



Media Literacy Concept Paper

Preface

In the world that our children and young persons grow up in, the (new) media have an increasing impact. That is why it is essential that children, young persons and adults - irrespective of their social and economic background - understand how (new) media operate and how they can use these media in their everyday life. The prior knowledge and approach may be very different; the final objective to become more *media literate* is the same. In order to actively take part in present-day and tomorrow's society, we must all acquire sufficient *media literacy*.

Media literacy is a theme that touches diverse aspects of policy-making such as media, innovation, youth, education, culture, well-being and poverty reduction. The present concept paper focuses its attention in particular on the interface between media policy and education policy, but at the same time it is an invitation towards a widening of the cooperation and approach in terms of policy.

In the paper, you will first of all find our vision with regard to the interaction with media and our expectations with respect to the different actors in this field. Furthermore, we want to elucidate the main lines of action of the media literacy policy in the present paper. In this context, we attach great importance to four aspects: streamlining and harmonising the media literacy policy, competency development, the focus on equal opportunities from an e-inclusive approach and the creation of a safe and sensible media environment. Finally, the present paper provides an answer to the question which concrete actions and measures are already implemented by us, but also to the question which initiatives we intend to take in the near future to improve the media competences of all Flemings.

Although we focus on everybody in society, we focus our attention in the present paper on children and young persons in particular. They steer our view in the direction of the future like no other; a future that evolves ever more rapidly and that is increasingly less in line with what we already know and are used to today. The youth culture is imbued with games, online applications and social network sites. Youth researchers invariably describe young persons as highly active owners and users of new media. At the moment, the Internet is the medium that influences children's living environment and identity the most. Therefore, school pre-eminently constitutes the place where all children can learn how to deal with the media. In addition to education's core task to pay attention to media literacy, a broader policy approach also has the advantage that it can include, make aware and educate (grand)parents and educators, for instance.

After all, nobody has a monopoly on wisdom. We hope that the present media literacy concept paper reinforces our shared responsibility in this matter and that it may constitute a starting point of many joint initiatives and a large amount of shared knowledge.

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Introduction: a joint media literacy policy

Media appear in different aspects of society. Television, the Internet, books, radio, games, cellular phones, and so on, play a prominent part in the family context, in education and in leisure activities. What is more: media often determine our view on reality.¹ Furthermore, it can be said that, because of the far-reaching adoption of ICT, among other things, media have become increasingly **omnipresent** and that citizens at the same time start to play a more **active role** - that of the so-called 'prosumer', consumer and producer at once.

This applies in particular to **children and young persons**, who grow up in today's world as the **native speakers of a digital game culture**. They increasingly become users of a language that they have learned as a 'dialect' *in the street of the web*. At the same time, the 'media skills' of young persons are often overestimated. They are mostly limited to intuitive use, resulting first of all in practical skills aimed at entertainment and recreation. Deeper insight into the mechanisms of different media, and especially being critical of them, generally applies to a small extent.²

In any case, it is a fact that children and young persons **learn in a different manner**, where (moving) images have an increasing importance. This evolution is at odds with the traditional literary culture that is used at school. If we want that children and young persons deal with media in a conscious and critical manner and that they learn how to express themselves properly by using them, then we must give this the necessary attention and space in school, but also in the informal learning contexts outside of it.

With regard to **adults**, the challenge lies elsewhere. Here, it often precisely involves imparting all sorts of practical skills, keeping pace with new technological developments and adapting to the increasingly far-reaching convergence of different types of traditional and new media. For adults as well, this requires new types of learning and processing information.

Here, the educational context (e.g. centres for basic education) and the informal learning context play a complementary part as well. In addition, **intergenerational learning** provides interesting opportunities: different generations can learn a lot from one another with regard to diverse forms of media use and consciousness.

Keeping the challenges above at the back of one's mind, it is no more than logical that 'dealing with' different media constitutes an important policy theme for the authority - included under the common denominator '**media literacy**'. Logically, media literacy covers a broad field - as is the case for media. It concerns, among other things, media as one's own means of expression, access to media, passive and active media understanding, evaluating media independently and critically, and awareness of the possibilities and dangers of (new) media.

¹ See also: SEGERS, K., and BAUWENS, J. (red.), *Maak mij wat wijs. Media kennen, begrijpen en zelf creëren*, LannooCampus, 2010, p. 15-18.

² PIJPERS, R., and MARTEIJN, T., *Einstein bestaat niet. Over usability en surfgedrag van jongeren*, Stichting Mijn Kind Online, 2010; and Apestaartjaren 3, Jeugdwerknet, Graffiti Jeugddienst and MICT-IBBT, 2010.

Given the fact that digital developments take place radically and rapidly, the policy also shoulders the responsibility for citizens that appear to miss the digital boat. Without a minimal baggage of (digital) media skills and a lasting motivation to integrate new applications in the personal living environment, there is indeed a threat that one will hopelessly lag behind.³

Media literacy is situated on the interface between **different policy fields**, including Media and Education. Both policy areas are already active in the field of media literacy and want to give a powerful impulse, by means of a joint concept paper, so as to make different target groups aware of media literacy, but also with a view to working out together how a media literate approach (from pedagogics to production) fits in better with the needs and interests of children, young persons and adults (in their role of supervisor or not). Thus, both Ministers meet the policy intentions in their respective policy memorandums.

The present concept paper is an 'evolutive' document. New insights from practice or scientific research must contribute to policy actions fitting in as closely as possible with the reality in which the media users find themselves. At the same time, the present paper is an invitation to other interested Ministers to develop further policy initiatives in cooperation and thus further streamline the media literacy policy. We also want to invite all interested stakeholders in the field to help develop this policy vision and to turn it into concrete actions. That is why, in the autumn of 2012, we will organise a certain number of round-table talks that leave space for critical reflection of the paper as well as for making the formulated objectives further concrete.

In order to be able to sufficiently attune the policy to the developments above, it is important to develop and to disseminate a **joint vision**. Media literacy is not just an objective, challenge or problem in education, nor of media (producers), but something that touches everyone who comes into contact with media.

Even though the present paper starts from the media and education areas, we hope to develop a joint vision over time, across all policy areas, that contributes to the harmonisation of policy actions and a clear communication to all citizens.

³ *Digitale inclusie in Vlaanderen. Kloven dichtten, kraters vullen en bruggen bouwen, IST Dossier nr. 23*, Instituut voor Samenleving & Technologie (IST), Vlaams Parlement, Brussel, 2010.

1. Policy context

1.1 European policy initiatives

In 2006, Europe created a group of experts regarding media literacy. It was charged with analysing and defining the objectives and trends in the field of media literacy, to draw attention to and to promote the good practices at the European level and to table proposals for measures in this field. Since then, this horizontal theme of media literacy led to objectives and directives in different European policy documents in the areas of culture, economics, education, media, and so on.

On 20 December 2007, the European Commission adopted a Communication entitled “A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment”. This Communication focuses on three areas: commercial communication, audio-visual works and online.

On 16 December 2008, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Media Literacy in the Digital Environment. The resolution deals with target groups and objectives, the guarantee of access to information and communication technology, media education in schools and as a part of the teacher training programme and media education for the elderly. The conclusions of the Council with respect to media literacy that were adopted by the Education, Youth and Culture Council of 21 and 22 May 2008 endorse the strategic view on media literacy proposed by the European Commission.

In October 2008, the Committee of the Regions adopted a general advice on media literacy and creative content online.

On 20 August 2009, the European Commission made a recommendation on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audio-visual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society.

Media literacy also comes forward in the European audio-visual media services directive of 11 December 2007, stipulating among other things that the European Commission must submit a report on the levels of media literacy in all Member States.

In March 2010, the European Commission gave the green light for the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Digital Agenda for Europe – one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020-Strategy – states what part information- and communication technologies (ICT) will have to play in a Europe that wishes to achieve its objectives for 2020. Increasing trust in ICT is central in the approach. The Commission also points out the shared responsibility of the European, national and regional authorities. Consequently, every core initiative contains commitments of the European Commission itself, as well as a certain number of expectations with respect to the member states and the regions.

The Digital Agenda for its part consists of seven core initiatives. One of the seven sections is entirely devoted to digital literacy and to developing the digital skills for all citizens. But the other "flagships" also include numerous references to (the role of) education.

The European Commission presented a European reference framework with eight key competences for lifelong learning where one refers to ICT competences. It is described as follows:

"Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet."

According to the European Commission, these basic skills include: the ability to search, collect and process information and use it in a critical and systematic way, assessing relevance and distinguishing the real from the virtual while recognising the links. Individuals should have the skills to use tools to produce, to present and to understand complex information and the ability to access, to search for and to use Internet-based services. Individuals should also be able to use ICT to support critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

1.2 Federal policy initiatives

In the federal coalition agreement of 1 December 2011, the Government committed itself to pursue the national action plan to bridge the digital divide. The PPS Social Integration is currently developing a second phase of the 'National action plan to bridge the digital divide'. The plan strongly starts from the digital divide issue and is aimed at developing instruments to bridge the digital divide. For that reason, a number of actions are put first, focusing on three guidelines: raising awareness, providing access and training. These actions are developed with the Regions and Communities.

