# EDUCATION & SKILLS

## Combating False and Misleading Digital Content A snapshot of Children's Media Literacy

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# Digitalisation



## The post-truth world where reality becomes fungible

- Virality seems privileged over quality in the distribution of information
- Truth and fact are losing currency

#### Scarcity of attention and abundance of information

 Algorithms sort us into groups of like-minded individuals create echo chambers that amplify our views, leave us uninformed of opposing arguments, and polarise our societies



#### Risks in the digital environment

There are varying estimates regarding the levels of exposure to false and misleading digital content for individuals, ranging from at least once a week (Eurobarometer, 2018) to everyday for almost half of children (Cawthorne, 2021).

Risk categories	Content risks	Conduct risks	Contact risks	Consumer risks
Cross-cutting risks	Privacy risks (interpersonal, institutional & commercial)			
Advanced technology risks (e.g. AI, Internet of Things(IoT), predictive ar				nalytics, biometrics)
	Risks on Health and Well-being			

Risk manifestations	Hateful content	Hateful behaviour	Hateful encounters	Marketing risks
	Harmful content	Harmful behaviour	Harmful encounters	Commercial profiling risks
	Illegal content	Illegal behaviour	Illegal encounters	Financial risks
	Disinformation	User-generation Problematic behaviour	Other problematic encounters	Security risks

Source: Adapted from OECD (2021), "Children in the digital environment: Revised typology of risks",



# **Students and computers**

### The digital world has become the real world



#### Access to a computer linked to the Internet at home for doing schoolwork



Fig 2.2





## What do we know about children's access to the Digital Environment?

Older Children	Younger Children
Approximately 90% of 15 year-old students have access to the internet at home (PISA, 2018).	In England, Estonia and the United States, 83% of five-year-olds use a digital device at least once a week and 42% use one every day.
Even before the pandemic, the average time 15 year-old students spent in the Digital Environment had reached 35 hours per week, roughly the same as the adult workweek.	Ownership of mobile devices is also increasing among younger children in many OECD countries. It almost tripled in the United States between 2015 and 2021, reaching 31%.

# **Distinguishing fact from opinion**



**Disinformation:** False and misleading content created and spread with the intent to cause harm.

**Misinformation:** False and misleading content spread without intent to cause harm.

**Propaganda:** Content that can contain both true and untrue information but prioritises sentiments and emotions over authenticity.

**Satire:** Social and political criticism using humour and wit, which is open to misrepresentation or misunderstanding as it becomes more widely shared online.

**Contextual deception:** Genuine information used in a way that is disingenuous with the intent to manipulate people or cause harm.



## **Children's relationship with Digital Content**



Despite changes in some individual platform popularity, **video-sharing platforms**, especially YouTube and TikTok, continue to be most popular across age groups.



These platforms have been found to contain a high volume of false and misleading content.



Children across a variety of ages have been found to **come into contact** with false or misleading digital information in a **short space of time.** 



**Trust in mainstream news sources is a challenge** in a number of OECD counties. In the United States, only 25% of children have high levels of trust in the information they receive from mainstream news organisations.



Evidence suggests that **many children tend to trust "digital influencers"** more than they trust newspapers or offline celebrities.

#### Students' knowledge of reading strategies for assessing the credibility of sources (PISA)



#### Students' knowledge of reading strategies for assessing the credibility of sources (PISA)



# Relationship between the reading item of distinguishing facts from opinions and the index of knowledge of reading strategies for assessing the credibility of sources



Fig 5.7



# **Navigating information**

## **Digital navigation skills (PISA)**



of students who self activated clicking hyperlink the multiple-source by

## Education won the race with technology throughout history, but there is no automaticity it will do so in the future



# Overview of priorities and pressing challenges in digital technologies across countries and systems



Source: Burns, T. & Gottschalk, F. eds. (2019). Chapter 2. Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-Being in the Digital Age.

