The three factors that are assigned the greatest importance in relation to violence are alcohol/drugs, parents, and peers. A large majority of respondents (97, 95 and 89 per cent, respectively) believe these factors have a strong or significant influence. The same results were found in 1995 and 2000, as well. These factors are followed by a cluster of factors that include media like video films (77%), television (75%), computer and TV games (70%), but also unemployment (76%) and the schools (74%). Fewer blame factors like cinema films (62%), the Internet (60%) and celebrities/ 'pop idols' (54%). All the factors are mentioned by rather many respondents, and few rate them as having only a slight effect.

On the whole, the the pattern of views appears to be rather similar to that registered in 1995 and 2000. A calculation of balance scores for the different factors shows that the rank-order is roughly the same. A closer examination reveals some changes, however. The top three factors remain stable throughout, whereas unemployment is mentioned less frequently as a factor behind violence in the most recent measure, a change that most likely has to do with fluctuations of the business cycle. The schools are mentioned to roughly the same extent as in 2000. The main differences relate to the importance accorded the media. One factor that is mentioned considerably more in 2004 than in 2000 is computer and TV games. Half the respondents perceived these games to have a strong or signifi-

Figure 1. Factors believed to have a strong/significant influence and little/slight influence on the incidence of violence in society 1995, 2000 och 2004 (per cent).



Note: Internet was first included in 2004.

cant influence in 2000; four years later the figure had risen to 70 per cent. The Internet was first included as a factor for violence in SOM 2004. Sixty per cent of the respondents say the web has a strong or significant influence. A certain shift away from video films, cinema films and television toward newer media technologies like computer games and the Internet, and celebrities/ 'pop idols' is apparent. All told, the media are accorded greater importance in relation to violence in society today than they were in 2000 and 1995.

In many respects ideas about what is behind the increase in violence in society are the same in different demographic groups. Essentially irrespective of their sex, age and education, respondents believe that alcohol and drugs have a strong or significant effect. Alcohol tops the list in another, comparable study, as well (von Feilitzen & Carlsson 2000). The next-strongest factor is peer pressure, followed by parental influence. Here, too, perceptions are fairly homogeneous. Although perceptions differ regarding the influence of the schools and unemployment on the incidence of violence, views are more or less consonant across subgroups based on sex, age and education. Young people, however, register lower values across the board.

Perceptions of the media-related factors show more marked variation, however. Age turns out to be a strong differentiating factor when it comes to perceptions of the influence of media-related factors. Young people are consistently more likely to assign these factors a less important role, whereas a majority of their elders say they have a strong or substantial influence. These findings largely coincide with those obtained in 2000 and 1995 and are in no way surprising. The younger generation has grown up with many different media and their content. We must bear in mind the *digital generation gap* that characterizes the media landscape today. The younger generation is comfortable with and has mastered media technology down to the last byte and Herz, whereas a considerable portion of the totality of media output remains unknown to a good share of the adult population. The Unknown in new media tends to be perceived as a danger. Time and again we have experienced 'moral panics' at the expense of dispassionate discussion (Dahlquist 1998, Drotner 1999).

Interesting, however, is the fact that four years ago hardly any younger respondents felt that computer and TV games had anything to do with violence in society, whereas in 2004, a majority of those aged 15-29 years think that games have a substantial influence. Four years ago, computer games were still a novelty and terra incognita for many, whereas today many in this age group have several years' first-hand experience of them. That is, the change is more likely attributable to personal experience rather than to impressions from public discourse. A similar tendency, albeit less pronounced, is noted with relation to celebrities/celebrities/'pop idols', and 45 per cent of the age group consider the Internet a strong or significant factor.

Table 1. Factors believed to contribute to the incidence of violence in society 2004 by sex, education and age (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				All		
Factor	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15-29	30-49	50-64	65-85	1995	2000	2004
Alcohol and drugs	+97	+94	+97	+96	+94	+97	+93	+94	+98	+99	+95	+95	+96
Peers	+95	+92	+95	+93	+94	+95	+90	+93	+95	+97	+94	+94	+94
Parents	+85	+86	+85	+83	+85	+89	+77	+88	+85	+90	+84	+87	+86
Video films	+78	+62	+81	+65	+70	+66	+42	+63	+83	+93	+78	+72	+70
TV	+75	+61	+75	+66	+66	+66	+53	+62	+75	+85	+71	+68	+68
Unemployment	+71	+62	+75	+63	+60	+69	+39	+65	+77	+84	+72	+71	+67
School	+65	+69	+79	+65	+63	+56	+55	+65	+68	+80	+59	+65	+67
Computer/TV games	+70	+48	+70	+55	+60	+54	+35	+53	+71	+80	/	+29	+60
Cinema films	+59	+42	+63	+47	+49	+45	+29	+43	+63	+71	+58	+57	+51
Internet	+59	+36	+58	+44	+45	+44	+25	+45	+57	+64	/	/	+48
Celebrities/'Pop idols'	+46	+36	+54	+39	+35	+36	+17	+35	+54	+61	+38	+31	+41
N responses	869-907	808-836	416-450	571-583	319-328	346-354	361-365	519-532	496-517	299-330	1 680-1 743	1 743 1 774	1 690 1 730

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "strong" or "significant" influence, minus the shares who have answered "little" or "slight" influence. Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "strong") and -100 (all answer "slight").

Young respondents also mention the schools in relation to violence less than other age groups in SOM 2004, whereas the schools are more frequently mentioned than previously in other age groups. Patterns of response for other factors are less distinct.

Looking at the differences in responses among women and men, we find more marked differences in the case of media-related factors than others; this applies to all media, but particularly computer and TV games and the Internet, which considerably more women than men feel play a role. Men are considerably more likely to mention celebrities/ 'pop idols' as a contributing factor in 2004 than was the case in 2000.

Looking at education, we find some clear-cut distinctions – the less one's formal education, the more importance one tends to accord the media as a factor that contributes to violence. Several of the media-related factors are more frequently mentioned in 2004 than in 2000. Once again, the increase relates mainly to computer and TV games, while television and cinema films remain at about the same level as in previous measures. The pattern of responses regarding the schools follows essentially the same pattern; patterns relating to other factors are less distinct.

Upon closer examination of the responses we find evidence of the existence of a *media factor* in public perceptions of the causes of violence in society. Factor analysis of all the factors studied produced three principal clusters of explanatory factors: a *media factor* (video films, television, cinema films, computer games, celebrities/ 'pop idols'), a *social factor* (alcohol and drugs, peer pressure, unemployment), and an *institutional factor* (parents, the schools). The factors in each pattern of response are closely interrelated; that is, respondents who consider video games important also mention cinema films and computer games as causes. The same patterns were found in the 2000 and 1995 surveys (Weibull 1996; Carlsson 2001).

Views on the influence of media violence

Many researchers have studied the issue of violence in the media and its influence on audiences, and several plausible interpretations of findings have been offered (Carlsson & Feilitzen 1998; Feilitzen 2001). No unequivocal answer as to how much media violence may influence children and young people is apparent, however. Many different and complex situations and factors are at play. The media may be one among many factors that contribute to the increase in violence. That media violence exerts some influence on viewers' sensations, feelings, thoughts, preferences and frames of reference is generally accepted, but that is not to say that it necessarily leads to manifest aggression and acts of violence. The influence can, however, be both powerful and lasting (Frau-Meigs 2004). This suggests that the focus of research should be broadened and trained more on the role of mass media in children's socialization and cultural upbringing than on media influences per se (Feilitzen & Carlsson 2004). This impression is reinforced when considering the SOM data.

Are young people influenced by violent content in the media?

SOM 2004 asks both about people's views about the influence of media violence and about the respondent's personal experience of such influence. A majority of the respondents consider the violence in computer and TV games (75%), reality television (67%) and feature films/TV drama (65%) very or somewhat harmful to children and young people. More say "somewhat harmful" than "very harmful" except in the case of computer and TV games, where the reverse applies. In the case of violence in documentaries, news and cartoons, however, the result is different: about 60 per cent say that violence in these kinds of programs is not harmful. Very few respondents have no opinion.

Table 2. Views as to how harmful different kinds of media content are for children and young people 2004 (per cent)

	Very harmfull	Somewhat harmfull	Not very harmfull	Not at all harmfull	No opinion	Total %	N
Computer/TV games	38	36	16	4	5	100	1 749
Reality TV	28	39	23	4	6	100	1 723
Feature films/TV drama	24	41	27	4	4	100	1 740
News	10	27	49	11	4	100	1 724
Cartoons	13	22	42	17	6	100	1 724
Documentaries	9	25	49	12	4	100	1 711

More women than men think that media violence, particularly in computer games and reality television, is harmful to young people. Among 15- to 29-year-olds, 75 per cent of young women think that the violence in computer and TV games is very or somewhat harmful to young people; among men of the same age the figure is 43 per cent. Meanwhile, we know that boys and men predominate among those who play these games (*Nordicoms Mediebarometer 2004*). The older the respondent, the more likely he or she considers depictions of violence harmful to some extent. Significantly more among the eldest respondents answer "very harmful" than younger respondents do.

Only slight distinctions are found between education groups, except in the case of reality television and cartoons. Considerably more highly educated respondents consider violence in these kinds of programs harmful to children and young people than respondents with little formal education. Other studies have found that parents with little formal education tend more than others to consider animated cartoons inappropriate for young viewers, but the most decisive factor for whether or not parents consider cartoon violence harmful is their habit of viewing (or not viewing) the programs with their children. The most frequently mentioned reason why cartoons are considered inappropriate is the violence in them. (Feilitzen 2004)

How do young people react to violence in the media?

SOM 2004 inquired about respondents' first-hand experience of various kinds of influence from violence on television and in films and computer/TV games. The influences asked about were a greater propensity on the part of young people to commit acts of violence, to display aggression, feelings of anxiety and fear, a distorted perception of reality, and weaker feelings of empathy. A strong majority, 64-75 per cent, of the respondents felt there were influences on all these dimensions. Fully three-quarters of the respondents say that depictions of violence in audiovisual media distort reality perceptions, and on this dimension more people responded "strongly" (40%) than "significantly" (35%). The relationship was the reverse with respect to other dimensions. Most respondents express a view; few express neutrality.

Table 3. Views based on personal experience on the extent to which exposure to media violence (TV, film, computer/TV games) influence children and youth 2004 (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				
Influence	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Distorted perception of reality	+65	+51	+67	+51	+57	+59	+30	+50	+74	+78	+58
Anxiety and fear	+60	+33	+59	+38	+44	+50	+10	+39	+68	+71	+47
Propensity to commit acts of violence	+54	+34	+55	+40	+45	+36	+9	+38	+60	+70	+45
Lack of empathy	+50	+37	+55	+33	+42	+46	+6	+33	+62	+72	+43
Manifest aggression	+44	+28	+52	+29	+30	+32	-4	+27	+54	+68	+37
N responses	896-605	829-836	439-452	580-583	326-328	351-355	363-364	530-532	507-513	324-335	1 326-1 744

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "very great extent" eller "great extent", minus the shares who have answered "little extent" or "very little". Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "very great") and -100 (all answer "very little").

Nearly 70 per cent of respondents say that media violence increases young people's propensity to commit acts of violence and to experience anxiety and fear. Somewhat fewer, 64 per cent, feel that it contributes to aggressive behavior. SOM 2000 included a similar question, and although the phrasing differed slightly, the results are similar. The Swedish public are more convinced that media have a negative influence on young people than research to date has been able to demonstrate.

More women than men, and more people with little formal education than highly educated people, feel that the media have a negative influence on young people. The differences are even more marked between age groups. The eldest age group shows the highest frequencies on all dimensions. Nearly 80 per cent of the eldest say they have personal experience of media-inspired aggressive behavior on the part of young people; the corresponding figure among the youngest is just over 40 per cent. It should be noted that on the other dimensions young respondents' views

that media violence has a strong or significant influence rested around 50 per cent; 61 per cent of the youngest say that violence in the media contributes to a distorted perception of reality. In all probability, these views are based on personal experience.

Views on pornography and explicit sex in the media

It has often been observed that a greater number of television channels, some distributed via satellite and cable, and the Internet have meant a greater incidence of scenes and programs that are pornographic or explicitly sexual. Some researchers speak of an ongoing cultural process, whereby pornography is becoming part of everyday life and in some cases even an idealized element in our cultures (Knudsen & Sørensen 2004). Films and images that would once have been considered pornographic are openly accessible today via numerous media and channels. What constituted pornography some twenty years ago is perceived quite differently today, particularly among young people. Some of the pornography that is available on video and the Internet contains elements of violence. The forms such violence takes important components in the social order that would keep women subordinate to men.

Sex scenes and sexist messages are encountered not only in television programs and on the Internet, but also in advertising, music video clips, the tabloid press and magazines. Many researchers have taken an interest in the role media play in an ongoing intimization and sexualization of the public sphere.

> It is increasingly as sexual beings that we are addressed, whether the message has to do with our choice of bank, shampoo, shaving cream or television program. And the formula is nearly always the same: young women in inviting poses flatter an imagined male gaze and impress on the imagined man behind the gaze the importance of being attractive, desirable. An indication that being desirable is a widely valued trait among young women today is a clearly increasing eagerness to display oneself. The 'pin-up' ideal has become a form of validation: I am worth others' gaze. More and more frequently, we are enticed into voyeuristic pleasures. Reality television programs promise that we will follow people to the toilet, see them break down and cry, fight, drink and (above all) have sex (Hirdman 2004).

Researchers and other initiated observers believe that attitudes toward sexuality have changed, as have sex habits. Consumption of pornography is on the rise, due in part to the medialization of sexuality. A review of the research literature on young people and sexuality (Forsberg 2000) found an increase in the consumption of pornography among young men and women alike; 70 per cent of the men and 50 per cent of the women had all partaken of pornography in one form or another in the media. There are also many indications that consumption of pornography is also closely related to different forms of sexual experimentation.

The influence of pornography and sex scenes in the media

When SOM 2004 asked respondents, "To what extent do you think pornography and sex scenes have a negative influence on children and young people," eight of every ten respondents answer either "to a great extent" or "rather much" in connection with pornographic films; over 50 per cent answered "to a great extent". Considerably more women than men hold this view. Only slight differences are to be noted between age and education groups. There is, in other words, a good measure of consensus around the view that porno films have a negative influence.

Seven of ten feel the same about pornography on Internet websites. Here, too, there is a marked difference between women and men. We also find a greater share highly educated respondents than people with little formal education among those who feel that pornography exerts a negative influence. When it comes to the Internet, young people, aged 15-29, express largely the same views as other age groups. In the case of all other program categories, the eldest respondents show the highest scores, and the youngest, the lowest scores on a scale from negative influence "to a great extent" down to "little or not at all".

Table 4. Views on the extent to which pornography/sex scenes in selected media content have a negative influence on children and youth 2004 (per cent)

	Greatly	Rather much	Rather little	Very little	No opinion	Total %	N responses
Porno film	52	28	9	3	8	100	1 754
Websites	40	32	9	3	16	100	1 726
Reality TV	28	36	21	7	8	100	1 718
Music videos	21	33	25	10	11	100	1 714
Feature films/TV drama	19	32	33	9	7	100	1 731
TV commercials	17	24	35	14	10	100	1 713

A majority of the respondents say they believe that pornography and sex scenes in reality TV (54%) and feature films/TV drama (52%) have a negative influence on young people to a great or rather great extent. The patterns of response are quite distinct: the values are higher among women, highly educated and elder respondents. Those who watch 'docusoaps' several times a week express basically the same views as those who seldom or never watch them. We note a rather substantial difference in views between young women who frequently watch the programs and young men who do the same. More than 60 per cent of the women aged 15-29 answer that pornography and sex scenes in 'docusoaps' exert a negative influence on children and young people, whereas the corresponding figure among men of the same ages is 40 per cent. This is notable inasmuch as heavy consumers of a given genre generally register lower-than-average values when it comes to negative influences of the genre in question.

In the case of television commercials, views tend toward the opposite: about half the respondents say that sex in commercials influences young viewers "rather little" or "very little". Women and the eldest age group are, however, considerably more negative than others in their estimation of the influences of pornography and sex in TV commercials on young viewers.

How are young people influenced by pornography and sex in the media?

SOM 2004 also asked respondents about possible consequences of exposure to pornography and sex scenes on television, in films and on the Internet. Does it lead to more sexual violence, changes in sexual behavior among adolescents, distorted conceptions of men's and women's sexuality, more knowledge about sexual relationships, weakened self-confidence among the young, greater tolerance of sexual expressions?

Over 80 per cent of the respondents think that pornography and sex scenes in the above-mentioned media strongly or significantly distort young people's ideas about women's and men's sexuality; the same number feel that they lead to changes in young people's sexual behavior. A larger share of women and older respondents think so, whereas the share of young people, especially young men, is smaller than in other groups.

Somewhat fewer, 72 per cent, believe that this kind of content leads to more sexual violence. Here the differences are more marked, with a larger share among women and older respondents sharing this belief than other groups. Young people doubt there is any relationship, but among young people there are marked differences between the sexes: 67 per cent of young women believe that pornography and sex scenes lead to more sexual violence, compared to 40 per cent among young men.

Some 62 per cent of all respondents believe that sex scenes and pornography on television, in films and on the Internet weaken young people's self-confidence/self-respect. The only distinction noted is that between women (72%) and men (56%). Views on this point are otherwise fairly homogeneous. Interestingly, as many as 60 per cent of the men who watch 'docusoaps' several times a week say that such content can weaken young people's self-confidence/self-respect.

Influences that are more decidedly negative are more widely endorsed than influences like "more knowledge about sexual relationships" (29%) and "greater tolerance of sexual expressions" (27%). More young respondents mention these possible effects than others, particularly the influence on knowledge. Among the most positive respondents are young men who regularly watch reality TV programs. Otherwise, we find no greater differences between men and women on this dimension.

Several studies have shown that young people tend to turn to the media for information about sex, love and relationships. It is a well established fact that they tend not to turn to their parents (Buckingham & Bragg 2003).

Table 5. Views on the extent to which pornography/sex scenes on TV and websites and in films influence children and youth 2004 (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				
Influence	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Distorted conception of men's and women's sexuality	+82	+54	+72	+63	+69	+72	+55	+68	+73	+78	+69
Changes in sexual behavior among adolescents	+77	+56	+67	+62	+65	+76	+59	+65	+66	+80	+67
More sexual violence	+69	+34	+65	+46	+47	+51	+28	+45	+61	+78	+52
Weakens self-confidence/self-respect	+54	+24	+41	+35	+40	+45	+21	+44	+45	+46	+40
Greater tolerance of sexual expression	-34	-27	-12	-29	-40	-49	-28	-44	-37	-2	-31
Youth know more about sexual relationships	-31	-35	-15	-31	-42	-50	-23	-47	-40	-8	-33
N responses	889-911	824-840	430-458	581-585	324-326	353-537	360-363	529-535	505-515	315-338	1 713-1 751

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "very great extent" eller "great extent", minus the shares who have answered "little extent" or "very little". Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "very great") and -100 (all answer "very little").

Still, it is clear that many young people feel that the media in many respects have influences that may be regarded as negative. These views have been formed in a time when the bounds between the private and public spheres are in flux, by a generation that has had access to computers, the web, satellit/cable TV, video and cell phones practically since infancy. Young people are far more familiar with new media like the Internet, with its risks as well as its positive potentialities, than their parents are. Parents know rather little about how their children use these new media. The difference between what parents think their children are doing on the Internet and what they actually do was revealed by the European SAFT project (SAFT 2002, 2003). This generational gap means that young people interpret media content in a context that differs more from their parents' frame of reference than ever before. The gap also adds a measure of urgency to the question of what happens when commercial media and channels present pornography as something positive, whereas a more troubled and moralizing attitude prevails in society as a whole.

What measures to reduce the negative impacts of violence and pornography in the media is the public prepared to accept?

How to limit and prohibit the spread of harmful content – depictions of violence, pornography, offensive advertisements, stereotypical and disrespectful depictions of young people, women and minorities, hate-mongering messages, and so forth – through legislation and self-regulation has been debated for many years. Over the past decade, however, emphasis has shifted from legislation and prohibitions toward a focus on the responsibilities of parents and other adults.

While the media are believed to cause some problems, they are also valued as social and cultural resources. An often raised question is whether children are helpless victims or are actually capable of meeting the challenges contemporary media present. In this context, the importance of media literacy, of knowing how the media are organized, how they work, and how they influence their audiences, is often mentioned. It is a question of strengthening children and youth in their role as consumers of media content so that they can use the media and keep a level head. Overall, it is a matter of enhancing young people's critical faculties as well as enabling them to express themselves in many different ways, by means of sound, image and word. More and more people are coming to understand the value of media education in school curricula. In the European Union, for example, there is widespread agreement that the schools should assume responsibility for ensuring that children's media culture is incorporated into the curriculum. Not only theoretical knowledge, but hands-on experience is envisaged.

Various EU documents define protection of minors as a matter of the *public interest*. Underlying this concept is the presumption that children are more impressionable, less critical and therefore more vulnerable than adults inasmuch as they have little experience and thus poorly developed frames of reference to guide their judgment. Therefore, it lies in the public interest to protect children from thing like harmful media content until they have become more experienced and more mature. Certain kinds of depictions of violence are thought to be harmful.

All the EU instruments in the area are consonant as to the assignment of responsibility for European children's well-being. First and foremost, responsibility for protecting young people from harmful media content rests with the adults – parents and others – in children's surroundings. But these adults need help in the form of both political decisions and initiatives on the part of the media industry, e.g., codes of ethics and rules that require the industry to assume its share of responsibility vis-à-vis children and youth. Proposed measures include the drafting of criteria whereby content may be classified and the establishment of consumer relations offices to field and follow up complaints.

Definitions of content that may be 'harmful' to children, youth and, in some cases adults vary, however, between countries, which means that many proposed measures arouse strong feeling. In short, the policy area is controversial.
Co-relulation and self-regulation have clearly become the remedy of choice in recent years; both Swedish and European documents stress that media should

The legal framework in the European Community (EU) for the protection of minors from harmful media content

- The Directive, *Television Without Frontiers* (adopted in 1989 and amended in 1997), calls upon broadcasters to take measures to ensure that their program output is not detrimental to the physical, mental and moral development of minors. The Directive also points to the responsibility of parents and other adults to guide and control children's exposure to television fare. The Directive is currently undergoing a revision that has been under way for several years. A draft put forward in December 2005 includes the Internet and other digital media.
- A Recommendation on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity (1998) includes all the new electronic media and calls upon broadcasters and operators of on-line services to develop new methods to enhance parents' control over their children's use of the media, e.g., the introduction of a Code of Ethics. In other words, self-regulation. Two evaluations of the implementation of the Recommendation by Member States have been reported, in 2001 and 2003. After the second of these, the Commission in 2004 proposed a supplementary recommendation "on the protection of minors and human dignity and the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and information services industry" (European Commission, AV Policy, press release 04/598).
  The proposed supplement, an attempt to meet the rapid pace of technological development, makes reference to media literacy and media education programs, institutions for collaboration between regulators and self-regulating institutions, and systems of classification of content and other measures designed to counteract and prevent "discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age in all media" (http://europa.eu.int./comm/avpolicy/regul/new_srv/pmhd_en.htm).
- One of the goals of the *Community Action Plan on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet* (2005) is to combat illegal content (monitoring, hotlines, etc.), control undesirable and harmful content (software solutions, e.g. filters), and promote a safer environment (self-regulation), plus measures to raise users/consumers' awareness.

take greater responsibility for protecting children and young people. The idea is that self-regulation – and co-regulation – will make it possible to reduce reliance on laws and public regulation, which quickly become outdated due to the rapid pace of innovation in media technology and are not easily amended.

'Self-regulation' can mean different things but is generally taken to mean protective measures relating to content that is legal, but can possibly be harmful to children and young people. Measures in this category include: information to users/consumers (e.g., at point of sale of technical equipment and on websites); product information (via warning texts, a light our sound signal, descriptive labelling and/or classification of content, systems for checking the age of the user); support to parental control (e.g., by limiting acess to certain websites, filter software); and following up complaints.

For obvious reasons, the degree of self-regulation varies between media. There is a direct correlation between the extent of legislation in a given area and the presence of self-regulatory initiatives, as a comparison of television and the interactive entertainment industry reveals. Media that have existed a long time also are better organized when it comes to policy issues and internal codes of ethics, etc. Consumer pressure can bring about change. It is a well-established fact that, left to their own devices, media companies themselves will not change their ways, unless it returns a profit.

Swedish legislation

TV

Radio and Television Act

The Swedish Radio and Television Act applies to channels that originate in Sweden. Today these are SVT1, SVT2, TV4 and their auxiliary channels, digital and otherwise. The definition of corporate domicile is somewhat equivocal, however, and in time more channels may come under the law. The basis for all national regulation of television is the Community Directive, *Television without Frontiers*.

The Act instructs channels to bear in mind "the dominant position the medium enjoys" when scheduling programs that have violent content. In practice, the channels are restrictive about airing violent fiction earlier than 9 PM, and documentary records of acts of violence before 7 PM.

Since 1999, television programs that contain explicit or prolonged depictions of violence must be preceded by a warning in sound and picture or accompanied by a warning in the picture throughout the program.

The legal restrictions on depictions of violence mentioned below also apply to television programs.

Films and Video

The Film Censorship Act

All films and videograms that are intended for public screening in cinemas or public gatherings must have the prior approval of the Film Censorship Board. This is an exception to the Freedom of Expression Act, part of the Swedish Constitution, which otherwise forbids prior censorship.

The Film Censorship Board sets lower age limits for admission to films according to the content. There are four categories: Suitable for children; From 7 years; From 11 years; and From 15 years. The Board can require certain scenes to be cut, or deny entire films approval for public screening.

The Penal Code and the Freedom of Expression Act

"Technical recording" in the sense of the law means all forms of moving pictures, regardless of medium or carrier.

Illicit depiction of violence

Penal Code, ch. 16 para. 6b: "Persons who depict sexual violence or coercion with the intention of distributing the image or images, unless circumstances justify the depiction or distribution, shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to two years. The same applies to graphic or detailed depictions in motion pictures of gross abuse of human beings or animals that are intended for distribution or distributed to others."

Illicit distribution

Penal Code, ch. 16 para 10c: "Persons who deliberately, or through gross negligence in professional or other commercial activity, distribute a film, videogram or other motion picture that includes images showing detailed, naturalistic depictions of acts of gross violence toward, or threat of violence toward human beings or animals shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to six months."

Perversion of minors

Penal Code, ch. 16 para 12: "Persons who distribute a text, image or technical recording, the content of which can have a brutalizing effect or otherwise seriously impact on minors' moral upbringing, shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to six months."

Translator's note: The above quotations are not official translations, but reflect the sense of the law. The official translation of the Code is currently unavailable due to revision.

The Internet

Falls under the Freedom of Expression Act. The general principle is that anything that is not condoned in other media is not condoned on the Internet.

Self-regulation

Computer and TV games

Sixteen European countries, Sweden among them, have adopted the age classification and labeling system, PEGI (Pan-European Game Information). PEGI is a branch initiative that recommends appropriate age limits for computer and TV games. For further information see www.pegi.info

What kinds of measures does the Swedish public find acceptable?

SOM 2000 included a question designed to find out what the public thought of different kinds of measures that might be taken to protect children and young people from harmful influences of violence on TV, in films and on the Internet. About then, the EU was beginning to draft policy on the issue, and Sweden had taken an active interest in it, as well. For one thing, during the Swedish presidency a conference of experts was convened to discuss the issue. The responses to the question in the SOM survey confirm that the Swedish people, too, are very interested in different ways to protect children from the harmful influence of media violence.

The same question in SOM 2004 included pornography in addition to media violence. New in the 2004 survey, respondents were asked to rate various measures in a scale, ranging from "very effective" to "very ineffective", whereas the scale in 2000 asked whether measures were good or bad. Some of the measures were also defined more precisely. As a consequence, responses to the question in the two surveys are not entirely comparable.

In 2000, the vast majority of respondents preferred measures that tend toward self-regulation and help parents make decisions about programs – measures like recommended age limits, rating and labelling, information to parents, and on-air warnings before and during programs. All these measures are informative rather than restrictive (like, for example, obligatory vetting). A high degree of covariance was noted between the measures, age limits, labelling and on-air warnings. That is, essentially the same people advocated all three. More than three respondents in four also endorsed the adoption of codes of conduct by the media industry.

When the question was changed to deal with effectiveness of the measures, a different rank-order emerged. Besides a change in the rankings, the 2004 frequences are also generally lower, and many more respondents respond neutrally, "neither effective nor ineffective" than was the case in 2000. It seems that it is considerably more difficult to decide whether a measure is effective or ineffective than whether it is good or bad.

Codes of ethics ("codes of conduct" in EU terminology) in the media industry are the measure that most respondents in the 2004 survey, 74 per cent, rate as effective. That is roughly the same share that felt that they were a "good" measure in SOM 2000. Thus, taking into account the differences due to the change in the question, we may conclude that public confidence in this kind of measure has grown. It is also a sign that consumers are more inclined to demand that the media themselves take responsibility for their program policies.

Information campaigns directed to parents also receive a strong vote of confidence; 68 per cent of the respondents consider them a "very effective" or "fairly effective" measure. We find other informative measures like recommended ages, labelling of program content and on-air warnings at the low end of the order.

Approval of more restrictive measures like obligatory vetting and technical filters that can block specified content is fairly widespread. Just under 60 per cent of the respondents consider legislation that would allow vetting "very effective" or

Table 6. Views on the effectiveness of measures proposed to protect children and youth from violent and pornographic content in selected media: TV, films, websites and computer games 2004* (per cent)

Measure	Very effective/Fairly effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Very/Fairly ineffective	Total %	Balance
Media industry codes of ethics	74 (77)	19 (19)	7 (4)	100	+67 (+73)
Information to parents	68 (78)	23 (18)	9 (4)	100	+59 (+74)
Obligatory prior censorship	59 (66)	26 (21)	16 (13)	100	+ 43 (+53)
Technical filters to block certain content	57 (48)	28 (24)	14 (28)	100	+43 (+20)
Obligatory media education in school	51 (64)	37 (29)	12 (7)	100	+39 (57)
Labelling of explicit content	52 (82)	32 (15)	15 (3)	100	+37 (79)
Audio/visual warnings before transmission	52 (78)	30 (17)	18 (5)	100	+34 (73)
Classification/labelling of appropriate minimum age	49 (85)	32 (11)	18 (4)	100	+31 (81)

Note: The responses were given on a 5-point scale: Very effective measure; Fairly effective measure; Neither effective nor ineffective measure; Fairly ineffective; Very ineffective. "Very" and "Fairly" ratings at each end of the scale have been combined in the table. The number of responses to each part of the question varied between 1669 and 1705.

* In SOM 2000 the scale had the following heading: Very good measure; Rather good measure; Neither good nor bad; Rather bad measure; Very bad measure. The scores from 2000 are given in parentheses.

"fairly effective"; technical filters are the only measure that receives more widespread support, 57 per cent, in SOM 2004 (effectiveness) than in 2000 (good).

Half of the respondents consider obligatory media education as an effective measure in a time when a number of researchers and other experts have urged protective measures of this kind. Measures that are discussed more in terms of risk management and public health strategies than as responses to media influences (Potter 2004).

Besides the change in the question, the differences in the public's rankings noted between 2000 and 2004 may also have historical causes. In recent years a number of widely publicized violent crimes have occurred in which minors, even very young children, have been involved, both as victims and as perpetrators. Greater support for more coercive measures might reflect a higher overall level of concern. A shift of public attention from broadcast media toward the Internet might explain the more widespread emphasis on filters.

We note marked differences between men's and women's attitudes toward the different measures. Women are considerably more favorable to obligatory censorship and filtering, but to industry codes of ethics, as well. Women would appear to be more inclined to endorse prohibitive measures. Men appear to be more doubting of the measures suggested and respond "neither effective nor ineffec-

Table 7. Ratings of various proposed measures to protect children and young people from media violence and pornography in selected media: TV, films, computer games and websites 2004 (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				
Influence	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Media industry codes of ethics	+76	+57	+62	+63	+66	+79	+50	+70	+70	+75	+67 (*+73)*
Information to parents	+66	+52	+55	+56	+63	+64	+42	+61	+61	+73	+59 (*+75)*
Obligatory prior censorship	+59	+26	+41	+42	+40	+50	+31	+41	+44	+60	+43 (*+53)*
Technical filters to block certain content	+53	+32	+44	+41	+39	+49	+31	+45	+44	+51	+43 (*+20)*
Obligatory media education in school	+42	+34	+50	+33	+38	+33	+26	+34	+41	+58	+39 (*+57)*
Labelling of explicit content	+43	+31	+48	+35	+33	+29	+27	+33	+37	+54	+37 (*+79)*
Audio/visual warnings before transmission	+41	+26	+46	+35	+26	+25	+30	+34	+30	+45	+34 (*+73)*
Classification/ labelling of appropriate minimum age	+33	+29	+46	+30	+21	+23	+14	+25	+33	+58	+31 (*+81)*
N responses 2004	858-887	810-818	420-435	566-576	319-325	344-350	356-361	520-528	492-502	294-314	1 669-1 705

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered ”very great extent” eller ”great extent”, minus the shares who have answered ”little extent” or ”very little”. Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer ”very great”) and -100 (all answer ”very little”).