1.3 Flemish policy initiatives

In the coalition agreement 'A Vigorous Flanders in Decisive Times' (p. 76), the theme of media literacy is discussed in the following paragraph:

"It is elementary that every Fleming can participate in the progressive information society that Flanders wants to be. The digital divide must be bridged. It is our ambition to make sure that vulnerable target groups have sufficient media access and are sufficiently media literate as well.[...]. Media users must be able to acquire the necessary skills to deal with new media adequately. For that reason, we create a Media Literacy Knowledge Centre that will coordinate the cooperation with all partners concerned."

In the policy memorandum on Media 2009-2014, specific attention is paid to a policy regarding media literacy. A policy regarding media literacy should contribute to the fact that all media users have sufficient information skills, technical skills and strategic skills and it should also promote the sensible and safe use of media. In the policy memorandum on Media, the creation of the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre is also further examined. First of all, this knowledge centre will further develop the already existing but spread initiatives and expertise, it will harmonise them and it will undertake actions when the existing initiatives do not meet the needs or show gaps. In addition, the centre will have an awareness-raising function, focusing on the needs of specific target groups. The built-up knowledge must in this respect be passed on to all relevant actors in the media, culture and education world.

The attention for media literacy is further manifested in the Media policy letters 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, in which attention is paid to a number of specific actions such as the Flemish component of the EU Kids Online research, the management agreement with the VRT, the Villa Crossmedia project and the Media Literacy incentive arrangement.

In different action plans, the Government of Flanders made commitments with regard to media literacy: the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction 2010-2014, the Flemish Youth Policy Plan 2010-2014, the Flemish Policy Plan for the Elderly 2010-2014 and the Equal Opportunities Objectives Framework 2010-2014.

With the Literacy Plan 2005-2011, the course of action was set out for a structural literacy policy in Flanders. The central strategic objective of the New Literacy Plan 2011-2016 remains increasing literacy in persons who do not have sufficient competences in the field of linguistics, mathematics and ICT so that they can maintain themselves in a knowledge society. The Strategic Literacy Plan consists of four operational objectives:

1. Literacy will be increased through a targeted approach in compulsory education and innovation in adult education;
2. Literacy will become a horizontal point of attention in the Welfare, Culture, Work and Media policy areas;
3. Structural partnerships with respect to literacy will be developed;
4. The literacy practices and the literacy policy will be further professionalised.

In each of these objectives, there is attention for linguistic and mathematical literacy, as well as for ICT literacy.

With regard to the ICT policy within education, we can record important shifts throughout the years. Now, a new shift presents itself, viz. a shift where the accent lies on digital media and a more integrated use of ICT.

In accordance with the Education and Training policy memorandum 2010-2014, active participation will be pursued in the drawing up and implementing of the new Digital Action Plan. The focus lies on bridging the digital divide. Recent OECD research shows that this divide does no longer manifest itself solely in access to ICT, but now more intensely in the use of ICT. Basic education has the important task of bridging the digital divide among adults. That is why the objectives of the information and communication technology (ICT) area of learning are brought up to date. In compulsory education, the attainment targets were recently adapted. Consequently, schools must have a sound infrastructure. The recently developed ICT monitor will be used to monitor the integration of ICT in education.

The Flemish Youth Council already issued a certain number of advisory opinions with regard to media literacy as well. In an advisory opinion of 9 April 2008, it argues in favour of a positive representation of young persons and games, of more research into the social and positive effects of gaming, of setting up information campaigns and campaigns to raise awareness for children and young persons, as well as for parents and supervisors and of bridging the digital divide.

An advisory opinion of 2 June 2010 dealt with the theme of cyberbullying and cyberhate. Within this framework, the Flemish Youth Council argues in favour of paying particular attention to cyberbullying and cyberhate within the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre to be newly established.

In addition, it strives for a support programme aimed at schools for dealing with the (cyber)bullying issue with specific attention to a school culture of dialogue, participation, cooperation and mediation and they argue in favour of making the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism and the Ecops reporting point of the federal policy better known among the public at large and children and young persons in particular as reporting points regarding cyberhate.

The Media sectoral council issued an advisory opinion regarding media literacy as well on 10 September 2009 and put forward three priority points.

In the first instance, media literacy must be promoted for both users and users-producers. In an interactive media context, there is after all a growing shift of passive users to users who provide an active contribution by creating 'user-generated content'. Furthermore, the sectoral council points out the importance of respecting the rights of (other) users and/or producers.

It is essential for the sectoral council that the policy in this matter is fleshed out in a positive manner. Nobody has an interest in a story filled with dangers and negative experiences, and that definitely applies to the target groups this policy is aimed at.

A second priority involves a more efficient, more coordinated approach of existing and possibly new initiatives. Cooperation and avoiding fragmentation of means are the core objectives in this context.

Thirdly, the sectoral council points out the importance of safe media environments, referring to an advisory opinion of 2006 regarding a possible media-neutral information system.

2. View on the media literacy policy

2.1 Definition

The present concept paper uses the following definition of media literacy:

Media literacy is the whole of knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow citizens to deal with a complex, changing and mediatised world in a conscious and critical manner. It is the ability to use media in an active and creative manner, aimed at social participation.⁴

It is important to emphasize that media literacy does not only involve practical skills such as ICT skills, reading skills and easily deal with/creatively use different media, but that it also involves media consciousness from practice, insights in the mechanisms of commercial communication and the media industry, critical information and strategic skills, and sensible and safe use of media.

A second element is that media literacy concerns **all** (new and traditional) **media**.⁵ At the same time, this implies that media literacy evolves as new media are being developed. This means that media literacy is not a competence that can be acquired once, but that it is a part of lifelong learning. Hence, media literacy is as fundamental for all age categories, although it is certainly true that "learn young, learn fair" applies as always.

Image literacy is an important part of media literacy as well. By image literacy is meant the ability to follow the reasoning and intention of the makers and users of images.

⁴ This definition was inspired by the definition used in the attainment targets in education and by the definition used by the Dutch Culture Council (2005).

⁵ It is self-evident that media literacy has much ground in common with cultural education. Without going more deeply into this, it can be said that with regard to the ground in common between media literacy and culture (cultural education), media literacy - roughly speaking - is more about the 'form' (the medium in itself) instead of the 'contents' of a medium.

For your information: the definition of cultural education that is used in the research 'Veldtekening Cultuureducatie' (Vermeersch & Vandenbroecke, 2011) is the following: *All activities to learn about culture or by means of culture (art, heritage, media and other cultural and intercultural expressions). Cultural education is aimed at establishing participation in culture (both participating and taking part in) and at personal, social and cultural awakening or (talent) development. In doing so, cultural education promotes the capacity to experience and act culturally, for intercultural communication and cultural adaptation.*

2.2 Mission and focus as to content of the media literacy policy

The media literacy policy's mission is to allow all citizens to deal with an increasingly mediatised society in a conscious, critical and active manner, both today and tomorrow. This must reinforce the position of citizens in society and/or contribute to their personal well-being.

In order to achieve this mission, the present concept paper focuses on **increasing the media literacy competences** of citizens. These competences must be seen as a combined action of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Knowledge: this involves the consciousness of the large part that media⁶ play in society, the knowledge to interpret media contents, the insight in the (historical) media framework, the ability to reflect, to draw conclusions and to strategically use media so as to reinforce one's own position.

Skills: this involves button skills, reading skills, knowledge of audio and video production techniques, finding, processing and editing information, determining its reliability and producing media contents oneself or dealing with them in a creative manner.

Attitude: this involves the consciousness of obligations and responsibilities in media behaviour (e.g. respect for privacy, no illegal downloading, ...), dealing with social and ethical aspects (e.g. cyberbullying), the understanding of the effect that media can have (e.g. manipulation and leaving digital trails) and having knowledge of the application of copyright, the protection of data and privacy.

Starting from a positive educational theory/approach, which is **not** based on fear and interdictions, but on an **emancipating vision** in which these media are used to express oneself. This way, media literacy can be realised from 3 aspects:

1. use media actively oneself (in order to get to know the possibilities and risks)
2. reflect on media consciously (if you do not want to be merely superficial, you need knowledge about the history and economics of media)
3. awake to the impact of media on your brain and therefore also on your actions

It is important to not only have an eye for the competences to develop, but also for the recognition of the **competences that are already present** in young persons. In this context, we think, for instance, of young persons updating their own blog or making digital films themselves, etc.

