



CINEKID

FOR PROFESSIONALS

MEDIA LITERACY CONFERENCE REPORT 2014

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‘Creating a future-proof future’

After last year’s kick-off of by European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou of what is to be Cinekid’s annual media literacy conference this year’s second edition was launched by Matteo Zacchetti, Deputy Head of the DG Information Society and Media Unit “Media Programme and Media Literacy” of the European Commission.

Why is media literacy so spectacularly important? If it’s up to Matteo Zacchetti and the European Commission it should be at the heart of a child’s education, right up there with languages and math. Media literacy, it transpired throughout the conference, actually is a language, a new language, the language of using and thinking about information technology and independent media.

“I think we all know”, said Zacchetti, “media literacy is a precondition today for active and full citizenship, for future employability, for enhancing curiosity and interest in European content and heritage, and for boosting and complementing on-going audience development strategies. And let’s not forget the development of new business models in the industry. So basically media literacy is crucial for creativity and innovation in the EU and probably also for the existence and understanding of pluralistic and independent media and a better informed public sphere.”

Zacchetti recalled how three years ago Cinekid director Sannette Naeyé tried to convince him to include media literacy in the MEDIA programme of Creative Europe, the European Commission’s framework programme for support to the culture and media sectors. Not that he needed persuasion, Zaccetti said. He was already convinced. “And the beauty is, some of the things we discussed then, have now become a reality. We recently selected 9 media literacy projects that we will support and I hope that the fruits of this work will come very soon. They will prove once again how important media literacy is.”



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Media literacy will create a future proof future, Zacchetti said. It will prepare for unexpected shocks and equip us with the right tools to deal with anything the digital media have in store. He did stress that sometimes “we focus a bit too much on a specific technology. But technologies come and go. The content, the media and the critical approach stay. So let’s focus on that: curiosity, creativity and a critical approach. Today’s diverse program will show the many different elements that make up media literacy.”

Five approaches to bring media literacy to children were then presented as Best Practices, focussing on four questions:

1. What is the project’s innovative quality?
2. How is children’s creativity a part of the project?
3. How does it affect media literacy?
4. How was it received by the audience?

‘Do it right and magic can happen’

Some see it as an unholy marriage but what if private sector businesses actually cooperate with schools in developing and offering learning materials?

Martin Finn was a founding member of British company EdComs in 1995 and has run the company since 2007. EdComs creates learning experiences for young people in school on behalf of clients that, according to the company’s website, “build trust and deliver educational, business and social impact”. Clients include GSK, RBS, Google, EDF Energy, British Olympic Association, DfE, and Unilever. Not only businesses though. Edcoms also works for charities and government, though cutbacks made government a smaller player in the market.

“We develop all kinds of different programs”, Finn said. “Digital, live, paper based. And they’re all free of charge to the schools. We create websites, apps, film is becoming increasingly important, we train company staff but also teachers and we create live experiences with theatre.”

So it’s not only digital. Moreover, the Edcoms CEO usually asks two questions when it comes to using digital media in schools:

1. Does it actually enhance learning: is it actually better than pen and paper?
2. Is it proportionate to what you’re trying to teach?

Finn showed “examples of good uses of digital education, not necessarily things that’ll blow your socks of.”

Scientists in Sport

Developed for pharmaceutical company GSK. Target group: 11-14. Part of GSK’s science education programme, it aims to inspire 11-14 year olds and show them how exciting a career in science can be. Getting them excited about sport and how science is applied to that sport. Available on tablet, mobile, whiteboard. From the website: “Our free interactive resources for 11-14 year olds help bring science to life in the classroom by covering five topics: performance analysis, technology, anatomy, psychology and nutrition.

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Designed to work alongside the science curriculum, the topics contain flexible resources including videos featuring some of the UK's top athletes, lesson and lab activities, fact sheets, curriculum links and teacher notes.”

<http://www.scientistsinsport.com>

The Pod

Developed for EDF Energy. Focuses on climate change, energy and the science of energy. From the website: The Pod – EDF Energy's award winning education programme – is now the largest programme of its type. In numbers:

- over 17,500 registered schools in the UK (over half the schools in the UK)
- over 10 million children engaged
- plus more than 138 schools from 30 other countries

The program's aims:

1. To inspire young people and their families to choose a more sustainable lifestyle.
2. To promote STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and encourage science and engineering as a career choice.
3. To help children understand that a low carbon, secure and affordable energy supply is vital for the future.

<http://jointhepod.org/home>



Where's the Science in That?

Developed for BP Educational Service. BPES offers free curriculum-linked teaching resources for primary and secondary schools and colleges. The objective is to excite young people for science and engineering. One example: Where's the Science in That? Aimed at 9-11 year olds. <http://bpes.bp.com/wheres-the-science-in-that/> put's science into a real-life context, using an interactive everyday setting. It's an immersive environment, based on self directive learning. Children can explore the world themselves.