* The balance scores for SOM 2000 are given in parentheses. In SOM 2000 the scale had the following heading: Very good measure; Rather good measure; Neither good nor bad; Rather bad measure; Very bad measure.

tive” more frequently than women. Education groups show a similar pattern of response: Highly educated respondents tend to endorse restrictive measures more than those with little formal education. Approval of all the proposed methods is higher among low education groups. Information campaigns that target parents constitute an exception here, too.

Age correlates positively with confidence in the various measures. The largest differences between age groups concern recommended ages, information to parents, and obligatory vetting; the least age-related differences are noted for on-air warnings and technical filters. On the whole, however, the rankings are the same among all age groups.

Relatively many of the youngest respondents, too, endorse technical filters that block transmission of specified content. Legislation to permit obligatory vetting receives the same support as in 2000, which (again because of the change in the question itself) indicates an increase in support among 15- to 29 year-olds.

Summary

For decades mass media have aroused fears as to the influence they may have on children and young people. In recent years the volume of media output has mushroomed, and public anxiety about media influence has reached new heights. Today, not only media violence, but pornography and explicit sex on the Internet and satellite/cable television cause concern. Many see a relationship between what the media show and the rising incidence of crime and antisocial behavior in society at large.

A majority of the population believe that depictions of violence in computer games, reality TV, feature films and TV drama are harmful to minors. As for first-hand experience of how violence on TV and in films and computer games affect young people, a majority say they have observed that young people tend to have "distorted perceptions of reality", a propensity for violent behavior, feelings of anxiety and fear, and aggressive behavior. But when asked what they believe the causes of these problems may be, mass media are not the "prime suspects". Instead, the vast majority of the Swedish public – irrespective of sex, education or age – point to social factors like alcohol and drugs and peer pressure as the principal causes. This pattern remains unchanged since previous surveys in 1995 and 2000.

That the media do exert influence, alongside social and institutional factors, is clear. The media, particularly computer and TV games and the Internet, are also assigned greater influence in 2004 than in 2000, and more young people say that computer and TV games influence violence in society than in 2000.

A majority also believe that pornography and explicit sex scenes have a negative influence. A majority feel that these kinds of media content lead to a "distorted conception of women's and men's sexuality", "changes in young people's sexual behavior", and "more sexual violence". Negative influences are cited much more widely than influences that might be taken as positive, e.g., "more knowledge about sexual relationships" and "greater tolerance of sexual expressions". These latter influences are most commonly cited by young people, particularly young men.

When the Swedish people are asked their opinion of various measures designed to protect children and young people from the negative influence of media violence and pornography and sex on television, in films and computer games, and on the Internet, they express confidence in industry codes of ethics and information campaigns directed toward parents. Legislation to permit vetting of program content and technical filters of specified content are also widely believed to be effective. Young people have traditionally questioned the wisdom of restrictive measures, but in the most recent measure they rate them as effective. A possible explanation may lie in recent trends in media output, with new kinds of programs and more widespread use of the Internet. Today, young people have a different, richer experience of the media; it may also be that traditional kinds of informative measures directed to parents have proven to be relatively futile. It will be very interesting to follow the trend in young people's opinions on this subject in coming few years.

The findings of SOM 2004 show that public concern that some kinds of media content have negative influences on children and young people is at least as widespread with respect to pornography and explicit sex scenes as with respect to media violence. Decidedly more women than men, and more older respondents than young, feel that the media do exert a negative influence. Women are much more inclined to support restrictive measures to shield young people from violence and pornography in the media – measures that are the responsibility of government and the media industry.

In extension of these findings, there is reason to reflect on how the media may affect the rise in violence in contemporary society. How violence and sex are depicted, and how victims and perpetrators are depicted. And not least, how responsibility for the acts is assigned. How do the media – and pornography in particular – define what is masculine, what is feminine? That is, to what extent do the media contribute to sustaining a social order in which women are subordinate to men? The media mirror reality, yes, but they also contribute to constructing hegemonic definitions that all too frequently are depicted as self-evident – as natural, all-pervasive and invisible as the air we breathe.

Note

1. The SOM Institute is managed jointly by three departments at Göteborg University: the School of Public Administration, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMG) and the Department of Political Science. Annual surveys of Sweden and Western Sweden form the core of the Institute's work. Both are mail surveys and involve 6000 respondents between the ages of 15 and 85. The questionnaires cover a broad range of issues relating to society, the media and public opinion. Reponsible for the questions asked about media violence and pornography is Nordicom in cooperation with the Swedish Media Council.

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New Environments of Media Exposure

Internet and Narrative Structures: from Media Education to Media Pedagogy and Media Literacy

Vítor Reia-Baptista

By observing some of the new environments of media exposure, such as the internet, the mobile communication devices and situations, or the console games' interaction patterns, we discern that there is a great need for research into, and development of, the field. In order to gather better knowledge about our individual and social situation in the private and public spheres of daily life, the emergent new media usage, or their appropriations, and the levels of credibility surrounding the information sources connected to those environments available everywhere, on-line and off-line, need to be studied in a multi-disciplinary approach.

Since mankind knows itself as mankind, such knowledge has probably been constructed and expressed through different narrative communication layers, structuring themselves one upon another and giving rise to new patterns of narrative strategies. Simultaneously, new communication instruments and devices emerge, such as, new gestures, sounds, images, words, languages, discourses and all the new channels of communicative diffusion and exposure. These range from ancient theatre to modern film, or post-modern mobile audio and video messages deconstructed within computer processing networks, that is, the media as we know them in their evolution until today.

When we speak about new media, we generally speak about devices that have emerged in our daily life environment rather recently. They have, however, rather quickly accomplished a reshaping of some of our ancient habits of personal communication and our most common communicative patterns of media usage. At first glance, these new patterns of communication and media usage seem many times to be so complex that we feel tempted to claim that we are entering, with them and via them, into a new paradigm of personal and social communication. It may well be so, and that is why we must observe and study them. However, when we look more closely at these new patterns, we see that although they are developing devices and postures upon new complex and differentiated channels

of communication, these new environments of media exposure may not have developed, apparently, any new narrative functions that would differentiate the new from older and more canonical environments, like the folktales or the various narrative arts and genres. This probably implies that although we have definitely got some new complex environments of media exposure we may still study them and their processes, in accordance with some of the best known narrative structural dispositions and their analytical models. However, we really don't know if this is so, and therefore there is an urgent need for research and in-depth studies into the new environments of media exposure and their publics, that is, their dramatis personae. If, however the functions appear to be essentially the same, we already know that the structures of exposure and their patterns of reception are much more fragmentary than before. Therefore, the knowledge we may glean about the appropriations of new media, in terms of a better understanding of the public sphere of media literacy, may also come in fragments, and so are not necessarily included in a global context of comprehension and understanding of this new literacy. Aiming at such a global context of new 'literary' comprehension is, in my opinion, one of the most important roles of the actual research within media and communication studies.

The geo-cultural context of the studies

In the field of Cultural Studies in general, and in Communication and Media Studies, in particular, it is possible to develop different analytical approaches according to the main goals relating to the different cultural, pedagogical and mediatic contexts.

At the Centre for Research in Communication Sciences at the University of Algarve, CICCOM, we have been developing some projects concerning various themes of pedagogical interest and cultural, or 'literary', implications. They are related to the primary characteristics of the information available in new public spaces, such as the Internet, the Bloggs, Mobile/Virtual Communities and Strategy Games. We aim to compare them with other characteristics already known from older media and communication contexts. These studies have also been concerned with the question of emergent risks, namely in terms of information credibility and reliability within the adequate contextualization of the available information, as well as the correct identification of the respective sources and channels.

We therefore introduce some media pedagogical approaches and propositions for analyses especially related to the Internet and its character as a public platform of communication. The present article presents examples of new cultural communication environments of media exposure in southern Portugal, showing that, in fact, there is little difference between these and other new European social and cultural environments of media exposure.

The Internet as a New Communication Platform within a New Paradigm of Media Literacy

Digitalization is the basis for modern day communication, presenting a technological system of digital treatment and information control programs. The Internet and its components (in particular the World Wide Web), must be included in the set of mass media, on account of its production and archiving capacities, its social system and economic characteristics, thus improving its capacity to extend the categories already defined in relation to the communication channels, technologies and processes including their narrative structures.

Therefore, one of the main questions must be: what are the new skills and competences that individuals and groups must acquire in order to allow them to participate as active, or passive, members of the new media literacy public sphere? While trying to find some answers to this question, we have realized that some very old narrative aspects and functions contribute to shaping the communication processes. Whether they depart from the traditional world of verbal narrative, such as folktales, or from pictorial iconography, they still play a very important part in these new environments of media exposure. Such completely different sets of channels also include the photographic composite imagery or the filmic montage of images and sounds, verbal and non-verbal.

The Internet must be recognized as a communication platform, a multimedia galaxy undergoing permanent expansion and reorganization. This enables millions of people to partake in the dissemination and exchange of information via conventional telephone network lines, optical-fibre, satellite links and radio waves, but also between individuals in a virtual peer to peer close relation. Its existence has become so common-place as to be considered ubiquitous, replacing man to man communication experiences. Its human-machine-human mediation interfaces are not always obvious, what with innumerable computers, mobile devices and software possibilities. For many of us, it has become part of every day life in terms of ease of access and information consultancy, and also for the multitude of communication services it provides.

Email is a remarkable process, to send and receive, in a fast and cheap way, instant and/or elaborated information over short or long distances. It has almost replaced the old reliable postal services, but it can also, very easily, become an incredibly troublesome tool. What then are the skills that every citizen has to develop to be a critical, independent and literate user of this tool?

Newsgroups are structured communication platforms, on most varied subjects, where the users can discuss and receive information about their favourite subjects via their personal mail, mail-lists or newsletters. But who filters and scrutinizes the information flow? And who confronts the sources, or how?

Internet Relay Chat rooms allow conversation among individuals in groups and peer to peer in real time on the most varied subjects, through written messages, generally in SMS formatted language and dialects, that are grouped in diverse channels, available for whoever may find it on the net. However, even if the user

is a skilled SMS user and has a good knowledge of the majority of the acronyms in local and global usage, how does he, or she, recognize different aims in similar narrative strategies? And how can he/she decode if those aims are related to common daily life issues or are, instead, hidden narrative strategies of harassment, personal trespassing and deceiving? But, on the other hand, are those strategies so much different from the Big Bad Wolf's deceiving narrative towards the Little Red Hood?

Because of its characteristics, the Internet is actually the largest database for information support in the daily life of individuals but even institutions and services. Among those we can count students and teachers, but also media and opinion makers, as well as information providers including journalists. When it is essentially used as a path for communication channels for electronic messages, the web contains a series of useful information, presented by individuals, institutions, governments, associations and all types of commercial and non commercial organizations. But who are the gate-keepers of that electronic flow? Who makes up the major streamlines of the global agenda? How and where are the most powerful editorial lines shaped?

Beyond the boundless and instantaneous allocation of data, the Internet developed new ways for cultural, economic and social life. This development is related to communication instruments and access to the communication and information industries. It is apparent in politics, education, commerce, and in many other fields of public and private character. All these areas contribute to the rapid change of our traditional paradigms of public sphere and space and we don't know yet if our position as individual and social actors in the above is changing as quickly and maybe we are not yet completely aware of the implications of such changes. The potential threat of widespread alienation in such new environments of media exposure should not be dismissed lightly.

The mass media established the traditional idea of message transmission from an emission centre to a plurality of receiving individuals. Contrary to this immediate personal communication, the Internet redefined this mode through the incorporation of a communication system that can embrace the media systems previously known, and the individual's facilitated capacity to produce online content. The Internet is usually seen as the "net of the nets", displaying an apparently organic and dynamic development towards a "supra net", where the source of the message no longer displays a steady, central and explicit character, and where the methods of production and reception are available and accessible at any moment, in any place, at reduced costs and higher returns. However, it may also be regarded as a vast quantity of fragmented, non structured and non scrutinized information. This means that the Internet is frequently used as a source that disseminates the information or distributes subject matter, such as the transmission of manifestos, conferences, concerts or congresses. In so doing it complements the information offered by the press, radio, television and other media. However, it is seldom looked upon as a pedagogical medium in itself with its non-structured function that may shape fragmented cultural patterns of message

reception and of message production in the most open, non regulated and apparently free environments of media exposure. It can be seen as the most available example of what may be termed an open work of multimedia texts, or text of texts and hypertexts.

The Internet as a World Wide Open Work

This proposition that considers the internet documents, or texts, to be open works refers directly to the methodological strategy of text analysis once presented by Umberto Eco, before we could even dream about the internet. However, that can be defined as the analysis of the relationship between the contemplation and the utilization of any "work of art", or "text", or "communication document" with the qualities of an "open work" – *L'oeuvre ouverte*[1].

This notion of "open work" is, of course, also influenced by Eco's later writings developing the subject in relation to the notion of "absent structure"[2] and to the structural role of "metaphor" in a broader sense of *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*[3].

The implications of such a relationship that Umberto Eco called the "poetics of the open work" were already the object of study in his early book *L'oeuvre ouverte* and introduced a complementary notion of the work as a pedagogical metaphor of knowledge, which can be summarized with the following quotation:

> ...si une forme artistique ne peut fournir un substitut de la conaissance scientifique, on peut y voir en revanche une métaphore épistémologique: à chaque époque, la manière dont se structurent les diverses formes d'art révèle – au sens large, par similitude, métaphore, résolution du concept en figure – la manière dont la science ou, en tout cas, la culture contemporaine voient la réalité.[4]

For this proposition, it is most pertinent to identify the epistemological metaphors that the documents can represent within the field of human communication, and consequently to determine how those metaphors can be contemplated and utilized within a contemporary cultural context, like the "internet culture".

The Internet as a Work of Tales

Some of these metaphors cannot be analyzed using the traditional instruments of literary criticism, which have been used too frequently as instruments of traditional literary criticism and are therefore marked as such, despite their unsuitability for their actual narrative forms. To approach the pedagogical value of the Internet multiple text imagery requires more than a mere identification of the

tenors and vehicles within the metaphors. Essentially, it requires the identification of functions and themes, patterns of information structure, signs and contexts of signification. This implies that, on occasions, we are not too far away from Vladimir Propp's study of the folk tales, which he defined as a "study of the folktale according to the functions of its dramatis personae"[5].

The Internet metaphors (and the modern multimedia in general), indeed, often assume the role of the ancient folk tales in their relationship to myths, religion and transcendental mysteries. They are modern tales and parts of modern myths with specific functions, and we can find some structural similarity between these and those analyzed by Propp in the folk tales, which he formulated as follows in his first thesis and which we could easily adopt as a point of reference for the narrative nature of the Internet multimedia functions:

> Function must be taken as an act of dramatis personae, which is defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action of a tale as whole ... Functions serve as stable, constant elements in folktales, independent of who performs them, and how they are fulfilled by the dramatis personae. They constitute the components of a folktale.[1]

Unfortunately, we cannot apply Propp's second and third thesis so easily to the Internet. The number of functions known to the multimedia components is not necessarily limited, even if it can, apparently, be so in the case of the most closed genres and structures, nor is the sequence of functions always identical. Quite the contrary, the Internet multimedia texts, in their quality of open works, are examples of non-identical unlimited sequences of functions. They are, in fact, "heretical" approaches to the folk tales, but tales nevertheless. This means that we can also find some theoretical support in Propp's formalistic and structural approach, but we cannot completely follow his method for the analysis of our material. However, although it has not been our aim to accomplish a morphology of the internet "tales" (which, per se, is a very interesting task for future research), it would nevertheless appear that we could use some of Propp's functional nomenclature to designate the most relevant functions in some internet genres, exactly as has been done for other media, namely in the field of film and photographic studies, i.e. a work of tales or their equivalent metaphors.

The Internet as an Equivalent of Social Information and Metaphor

The shortcomings of the methods of traditional literary criticism and of formal structuralism, when applied to multimedia and hypermedia analysis, may be compensated with elements that determine another specific matter of expression embodying the virtual metaphors' imagery. For this purpose it is especially inter-

esting to determine the metaphoric implications of the notion *Equivalence*, and here we could borrow some of the work that has been done in the field of photographic studies, namely by Susan Sontag in relation to the notion of "photographic equivalents" by the great north American photographer Alfred Stieglitz:

> "Equivalents", that is, statements of his (Stieglitz) inner feelings. ... Photography is the paradigm of an inherently equivocal connection between self and the world – its version of the ideology of realism sometimes dictating an effacement of the self in relation to the world, sometimes authorizing an aggressive relation to the world which celebrates the self .[7]

The available readings of these texts are in fact wide open and it is necessary to tutor the reader (the user) to find the patterns of narrativity that may exist in the text structure of real referents, their metaphors and/or equivalents. Or, last but not least, to understand the function of their absence. When doing this, we usually find ourselves in a learning process, in the widest sense of the expression, and that is why the pedagogical dimensions that are involved and relayed in the different multimedia channels usually prove to be highly effective, especially if the readers are not quite aware of them.

The Internet facilitates the information research, but it requires a redoubled attention to the verification of the information. The credibility and authenticity of the data found on the Internet is one of its greater problems. It is generally ignored in favour of the idea that the present information is free from errors, and therefore, freely available for gratuitous use without any type of verification. This is really one of the greatest dangers that our students are exposed to, probably, at a much higher degree than they are exposed to more explicit "dangerous" contents like pornography and similar subjects. The diversification of the production, and the absence of evaluation filters, articulate a redistribution of data, less conditional and therefore more prone to suffer from all types of negative or "positive" influences.

The databases and the Internet contents allow access to innumerable quantities of information in a simple and fast way, but they can become useless, without a previous ability to use them. Moreover, the easy and free access to all sorts of information does not mean that the user will be able to contextualize it, in face of its cultural universe. This possibility is, therefore, as important as the acquisition of the necessary skills to look up and to know what to make of the collected data. The technological system of the Internet and its auto-legitimacy, resolve an extensive set of questions and inequalities concerning information access, transforming the technological performance into the guarantee of content veracity, which is often assumed by many national and even international authorities as a safe way of regulation and self-regulation. However, such an assumption can be misleading and instead of knowledge, skills and competence, we may find ourselves working within a maze of ineffective rules and dubious laws at the global level.

The democratization of the communication channels discloses the capacity to exceed the receiving condition and move to an individual reflection, allowing also an individual leading form of participation, while individual users who interact through the multimedia channels are free to assume different positions and opinions, which is not always seen as a very "healthy" characteristic of the Internet. And these phenomena, along with the digital divide, also need our attention and research.

The Internet as a Research Object and as a Research Environment

In this context we may now refer to the "Educaunet"[8], "Glocal Youth"[9], "Mediappro"[10], or even the "European Charter for Media Literacy"[11], all projects that attempt to relate different situations of media usage to the common local and global outcomes and in which the CICCOM has been deeply involved.

Educaunet was a critical educational programme, researching and teaching about Internet and its possible risks. It was developed in collaboration with several European countries to implement an awareness campaign and training sessions for educational publics. Its educational model advocates an active commitment to risk-taking, based on a set of pedagogical tools and activities produced in close cooperation with all the participants – schools, teachers, students and parents. The major objective was to train the children's ability to assess and become aware of the risks when using the net. The Portuguese approach to these problems was a bit different from other European countries, specially the Northern European ones, where children were already familiar with the Internet and frequently used it at home and at school when the project started. In those countries, the Educaunet project had its focus especially on the Internet hidden risks, because the challenges of usage were already known. In Portugal, we had to focus both on the risks and on the challenges, since many children, some young people and some adults even had not yet used the Internet, or had only done it a few times. Part of the Portuguese population still do not have any computer link to the Internet at home. Using Internet at school, or in other public places, is a good way to bridge the common situation of digital divide.

The major aim of the Glocal Youth project was to study the different social and geographical appropriations within similar age groups. However, there is a common belief that the use of computers may contribute to a decline in social differences. However, it is not that simple since the circulation of the information through the net is not universalized and often presents two distinct features: development and exclusion concerning access to, and the capacity to select and operate the different information channels. Although there is a global process of production and diffusion of the main information streams, there is no exact parallel on the receptive side and those who do not master the techniques may even be suppressed, regarding the languages and the narrative devices used to com-

Educaunet www.educaunet.org

With partners in seven European countries the approach of the Educaunet programme is based in media education. By using a critical educational approach they aim at developing an independent and responsible attitude in children and adolescents when using the Internet. Through the web site Educaunet provides educational material to be used by teachers, parents and educators as input for training sessions to enhance awareness of the Internet and possible risks. The project is financed by the European commission and has partners in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Glocal Youth www.glocalyouth.net

The Glocal Youth website is about media education and interculture and aims to teach young people (14-20 years old) awareness of their relation with the media and to promote the development of critical thinking skills and responsible citizenship. It is hoped this will enhance understanding and knowledge about youth like themselves in different countries and cultures in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and foster dialogue and exchange. The material, with texts in several languages, can be used as a guide and instructional kit for teachers and educators, young people and others interested. The Glocal Youth project is carried out with support from the e-Learning programme of the European Union.

Mediappro www.mediappro.org

Mediappro is an international project (Europe and Canada) on how young people (12-18 years) appropriate new media such as mobile phones, Internet and video games. The aim of the project is to contribute to the education of young people in safer use of the Internet and other new portable audio-scripto-visual media connected on telecommunication networks by empowering leaders and persons engaged in the field of education. The project is carried out with the support of the European Commission/ Safer Internet Action Plan and in co-operation with ten different European national media education organisations.

The European Charter for Media Literacy www.euromedialiteracy.eu

The charter is developed in order to support the establishment of media literacy across Europe. Signing the charter means endorsing a specific and common definition of media literacy, facilitating consensus and networking amongst organisations and individuals working for media literacy. The site offers a discussion forum as well as a list of resources/links to organisations and projects concerned with media literacy. The charter is developed on initiative from the UK Film Council and the British Film Institute (BFI).

municate. The online communication patterns have produced a new specific net culture, which in turn introduced new patterns of social and personal communication within the public spheres of different countries on different continents.

Those patterns are frequently cultural forms of narrative absence in a structural sense, and of close communication boundaries leading to processes of unawareness and even alienation that can still be observed in some geographical, cultural and generational European contexts. These are apparent in some more recent research approaches like those studied in the Mediappro project. They revealed an impressive amount of information on new media usage, skills and appropriations by the younger Portuguese population concerning the cultural and generational use of mobile phones, especially with SMS language, video and strategy games, Bloggs and other interactive devices.

That fact led some of the participants in the project to start a movement towards a European Charter for Media Literacy, which is just beginning, but which may well become an important platform for discussion and intervention towards the acquisition of general media literacy skills and concepts in the most problematic fields of media exposure.

In this context, it would be both interesting and fruitful to connect these reflections to other well known cultural environments of media exposure that have not always been regarded as such given environments of literacy, mostly because of their "lack" of canonical literary structure, which has frequently been apparent in the case of some specific film genres and languages.

The Internet as an Absent Structure, its Filmic and Pedagogical Functions

This proposition is an exercise that, isolated from the organic structure of the object, may function as a source of information in direct connection with the study of its most important components and their respective equivalents of virtual transfiguration. They serve as an instrument of evaluation, comparison and assessment of the information flow connected to content and form of the multimediatic "themes", or genres, and to the group of functions assumed by the characters within the themes. They are generally very difficult to define because their number varies with the nature of the themes and, sometimes, even with their apparent absence in the main structure. In this context we should focus on those that embody the requisites of the moralities, abstractions of vice and virtue and other ethical values, or those that in their "heretical" relationship with the themes make their contribution to generate a sense of absence of values. Again, it is very important and useful to be able to identify the functions, from the structure of the old folk tales that emerge from such a modern fragmentary structure[12].

The titles, for example, that, according to the notion of the "open work", are absolutely determinant factors in the interpretation processes, can open or close the structure of a work completely[13], turning it into virtual absence.

The pedagogical dimension of such devices may be a result of the character of their structural function within the "open work", and it may assume, in fact, some aspects of education values that can be developed within the process of confrontation between the expectations, or apparent reasons, and the answers (or the lack of them) that strike the reader, or the user. This process includes the manipulation of thematic and semantic items and, generally, it is an embedded way of conditioned literacy and pedagogical awareness. We can say that the "poetics of the open work" may constitute the pedagogical dimension of such a reading process. Either it is wide open in its significance or apparently absent of signification. Luis Buñuel's comments on the constrictions relating to the understanding of neo-realist film could be used to help us fathom some of the constrictions within the internet approach and its pluralism of signs and of contexts of signification which turns the semiosis behind the "obvious" meanings, and their denotative and connotative paradigms, into a useful instrument that offers some accuracy to this kind of analysis. Although Buñuel hated such jargon, it was he himself who exposed this problem as an argument against the "monolithic" views of the neo-realist cinematography and of the daily media, and we could add – the internet, where apparently "a glass is a glass and nothing more":

> ... this same glass, contemplated by different beings, can be a thousand different things, because each one charges what he sees with affectivity; no one sees things as they are, but as his desires and his state of soul make him see. I fight for the cinema which will show me this kind of glass, because this cinema will give me an integral vision of reality, will broaden my knowledge of things and people, will open up to me the marvellous world of the unknown, of all that which I find neither in the newspaper nor in the street[14].

In fact, we should also be fighting for a world wide media that could give us such an integral vision of reality and therefore broaden our knowledge, as has been proposed in other visionary works like those of Ted Nelson, Nicholas Negroponte, or Serge Proulx. However, we'll always need a global critical approach, as well as an ethical one, as in the sense of the work of Neil Postman and Ignacio Ramonet. as well as a multiple media cultural and critical perspective, like the ones offered by the more specifically aimed media educational tradition but also by the more general media pedagogical perspective. Nevertheless, whichever methodological or theoretical approach that we may choose from any of the abovementioned, we will only be attempting different processes of approach to media pedagogical problems, because the common goal to aim for is, and will always be, a better and more developed general state of media literacy.

Notes

1. Eco, 1962.
2. Eco, 1968.
3. Eco, 1984, pp. 87-129.
4. Eco, op. cit., p. 28.
5. Propp, 1928, p. 18.
6. Ibidem, p. 20.
7. Sontag, 1973, p. 123.
8. www.educaunet.org
9. www.glocalyouth.net
10. www.mediappro.org
11. www.euromedialiteracy.eu
12. Propp, op. cit.
13. Eco, 1962.
14. Reia-Baptista, 1987, p. 9.

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Raising Media and Internet Literacy

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What is Media and Information Literacy?*

During the past decades, the media landscape and media culture have undergone major changes. Modern information technology has given rise to a constantly increasing supply of media products – increasingly unbound to time and space. Convergence, fragmentation, diversification and individualization are characteristics frequently taken up in the debate on our contemporary media culture. This phase of development was already discernible in the 1980s, with the advent of new forms of distribution such as video, satellite TV and cable TV. Even then, many parents, teachers and political decision-makers expressed their concerns about the negative effects of the media on children and young people. As long as modern mass media have existed, there have been some concerns about how the media affect particularly children and young people, but these concerns have increased along with technological development in the media field. The topic of violence in the media has received a great deal of attention.

Different actors have during recent decades discussed how legislation and voluntary self-regulation might be used to limit the spread of media content classifiable as harmful. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989 provides a framework in the form of Article 17, which states that those countries that have ratified the convention shall ensure that children and young people have access to information from different national and international sources, particularly information intended to promote their social, spiritual and moral well-being as well as their physical and mental health. To this end, appropriate guidelines shall be developed to protect children and young people from information and material that are detrimental to their well-being. In various official documents from as well national public authorities as regional and international organisations protection of minors is described as an issue of great public interest. One basic point of departure is that children are different from adults in that they are more vulnerable, less critical and more susceptible to influence because they lack the experience and frames of reference necessary for understanding certain circumstances.

Early on in the debate, children and young people were often viewed as helpless victims seated before the TV screen. The questions at issue developed during the 1990s, and there was increased interest in media culture in a broader sense. Most researchers pointed out that while the media are assumed to create problems, they also constitute social and cultural resources, and that, in many respects, young people are quite capable of meeting the challenges of today's media products. Thus, during recent decades, the main focus of the debate has shifted from legislation and restrictions to adult responsibility, which includes the media industry, parents and the schools. In this connection, the importance of knowledge about the media and media influences – or 'media literacy' – is stressed. Inherent in media literacy is the notion that 'protection' need not mean that children and young people should be kept from watching, e.g., certain TV programmes, but that it instead means promoting their media knowledge and helping them to become cognizant media consumers.

Among the prerequisites of media literacy are understanding how the media function, how they construct reality and create meaning, and how they are organized as well as knowing how to use the media in a sensible way. Overall, this is a question of strengthening children's and young people's critical abilities as well as their ability to express themselves in many different ways, through pictures, sounds and words. This does not merely involve providing theoretical knowledge, but also knowledge gained through practical experience. Considerable emphasis is placed on allowing young people to actively participate in programme production.

The concept of 'media literacy' was established in the US during the 1980s and was, at first, closely tied to children's media environment, where media violence and commercialism were under scrutiny. Yet media literacy is a considerably broader concept than 'media education', which only refers to the mission of the schools (where there is great consensus, e.g., within the EU, that the schools are responsible for introducing children's media culture into teaching). The point of departure of the two concepts is, however, the same, that is, that the media construct reality, that audiences interpret media content on the basis of their own preferences, that the media have commercial as well as social and political significations, that the media contain ideological messages, that form and content are closely related and that every medium has an aesthetic form.

With time, media literacy has even come to include *adults*. Media literacy embraces everything from having the knowledge needed to use old and new media technology to having a critical relationship to media content in a time when the media constitute one of the most powerful forces in society. Proponents of media literacy view increased media knowledge in society as contributing to participation, active citizenship, competence development and life-long learning. In this way, the population's media literacy becomes a necessary part of ensuring a democratic society.

Several books and articles have been written about media literacy, and many attempts at defining the concept have been made. Leading researchers in the field

often use the following trichotomy: media literacy implies having *access* to the media, *understanding* the media and *creating/expressing* oneself using the media. (Buckingham 2005, Livingstone 2005)

Access includes having the use of media as well as media habits: the ability to use functions and navigation competence (e.g., changing TV channels/channel orientation, using Internet links): competence in controlling media (e.g., using interactive on-line systems, making financial transactions on the Internet); knowledge of legislation and other regulations in the area (e.g., freedom of speech, protection of privacy, knowledge of the meaning of harmful material, protection from 'spam').

Understanding includes having the ability both to understand/interpret and to gain perspective on media content as well as having a critical attitude.

Creating includes interacting with the media (calling radio programmes to express ideas, participating in discussion rooms on the Internet, e-voting, etc.) as well as producing media content. Having the experience of producing material for different media helps form both a better understanding of and a critical approach to media content.

The concept of media literacy has primarily engaged researchers in Western countries as England, Canada and the US. Many of them start from the notion that, in a democratic society, an individual who has knowledge of the media will more easily acquire a well-founded opinion on societal issues/events and, thereby, will be better equipped to express his/her opinion, individually as well as collectively, in public and other social contexts.

Thus, media literacy is a question of skills, knowledge and competencies, but it is also dependent on the institutions, texts and techniques through which information and communication are mediated. Analytically, the concept of media literacy is used both at the individual and the societal level.

New information and communication technologies face young media users with new media formats through the convergence and more often a distinction is done between *media literacy* and literacy regarding new skills where the terminology shifts between digital literacy, cyber-literacy, internet literacy and web-literacy. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use A more gathering term is *information literacy*. UNESCO has initiated several projects and one definition among others is the following: "information literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues and problems at hand" (US National Information Literacy Meeting on Experts, 2003).

Media literacy, has been defined and developed in relation to audiovisual media, while the information literacy has been developed in relation to various new digital systems for representing and distributing information. Media literacy has tended to focus on cultural expression and is marked by a critical dimension. This critical dimension is often missing in the current concept of "information literacy", which focuses more on "technical" skills, such as using ICT to find and gather and to

"Central to any discussion of literacy is the question of purpose. What is the purpose of media literacy, information literacy, or any other literacy, and why do they matter? From the literature discussed in this chapter, we draw out three broad purposes to which media and information literacies may contribute. These purposes also, though often only implicitly, drive the policy debates over literacy. First, democracy, participation and active citizenship: in a democratic society, a media and information-literate individual is more able to gain an informed opinion on matters of the day, and to be able to express their opinion individually and collectively in public, civic and political domains, while a media and information-literate society would thus support a sophisticated, critical and inclusive public sphere. Second, knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice: in a market economy increasingly based on information, often in a complex and mediated form, a media and information-literate individual is likely to have more to offer and so achieve at a higher level in the workplace, and a media and information-literate society would be innovative and competitive, sustaining a rich array of choices for the consumer. Third, lifelong learning, cultural expression and personal fulfillment: since our highly reflexive, heavily mediated symbolic environment informs and frames the choices, values and knowledge that give significance to everyday life, media and information literacy contributes to the critical and expressive skills that support a full and meaningful life, and to an informed, creative and ethical society."