Furthermore, a **balance between 'emancipate' and 'protect'** should be aimed at. The media literacy policy takes the negative effects linked to media into account. Cyberbullying, for instance, can have serious consequences for the victim.⁷ Instead of looking for the

⁶ A medium can be described as a data carrier. Although this can be given a very broad interpretation (e.g. everything that is used by an artist to make art), the present concept paper rather starts from a more classical interpretation of a medium or media. The focus lies in the first place on mass media such as radio, television, the written press or the Internet.

⁷ VANDEBOSCH, H., VAN CLEEMPUT, K., MORTELMANS, D., and WALRAVE, M., *Cyberpesten bij jongeren in Vlaanderen*, studie in opdracht van het viWTA, Brussel, 2006.

answer in a multitude of regulating measures, the intention is, however, to make citizens in the first place defensible, alert and critical. Suggestions that help to use media in a positive and independent manner are put forward as much as possible from the user's point of view.

Finally, attention must also be paid to certain **preconditions** which must be met. After all, they are also the subject of the media literacy policy. In this context, we think of the access to media and the provision of sufficiently diverse and high-quality content.

2.3 Role of the authority

An efficient policy with regard to media literacy presupposes a productive interaction between different actors involved, between provider and user, between sector and authority,... In this context, the role of the authority can be defined as follows:

1/ **Coordinate**: The authority takes on a coordinating role or director's role. It stimulates cooperation and consultation between all actors involved and promotes - where necessary - a better harmonising between new and existing initiatives.

2/ **Regulate**: The authority develops a strategic framework with a clear regulation. Thanks to an effective regulation, it can play a part in reducing potentially harmful content.

3/ **Facilitate**: A third core task of the authority is to facilitate initiatives regarding media literacy. This can be done through oriented financing, project subsidising or the development of other forms of (financial) incentives.

4/ **Make aware**: Furthermore, the authority has to fulfil the role of making people aware. This may involve inciting diverse actors to specific actions. In addition, this may also involve larger awareness campaigns regarding specific topics or aimed at special target groups (e.g. teachers from a certain educational level).

5/ **Monitor**: A final part involves mapping out the field of media literacy, the needs and requirements, through targeted research activities or consultancy.

In all of this, the principle of subsidiarity is preferably taken into account, implying that (policy) initiatives with priority local activity are best established or supported at this policy level. After all, the local authorities have just as much a crucial part to fulfil in realising media literacy within their own (urban) context.

2.4 Intermediary actor(s) in the field

Certain needs and requirements can be efficiently dealt with by one or several **intermediary organisations** that are at the disposal of the entire sector. This is also clearly put forward in the recommendations of the recent IST study "Digital Divide of the Second Degree in

Flanders”.⁸ First of all, we think of fulfilling a certain number of 'support centre functions', to be compared with those executed by, for instance, the support centres in the Culture policy field: sharing knowledge and expertise, exchanging good practices, practice development and support, (international) networking/meetings, joint image creation, education and training, raising awareness, developing materials, ...

2.5 Target groups approach

In order to draw up a goal-oriented, contemporary e-inclusion policy, a thorough insight in media literacy competences that were acquired or not within the different layers of society is necessary. We must be aware of the fact that we are dealing with an information society at different speeds. Not every citizen grasps the new developments equally rapidly.

The needs and behaviours of the different sections of society, as well as their access possibilities to media, can greatly vary. The variable and differentiated needs of specific target groups such as children, young persons, (grand)parents, seniors, teachers, handicapped people, people in poverty, lower-educated people and unemployed people must be taken into account. The distinction between target groups can constitute an important aid in providing tailored measures (for instance in the form of formal and informal education) and thus sharpen the media literacy competences.

On the other hand, the method used to distinguish between profiles of media literacy also has its limitations. Research results must therefore always be seen in the correct perspective. We could (mistakenly) suppose that the digital media literacy in Flanders is not doing too badly. Although six in ten digital media users (59%) can be found in the group of “advanced users”, it is important to bear in mind that this clustering is based on variables that merely assessed the ability to use (rather than to understand) digital media. In other words, this means that the data presented only tell something about the – operational and formal – medium-related skills of the users, but nothing about their – informational and strategic – content-related digital skills.⁹

⁸ MARIEN, I., VAN AUDENOVE, L., VLEUGELS, C., BANNIER, S., PIERSON, J., Digitale kloof tweede graad in Vlaanderen, 2010, studie in opdracht van Instituut Samenleving en Technologie.

⁹ PAULUSSEN, S., COURTOIS, C., VANWYNSBERGHE, H., and VERDEGEM, P. “*Profielen van mediageletterdheid*”, *Mediageletterdheid in een digitale wereld*, 2011, p. 61.

3. State of affairs regarding media literacy

The state of affairs described below is based on available and existing research. It provides a current image of a certain number of findings regarding the use of media and media competences in Flanders. Evidently, this image must be brought up to date every time and refined with new insights and findings.

3.1 Social context

3.1.1 Use of media in Flanders

Ownership and use

Regarding the ownership of traditional ICT infrastructure such as a computer and a broadband connection, the Flemish family scores at least as well as the average European family. However, Flanders does lag behind with regard to effective **computer skills**.¹⁰ At the European level, the share of Flemings who followed a computer course in the past year is also moderate.

Comparatively, poor families lag behind more with regard to the diffusion of ICT goods, and they own less, and less advanced, ICT goods.¹¹ Of the people aged between 55-64 almost three-quarters are online, of those between 65-74 less than half. Of the people aged over 75, only one in six has an Internet connection at home.¹²

Almost every Fleming aged 18 or more has a television at home and uses it at least once per month (98%). A radio (98%) and a cellular phone or smartphone (93%) are also present in almost every family, but the monthly use at home is a little lower (almost 90%).

A game console is a lot less popular. 33% of all Flemings own a game console and only 15% use it at least once per month. 43% of all respondents say that they have a newspaper at home and 41% of all Flemings read this available newspaper at least once per month.¹³

Social network sites gain popularity; people have 115 online friends on average and the online contacts usually take place with people whom they also meet in real life.¹⁴

The Internet use by **children and young persons** in Belgium as compared to other EU countries can be considered to be 'average' (between 65% and 85%) (Tsatsou, Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt & Murru, 2009). With regard to exposure to diverse Internet risks, Belgium also occupies a middle position (Hasebrink, Livingstone & Haddon, 2008).

¹⁰ Research Centre of the Government of Flanders, ICT Monitor 2010. European comparison among enterprises and citizens, 2011.

¹¹ *Aan de onderkant van de technologische samenleving, Een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen armoede en technologie*, viWTA, 2007

¹² DUIJEL, M., *Senioren en internet: aansluiting of kortsluiting*, Jaarboek ICT en Samenleving, 2007, p. 51

¹³ MOREAS, M., and PICKERY, J., "De digitale kloof in twee dimensies", *Mediageletterdheid in een digitale wereld*, 2011, p. 11.

¹⁴ SMITS, W., *Sociaal Cultureel Werk, Participatie in Vlaanderen I, Basisgegevens van de Participatiesurvey 2009*, Den Haag, ACCO Leuven, 2009, p. 159-160.

As could be expected, parents play a crucial part in this context: teenagers with a good parental tie are less active when it comes to using entertainment applications, have less contact with risky content and are less inclined to make new contacts over the Internet (Vandoninck e.a., 2010). This can be partly explained by the fact that surfing the Internet usually takes place indoors in Belgium, and that Belgian parents are online more often than average (European Commission, 2006).

The **social context** also plays a role: in less well-to-do families, less frequent use seems to go hand in hand with more frequent risks. Low-educated parents are often less familiarised with computers and the Internet, which can lead to more uncertainty regarding regulation and guidance of their children's Internet use and to an underestimation of the online risks that their children can be confronted with (Vandoninck e.a., 2010).¹⁵

In spite of the rise of ICT and the Internet, the use of **traditional media** such as radio, newspapers and television has remained almost unchanged.¹⁶ Even for young persons, watching television remains the most common media use: no less than 99,4% of all young persons have a television at home. On an average weekday, they watch over 2,5 hours of television, and in the weekend this becomes more than 3,5 hours.¹⁷ Only 7% of all young persons say that they almost never watch TV. Only 6 to 7% of all young persons say that they never listen to the radio (or at least not often enough to give their opinion regarding radio stations).¹⁸

In general, television is the most popular medium: on a daily basis, 81% of all Flemings aged over 18 watch television and 16% do not watch every day, but at least once a week. Radio is used almost equally frequent: 67% listen to the radio on a daily basis. Television is by far the most popular medium to keep abreast of current events. In 2009, nine adults in ten watched a television news at least once per week. The radio news reaches 77% of the population every week.¹⁹

The consumption of **games** has known an exponential growth in the past years. Gaming has developed into a phenomenon, and has evolved from a 'product' that was merely important for a small subculture to a broad social phenomenon and cultural product. The consumption of games followed these trends in Flanders as well. In 2009, a total of 227 million euros in games were sold in Belgium, a number that does not yet take into account the increased digital sales through platforms such as Steam and the Apple or Android application stores. We do not even talk about games that are available for free via social network sites yet. The IBBT Digimeter study²⁰ already indicated in 2010 that more than 50% of all Flemings play a computer game from time to time. The analyses in Digimeter 4 (Q3-Q4 2011) reveal the following with regard to gaming: 37% of all Flemings say that they play games from time to time, whereas the other 63% say that they never play games. However, 44% of these self-proclaimed 'non-gamers' happen to play a game from time to time via digital TV, their computer, tablet or cellular phone when asked about the use of applications with regard to these specific appliances or media. Summarizing, it may be said that a total of 65% of all

¹⁵ D'HAENENS, L., and VANDONINCK, S., *Hoe digitaal geletterd zijn Belgische kinderen en jongeren in vergelijking met leeftijdgenoten in Europa?*, 2011.