<http://bpes.bp.com>

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FinCAP: teaching young people to manage money

Developed for financial education charity PFEG. From the website: FinCAP is an online tool for assessing your pupils' personal finance knowledge, skills and attitudes at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Each key stage assessment is presented as an engaging interactive photo story, set over five chapters, that will assess financial knowledge, skills and attitudes. It provides detailed reporting to teachers to inform and assess teaching.

<http://www.pfeg.org/welcome-fincap---my-money-financial-capability-assessment-profile-tool>

Edcoms evaluates all of its programs and found that:

- Teachers and pupils worked more collaboratively than other classes that didn't have these tools
- Programs created more self directed learning
- Pupils were more engaged in their learning, especially children who were disengaged
- Programs help teenagers interpreting data: better analysis and critical thinking
- Increased media literacy
- Engages children with special educational needs more

Why is the cooperation between businesses and education a good thing, according to Martin Finn. "What is education for? I think a big part of it is preparing children for the world. To be participative citizens. To use their potential and do the best they can do. There is that feeling that a lot of the world's problems can be helped by educating people. And there's the big issue of corporate reasonability. Businesses have learned that their reputation can be damaged very easily. But it's not only that they're expected to do good. I found a lot of senior people want to do good. And finally, they reach out because not many young people chose a career in science and engineering. Businesses hope to change that by exposing people to what they do." What can others learn? "The UK is particular in that schools are very autonomous. They're free to deliver the curriculum how they want. So they're free to cooperate with the private sector. But I think, in order to bring business and education together successfully, they must understand each other. Otherwise you get a bit of a mess. There needs to be a common understanding of what they can offer each other. If you get those things right, then magic happens."

It is true, Finn responded to audience questions, that there is a bias towards science and engineering in the products Edcoms offers. But that doesn't mean organisations like The National Theatre do not reach out to schools. Sometimes they have their own education departments. But it's also question of money. Developing these media is expensive, partly because young people's expectations have become quite high.

We help children become designers of a better future'

"A typical starting point for our workshops is this question: what would you like to change in the world?" Unexpect founder Emer Beamer explained how the social design company aims to empower children.

What would children like to change if you put the question to them? Less homework? Less

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school? No. A ten year old thinks up a robot to clean up plastic in the streets. Or a 3D food printer to tackle world hunger. Or a car that drives on electricity to reduce carbon emissions. Or a pen that writes for children with dyslexia. “That’s actually the kind of things children come up with”, said Beamer. “And then they get to make them.”

“We have two billion children of school going age. And the world they live in is changing fast. How do we help them become designers of a better future? Isn’t that what education is all about?” Beamer quoted Dutch education philosopher Gert Biesta, who formulated three goals of education:

- To get children ready to be self-sustainable for their future
- To invoke societal values into the child
- To prepare the child to contribute to their future societies

We don’t know what the future will be like, said Beamer, but we do know what changing already. The amount of online information is like the equivalent of four billion books. “Children have to learn to search cleverly and smartly and have the capacity to synthesize a lot of information.” Other technologies will also increasingly be a part of people’s lives and make lifestyles change: robotics, nanotech and genetics. Unexpect formulated seven spear points to prepare children for this changing technological landscape.

- To discover one’s purpose and values. “That’s really not in the education system at all but at the end of the day that’s what’s driving us.”
- An ability to create and design
- Modelling for complexity and sustainable life style goals. Understanding algorithms
- To think critically
- To make things with new and older technologies. “It’s almost scandalous if we don’t teach children to use the technology that we are creating around them. It boggles my mind.”
- To cultivate children’s sense of wonder and curiosity
- To develop relationships and empathy across our intercultural and transdisciplinary future world



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Unexpect developed a methodology based on design thinking - which is still in beta - to translate these spear points to practical education. They start out with a question. Followed by a research phase. Then an idea or brainstorm phase. A sketching phase. A building or making phase. And finally the work is presented. All based on learning by doing. Schools can include this in the curriculum throughout the year, or in the form of a single day's workshop. Unexpect is developing a Do It Yourself toolkit so teachers can work with it themselves, using Unexpect's guidelines.

'Strengthen children's awareness of media'

For the past ten of its 28 years of existence Cinekid has developed its own educational projects, which are offered throughout the year. Cinekid's Vanessa Pattipeilohy presented a showcase of a number of those projects. For the development of new tools and expanding its media literacy program, Cinekid is actively looking for new partners in Europe.

"All projects are media related and all are based on the idea of learning by doing. We offer tools and workshops with which young children can design and create a broad range of media products. Our mission is to strengthen children's awareness in relation to media and understand how it affects their emotional and social development. We want to teach children how media work and how they are being made. We want to teach about the influence of media on the everyday life, with a focus on audio-visual media. How do we do that? Through workshops and lesson materials. Where do we do that? Everywhere. At home, in schools, at other festivals, cultural institutions and libraries."