Livingstone, S., van Couvering, E., and Thumim, N.: Converging traditions of research on media and information literacies: Disciplinary, critical and methodological issues. In D.J. Leu, J. Coiro, M. Knobel and C. Lankshear (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on New Literacies.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

distribute information. One might say that the focus is on users of ICT rather than on citizens who use ICT. Given the increasing convergence of radio, television, and computer technology "information literacy" is increasingly linked up with issues of democracy and active, participatory citizenship. A conclusion is that there is a need for bringing media literacy and information literacy (e-strategy, e-culture, e-learning) together in a multi-factor, riskbased framework to further promote the role of citizens and their participation in society. (Livingstone 2005 and 2006).

Having media- and information literate individuals in a society promotes a critical, open and all-embracing public sphere. The medialized symbolic environment we live in today largely shapes the choices, values and knowledge that determine our everyday lives. At the same time communication through the media can contribute to development and social change. Media and information literacy helps, therefore, to strengthen the critical abilities and communicative skills that give the individual's existence meaning, while promoting a well-oriented, democratic knowledge society.

* This introduction is compiled by Ulla Carlsson

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I Media Literacy for Children, Young People and Parents

How media literate are children and young people? This varies, of course, depending on the child's age, personality, interests, motivation, social relations and context, etc., and obviously to a great extent also on access to, use of, understanding of and own creation of media contents. Media literacy among the young therefore differs among individuals, groups and nations.

Ofcom, the independent regulator and competition authority for the U.K. communications industries, defines media literacy as 'the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'. Without such skills, people's ability to participate effectively in the workplace and in society may be greatly diminished, Ofcom says (http://www.ofcom.org.uk).

In 2005, Ofcom published a review of research, mostly performed in the U.K., about children's media literacy (Buckingham 2005).

The report concludes, among other things, that in terms of *access*, the research literature suggests that children and young people in the U.K. possess quite high levels of *functional* literacy – that is, the skills and competencies needed to gain access to media content, using the available technologies and associated software.

Many findings in the review point to a growing media literacy by age. For example, older children are generally aware of regulatory mechanisms and systems of guidance, and take these into account in seeking to make their own decisions. The large majority of young people also show some awareness of risks relating to sexual dangers on the Internet, although they are less aware of potential economic risks.

The review adds that several studies regarding regulations and risk on the Internet conclude that education in media literacy may be a more effective strategy than blocking or filtering.

In a similar vein, children's *understanding* of television – e.g., children's awareness of areas such as television 'language', the difference between representation and reality, and the persuasive role of advertising – develops both as a function of their increasing knowledge of the world, and as a result of their broader cognitive and social development. When the children grow older, they also learn to cope with potentially unwanted or upsetting emotional responses, and to make critical judgments about areas such as television violence, by employing forms of media literacy.

For example, Andrea Millwood Hargrave (2003) found that children aged 9-13 could clearly distinguish between fictional violence and violence that is 'real' in the media. The children made judgements about the justified use of violence, and this could affect how 'violent' an image was perceived to be in the first place. Although this kind of result does not tell fully about influences of media violence, it implies that the meaning of a particular form of media content is not pre-given but actively constructed also by the reader or viewer (something that, in turn, is an important fact to take into account in research on media influences).

The review by Buckingham found considerably less research about how children and young people interpret, evaluate and respond to other media contents than on television.

By contrast, when it comes to *creativity*, there has been less academic research relating to 'older' media such as video and analogue radio than to new media, particularly the Internet. The review found research suggesting that there is considerable potential for media to be used as means of communication and self-expression, not least by socially disadvantaged groups; that creative involvement in media production (particularly in the context of education) can make an important contribution to the development of critical understanding; and that new media such as online gaming and mobile telephony provide possibilities for new forms of interaction.

In sum, the review shows that there are gaps in research about how media literate children and young people are. At the same time, it shows that media literacy is partly developing with increasing age.

This is not to say that adults are in all respects media literate or that they always are more media literate than young people – the contrary can also be the case. In another review of research on adults' media literacy in the U.K. for Ofcom (Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumim 2005) the authors say that much research raises concerns that adult audiences lack the more complex skills for a sufficiently discerning or critical understanding to deal with the highly sophisticated construction of media messages. For example, the audience's trust of news is not always associated with good understanding or critical judgment, and many viewers are overwhelmed by multiple content sources that they find difficult to evaluate or compare. Studies also suggest that adults are often unaware of the provenance of information on the Internet and may lack the skills to take into account the point of view from which information is presented.

In May 2006, Ofcom released *Media Literacy Audit. Report on media literacy amongst children* (see http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/children.pdf) (and a corresponding empirical report on adults). The aim of the child study was to assess the extent of media literacy amongst children aged 8-15 across the U.K. in order to provide stakeholders with a source of information about children's levels of such literacy. To a great extent this empirical investigation deals with 8- to 11- and 12- to 15-year-olds' uptake and usage of the media, but also their attitudes to media and towards

learning. In addition, there were questions to children's parents about the extent and type of rules in the home regarding the media platforms.

A main conclusion from the report is that although children's access to and usage of media technologies in the U.K. is widespread, children's levels of critical understanding and of creativity as regards the media are highly variable. So are steps taken to ensure online safety at home, as well as lessons about media at school.

A few examples of findings in the report that support this conclusion are:

- Some 78 per cent of children aged 12-15 feel that news programmes are true either 'always' or 'most of the time', and 76 per cent feel similarly about nature and wildlife programmes. Slightly more than half say this for current affairs programmes (with only 11% saying they are true 'all the time' compared to 35% saying this about news programmes). One third of 12-15-year-olds say that reality TV programmes are true 'all' or 'most of the time', although 20 per cent say they are 'never' true.
- Whilst two in three children aged 12-15 who use the Internet at home agree that they trust most of what they find on the Internet, 20 per cent disagrees, and a further 13 per cent is unsure. Children from minority ethnic groups are more likely to disagree (at 30%) that they trust most of what they find on the Internet.
- One in five of 12-15-year-olds say they have set up their own website. Around half of this age group has either experience of or interest in setting up their own website or making a short film using a digital camcorder, and rather fewer are interested in making a short film using a mobile phone.
- Most parents say they have rules for the Internet, although only around half of all parents with Internet access say they have blocking systems in place to stop their children viewing certain types of websites, with no significant differences by the age of the child. Parents who do not have blocks in place give reasons for this largely relating to trusting their child, although around one in five of these parents say they do not have controls set because they are unsure how to do this or were not aware it was possible.
- Significant minorities of children are consuming media largely on their own, especially in the 12-15 age group.
- Around two-thirds (64%) of all children aged 8-11 say they have had any lessons at school that teach them about the Internet, and just one in ten in this age group (9%) say they have had any lessons that teach them about television or films.
- Among 12-15-year-olds, three quarters (74%) say they have learned about the Internet at school and some 40 per cent that they have had any lessons about television or films.

Although the above-mentioned research reports for Ofcom geographically represent only one corner of the world, there is no evidence that children's and young people's level of media literacy in other countries is higher. At the same time, much research tells that a great amount of children and young people run across offensive media contents, and that some children feel upset or disturbed about it. Other research deals with potentially harmful media contents – such as portrayals of physical media violence; underrepresentation and stereotypes of population groups, peoples or nations; hate and racism; violent and child pornography; cyber bullying; excessive marketing, etc. – which for some children and young people under certain circumstances may reinforce or contribute to biased ideas about other people and the world, and to fear, anxiety, depression and destructive aggression, rather than to pleasurable experiences, social relations and learning; self-expression and personal fulfillment; health; and communication and participation for change towards a better environment, democracy and peace.

A common argument, not least among commercial media professionals, is that it is the parents' responsibility to take care of and teach their children about the media.

Research gives evidence that parents can be of great importance in this regard:

- The parental example plays an essential role, that is, the way parents themselves use the media often makes a lasting impresson on how their children use – and in the future will use – media.
- Children and young people who live in a harmonious social environment – have good relations to their parents, peers, other adults and in the school – are more seldom influenced by media contents in undesirable ways than children who live in tangled social environments.
- Parents can mediate children's media use with the aim of reinforcing desirable and counteracting undesirable influences of media contents by 1) using media together with their children (co-using), 2) talking about media contents with their child (active mediation), and 3) setting rules in relation to the child's media use (restrictive mediation). Research on only 'restrictive mediation' (setting rules) and only 'co-using' the media has produced somewhat inconsistent findings, whereas 'active mediation' (talking about the media and their contents) seems successful in a variety of domains. At the same time, different kinds of mediations, and combinations of them, are, naturally, more or less suitable for different ages (Nathanson and Cantor 2000).

On the other hand, research also points to the fact that children's and young people's media use cannot only be the responsibility of parents alone:

- Much research concludes that parents are not especially well informed about their children's media use, and that communication between children and parents about media use and media contents many times is lacking. Sev-

eral studies show that parents often overestimate their own engagement in children's media use (e.g., Larsson 2004), as well as their children's satisfaction with talking with them about the media (e.g., Casas, González and Figuer 2004).

- In media-saturated countries, there are nowadays often many television sets and computers in the home, and great proportions of children and young people also have a television set and other media equipment in their own room. This means that the conditions of using media together, talking about media contents, and setting rules have radically changed – joint media use is in these countries becoming less common.
- There are always a great many parents who do not have time to engage in their children's media use, who do not know about or how to handle possible filtering methods, who do not care since they are in entangled situations themselves but instead rely on media as sitter-ins, or who do not think of extensive media use or certain media contents as anything to be concerned about.

The conclusion is that relying solely on parents is not an effective regulatory strategy in the media field (a conclusion also drawn by many others, e.g., Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumim 2005).

However, this conclusion does not contradict the fact that parents need information and support to better interact with their children in relation to the media. Different awareness-raising efforts for parents are highly relevant – both in order to increase their own media literacy as adults and to make them realise the importance of their own role in helping children to become more competent, responsible and critical media users.

1. Television, Films, Videos/DVDs – What Is New?

We will here temporarily put media literacy as regards the Internet aside, since this is dealt with in a separate section further ahead. We will here also leave the creativity aspect away, since there is a special section on children's and young people's own media production later on.

Methods for increasing children's media literacy when it comes to television and films are more rarely addressed directly at children, especially young children, than to their parents. And, naturally, advice about using television and films in sensible ways has existed since these media were introduced. Nevertheless, the media landscape has basically changed in that national television channels today are accompanied by 'inumerable' transnational satellite channels that are outside national control, in that movies in the theatres are for rent and purchase in the form of videos and DVDs in private stores of many kinds, and that television and films are also currently finding their way onto the Internet.

Traditional means of awareness-raising as regards national media still exist in many countries, but they have been supplemented with new efforts at increasing information and media literacy among children and parents. Thus, traditional and new methods exist side by side.

Parents in many countries can find advice on how to mediate children's use of television and films in, for instance, the following ways:

- in parental magazines
- through campaigns of different kinds initiated by interest organisations or, sometimes, the government
- by participating in 'turn-off TV' weeks
- by watching television programmes on media literacy (e.g., the Swedish public educational television channel has produced special TV series on media literacy for children as well as for adults, series that are broadcast on ordinary television and also are available for use in schools)
- by watching so-called Public Service Announcements on TV use
- by paying attention to age recommendations/labellings associated with TV programmes and similar governmental rules for films
- by paying attention to programme schedules, reviews, possible content ratings/labellings, etc.
- by paying attention to the 'watershed' on television (meaning that programmes broadcast late in the evening are for adults)

- by complaining to authorities and (if possible) taking part in audience councils
- by joining associations with the objective of promoting a better television milieu
- by using blocking devices for television (the so-called V-chip in North America or set-top-boxes for digital television in several countries)
- by paying attention to acoustic or visual warnings shown on the TV screen or told by the programme presenters (in, e.g., Europe)
- by turning on the Internet to voluntary or interest organisations, consumer bodies, or to media authorities or taking part in parents' chat communities

The newer additions to traditional media literacy methods for children and parents in this list are apparently blocking devices for television, clear acoustic or visual warnings on national television channels, and the possibility to turn to different platforms on the Internet for getting advice about television and film contents.

Awareness-raising methods of the above-mentioned kinds have developed differently in different social, cultural and media contexts. Compare, for example, the V-chip in North America, and the acoustic and visual warnings on national television in Europe – methods, that for the rest, have turned out insufficient in that many parents do not use the V-chip and that 'warnings' sometimes get the function of 'forbidden fruit' for certain children and young people, thus, may be more tempting than deterrant.

Furthermore, the list of awareness-raising methods in the list above are, as a rule, more common in countries with much media. A tiny selection of examples in this section of what can be found on the Internet today for parents and children are therefore collected from voluntary and interest organisations in the media-rich North America.

Don't Buy it – Get Media Smart!, U.S.A., http://www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit

This organisation is addressing children and young people – as well as parents and teachers – about commercial messages/consumerism.

By teaching media literacy skills young people are supposed to be encouraged to think critically about media and become smart consumers. The aim of the organisation is to provide the user with skills to question, analyse, interpret and evaluate media messages. For instance, young people can learn how to discover advertising tricks (e.g., food advertising tricks), how to be a smart buyer, and how to react on or report something seen or heard in the media. The site also provides links to other similar organisations and media education sites and gives tips on literature.

Get Media Smart is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in the United States. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a nonprofit organisation created by the U.S. Congress and funded by American taxpayers. CPB provides funds to develop educational television, radio and online projects. It also funds more than 1,000 local public radio and television stations. The Public Broadcasting Service is a nonprofit organisation with PBS mem-



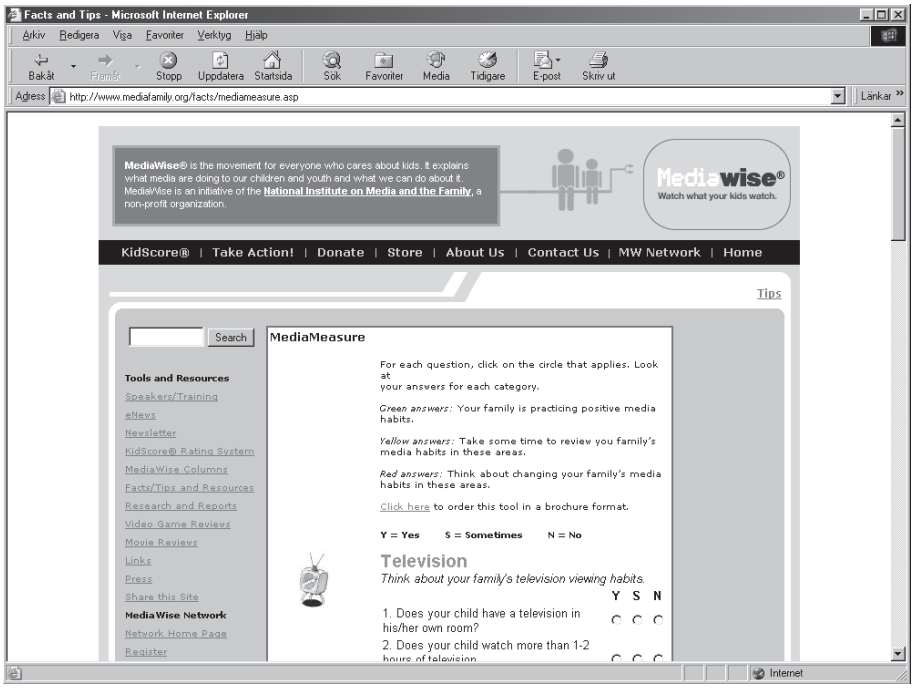
ber television stations in all 50 states. PBS gets its funding from PBS member stations, CPB, grants, video sales, royalties, license fees and investment income.

National Institute on Media and the Family, U.S.A, http://www.mediafamily.org

The National Institute on Media and the Family is 'a research-based organisation on the positive and harmful effects of media on children and youth'. The organisation declares itself to be independent, nonpartisan, nonsectarian and nonprofit. Its 'MediaWise movement' aims to help families make wiser media choices and encourage parents to 'Watch What their Kids Watch'. The mission is to maximise the benefits and minimise the harm of media on children and families through research, education, and advocacy.

The website further says: 'We do not advocate censorship of any kind. We are committed to partnering with parents and other caregivers, organizations, and corporations in using the power of the free market to create healthier media choices for families, so that we have healthier, less violent communities. We seek to educate and inform the public, and to encourage practices and policies that promote positive change in the production and use of mass media.'

Various fact sheets are available on the website as well as tips to parents about how to use media and suggestions for how to talk to children about certain media



contents, for example, about war and terrorism. 'MediaMeasure' is a 'self test' with questions about the family's media habits and suggestions for improving them. There are also quizzes and practical tips about different activities for children and parents, together or separately, to raise awareness about media contents and their impact. Moreover, the organisation offers a newsletter, research reports, and reviews of video games and movies.

Parents Television Council, U.S.A., http://www.parentstv.org

Parents Television Council (PTC) is a grassroot, non-governmental organisation funded by donations from interested individuals and based in the United States. The mission of the PTC is to promote and restore responsibility and decency in American entertainment industry and to promote 'family friendly' television programming. The organisation was founded in 1995 to ensure that children are not constantly assaulted by sex, violence and profanity on television and in other media. The PTC uses a content-based rating system for 'informed viewing decisions'. On the website a traffic light is used as symbol for the classification of different TV series. The series are evaluated on basis of their suitability to viewers of all ages (and not on artistic merits). Time of transmission is also taken into account. A team of entertainment analysts screen the programmes and enter their results in a database for producing the 'Family Guide to Prime Time Television'. Among the organisation's actions are calls to file complaints or

comments to advertisers, television networks, and the Federal Communications Commission about unsuitable television content. The organisation also presents reviews of movies and video games and a guide to Internet safety.

Control Your TV, U.S.A., http://www.controlyourtv.org

The cable industry in the United States – through National Cable and Telecommunications Association and 'Cable in the Classroom' (CIC) – supports this website. 'Cable in the Classroom' (www.ciconline.org) is the U.S. cable industry's education foundation. Its expressed mission is to foster the use of cable content and technology to expand and enhance learning for children and youth nationwide. CIC is mainly addressing teachers, giving tips and examples of its educational programming.

Control your TV, on the other hand, is addressing parents' concerns about what their children view on television. The approach to address violence and indecency on television is 'Choice', 'Control' and 'Education'. Under the heading 'Control' instructions are given for how to use the set-top-box to block unwanted programmes or channels and/or how to use the V-chip installed in the TV set. The V-chip utilises the ratings of TV-programmes made by the industry. 'Choice' describes how to find 'programs suitable for the family'. 'Education' gives links and tips about where to find information on media literacy for the family and other resources to get media smart and be able to 'navigate in the children's media landscape'. By transmitting Public Service Announcements on cable networks the cable industry also tries to educate their customers and viewers how to make responsible viewing decisions in the family.

American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S.A., http://www.aap.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a non-profit professional organisation of pediatrics in the United States established to meet the needs of information and education of its about 60,000 members. The main focus of the organisation is children's health issues in general – but it is also engaged in children and the media. The website offers practical advice to medical doctors to meet the questions and worries of parents regarding their children's media use and the possible health effects – and includes direct advice to parents, as well. There are many articles, guidelines and tips addressing parents about, e.g., television's impact on children, using television wisely, and rules for Internet use.

In 1997, the AAP initiated a project called Media Matters – a national public education campaign on awareness of influence on the health of children and young people of the media to help pediatricians, parents and children. Through the campaign the AAP advocates media education to mitigate problems with harmful contents, such as media violence. 'Everyday Media Education Ideas' and 'Media Education Basics' are examples of tips and guidelines to parents. There is also a letter-writing campaign which encourages parents to send letters to movie theatres, video stores, etc., about the importance of: following ratings, being concerned and aware of the reasons behind these ratings, and informing the media staff about them.

Now, which media guidelines from the AAP will a parent find? The AAP says on its website under 'Media Guidelines for Parents':

> Just as a print-literate child learns to be critical of the things he reads, he should also be able to do the same with moving pictures and sounds. Your child can learn to understand both the obvious and hidden messages in all media. Once children learn media education skills, they will begin to ask questions and think about the media messages they watch, read and hear. And they usually will enjoy doing it.
>
> Following are basic media education points your child should know:
>
> **People create media messages.** Any media message, whether it's a magazine article or a TV talk show, is created by a team of people. Those people write it, decide what pictures to use and what to leave out. All of these things give the message a purpose. Each media form uses its own language. For example, newspapers make headlines large to attract readers to certain stories.
>
> **Media with sound may use music to make people feel a range of emotions.** When children learn about these techniques, they are able to understand how a message is delivered instead of only being affected by it. No two people experience the same media message in exactly the same way. How a person interprets a message depends on things unique to that person's life. These can include age, values, memories and education.
>
> **Media messages have their own values and points of view.** These are built into the message itself. Children should compare the promoted values against their own values. It is important for children to learn that they have a choice in whether to accept the values that are being promoted in any media message.
>
> You can use these lessons as part of your everyday life. Besides asking how and why media messages are created, children of various ages can do everyday activities with you or other adults to help build media education skills.

After that the AAP suggests parents to make educational games for their children out of advertising, movies, music videos, etc. – for full information, see AAP's website.

The AAP also underlines the importance of good viewing habits early and in the home, such as:

- Making a media plan.
- Setting media time limits. (The AAP recommends no more than one to two hours of quality TV and videos a day for older children and no screen time for children under the age of 2.)
- Setting family guidelines for media content.
- Being clear and consistent with children about media rules.
- Keeping TV sets, VCRs, video games and computers out of children's bedrooms.
- Making media a family activity.
- 'Talking back', or asking questions about media messages, something which builds the lifelong skills the child's needs to be a critical media consumer.

- Looking for media 'side effects' (of, e.g., violence, sex or graphic language), such as poor school performance, hitting or pushing other kids often, aggressively talking back to adults, fequent nightmares, increased eating of unhealthy foods, and soking, drinking or drug use.

(For more complete information under each recommendation, please, see the AAP's website.)

Furthermore, the organisation has the following recommendations for parents (we refer again to the website for full information):

1. Set limits as regards your child's use of TV, movies and computer games to no more than one or two hours per day.
2. Plan your child's viewing
3. Watch TV with your child
4. Find the right message (Some television programs may portray people as stereotypes. Talk with your child about the real-life roles of women, the elderly and people of other races that may not be shown on television.)
5. Help your child resist commercials
6. Look for quality children's videos and DVDs
7. Give other options (than watching TV)
8. Set a good example (You are the most important role model in your child's life. Limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your child do the same.)
9. Express your views
10. Get more information (through your pediatrician, public service groups, parent organisations or just talking to other parents)

Media Awareness Network, Canada, http://www.media-awareness.ca

The Media Awareness Network in Canada are mainly addressing teachers but has a special section for parents, as well.

The following text is an example of what parents can read about television on the website of Media Awareness Network:

> *Instead of two or three stations we now have hundreds, with shows for every taste and interest. This increased selection means that there are fewer opportunities for the whole family to sit down and enjoy a show together. Watching television has become a more solitary activity and less shared time means that parents are less able to monitor what their kids are watching.*

The parent can then click on the following headings for getting further advice:

The Good Things About Television
Kids can learn a lot from television, if parents are involved in their kids' viewing habits.

Television's Impact on Kids
A look at the issues of concern to parents: age-inappropriate content, violence, and the "too much TV" dilemma.

Special Issues for Young Children
How young is too young to watch TV? Managing superhero play and helping young children to distinguish fantasy from reality.

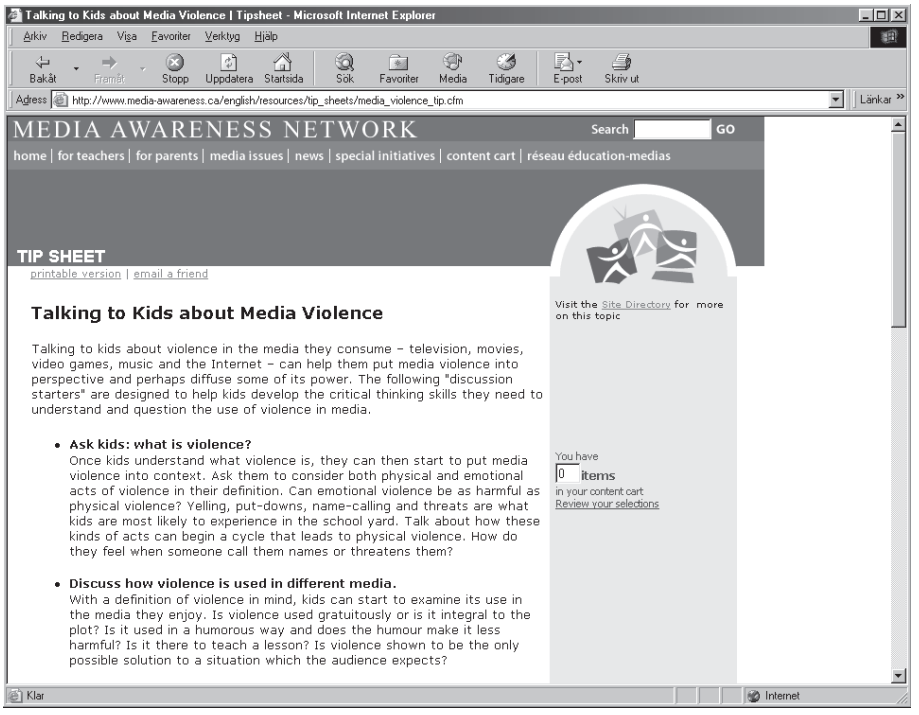
Special Issues for Teens
Sexual content in prime time is on the rise, and parents worry that values absorbed from TV can be at odds with family values.

Understanding Television Rating Systems and Codes
Learn what the TV ratings mean and the guidelines Canadian TV broadcasters have to follow.

Managing Television in the Home
Take control of your family's viewing habits with these strategies for different ages.

Talking to Your Kids About Television
Use TV to help your kids learn to think critically. This section contains tip sheets on talking to kids about everything from stereotypes and violence to TV news.

Taking Action
Voicing your opinion to the TV industry, promoting parent education through your school council, and organizing a TV Turnoff Week in your home or community.



2. Video and Computer Games

Video and computer games used on a large-scale can be regarded as an even newer medium than satellite television. Many organisations, associations and networks give recommendations about how to use video and computer games wisely – through media such as magazines and the Internet.

Yet, the most obvious media literacy method regarding digital games are rating and labelling. Below are brief descriptions of these methods in Europe, U.S.A. and Australia. Besides the rating/labelling systems, the websites mentioned here contain several other kinds of consumer information.

The PEGI system, Europe, http://www.pegi.info/pegi/index.do

The Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) age rating system was established in 2003 to help European parents make informed decisions on buying interactive games. Designed to ensure that minors are not exposed to games that are unsuitable for their particular age group, the system is supported by the major console manufacturers, including PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo, as well as by publishers and developers of interactive games throughout Europe.

The PEGI system was developed and based on existing systems in Europe. In the drafting of the PEGI assessment form and the shaping of the system organisation, society representatives such as consumers, parents and religious groups have been involved.

The age rating system comprises two separate but complementary elements. The first is an age rating, similar to some existing rating systems. The PEGI age bands are 3+, 7+, 12+, 16+, 18+. The second element is a number of game descriptors. These are icons, displayed on the back of the game box that describe the type of content to be found in the game. Depending on the type of game, there may be up to six such descriptors. The intensity of the content is appropriate to the age rating of the game. The content types/game descriptors are: bad language, discrimination, drugs, fear, sex, and violence, respectively – see below in the same order:



The PEGI system is a voluntary system in which the ratings are carried out by members of the game industry itself. This takes place by means of a self assessment form. Rat-

ings proposed by publishers are then checked by NICAM the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audio-visual Media. A few single variations of symbols and agents exist. In the U.K., for example, The British Board of Film Classification (http://www.bbfc.co.uk), an independent, non-governmental body, is previewing digital games and functions as an agent for NICAM.

Entertainment Software Rating Board, U.S.A., http://www.esrb.org

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) in the U.S.A. ESRB applies and enforces ratings, advertising guidelines, and online privacy principles adopted by the industry.

ESRB ratings have two equal parts: Rating symbols (on the front of the game box) suggest age appropriateness for the game and content descriptors (on the back) indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

ESRB age rating symbols



EARLY CHILDHOOD Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.



EVERYONE Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.



EVERYONE 10+ Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.



TEEN Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.



MATURE Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.



ADULTS ONLY Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.



RATING PENDING Titles listed as **RP (Rating Pending)** have been submitted to the ESRB and are awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)

ESRB content descriptors

- **Alcohol Reference** – Reference to and/or images of alcoholic beverages
- **Animated Blood** – Discolored and/or unrealistic depictions of blood
- **Blood** – Depictions of blood
- **Blood and Gore** – Depictions of blood or the mutilation of body parts
- **Cartoon Violence** – Violent actions involving cartoon-like situations and characters. May include violence where a character is unharmed after the action has been inflicted
- **Comic Mischief** – Depictions or dialogue involving slapstick or suggestive humor
- **Crude Humor** – Depictions or dialogue involving vulgar antics, including 'bathroom' humor
- **Drug Reference** – Reference to and/or images of illegal drugs
- **Edutainment** – Content of product provides user with specific skills development or reinforcement learning within an entertainment setting. Skill development is an integral part of product
- **Fantasy Violence** – Violent actions of a fantasy nature, involving human or non-human characters in situations easily distinguishable from real life
- **Informational** – Overall content of product contains data, facts, resource information, reference materials or instructional text
- **Intense Violence** – Graphic and realistic-looking depictions of physical conflict. May involve extreme and/or realistic blood, gore, weapons and depictions of human injury and death

- **Language** – Mild to moderate use of profanity
- **Lyrics** – Mild references to profanity, sexuality, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
- **Mature Humor** – Depictions or dialogue involving 'adult' humor, including sexual references
- **Mild Violence** – Mild scenes depicting characters in unsafe and/or violent situations
- **Nudity** – Graphic or prolonged depictions of nudity
- **Partial Nudity** – Brief and/or mild depictions of nudity
- **Real Gambling** – Player can gamble, including betting or wagering real cash or currency
- **Sexual Themes** – Mild to moderate sexual references and/or depictions. May include partial nudity
- **Sexual Violence** – Depictions of rape or other violent sexual acts
- **Simulated Gambling** – Player can gamble without betting or wagering real cash or currency
- **Some Adult Assistance May Be Needed** – Intended for very young ages
- **Strong Language** – Explicit and/or frequent use of profanity
- **Strong Lyrics** – Explicit and/or frequent references to profanity, sex, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
- **Strong Sexual Content** – Graphic references to and/or depictions of sexual behavior, possibly including nudity
- **Suggestive Themes** – Mild provocative references or materials
- **Tobacco Reference** – Reference to and/or images of tobacco products
- **Use of Drugs** – The consumption or use of illegal drugs
- **Use of Alcohol** – The consumption of alcoholic beverages
- **Use of Tobacco** – The consumption of tobacco products
- **Violence** – Scenes involving aggressive conflict

Online rating notice

Online games that include user-generated content (e.g., chat, maps, skins) carry the notice 'Game Experience May Change During Online Play' to warn consumers that content created by players of the game has not been rated by the ESRB.

Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification, Australia, http://www.oflc.gov.au

In Australia, video and computer games – as well as all kinds of films – are classified in the same way by the governmental body Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification. The classifications are: G (General), PG (Parental Guidance recom-

mended), M (recommended for Mature audiences) or MA 15+ (Not suitable for people under 15 – under 15s must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian).

Films can also be classified R 18+ or X 18+ (both meaning Restricted to 18 and over). R 18+ and X 18+ are not classifications for computer games.

There are, thus, two types of classification – advisory (G, PG and M) and restricted (MA 15+, R 18+ and X 18+).

In most circumstances, there is also a space next to this coloured symbol that contains brief consumer advice, specific to the film or computer game that has been classified and designed to provide assistant information about the content. Examples of consumer advice may be: mild violence, moderate sex scenes, strong violence, frequent coarse language, etc.

II Media Literacy for Children, Young People, Adults and Media Educators

As is evident from the previous section, awareness-raising methods among parents is by no means a sufficient method to 'regulate' the media environment. We turn in this section to media literacy in and outside school. However, when talking about media literacy and media education, adults most often associate it with only children and young people – but media literacy is needed among parents, media educators, media professionals and other adults, as well.

This is supported by, among others, UNESCO that since long has worked for media education, media literacy and information literacy – and successively widened its scope.

For instance, in the early 80s, UNESCO published a book by Sirkka Minkkinen, titled *A General Curricular Model for Mass Media Education* (Paris, UNESCO, 1981). In this book, the Finnish author presents a model for mass media education programmes within secondary school curricula aiming at understanding and critical use of different media. The first part deals with 'mass media education' and its relationship to 'film education' (which in several countries had been on the agenda for decades), as well as reasons for the importance of mass media education and for connections between media education and general education in schools. The second part treats the goals of media education and teaching methods.

International symposium on education of the public in the use of mass media: problems, trends and prospects, 1982

In 1982, however, UNESCO supported an international symposium on media education in Grünwald, the Federal Republic of Germany. The participating experts said that government agencies, educational systems, community organisations and parents should not overlook the role of media in the process of personal and social development, as well as instruments for an individual's active participation as a citizen in society.