¹⁶ BOONAERT, T., and SIONGERS, J., *Jongeren en media: van mediavreemden tot hybride meerwaardezoekers*, Jongeren in Cijfers i.

¹⁷ Apestaartjaren 3, Jeugdwerknet, Graffiti Jeugddienst en MICT-IBBT, 2010.

¹⁸ JOP-monitor 2.

¹⁹ VRIND 2011.

²⁰ See: http://www.digimeter.be/files/digimeter_wave_3_samenvatting.pdf.

Fleming happen to play a game from time to time.²¹ Hence, we can hardly speak of a new phenomenon. The relative importance of games as a 'medium' may not be underestimated as well. Gaming has indeed solidly settled into fourth place, following radio, television and the Internet, with regard to daily media consumption (so before newspapers, magazines and books).

Safety and risks

Of all children aged between 9 and 16, 14% have seen online images in the past 12 months that are clearly of a sexual nature (e.g. naked people or people having sex). Among them, one in three was worried about this, and half of those (i.e. one in six of those who had seen images of a sexual nature, or approx 2% of all children) were 'rather' to 'very' shocked by what they had seen.

Of all children aged between 9 and 16, 6% received mean or offensive online messages, and 3% sent such messages to others. More than half (55%) of those who received such bullying messages were 'rather' to 'very' shocked by them.

Of all children aged between 11 and 16, 15% received peer-to-peer "messages or images of a sexual nature ... [this means] talk about sex or images of naked people or sexual acts", and 3% say that they have sent or have put such messages online themselves. Of all those who received such messages, about a quarter (27%) were worried about them. Furthermore, almost half of those who worried about them were 'rather' to 'very' shocked.

Communication with new contacts that one has never met face-to-face before is not uncommon; one in three children (30%) in Europe aged between 9 and 16 have communicated in the past year with someone who they did not meet face-to-face before. This runs to 46% for those aged 15 to 16.

Exposure to so-called 'user-generated content' that is possibly harmful is an online risk that one in five (21%) children aged between 11 and 16 have already been confronted with. This involves hate messages (12%), pro anorexia (10%), self-mutilation (7%), drug use (7%), suicide (5%). About one in ten children aged between 11 and 16 say that their personal data have already been abused: this involved the abuse of passwords (7%), of personal information (4%), or even financial deceit (2%).²²

The digital divide

The digital divide shrinks over time. For cellular phones, the computer and the Internet, the shrinking of the divide follows a process where the penetration among precursors at the time of the first survey was very high and consequently could not rise a lot. This allows later followers to catch up a little. With respect to ownership of a game console - where penetrations are still very low in general - the divide is growing. The divide between high-qualified and low-qualified persons does not shrink with respect to computer ownership, general computer use, having an Internet connection and general Internet use. Here too, there is a high penetration ratio among the precursors, but the situation among low-qualified persons between 2005 and 2010 remained as good as unchanged. The divide between

²¹ Digimeter 4, published by IBBT-iLab.o, based on figures collected in 2011 Q3-Q4, in print.

²² For this section, we used: D'HAENENS, L., and VANDONINCK, S., *Hoe digitaal geletterd zijn Belgische kinderen en jongeren in vergelijking met leeftijdgenoten in Europa?*, 2011 (in print).

families with an income under or above 2,000 euros remains constant with regard to ownership and general computer and Internet use. The penetration levels between 79% and 74% still allowed for some growth among precursors, and persons with a low income also made some progress.²³

3.1.2 Media literacy in education

With regard to the **educational context**, the three researchers in the recent research 'Simpel als krijt'²⁴ by the Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen (HOWEST - January 2011), draw attention to the **strange paradox** where they saw how the students of the teacher training programme taught classes in a very monotonous manner during practical training, not making use of the many means that they have at their disposal: iPods, laptops and iPhones. 'They became estranged as it were from themselves: their own multimedia world faded in an analogue world of contorted teaching, bland worksheets and dull use of blackboard and chalk. As if education is a priori always supposed to be grey, rigid and conservative.'

The ICT monitor²⁵ confirms but also nuances this story. On the whole, the results evoke an image where ICT is embedded in Flemish education. ICT is widely used, but this use is mostly information-oriented. Among all actors questioned, there appears to be a large consensus on the importance of ICT in education. The need for support is very high and the example above also shows the necessity to connect worlds. Educators draw attention to this in recent learning theories and it is increasingly frequently occurring that media makers are out of step with younger people. Possibly, the cultural shift that is taking place is considered insufficiently and it is definitely converted insufficiently into innovative learning strategies or media content. The vanguard of multimedia users are no longer only consumers of those new technologies, but have meanwhile become literate in the field of multimedia to such an extent that they can claim those new media: to use them to develop themselves and to express themselves. Thanks to the fact that they grow up in this information society, today's children and young persons have a different way of processing information (creative, multidisciplinary, lateral) than the preceding generations (logical, rational, linear). The way this generation thinks, looks upon things and reasons is essentially different from that of their educators and their expectations with respect to exploring and learning about their outside world has also essentially changed because of it.

As was pointed out in the introduction, the 'digital natives' often lack a certain sense of critical attitude towards the media. Furthermore, there appears to be a group of young persons who are not entirely in touch with the digital story.²⁶ Contrary to children and young persons, adults and elderly people are 'digital immigrants'. Because of the fact that they often did not grow up with the Internet and computers, they usually need a longer period of training.²⁷

²³MOREAS, M., and PICKERY, J., *De digitale kloof in twee dimensies*, Mediageletterdheid in een digitale wereld, 2011, p. 15.

²⁴www.simpelalskrijt.be

²⁵ See: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/ict/onderzoek/files/MICTIVO.pdf>

²⁶ BROTCORNE, P., MERTENS, L., and VALENDUC, G., *Offline jongeren en de digitale kloof. Over het risico op ongelijkheden bij "digital natives"*, Fondation travail-université, 2009.

²⁷ DUIMEL, M., and NOTENBOOM, M., *Digibyte, digibabe, digibeet. Wie zijn 'de digibeten'? Waarom zijn ze digibeet? Wat willen zij wel en niet?*, Digivaardig & Digibewust, Leidschendam, 2010.

One of the most important structural measures to embed media literacy in the educational policy is the attention for media education in the attainment targets. In this field, major efforts have been made in the past few years. Within the education policy area, media literacy has become one of the cross-curricular attainment targets for secondary education as of 1 September 2010²⁸.

The media literacy attainment targets read as follows:

- The students deal with media in an alert manner.
- The students participate in the public space in a well-considered manner through media.

With regard to media literacy, the explanatory memorandum added to these attainment targets clarifies that media literacy should be understood in the sense of a conscious and critical attitude adopted towards classical (television, radio, press) and new media (internet applications, SMS) and the ability to use media on a daily basis, informally and creatively, (implicitly or explicitly) aimed at participation in the cultural public context (readers' letters, YouTube, chat rooms, blogs, webcam, etc.).

Other attainment targets related to media literacy are located in the art education area of learning in primary education, in the cross-curricular attainment targets of secondary education, in the cross-curricular ICT attainment targets in primary education and the first stage of secondary education and in the ICT training profile in basic education.²⁹

Although the fact that the attainment targets and developmental objectives provide sufficient steppingstones to make education more contemporary and more audio-visual, there is still a great need for media literacy in all sections and at all levels of the Flemish education. A similar conclusion can be drawn with regard to educational games. Although the potential of games in an educational context has been recognised for years, it is found that they do not constitute a standard element of the educational methods in the classroom. This is an important challenge for the educational policy.

3.2 Actors

As mentioned earlier, 'multi-stakeholder governance' is an important basic principle of the media literacy policy. The responsibility for an efficient policy with regard to media literacy is shared by many actors. The sphere of activity in the field of media literacy counts numerous actors who can, each from their point of view, contribute to a more coherent, future-oriented and sustainable reference framework for media users and media producers.

