Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM)

11, Fragoudi & Al. Pantou Str.
Kallithea 176 71
Athens
Greece

Website: www.iom.gr

The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM) is the national applied research organisation in the field of audiovisual communication in Greece. It is a legal entity of Private Law, supervised by the General Secretariat of Communication. The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute is thoroughly engaged in carrying out methodical research-projects concerning, mainly, the audiovisual media: Radio, Television, Cinema, Multimedia and New Technologies. The Institute also constitutes the national representative and co-ordinator of Greece's positions on European procedures and programmes for the support of the audiovisual industry, such as the MEDIA Plus Programme and the pan-European organisation EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL OBSERVATORY.

Making sense of today's media content: Public Media Literacy Consultation

MEDIA LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

0) Introduction and background

The objective of this questionnaire is to identify existing and possible approaches to media literacy and provide a description of emerging trends in this field throughout Europe. The wide availability of broadband and associated Internet Protocol based services in Europe and the roll-out of digital television enlarge citizens' access to information plus creative and cultural content to an unprecedented degree. These developments also enable consumers to generate and distribute content (see also the ongoing consultation on "Content Online in the Single Market"). While these developments increase freedom of speech and pluralism, they raise questions regarding the accuracy of information or whether it respects fundamental principles, notably human dignity. Therefore, stakeholders and politicians in Europe increasingly see a need for citizens to have tools to stand back and think about the media content they access, and so become more media literate. As a contribution to the ongoing debate, the European Commission set-up a "Media Literacy Expert Group" composed of a number of European media literacy experts including a mix of different competences and backgrounds. The remit of this Group is to define media literacy objectives and trends, to highlight and promote good practices at European level and propose actions in the field. In this framework, the Commission has identified a need to investigate and map existing practices in media literacy and in related fields. Although many of the questions address issues relating to young consumers, respondents should feel free to submit elements and examples targeted at other population groups.

Media literacy relates to all media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and other new digital communication technologies. The aim of media literacy is to increase awareness of the many forms of media messages encountered in everyday life. It should help citizens to recognize how the media filter their perceptions and beliefs, shape popular culture and influence personal choices. It should empower them with the critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills to make them judicious consumers and producers of content. Media literacy 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 it is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy.

The questionnaire is composed of four sections: in the first section it addresses general questions about media literacy while in the other three it seeks to collect information about initiatives and projects in specific areas of media literacy (commercial communication, audiovisual works, online environment including press and publishing).

1) General questions

1. Media literacy has been defined as the ability to access, analyze and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages which we are now being confronted with on a daily basis and are an important part of our contemporary culture, as well as to communicate competently in media available on a personal basis. Do you agree with this definition? Please provide any other definition that may be used in your country, institution, other (please specify).
A multidisciplinary approach is needed in order to fully comprehend the new term of "media literacy". The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute, (IOM), the national applied research organisation of audiovisual media in Greece, agrees with the above definition but also approaches the term in a broader context. Thus, media literacy can also be defined as an "agent" able to control and exert social, political and economic influence in the media field. Additionally, it should be noted that a tension has been recorded between media literacy and the professionals of mass media education. The former actually tends to lean towards the ideal situation of a media literacy environment whereas the latter reflects the actual real thing, the status quo[1] .

2. What do you think should be the aim and the target audience of initiatives on media literacy? Should special attention be devoted to digital media, as these are more widely used by young people? Should media literacy initiatives be combined with initiatives to increase media consumption or kept separate?
Two important things are being raised in this question: the digital media and the young people. These ought to constitute the core course of a media literacy project. The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute firmly believes that the aim of the media literacy should be to create critical reflection upon incoming media messages. In the emerging new media landscape, it is imperative that *all media users,* both as individuals and as social factors, should be media literate in the context of user empowerment in *all communication media* and during *their whole life*. This implies that media literacy must be a lifetime educating experience, adjustable to new forms of media in the digital field. However, special attention should be given to parents and the education professionals as they are the key contributors of their children's media behaviorism. Most importantly, media literacy initiatives should be aimed at the young audiences and children as they are by nature more susceptible to influence and they lack the experience and frames of reference in the media procedure. In short, young people are the most vulnerable in assessing, scrutinizing and hence, adopting a critical reflection against all incoming information from the new digital media. Moreover, it is true that young people are the most eager users of the digital media and especially, the internet, therefore special actions must be taken in order to ensure their media competence. They are the ones who engage an active role in the new internet platforms and consist the main target group, they are *the* "active consumers" of the new communication platforms. In this context, it is unavoidable that media literacy is closely interlinked with media consumption.