The outcome of the symposium was the 'Grünwald Declaration on Media Education'. Recommendations of the declaration include:

- Initiating and supporting comprehensive media education programs – from pre-school to university level, and in adult education – the purpose of which

is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness and, consequently, of greater competence among the users of electronic and print media.

- Developing training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and train them in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students.
- Stimulating research and development activities for the benefit of media education, from such domains as psychology, sociology, and communication science.
- Supporting and strengthening the actions undertaken or envisaged by UNESCO and which aim at encouraging international co-operation in media education.

New directions in media education, 1990

A next step was the international colloquy 'New Directions in Media Education', held in Toulouse, France, in July 1990 and organised by the British Film Institute (BFI), the Centre de Liaison de l'Enseignement et des Moyens d'Information (CLEMI), France, in association with UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and with the support of academic institutions. Above all representatives of advisory and administrative sectors of education, teachers, journalists and broadcasters from 45 countries attended this colloquy.

Themes discussed were, among others, the nature, location and support of media education; the role and influences of the media; media involvement in media education; the term 'literacy'; and the relationship between theory and practice as regards media education.

The Toulouse meeting helped many participants to realise that established definitions of media education needed radical revision in face of the changing media scenario, new communication research, and different cultural contexts. Alternative definitions were offered by participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The colloquy is documented in Cary Bazalgette, Evelyne Bevort & Josiane Savino (eds.) (1992) *New Directions. Media Education Worldwide.* London, BFI, CLEMI, UNESCO.

Educating for the media and the digital age, 1999

The Twenty-Ninth General Conference of UNESCO in adopting Draft Resolution 61, approved that, for its programme in 1998-1999, support for media education should be ensured through different modalities and actions.

In April 1999, the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in co-operation with UNESCO organised the international conference 'Educating for the Media and the Digital Age' in Vienna, Austria. Invited representatives – media educators, researchers, administrators, etc. – from 33 countries in all continents attended the conference. The meeting resulted in recommendations addressed to UNESCO (see the box). It must be underlined that the concept of 'media education' in these recommendations equals the concept of 'media literacy', something that is understood by the definition and principles in the document.

In brief, this definition and these principles signify that media education must deal with *all communication media*, should be aimed at empowering *all citizens*, and should be present in all possible contexts during *the whole life*. Furthermore, media education should enable people to gain *understanding of how* and for what reasons *the media act* and operate in society, and to learn to analyse and *critically reflect* upon media messages. Since these processes are, among other things, obtained by people's own media production, individuals and groups must gain, or demand, *access to media for own production*. They must acquire *skills in using the media* to communicate with others, and to communicate *their own messages or stories*. It is, namely, the case that everyone not only shall have the right to information but also the right to *freedom of expression*, to *participation in society* and to building and sustaining *democracy*. In this context, media education also has a critical role in, and should be responsive to *situations of social and political conflicts*, war, natural and ecological disasters, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressed to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO adopted by the Vienna Conference 'Educating for the Media and the Digital Age' 18-20 April 1999

General definition, principles and statements of policy

Media Education . . .

- deals with all communication media and includes the printed word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology;
- enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills in using these media to communicate with others;
- ensures that people learn how to
  - analyse, critically reflect upon and create media texts;
  - identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts;
  - interpret the messages and values offered by the media;

- select appropriate media for communicating their own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience;
- gain, or demand access to media for both reception and production.

Media Education is part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy. While recognizing the disparities in the nature and development of Media Education in different countries, the participants of the conference "Educating for the Media and the Digital Age" recommend that Media Education should be introduced wherever possible within national curricula as well as in tertiary, non-formal and lifelong education.

- Media Education addresses a wide range of texts in all media (print, still image, audio and moving image) which provide people with rich and diverse cultural experiences.
- In countries moving towards the introduction of new technologies, Media Education can assist citizens to recognise the potential of the media to represent/misrepresent their culture and traditions.
- In situations where access to electronic or digital technologies is limited or non existent, Media Education can be based on available media texts in that context.
- Media Education should be aimed at empowering all citizens in every society and should ensure that people with special needs and those socially and economically disadvantaged have access to it.
- Media Education also has a critical role to play in, and should be responsive to, situations of social and political conflicts, war, natural disaster, ecological catastrophe, etc.

In the light of these general definitions and statements of policy, the Participants of the Vienna Conference recommend that

1. UNESCO should facilitate several forms of research at local and international levels to address different aspects of Media Education, including:

- exploratory projects in locations that wish to introduce or to develop Media Education programmes
- comparative international studies
- rigorous evaluation to provide evidence about the efficacy of Media Education programmes and practices

2. UNESCO should facilitate cross-cultural evaluation of initial and in-service teacher training methods and programmes, and ensure the sharing of experience in their utilisation.

3. UNESCO should develop appropriate guidelines, based on ethical principles, that address corporate sponsorship of Media Education initiatives and programmes to ensure that the educational integrity of curricula, pedagogies and resources are not compromised

4. UNESCO should facilitate partnerships and finance to fulfil the recommendations of the Vienna Conference and help to design an action plan.

5. UNESCO should make better known the existing copyright conventions and should encourage the development of national and regional copyright instruments which take full account of the needs of Media Education and which provide that the right to copy audio-visual and digital media for educational purposes is no less than for print material.

6. To facilitate and co-ordinate all these actions, UNESCO should set up an international Clearing House for Media Education.

This Clearing House should collaborate with functioning national and international networks and organisations that deal with Media Education. It should stress co-operation among all experts and organisations dealing in a formal or informal way with Media Education. It should:

- share strategies, disseminate Media Education materials, promote and stress awareness of Media Education;
- be a permanent observatory for the development of Media Education;
- give special attention to wide dissemination in order to encourage equality in development of Media Education in all countries and languages.

The Clearing House should be set up as soon as possible to fulfil all the recommendations adopted during the Vienna Conference

The participants urgently recommend that UNESCO review its programme for Media Education and allocate the resources required to implement these Recommendations.

UNESCO and all the participants of the Vienna Conference should endeavour to transmit and disseminate these recommendations to the national representatives of UNESCO and other interested institutions.

Approved unanimously by the participants of the Vienna Conference in plenary session.

Vienna, April 20th 1999

Following the recommendations of the Vienna Conference, the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO in 1999 approved to integrate into its programmes of 2000 and 2001 activities concerning Media Education both in the field of the Communication and the Education Sector.

UNESCO seminar on youth media education, 2002

In the light of the previous above-mentioned – and other – conferences on media education and media literacy, UNESCO's Communication Development Division, Paris, started to more radically reorient its actions in this field. The fact that media education, media literacy, community participation, etc., in practice is locally anchored, and differ markedly over the world, implies that most successful for promoting the realisation of media education or media literacy will probably be strategies of *regional and*

decentralised sustained actions among researchers, practitioners, national regulatory authorities, media prefessionals, educationalists, etc., and networks between them.

Therefore in February 2002, UNESCO – together with the Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, Spain, the European Observatory on Children and Television, Spain, the University of London, U.K., and The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, Nordicom, Sweden – arranged a seminar in Seville, Spain, hosted by Andalusia Television and the International Association of Educational Televisions (AITED). Experts from fourteen countries were invited to formulate recommendations addressed to UNESCO on how to bring about media literacy programs through decentralized actions and synergies of relevant groups (Buckingham, Frau-Meigs and Tornero, Artigas 2002).

A range of regional activities

UNESCO's website now presents a range of regional media development activities in the information society. UNESCO helps to strenghten the capacities of communication institutions to improve the training of media professionals and to raise awareness among the public in making best use of communication resources.

Particular attention is given to

- training of media specialists, particularly *women journalists*, in developing countries
- strenghtening news agencies, *public service broadcasting* and *community media* in developing countries
- assisting media in improving the quality of their *local contents* by providing training, production and distribution opportunities
- training in *media literacy* for users, particularly children and youth.

UNESCO, through its Communication and Information Sector, is therefore actively assisting young people to produce information themselves by supporting *youth media*, by facilitating the creation of media education and of youth information and communication networks, and by providing appropriate technologies to youth organisations.

UNESCO further says: 'Indeed, *media education* for youth should be part of the basic entitlement of every citizen. While recognising the disparities in the nature and development of media education in different countries UNESCO is encouraging efforts to introduce media education wherever possible within national curricula as well as in tertiary, non-formal and lifelong education.

Another important initiative for UNESCO is *INFOYOUTH*, a worldwide information network of government authorities, relevant agencies and youth organizations on youth-related issues. The establishment of various information structures all over the world is a high priority, reflecting a key concern to secure better conditions with which young people can access information.

By collecting information concerning different youth activities and projects and providing training, these info-structures meet the constantly increasing needs of young people and youth NGOs for an increased access to information for education and development. INFOYOUTH also supports the global preventive effort against HIV/AIDS.'

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4625&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Information literacy

Furthermore, UNESCO is to an increasing extent using the concept of 'information literacy'. The organisation says: 'Empowerment of people through Information Literacy is an important prerequisite for harnessing ICTs [information and communication technologies] for education and fostering equitable access to information and knowledge. Information literacy enhances the pursuit of knowledge by equipping individuals with the skills and abilities for critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives.

UNESCO's main strategy in the area of Information Literacy consists of awareness-raising about the importance of information literacy at all levels of the education process – basic education, primary and secondary education, technical and vocational training and lifelong education – and of establishing guidelines for integrating information literacy issues in curricula.

A particular focus will be on training teachers to sensitize them to the importance of information literacy in the education process to enable them to incorporate information literacy into their teaching and to provide them with appropriate pedagogical methods and curricula.

An essential element of the strategy is the integration of libraries into information literacy programmes as they provide resources and services in an environment that fosters free and open inquiry and serve as a catalyst for the interpretation, integration, and application of knowledge in all fields of learning.'

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15886&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

1. Other International Meetings on Media Education

Three world meetings on media education, 1995-2000

In 1995, a 'World Meeting on Media Education' was held in La Coruña, Spain. As one result the World Council for Media Education (WCME; Consejo Mundial de Educación para los Medios) was created in 1996, an international forum of researchers, educators and non-governmental organisations committed to media education.

A Committee of WCME then organised the 'II. World Meeting on Media Education' and, in co-operation with the University of São Paulo, the 'International Congress on Communication and Education' in May 1998 in São Paulo, Brazil. More than 200 persons from 30 countries participated in the congress, besides some hundred Brazilian teachers and journalists invited by the city.

At the Summit 2000 in Toronto, Canada (see below), the WCME held its 'III. World Meeting on Media Education' and decided to sustain its work through an on-line component called the World Network for Media Education (WNME).

Summit 2000

The probably biggest international event in media education ever, 'Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media – Beyond the Millennium', took place in Toronto, Canada, in May 2000. Summit 2000 was driven by the concerns and issues of children's media education in North America and was organised by The Alliance for Children and Television, Canada, The American Center for Children and Media, USA, The Association for Media Literacy, Ontario, Canada, and the Jesuit Communication Project, Canada. However, the event became an opportunity for those who create and distribute media television, film and new media for young people to meet with media educators from the whole world. The conference program consisted of three pillars:

- Media section – with topics such as: creative development, global business, social issues, changing technology, and research and education.
- Media education section – workshops, panels and papers on themes such as: marketing to youth audiences, media and multiculturalism, reading audiences, identity and cyberspace, debates in media education, television's representation of young people, etc.
- Academic section – with papers related to media and media education.

Some 1,400 participants from the media, media education, and the academic sectors and representing 55 different countries participated in plenary sessions and parallel seminars including nearly 250 presentations.

An overview of Summit 2000 is given in *Clipboard – A Media Education Newsletter from Canad*a, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, 2000, edited by John J. Pungente, SJ, Jesuit Communication Project, and also chairperson of the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO). Of special relevance from a researcher's view-point is the fact that almost thirty academic papers written for the Summit 2000 are available on CD.

Two international forums of children and media researchers

The need for researchers active in the field of children and media to exchange theories, methods and findings also led to their first major international meeting ever – The International Forum of Children and Media Researchers, 'Youth and Media – Tomorrow'. This Forum was held in Paris in April 1997 and organised by a small network in France, GRREM (Group de Recherche sur la Relation Enfants/Médias; Research Group on the Relationship between Children and the Media). UNESCO undertook patronage of the Forum, which was supported by France Télévision and others, and attended by 350 participants, not only researchers but also teachers, media professionals and regulators from nearly 40 countries.

GRREM underlined the need to better understand – in light of information provided by researchers – what positive role the media might play in children's lives, and what children and young people are making of the media that surround them. Research presented related mainly to the daily themes: beyond media effects?; media and social concerns; the why and future of research; and media education, media literacy.

The Second International Forum of Children and Media Researchers, 'Young People and the Media – Tomorrow. Issues and Outlook', in November 2000 in Sydney, Australia, was hosted by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO with organisational support from the Australian Broadcasting Authority. This Second Forum of Children and Media Researchers promoted discussions on a diversity of research and policy issues in all areas of the media, including television, print, radio and the Internet. It also provided an occasion for dialogue and interaction between members of the research community and representatives of research user groups, such as regulators, producers and educators.

The Forum was attended by some 300 participants. Papers and posters focused on the main themes given in advance: youth production and consumption of media; globalisation and socialisation; policy and regulation of media for young people; and, interwoven with the these themes, approaches to research methodologies.

EU media literacy activities

The European Commission has also been demonstrating a growing interest in media literacy. For example, media literacy is a subject that has been given priority in calls for proposals of the EU *e*Learning Programme launched in 2000. Projects considered

for funding have, among others, been those encouraging the production and distribution of media literacy related content, or intensifying networking around media education related issues. Several workshops and expert groups on media literacy have also been organised by the Commission, and a survey mapping the situation of media education and media literacy in the EU member states has been conducted.

One of many media literacy project funded by EU has been Media-Educ, meaning, among other things, a conference organised by the British Film Institute's Education Department and taking place in Northern Ireland especially for media educators. The majority of delegates came from various kinds of regional and national initiatives, whether run by charities, local government, multi-agency consortia or universities, and from film institutes and government departments.

A majority of delegates expressed the strong need and desire for a media educators' network across Europe, for regular network events, for a forum to exchange best practice across Europe, for dialogue with a relevant EC department, for a coordinated European Media Education policy to reach official policymakers, and for the further development and sustainability of initiatives at a European level.

Another outcome of Media-Educ is The European Charter for Media Literacy to support the establishment of media literacy across Europe. By signing the Charter, organisations and individuals endorse a specific definition of media literacy, and commit to actions that will contribute to its development. The Charter, available on http://www.euromedialiteracy.eu, thus facilitates consensus and networking amongst those working for media literacy in different European countries. The website also offers a forum for discussion, and links, an archive and research listings. The aims of the Charter are

- to foster greater clarity and wider consensus in Europe on media literacy and media education
- to raise the public profile of media literacy and media education in each European nation, and in Europe as a whole
- to encourage the development of a permanent and voluntary network of media educators in Europe, bound together by their common aims, and enabled by their institutional commitment.

The European Charter for Media Literacy has been developed out of an initiative/idea of the U.K. Film Council and the British Film Institute by a Steering Group representing major institutions in a limited number of countries, who have each committed to ensuring support for Steering Group meeting costs for an initial three year period (2005-2008).

Another example of a media literacy project funded by EC is Mediappro – a comparable project in Europe and North America about the way young people (12-18) appropriate the new media in network, including new portable audio-scripto-visual media (mobile phone, Internet, video games, multimedia supports). The findings will be presented in June 2006.

Mediappro tends to contribute to a safer use of the Internet and the new portable audio-scripto-visual technologies. Its final aim is to identify relevant pedagogical orientations to help persons from the educational field (teachers, educators, parents) to develop educational practices to make young people responsible, autonomous and aware about the Internet.

2. On the Local Level

All over the world there countless organisations, associations and networks dedicated to media education and media literacy for children, young people, teachers in school and other media educators outside school in informal settings. Many of the organisations and networks offer advice, lessons and facts and arrange conferences and seminars. (On the Clearinghouse website, we have collected a database of some 250 organisations and networks over the world engaged in children, young people and media, and many of them focus on media education/media literacy (see http://www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse.php). In some countries media education and media literacy initiatives are initiated or supported by the state – but much more often they are run by voluntary organisations or grass-roots movements both in and outside school. It is, naturally, impossible to give an overview of the progress of media literacy across the world on this local.

Media literacy in practice

Considering media literacy in practice – how is it realised after all? On the one hand, there are many positive reports on case studies. Here are a few different examples, of which some are supported by research:

Canada

How to practice media education in the classroom

Canada is often considered the country in which media literacy is most developed. In 1999, media education became a compulsory subject in Canadian schools. Before that, teachers had been networking and establishing teachers' associations for media education; they also arranged conferences, and exerted pressure on the authorities. 1989, ten years earlier, was a milestone in the Canadian teachers' struggle to include media education in the curriculum, since their book *Media Literacy Resource Guide* (Duncan 1989) was accepted and released by the Ministry of Education of Ontario, one of Canada's provinces. This book includes numerous tips about how to practise media education in the classroom.

Other provinces in the country made similar documents. As a base the resource guide explains eight key concepts that teachers and students should focus on. These key concepts have inspired many other countries, as well:

1. All media are constructions
2. The media construct reality
3. Audiences negotiate meaning in media
4. Media have commercial implications

5. Media contain ideological and value messages
6. Media have social and political implications
7. Form and content are closely related in the media
8. Each medium has unique aesthetic forms

Many other resources have been made available for Canadian teachers, such as *Scanning Television* (Hartcourt Brace, Canada 1997) consisting of forty short videos, mostly documentary, that were culled by teachers from over a hundred items and copyright cleared for classroom use. The collection was designed mostly for secondary classrooms, and deals with all of the eight key concepts. There is also a teachers' guide to the videos. Another boon has been *Cable in the Classroom* beginning in 1995 and founded by the cable operators and programmers to provide from all their shows some that are for educational use. An ongoing concern about media violence gave rise to a Metro Toronto School Board publication, *Responding to Media Violence*, and so on (Andersen, Duncan and Pungente 1999).

Media education and at-risk adolescents

A more specific Canadian project is The Alternative Career Education (ACE) Program (Rother 2000) assisting at-risk students (16-19 years of age), who struggle with conventional educational approaches. The ACE Program is a student-centered, multi-media/technology learning environment. The ACE curriculum includes learning about the mass media and the technologies associated with it, reading/analysing and studying popular culture texts, having students write/produce their own media texts, and making connections between the English Language Arts and Media Education. Media texts are here referring to print texts, such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, as well as non-print texts, such as videos, television and radio commercials.

The ACE students are physically and socially indistinguishable from typical high school students – but their reading levels are low and their negative experiences in the school, and at home, have left many students 'turned off' to schooling.

Rother's methodology was a single case, classroom based action research design, focusing on the ACE Program and the ACE students, from 1991 to 1997. The results demonstrated that the ACE students:

- read media texts with considerable sophistication. They were not only able to read/analyse the literal denotative aspects of texts, but were also able to interpret the connotative level;
- were able to identify ideologies in a text and relate them to their own experiences;
- acquired and used specific aspects of media languages and concepts in their writings and productions;
- were more willing to undertake the kind of school writing they are expected to do, using media texts as a source for their writing;
- demonstrated a critical, reflective stance, revealing insights about themselves as individuals and learners.

The conclusion of the study is that the ACE students are literate, and that traditional practices of literacy education have prevented adults from acknowledging their literacy. Schooling's notion of literacy which uses de-contextualized print texts as the only data source to determine the ACE students' literacy reflects a model of literacy that is outdated and inadequate.

USA

A media literacy curriculum on media violence

Many of the Washington State's media literacy initiatives in the U.S. have not been directly orchestrated by the state but overseen by a media literacy advocacy organisation, the Teen Futures Media Network (http://www.teenhealthandthemedia.org). In 1998, this organisation with support of the State undertook a four-year project to develop a media literacy curriculum to be presented in the Seattle public schools. The curriculum was designed to address the issue of media and violence. The curricular design involved six lessons: 1) defining violence, 2) examining why people watch media violence, 3) deconstructing media, 4) deconstructing media violence, 5) examining conflict resolution, and 6) developing violence prevention recommendations for a middle or high school. As part of the curriculum's design, the Teen Futures Media Network held annual instructional sessions before the start of each year for the middle and high school teachers who would be using the curriculum.

In addition to presenting this curriculum to nearly four thousand students in the Seattle Public School System during a four-year period, an evaluation team (Lisosky, Cohen & Sager 2002, 2003) assessed the effectiveness of the lessons among the student participants and the faculty instructors using both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The evaluation team gathered data from pre- and post-tests distributed to the students who participated in this media literacy instruction. These data annually revealed that after completing the unit, the students' definition of the term 'violence' had broadened in scope, and their ability to critique violent media messages in their environment had grown. Significant gains were also found in the students' knowledge of media strategies used to capture an audience's attention and in their knowledge of how to use media themselves to prevent violence around their home and school. Remarkably, a control group of students surveyed in year four exhibited no significant changes in these outcome measures.

To augment the survey data, nearly one hundred student participants and a dozen faculty instructors were interviewed to assess their opinions of the media and violence curriculum. Through these interviews it was revealed that the unit on violence and media significantly influenced students who participated.

Less television, less aggression

The objective of a U.S. field experiment (Robinson et al. 2001) was to assess the effects of general reduction of children's television, video films, and video game use on

aggressive behavior, as well as on children's perceptions of the world as mean and scary. Before the study, the children (mean age 8.9 years) used these media combined about 3 hours and 20 minutes a day on average.

105 third and fourth graders in one public elementary school received an 18-lesson, 6-month classroom curriculum during 1999-2000 with tips and advice on how to reduce the media use in question. At the end of the period, they used the three media on average 2 hours a day.

Compared to 120 children in a socio-demographically and scholastically matched elementary school who did not receive this intervention and used the media as usual, aggression among the 'test children' significantly decreased as measured by 'peer ratings of aggression' and 'observed verbal aggression on the playground'. ('Observed physical aggression on the playground' and 'parental reports of aggressive behavior' gave no statistically significant differences although they pointed in the same direction. The same was true of children's self-reported perceptions of the world as mean and scary.)

Active mediation reduced aggression-proneness after a cartoon

An experiment (Nathanson and Cantor 2000) found that talking to children ('active mediation') reduced aggression-proneness after a cartoon. The two researchers performed the study with 351 second through sixth graders in different U.S. schools. Before viewing a 5 minutes' episode of the cartoon *Woody Woodpecker*, one group of children (of three) were encouraged to think about the consequences of violence from the victim's perspective, i.e., these children's 'fictional involvement' with the victim was increased. In the episode, Woody Woodpecker is annoyed, because a well-intentioned man, a 'tree medic', has interrupted his nap. Woody spends the episode trying to get rid of the man by committing various violent acts against him. The episode ends when Woody knocks the man unconscious and then happily returns to his nap.

The findings were statistically significant. The boys, even the oldest ones, who watched this unrealistic cartoon without the mediation were more aggression-prone after viewing. However, the boys who received the mediation did not show an increase in aggressive tendencies. Neither the cartoon nor the mediation affected the girls' aggression- proneness.

Some likely explanations, supported by the children's answers, are that children who received the mediation perceived the violence inflicted on the victim to be less justified. Rather than identifying with the more attractively portrayed and humorous perpetrator of violence (conditions that, according to previous research, encourage viewers' aggression), these children viewed the violence differently. And although the actual consequences of violence for the victim were not shown (research indicates that depiction of the negative consequences of televised violence inhibits aggressive responses), these children could imagine such consequences.

Japan

Media literacy for Japanese third graders

Komaya and Muto (2002) at Ochanomizu University in Japan created media literacy educational materials to help elementary school teachers new to this area to introduce lessons to third graders. The material, *Ukkie Has Fun Exploring TV*, consists of two parts, 'Exploration 1: The media and the creation of fashion through commercials and character goods' and 'Exploration 2: Reality and fantasy on TV including the issue of violence', each consisting of a 30-minute introductory teaching video, a teacher's guidebook, a 14-minute classroom video, and children's activity sheets.

Using this material, the researchers implemented a short introductory media literacy curriculum for first and third graders (6-7 and 8-9 years of age) focusing on 'Exploration 1'. It has two building blocks: (1) to help children learn about, and gain a greater understanding of, both the process of construction and the business intentions behind making TV commercials and character goods, (2) to create an opportunity for active participation as creators of the media.

The effectiveness of the materials was verified with a pretest and a posttest in a piece of quasi-experimental research: Three classes in the first and third grades were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. Before beginning, teachers in all groups attended a four-hour orientation on the project. The children in Experimental Group 1 were given a treatment of four hours of media literacy lessons using all material. The children in Experimental Group 2 were given a short treatment, only watching the classroom video. As a control, the final class had no treatment at all.

The 'Commercials test' consisted of five categories, including the concept of commercialism, specific qualities of commercials, the purpose of making commercials and character goods, and existence of sponsors.

The findings showed that the majority of first and third graders enjoyed the lessons and classroom video much. Understanding of commercials increased significantly although many children felt the lessons were difficult. Moreover, especially the third graders came to pay attention to TV commercials, as well as those in printed media such as flyers or newspaper advertisements, and to compare goods with commercial images at supermarkets. The children wanted to make and study more commercials by themselves. In sum, the project showed that especially third grade children developed the ability to read and comprehend the media subjectively and critically.

Argentina

The National Ministry of Education in Argentina created in 2003-2004 a national Media Education Program to coordinate various initiatives between the media and the schools across the country. The program has the media industry as its main partners and coordinates several different projects. The main goal is to consider the students as cultural producers who know how to read different texts (media contents) and, certainly, how to produce them.

The project 'The School Goes to the Cinema' allows 10,000 secondary school students (13 and 14 years old) across the country from very poor neighborhoods to go

to the cinema, during school hours, to see three Argentine films per year. After the film, the director, writer, actors and other professionals who took part in the film production talk with the students about the way the film was made. For most of the students it is their first time in front of the big screen.

The project 'The School Makes Television' invites all 11- and 12-year-old primary students in urban schools to write a fictional story about a certain subject. Six stories from the entire country (one per region) are then produced as 'advertisements' and shown on all Argentine TV channels for a month. In order to produce a story, a student needs to investigate, learn about publicity (be critical), conduct research on the issue and write the story.

'Moments of Radio' invites primary schools in rural areas to write a story on 'Legends and characters in my town'. Twenty-three stories (one per province) are chosen and broadcast on all AM and FM radio stations in the country for a month on radio shows with the highest audience ratings. The project connects rural students with their roots and the elderly in their towns, and displays the value of their culture and traditions for the rest of the country (mostly the urban population, which ignores rural areas).

'Journalists for a Day' invites all 16- and 17-year-old secondary students to write an in-depth report on a subject that interests them. A jury consisting of editors of all newspapers chooses some 70 reports from across the country. The first Sunday in December, the newspapers publish on a full page a report written by the students. In order to write their report, students read newspapers and professional reports, investigate the social problems affecting their own lives – and write.

It is hoped that students through this media education program already from primary school, will learn that they have a voice, that they will be able to study how the media function, and learn how to use them. And the entire Argentine society, no matter where one lives, will be able to watch a TV campaign written by small children, listen to rural traditions on the radio selected and expressed by rural children who do not normally have a voice in the public sphere, and read about what affects, worries and interests the country's youths.

Sources: Morduchowicz (2004) and http://mailman.me.gov.ar/escuelaymedios

Sweden

Learning by making media

A Swedish research project (Danielsson 2002) dealt with children's creation of videos and other media at school. The theoretical base of the project included experiences from aesthetic praxis, as well as children's reception and perception of images. Creativity, language and communication were key concepts.

Empirically, the project consisted of three qualitative and ethnographic studies: The first concerned pupils making videos in four schools during one term in two Stockholm suburbs, characterized by a culturally diverse population. Half were high school seniors (13-15/16 years old), and half were elementary school students in first to third grades (7-9/10 years old). The second study was part of a broader national two-year

investigation of 40 schools participating in developmental work on images and media. The third study was based on eleven seminars for teachers and media pedagogues in different parts of the country during one year.

Among other findings, the pupils' media productions show 1) the importance of creativity and its functions in an aesthetic process, 2) how children of different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds provide a rich variation of media messages, and 3) that communication can grow via the process of creating a video or in the product itself. Examples: Children and young people willingly tell about themselves and their own realities if allowed to choose subjects themselves. Especially the students in the culturally diverse school environments pointed out that they had learned more of the Swedish language and of co-operation through the video production process. Girls' activity could increase dramatically when the more technically experienced boys were not nearby and the media pedagogue discreetly stepped aside. Important for all children were the feeling of being taken seriously, having responsibility of one's own, *daring*, and strengthened self-esteem.

The project also underlines the necessity of more media literacy in teacher training colleges and in teachers' continuing training, so that the adults can be better prepared to meet their students through media education.

Africa

Soap operas for education and social change

The functionality of media in tackling social ills and motivating young people is what is aimed at in many countries in particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America, where producers use the format of radio and TV drama, soap operas, *telenovelas*, docu-soaps and other entertaining genres for *education*, that is, in order to raise debate and contribute to solving health and other problems in society. Within primarily non-formal education, the use of entertainment-education (EE) in an integrated manner and often in the form of multimedia initiatives has been growing significantly over the past decade, not least addressing health-related issues such as HIV/AIDS. The ideal communicative scenario in this respect is 'communication for social change', i.e., to deal with the challenge of providing an information and dialogue-rich enabling environment where the media contents contribute to empowering the audiences in facing health-related and other social issues and fighting them in everyday life.

One of hundreds of such programs is the youth-oriented South African drama series *Yizo Yizo* with extremely high audience ratings – aiming at reflecting reality (ordinary black South Africans living in townships) rudely and toughly (portraying children's experiences of formal schooling, including violence, sexual harassment and rape, and drug abuse). The series is commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Education Television. Research indicates that the aim of the series at revealing the depth and complexity of social crises, and at raising debate and action in society, succeeded to a great extent (Gultig 2004).

3. Media Literacy for Media Educators

Although strong voices from many places in the world are heard urging for media education and media literacy, and although there are successful examples, the practical realisation of media education/media literacy has not gone on fairly well in most countries as a whole. This is the case regarding media education in school. The same is valid for media literacy in the wider sense. Information about children, young people and the media to adults and the process of making all citizens media literate have not found effective forms.

Thus, we can conclude that there are – internationally and in many countries – principles and statements on paper confirming that media education and media literacy are essential. There are also bright spots in practice – but they are shining in isolation. In most cases and nations, media education or media literacy is leading a languishing life in practice, mostly relying on grass-root moments and single enthusiasts.

There is also a strong claim for more research, evaluations and assessments. Even if some research studies showing that students have learnt what they have been taught, we know very little about the long term consequences of media literacy education. Are they lasting? Is the level of media literacy generally raised?

Obstacles to media education

There are many factors preventing media education and media literacy. Even if also these factors differ between countries and regions in the world, some recurrent ones are the following:

Media literacy may be hampered by *the media themselves*. This can manifest itself in, for instance, difficulties in copying and clearing copyrights of audio-visual material for educational use – especially if the goals of media education are to teach students and ordinary people critical media thinking and democratic participation. Another example is that it can be difficult to persuade the established media to broadcast successful programmes made by ordinary children, young people and adults. The media may argue that such programmes do not fit into the schedule, or that the ordinary audience lacks interest in programmes made by non-professionals.

There is also in many countries a *lack of genuine political will and support*, on the national or local level. If there is media education at all, it is mostly initiated by a grassroots movement of enthusiasts. This is in itself an advantage, as media education must be rooted in the needs of children, young people and the local community, but the movement also has to be supported, be integrated into a general media policy. Solitary fiery spirits may at last be burnt out.

A third complex of factors preventing media education is *the media educators' situation. Training of teachers* in media education is mostly lacking or insufficient, or, if it exists, it is almost always implemented as an optional area in teacher training colleges and not as a compulsory element. This is related to the fact that in most coun-

tries, where media education is supposed to be taught in school, media education is not a subject of its own but shall, according to the curricula, be integrated in other 'mother disciplines'. Moreover media literacy for young people is almost solely implemented in secondary education, although it would be at least as pertinent to younger children. Actually, the most urgent need identified for better media education in school in an international survey performed by David Buckingham and Kate Domaille (2004) is in-depth teacher training.

One consequence for media educators is, mostly, low status of, and no one really responsible for, *the subject*. (This is in contrast to the high status of the more technical learning how to handle computers and the Internet.) Other consequences are *lack of teaching resources* and difficulties in formulating and assessing *goals* for media education.

This might be further complicated by *the kind of education system* – one must bear in mind that the education system is different in different countries, sometimes being centralised, sometimes decentralised; sometimes public, sometimes private; sometimes controlled, sometimes not.

If looking upon media education as something limited to school, we must also remember that *some children in the world never attend school* and of those who do, many do not reach grade five, and many more never go to secondary school.