3.2.1 Actors at the policy level

At the **policy level** many parties are involved. After all, media literacy is a **transversal theme** of which the strong basis lies indeed in the Media policy field, but which also has

²⁸ For a full overview of these new attainment targets and the underlying vision, we refer to the publication VOET@2010 <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/eDocs/pdf/393.pdf>

²⁹ For a full overview, please see: <http://ond.vlaanderen.be/DVO/ICT/ictvoodvoe.htm>.

strong links with the Flemish Education, Youth, Culture, Well-being, Innovation and Poverty Reduction policy fields.

At other policy levels as well, there is much ground in common with media literacy. At the federal level, there is the Public Planning Service (PPS) Social Integration, Poverty Reduction, Social Economy and Federal Urban Policy. It encourages the use of Public Computer Spaces, providing free access to the Internet, and devotes itself to the 'National action plan to bridge the digital divide'. Cities, municipalities and provinces also take important initiatives with respect to media literacy and/or the digital divide.

3.2.2 Actors in the field

In the large field of media literacy, different actors are active, in different sectors. The most relevant, mainly from the point of view of the media and education policy fields will be discussed briefly below.

First of all, there are different **non-profit organizations or legal persons under public law in the form of an authorised association** that are active in the large field of media literacy. These organisations often receive means from different policy levels and/or policy areas to organise their activities. Their activities are often close to the media user or to initiatives that have a local effect.

In addition, there are bodies that are connected directly to the policy implementation: the VRT and the Flemish Media Regulator (VRM). The **VRT** can fully play its educational part in the media literacy story. In the diverse programmes and on the different channels, it can cooperate to stimulate the diverse competences and, in doing so, give space to listeners and viewers to create media content themselves. The VRT can also provide a custom offer so as to familiarize less skilled media users with new media applications and it can open its media archive to the broadest possible use and public.

The **Flemish Media Regulator** can have an essential task with regard to the compliance with the regulation that supports the media literacy policy. In addition, it can make the business economic structures of the media landscape more intelligible.

The **commercial (television and radio) broadcasting sectors** can also play an essential part with regard to awareness campaigns and can promote media literacy competences in or through their programmes. They can also provide more insight into how the media work and how they are structured. Furthermore, they also have interesting archive materials at their disposal that can be opened up. The newspapers have a task that concurs with that of the commercial broadcasting sector. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see how cross-pollination would arise between the professional media sector and the non-profit organizations active in the field.

According to the recommendation by the European Commission of 20 August 2009 on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audio-visual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society, the **media industry** especially has an awareness-raising task. This task can also go further; the media industry can provide more insight into the privacy regulations that are applied, for instance. **Telecom** companies can cooperate in

infrastructure initiatives that promote e-inclusion such as the putting at the disposal of hardware and its maintenance, providing (affordable) access to broadband, etc., but they can also play an important part in other ways. They can for instance take into account the media skills of their clients when developing their services regarding digital television or further examine how the possibilities of digital television can play a part in promoting media competences or the access to the (Internet) media. Besides, their foundations are also already active in the field of awareness-raising or educational projects regarding ICT use.

The **games sector** can develop games that are aimed at teaching media literacy competences. Here as well, there are opportunities to further explore the educational role of games and give an impulse to the development of games with learning aims, the so-called “serious games”.

Social network sites, for their part, can also play an awareness-raising and competence-enhancing part.

Within the **cultural sector** as well, organisations receive subsidies (both from the Agency for Socio-Cultural Work and from the Agency for Arts and Heritage) when their work involves media literacy. An important potential actor from the field of Socio-Cultural Work is the library.³⁰

Educational institutions from compulsory education are key actors in developing media literacy competences among pupils, students and course participants. The attainment targets or training profiles constitute the framework in which they can work on media literacy, digital literacy and ICT skills. The role of the education takes place at two levels: on the one hand, it should make sure that young persons who do not have ICT at their disposal at home have nevertheless access to technology and media through the educational institutions and learn how to work with them and, on the other hand, it should bring the media knowledge and media skills to a higher level, so that the media use also takes place in a critical and well-reasoned manner.

The Flemish **colleges of higher education and universities** examine the diverse aspects of media literacy such as the development of tools, the introduction of digital didactics, the development of standards for the opening up of media, the monitoring of competences, the mapping out of needs and requirements, etc. They are also active in the field of games research and games development. In doing so, it is important to integrate media literacy in general pedagogical actions as well instead of reducing it to subject-oriented tips and tricks. We must examine which new types of learning fit in with the spontaneous learning strategies that media users have developed within this digital-cultural shift.

Adult education also has an important part to play. In adult education as well, an integration of media literacy is included in the programme. Among other things within the framework of the Strategic Literacy Plan, basic education has an important task in imparting elementary digital skills to lower educated adults. In order to meet the needs, a new training profile that is aimed at digital literacy is currently being developed. In the Flemish adult education centres (CVOs), media literacy is included in a number of courses.

³⁰ One Agency, The Digital Public Library in Flanders. Een strategische kijk op de toekomst, 2007.

The **Part-time Arts Education** (DKO) is facing an important reform at the moment. The concept paper (March 2011) provides a new “media arts” training pathway with four outflow/transfer possibilities: audio-visual media, auditive media, media art and theatre design. It is to be expected that the DKO will play a substantial and highly active part with regard to dealing creatively with media and this in function of further individual development, leisure activities or as a preliminary pathway of a bachelor and/or master programme in which media play a part.

Finally, we mention the **teacher training programmes** that have an important task with regard to the professionalization of teachers. The extent to which media literacy is now already part of the curriculum is rather limited and insufficiently known.

3.3 Identified issues

3.3.1 Education and training

It goes without saying that a policy regarding media literacy is aimed in the first place at the user. It is first of all the citizen that we, as the authority, want to make more media conscious, media skilled and media critical. This can cover a broad range: both basic and advanced technical skills, both reflection on media and learning how to work with all sorts of new applications,... In this context, different user profiles require different types of training, or a different focus. This requires a thorough pedagogical approach, through professional bodies and through teachers with appropriate competences.

In the field, the assistance in many extracurricular initiatives is currently carried out by volunteers, sometimes also with limited training.³¹ As a result, an important issue is how to organise the ‘train the trainer’ trainings on a larger scale: which organisation(s) is/are taking this on at the moment/should take this on? Which target groups do they aim at/should they aim at?

There is also the need of a certain extent of standardisation of the training and of consultation with regard to the concept, the basic view, the competences that are aimed at, the didactics and the terms of certification.

Within the field of education as well, the need is felt for support of teachers. The research by Annemie Goegebuer³² already revealed that teachers often do not feel proficient enough in working with digital media. A more recent report³³ including a needs analysis in the field of continuing education confirms the need for ICT and media-related trainings and, moreover, draws attention to highly diverse continuing education demands. Currently, the ambition to use games for educational purposes is also still running up against a number of important barriers. Full integration is still absolutely out of the question. The decision to use games

³¹ MARIEN, I., VAN AUDENOVE, L., VLEUGELS, C., BANNIER, S., PIERSON, J., *Digitale kloof tweede graad in Vlaanderen*, 2010, studie in opdracht van Instituut Samenleving en Technologie.

³² GOE, A., *Audiovisuele vorming in het Vlaamse Onderwijs*, Vlaams Steunpunt voor de Audiovisuele Kunsten, Gent, 2004.

³³ STEYAERT, J., VAN GOMPEL, R., and SAMYN, W., *Evaluatie REN*, Indigov, Leuven, 2009.

depends chiefly of the will of the teachers. It would appear that school-specific characteristics, such as the ICT policy, the ICT infrastructure, school system and location play as good as no part in making this decision. This underlines the need for a teacher-oriented support. The relation between teaching structure (duration of the lesson and learning objectives) and the game constitutes a major influence however. In other words, when games are perceived as applicable within the learning objectives and within the duration of the lessons, this will highly influence the adoption of games. Furthermore, factors such as user-friendliness, usefulness and learning opportunities also have a direct impact on the decision to use games or not. This applies to all teachers, irrespective of their teaching experience. This was revealed in an IBBT study on the decisive factors for the adoption of games in the Flemish educational system.³⁴

However, there is a concrete yet limited provision available. Within the media literacy platform "Ingebeeld", a training provision has been developed that is aimed explicitly at the professionalization within the teacher training programmes. In addition, there are the lab projects in the teacher training programme. However, this training provision cannot meet all needs. Furthermore, there is a problem with regard to the policy-making capacity in numerous schools. An ICT vision is often technologically oriented and to an insufficient extent a driving force for pedagogical innovation and support. This is also revealed in the MICTIVO ICT Monitor. Although the fact that the attainment targets and developmental objectives provide sufficient steppingstones to make education more contemporary and more audio-visual, the use of images in classrooms is dealt with in a very limited manner, and even then merely illustrative, i.e. embedded in a literary discursive. Because of this, the technical infrastructure lies relatively idle with regard to media literacy and media education. With regard to the educational use of games as well, there is a need for training and specific support.