## Policy Responses to False and Misleading Digital Content

#### Three pillars of country responses (OECD, forthcoming)

Initiatives that help prepare and	Measures to increase transparency	Responses targeting economic and	
respond to published content	and prevention	structural drivers	
<ul> <li>Supporting collaborations between media, civil society organisations, fact-checkers, social media platforms</li> <li>Capacity building for more responsive and effective public communication</li> <li>Improving media literacy through awareness campaigns and education .</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>&gt; Data sharing requirements for online platforms</li> <li>&gt; Establishing effective transparency frameworks around content moderation</li> <li>&gt; Increasing transparency and understanding of algorithms</li> <li>&gt; Increasing levels of authentic online activity .</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Promoting quality and safety in platform design</li> <li>Promoting and maintaining a diverse and independent media sector through anti monopoly measures and fostering fair competition .</li> </ul>	





Media literacy has been found to be the **most commonly emphasised policy response** by governments to the challenge of false and misleading content.



The Council of Europe recommends that education systems should look to develop **dedicated media literacy strategies.** 



However, at present, only a **minority of systems** have dedicated national media literacy strategies.



Most commonly, digital and media literacy is incorporated into **broader policies**, **strategies**, **laws and regulations** on topics such as in child protection, school digitalisation, national digitisation, cyber security and media development.

## Media Literacy policy opportunities



*Source*: Adapted from Palsa and Salomaa (2020) "Media literacy as a cross-sectoral phenomenon: Media education in Finnish Ministerial-Level Policies", <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.19195/1899-5101.13.2(26).2">http://dx.doi.org/10.19195/1899-5101.13.2(26).2</a>.



#### Media Literacy in the curriculum

#### Percentage of content items in the overall mapped curricula targeting media literacy (as main or sub target), and distribution by learning area



Source: OECD (2021[188])Future of Education and Skills 2030, Curriculum Database, E2030 Curriculum Content Mapping exercise

# Learning how to teach digital skills in teacher education (initial and continuous)



Required (by national curriculum, standards or other) Covered in most programmes Covered in some programmes Not widely available

*Source:* Burns, T. & Gottschalk, F. (2019). Chapter 11. *Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-Being in the Digital Age*.



### Media Literacy in the classroom



The vast majority of teachers agree that teaching media literacy in the classroom is important to combat disinformation. However, less than half are found to have **taught media literacy**.

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On average, **54% of 15-year-old students** report that they were trained at school to recognise whether information is biased or not.



The percentage of 15-year-olds from socio-economically advantaged backgrounds being taught how to detect biased information is **8-14% higher**, depending on the country, than students from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Despite the importance of algorithms for understanding digital media content an **uneven distribution of algorithmic awareness** has been found among children.



#### Percent of teachers who feel they can do the following "quite a bit" or "a lot" (OECD average-31)



Make my expectations about student behaviour clear Get students to follow classroom rules Control disruptive behaviour in the classroom Calm a student who is disruptive or noisy Provide an alternative explanation Craft good questions for students Vary instructional strategies in my classroom Use a variety of assessment strategies Get students to believe they can do well in school work Help students value learning Help students think critically Motivate students who show low interest in school work

Support student learning through the use of digital technology

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table I.2.20.

#### Correlations between access to learning digital skills in school and the reading item of distinguishing facts from opinions in OECD countries



Fig 2.6



----How to decide whether to trust information from the Internet

- ----How to compare different web pages and decide what information is more relevant for your schoolwork
- ----To understand the consequences of making information publicly available online on <Facebook©>, <Instagram©>, etc
- ----How to detect whether the information is subjective or biased



### Partnerships between schools and external actors

#### Partnerships required or present in most schools



Source: Burns, T. & Gottschalk, F. eds. (2019). Chapter 13. Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-Being in the Digital Age.





The **number of academic publications** related to media literacy and disinformation is **increasing rapidly**.



Self-reporting surveys are the most commonly used empirical assessment tool. However, this **does not directly assess media literacy**, only the perception of the respondent's level of knowledge and skills.



There is a **limited geographical coverage of studies**, which are mostly focused on the United States, United Kingdom and certain European countries.

There is a **lack of diversity** (both socio-economic and ethnic) in many studies.





#### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Children Project: https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/21stcentury-children.htm

#### Latest Working Paper:

https://www.oecd.org/publications/policyresponses-to-false-and-misleading-digitalcontent-1104143e-en.htm