In several countries projects of 'media education', 'media literacy/media competence', 'education for communication', 'communication for social change' are, actually, happening outside school, often led by voluntary organisations and/or in the forms of local youth and community-based projects. When talking about media education globally, it is therefore, as mentioned, necessary to widen the scope and *include all kinds of non-formal contexts*, as well.

Furthermore, teachers in school – or other media educators – often lack *interdisciplinary, national and international networks networks* which facilitate conferences and newsletters providing input from various directions – tips about new pedagogic methods, books, audio-visual material, and so on. To be prosperous, media education also has to be based on a continuous *co-operation with groups other than teachers,* for example, parents, researchers, media practitioners and viewer action groups, something that seldom is the case. Moreover, teachers and media ecudators themselves often belong to the *middle class*, which means that they are striving for other kinds of symbolic capital than those conveyed by popular media and which most of their students use.

All these – and other – hindering factors often contribute to confusion on part of the teachers and others with interest in media education, and, consequently, a *pedagogy of media education not thoroughly thought out*.

The conclusion is that if media literacy shall be realised and successful in and outside school, teacher's and other adults' training must be implemented and improved, and school leaders' and politicians' awareness of the need for media education must be raised.

Media literacy for media educators are of utmost concern.

Pedagogy

The multidisciplinary nature of media education or media literacy, and the lack of clear goals and assessments, lead, thus, often to the fact that its pedagogy rests on different and obscure grounds, creating confusion. Let us give two concrete examples:

Russian teachers and media education

Are Russian teachers ready for the implementation of media education? What is their general attitude regarding media education in school and at university? What objectives of media education are most important to them? To what extent do they use elements of media education in their teaching?

The answers of 57 teachers at secondary schools in Taganrog, Russia (Fedorov 2005) showed that three quarters of the teachers support the idea of media education in school, and that more than half feel the need for the introduction of a new major – Media Education – at pedagogical institutes of higher learning. Most of the teachers surveyed also believe that a combination of autonomous and integrated media lessons is the most effective way to develop media education in Russia and thus increase media literacy in the young generation.

However, despite the fact that the majority of the teachers in the study felt that developing the audience's critical thinking is one of the most important aims of media education, the same teachers place great stress on the value of a 'protectionist' approach. They undervalue goals to develop democratic thinking among pupils and increase students' knowledge about theory and history of media and media culture.

Moreover, despite most of the teachers' general support of media education (in theory), only one-third of them actually use elements of media education in their lessons.

According to the teachers surveyed, the greatest obstacle on the path to media education in the Russian classrooms is the absence of financial motivation. However, the researcher asserts that important factors also include the passive anticipation of the authority's directives and the insufficient level of knowledge among today's Russian teachers in terms of theory and methods of media education.

Computer use in school – conflicting views among young children and teachers in Sweden?

In a Swedish research project on children and new information and communication technology (ICT) (Hernwall 2003) the author questions whether Swedish teachers have learned how to integrate computer use into young children's schoolwork. The study presents qualitative data on computer use among four school classes in Sweden – in grades 2-3 (ca. 8-9 years of age) and grade 6 (ca. 12 years of age). The author found that these children experienced the computer as offering them many uses: games, writing, surfing on the Internet, chatting, e-mail use, creating home pages, etc. – all children seemed to be able to find a use that appealed to them. Generally, especially

the 8 to 9-year-olds had an obvious interest in e-communication – that is, they mentioned primarily social interaction on the Internet when discussing their computer use. This e-communication gave them the opportunity to keep in contact with other children, find new friends (generally or in a more simple, interesting and different way), test different roles, check out which behaviour is acceptable and which is not, exchange experiences, and so on. Communicating and acting in the different arenas of the Internet thus also contribute to children's ongoing identity formation, the researcher says.

However, the children in the study were hesitant about the functions of the computer as regards schoolwork and felt that fewer – rather than more – computers are needed in school. The children found it difficult to imagine the 'useful' computer, and regarded it more as something fun that has to do with things other than usual schoolwork, or something that constitutes a 'space between' school and leisure. All four classes had computers at their schools, but the children perceived the value of the computers and ICT at school as 'limited'; the computer brought the opposition of work and amusement to the fore.

In sum, the researcher underlines that it is not possible to introduce computers in school unless pedagogical practice is well planned. The Internet, which teachers often regard as a basis of knowledge where the students can collect knowledge to critically scrutinize and treat, is instead viewed by young children (at least the 8 to 12-year-olds studied) as a space in which to participate in a dialogue – a social forum. (Other studies indicate that older students, naturally, place more stress on the usefulness of computers for schoolwork.) According to the study, a fruitful pedagogy should start from the children's – the agents' – perspective and should not seek to incorporate Internet use within the frame of an adult idea of how school ought to be.

Sometimes, and in some countries more than others, the claims for media education or media literacy are of a *protective* nature – e.g., to protect the audience against undesired influences of prejudices, stereotypes, violent images, etc., in the media contents. This is what Masterman (1985) referred to as the inoculationist approach.

Sometimes, and more and more often in an increasingly number of countries, the claims for media education are instead of a *participatory* nature – e.g., to teach and *empower* children in school and other population groups to use the audiovisual media, as well as computers and the Internet, for communication and participation.

Often – but not in all countries – one central aim of media education, both when it is of a protective and when it is of a participatory nature, is that it shall lead to *critical thinking and reflection*.

We will touch somewhat more on these basic lines within media literacy pedagogy in the next section, 'Children's and Young People's Own Media Production'.

III Children's and Young People's Own Media Production

Nowadays many websites, as well as voluntary and formal organisations, are offering children and young people advice or lessons about how to produce media content – making a short film, setting up a website, etc. There are also several school networks where classes exchange experience online or send 'video letters' about their experiences to other classes in the same or other countries. Moreover, there are quite a number of festivals and awards for short films, videos and websites made by children and young people.

However, there is less research about the *consequences* of children's and young people's own media production, both in the short and, especially, in the long run. During the latest years, much research in richer countries has focused on children's creativity online – in chat rooms, communities, when making blogs, setting up websites, editing digital pictures, etc. Often, this research concludes that young people's or certain groups' Internet creativity plays a role for their identity seeking and identity construction, self-expression, and social communication with peers in different regards. More recently, children's and young people's mobile telephony has been included in the studies. In addition, there is current research (by David Buckingham and Andrew Burn, see http://www.childrenyouthandmediacentre.co.uk) developing a prototype, which will enable young people to create their own adventure and role-playing games.

Even less research seems to have analysed the consequences of children's and young people's production of contents for traditional media – print media, radio, television, film, etc. Scattered studies performed in school settings show that such media work may lead to a better understanding of how media works – but there are also studies indicating that certain media production can be problematic, because of, among other things, lack of appropriate equipment, lack of time, or lack of motivation among children to communicate with people they do not know in projects designed by adults (Ai-Leen 1999, de Block et al., 2004).

This may also have to do with the fact that the pedagogic approach is not well thought-out. Experiences of media education and media literacy initiatives among children tend to show that media education often fails if it only seeks to get the audience dissociate itself from bad TV programmes and other media contents, that is, media education often fails if it attempts to 'vaccinate' or 'inoculate' students or viewers. Neither will that media education succeed very well, which only trains students in critical analyses of various programmes and other

media content, because this procedure becomes too abstract for many students. Instead, that media education stands a good chance of succeeding that sandwiches critical analysis and students' own production, a production – and this is important – that at the same time emanates from the young people's own pleasure and motivation. The first times students make, for instance, video films, they often imitate popular products. However, if students are allowed to make more films in the long run, the production process in itself will instead lead to choice of other topics and formats, and to reflection and critique.

The Danish media researcher and pedagogue Birgitte Tufte (1995) has worked out a useful zigzag model based on such reasoning and which consists of three stages:

- to critically analyse professional TV programmes, films, or other media contents
- to produce video films, or other media contents oneself; and
- to critically analyse one's own production together with other people.

And then the model begins all over again.

Evidence that this kind of zigzag media education with great emphasis on children's and young people's own participation in media production – i.e., learning by doing – often is increasing media literacy and understanding of how the media function is found in several sources. The Clearinghouse has collected in yearbooks (e.g., von Feilitzen & Carlsson 1999, von Feilitzen & Bucht 2001) and in several newsletters more than fifty practical examples of 'media by children', presented by teachers, single media professionals, researchers and organisations all over the world. The examples have different backgrounds and aims and represent projects both inside but more often outside school. They also apply to different media – TV, video, film, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines, photography, books, CDs, and others. Here one finds, for example, Swedish children making animated films; Austrian children formulating a declaration of what good television is for them; Japanese children sending video letters in English to school classes in other countries; children in Ghana and Spain making radio programmes; Indian working children regularly producing a wall paper on the rights of working children; Australian children making own music and recording it on CDs, as well as writing short stories for a book collection; children and young people producing on the Internet; and much much more.

These examples are what one usually calls 'best practices' of children's and young people's media production – where the media professionals, researchers, teachers, voluntary organisations, etc., have observed positive consequences either through practical experience or, in a few cases, by means of more strict evaluations or research.

Taken together these over fifty best practices show interesting consequences:

- *Pride, power, self-esteem*
  The examples clearly show that children through their creative media participation have become empowered – that the participation has *strengthened their pride, sense of power, and self-esteem* since they have felt that their voices are worth listening to, that they belong to their community, that they have achieved an understanding of others and of their own culture.
- *Wish to meet everyday dreams and local reality in the media – cultural identity*
  Certain examples show – as do children's explicitly expressed viewpoints about what they want to see, hear and read about in the media – that children often wish to meet their *own everyday dreams and their own local, social and ethnic culture and reality* in the media. This means that children strengthen their *own cultural identity*.
- *Critical understanding and increased media competence*
  Moreover, the examples support the thesis that many of the goals set up by media education are realised through children's participation in the media: participation in 'real' media strengthens children's ability and curiosity, gives them *a critical understanding of the media,* and *increases their media competence*.
- *Greater social justice with audio-visual media*
  Some examples also demonstrate that children's participation in especially *audio-visual media* production is particularly suitable for children who otherwise do not manage well in the traditional school with its print-based culture, which is why media production in itself brings about *greater social justice*.
- *Interest in society, steps towards increased democracy*
  Several examples also show that children's participation in the media bridges the gap between media use, on one hand, and children's participation in their community, on the other, something which, in turn, has had further consequences: When the media participation has been something real for them (on terms not only directed or controlled by adults), the media participation has led to *knowledge of and interest in the local community* and *inspired collective action*, or the children have been able to use the media in order to *improve their situation in the community*. With that some progress towards more worthy media representations of children, as well as towards *increased democracy*, could be made.

These consequences are especially noticeable if the own media production has been included in a 'real' context, that is real radio programmes, video films, magazines, web sites, etc., *that have a real child and/or adult audience*. The examples also show that *project success requires that adults* not only listen to children but also *participate with the children and young people in equal partnership*, a partnership where all involved are experts.

Increased participation in the media by children and youth may, thus – besides counteracting the clear underrepresentation of children in the media contents – contribute to realising children's right to freedom of expression and children's right to participate in media and in society. At the same time, children will – at least to some extent – be protected against offensive and potentially harmful media contents, since they through their media participation will develop a critical thinking towards the media.

It is important to underline again that not all attempts at own media production are successful – they require, as mentioned, the participating children's pleasure and motivation, as well as time, adult support and certain resources.

1. Two Examples of Best Practices

This section reproduces two brief articles from *News from ICCVOS*, No. 1, 2004, about children's and young people's own media production, where the consequences of their taking part in the media production are described.

Children's Media Production in Lanalhue, Chile

In the rural areas of Chile, children between the ages of 6 and 14 study in public boarding schools far away from their parents. One of these schools is in Lanalhue, which means 'lost soul' in the native language, situated 700 kilometers south of the capital of Santiago. The 90 pupils come from farmer families of extreme poverty. Seventy per cent of them descend from the native population. During the weekends, the pupils return back home and work in agricultural farming. Many of them have to walk an hour or more to get to school. The closest city is situated 16 kilometers away, but the children do not have resources to travel to the city.

In the face of the school's isolation and insufficient infrastructure, broadcast television and radio are the main ways of contact with the outside world. We went there with the purpose to teach the children to be radio reporters and to produce their own news about their school and community.[1]

Children as protagonists in the production process

The pupils did not have any experience of media education, media literacy or education in communication via media (von Feilitzen 2002).[2] Despite the educational reform that the government carried out in the 90s, a high correlation still persists between schools of extreme poverty and lack of education in media and technologies. In this case, the teachers needed support in learning how to use radio equipment. To help them, a method of teach-and-learn was designed.

The method solved the education problem of the teachers through the use of the children as protagonists in the process of radio production. The implied presumption is that media are a tool in the service of the basic human communication needs between persons and their surroundings in accordance with their own experiences, problems and interests. It implies acknowledgement of the significance of community and culture in each situation that is to be investigated. As communication educators we are more concerned with teaching the children to be protagonists in the whole communi-

cation process than focusing on the medium itself. Therefore the work centered on the children's active learning in being reporters.

Results

Educating the children to be reporters entails that we use the radio as a pretext to develop better skills in thinking in such areas as communication, expression, discussion, analysis of reality, selection and reproduction of events that are enduring and independent of the chosen medium. During the three days the project lasted, the children produced 33 minutes of news-broadcast on their own. They were able to define what news is, to report news items, to edit and finally also to record them.

To achieve this we organized different workshops for training: 'The Ear', to develop the ability of monitoring; 'Components of the Radio', to handle the language of broadcasting; 'Expression', where the children learned how to breath and to announce; and, finally, 'Interview', to handle the recorder, to interview and to relate histories through the radio. Through teamwork and by assuming the real roles in a process of production the children had a meeting to discuss the important events in the area and to select the subjects for the programme. Then the children went out in the district to make reports: they made manuscripts, edited and recorded the news. The news was broadcast at school. The news was also transmitted to the whole rural district thanks to the radio station in the closest city, which became interested in transmitting the programme. The children walked all the way to the professional broadcasting studio to present it to the local community.

Impacts of the children's experiences

The first emotionally moving indicator is the children's happiness, pleasure and satisfaction while learning. Even though the working day started early in the morning they insisted on working until eight o'clock in the evening.

> *We threw ourselves out in the adventure of being reporters, they said.*

When they understood that messages represent the reality in which they live they came to appreciate teamwork and expressed that they felt responsible and important. They articulated expressions, such as:

> *I never thought that I would be capable of producing a programme.*
>
> *I've never felt intelligent before.*

Another consequence is that the children developed a sense of utility in relation to their own community. They became conscious that even though they live in poverty, their surroundings are full of information and histories. They became aware of the necessity to document their daily life. This strengthens their identity:

> *We discovered that our grandparents had to work with farming because they didn't have the opportunity to study. Those who were able to study didn't use uniform and went barefooted to school during the winter.*

This experience also allowed the children to open up a door to the future as they dream of being reporters as grown-ups. Perhaps the words of Magdalena 11 years old express the common feeling of what this experience meant for the pupils:



Child radio reporters in Lanalhue.
Photo: José Antonio Soto

It's unbelievable to feel like a reporter, because it allows us to see more than our own square meter.[3]

The method especially designed for this project[4] has been acknowledged in different seminars and has been replicated by other universities in Chile because of its innovative focus on pupils' media production.[5] To our country this method seems relevant, but we also need to promote other learning processes for children.

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Notes

1. Part of the Catholic University mission is to contribute professionally to areas of great social need in the country. The project was carried out in July, 2002.
2. von Feilitzen, Cecilia (2002) Aprender haciendo: reflexiones sobre la educación y los medios de comunicación, *Revista Comunicar* 18, 2002, ISSN: 1134-3478, pp. 21-26.
3. A documentary for television was made based on the experience of the project. It shows the children in their learning process. The documentary was awarded an honourable mention at the 'Festival de Video Educativo de Chile, Videas 2002'. It has also been broadcast on television.
4. Condeza, Rayén (2002) 'Producir para los medios: niños y niñas protagonistas y su relación con el desarrollo de habilidades afectivas y de pensamiento de calidad. Hacia una metodología de intervención educativa'. A document written on account of the seminar 'Radio, Ciudad y Educación' (Radio, City and Education), Santiago de Chile, August 2002, 10 pp. Institute of Media Studies, The Catholic University of Chile.
5. It can be added that this project, among others, was selected (out of 400 proposals) for exposition at the World Panorama Session at the 4th World Summit on Children for Media and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro, April 19-23, 2004. One of the adolescents participating in the Lanalhue project was also the only Chilean young person taking part in the Adolescents Forum at the Summit.

The Young Web of Citizenship in Brazil

The Young Web of Citizenship is a net of information, culture and citizenship that connects young people in the nine administrative regions of the city of Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Based on a program in which adolescents aged 13 to 22 years develop abilities related to participation and communal mobilisation, the net promotes participation in and production of media.

The net benefits hitherto approximately 250 cultural groups and social institutions that develop socio-cultural products directed at young people in the city. These productions are coordinated by adolescents themselves with permanent support of a team of professionals. The weaving process has also mobilised more than 5,000 young people from communities spread across Belo Horizonte. Moreover, the information produced and transmitted via the media reaches more than 100,000 viewers, listeners, readers and Internet users of different ages and social conditions.

The Young Web of Citizenship is managed by a non-governmental organisation called the Communal Image Association (Associação Imagem Comunitária), which has been working since 1993 with ideas of media education and public participation in the media. The net was established in 2002, gathering youngsters from several previous activities promoted by the Communal Image Association. In order to construct the net, the adolescents have attended educational workshops and receive continuous advice from a professional team from the Communal Image Association. Articulating a wide range of projects in the area of culture and citizenship, the net allows disadvantaged adolescents to make their issues visible. In this process, they become protagonists of their citizenship by expressing their ideas in the public sphere.

Media literacy and children's participation in the media

Different media products

Sixty-six adolescents are responsible for local mobilisation and communal creation of the following media products:

- television programs (a weekly 15-minute program broadcast on local channels in Belo Horizonte)
- radio programs (a weekly 60-minute live program broadcast by the educational station Favela FM)
- newspapers (30,000 copies per edition; distributed freely in the public schools of Belo Horizonte every six weeks)
- a website: www.redejovembh.org.br
- a syndicate of news (weekly bulletins with information about communities and cultural manifestations, sent to conventional media)

The net will also publish two books: an Alternative Guide of Culture and Citizenship and a methodological book, *Mídias Comunitárias, Jovens e Cidadania* (Communal Media: Youngsters and Citizenship). The guide intends to present groups and institutions that promote culture and citizenship, and the book will present results of the establishment of the net, as well as ways of reproducing it in other contexts. There will also be

a CD-ROM containing some of the net's productions. These products will be distributed freely to public schools and libraries in the city, and to civil organizations in the entire country.

All these actions have been possible thanks to sponsorship from the oil company Petrobras and other supporters (City Hall of Belo Horizonte, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Municipal Secretariat of Citizenship, Canal Saúde – Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, the National Ministry of Health, and the National Ministries of Justice and Communication).

Inclusion in the public sphere

The Young Web of Citizenship is a grassroots project, attempting to provide a deep and lasting transformation of society via cultural development. Education for communication and participation in the media is seen as an important tool that can generate opportunities that surpass hurdles to social and individual development. Results are already being reached. What can be observed are, among other things, the following consequences:

The Young Web of Citizenship is comprised of adolescents who live in areas of social risk – slums, *favelas* and areas characterised by problems of urban infrastructure and low-income population groups. An important result is, hence, the consolidation of a net of inter-community communication produced and managed by people who are frequently outside public spaces, including the traditional media. The project shows a way to overcome current forms of exclusion, such as the symbolic invisibility that outsiders face. The net is a space for expression that divulges issues and understandings of poor youngsters – all the net's media addresses issues, groups and spaces that they want to make visible. The web also presents opportunities for formal and informal education, social projects, and tips for preventive health and quality of life. Humor, critique and art are significant features of this way of producing communication that attempts to represent a complex reality and overcome simplifications.

All the net's media products have had great feedback, which is evident in hundreds of phone calls, thousands of e-mails and increasing participation of different social and cultural groups. In addition, several themes suggested by the informative bulletins have acquired visibility in local and national conventional media.

Positive impacts on the adolescents' development

Evaluation meetings (involving participants, parents, communal leaders and school members) and qualitative research inquiries have also pointed out that the participants in the net have shown improvement concerning: self-esteem; effective participation; will for teamwork; fluency of expression of their ideas through texts and audio-visual works; interest in and searching for information about subjects related to culture and citizenship; improvement of school performance (greater motivation and involvement in school and extra-curricular activities, bringing into class new topics and inquiries to be discussed). The adolescents have also become more involved in their communities, taking part in social projects and cultural groups in their neighbourhoods.

It must also be mentioned that several adolescents have got educational opportunities and opportunities to act professionally. They were invited to participate in other educational and cultural activities offered by Centro Cultural of the Federal University of Minas Gerais and to take part in internships and training periods at large audiovisual companies. Finally, it must be highlighted that the core group of adolescents most involved in the Young Web of Citizenship will receive a scholarship in order to enable other adolescents to work with media in 2004.

In sum, the Young Web of Citizenship has enhanced intense youth mobilization in social and cultural actions and has strengthened such projects leading to youth citizenship. When communication comes closer to youngsters, and their actions are given visibility, youngsters come closer to citizenship.

Recognition

The Communal Image Association, through the Young Web of Citizenship, has won the Award of Human Rights 2003 (Prêmio Direitos Humanos 2003), granted by the National Ministry of Justice. The net has also been considered a good social technology by UNESCO and Fundação Banco do Brasil. In addition, it was a semi-finalist in the National Itaú/UNICEF Award (for experiences of education and participation) and a finalist in the International Betinho Award for Communication (which gathered experiences that used information and communication technologies for the promotion of communal development and social justice). One of the television programs produced within the net was presented in Festival Internacional de Cinema do Rio 2003, the greatest event in Latin America in the area of cinematography. The Young Web of Citizenship has also received much attention from traditional local and national media.

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2. Other Youth Media Productions – a Selection

In the following paragraphs we give a few succinct examples of children's and young people's media production in the world most often led by voluntary organisations outside school. Occasionally we include excerpts from, or just point to, evaluations of the projects, evaluation reports that also contain recommendations for other groups and organisations that want to start similar projects.

Plan International, http://www.plan-international.org

Plan International works across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in communities where many people struggle to meet their basic needs. Working in partnership with local people of all ages, supporting them to end poverty in their community, Plan believes that every child should have the opportunity to realise her/his potential.

Plan implements close to 60 media projects worldwide. The text below provides examples of some of Plan's projects.

Kid Waves, West Africa

Kids Waves is a regional radio project implemented at the national level in eleven West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Kids Waves is a 30-minute weekly show broadcast in local languages. The show is hosted by children and 'travels' to a different location/village each week. It involves different children each week coming from the visited community. Each show evolves around a theme linked to the rights of the child that is explained to the audience along with the responsibilities of children and of those influencing their lives.

In Senegal, *Kids Waves* is called *Radio Gune Yi*. Created in 1995, it is the first Plan radio project. The *Kids Waves* show is called *Deviwo be Radio* in Togo, *Etoto Deviwo* in Benin, *Bibir Radio* in Burkina Faso, *La voix de Alpha et Finda* in Guinea, *Denmisenw Kun Kan* in Mali.

The radio campaign 'I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!', West Africa

The regional radio campaign *I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!* has been produced since 1998 by Plan in West Africa in collaboration with close to 100 radio stations. The show informs parents, children and authorities on their roles and responsibilities to respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Seven West-African countries have implemented the project: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo, Mali, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Benin. Two countries, Niger and Cameroon, will start broadcast in 2006. Dramas and sketches are produced with children and professional comedians. Interviews, debates and radio contests are also included in the shows. They are broad-

cast by up to twenty (public, private and community) radio stations in each country. More than 700 productions of the stories promoting child rights have been made and thousands of broadcasts have been heard throughout the region. The show has won international awards.

Evaluation

Radio Campaign in West Africa: I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too! is an evaluation report by Rosita Ericsson, 2005, for Plan Region of West Africa (available at http://www.plan-international.org).

This evaluation report of the awareness campaign on the rights of the child *I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!* says that children have active roles at all stages of the project. The campaign is produced and implemented by the participating country offices in collaboration with national and local broadcasters, authorities and NGO partners. The radio spots have been produced in more than 20 different languages.

The evaluation shows that the campaign has become something more than radio since theatre and school activities have become integral parts of the project. Hundreds of children have been involved in the production and broadcast of the show and many thousands have participated in its contests and public recordings.

Presenters, journalists and technicians from more than 90 radio stations have been trained to host the show. The stories are appreciated by both children and adults. The identification factor is high and children can relate the stories directly to their own lives. The messages give children courage to seek support from adults and to look for solutions to their problems. Listening children gain knowledge, which they pass on to others by discussing what they have heard with their families and friends. Hearing other young people talk on the radio encourages and motivates children to participate themselves or in other ways make their voices heard. Children who have participated in production and broadcast of the radio programmes have acquired a range of new skills, including communication and vocational skills. They are often empowered to take on new roles and responsibilities in their communities. Parents and other adults are starting to change their attitudes and value children as actors in the communities, the report says.

Furthermore, the campaign has contributed to breaking taboos surrounding excision and to raise the awareness about issues such as girls' education, discrimination of disabled children and ill-treatment of step-children.

The report shows that the impact of the project is particularly strong when it is implemented directly in the communities and involves young people directly through mobile radio stations, listening clubs or as an integrated part of Plan's advocacy work.

In sum, the project has greatly exceeded its planned outputs and original scope, according to the report, which also includes recommendations for media initiatives by other organisations.

- Sauti ya Watoto wa Dida (Give Children a Voice), Kenya and Tanzania

In this video magazine project in Kenya and Tanzania children are involved in the preparation and production of each film, both in front of and behind the camera. Each film focuses on an issue chosen by the children, including child labour, early marriage and street children.

- Rights of the Child, Malawi

Rights of the Child is a radio programme in Malawi, in partnership with Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and funded by UNICEF. Children produce radio shows about their rights.

- Agami (Future), Bangladesh

Agami is a weekly television show in Bangladesh broadcast by BTV, the national public network. Children host the shows and talk about issues relevant to their lives. The show reaches millions of viewers.

- Children Have Something to Say, India

Children Have Something to Say is a video project in India, which involves young people in creating short films (documentary, drama-documentary and animation) focusing on child rights. The stories are selected by the children themselves and relate to issues that affect their lives: child labour, child abuse, health and environmental issues and many others concerning the violation of the rights of children. The project won the One World Media Award for Special Achievement in a contest in the U.K. that recognises excellence in communication about the wider world through television, radio, print and new media.

Evaluation

Children Have Something to Say: Video Project in India is an evaluation report submitted to Plan India in 2003 and written by Sarah McNeill and Mimi Brazeau with the participation of three youth evaluators. (The report is available at, e.g., http://www.iicrd.org)

Children Have Something to Say was initiated by Plan India in 1999 and funded by the Plan National Office in the Netherlands. It had in 2003 been implemented in collaboration with eleven local NGO partners from seven states in India. The project is a (still on-going) children's media development project in involving young people, usually 14-18 years of age. A very high percentage of the project is child led, the evaluation report says.

The overall objective of the video project is to promote child rights and provide a platform from which the voice of youth can reach out to adults. More than 20 workshops, usually 20 days each, had been organized when the report was written. The workshops enable young people to reflect on and analyse various situations and circumstances faced by children in their local communities. The children spend time on researching stories and learning how to present a case study in a

logical and interesting storyline. Workshops also provide them with basic technical skills in the use of video camera and sound recording to present their story to the public by means of a short film.

The report found that the way this project enables children to have so much input to the final product makes it a special example of good practice. The project demonstrated that children have the ability to produce high quality films with minimal – though vital – assistance from professional filmmakers.

Thirty-six films had then been produced – all from the perspective of the child. According to the report, the films create a vivid, shocking and very moving picture of children's experience of childhood. The films were screened in communities and at training sessions for community workers. The messages targeted adults with the aim of sensitising parents, community leaders and government authorities about child rights issues in order that they will take action to improve the situation of children in India and respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report further says that the project's impact is certain on child participants, parents, NGO partners and viewers. The experience also provides children with the confidence and skills to become a productive force as potential partners in the community's development activities.

In terms of the objectives set out, many outcomes exceeded expectations, the report concludes. In spite of certain weaknesses (which are also dealt with in the publication), the project is said to be a very effective way of putting children's participation in media activity into the service of child rights and be a successful means of making the views and voices of children heard. The report includes recommendations for similar and further work by other countries and organisations.

- Children's Voice, Nepal

The radio project *Children's Voice* produced and broadcast in Nepal has involved more than 100 children. The show aims to promote child rights and child participation.

- Bidang bulilit (Children Are the Stars), Philippines

Since 1999, children in partnership with a local radio station in the Philippines prepare, manage and produce one-hour weekly shows about children's rights, called *Bidang bulilit*. More than three million people listen to the programme.

- Young media clubs, Viet Nam

Since 1998, hundreds of children in Viet Nam have been trained in journalism including radio broadcasting on the initiative of Plan.

- Child media projects, Latin America

Since 1999, close to 2,000 children have been involved in producing radio programmes, videos and printed materials promoting the rights of the child in Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala and Dominican Republic.

- Comunicando os direitos das crianças (Communicating Children's Rights), Brazil

In Brazil, young people are trained by professional radio workers to produce programmes. The project is run in partnership with a local NGO called the Centro das Mulheres do Cabo (Cabo Women's Center).

- Caja magica (Magic Box), Colombia

Caja magica is a magazine produced for and by children in Colombia.

- Aquí los chicos (Here We Are), Ecuador

In Ecuador a production team of 40 children, supported by a network of 300 community reporters, prepare and edit reports on child rights issues for a weekly live radio programme titled *Aquí los chicos*.

Africa Animated!, http://portal.unesco.org

Africa Animated! is a series of cartoon productions in which young people from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are trained in multimedia animation techniques and then produce their own cartoons. Despite efforts by regional broadcasters and the audiovisual community in Africa, children's programmes in Africa and in particular animated cartoons are mostly imported from abroad. In order to address this lack of local content production, UNESCO launched *Africa Animated!* in 2004, an initiative that assembles resources and expertise for the production of children's animated cartoons in Africa. The initiative was started in collaboration with specialized partners such as the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation), Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa (URTNA), the National Film and Television Institute of Ghana (NAFTI) and the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA).

Curious Minds, Ghana

A group of young people from 8 to 18 who are part of the Children and Youth in Broadcasting/Child Survival and Development Action Club are producing a radio programme called *Curious Minds* in Ghana, broadcast by Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. Children act as presenters and producers of the show under the supervision of a professional journalist who coordinates the activities of the group. The purpose of the programme is to help make Ghana's citizens aware of issues related to children's rights. Two radio programmes per week are broadcast on national radio, one in English, the other in Ga. Some programmes involve resource people, some involve only the children framing the discussions from their perspective.

Source: http://www.comminit.com/experiences/pdskdv42003/experiences-1327.html

Mundo sem segredos (A World of Secrets), Mozambique, http://www.mediasupport.org

Mundo sem segredos is a 30 minutes' children's radio programme in Mozambique that addresses the issue of HIV/AIDS. Media Support Partnership, a British non-governmental organisation, is training children to participate in the programming and presenting the radio shows for their peers. The project is funded by DANIDA (the Danish government). Since 2004, the weekly programmes are broadcast bilingually through Rádio Moçambique provincial stations in Portuguese and local languages. They contain a mix of interviews, drama, live reports, testimonials, music, and poetry. Children are encouraged to participate through letters, phone calls, and competitions. A weekly counselling session with a trained counsellor provides advice and solutions to listeners' questions or problems. Partners are the Ministry of Education and Rádio Moçambique.

Radio Infantil, Mozambique, http://www.ibis.dk

Radio Infantil is a participatory children's radio programme in the community of Alto Molócuè in Mozambique. Run by the Danish NGO Ibis, the programme explores issues affecting children including child rights, HIV/AIDS, health, and education. The programmes are in Portuguese and Lomwé. The slogan of *Radio Infantil* is 'a voz da criança – a voz do futuro' (the voice of the child is the voice of the future). The project also supports the development of new media initiatives by providing training to radio journalists from Mozambique to produce more children's programmes.

Soul Buddyz, South Africa, http://www.soulcity.org.za

In 2005, the third *Soul Buddyz* series was launched by Soul City, Institute for Health and Development, in South Africa and broadcast by SABC1. *Soul Buddyz* is a real-life television drama specifically developed to empower 8- to 12-year-olds and the adults in their lives. Each time it is broadcast it has been the most popular television programme in the country for children.

With strong real-life stories that affect children, their parents and their teachers, the programme delivers the positive message that all irrespective of age should – and can – talk about issues. It also breaks the stereotype that children are incapable of making informed choices and reinforces the message that kids can be active citizens in society. After the first two series, 1,900 *Soul Buddyz* Clubs had been set up across the country and had attracted 12,000 children country-wide who are interested in being agents for social change in their communities and in their own lives.

Additionally, the series *Buddyz on the Move* has been developed by Soul City in partnership with SABC Education and with support of the South African government.

Several evaluation and audience research reports with children and adults about the programme series are available on Soul City's website.