Three examples of projects:

- Cinekid Filmspel, a program for creative storytelling. Focuses on children 6 and up. Cinekid provides the tools, the children come up with the stories. It can be used in lessons but individual use online after school is encouraged. Children not only come up with stories, they also get a rudimentary feel of what it's like to build 3D and stop-motion animation.
- Mini Media Academy, where children learn about website hacking, app-building, robotics and programming.
- Green screen technology.

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'An very interesting first experience with mixed media'

Max & Billy's Drill Machine Girl is Dutch Film Institute EYE's debut in the online series arena. EYE Amsterdam opened its doors in 2012 and is expanding its educational activities rapidly with new digital content.

Next to its screening and preservation activities of some 37.000 films EYE houses an international department that represents Dutch cinema in international markets and an extensive education department. It organizes educational programs, special screenings and workshops in EYE itself but also provides national educational programs. For example MovieZone, aimed at teenagers.

“Through MovieZone, we present history, present and future of filmmaking. This will enhance children’s knowledge about the medium”, said Manon Sandee of EYE. “MovieZone gives 12-18 year olds the opportunity to discover the world of film and stimulate one’s talent. We present offline and online activities, which we promote in school and after school. After school access is crucial as film education is still not part of the Dutch national curriculum. We also organise MovieZone juries at film festivals. But back in 2011 we were wondering how could we reach a larger audience, i.e. how to renew MovieZone.”

Independent media company NewBeTV came up with Max & Billy’s Drill Machine Girl. It comprises an online series and a website. While watching the series you get information about film, if you wish. It’s voluntary. It’s a series about friendship and love but especially about film. Launched in 2013 at the Dutch Film Festival and broadcasted by national tv-station Veronica. Over 690.000 people saw the show. A French tv-channel has bought the series and will broadcast in November. On YouTube the show reached more than 50.000 views, on Vimeo over 22.000. According to Sandee EYE’s first experience with a “mixed media format where education meets entertainment was very interesting.”

A second project is underway: ‘Bardo’s Film Gebeuren’ in which one of Holland’s most popular YouTubers aims to make a movie, together with the audience.
<http://serie.moviezone.nl/bardorsquos-filmgebeuren/>



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‘Very popular cBBC whodunit web series about online safety’

Dixi is a very popular cBBC’s interactive web series production. cBBC’s Mario Dubois offered an in-depth look at the program’s approach.

“We create content for 6-12 year olds. As an interactive producer my job is to work with independent production companies to help them stimulate ideas that will work interactively with our audience. In fact interactivity is my heartland. In view of that Dixi is a really interesting project, because it has no tv component. For us it’s a new step in doing drama, in partnership with Kindle Entertainment. It’s a whodunit in which Dixi has her profile hacked online and the goal of the show is to discover who’s behind it. It consists of 30 vlogs, scheduled for release over a period of three weeks. Its sub message is about how to be safe online. Kids see that, but they first and foremost love it because it’s a drama and they’re involved.”

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/dixi

Children can go online and interact with the characters, which offers another approach next to linear viewing of the story itself. It’s very topical and reflective in terms of the conversations between friends. Its key characteristics: social, it has the suspense of a whodunit, it’s shot in a way that resembles real life and children can chat in a safe environment.

The show has had over a million view requests. Over 50% of viewers watched at least 50-75% of an episode. First children accessed the show predominantly from their desktop but in the course of the three-week screening schedule their mobile use increased. The second series is in production now, which will focus on how to protect yourself more when surfing online.

The Art of Storytelling

Children love to read and tell stories. Australian company The Project Factory created the Junior Storytellers app to make it easy for children to build stories.

“It’s not a movie making app”, said UK-based Jennifer Wilson. “It’s a story telling app that we developed together with the help of teachers, parents and education specialists. We provide settings and a hero, the children come up with the story. Junior Storytellers came to us from a small production company in Australia. They were interested in taking what they knew about TV, filmmaking and storytelling and turning it in to an app that would teach children storytelling. Actually, more and more other companies now come to us with their trademark characters and ask us to build a storytelling app around those.”

<http://juniorstorytellers.com.au>

The Project Factory built the app around three key principles:

1. We wanted to teach the art of storytelling. From 4 upwards. We teach them a story has a beginning, middle and an end. We talk about a hero, the hero’s desire, obstacles, and the hero’s journey. Let me tell you, even Ulysses was written with these building blocks. The app teaches storytelling with this staged approach.
2. We wanted to teach emotions. So children can tap on the face of a character chose different emotion through facial expressions.

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3. We have several asset packs. For instance a jungle setting of a fairy tale setting. They can view those settings from three perspectives, through which we wanted to give them a feel of special awareness.