3. Media creativity is the growing capacity of citizens everywhere to produce and distribute content to audiences of all sizes. In your opinion, should media production skills be an essential feature of media literacy? Do you have examples of best practices in that field?
It has been already stipulated that the main target group of the media literacy campaigns and initiatives shall be – ideally- the parents, school professionals and the children. In the general context of disseminating media literacy information, media production skills can

---

[1]   D. Demers, "*Dictionary of Mass Communication & Media Research. A Guide for students, scholars and professionals*", Marquette Books, USA 2005.

become a supplementary learning tool, mainly addressing to young audiences who wish to enlarge their knowledge in the media production field, basically in terms of their future professional orientation. Moreover, generally speaking, media production by children contributes to their self pride through creative media participation, to a critical understanding and familiarization with the media and finally, to acquire an early cultural identity.

Completed Projects

Roaming Reporters

Roaming Reporters was an EU pilot project in Greece, Italy and Austria with a worldwide appeal. The project was part of the experimental applications of informal education of the Media Summer School, a joint project developed by the European Children's Television Centre (ECTC)[2], the Giffoni Film Festival and Radiofabrik. The main action of Roaming Reporters was the creation of reports for all forms of mass media on the part of youngsters throughout Europe, combined with an Internet-based dialogue. By setting up training hands-on workshops and in conjunction with kid-centered media events, the project sought to turn the act of reporting into a language of communication among young people, turning them into intelligent users of the mass media with critical viewpoints and media production competence.

Let's go to the Cinema (Pame Cinema**)**

Let's go to the Cinema was an educational program launched by the Greek Ministry of Culture, on advancing media literacy in children in terms of the cinema production and the necessary technical skills required for the creation of a film. It took place in primary and secondary education schools[3] in Athens, Thessaloniki, Mytilini island in Greece and also in New York, from 1999 to 2004. The content of the program involved daily visits to the schools, where children were introduced to cinema history, culture and production. In secondary education, the students were able to see in action the creation of a film, as they took part in small groups in the creation of a film with the help of experienced professionals. At the end of the program, all films made by children were presented to "Let's Go to The Cinema" Festival, which was also televised by the national Greek broadcaster, ERT.

Current Projects

Audiovisual Education for Children and Young People

The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Communication – General Secretariat of Information and the national, public service broadcaster, ERT, are currently working on the implementation of a media literacy project, with the aim to introduce young students to the Greek audiovisual environment and present them the main procedures followed during the production of a radio program. The project, due to start on a national level in spring 2007 with daily visits in public schools (primary and secondary education), has been preceded by pilot projects during the summer period (2005, 2006) in student camps that were received favorably by the children.

School & Cinema

The project "School & Cinema" is a private initiative by YOUTH PLAN, a non-profit organization for the development of young people's audiovisual communication and expression[4]. It incorporates a range of activities extending from the simple acquaintance of children and young people with the art of cinema to a further theoretical exploration. The project includes "The Parallel Network" for the distribution of quality films made by children and young people with organized screenings of selected Greek and foreign films. The film screenings take place on the basis of educational criteria. The project also includes educational programs through workshops on the introduction to the cinema aiming at reinforcing young people's creative expression. The programs are tailored to local needs, yet they take into consideration foreign programs of a similar kind.

---

[2] ECTC, was a non-profit organisation working towards a common European audiovisual language with special actions on the audiovisual education of youngsters. It was under the authority of the General Secretariat of Communication and formerly supervised by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute. It stopped operating in December 2005.

[3] In sum, the amount of participation in primary education, was 2.038 schools with 162.550 students (1999-2003) and in secondary education 405 schools with 59.500 students (2001-2003). Source: (http://www.filmfestival.gr)

[4] Youth Plan is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, the Prefecture of Ilia and the Local Union of Municipalities of Ilia, in Greece. It is also supported by the General Secretariat for Youth, the Greek Film Centre, ERT S.A. and the municipalities where events are being held. Source: (http://www.olympiafestival.gr/)

4. In your opinion, should media literacy be addressed mostly by school-based educational environments? Could you please provide a brief overview of how media literacy is taught in the context of the formal educational system of your country/region/community?