Talking Drum Studio, Sierra Leone, http://www.sfcg.org

This project, supported by the NGO Search for Common Ground, Washington D.C., U.S.A., is also implemented in Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Macedonia and Ukraine. Talking Drum Studio creates and airs radio programmes with different formats that are designed to encourage peace and reconciliation. The radio stations collaborate with government agencies and local and international organisations. The show *Golden Kids News* in Sierra Leone brings together children of mixed backgrounds to serve as reporters, producers, and actors. This show creates a forum for children to share their hopes and fears, advocate on various issues, and discuss events related to war.

Children's Media Centre, Kyrgyzstan, www.neboscreb.kg

The Children's Media Centre (CMC) works in audio-visual and print media and the productions are done exclusively by children and young people. The project aims at promoting the child's self-expression. The members of the CMC study the problems faced by children and young people in Kyrgyzstan and evaluate their observations from the children's own point of view. In addition to that, the members spread information about child rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CMC members work on many different topics highlighting the problems of youth, including child protection, gender issues and HIV/AIDS. CMC produces videos and print media articles about homeless children, HIV infected people and women's rights violations.

Little Masters, China, www.xzrcn.com

Little Masters is a national magazine in China, written, edited and produced by children under the age of 15. The project has been running for over 20 years and is considered to be a successful partnership between children and adults. Initially developed as a newspaper, *Little Masters* has been adapted to other media such as radio, television and most recently the web.

ANKURODGAM, India

Koraput is one of the developing districts of Orissa in India. The monthly magazine *ANKURODGAM* in Koraput, carrying exclusive contributions of news and views from children, is an initiative of UNICEF. Children contribute their views on issues such as health, education and sanitation in their villages. There are now 100 child reporters from 10 villages in the district – and the plans are to reach every village and every child.

Children are provided with diaries where they write their daily observations. They also interview people and visitors and interact with officials on the development in their villages. This has developed children's confidence to ask questions – they want

to be equipped with more knowledge and information. This, in turn, has further strengthened their social belongingness and they have been participating actively in all possible developmental activities.

Source: Chelapila Santakar, Orissa, India, in an announcement on http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=6925

Voice of the Children, the Philippines, http://www.ecpat.net

In the Philippines, the most popular medium is radio, especially in remote areas where newspapers and television are not available. Every Sunday morning since 1999, a 30-minute radio programme – *Tingog sa Kabataan* (Voice of the Children) – is being aired on a local AM band radio station in the province of Cebu. It is the first and only radio programme in the area of Central Visayas that is produced *by* children (aged 9 to 18) *for* children. Its primary goal is to let children with experience of violence and abuse talk about and advocate for changes related to issues that affect them.

The programme, which started as a joint project of five NGOs with ECPATCebu as the lead implementing agency, is much listened to and received an award from, among others, the Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines. The BBC, U.K., considers it one of the best practices in the combat against commercial sexual exploitation.

The project has a direct effect on the children and youth who produce the programme, in the form of renewed self-assurance and more participation at school and in the community. Indirectly, the programme serves other victims of child abuse, helping them to recover from their own experiences.

Children's way to participation in the radio production, as well as necessary factors for replicating the project, are described more in detail on the above-mentioned website, where the full report of the project can be accessed.

PYALARA, Palestine, http://www.pyalara.org

Pyalara – Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation – is a communication and media-oriented Palestinian NGO established for Palestinian youth. *The Youth Times*, which gives space to contributions from young journalists between 14 and 25 years of age, has developed into a 24-page bilingual Palestinian youth paper, published on a monthly basis. On average, a total of 20,000 copies are distributed per month to 100,000–120,000 readers. The paper was established in 1997 and is considered the first paper for Palestinian youth to be published in Palestine with a nation-wide distribution.

Since December 2000, PYALARA has also produced, with the support of UNICEF and the cooperation of Palestine TV, a weekly two-hour TV programme called *Alli Sowtak* (Speak Up) with much representation of youth. An average of 300,000 Palestinian children and teenagers watch every episode, each of which has a major theme, for example: education, children's talents, health, and children's awareness concerning their various rights.

Cámara ! Ahí nos vemos, Mexico, www.rostrosyvoces.org

This project, launched in 2001, uses video production as an educational tool for young people, especially those living in the margin to learn about their communities, their peers and themselves. The programme *¡Cámara! ahí nos vemos* which has engaged several thousands of young people, is implemented by Rostros y Voces and is part of the global programme Make a Connection that operates in eighteen countries.

Sisichakunaq Pukllaynin, Peru, www.pukllasunchis.org

Sisichakunaq Pukllaynin is a partnership between several schools and two radio stations in Cusco, Peru, that produces regular programming for and with children.

Just Think, U.S.A., http://www.justthink.org

Just Think is a non-profit organisation supported by foundations and government grants located in the United States. The organisation targets under-resourced populations from low-income communities teaching young people media literacy skills, critical thinking and creative media production. This is done by teaching and producing media arts in- and after school. The aim is 'to teach young people to lead healthy, responsible, independent lives in a culture highly impacted by media'. The website provides many examples of young people's own media production and presentations of the different programmes conducted by the organisation.

One example of the programmes is the Family Media Forum, a workshop involving children and their parents aiming at promoting the dialogue between them around media and media issues. Media habits of the youth are surveyed as well as the concerns of the parents. Some of the different themes of the workshops have been body image, media violence, culture/identity/diversity and video games. The students create their own media production and share it with their parents and there is also a package of activities and resources for use at home.

Educational Video Center, U.S.A., http://www.evc.org

Educational Video Center (EVC) is a not-for-profit media arts center teaching documentary video production and media analysis to youth, educators and community organisers in New York City. The centre's work is financed by public and private foundations, corporate and individual donors, and earned income. Since 1984, the EVC has used video and multimedia as means to develop the literacy, research, public speaking and work preparation skills of, in particular, at-risk-youth. By producing documentaries on issues from their everyday life these youth with social and/or academic difficulties develop critical thinking skills and group collaboration. Many of the

youth produced documentaries have also been broadcast on national U.S. television networks.

Publications, classroom curricula, production handbooks, research papers, viewer guides based on their work can be found on the website.

Let's Talk Children, http://www.unicef.org

Let's Talk Children is a global radio service from UNICEF, focusing on the health, education, equality and protection of children. There are many different programmes featuring news and in-depth stories about, with and by children and young people around the world.

A summarising report

What Works in Youth Media. Case Studies from Around the World by Sheila Kinkade and Christy Macy 2003 and published by International Youth Foundation, based in Baltimore, M.D., U.S.A., reports on

- how young people in Mexico learn to see their community with new eyes through the lens of a video camera (see the project *Cámara ! Ahí nos vemos* mentioned above)
- how young reporters of Children's Express U.K. express their views while learning life skills and has forged long term relationships with *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, Sky News, the BBC, and numerous other media outlets
- how Chinese children under the age of 15 write, edit and produce a national magazine, *Little Masters* (see also above how this project has developed into other media)
- how *Trendsetters* in Zambia, a magazine by and for youth is dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS
- how *Troç* ('straight talk'), a youth-run television programme in Albania, educates the public about critical issues facing children
- how the Young Journalists Group, Viet Nam, seeks to engage their generation and through its twice-weekly broadcasts reaches over 30 million radio listeners
- how *Youth Outlook*, United States, is chronicling life through the eyes and voices of young people.

According to the report, the case studies show that youth media programmes such as these, where young people's voices are being heard, promote children's and young people's personal growth and development. For many young people, the experience they gain in analysing and presenting news make them more informed consumers of the news they receive, and more active citizens in their communities and nations. The young people also learn about critical issues, such as education, the environment, human rights, child abuse, the growing divide between rich and poor, and the impact

of globalisation. A strong thread running through the conversations with young people involved in youth media projects was also, the report says, that they were involved in an activity that was interesting, that engaged them creatively and intellectually, and that could make a difference.

The foreword quotes Sandy Close, Executive Editor of the Pacific News Service, who for years has supported youth-led media projects in the United States. She underscores the growing 'hunger' of today's young people to be visible in the media culture. 'It is as if these new media outlets have become the bonding tissue that holds young people together. Being visible – expressing oneself and being read or seen by others – means you exist.' That 'hunger' among young people to have a voice has coincided with a revolution in technology, and the result has been a dramatic increase in youth media projects around the world (p. 8).

3. Further Resources

The Communication Initiative, http://www.comminit.com

The Communication Initiative (CI) network is an online space for sharing the experiences of, and building bridges between, the people and organisations engaged in or supporting communication as a fundamental strategy for economic and social development and change.

The CI has, among other things, an extensive website (of summarised information – 17,000-plus pages – related to communication for development) which includes facts, evaluations, planning methodologies, change theories, programme descriptions, articles, reports and documents, and much more. The CI also releases several e-publications.

'Children', 'young people' and 'media' are special entries on the website and in the e-publications – one can find many examples of children and young people in Africa, Asia and Latin America taking part in and producing media communication for social change.

Currently, the CI network process includes: The Communication Initiative – in English, with a worldwide overview and focus; La Iniciativa de Comunicación – in Spanish, with a worldwide overview and focus on the Latin American experience and context; and Soul Beat Africa – in English, with a focus on the African experience and context.

The CI is a partnership of development organisations seeking to support advances in the effectiveness and scale of communication interventions for positive international development.

The Child Rights Information Network, http://www.crin.org

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), established in 1995, is a global network that disseminates information about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights amongst non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organisations, educational institutions, and other child rights experts. CRIN's objectives are, among others, to support and promote the implementation of the Convention.

CRIN is supported, and receives funding from, Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children UK, UNICEF, Plan International and the International Save the Children Alliance. Project funding is also received from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worldvision.

CRIN has a membership of more than 1,400 organisations in over 130 countries. About 85 per cent of the members are NGOs and 65 per cent are in the Africa, Asia and Latin America. In addition to working with member organisations, CRIN services

the information needs of 2,500 organisations and individuals who have joined CRIN's mailing lists.

On CRIN's website and mailing lists, there is also information on activities and research as regards media, for example projects involving children's and young people's own media production.

MAGIC, http://www.unicef.org/magic

Another network and data bank is MAGIC (Media Activities and Good Ideas by, with and for Children) on UNICEF's website. The associated network, which was set up for professionals and organisations working in the field of children and media to share information and ideas, coummunicates through the e-mail group Young People's Media Network.

INFOYOUTH, http://portal.unesco.org

As mentioned previously (see the section 'Media Literacy for Children, Young People, Adults and Media Educators'), UNESCO has initiated The INFOYOUTH Network. Among the 2006 activities is 'Youth and Media. A UNESCO workshop in Beirut', where students met from Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Tunisia and the Palestinian Territories for a workshop to learn more about media, and their role in it. A 2005 activity was the opening of a children's and youth's library in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The library – operated by Impact Libarary, an Ethiopian NGO – aims at offering young visitors a range of useful and interactive learning activities that incorporate multimedia tools.

IV Media Literacy for Media Professionals

Media professionals are, naturally, in many ways 'media literate'. On the other hand, much research all over the world successively finds that media contents often underrepresent and give biased pictures of population groups (children, women, ethnic and linguistic minority groups, etc.) and of entire populations and nations. There are also in many media other offensive and potentially harmful contents, such as representations of physical violence, pornography, and increasingly excessive marketing. While research on portrayals of physical violence and the influences of them has been carried out since the 1920s and by now amounts to many thousands of studies, and examples of research on stereotypes of groups, peoples of nations goes back to many decades, research on pornography and commercial elements in – or products connected to – the media contents is of more recent dates but is engaging a growing number of scholars.

Nevertheless, there are – in general – no signs of more balanced media contents in these respects within the explosive media flow as a whole, especially not as regards satellite television, commercial films and the newer digital media. On the contrary, research studies over time often find the same or more representations of offensive and potentially harmful media contents.

The reasons for such media violence in a broad sense – thus, including not only portrayals of physical violence but also biased psychic and structural oppression, etc. – are many. Examples of reasons are ignorance or lack of ethics among certain media professionals, as well as stressing production conditions, but, to a greater extent, the ideology and societal culture in which the media work, the dependence of media on the political power elite, and the media's policy and economy. The strive for economic profit among most mainstream media in a more and more competitive and globalised media landscape supported by the rapid development of information technology means that the observance of codes of conducts and ethical guidelines often comes in the second place or is thrown into the shade.

Combating the root of media's offensive and potentially harmful contents must therefore primarily mean analysing and changing the relations of the prevailing media globalisation process to economy and market forces, politics, technological development, dominance/dependence between countries and rich and poor people, cultural identity and human/children's rights.

As regards media's relation to children and young people, the main question that must be asked is, according to Robert McChesney (2002): 'What sort of media policies would produce positive externalities for children and all of society?' The issue of externalities (the economic and social costs of market transactions that society as a whole must care and pay for, for example, non-desirable influences of advertising or media violence) makes this a mandatory public policy issue. It is therefore imperative, he says, that debates over media and media directed to children receive widespread public participation and deliberation. Without a new direction in media policy, the current trends point to dubious outcomes for democracy, culture and public health.

Cees J. Hamelink's (2002) conclusion also is that the prevailing process of media globalisation – the neo-liberal market-centred globalisation-from-above – hampers implementation of children's information rights expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that is ratified by 191 of the 193 UN member states. Hamelink points to the need of a different humanitarian form of globalisation – globalisation-from-below that is people-centred and prefers the protection of basic human rights to trading interests. Fundamental to the implementation and protection of human rights is an environment of empowerment. This is equally important for grown-ups and minors and maybe even more crucial for the latter as there is in most cultures a strong tendency to silence them and spend more energy on filtering messages for them rather than on producing materials specifically suited for them. Implementation of a humanitarian agenda is urgent, this researcher says, since the current globalisation process of the media contributes to limiting people's free space for expression and thought, violating their privacy, and undermining their citizenship by perceiving them primarily as consumers.

There are many researchers that underline the need for research on the consequences of the prevailing media globalisation. Francis B. Nyamnjoh (2002) puts forward the hypothesis that even if media globalisation is homogenising consumer tastes, it also appears to accelerate the production of differences, heterogeneities or boundaries through the structures of inequalities inherent in global capitalism. Poverty accelerates conflict. It may well be that globalisation and media globalisation intensifies age-old boundaries and divisions.

Research, empowerment of people, and political measures are thus important means for changing media's economy and policy and their offensive and potentially harmful media contents.

Increased awareness among media professionals and policy-makers of the need for such change is therefore essential. It is reasonable to say that although media professionals and policy-makers in one way are 'media literate', they are on another plane the groups in society most in need of media literacy.

Limiting us here to media professionals' need for increased awareness of children and young people and of offensive and potentially harmful contents for them, there are also several other initiatives – on minor levels – to increase media literacy among media professionals and policy makers. We will in the following pages give a few examples.

1. Reporting on Children and Young People

International Federation of Journalists, http://www.ifj.org

Putting Children in the Right

In the booklet *Putting Children in the Right. Guidelines for Journalists and Media Professionals* published in 2002 by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) with the support of the European Commission, General Secretary Aidan White considers in the introduction the fact that children and young people are seldom seen and heard in the media. This reflects a weakness that resonates through any discussion on media and the rights of children. Raising awareness about the rights of children and the promotion of children's rights is a challenge to media. Media must not just report fairly, honestly and accurately on the experience of childhood, the author says, but they must also provide space for the diverse, colourful and creative opinions of children themselves.

At the same time, the media must be freed from the reins of political and economic control, which limit professionalism and undermine ethical standards. The author points to several delicate dilemmas facing the media professionals and which are dependent on their working conditions, the issues of standards, regulation and self-regulation, and their relations to economic, political and cultural institutions in society.

Running throughout Aidan White's introduction is the issue of how to balance the right to freedom of expression and the rights of children. Media professionals can both give a voice in the media to children, listening to their views and aspirations, and protect the identity of children who should not be exposed to the glare of publicity.

The booklet *Putting Children in the Right* includes guidelines for reporting on children (see below); recommendations for raising awareness of child rights; awareness training for media professionals; a section on interviewing, photographing and filming children; and much more.

Objectives of the IFJ

The IFJ has in this respect integrated the following objectives in its programmes: awareness raising, integrating child rights in the professional code of ethics, supporting an international exchange of best practices between the unions, countering the commercial pressures on journalists and media for 'sensational news' and enabling children to be seen and heard.

Guidelines for reporting on children

The above-mentioned objectives are, among other things, realised by the IFJ's guidelines for reporting on children. These guidelines were initially adopted in draft by journalists organisations from 70 countries at the world's first international consultative conference on journalism and child rights held in Recife, Brazil, in May 1998. After regional conferences and workshops the guidelines were finally adopted at the Annual Congress of the International Federation of Journalists in Seoul in 2001. The guidelines were presented by the IFJ at the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children held at Yokohama, Japan, in December 2001.

Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children

Preamble

Informed, sensitive and professional journalism is a key element in any media strategy for improving the quality of reporting concerning human rights and society. The daily challenge to journalists and media organisations is particularly felt in coverage of children and their rights.

Although the human rights of children have only recently been defined in international law, the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child is already so widely supported that it will shortly become the first universal law of humankind.

To do their job of informing the public effectively, journalists must be fully aware of the need to protect children and to enhance their rights without in any way damaging freedom of expression or interfering with the fabric of journalistic independence. Journalists must also be provided with training to achieve high ethical standards.

The following guidelines for journalists have been drawn up by the International Federation of Journalists on the basis of an extensive survey of codes of conduct and standards already in force across the world. The purpose is to raise media awareness of children's rights issues and to stimulate debate among media professionals about the value of a common approach which will reinforce journalistic standards and contribute to the protections and enhancement of children's rights.

Principles

All journalists and media professionals have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and should promote within the industry the widest possible dissemination of information about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for the exercise of independent journalism.

Media organisations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children's safety, privacy, security, their education, health and social welfare and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigations and public debate. Children have an absolute right to privacy, the only exceptions being those explicitly set out in these guidelines.

Journalistic activity which touches on the lives and welfare of children should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children.

The following statement was also endorsed at the Recife Media and Child Rights Conference:

'The IFJ is deeply concerned at the creation of paedophile Internet sites and the fact that certain media publish or broadcast classified advertisements promoting child prostitution.

The IFJ calls on its member unions to:

- intervene with media owners over the publication or broadcasting of these advertisements;
- to campaign with public authorities for the elimination of these sites and advertisements.'

Guidelines

Journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs and, in particular, they shall

1. **strive** for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;
2. **avoid** programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them;
3. **avoid** the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;
4. **consider** carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and shall minimise harm to children;
5. **guard** against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;
6. **give** children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind;
7. **ensure** independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk;
8. **avoid** the use of sexualised images of children;
9. **use** fair, open and straight forward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;
10. **verify** the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children.
11. **not** make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.

Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by Governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead or leading to the occurrence of these events.

Seoul, June 11-15, 2001

IFJ reports

Available on the IFJ's website are also reports on

- *Promoting Children's Rights in the Media*, a workshop in Cape Town, South Africa 2003
- *Reporting Children's Rights in Eastern Africa*, a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya 2003
- *Reporting Children's Rights – A Case Study in Ethiopia*, 2003
- *How the Kenyan Media Covers the Children's Rights Issues: A Content Analysis and an Assessment on the Implementation of the CRC Provisions in Kenya since the Country Ratified It Including the Children's Act 2001* by Emily Habwe Nwankwo and Arthur Okwemba, 2002

The MediaWise Trust, http://www.mediawise.org.uk

MediaWise (formerly PressWise) is an independent charity, set up in 1993 by 'victims of media abuse', supported by concerned journalists, media lawyers and politicians in the U.K.

The Media and Children's Rights – a guidebook

MediaWise has published *The Media and Children's Rights*. *A resource for journalists by journalists*. Devised for UNICEF by MediaWise. MediaWise & UNICEF, 2005. This guidebook was written to assist media professionals and others to consider how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child might impact upon the way children are represented in and by the media. Based on the practical experience of working journalists, it aims to generate responsible coverage of children and the impact of adult behaviour and decisions on their lives, as well as to encourage media professionals to consider how best to protect the rights of children and help children to play a role in the mass media.

The handbook outlines two milestones for children's rights: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and A World Fit for Children, the declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2002. It contains the International Federation of Journalists guidelines (see above) and over 60 international contacts for journalists seeking facts, figures, quotes and advice about children's rights.

Key topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- children with disabilities
- child labour
- children and armed conflict
- children's health and welfare
- the child's identity
- children's opinions and civil freedoms
- children and the media.

First published in 1999, a revised and expanded second edition was published in February 2005 and is available on the website of MediaWise Trust and elsewhere.

Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe

MediaWise presents on its website several other activities and articles on children and the media. One of these is training material for print and broadcast journalists to improve media coverage of children affected by violence. The material consists of modules for use in vocational, in-service and distance learning settings and is free to use by everyone. Three sets of training modules were devised and then tested and reformulated in response to evaluation. They cover:

- The Rights of Children & Codes of Conduct
- Uses of Images
- Interviewing Children

The modules are the result of a pilot training project called 'Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe' (2001) funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Initiative.

Codes of conduct

MediaWise has also assembled a large collection of journalistic Codes of Conduct from around the world.

The Media Monitoring Project, South Africa, http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za

The Media Monitoring Project (MMP) monitors the media with the aim to promote the development of a free, fair, ethical and critical media culture in South Africa and the rest of the continent. MMP is an independent non-governmental organisation that has been monitoring the South African media since 1993.

The core objectives of the organisation are as follows:

- To be the pre-eminent media 'watchdog' in Africa
- To inform and engage media professionals and other key stakeholders to improve the quality and ethics of news reporting in Africa
- To influence the development of robust and effective communication legislation and media codes of conduct in Africa.

The MMP has released several reports about children and media, of which the following are some examples:

- *Reporting on Children in the Context of HIV/AIDS: A Journalist's Resource*, 2005
  In the context of widespread HIV/AIDS and poverty, this booklet provides reference information about children affected by HIV/AIDS and related policy is-

sues, which need urgent and in-depth coverage by the media. With the imperative to 'put children first', the booklet challenges some of the limitations and misleading messages in current coverage, and offers a resource list to help media with the task of shaping an appropriate national response to children affected by the epidemic.

- *A Resource Kit for Journalists: Children's Media Mentoring Project*, 2005
  This resource kit provides journalists with the necessary information to enable children's voices to become a part of daily media coverage, without violating children's rights, South African laws or international norms and standards. The resource kit is designed to allow journalists and editors easy access to guidelines and laws during the production of news. MMP hopes that the resource kit can help to bring more children's voices into the South African media, in positive ways, which do not harm children.
- *What Children Want*, 2005
  The MMP's latest research with children and media challenges a number of preconceived ideas about children's programming, how it is understood, and how it should be regulated. The study aimed to give practical realisation to children's right to participate in all matters that affect them, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The research was conducted as part of the MMP's submission on the draft licence conditions of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) and was supported by Save the Children Sweden.

The Empowering Children & Media project

The MMP has also performed a special project, The Empowering Children & Media (ECM) project, which monitored the representation of children and children's rights in the South African news media. The project analysed over 22,000 items from 36 different South African media, including print, radio and television media. From March to May 2003, every item that contained a reference to a child or children was monitored.

The most innovative part of the project was the participation of children themselves. The children engaged in a parallel monitoring project where they monitored the media for a two-week period. This was done so that the children could express their views directly, and so that they could see for themselves how the media represented children.

A few findings from ECM are:

- Only 6 per cent of all monitored news items contained children up to 18 years of age. When children were represented, their newsworthiness seemed to be defined by the extreme and/or dramatic nature of stories.

  The children who participated in the workshops commented on this lack of representation:

  > *There is nothing on the radio news about children. These guys, they don't think our issues are important.*

  In newspapers made by the children themselves, on the other hand, 54 per cent of all people identified were children. The children made sure to include children but there was also a clear adult component.

- Children are rarely accessed for their opinions. Children were quoted directly or indirectly in only 13 per cent of the items on children. When children were sourced, their comments were limited to sport, arts/culture, and war/conflict/violence.

  Children in all of the workshops talked about how few journalists interviewed children or asked them to tell their stories.

  > *I realised that we can understand what is going on around us. If it is about us we are the best people to say something about it.*

  The names the children chose for their own newspapers indicated that the children recognised that this was an inclusive forum through which they could express themselves. It also demonstrated strong ownership of the newspaper and recognition for what children are capable of achieving.

  > *We called it "Children's Voices". We made this newspaper and it is our voice.*
  >
  > *We chose that because we put things that are happening in "Our World Today", things that are affecting us.*

- The results showed that almost 50 per cent of stories on children were negative. While it is a common feature of news to report on 'bad news' (stories such as crime, violence and abuse), this severely narrows the representation of children and helps locate children more often as victims in 'bad news' stories.

  The children in the workshops were acutely aware that most of the coverage afforded to children in the media tends to be negative:

  > *They only show bad things that happen to children. They never speak about good things that we do as children.*
  >
  > *I feel sad because nothing is said about the good children do.*

  In addition, the children raised the fact that the media tend to focus on dramatic issues, such as child abuse, and may ignore other children's issues. This was also reflected in the monitoring done by adults, thereby indicating a fairly narrow representation of children in the news media, both in terms of topics and roles.

  In their own newspapers, the children strived to maintain a balance between positive and negative news stories, and often tended to juxtapose a positive item with a negative item. Even though they used negative images or stories, there was a distinct sense that these were employed in order to deliver more positive or meaningful messages. The children also demonstrated a need for news that is relevant to their lives.

Guidelines for interviewing children

The MMP has published on its website the Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children adopted by the International Federation of Journalists (see above) and has also released own guidelines for interviewing children.

ANDI – Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância, http://www.andi.org.br

Below is an excerpt from the article 'Journalism on Children's Rights in Brazil' by Geraldinho Vieira, Executive Director of ANDI, Brazil, in *News from ICCVOS,* No. 1, 2002, p. 16:

The News Agency for Children's Rights (ANDI – Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância) was created during the 1990s with the aim to contribute to the building of a culture in which the press gives priority to a children's and adolescents' agenda. In other words, the Agency argues that the promotion and defense of children's and adolescents' rights and their access to basic social rights is fundamental to the achievement of social equity. The Agency, in contrast to standard news agencies, acts as a center of reference where journalists can find the best story ideas, the best ways of telling their stories, and the most up-to-date sources of information, thereby establishing connections between the press, innovators and specialists.

ANDI cooperates with the Brazilian mass media to promote a new system of investigative journalism. The organization believes that it is not enough when a newspaper publishes a story with facts that, for example, four million children are exploited as slaves or that five hundred thousand little girls are driven to prostitution. In a country with such social inequalities and lack of efficient public services [as Brazil], ANDI has discovered that solutions must be sought in order to promote the changes that have to be made. This does not mean that the press should only publish 'positive' or 'optimistic' stories. On the contrary, the sooner society learns about the actions and policies that have been proven to make change possible, the greater impact the stories will have

One of the most effective strategies developed by ANDI to increase awareness of the problem in newsrooms is the promotion of regular studies (in early 2004, 14 issues had been released beside special analyses, *editor's remark*), showing how more than 50 of the most important newspapers and magazines are reporting on subjects relevant to children's rights. After the Agency's research began to be published in 1996, the various news media launched a healthy competition among themselves. Several years later, ANDI has detected that the number of stories dedicated to themes related to children's rights has increased from 10 thousand, in 1996, to 65 thousand in 2000. Moreover, 41 per cent of these stories focus not only on social problems, but also on their possible solutions.

Therefore, it can be said that it has become easier for society to understand that street kids are not potential criminals, but instead children whose families have been destroyed by misery and unemployment. These children are, after all, kids out of home and out of school, whose essential rights have been stolen. If they are on the streets of big cities, it means that the streets provide the only way of making a living. In order to survive, get educated and contribute for the country's future, these children need help and the mobilization of the entire society. This is the change that ANDI is helping to promote.

Red ANDI América Latina, http://www.redandi.org

The success of ANDI in Brazil (see above) has led to the creation of a network of non-governmental news agencies for children's rights across Latin America – Red ANDI América Latina. Each agency represents a Latin American country (at present nine countries) and is responsible for carrying out, on a national scale, a number of strategic actions based on the work of ANDI in Brazil.

Red ANDI América Latina was officially created in 2003 and the practical work of the network started in 2004.

Hatemalo Sanchar, Nepal, http://www.hatemalo.org

As a pioneer child rights organisation, Hatemalo Sanchar in Nepal has been involved in advocating child rights through media campaigning – both print and broadcast – since 1982. Hatemalo Sanchar (Hatemalo meaning 'hand in hand' in Nepali) has been broadcasting radio programmes for children, has been regularly publishing a monthly child magazine from 1990, has initiated child club activities, and is engaged in research work, seminars for media professionals, and media monitoring programmes. In 1994, Hatemalo Sanchar was established formally as an independent social organisation for child right promotion. As Nepal ratified the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990, the Hatemalo group started encompassing children's rights through a multi-media approach. One of several initiatives for raising media professionals' media literacy is, beside seminars, the Media Monitoring Programme.

The Media Monitoring Programme

The Media Monitoring Programme was first initiated in 2002. In the third report *Print Coverage of Children's Issues 2004* by Saurav Kiran Shrestha and released by Hatemalo Sanchar in 2005, it is said: The main aim of the programme is to raise general consciousness on various child-related issues among mass media institutions, journalists and children so as to create child-friendly mass media. This comparative programme also endeavors to study pattern of media coverage on children. The report deals with coverage on children's issues during 2004 from nine national dailies. The study tried to reveal the pattern of print coverage under the four categories of child rights stated in the UNCRC – right to survival, right to development, right to protection and right to participation. All news/articles regarding children aged between 0-18 were taken into account.

The findings show that since 2002, there is a trend of steady increase in coverage of child-related issues in Nepal's national dailies. In fact, while comparing the coverage of the year 2003 and 2004, it has doubled. With the escalation of violence in the country, children have been equally affected and this must be attributed to, albeit partly, the increase in the coverage of children's issues.

Despite the increase in the coverage, most of the news/articles on children have been attributed to negative consequences, i.e., deaths in armed conflict, and accidents and crimes.

- Hence, the report recommends that there should be a shift in news selection priority from 'death reporting' to positive sides.

Other findings and recommendations are:

- Though some improvements vis-à-vis coverage of children's issues geographically have been observed, yet the children's issues from far-flung districts and inner hinterlands have been consistently overlooked. This has excluded the majority of the children, which should be avoided.
- Most of the news/articles are event-oriented. Hence, the reporting should go beyond covering a mere formal programme. Further exploration and in-depth investigation into the issues arising in such programmes can be taken into consideration by reporters/analysts.
- Over years, most newspapers have started publishing special supplements or segments on children's issues. But some of the dailies have either stopped publishing such things or have decreased space meant for children, which should not have been done.
- Whenever it is reported on children, the media personnel should rise above the customary/regular issues such as educational activities, health-related reports, and conflict, among others. Even these issues could be reported differently. And many overlooked issues should be covered.
- If the number of supporting pictures or sketches alongside the news report is increased, it draws more readers and makes the case stronger.

In sum, the study found many things to be worked upon in order to ensure child rights for their development: The print media have challenges ahead in reporting sufficiently many identified and unidentified issues of children, letting the voices of children residing in remote areas be heard, and practicing possible participation of children in the publication process. The print media have a challenge of rising above its existing nature of being city-centric and event-oriented in order to empower voiceless people and children.

The study also explicitly argues for the need to establish an effective and authorized body/mechanism that helps and supports media to implement codes of conduct. Likewise, the report advocates for the need of practice of professional journalism that well considers child rights principles – the best interest of children, non-discrimination, children's development and participation.

2. International and Regional Conferences – and Declarations, Resolutions, Charters

Another means to raise media professionals' awareness about children's and young people's relations to the media is seminars and conferences. It must be emphasised that many national, as well as some international and regional events about children, young people and media are long standing and regular. However, as a response to the globalised media flow with satellite television channels spreading rapidly all over the world since the late 1980s, and then the digital media, the international and regional meetings and conferences on children, young people and media have multiplied since the early 1990s.

These conferences have had different contexts and aims. There are, for instance, meetings mainly for professionals working with children's media. The objectives of these gatherings have been to improve the profile of children's programming and other child media contents throughout the world, to prompt initiatives to advance the diversity and quality of children's broadcasting, and to promote research, co-operation, exchange and training for those concerned with children's broadcasting and other media.

Furthermore, there are meetings with children, youth and media on the agenda arranged by UN agencies or on a regional supranational plane by, for example, the European Union. The objectives of these meetings have been partly to support States in their cultural policies, and partly to give media professionals ideas on how to promote and protect the rights of the child.

Other examples of meetings are those where most participants have been researchers and media educators. A few such international and regional conferences are mentioned under the heading 'Media Literacy for Media Educators', but one must bear in mind that these events have often invited media professionals and policy-makers, as well, beside researchers, teachers and interest organisations. Thus, there are often no sharp dividing lines between the growing amount of international and regional meetings. Most of them have been open for representatives of all groups – media professionals in traditional and new electronic and digital media, policy-makers, researchers, media educators, voluntary organisations and other interested individuals. Many of the meetings have also invited children.

However, below are listed a few examples of international and regional meetings where delegates to a greater extent have been media professionals and/or policy makers.