Within the authority itself, a lot of knowledge is already present. However, it should come about in closer dialogue between the policy areas. Moreover, because of the fast technological and social developments in the field of media literacy, the authority needs a continuous process of knowledge acquisition.

3.3.2 Safe and sensible media use

To be able to deal with media contents in a conscious and critical manner is one of the most important concerns of an efficient media literacy policy. Media literacy is thus also aimed at making the citizen 'more responsible' with regard to his/her media use. Especially children and young people are more vulnerable than older people in this context. They need to be 'empowered', among other things through an increased alertness of and an appropriate assistance by their parents or educators, to deal with the risks of (online) media use.

However, awareness or competences are not always sufficient. Some messages are harmful to such an extent that teaching competences and focusing on awareness must be complementary to more regulating initiatives. Sometimes, regulation is the most appropriate instrument, in other cases laying something down in an Act is too rigid and it is sufficient to

³⁴ DE GROOVE, F., and VAN LOOY, J., *Computerspellen om te leren*, MICT/IBBT, Gent, 2011.

draw up codes of conduct, to develop initiatives in the field of co-regulation or to encourage self-regulation.

3.3.3. Conceptualization

The Internet, newspapers, radio and television throw a light on reality in their own manner, also influenced by their own mental frameworks and backgrounds. Through their way of reporting and conceptualizing, they influence the conceptualization and experiences of media users.

Media makers are not always aware themselves (of the impact) of this fact or they do not have the necessary tools to break through certain mechanisms. Not only the media user, but also the media maker has an interest in recognizing and dealing with over-simplified conceptualization.

3.3.4 Access and infrastructure

A certain number of steps have been taken in the field of access and ICT infrastructure. The PPS Social Integration, Poverty Reduction, Social Economy and Federal Urban Policy supports over 350 Public Computer Spaces since 2006, for instance. A Public Computer Space is open to everyone, for free, and provides a priority target group the opportunity to access the Internet for free.

Although the Flemish families are relatively well provided with regard to ICT infrastructure, such as computers and broadband connection, in proportion to the other European countries, not yet everyone can afford to take part in the digital world.³⁵ Hence, affordable (social) rates remain a point of interest.

Furthermore, reflection is in order regarding specific initiatives to win over non-users. Non-use in itself is not problematic, but it would be if it should lead to social exclusion. In addition, the user-friendliness of new applications or the integration of new innovations within existing media is important, because they can lead to the reduction of existing thresholds.

It also remains important to keep taking care of a high-quality digital infrastructure in the schools. Since the last round of subsidisation in 2007 and 2008, the intention is that schools use their operating resources to renew their ICT materials. In order to teach pupils, students and course participants to deal with media, it is necessary that educational institutions have a sound infrastructure. This can involve not only digital media, but also sufficient bandwidth, for instance. The IT and digital media infrastructure must be used optimally. This means, first and foremost, that all pupils, course participants and students must be able to make use of it and that it is not reserved exclusively to specific courses or subjects.

3.3.5 Coordination and harmonisation

³⁵ ICT Monitor 2010. Europese vergelijking bij bedrijven en burgers, 2011, Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering, Brussel.

There is little coordination within the field. Initiatives are often fragmented and insufficiently geared to one another. There is a need for a more systematic exchange of advice, information, methodologies and materials. There is currently no institution that takes on a coordinating role in this field.

There is a need for a platform or an organisation where people can get help from regarding advice, materials, practice examples and information with respect to all aspects of media literacy, a place where relevant research is translated, new media are tested and the results thereof are validated, digital didactics with regard to media education are further developed and projects are financed.

At the policy level, there is currently little or no harmonisation between the different policy areas involved, or merely ad hoc consultation. As a result of the current fragmentation within the policy, a coherent approach and a further professionalization of the sector threaten to be postponed.³⁶

3.3.6 Sustainable financing

Most initiatives today function on the basis of (short-term) project financing, which makes it more difficult to trace out a long-term vision and activities. This also causes problems with regard to technical maintenance of hardware and keeping software of programmes and applications up-to-date. In addition to the support for short-term projects, that is also relevant in function of the promotion of innovative practice development for instance, reflection is thus required with regard to more sustainable types of financing, tailored to the activities of certain organisations.

3.3.7 Needs in terms of availability of and access to high-quality learning materials

In addition to hardware, adapted software and digital learning materials are also required to be able to work on media literacy in a rich learning environment. Projects such as "Ingebeeld"³⁷ are a first step towards more efficient (multi)media use in education. Furthermore, there is the ever-recurring question of how cultural institutions that are financed by or receive subsidies from the authority can open up their materials and make them of use within the educational context. Cultural houses, heritage organisations, museums, radio and television archives³⁸, etc. have large collections of information at their disposal that are in fact all potential learning objects. The digital opening up of them can constitute a large added value for educational institutions. This potential must be used as much as possible.

But the needs in terms of software and digital learning materials are diverse: multimedia tools for the editing and processing of visual material and audio, databases with reusable multimedia, ready-made teaching packages, etc.

³⁶ MARIEN, I., VAN AUDENOVE, L., VLEUGELS, C., BANNIER, S., PIERSON, J., *Digitale kloof tweede graad in Vlaanderen*, studie in opdracht van Instituut Samenleving en Technologie, Brussel, 2010.

³⁷ www.ingebeeld.be

³⁸ With regard to education, reference can also be made to the recent VLOR advice (ref. ar-ar-adv-008) regarding the social role of the public broadcasting company.

In addition, games need to fit in with the existing limits of the current educational system. More concretely, within the curricula and within the time frame of the lessons. Here too, there are two different possibilities: on the one hand, promote the development of computer games that are aimed specifically at education or, on the other hand, see how existing computer games can fit in with the current teaching structure. Whichever choice is made, the compatibility of the content with the current demands of the educational context is a prerequisite for the successful introduction of computer games in education.

3.3.8 Need for more scientific research and the opening up of it

In Flanders, a lot of research has already been carried out in the field of media literacy: both scientific research at the universities and more practice-oriented research by civil society. This resulted in a huge amount of information that is unfortunately not always opened up in a conveniently arranged and accessible manner and is therefore often of no use for further research or support.

Because of the fast technological and social changes, the research is never finished, nor complete. In many domains, data are missing and there are still gaps in research. There is a need for a measuring system that makes it possible to measure media literacy skills on a regular basis.³⁹ It should also be examined how existing instruments such as the ICT Monitor can be used in education to measure elements that are connected with media literacy.

Furthermore, it is not simple to gain a good insight in the expanding field of media literacy. Which organisations and initiatives deal with media literacy today? For which target groups do they work? How are they supported? It is worth the effort to draw up a thorough diagram of the field including all actors (and their objectives) that are already active in the field of media literacy today.

³⁹ See also: CELOT, P., and TORNERO, J.M.P., *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels. A comprehensive view of the concept of media literacy and an understanding of how media literacy level in Europe should be assessed*, European Commission, Brussels, 2009.

4. Strategic objectives

On the basis of the elements above, a rough sketch will be given below of the contours of a strategic policy with regard to media literacy. Putting the **objectives and actions** below first must lead to an increase in media literacy competences, and to a better response than before to the preconditions that are to be met.

The objectives already constitute a solid foundation for the actions, but this does not involve an end point but a strategic framework that will be brought up to date on a regular basis and in consultation with the parties involved.

Strategic objective 1: The creation of a sustainable and strategic framework for media literacy

It is important to have a **vision and policy framework** at one's disposal on which the many actors mentioned in the present paper can fall back when they want to take actions and initiatives with regard to media literacy. This framework must also be sustainable. The present concept paper already gives the initial impetus to a framework, by formulating a common definition, mission and focus as to content. At the same time, it wants to define the role of the authority more clearly and declare a number of commitments. For the time being, the present framework uses the media and education policy areas as the basis but, ideally, this will be further extended to the other policy areas. Evidently, this framework leaves the necessary space to respond to a constantly and rapidly evolving landscape and to adapt to new insights, needs and requirements.

Strategic objective 2: The stimulation and increase of competences

Society is evolving towards a knowledge society where dealing with technology and digital media has become an important basic competence. In addition, digital media provide plenty of opportunities to participate in society: from getting to know a varied and accessible offer to the possibility of adding (creative) content oneself. Being able to function independently in this context is increasingly becoming an essential condition to take part in society.

Dealing with the classical media also requires **knowledge, skills and attitude competences**. The concept paper Media Literacy also has an eye for this.

The Fleming lives in a multimedia world where (digital) media, games and information and communication technology are omnipresent. But often, this dealing with media takes place in an intuitive and sometimes in a too little critical manner. Dealing with (new) media in a critical and efficient manner, but also in a sensible and safe manner requires therefore a new set of basic competences.