The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM) believes that media literacy should not operate strictly on a school-based environment but also on a more school-independent environment. However, due to the apparent deficit of formal school media literacy in Greece, it is recommended that the first steps take action there. The coordinated project "**Audiovisual Education for Children and Young People"** of IOM, General Secretariat of Communication and ERT, has been sent to the Ministry of Education for formal approval, and aspires to become the first in a series of initiatives in the media literacy field, creating thus "fertile ground" for a systematic and coordinated action taken up in the formal educational system.

5. In your opinion, should media literacy be taught as a specialist subject or integrated within the context of existing subjects?

In the new media landscape with a variety of new communication platforms, one cannot foresee the fragmentation of information that every citizen ends up with. This is most obvious in the new digital media therefore it is suggested that media literacy is taught separately, as a specialist subject, in order to be able to fully understand its complex / multifarious nature, without intermingling with other issues.

6. Could you please provide a brief overview on media literacy initiatives in environments outside the formal educational systems, such as cultural centres, film schools, life-long learning programmes, on-line discussion groups concerned with ethics in the media, advertising, media industry and the press, etc.?

The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute, supporting the audiovisual community in Greece, has a long-standing experience in the audiovisual media field and children with a series of events, the most important of which was the **3rd World Summit on Media for Children,** held in Thessaloniki, in March 2001. The Summit aimed at enhancing media quality and media awareness worldwide as well as demonstrating the emerging relation between television, radio and the new media. The themes of the summit were: "Going Global", "Media for all", "New Technologies" and "Children Have a Say". During the event, the Institute put forward the draft "*Declaration of Thessaloniki: Commitment for the Future*", which was amended and finally adopted in 2002. Additionally, IOM organized the meeting on "**The Protection of Minors in Broadcast Media**" in May 2000, and also the meeting on "**The Future of the Greek Audiovisual Production for Children**", focusing mainly on the professionals of the audiovisual industry in Greece.

In the relevant research area, the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute published in April 2000 "**The Protection of Minors in Broadcast Media**" presented in the meeting above. It contributed also to the publication of the study "**Outlooks on Children and Media**", by NORDICOM, The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on Screen, in February 2001. The study was compiled for the 3rd World Summit on Media for Children mapping the international audiovisual media scene in relation to the children and spotting the current global trends in media literacy, including research on media and the children. The publication was formerly supported by an internal research on "**What Do children Think on Television**", the results of which were presented in the 3rd World Summit on Media for Children. Moreover, the Institute prepared and published in 2003 the first electronic "**Guide to Education and Training in Communication**", as a career handbook cataloguing all stages and levels of formal education in the media sector in Greece.

7. In your opinion, how should media literacy initiatives be supported financially? Does financial support from media organisations raise issues?

In the case of international joint co-operations, when large-scale media literacy projects are at stake, it is best that the funding is mixed, that is, partly deriving from the Member States separately and partly from the EU as a whole unit, to ensure the implementation and success of the running project. More specifically, on the EU level the projects can be part of

large framework programs, such as the 7th Framework Program, as long as they consolidate their existence and are thus, incorporated among the main actions of the program. Moreover, alternative ways of financing can be sought in the advertising sector, due to its strong influential force and within the context of an open audiovisual market, outside the "safety umbrella" of the European Union. On a national level, funding can be derived from the public service sector (eg. units of culture, education), in cooperation with independent bodies and universities. Finally, financial support of media literacy from media organizations may raise some issues due to its conflict of interest character, therefore it is not preferable.

8. Do you think that there are <u>criteria available</u> today to assess young people's media literacy level? What is being done in your country/region/institution in order to develop <u>qualitative and quantitative indicators</u> in order to be able to evaluate and assess in a reliable fashion the effectiveness of policies and media literacy activities?
On a national level speaking, no adequate criteria have been noted down that can be used as general guidelines for assessment people's media literacy level.
The project of the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute, General Secretariat of Communication and ERT, "Audiovisual Education for Children and Young People", currently under preparation, can become a starting point for an applied qualitative research on the formal education system based on the level of media literacy among youngsters. Moreover, the Institute is elaborating a research on the "Creative and Safe Use of the Internet among Children and Young People up to 18 years old", targeting internet media literacy. The research is under the aegis of the Greek Ministry of Education and it addresses schools of primary and secondary education, through the distribution of targeted and customized questionnaires to 2500 students, 500 teachers and 500 parents. The project aims to depict the level of internet literacy on national level along with raising issues of safety and security from illegal and harmful on-line content.