In addition, many of the meetings have resulted in declarations, resolutions and charters distributed to media professionals and others all over the world as expressions of opinions on how to ameliorate children's and young people's media environment. (The declarations, etc., are available on the website of the Clearinghouse, http://nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse.php).

Non-violence, Tolerance and Television, 1994

Coinciding with the 125th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet of non-violence and tolerance, an international roundtable on 'Non-violence, Tolerance and Television', was organised in New Dehli in April 1994 by UNESCO, the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) and the Indian Government. The roundtable was restricted to a number of broadcasting professionals in order to analyse problems related to the theme of the roundtable and put forward solutions in a practical way.

The document *Non-violence, Tolerance and Television. Report of the Chairman to the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication*, UNESCO, 1994, summarises the viewpoints.

The Bratislava Meeting, 1994

A meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November 1994, arranged by the International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (Centre International du Film pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse, CIFEJ) based in Canada, invited heads and producers of children's programming from Eastern and Western European television stations to find ways of dealing with the down-turn of national production for children.

Three days of informal talks gave rise to **the Bratislava Resolution**, which, according to the participants, outlines the minimum requirements for a worthy film and television production for children.

AGORA

From the mid 90s till 2005, AGORA, organised by the European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C), has been held every year in Greece, Cyprus or Italy. AGORA has been an opportunity for key players of production and research in the international children's audio-visual field to gather in order to explore the needs of the area, to plan specific productions and research, and to exchange information and programmes. Special emphasis has been given to the promotion and the improvement of programmes from the Balkan, Mediterranean and small European countries.

KID SCREEN

Established in the mid-90s, KID SCREEN has been an annual international seminar and meeting point for teachers, researchers and media professionals to discuss children's film and media education. It has been organised by the European Children's Film Association (E.C.F.A), based in Brussels, Belgium, with support of the Cultural Department of the Lombardy Region, Italy. For example, the theme of the 1999 seminar held in Como, Italy, was violence on the screen, and the 2000 seminar in Varese, Italy,

dealt with children's creativity in a digital age. Importance is attached to nuanced and interdisciplinary characterisation of the relationships between children and the media.

Seminar reports are released in Italian.

The first World Summit on Television and Children, 1995

The first World Summit on Television and Children, held in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1995, was hosted by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF). The main reason for organising the Summit was that programming for children was changing and under threat in a variety of ways and could no longer remain purely a domestic issue for most nations, if it was to survive with the values and objectives that professionals in the industry believe should apply to children's programmes.

At the Summit a charter on children and television was proposed Anna Home, Head of Children's Television Programmes, British Broadcasting Corporation. **The Children's Television Charter** was revised and adopted in Munich, Germany, in May 1995.

World Summit on Television and Children. Final Report. Carlton, Australia, The Australian Children's Television Foundation, 1995, documents this first World Summit, which provided the incentive for several other regional and global summits on children and media.

Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child, 1995

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO in co-operation with UNESCO and UNICEF organised the international seminar 'Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child' in September 1995 in Lund, Sweden, bringing together participants from all continents representing the media business, universities, government institutions, teachers and parents associations, etc.

A report comprising the speeches and conclusions and with the same title as the seminar is available in English.

As a direct outcome of the seminar, The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media (formerly The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen) was established by Nordicom, Göteborg University, Sweden, in 1997, with support from UNESCO and the Swedish government.

The Southern African Developing Countries' Summit on Children and Broadcasting, 1996

This regional Summit held in May 1996 by The Children and Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) for Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa, was a direct result of the first World Summit on Children and Television in Australia in 1995 (see above). The delegates from Africa were concerned that Africa's voice was not being heard at the World Sum-

mit, and felt that an environment must be created in which children's broadcasting issues could be discussed within the region.

At this SADC plus Kenya Summit discussions concentrated on, among other things, how to make the Children's Television Charter emanating from the first World Summit more relevant to Africa, and **The SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter** was adopted.

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, 1996

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media was held in July 1996 in Manila, the Philippines. The major organising members included the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Philippines, and UNICEF. Issues examined at the Summit were: child rights and the media; influence of media; access to media; promoting cultural diversity; children's media; media and values; issues of portrayal; and media education.

Delegates at the Summit – including ministers and senior officials of Asian governments, journalists, media executives, educators and child rights advocates – adopted the **Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media**.

A report of the Asian Summit is available from AMIC.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1996

In October 1996, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the mechanism tasked with monitoring progress in the realisation of children's rights and with advising on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) held a theme day on children and the media. The Committee had invited representatives of UN organs, bodies and specialised agencies, other competent bodies, including non-governmental organisations, media representatives, research and academic organisations, and children, to contribute to the discussions and provide expert advice. Three main areas were considered during the debate: child participation in the media; protection of the child against harmful influences through the media; and respect for the integrity of the child in media reporting. The discussion resulted in twelve recommendations (see the box, which includes an excerpt from an article by Thomas Hammarberg 1997).

The Committee also set a up a multisectoral working group that met in Paris in April, 1997, to consider constructive ways of ensuring implementation of these recommendations.

THE COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED three main areas to be considered during the debate:

- Child Participation in the Media

  In short, the discussion here centred around the importance of children participating not just as commentators, but at all levels of the information and media production process. Therefore, adequate mechanisms must be developed to

enable the child to participate. Not only the media as such but also parents and professionals working with and for children must help children to make their voices heard.

Among many other things mentioned, the potential positive impact of technology for children's rights was underlined, as well as the importance of their access also to all traditional media.

- Protection of the Child against Harmful Influences through the Media

  It was said, that States should take concrete measures to encourage the media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child, as called for in article 17(a) [of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child]. The clear identification of harmful influences in media was considered essential, as well as the need to raise, through school and other fora, the awareness of children on how to tackle media issues in a critical and constructive manner.

  Also, a better balance ought to be reached in the media between concern for protection and accurate reflection of the real world. A better balance is needed, too, regarding cultural diversity and gender bias. It was recognized that freedom of expression was not incompatible with the strong prohibition of material injurious to the child's well-being. Specific reference was also made to Internet, for example, the idea to develop in all countries hot-lines where Internet users can transmit information on existing harmful sites.

- Respect for the Integrity of the Child in Media Reporting

  In short, it was stressed that media play an essential role in the promotion and protection of human rights in general, and should be particularly vigilant in trying to safeguard the integrity of the child. For example, media must take into account the best interests of the child when children are sources of information, as in interviews or simulations with child victims of violence and abuse. Reference was also made to the most common stereotypes in media reporting about children, such as the 'violent teen-ager' or the misrepresentation of children from specific groups.

ON THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS on the three areas and in my capacity as rapporteur of the meeting, I formulated the following recommendations:

1. Child Media: A dossier should be compiled on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in media, like 'Children's Express' in the United Kingdom and the United States.
2. Child Forum within Internet: The UNICEF-initiated 'Voices of Youth' at the World Wide Web should be further promoted and advertised as a positive facility for international discussion on important issues between young people.
3. Active Child Libraries: The experience of dynamic child libraries, or child departments within public libraries, should be documented and disseminated.
4. Media Education: Knowledge about media, their impact and functioning should be taught in schools at all levels. Students should be enabled to relate to and use the media in a participatory manner as well as to learn how to decode media messages, including in the advertising. Good experiences in some countries should be made available to others.

5. State Support to Media for Children: There is a need for budgetary support to ensure the production and dissemination of children's books, magazines and papers; music, theatre and other artistic expressions for children as well as child oriented films and videos. Assistance through international co-operation should also support media and art for children.
6. Constructive Agreements with Media Companies to Protect Children against Harmful Influences: Facts should be gathered about various attempts of voluntary agreements with media companies on positive measures such as not broadcasting violent programmes during certain hours, clear presentations before programmes about their content and the development of technical devices – like 'V-chips'– to help consumers to bloc out certain types of programmes. Likewise, experiences of voluntary ethical standards and mechanisms to encourage respect for them should be assembled and evaluated; this should include an analysis of the effectiveness of existing Codes of Conduct, professional guidelines, Press Councils, Broadcast Councils, Press Ombudsmen and similar bodies.
7. Comprehensive National Plans of Action to Empower Parents in the Media Market: Governments should initiate a national discussion on means to promote positive alternatives to the negative tendencies in the media market, to encourage media knowledge and support parents in their role as guides to their children when relating with electronic and other media. An international workshop should be organized to promote a discussion on this approach.
8. Advice on Implementation of article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A study should be conducted with the purpose of developing advice to governments on how they could encourage the development of 'guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being'. Such a study should also serve the purpose of assisting the Committee on the Rights of the Child in drafting a General Comment on article 17.
9. Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Child Abuse: To encourage further discussions in the news rooms and within the media community as a whole guidelines should be drafted by relevant journalist bodies on how to report on abuse of children and at the same time protect the dignity of the children involved. Special emphasis should be placed on the issue of not exposing the identity of the child.
10. Handbook Material for Journalist Education on Child Rights: Material should be produced to assist journalist and media schools on child rights standards, established procedures for child rights monitoring, existing international, regional and national institutions working with children as well as basic aspects of child development. The manual planned by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights as a tool for journalist education on human rights should be widely disseminated when produced.
11. Network for Media Watchgroups: The positive experiences of media watchgroups in various countries should be further encouraged and 'good ideas' transferred between countries. The purpose is to give media consumers a voice in the discussion on media ethics and children. A focal point for exchanges should be established.

12. Service to 'Child Rights Correspondents': Interested journalists should be invited to sign in to a list of 'Child Rights Correspondents'. They should receive regular information about important child issues, interesting reports by others and be seen as media advisers to the international child rights community.

Source: Thomas Hammarberg 1997

The first All African Summit, 1997

The first All African Summit was arranged in Accra, Ghana, in October 1997. The most important thing that occurred at this Summit was the adoption of the **Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting**. The Charter is an amendment of The SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter in 1996 (see above) and is in keeping with the international Children's Television Charter in 1995 (see above), but expands on issues relevant to the African continent, and includes radio as well. In particular greater emphasis is placed on the educational and developmental needs of Africa's children and protection from all forms of commercial exploitation.

The Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting was ratified at the general assembly of URTNA (Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa) in 2000 in Algiers, where all African broadcasters were asked to make necessary amendments. The final Charter was then further adopted by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) in 2000 in Cape Town, South Africa.

The Second World Summit on Television for Children, 1998

The Second World Summit on Television for Children took place in March 1998 in London and was hosted jointly by the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Nickelodeon UK. A large number of keynote addresses, debates, seminars, and workshops dealt with: the nature of the child audience; different programme genres; production and policy; financing; advertising; new media; globalisation vs. local survival; and co-operative ventures. Master classes and screenings of children's programmes ran parallel. There were also sessions on research.

A report from the Summit was published with support of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, U.S.A.: Anna Home & Amy B. Jordan *The Second World Summit on Television for Children 1998. Final report.* University of Pennsylvania, The Annenberg Public Policy Center.

The Power of Culture – Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, 1998

The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development – the greatest manifestation for culture on a governmental level ever – held in Stockholm in March-April 1998 was designed by UNESCO to transform the ideas from the report *Our Creative Diversity,* UNESCO, 1995, into policy and practice. This report was presented by the World Commission on Culture and Development, established by the United Nations and UNESCO and led by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. The document presents a programme of action with the purpose of influencing the international political agenda and actively engaging individuals, groups, organisations and states. One chapter is devoted to children and young people, another to mass media.

The UNESCO Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development was agreed upon that shall serve as an inspiration for the Member States' international and national cultural policy and be a tool for UNESCO's continued cultural work. Certain policy objectives explicitly mention children and young people.

Journalism 2000: Child Rights and the Media, 1998-2001

In May 1998, the international conference 'Journalism 2000: Child Rights and the Media', arranged by The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), was held in Recife, Brazil. The conference focused on reporting on children.

The meeting resulted in the adoption of the **IFJ Child Rights and the Media: Guidelines for Journalists** (see also under the heading 'Reporting on Children and Young People') as a draft for debate and development among the world's journalists – a process that was expected to take three years. After regional conferences and workshops the guidelines were finally adopted at the Annual Congress of the IFJ in Seoul in 2001 and presented at the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children held at Yokohama, Japan, in 2001.

The Oslo Challenge, 1999

In late 1998, the Norwegian Government and UNICEF responded to a request from the working group set up by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1997 (see above) to initiate a longer process that would continue this work – meaning, for example, to identify examples of good practice in fulfilling Articles 12, 13 and 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), to forge co-operative links among the many sectors involved in the issue of children and media, and to produce a checklist for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to facilitate consideration of submission by State Parties in relation to these articles. In connection with an international working group of media professionals, young people, UN and voluntary sector workers, researchers and creative thinkers from different continents, **The Oslo Challenge** was launched on the 20th of November 1999 – the 10th anniversary of the UN

CRC. The Challenge is a call to action with the aim to ensure that the overwhelming power of the media for good in the lives of children is identified, encouraged and supported, while the potential harmful effects are recognised and reduced.

West African Regional Summit on Media for Children, 2000

In May 2000, a West African Regional Summit on Media for Children was held in Abuja, Nigeria. The Summit was co-ordinated by Glorious Diamond Productions and Children and Broadcasting Foundation for Africa (CBF; Nigeria Chapter) in collaboration with UNICEF for the organisers, African Children Broadcasting Network (ACBN). The Summit focused largely on the forthcoming 3rd World Summit on Media for Children in Greece, March 2001.

Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth, 2001

An Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth was organised by the Korea Educational Broadcast System (EBS), the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), and UNICEF in Seoul, South Korea, in February 2001. The object was to provide television practitioners from across the region an opportunity to discuss television's critical role and responsibility in promoting the understanding of and helping to protect the rights of the region's children and young people.

The **Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth** was adopted at the Forum and an action blueprint developed. The action points are practical ideas for TV news and children's programmes recommended as starting points to better serve the interests of children in local and national television markets.

EU Expert Seminar: Children and Young People in the New Media Landscape, 2001

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union, in co-operation with the European Commission, organised an expert seminar in Stockholm in February 2001, under the above heading. The seminar brought together representatives from governments and authorities within the Member States and Candidate countries, EU institutions, media industries and non-governmental organisations.

The theme of the seminar was the situation of minors in relation to the media, seen in the light of the rapidly evolving media landscape due to the impact of globalisation, digitalisation, the emergence of new media and the growth of media output. The issues discussed were protection of minors from harmful content on the Internet, in computer and video games and on television, and also television advertising directed at children. The full document and other material from the seminar are available on the website http://www.eu2001.se/eu2001

The 3rd World Summit on Media for Children, 2001

The 3rd World Summit on Media for Children took off during March 2001 in Thessaloniki, Greece. It was produced by the European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C.) under the auspices of several institutions, supervised by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (I.O.M.), and organised by Children's Media Development (CMD). The Summit aimed at enhancing media quality and media awareness worldwide and at demonstrating the emerging relation between television, radio and the new media. The participants were above all media professionals across the world, but also researchers, media educators, politicians, voluntary organisations, and children.

There were four main themes with plenary sessions and workshops: 'Going Global', 'Media for All', 'New Technologies', and 'Children Have a Say'. The I.O.M. put forward the draft **Declaration of Thessaloniki: Commitment for the Future** as regards children and media, a declaration which was amended and finally adopted in 2002.

MAGIC – An Oslo Challenge Follow-Up, 2001

In 2001, as a response to the Oslo Challenge (see above), UNICEF with the support of the Government of Norway launched the project MAGIC – a compilation of Media Actions and Good Ideas by, with and for Children. A resource pack of good ideas, which have been tried and tested by media industry players, organisations working for and with children, governments and academic/educational institutions, is continuously being put together (see http://www.unicef.org/magic) in order to be a working tool for a wider circle of people and organisations. The aim of the pack is to encourage and support new initiatives that will contribute to developing the relationship between children and the media.

Along with the resource pack, an e-mail network has been expanded and energised so that ideas and information can be shared and more players can be brought into this Oslo Challenge follow-up.

Asian Seminar on Children and the Internet, 2001

In August 2001, academics, media practitioners, new media experts and NGO representatives from six Asian countries met in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss 'The Impact on Children of New Media and the Internet in Southeast Asia'. The seminar was held under the auspices of AMIC (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore) with support from the Netherlands Government, UNESCO, UNICEF, and Thailand's Public Relations Department.

The participants generated a set of recommendations to help protect children in cyberspace. Among them are educational programmes targeted towards children, parents, teachers, educational institutions, media, policy-makers, law enforcers, civil society organisations, unions, Internet service providers and telecom companies. Other recommendations comprise guiding principles for regulatory and self-regulatory en-

vironments. The papers and recommendations are collected in Kavitha Shetty (ed.), *Kids On-line. Promoting Responsible Use and a Safe Environment on the Net in Asia.* Asian Media Information and Communication Centre & School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, 2002.

2nd Asian-Pacific Television Forum, 2002

In March 2002, the 2nd Asian-Pacific Television Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, attracted delegates from across the East Asia-Pacific region representing public and private sectors such as television, advertising, corporate, government and civil society organizations. The theme was 'Children's TV – Partnerships for Quality'. The Forum was organized by UNICEF and the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia (CASBAA), and hosted by the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) and Thailand's United Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). Recommendations aimed at building sustained partnerships for quality children's television were adopted at the closing session.

The recommendations included:

- Making existing producers of quality productions aware of child rights issues and urging them to incorporate those issues in the programmes they are already producing.
- Encourage and ensure the authentic participation of children and youth in the production of quality children's programming.
- Using integrated media – on-air, off-air, on-line and on-the-ground – to ensure maximum reach and relevance.
- Support for training/production workshops in technical and storytelling techniques, as well as exchange programmes for children's programme producers from developing countries with their counterparts in industrialized countries.

The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents, 2004

The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents came off in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in April 2004. On the agenda were the rights of children and adolescents to quality media; 'Media from All, Media for All' was the overriding theme. Attendees were producers, researchers, educators, journalists, publicity and marketing professionals, students, representatives of non-governmental organisations, national and international cooperation organisations, regulatory agencies, and funding institutions. Many persons were also attending the Summit on-line via real time web casts of the principal sessions.

The Summit was organised by Rio Prefeitura Educação/MULTIRIO (Rio Prefecture of Education) and Midiativa (Centro Brasileiro de Mídia para Crianças e Adolescentes;

Brazilian Centre of Media for Children and Adolescents). On the closing day the **Rio de Janeiro Charter: Media from All, Media for All** was adopted.

The Radio Manifesto, 2004

Three years of discussions and workshops by children and youth around the world have resulted in an international document, **The Radio Manifesto**, launched at The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents in 2004 (see above). The Radio Manifesto – addressed by young people to radio broadcasters – began in 2001 with youth radio broadcasters at Bush Radio in Cape Town, South Africa. Since then, the World Radio Forum has helped young broadcasters in other countries in Africa and the rest of the world to develop the text of their Radio Manifesto. Youth 8 to 18 years of age contributed from townships, remote villages, and the streets of capital cities, together with the new young citizens of emerging democracies. Their Manifesto proclaims strongly to radio authorities the rights, needs, and hopes of young people.

The Radio Manifesto is available in several languages at http://www.worldradioforum.org and is open for further contributions from child and youth's radio groups.

European Association for Viewers Interests, 2004

Television is an increasingly consolidated and globalised industry and its daily impact has continued to grow during the last years. Nevertheless, audience power and audience satisfaction have not increased proportionally, according to the European Association for Viewers Interests (EAVI). EAVI is an independent, not-for-profit association with the aim to identify, represent and advance the interests of the television viewers, and was initiated under the European Commission's *e*Learning initiative. Many of EAVI's objectives are of high relevance to children and young people.

In October 2004, EAVI held its first meeting, 'Advancing the European Viewers Interests', with several interest groups and associations in Lucca, Italy. Participants discussed the themes: 'viewers participation', 'media accountability' and 'media literacy and education'.

EAVI has also identified the current procedures that European citizens have at their disposal in order to effectively participate in media governance and the legal basis for citizens to exercise their rights as viewers, see http://www.eavi.org

The Arab Child Subject to Different Cultural Influences, 2005

A regional conference on the above-mentioned theme was held at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, in September 2005. The event was organized by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, a non-governmental organization with

legal entity that was established on the initiative of HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz after a resolution of the Arab League Conference on Childhood in Tunisia in 1986.

The concern of the 2005 conference was to investigate the theme within the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that includes the cultural rights of children, and the respect of ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Attendees were experts on children's culture, researchers, governmental authorities, voluntary organizations, the press and other media, as well as children.

A printed booklet with abstracts of all speeches is available in Arabic and English and **The Arab Child Subject to Different Cultural Influences** is also the name of the Final Statement and Recommendations of the conference.

3. Festivals, Awards, Prices – and Programme Item Exchange

Another means of raising media professionals' awareness of children, young people and media and increasing media professionals' media literacy is festivals, awards and prices. Certain major international festivals for children's and young people's films and TV-programmes are well-established. This is true of, for example, **PRIX JEUNESSE International**, established in 1964 and held every second (even) year in Munich, Germany (http://www.prixjeunesse.de); **PRIX DANUBE** established a few years later and held every second (uneven) year in Bratislava, Slovak Republic (http://prixdanube.stv.sk); and **Japan Prize International Educational Programme Contest** starting in the 1970s and taking place each year in Japan (http://www.nhk.or.jp/jp-prize).

However, there are also many new and a growing number of film and television festivals and awards around the world, for example, the regional **Asia-Pacific Children's TV Festival** held for the first time in Beijing, China, in 2005 and the regional **PRIX JEUNESSE Iberoamericano** held in Santiago de Chile in 2003 and 2005. And there are many many more. The **International Centre of Films for Children and Young People, CIFEJ**, is continuously producing a worldwide calendar of such festivals and awards as regards film and TV programmes for, as well as by, children and young people around the world. The calendar is available on CIFEJ's website http://www.cifej.com

There are also awards for websites created by and for children and young people.

The Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, http://www.anaktv.com

As example of another kind of reward we will bring out the ANAK TV Seal in the Philippines as a tool for making broadcasters – and the audience – sensitive about television programmes for children. It is the ordinary TV audience that is the jurors of this award.

In 1996, the major television networks in the country formed the Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television (SEAFCTV), since few TV programmes are produced locally for children in the Philippines. Children consequently watch much Western imports and adult programming. SEAFCTV was established with the aim of protecting children from media violence, cultural decay, and crass commercialism. The Foundation invented the Anak TV Seal (Anak meaning child in the local language) as an award for TV shows that promote wholesome and child-friendly, quality programming.

The process is as follows: The TV network members send their programme entries to the SEAFCTV, which in turn organizes jury screenings all over the country. In a year, it means that some 2,000 people from all sectors of society, including children, are asked to look at episodes of TV programmes and asked to evaluate the programmes

from their own point of view as elder or parent: Is this programme safe for the children in my house or community to watch?

When a programme entry makes the grade in at least two separate jury-screening rounds, it is elevated to a higher jury level in Manila consisting of a panel of ca. 100 specialists representing various disciplines. Entries that pass the second level jury in Manila are forwarded to SEAFCTV, which declares them child-sensitive enough to deserve the Anak TV Seal.

In the 2004 ceremonies, over fifty programmes were bestowed the Seal. The winning shows install the seal in the lower left corner of the frame during broadcast, announcing to viewers that the programme has received the approval of thousands of jurors nationwide and that it is safe to let children watch, even unattended by adults.

Sources: Mag Cruz Hatol, Secretary General, Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, Quezon City, Philippines, and several online articles.

Programme item exchange

Since long, European producers of programmes for children and young people have met for exchanging programme items in organised forms. **The European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** had in 2005 had such a Children's TV Programme Item Exchange scheme for 31 years, and there are also children's TV programme item exchanges within smaller regions in Europe, such as in the Nordic countries.

More recently, children's TV programme item exchanges have started in other continents. The meetings also provide opportunities for producers to exchange ideas and engage in co-operations across borders. Usually the events include workshops for training, as well. The main idea behind the exchange meetings are for members to increase the quality of children's programme, to contribute more local television content for children and young people, and through the exchange eke out financial resources since money for producing domestic programmes for young people often is all too insufficient.

In 2005, **the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)** had been running a Children's Programme Item Exchange scheme for 15 years. The workshop in 2005 was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with some forty participants from twenty-one countries and twenty-eight organisations taking part. Among the activities was a two-day workshop dedicated to children's documentary productions. Besides going through storytelling, cinematography, sound effects and ethics, best practices from the EBU documentary exchange were screened. Another half-day workshop was devoted to children's drama and became the starting point for an ABU co-production series.

The Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa, URTNA, had its first meeting for starting an exchange scheme in Nairobi in 1999 and has after that established a regular Children's TV Programme Item Exchange.

In **Latin America** an Item Exchange is at present being built up under the chairmanship of Beth Carmona, President of TVE Rede Brasil. There have been two brainstorming meetings in connection with the festival PRIX JEUNESSE Iberoamericana (see above).

The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) had its first workshop and training for a coming Children's TV Programme Item Exchange Scheme in July 2005.

These regional events also attract interest from other parts of the world. Producers from outside countries attend the exchange meetings to an increasing intent and items from their companies are partly screened, as well, meaning that these regional events have the potential to become international gatherings.

4. A Positive Counterculture

The main idea behind the growing programme item exchange schemes, the increasing number of workshops and training events, festivals and awards, international and regional meetings, monitoring organisations of media contents, charters, declarations, resolutions, recommendations and guidelines – in short, means of increasing media professionals' media literacy – is a growing global awareness of that counteraction is a way to minimise offensive and potentially harmful contents in transnational media – for instance, those global satellite television channels that are driven only by commercial profit and therefore almost impossible to influence by nations. Thus, the idea is to create a positive counterculture – a plurality of domestically produced media contents of high quality aimed specifically at children and young people and that children like. Research all over the world shows that if there are such high quality, home-produced entertaining and informative TV-programmes, books, magazines, radio programmes, websites on the Internet, etc., directed at children and easily available (for example, broadcast at the most appropriate times of the day) – media contents where children recognise themselves – then children will prefer to view, and listen to, and read, and search for these contents.

Research from, for instance, Australia, Japan and Sweden shows that children prefer to watch the home-produced TV programmes, and often live drama and informative children's programming instead of packages of imported routine cartoons (e.g., Rydin 2000, von Feilitzen 2004). In these countries there are also explicit media policies to safeguard children's programming.

For example, Australia has since the late 1970s made great efforts to develop children's television (whereas television programming earlier consisted largely of cheaper imports from other English-speaking countries, mainly the U.S. and the U.K.). Regulations were introduced, and in 1982 the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) was established. Nowadays it is stipulated that domestically produced children's and adult programmes must be broadcast, and that there shall be financial and other support for such production. The Australian Communications and Media Authority also plays an important role in regulating the quality of children's programming.

A joint research report released in 2000 and commissioned by the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Children's Television Foundation, and the Australian Film Finance Corporation (*Twenty Years of C*, see http://www.acma.gov.au/ACMAINTER.65640:STANDARD:1620029812:pc=PC_91032) shows significant improvement in the quantity, quality, diversity and Australianness of children's programmes on commercial television over 20 years, i.e., since regulation was introduced. In particular, domestically produced children's dramas have increased. The regulation from 1979 imposes C (children's) classification and quota requirements for the broadcast of C programmes.

Thus, media regulation or other media policies in a supportive rather than a prohibiting sense can without doubt be very successful. Leaving regulations aside, counteraction has started occuring in other ways. Tim Westcott (2002) questions if the

strategy of global satellite channels for children – particularly the U.S. based Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney Channel – also will mean global domination. Among other things, he underlines that competition from these three big channels has mobilised local players. Many European countries have started children's channels or branded blocks of their own. Local players have also learnt from the strategies of the U.S. players in developing a more concerted approach to rights ownership. In addition, an increasing part of animation is now being produced in Europe and Canada, beside the U.S.A. and Japan that previously completely overshadowed the market. An important reason for the growing number of animated children's programmes from other countries on the international arena is public policy initiatives (for example, in France and Canada), which give financial backing to help the development of domestic production. Support schemes have also aided development in other countries like Germany and Australia and were in 2002 under consideration in Asian countries, notably China and South Korea, the author says.

A final example of counteraction is the new children's channel JCC – Al Jazeera Children's Channel – a pan-Arabic channel funded in 1995 by Quatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science and Community Development. On JCC's website (http://www.qf.edu.qa/output/page469.asp) one can read:

> *In view of the existing state of television, where children are exposed to violent and inappropriate material on a daily basis, QF has the willingness and the capacity to offer a vivid and compelling alternative to the current trends in television broadcasting. More than a channel, JCC is an innovative concept for Arab television. JCC is an ideal balance between education and entertainment for the Arab family.*

JCC has developed TV programmes for the age groups: 3-6 years of age, 7-10 years of age and 11-15 years of age, and says that 40-45 per cent are produced in-house with a minimum of six hours a day consisting of original and fresh programmes. JCC will be supported by an interactive website for children and has already set up a website for the 3- to 6-year-olds.

V Internet Literacy

When talking about measures aiming to restrict undesirable content and its influences on the Internet, one has to distinguish between *illegal* content on the one hand and *offensive and harmful* content on the other. While there are laws against illegal content, measures against offensive and harmful content mostly consists of awareness-raising or media literacy methods among Internet users and Internet service and content providers.

Different countries define differently what is illegal. As a rule of thumb, what is illegal in society is also illegal on the Internet. In practice this means that illegal content on the Internet often refers to child pornography, extreme violence, political extremism, incitement to hatred against minority or other groups in society, economic crimes and serious encroachment on privacy, business firms, authorities and the nation.

However, it is important to remember that what is illegal in one country can be protected as free speech in another. Illegal Internet content may also be produced in one country, stored in a second and accessed in a third, complicating law enforcement.

The law enforcement agencies are in charge of handling illegal content. Often the police collaborates in this respect with the Internet Service Providers. Internet users can report illegal content they find on the Internet to these agents. In several countries there are also hotlines to facilitate such reporting (see further on in this section under the heading 'INHOPE').

In contrast to *illegal* content, *harmful* content on the Internet is defined by the European Union as content which parents, teachers or other adults responsible for children consider harmful to them. Definitions consequently vary from one culture – and one person – to the next, EU says (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/doc/factsheets/018-saferinternetplus.pdf).

There is, however, reason to distinguish *harmful* content from *offensive* content. While children and adults mostly can tell themselves which contents have *offended* them, the question of what is *harmful* is not always that obvious. A person might, e.g., be deeply involved in, and find pleasure from, violent games or pornography, although too much involvement in such Internet contents might reinforce and aggravate the person's already tangled living circumstances. In the same vein, stereotyping of, for example, gender and minority groups might not be experienced as immediately offensive, but constant patterns of stereotypes in

the media contents might harmfully contribute to persons' prejudiced views of gender and minority groups in the long run.

Existing research on the influences of use of the Internet and its various contents is mostly limited to direct questions to Internet users about what they themselves find *offensive* (have made them upset, what they fear, and the like), while in-depth research on possible *harmful* influences of the Internet is still in embryo.

Offensive and potentially *harmful* contents on the Internet may be various kinds of portrayals of physical violence, pornography, stereotyping of or expressed hate or racism addressed to societal groups and nations, cyberbullying and harrassment, excessive marketing, etc., including consequences in real life (such as destructive personal meetings). Offensive and potentially harmful contents on the Internet are, thus, physical, psychic and structural violence and oppression in a wide sense.

Although we know much more about offensive than about harmful Internet contents, adults do often not know that Internet contents have offended their children. Several research studies with both children and parents show that parents are often not aware of what their children are doing on the Internet. According to, for example, the SAFT project (Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools), supported by the European Union's (EU) Safer Internet Action Plan and conducted in Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden in 2002-2003, many parents did not know that children had come across pornography and sexual material on the Internet (which made some of the children upset), that many children had received unwanted sexual comments on the Internet, or that a great deal of the children had met someone in real life whom they first got to know on-line (persons that in some cases turned out to be adults although they had introduced themselves as a child on the Internet). Relatively many of the children had not told their parents about these happenings (Larsson 2004).

New similar surveys about the Internet (and mobile phones) conducted or commissioned by public and private companies are continually released. For example, a special Eurobarometer report, 'Safer Internet', was published in May, 2006, presenting field work during December 2005-January 2006 in the twenty-five EU Member States (and the four accession and candidate countries) (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/eurobarometer/index_en.htm).

According to this Eurobarometer survey, half of the parents in the member states say their children (under 18 years of age) use the Internet (ranging from 24% to 85% in the different countries). And on average, just over one third of the parents say that their child owns a mobile phone (ranging from 28% to 57% in the countries in question).

Nearly one parent in five believes their child has come across harmful or illegal content while on-line, and this belief increases with the child's age.

Furthermore, almost half of the respondents say filtering or blocking tools are applied, most likely among parents of younger children. A quarter of the parents regularly sit with their child, which is also most common with younger children. However, close to half of the parents state they never do. Two out of five parents have rules for the use of Internet, mostly when children are aged 10 to 13.

The most usual rule is prohibition to visit certain sites, followed by limited time spent on the Internet. Not to give out personal information is the third most common rule among the group declaring they have set rules. The rules vary with the age of the child.