It goes without saying that the educational institutions, given their core task, are the choice places to make sure that everyone - children, young people and adults - possesses the diverse media literacy competences. At the extracurricular level as well, these competence can and must be thoroughly dealt with.

With regard to the issue of gaming, the critical and healthy dealing of young people with games receives a special place and the educational opportunities of so-called serious games

must also be further examined and promoted. The successful integration of games in education requires efforts in at least two fields: provide training and provide adapted games.

Strategic objective 3: The creation of an e-inclusive society

An important objective of the policy is **the creation of an e-inclusive society**. Guaranteeing equal opportunities for all citizens in today's and tomorrow's knowledge society constitutes an absolute priority.

After all, it is clear that the growing presence and impact of technology and media does not only entail extra opportunities but also additional risks. One of those risks is for instance the polarisation in society between those who have the access and the competences to deal with ICT and those who do not have this access and those competences. When the lack of access or competences leads to social exclusion, the authority cannot stand aloof.

This digital divide is a polyhedron of digital fractures. It may involve differences in access to ICT and media, differences in their use or differences in competences to deal with digital media and technology. In the field of specific target groups as well, diverse fractures take shape. There are gender differences, for instance, the digital divide grows as people get older and there are striking differences in media use between lowly and highly educated persons. A specific problem presents itself among people who have limitations and who often benefit extra from using all sorts of new supporting technologies.

As mentioned earlier, the knowledge society presupposes adapted skills, attitudes and knowledge. Certain groups of people often lack the knowledge and skills, or the motivation and means to make optimal use of it. They are insufficiently aware of the opportunities that these new media provide, or they believe that they are insufficiently provided with diversified and high-quality content and services that can be useful or relevant to them. With respect to teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes, an important part in bridging the digital divide has been reserved for the authority.

Education should provide maximum opportunities for everyone to develop in the multimedia knowledge society. However, this is not a task which falls only to education. Finding solutions for the digital divide presupposes the necessary harmonisation between the different teaching, education and training providers, but also cooperation with the media themselves and with actors from the cultural and social field: socio-cultural work, neighbourhood work, libraries, museums,... The complementary part that community initiatives can play is also important. This is also relevant when we want to reach other groups such as seniors among whom the media can also play an important role as part of getting older actively.

In that sense, the policy regarding media literacy also wants to contribute to a more inclusive society where the access to media and the distribution of media competences for all sorts of underprivileged groups are better guaranteed.

Strategic objective 4: The creation of a safe and sensible media environment

For a lot of people, and especially for young people, games, network sites, mobile technology and all sorts of other media have become an inextricable part of their living

environment. That is only logical, because they provide a lot of possibilities and opportunities. The Internet holds a wealth of information and provides the ideal way to relax or to communicate with friends. But this also goes with a number of less positive aspects.

Dealing with one's own privacy and that of others constitutes one of the major challenges, now that technology has made it possible to make private data in social network sites and databases available on a large scale. Cyberbullying is also a problem that requires commitments from all parties involved in order to reach solutions. New media channels where music, videos and e-books, among other things, can be downloaded easily call for new demands and raise questions with regard to copyright and enforcing those rights. Parents sometimes worry about the game use of their children or insufficiently make their way to correct information.

Parents, training collaborators, teachers and media makers are usually aware of the important role that they play in preventing and dealing with these issues. But it is not always obvious to apply this in the daily practice as well. A policy regarding media literacy also wants to play an important part in this field.

5. Operational objectives and actions

SO 1 The creation of a sustainable and strategic framework for media literacy

A sustainable vision and policy framework supports the actions and initiatives regarding media literacy. In the present concept paper, the lines are set out. In accordance with the needs, new insights and technological developments, this framework can be adapted.

OO 1.1: Coordination and policy harmonisation

- **Action 1.1.1: Coordination and policy harmonisation within the administrations**

The Ministers responsible for Media and Education take the initiative, in consultation with their respective administrations, to assign the theme of 'media literacy' to a civil servant. In this manner, it is made sure that the policy regarding media literacy within the own entity is further prepared and shaped in a sustainable and structural way.

An initiative is also launched to extend the official protocol of cooperation between the CJSM and O&V departments and other agencies involved to Media so that media literacy can receive a more structural place in the cross-policy area consultation between the authorities involved. In other words, the appointed civil servants are also responsible for the further stimulation and putting into operation of the cross-pollination and cooperation between their respective policy areas.

These civil servants also act as the contact person within the authority for the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre to be created and also take initiatives to involve the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre within the framework of policy preparation and policy implementation initiatives.

- **Action 1.1.2: The creation of a Media Literacy Knowledge Centre**

The Media Literacy Knowledge Centre is a small, flexible organisation that receives financing for personnel and activities by means of an agreement with the Flemish authority, more specifically with the Minister responsible for Media, linked to a well-defined mission, which will be evaluated. The Media Literacy Knowledge Centre subscribes to the objective of the media literacy policy to allow all citizens, both today and tomorrow, to deal with an increasingly mediatised society in a conscious, critical and active manner. This must reinforce the position of citizens in society and/or contribute to their personal well-being. To that end, the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre promotes the acquisition and sharing of knowledge among organisations and workers in the large field of media literacy. The Knowledge Centre provides practice support and works on practice development. The Media Literacy Knowledge Centre cooperates actively with the relevant authority and field of action stakeholders and promotes the dialogue and cooperation between those stakeholders. The Knowledge Centre works complementary and strengthening with regard to the already existing initiatives in the field. The Media Literacy Knowledge Centre will be selected through a call. A putting into operation of the activities of the Knowledge Centre is set for 2013, after the approval of the paper by the Government of Flanders.

OO 1.2: Regulatory framework

There is a need for financial support that does not only allow for short-term projects, but also for projects with a longer duration.

The project subsidising elaborated in 2011 is of a rather experimental nature and allows to gain insight into the field and the concrete activities of organisations concerned with media literacy. On the basis of the acquired insights, it can be examined at a later stage whether this arrangement must be continued further or adapted.

- Action 1.2.1: Incentive arrangement

In the autumn of 2011, subsidies were awarded from the Media competence through an incentive arrangement.

The intention of the incentive arrangement is to remunerate projects that strengthen the position of citizens in an increasingly mediatised society and/or contribute to their personal well-being. The purpose of this incentive arrangement is to respond to a number of the issues mentioned above.

In order to achieve this mission, the possibility is created to grant subsidies for the following policy objectives:

1. 'Train the trainer': This subsidy is used for initiatives that train teachers, volunteers and trainers who teach and train the target groups involved themselves.
2. Developing methodologies and skills aimed at specific target groups: This subsidy is used for initiatives that act as 'blueprint projects' regarding media literacy.
3. Safe and sensible media use: This subsidy is used for initiatives that deal with safe and sensible media use.
4. Conceptualization with the media maker: This subsidy is used for initiatives that make the media maker more 'media literate'.

Within the framework of these incentive arrangements, it was possible to apply for subsidies for train-the-trainer projects. Trainers are often trained 'multifunctionally'; they are provided with knowledge on how they can stimulate skills among their target group, but also on how to keep computers protected and up-to-date. In this way, the necessary training for the basic maintenance of the available infrastructure can also be provided.

In the evaluation criteria, the focus was put on the sharing of knowledge, the roll-out of the activities within Flanders and the sustainability of the results⁴⁰.

- Action 1.2.2: Co-regulation of social media

In the strongly internationalised field of social media, the development of a Flemish regulation in this matter possibly constitutes only an answer in part. In time, the EMSOC research must provide the necessary insights to the authority and make clear to what extent regulating initiatives are desirable and feasible, but above all which co-regulation and self-regulation can be encouraged and supported.

In addition, an appeal can also be made to the legislation regarding consumer protection.

⁴⁰ In the end, 6 projects were remunerated.

- Action 1.2.3: The innovation fund for teacher training programmes.

Through the innovation fund for teacher training programmes, the Government of Flanders wants to finance projects that benefit the quality of the teacher training programmes by means of innovation. An innovation project can be submitted by one or several initial teacher training programmes, one or several expertise networks or a regional platform or a combination thereof. For the 2011 call, projects could be applied for within 5 themes. One of those themes concerns gaming. Within this theme, a game will be developed for use in the teacher training programmes regarding class management. For the next call, media literacy will be included as a separate theme.

OO 1.3: Knowledge acquisition, research and monitoring

An efficient media literacy policy must be based on valuable quantitative and qualitative research material. The actions and initiatives must be supported by scientific material and the results must be monitored, followed and opened up.

- Action 1.3.1: Creation of the Support centre for policy-relevant research Media

In 2012, a scientific support centre for policy-relevant research Media will be created, called Media. The support centre will deal with monitoring the media production, media use and media skills, among other things, focusing its attention on classic and new media. This longitudinal approach, complementary with existing survey material, must allow the monitoring of media skills in Flanders in the longer term.