9. What is being done in your country/region/community in order to <u>define, highlight and spread</u> best practices?
The topic of "Media and Children" along with all the deriving parameters (media literacy included) is among the main axis of actions of the Institute. In this context, IOM is working on defining the best practices and the criteria of implementing media literacy on a national level in order to have a completed picture for Greece. The relevant actions taken by the Institute in the past (*see q. 6*) along with the running project of "Audiovisual Education for Children and Young People" are incorporated in this task.

10. Are you able to define a<u> common set of principles for media literacy</u> in relation to textual and audiovisual material?
The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute has not defined a common set of principles and guidelines for media literacy in Greece. Autonomous initiatives have been recorded in the Greek internet, such as the advices and suggestions for safe use of the internet for parents, educators and children, published by SafeNetHome (*see q.13*), yet these actions are restricted to the on-line use of the media and do not consist a systematic media literacy approach on a national level.

2) Commercial Communication Literacy
The audiovisual sector contains a number of complex messages. Some of these are of a commercial nature. Young people represent both an important <u>youth audience</u> and a <u>potential future audience to the different media players</u>. It is important for them to acquire the necessary skills to enable them to interpret the different messages and make informed choices. In this area, where valuable self-regulation already takes place, a number of different commercial strategies are used, such as product placement, sponsorship, direct marketing, data mining and branding across different media platforms.
11. Could you please list and briefly describe any important and effective initiatives in your country/region/community whose objective would be to help children and young people to acquire the necessary skills to decipher and evaluate <u>advertising and other forms of commercial communication</u>?

The Hellenic Audiovisual Institute has not recorded any systematic media literacy campaign on advertising and commercial communication, specially targeted to young people.

3) Media Literacy for audiovisual works

Audiovisual works represent the main vector for the transmission of our cultural, social and democratic values to European citizens, notably in respect of the younger generations. They also have a strong economic dimension in Europe's internal market. One of the consequences of the distribution structures and financial means available to Hollywood blockbusters is that European works i.e. stories, dramas, documentaries and other works that reflect the reality of our own lives and histories, are neglected by young European audiences. At the same time many audiovisual works preferred by young audiences in Europe include content that might be detrimental to their health or influence negatively their social behaviour. These issues can also be raised as regards the consumption of videogames. Media literacy for audiovisual works may contribute to raise the awareness of European audiences regarding the social values and messages conveyed by audiovisual works according to their region of production and to enhance the taste for quality audiovisual works among European audiences.

12. Could you please list and shortly describe any important and effective initiatives in your country/region/ aiming at encouraging Europeans, and notably young audiences, to develop a critical approach to the audiovisual content available to them, including videogames? Could you please list and shortly describe any important and effective initiatives in your country/region/ aiming at encouraging Europeans to develop their curiosity for culturally-diverse audiovisual works?

"Let's go to the Cinema (Pame Cinema)", "School and Cinema" and "Roaming Reporters" (*see q.3*) are among the initiatives that give rise to a critical approach on cultural-diverse audiovisual works.

4) Media Literacy in the online environment

IP-based services contain an ever increasing amount of creative and informational content, and are becoming the preferred way of accessing information and entertainment for many Europeans. The availability of this unprecedented amount of content, together with multiplatform distribution technologies and devices has become a magic formula, to be mastered if one does not want to be excluded from today's world. Beyond the issues of e-accessibility and e-inclusion, important questions have to be addressed when it comes to the consumption of online value-added services, not only in terms of digital skills, but also with regard to the key characteristics of the media and their messages, notably the origin and accuracy of information, etc. This also raises questions of the remuneration of creators (copyright), and of the origin and relative importance of content where such issues may not be clear.

13. Could you please list and briefly describe any important and effective initiatives in your country/region/community aiming at implementing and encouraging a critical approach of content, especially information material, available online? Could you please list and briefly describe any important and effective initiatives in your country/region/community aimed at increasing citizens' active participation in virtual information communities such as news-related discussion forums, user's generated databases / encyclopedias?

In terms of internet media literacy, the current research of the Institute on "Creative and Safe Use of the Internet among Children and Young People up to 18 years old", constitutes a targeted approach among the youngster's acquaintance with the internet culture, raising issues of security and protection from harmful and illegal content.