The survey also found that there is a widespread interest in obtaining more information about safer Internet among the parents. Schools, Internet service providers and the media are the senders that parents and caretakers are most interested in receiving information from.

To take another recent survey example, Common Sense Media – a national organisation in the U.S.A. led by concerned parents and individuals with experience in child advocacy, public policy, education, media and entertainment – published a poll in June 2006. This national poll contained questions to parents with Internet access and who have 11-16 year old children who go online at least once per week. The findings indicate that the number one media concern among these U.S. parents has shifted from television to the Internet, with 85 per cent saying that the Internet poses the greatest risk to their children among all forms of media. (The poll comes in advance of a national public education campaign by Common Sense Media targeting parents) (http://www.commonsensemedia.org/news).

All over the world, different kinds of public, private and voluntary organisations and networks are offering advice and help to children, parents, teachers/media educators, librarians and others about how especially children and young people shall behave safely on the Internet, while at the same time getting most out of the medium. There is also advice for and collaboration with the Internet service providers and content providers/webmasters, as well as for and with policy makers.

The target groups are, thus, most of society. And the advice or awareness raising and Internet literacy measures take many forms – such as, for example,

- online/paper booklets/fact sheets for parents, as well as community events, campaigns, and trainings in real life
- online/paper information tool kits, trainings, lesson plans, suggestions of activities, and awards for schools and classes
- educational games, quizzes, story telling competitions, blogs, and 'contracts to sign' for children
- offers of filtering and rating systems for all Internet users
- Public Service Announcements on radio and television
- hotlines for users' reporting of offensive or potentially illegal material
- recommendations to service and content providers on ethics, guidelines, and codes of conduct
- research
- conferences and round tables for relevant agents and groups involved.

Since the medium is the Internet, information about all these awareness raising or Internet literacy methods are most often available on the websites/portals of the organisations and networks engaged.

The websites or portals, in turn, are usually not targeting just one group or offering just one measure but are often sites comprising several subsites with advice for increasing the levels of Internet literacy among different groups. It is, therefore, not feasible or fair to organise the following text after special target groups (such as parents, children, media educators, Internet service providers, etc.) or after special awareness raising measures. Instead, we have selected just a few of hundreds of organisations and networks on Internet safety from different parts of the world to give some illustrating examples of their services.

1. Europe

European Union Safer Internet Programme, http://europa.eu.int/saferinternet

In 1998, the EU adopted *The Recommendation on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity in Audiovisual and Information Services* (98/560/EC) that provides national legislative guidelines regarding illegal and harmful content over all electronic media.[1]

With this recommendation as a basis, the European Commission launched the *Safer Internet programme* (1999-2004). It covered technologies as diverse as 3G, online games and chat rooms, and dealt with content ranging from child pornography to racism. By the end of the programme, it had financed over 80 projects with the aims to

- create a safer environment via a European network of hot-lines to report illegal content
- encourage self-regulation and codes of conduct
- develop filtering and rating systems
- encourage awareness actions.

The follow-up, also launched by the European Commission, is called *Safer Internet plus programme* (2005-2008). It will support co-operation among the different actors – from mobile operators to child welfare NGOs. The programme aims to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user, as part of a coherent approach by the European Union.

There are four action lines:

i) Hotlines: fighting illegal content

Hotlines are set up in order to facilitate for people to report illegal content on the Internet. Since the host website or content provider in many cases is in another country, cross-border networks of hotlines are essential.

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[1] Other EU policy documents in this area are:

– The *Directive on Electronic Commerce* (2000/31/EC, June 2000) regulating important aspects of the liability of intermediary service providers for 'mere conduit', caching and hosting.

– The *Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications* (2002/58/EC, October 2003), fighting against spam.

– The *Framework Decision on child pornography* (2004/68/JHA, December 2003), setting out minimum requirements for Member States in the definition of offences and for sanctions.

ii) Raising awareness

Measures are taken in order to raise awareness of safer Internet. In this respect the Commission use multiplier organisations and electronic dissemination channels. It also considers using mass media as well as distributing information to schools and Internet cafés. For example, a European network of *'awareness nodes'* has been set up. Nodes are carrying out awareness actions and programmes in co-operation with concerned parties at national, regional and local levels. The ambition is to extend the network. Another example is the *Safer Internet Day* that took place for the first time on 8 February 2005 in 30 countries.

iii) Unwanted and harmful content

Technologies can be developed to limit the amount of unwanted and harmful content users receive, and help them manage it when they do. Projects will

- assess the effectiveness and support the development of filtering technology – a call for tenders was published in December 2004
- improve information exchanges and best practices on effectively fighting spam
- continue work on content rating, and give opportunities for child welfare specialists and technical experts to develop tools for protecting minors.

iv) Promoting a safer environment

EU emphasises a self-regulatory approach among Internet service providers and allows different codes of conduct. However, these codes should share essential features such as effectiveness, fairness and transparency. To exchange best practices and encourage dialogue, the Safer Internet programme has set up the *Safer Internet Forum***,** where the industry, child welfare organisations and policy makers can discuss safer Internet topics. Furthermore, a first *Call for proposals* was published in September 2005.

Here follow a few examples of the Safer Internet plus programme more in detail.

● **Insafe,** http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/index.htm

Insafe, mentioned above and funded under the *Safer Internet plus programme*, is meant to be Europe's Internet safety information resource. Insafe is a network of hitherto (2006) 23 'nodes' in 21 countries (mostly within the European Union but also Australia, Canada, Bulgaria, Russia and Singapore). On Insafe's website we can read that

> *Insafe is a network of national nodes that coordinate Internet safety awareness in Europe. The mission of the Insafe cooperation network is to empower citizens to use the Internet, as well as other information and communication technologies, safely and effectively.*
>
> *Insafe promotes positive, ethical use of online information and communication technologies. The network calls for shared responsibility for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and youths, by government, educators, parents, media, industry and all other relevant actors.*

Insafe partners work closely together to share best practice, information and resources. The network will interact with industry, schools and families with the aim of empowering people to bridge the digital divide between home and school and between generations.

Insafe partners will monitor and address emerging trends, while seeking to reinforce the image of the Internet as a place to learn. It will raise awareness on reporting harmful or illegal content and services.

Through close cooperation between partners and other actors, Insafe aims to raise Internet safety-awareness standards and support the development of information literacy for all.

Furthermore, Insafe's web site gives information and advice for parents and educators about, for example,

- Blogging
- Chat
- CyberBullying
- Hate speech/Racism
- Instant messaging
- Mobiles
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Phishing/Spoofing
- Privacy
- Spam
- Spyware
- Virus

Insafe recommends these links for further information about *CyberBullying*:
http://www.cyberbullying.org
http://www.cyberbully.org
Insafe recommends these links for further information about *Online gambling*:
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/olgamble.htm (U.S. Federal Trade Commission)
http://www.gamcare.org.uk (Gamcare – pages dedicated to young people)

● **INHOPE,** http://www.inhope.org/en/index.html

Besides *Insafe* (see above), that carries out awareness actions (events, trainings) and run websites to inform parents, children and teachers on the safe use of Internet, the *Safer Internet programme* is funding *INHOPE* – the International Association of Internet Hotlines. INHOPE was founded in 1999 under the EU Safer Internet Action Plan and represents (in 2006) Internet hotlines in 23 countries over the world, supporting them

in their aim to respond to reports of illegal content from Internet users to make the Internet safer.

According to INHOPE the last number of years has seen an increase in illegal content online.

If the content reported is found illegal, the hotline will refer this onto law enforcement agencies and also to the Internet service provider for removal. INHOPE member hotlines collaborate and have the support of law enforcement agencies, local governments and child welfare organisations.

Once the source is traced hotlines pass reports over to the relevant country. For example a case of illegal content reported in Germany but traced to France, will be passed onto the French hotline for further investigation and action. For countries where there are no hotlines, the report will be passed onto the local law enforcement agency.

INHOPE Members

Country	Membership Status	Organisation Name	Web Address	Membership Date
Australia	Full	ACMA	www.au.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Austria	Full	Stopline	www.at.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Belgium	Full	Child Focus	www.be.inhope.org	2001-01-09
Brazil	Provisional	hotline.br	www.br.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Canada	Provisional	cybertip.ca	www.ca.inhope.org	2005-05-12
Cyprus	Provisional	Safeweb	www.cy.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Denmark	Full	Red Barnet	www.dk.inhope.org	2002-01-05
Finland	Full	STC Finland	www.fi.inhope.org	2002-01-09
France	Full	AFA	www.fr.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	ECO	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	FSM	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	jugendschutz.net	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Greece	Full	SafeNet	www.gr.inhope.org	2004-02-05
Hungary	Provisional	MATISZ	www.hu.inhope.org	2005-05-12
Iceland	Full	Barnaheill	www.is.inhope.org	2001-01-09
Ireland	Full	ISPAI	www.ie.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Italy	Full	STC Italy	www.it.inhope.org	2003-01-23
Lithuania	Provisional	BITE Lietuva	www.lt.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Netherlands	Full	Meldpunt	www.nl.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Poland	Provisional	NASK	www.pl.inhope.org	2005-01-28
South Korea	Full	ICEC	www.kr.inhope.org	2003-10-19
Spain	Full	Protegeles	www.es.inhope.org	2002-01-05
Taiwan	Full	ECPAT Taiwan	www.tw.inhope.org	2005-05-12
United Kingdom	Full	Internet Watch Foundation	www.uk.inhope.org	1999-11-01
United States	Full	Cybertipline	www.us.inhope.org	1999-11-01

Source: http://www.inhope.org/en/index.html

- **Safer Internet Forum,** http://europa.eu.int/information_society/ activities/ sip/si_forum/forum_june_2006/index_en.htm

Within the Safer Internet programme, there are also conferences and research projects. For example, the *Safer Internet Forum* in Luxembourg in June 2006 is open for all

interested. The meeting will focus on two topics: 'Children's use of new media' and 'Blocking access to illegal content: child sexual abuse images'.

The half-day devoted to children's use of new media will analyse the results of the Eurobarometer survey (see the introduction to this section 'Internet Literacy' and the Mediappro project (Applied research for media education) (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/projects/awareness/mediappro/index_en.htm). Discussion will focus on awareness-raising tools and ideas on how to exploit research results for practical awareness-raising work. During the other half-day, the problematic of notice and take-down of illegal content blocking access to child sexual abuse images and server-level filtering of illegal content will be addressed.

The purpose of the *Safer Internet Forum* 2006 is to contribute to improve the common understanding of these issues at European level. As was the case in 2005, participants will include representatives of industry, law enforcement authorities, child welfare organisations and policy makers.

Call for proposals, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/call/proposals_2006/index_en.htm

Call for proposals are launched under the *Safer Internet plus programme* (as they were under the *Safer Internet programme*). Date for publication of a new one is end of June 2006.

Safer Internet Day

The first *Safer Internet Day* took place in 2005. Sixty-five organisations from 30 countries took part. This event included the launch of a storytelling competition for children.

In 2006, *Safer Internet Day* took place on 7 February with around 100 organisations in 37 countries across the world. Among the events, *Insafe*, the EU network for Internet safety awareness (see above), supported by MSN, organised a global 'blogathon' for safer Internet. This meant that a range of organisations active in promoting Internet safety and special guests posted entries on a blog and invited comments from visitors, children, schools and parents. The blog, with content in several languages, had a geographical focus that moved west through the global time zones, from New Zealand to Argentina, during the day.

The press release announcing the 'blogathon' said that

> *according to blog tracking site Technorati, 70,000 new blogs are created every day, many by young people. A Guardian/ICM poll in the U.K. found a third of young people published content online on a personal blog or website. Blogs offer exciting possibilities for education and self-expression. However many young people are unaware of important ethical, legal and safety issues. Posting of personal information and publishing of copyright material are among the online practices that have caused concern. (http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/insafe20060118.htm)*

The aim of the blogathon was to raise awareness about such issues and enable parents, teachers and young people in particular to share experiences and cultural attitudes about their use of new technologies.

Other events ranged from interactive activities such as quizzes, online games, storytelling competitions, and round table discussions. In Belgium, the Netherlands and Lithuania, children reversed roles by giving their teachers, parents and grandparents lessons in how to use Internet and surf safely. In Norway and Malta results of recent surveys were launched (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/news_events/events/si_day/index_en.htm).

Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int

The advice to parents, teachers, other media educators, young people, etc., is – as mentioned – often available in the form of booklets and fact sheets on the organisations' web sites and sometimes in paper versions. One example of such a booklet is produced by the Council of Europe:[2]



The Internet Literacy Handbook – A guide for parents, teachers and young people issued by Council of Europe (Media Division, Directorate General II – Human Rights & Good Governance in the Information Society Project, Directorate General of Political Affairs).

The second edition of this booklet, updated in January 2006, is available in English and French (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Media/hbk_en.html). In early 2006, it consists of 21 fact sheets but is an ongoing project, in that the fact sheets will continuously be updated and new ones added, and in that users are welcome to participate in the project by sending feedback or ideas on classroom activities, best practices or pertinent links to Council of Europe at: media.IS@coe.int

The booklet offers technical know-how and highlights ethical issues, provides ideas for creative activities and best practices on the Internet, not least classroom activities, and points out certain dangers in combination with giving recommendations of how to avoid these dangers. There are also several links to other Internet resources.

At present the fact sheets deals with the following aspects:

- Getting connected
- Setting up websites
- Searching for information
- Games
- Distance learning
- Labelling and filtering

[2] The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest political organisation, founded in 1949. It:
- groups together 46 countries, including 21 countries from Central and Eastern Europe,
- has application from 1 more country (Bélarus),
- has granted observer status to 5 more countries (the Holy See, the United States, Canada, Japan and Mexico),
- is distinct from the 25-nation European Union, but no country has ever joined the Union without first belonging to the Council of Europe,
- has its headquarters in Strasbourg, in north-eastern France.

- Portals
- E-mail
- Spam
- Chat
- Newsgroups
- World-wide libraries
- Music and images on the Internet
- Creativity
- Privacy
- Security
- Bullying and harassment
- Shopping online
- Becoming an active e-citizen
- Mobile technology
- Blogs

To take but one example, the Council of Europe's fact sheet about labelling and filtering says, among other things:

Labelling

Labelling refers to a quality-assurance tag or label displayed on software and websites, or integrated into the content of websites. It ensures that the product meets the criteria and standards designated by rating agencies such as Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) and the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA).

Sites are labelled in order to protect minors, increase public trust and use of online transactions, and also to comply with legal standards. When labelling website content, a code is written into the webpage html, thereby detailing its contents so that the page can be rated. This rating – which is invisible on the page itself, details the nature of the content and is detected by filtering mechanisms, which will subsequently either block or load the page.

Websites can also be branded with 'Quality Labels' and 'Trustmarks', labels which signify that specific regulations have been met. These regulations often include prescriptions about secure transactions. Two well-known quality labels include Verisign, http://www.verisign.com and Trust-e, http://www.truste.org

Filtering

Filtering is the process of detecting and blocking inappropriate content on the Internet. It can be done within browsers and proxies, or by installing software censors.

An alternative to filtering is 'white listing', whereby access is allowed only to certain pre-approved sites.

Education

Filters can be valuable in reducing the risk of students accessing inappropriate or harmful material.

The issues raised by labelling and filtering practices are rich in material for citizenship and/or social studies themes. Start a debate on the subject of online filtering. Is it an acceptable and necessary form of censorship?

Issues

The labelling and rating of websites remains a largely voluntary practice, except where countries have laws to enforce certain standards.

Currently only a small percentage of pages are labelled by the authors.

Filtering software-services label pages according to their value systems and social agendas.

Filters may block useful sites relating to contraception or sex education due to certain key words they contain.

Some countries block sites of opposing political parties or ideologies.

Some people consider filtering as a form of censorship and therefore against the spirit of the Internet. Others claim that if filter software did not exist, governments would be under pressure to regulate online content.

How to

To label content you have created on a site of your own, follow instructions on a rating site such as ICRA at http://www.icra.org

You will be asked to classify the material according to a number of set criteria.

Most browsers can be set to filter out specific sites. For example, in Microsoft Explorer, this option can be found under 'security options'.

Very few computers are sold with filter software pre-installed. You will need to purchase a dedicated filter program for a more sophisticated approach to filtering sites. A number of products are available on the market.

Most filter programs will allow you to specify what types of content you wish to filter or allow.

Best practice

Have a close look at how a filter works before you install it. Does it make any ideological or cultural decisions in its filtering that you do not agree with?

Use electronic aids with discrimination, and do not believe the hype. Test product claims against personal experience.

Talk to students, parents and staff about their usage and needs, and do so regularly. Creating an open discussion environment will do more to add value to your learners' Internet experience than censorship or witch-hunts.

Consider 'white listing' options – allowing access only to approved sites – for the youngest Internet users.

Experts recommend that parents should take an interest in their children's online activities and spend time online together.

Children and young people should be encouraged to talk about inappropriate material they find on the Internet. Report potentially illegal content to a hotline: http://www.inhope.org

2. Asia-Pacific

NetAlert, Australia, http://www.netalert.net.au

NetAlert is Australia's Internet safety advisory body, a not-for-profit community organisation established in late 1999 by the Australian government to provide independent advice and education on managing access to online content. The organisation works with authorities, the Internet industry and community organisations. NetAlert's vision is a safer Internet experience, particularly for young people and their families.

NetAlert's services are comprehensive and include, among other things:

- *advice* to *parents*, *schools*, *libraries*, *children* and the *industry.* The website can be accessed in seven languages (English, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, Greek, Vietnamese and Japanese).
- services for *reporting offensive material*.
- *research* on filtering and technologies for Internet Service Providers, Internet content hosts and their clients.
- *awareness and education campaigns*. From August 2005 to June 2007, 'NetAlert Expo' travels around Australia promoting Internet safety, visiting every state and territory and holding events in local communities. The events are tailored to suit each different audience and take different formats (a presentation or workshop for example) and are run in various venues (such as community centres, libraries or schools).
- *different subsites for different audiences* (parents, children, schools, libraries and the industry). For children, for example, there are two different sites with fun, games and adventures surrounding the advice – Netty's world for young children and CyberQuoll for older kids.





- *a helpline* answering e-mails or telephone calls about advice on Internet safety.
- *free information kits* on Internet safety and free resources and materials to schools, community organisations, libraries and other interested organisations and individuals. For example, NetAlert has sent Internet safety information materials to every school in Australia.

- *'awards for excellence'* for which schools and classes might apply if they have innovative ideas about Internet safety.
- *community service announcements* for television and radio during 2005, announcements that highlighted the dangers that children face in chat rooms and some of the words and terms that children may be exposed to when they are online.
- *conferences*, for example, an international conference in 2002 designed to provide a forum for policy makers, governments, the IT industry, community groups and the broader Australian community to participate together in 'growing Australia online'.

PAGi, Singapore, http://www.pagi.org.sg – **in 2006 forming into CAC**

Singapore is a country with one of the world's highest computer take-up, Internet usage and Internet household penetration rate.[3] While many Singaporean parents perceive the Internet as an essential educational tool, there are concerns about problems and potential dangers on the Internet such as pornographic web sites, cyber predators and Internet addiction.

Since 1996, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (http://www.mda.gov.sg) has established an Internet regulatory framework to meet these concerns. The authority has adopted a three-pronged approach involving collaboration between government, industry and the public – (a) instituting a light-touch regulatory framework; (b) encouraging industry self-regulation; and (c) promoting on-line safety awareness through public education.

The Parents Advisory Group for the Internet (PAGi), a volunteer group formed in 1999, has been active in implementing Internet public education initiatives. PAGi partnered the Internet industry and government agencies to

- promote safe surfing, and educate parents about online safety
- advise and give feedback to the industry, on tools for online safety
- recommend safe and fun sites for children
- help familiarise parents with the Internet so that they can supervise their children better
- keep up with developments in child online protection
- educate children on safety in the Internet.

PAGi embarked on research in 2001 and 2003 in order to study the level of awareness Singaporean parents and children have of Internet problems and potential dangers, as well as their concerns for these problems and potential dangers. The studies also examined children's and parents' perceptions of measures or strategies to safeguard children from these problems and dangers.

[3] The text about PAGi is partly from PAGi's web site, partly from Khoo, Cheong and Liau (2004)

The findings of the first study had three implications for PAGi. Firstly, the organisation had to double its efforts in reaching non-English speaking parents who were less aware of the importance of Internet safety. Secondly, as the results indicated that teenagers, especially those between 13 and 15 are more resistant to parental advice, PAGi could play an important role in encouraging parents of pre-teen children to take advantage of pre-teen years to inculcate healthy surfing. Thirdly, a deeper understanding of the 13 to 15 year-olds was required in order for public education efforts reaching teenagers to be more effective.

In response to the findings, PAGi embarked on a series of initiatives to aggressively reach out to the non-English speaking parents. Some of these initiatives included:

- *Participation in community events* – to create greater awareness of the importance of Internet safety especially among heartlanders. PAGi's volunteers were mobilised to speak to participants about Internet safety and, at the same time, multi-lingual brochures were distributed to reinforce the Internet safety messages.
- *'Making the Internet Journey Safe' multi-lingual training* – PAGi co-developed training materials with Childnet International, United Kingdom, to empower parents, and these materials were translated into Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Training sessions were conducted through schools and companies.
- *'Caught in the Web' VCD* – PAGi produced a multi-lingual educational video in VCD format, a medium that is easily accessible for non-English speaking parents. The production marked the birth of SPEEDi, PAGi's mascot and everybody's cyber buddy. SPEEDi starred as a guide for the family that encountered various Internet pitfalls.
- *PAGi Families Week '03* – The culmination of PAGi's efforts to create awareness and educate the heartlander parents was PAGi Families Week '03, comprising a series of events aimed to highlight the positive and safe use of the Internet. Some of these included: story-telling sessions at libraries; road shows at the heartland shopping malls; Cyber Families Race, a virtual and on-line treasure hunt for families; and Cool Kidz Search '03, a pageant in search for Singapore's most Internet-savvy teenagers. PAGi also invited international speakers from Canada and U.K. to share their knowledge and expertise on Internet safety.

Although PAGi reached out to almost 60,000 parents, the second study showed that there had been no significant changes over time in teenagers' Internet behaviour and parents' understanding of their children's on-line activities. And still, the teenagers at most risk would be those aged 13 to 15. At the same time, the findings showed that parental involvement plays a significant role in their children's safety on the Internet. These findings were in accordance with other international research.

One of several conslusions was, however, that Internet public education initiatives cannot be shouldered by one agency alone but rather requires that of a multi-prong approach involving inter-agency and international collaboration.

In 2006, a new committee, Community Advisory Committee (CAC), will be formed. The CAC brings together the Parents Advisory Group for the internet (PAGi), Cyber Wellness Task Force (CWTF) and the Public Education Sub-Committee (PESC) under

one committee. The CAC will advise the Media Development Authority on ways to cultivate greater media appreciation amongst the public as well as promote positive use of new media such as High-Definition TV. Specifically, the CAC will provide feedback, input and champion projects that will help the MDA achieve its community objective of cultivating a media literate population – particularly in the light of emerging new media technologies.

3. North America

The Media Awareness Network, Canada, http://www.media-awareness.ca

The Media Awareness Network (Mnet) is a Canadian non-profit organization that has developed media literacy programs since 1996. Members of Mnet's team have backgrounds in education, journalism, mass communications, and cultural policy. The network promotes media and Internet education by producing online programs and resources, working in partnership with Canadian and international organizations, and speaking to audiences across Canada and around the world. MNet's programs are funded primarily through the contributions of private sector sponsors and the Government of Canada, with additional support from the annual memberships of individuals, non-profit organizations and small businesses.

Hitherto MNet has focused its efforts on equipping *adults* (parents, teachers, librarians) with information and tools to help young people to understand how the media work, how the media may affect their lifestyle choices and the extent to which they, as consumers and citizens, are being well informed. MNet also provides reference materials for use by adults and youth alike in examining media issues from a variety of perspectives.

However, the Internet literacy section – Web Awareness Canada – will expand to include Internet literacy resources designed for use by *young people*.

Already now, there are *educational games* about Internet safety for children and young people. For younger children of school age there are stories about the CyberPigs – how they learn about online marketing, and about protecting their privacy as they surf the Internet, and when they explore the world of chat rooms and learn to distinguish between fact and fiction and to detect bias and harmful stereotyping in online content.

An interactive online game takes older students through a series of mock sites that test their savvy surfing skills. The game ends with an online quiz, that gives students an even more in-depth level of information. Another animated module takes students on a mission from Planet Earth to assess the varying degrees of prejudice, misinformation, and hate propaganda on the 'Galactic Web'.



There is also a *Media toolkit for youth* designed to help young people understand what drives the news industry, why youth stereotyping happens and how they can access the news media – including the Internet to make their voices and issues heard.

In sum, MNet has developed the following core programs offered on its web site:

Media education

- *The Parents section* offers tips for talking to kids about the media, and advice on managing media use in the home.
- *The Educators section* includes teaching units and supporting materials designed to Canadian provincial media education outcomes for grades K-12. (There are more than 300 lesson plans for educators to use in classrooms.)
- *The Media Issues section* examines media-related topics such as stereotyping, violence, privacy, marketing to children, the portrayal of diversity in the media, and online hate.

Web Awareness Canada

- This program uses a delivery model based on partnerships with public libraries, the education sector, parent groups, and community organizations. Its primary focus has been to help bring *teachers* and *librarians* up to speed on the issues emerging as young people go online. Mnet has done this by licensing workshop tools that can be purchased for professional development. The workshop topics include online safety, protecting personal privacy, authenticating information, and marketing to young people.
- As mentioned, this Internet literacy section will expand to include resources designed for use by *young people*.

Research

- In the beginning of the 2000s MNet developed its *Young Canadians In A Wired World* (YCWW) research program in order to build an extensive database about the role of the Internet in the lives of young people. The second stage of the research project is (2006) under planning.

The Federal Trade Commission, U.S.A., http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec13.htm

The Federal Trade Commission, the United States consumer protection agency, urges parents to talk to their tweens and teens about social networking sites, and elaborates in a parents' guide these issues for using such sites safely:

- In some circumstances, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and Rule require social networking sites to get parental consent before they collect, maintain, or use personal information from children under age 13.
- Keep the computer in an open area.
- Use the Internet with your kids.

- Talk to your kids about their online habits. If they use social networking sites, tell them why it's important to keep information like their name, Social Security number, address, phone number, and family financial information — like bank or credit card account numbers — to themselves. Remind them that they should not share that information about other people in the family or about their friends, either.
- Your children should be cautious about sharing other information too.
- Make sure your kids' screen names don't say too much about them.
- Use privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your child's website.
- Your kids should post only information that you – and they – are comfortable with others seeing – and knowing.
- Remind your kids that once they post information online, they can't take it back.
- Warn your kids about the dangers of flirting with strangers online.
- Tell your children to trust their gut if they have suspicions.
- If you're concerned that your child is engaging in risky online behavior, you can search the blog sites they visit
- Check site privacy policies.

For full advice, see http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec13.htm

American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S.A, http://www.aap.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics gives the following Internet advice to parents:

Setting Rules for Internet Use

Just like you have rules for how your children should deal with strangers and which TV shows, movies, and videos they are allowed to watch, it is important to have a set of rules when they use the Internet. Be wary of people on the Net who can be mean, rude, or even criminal. To keep your child's time on the Internet safe, productive, and fun, follow these guidelines:

- Set limits on the amount of time your child can spend on-line each day or week. Consider using an alarm clock or timer in case you or your child loses track of time.
- Do not let surfing the Net take the place of homework, playing outside or with friends, and pursuing other interests.
- Make sure your child knows that people on-line are not always who they say they are and that on-line information is not necessarily private.

Teach your child the following:

- NEVER give out personal information (including name, address, phone number, age, race, school name or location, or friends' names) without your permission.

- NEVER use a credit card on-line without your permission.
- NEVER share passwords, even with friends.
- NEVER arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone she meets on-line, unless you approve of the meeting and go with your child to a public place. Teenagers in particular need to be aware of the risks.
- NEVER respond to messages that make her feel confused or uncomfortable. Your child should ignore the sender, end the communication, and tell you or another trusted adult right away.
- NEVER use bad language or send mean messages on-line.

Source: http://www.aap.org/pubed/ZZZQJ9C0B7C.htm?&sub_cat=17

CyberAngels. U.S.A., http://www.cyberangels.org

CyberAngels says it might be the oldest association fighting for Internet safety since it was formed in 1995 in the U.S., a mere year and a-half after the World Wide Web was launched. The volunteers of CyberAngels are comprised mainly of law enforcement officers, information technology specialists, and educators from all over the world, as well as parents, librarians, technical writers and legal professionals. The association is especially focused on online criminal activity.

CyberAngels has:

- *Programs for Schools:* Internet safety information for educators through online classes and published materials and speakers for schools and public libraries.
- *Programs for Families:* assistance to children and parents on a wide range of concerns relating to Internet use.
- *Victim Assistance:* assistance to victims of the Internet and computer crimes such as stalking, harrassment, identity theft and fraud
- *Internet 101:* a wide variety of materials related to general Internet knowledge, online security, safety and privacy.

4. International

Internet Content Rating Association, http://www.icra.org

The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA), registered since 1999 in the U.K. and U.S.A, is an international, non-profit organization of Internet leaders working to develop a safer internet through self-regulation. ICRA addresses mainly webmasters and parents.

Content providers (webmasters) can label their websites by using 'the ICRA questionnaire', that is, they check which of the elements in the questionnaire are present or absent from their web sites (such as details of violent representations, sexual content, etc.). This generates a small file containing the labels that is linked to the content on one or more domains. The ICRA questionnaire can be completed in several different languages; however, the labels themselves are expressed as computer code.

Users, especially parents of young children, can then use free filtering software to allow or disallow access to web sites based on the information declared in the label. Parents can create their own block or allow lists, set up different filtering profiles for different family members and easily override a blocked site that they deem appropriate for their child.

In order to create a comprehensive filtering system that will block or allow access to websites, including unlabelled sites, ICRA also allows users to install additional modules that can use other methods to filter Internet access.

On its website ICRA also turns to children. For example, there is a list of advice to children such as keeping personal details (name, adress, password) private, asking for parents' permission if wanting to meet someone in real life that one has met online, and telling a parent or teacher if coming across anything that makes the child uncomfortable.

Furthermore children are encouraged to print *The Children's Bill of Rights for the Internet*, produced by Childnet International (see below).

There is also *The Family Online Internet Safety Contract* to be printed and signed by Child and Parent on how they should behave towards each other as regards the Internet.

Childnet International, http://www.childnet-int.org

Childnet International, established in 1996, is a non-profit organisation based in the U.K. working with others to 'help make the Internet a great and safe place for children'. Childnet works in three main areas of access, awareness, and protection & policy. This web site is another portal offering information and advice in many different forms to, above all, children, parents and educators.

To single out only a few of Childnet International's activities, there is the well-known *Childnet Academy*, a unique competition for young people around the world who are developing Internet projects or exciting online ideas to benefit other children. This international project has been run for eight years with yearly international awards.

Kidsmart is a practical Internet safety programme subsite for schools, young people, parents, and agencies. Resources include lesson plans, leaflets, posters, activity days and interactive games

Chatdanger is a site about the potential dangers on interactive services online, such as chat, instant messaging, online games, e-mail and online mobiles

Peer2Peer, file-sharing and downloading on the Internet is a site and leaflet that gives advice when downloading and sharing music and films. There are also useful links to other organisations and resources.

Mobile phones – the mobile Internet

Childnet International is one of very few organisations that hitherto has given explicit attention to mobile phones – the mobile Internet. On Childnet's website its booklet *Children & Mobile Phones: An Agenda for Action* was published in 2004.



The booklet says: Mobile phones offer access to a diverse mix of broadcast and entertainment media, including photography, video, radio and music, games, Internet browsing and personal software applications, including SMS, MMS and video messaging, chat, contact, dating and adult subscription services. Mobile payment mechanisms are also in use. Therefore mobile phones are also a mobile Internet which can be much more attractive, not least for children and young people, than the traditional fixed Internet.

This means that mobile phone technology also is a further possible medium for abuse and may potentially be more difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace.

Concern for children's safety extends beyond pornography and gambling to race hate content, and information on tools for violence, cults, drugs, and eating disorders, etc.

Contacts of different kinds are also a serious area of concern. In Japan, for example, many young people are using 3G phones to access online dating sites leading in some cases to sexual abuse and other crime.

Among young people themselves, bullying can be perpetrated and potentially intensified using mobile phones, and there are also many new and intimate forms of marketing through these phones.

And it is important to remember the privacy that mobile phones afford their users, in particular children, who can now communicate with anyone far from parental supervision.

Future implications of the development of mobile phone technology are as a payment mechanism and as a repository of detailed or even sensitive personal data, extending potentially to include biometric information. Given the high incidence of mobile phone theft, this presents huge challenges in terms of ensuring that personal identifying data does not fall into the wrong hands even if the phone itself does.

Childnet International offers different lists of advice in the booklet to all these target groups:

- children and young people
- parents and carers
- educators and schools
- government and law enforcement
- mobile network operators
- product developers
- content providers
- retailers

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