Moreover, in the Greek on-line environment, the Institute has recorded the following actions and initiatives:

On-line Projects

SafeLine (www.safeline.gr) is the first open interactive hotline operating in Greece, launched in March 2003. The hotline is co-funded by the EU program "Safer Internet Action Plan" and is operated by SAFENET, the collective body of Internet Services Providers in Greece. SafeLine co-operates also with the National Academic Network "GRNET" and the National School Network, research and cultural institutions, consumer organizations and the Greek Police towards the restriction of the flow of illegal content in the Internet. It addresses all

internet users with accepting reports concerning websites or newsgroups in the Internet that contain harmful and illegal content. This may include: images of child abuse anywhere in the world, racist and xenophobic content that may violate Greek law and other content, considered of an illegal character.

SafeNetHome (www.saferinternet.gr) is the Greek awareness node funded by the Safer Internet program against harmful content distributed through the Internet and other new media. SafeNetHome is member of Insafe, a network of 23 awareness-raising nodes in 21 countries that co-ordinate Internet Safety awareness in Europe. Its mission is to promote a safer use of the Internet and of new technologies in Greece, and to awaken the Greek public concerning the Internet and dangers hidden in new technologies, through a multi-channel awareness campaign. In particular, SafeNetHome informs and establishes awareness aimed at the protection of children and youngsters, focusing on the promotion of media literacy now and in the future. In the website of SafeNetHome there is available plenty of material (advices, tips, useful links) addressing to parents, educators and children.

Oikade (www.oikade.gr), an initiative by the Bank of Cyprus addressing the Greek population abroad, has launched an educational program "Communication in Schools", which engages schools in Greece, Cyprus and other Greek-speaking schools abroad in an international network for the empowerment of their national cultural identity. More specifically, the network, currently engaging over 100 schools, aims at improving children's educational competence, focusing on the communication literacy through new media technologies. All interested schools mainly from abroad, wishing to participate to the program, can apply through an on-line application form and can take part in the on-line meetings to exchange views and experiences from their school environment in their own country.

Events / Meetings in 2006
- International Conference "We want Safer Children On-Line", 21-22 September 2006,Thessaloniki, Greece

    The conference was held in the context of the EU 'Safer Internet Program" promoting the dialogue on the best practices for a safer internet. Its main objectives were, to provide a media forum for presentations on issues within society, law enforcement and technology, to exchange expertise and know-how and to promote networking in the relevant international field.
- 5th ETRE Conference "Information and Communication Technologies in Education", 5-8 October 2006, Thessaloniki, Greece

    The Conference aimed at informing the Greek scientific community, the teachers, the education staff and all people interested in ICT applications in education about the current research as well as the development of relevant theories, models and applications.
- Workshop: "Safety in Mobile Internet", 10 May 2006, Athens, Greece

    Among the main themes of the workshop were, The Child and the Internet: The Responsibilities of Parents and the Role of the Media, Internet and the Rights of the Child, the Benefits and Dangers from the Use of the Internet: The Opinion of the Children. The Protection of the Child from the Illegal Internet Content and the Use of the New Technologies.

14. In your opinion, should media literacy initiatives include a dimension of awareness of copyright issues? (see also on this issue the European Charter for the Development and the Take-up of Film Online[5]).
The parameter of copyright issues is something that should be seriously taken into consideration on a future Communication by the EU, as media literacy initiatives may involve the use of various forms of audiovisual and textual material. In this respect, children and young audiences shall be aware of the fact that there are copyright issues behind each cultural material and that their use is not unrestricted but abides to certain rules and guidelines.

---

[5] *European Charter for the Development and the Take-up of Film Online*. p. 1.3, 23 May 2006.

15. The culture of finding information through search engines involves access to almost limitless sources of information. The ability to <u>understand</u> the way these search engines work (prioritisation and classification of sources), to <u>validate</u> these sources of information and to evaluate items of news and opinion outside known branded websites is essential in the global online information society. Could you please list and briefly describe any projects to help this process of critical use of search engines and of evaluation of sources and content?

The Institute has spotted occasional and autonomous projects in terms of critical use and evaluation of the search engines. SafeNetHome offers through its website a Greek Glossary with the main terminology used in the internet navigation. It addresses mainly to young users aiming to familiarize them with the basic English terms used widely in the Greek internet.