- Action 1.3.2: Inventory of the field and keeping the data of the inventory up-to-date

A research contract will be carried out in 2012 to establish a baseline measurement in the field of media literacy. The objective of this baseline measurement is to map the organisations and initiatives that are active in the field of media literacy. This overview will be supplemented with a SWOT analysis of the media literacy field in which the different actors in the field will be surveyed. The results of this research can also be used as input for the Support centre for policy-relevant research Media.

Starting from the baseline measurement mentioned above, a system must be designed which makes it possible to keep the inventory of the field up-to-date. This can be achieved through the activities of the Media Literacy Knowledge Centre.

- Action 1.3.3: Opening up of research results: EU Kids Online

EU Kids Online is a European research project that examines the online experiences of children and their parents. More specifically, it is about their Internet use, Internet skills and their own assessment of online opportunities and risks. In 2012, a workshop will be organised where the research results (relevant for Flanders) will be further examined. They

will also be opened up in an accessible manner on the website of the Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Department and (in time) on the Media Literacy website.

- Action 1.3.4: Start up policy-relevant research: advertising literacy

In 2012, research will be carried out regarding the way in which children and young people deal with advertising. At the same time, it will be examined which skills and instruments children and young people need to deal with advertising and what role the policy, the sector and organisations such as the VRM can play in this context.

- Action 1.3.5: Extend the ICT Monitor

Through this action, we want to extend the ICT Monitor with a number of questions or indicators including the theme of media literacy. The objective is to acquire specific data regarding the skills and perceptions with respect to media literacy on the one hand and data regarding the concrete approach of the theme and the media literacy attainment targets in education on the other hand.

The next time MICTIVO⁴¹ will be held is planned for the end of 2012, the results are to be expected by September 2013.

- Action 1.3.6: Attention for the opening up of already available data

Every year, the Research Centre of the Government of Flanders makes inquiries about computer and Internet ownership, computer and Internet use and the collection of news, among other things, in a survey.

Given the recurrent nature of the research, important trends can be derived from it. In this context, it is also important to reach alignment with the support centre for policy-relevant research Media.

The Flemish legislator assigned the Flemish Media Regulator to map the concentration in the Flemish media sector annually. By means of the report 'Media concentration in Flanders', the Regulator maps the Flemish media sector, describes the most important evolutions and measures the existing concentration.

The results also provide a clear insight into the Flemish media landscape and the economics of media.

Until now, the report is aimed especially at policy makers. In the light of the present media literacy policy, it is advisable to open up the annual report in a user-friendly format and language in the future.

SQ2: The stimulation and increase of competences

⁴¹ MICTIVO stands for "Monitor ICT in het Vlaamse Onderwijs" (ICT Monitor in Flemish Education). This ICT Monitor includes analyses with respect to four groups of indicators that are surveyed: ICT infrastructure, ICT integration, competences and perceptions regarding ICT use at school. The survey is taken of headmasters, teachers and students and thus results in a broad image of the ICT situation and the use of new media in Flemish education. A new data collection is planned for 2012.

Dealing with the diverse media in a critical and efficient manner, but also in a sensible and safe manner, requires knowledge, skills and attitude competences. The stimulation and increase of competences is one of the core objectives of a media literacy policy.

Evidently, in this context, the actions formulated within the framework of knowledge acquisition, research and monitoring, also contribute to an increasing insight with the authority, the sector and the public.

OO 2.1: Competence development

Media literacy is first of all a story of knowledge, skills and attitudes with respect to media use. For this operational objective, actions are formulated that are aimed at both the general (media) training and to aspects that relate to certain specific sections of the media event, e.g. image literacy. In addition, attention is paid to both the media maker and the media user.

- Action 2.1.1: VRT management agreement: educative mission VRT gets focus on media literacy

A certain number of provisions regarding media literacy are included in the management agreement with the VRT 2012-2016. The VRT integrates the teaching of media literacy competences in its programming schedule, the (especially young) viewer or listener is given an opportunity for creation and co-creation. In addition, the public broadcaster is assigned a task with regard to bridging the digital divide.

The VRT also establishes a structural cooperation with the Education media literacy platform 'Ingebeeld'.

- Action 2.1.2: Action(s) young people and media

In implementation of the Flemish Youth Policy Plan, laying down the integrated youth policy by the Government of Flanders until 2014, a network of young people's organisations can be created. This is preferably done by the diverse young people's media organisations themselves.⁴² Within this network, they can learn from each other's expertise, increase their visibility with respect to the outside world and in particular with respect to the classic media. They can join their forces and establish joint projects. This network can be facilitated by a number of actions such as the organisation of a young people's media day.

- Action 2.1.3: Embedding media and image literacy in the educational curriculum

⁴² This action closely fits in with strategic objective 12 and operational objective 12.3 in the Flemish Youth Policy Plan.

At present, organisations such as the young people's press agency StampMedia and Javi TV give young people an opportunity to express their view on society and current affairs. From time to time, these stories are picked up by the classic media. Articles by StampMedia are published by Gazet van Antwerpen on a regular basis, for instance.

The new Villa Crossmedia project will also give voice to young people.

The social context requires a specific fleshing out of competences such as media literacy, ICT, information and digital literacy. The introduction of attainment targets in the form of subject-specific and cross-curricular attainment targets and developmental objectives provides an answer to this social question. Existing ICT and media literacy attainment targets will be further validated. In addition, an expert group will be established that will further explore the theme of image literacy and substantiate the need for further embedding of image literacy and media literacy in the educational curriculum. If necessary, new attainment targets will be developed to integrate image literacy in the educational curriculum.

- Action 2.1.4: ICT training adults, low literates and underprivileged people: new ICT training profile in basic education

The ICT training in basic education is aimed at learning course participants how to deal with a multitude of ICT and digital media possibilities. A new training profile must respond to the current needs. This new profile took effect from 15 April 2012. At the end of the training, the course participant is familiarised with it to such an extent that he or she can use ICT and digital media in everyday life without initial hesitation and in a safe manner. The steering idea behind this training profile for ICT and digital media is that low-qualified adults especially benefit from increasing their capacity to take action.

- Action 2.1.5: EVC and E-portfolio

Young people and adults acquire a lot of competences outside the formal education system. Just think about young people who become competent at computer skills at home, make digital music, sample, make their own videos, write articles for a blog or a website,... The recognition of such skills will become increasingly important in the future. That is why it is important to invest in EVC procedures such as the e-portfolio. Diverse portfolio systems are already financed or supported by the authority: *My-Digital-Me* for people leaving education, *WAI-PASS* for autistic students, *Oscar* for competences acquired in Socio-cultural and Youth work, *C-stick*, etc. E-portfolios make it possible to support personal development plans, to keep track of one's own media productions, etc. By means of this action, we want to stimulate the use of such portfolio systems through consultation with all parties involved.

- Action 2.1.6: Promote the creative use of media

In order to promote the creative use of media, a threefold strengthening of the digital media use is employed. In the Secondary Education reform, new core competences will be taken into account, including media literacy. The Part-time Arts Education reform (entry into effect of the Act from 1 September 2014) provides a new "media" learning pathway (beside the current image, dance, music and words learning pathways). In addition to general media art, courses such as Audio-visual Media and Auditive Media are provided. It is the intention that elements such as animated film, video art and cinematography and media performance feature in the media art training. Furthermore, cross-pollination is provided in the other learning pathways. *Auditive Media* will also feature in the 4th stage of the Music learning pathway, for instance.

Finally, the media component must also be strengthened in the Higher Arts Education. In this context, a strong focus lies in particular on image literacy: dealing with and insight into the impact of (digital) images.

- Action 2.1.7: Provide a training provision for teachers

Increasing the digital literacy of teachers is also an objective of the present action plan. Between 2000 and 2011, about 10,000 teachers annually received specific ICT trainings within the framework of the REN Flanders project. From the 2011-2012 school year, the ICT in-service training for teachers will be financed by the Flemish authority, organised by the educational guidance services. The ICT training does no longer stand alone (such as through separate ICT courses) but constitutes an integral part of a subject-oriented or theme-oriented training.

- Action 2.1.8: Launch and production of educational games

The game PING - Poverty Is Not a Game – was launched for all secondary schools during the 2010-2011 school year. During the 2011-2012 school year, the game Re:Pest was used in secondary education. The game was developed within the framework of a prevention policy against bullying and antisocial behaviour at school. An evaluation has revealed that the game has a lot of potential, but must be better embedded in a broader support pathway. That is why, in the first half of 2012, additional teaching materials have been developed to support schools in the use of the game. Generally, it will also be examined how we can stimulate the production of educational games in Flanders.

SO3 The creation of an e-inclusive society

The digital divide or the dividing line between those in society who have the access and the skills to deal with ICT and those who do not have this access and those skills must be reduced. A contribution must be made to realise a more inclusive society where the access to media is guaranteed and everyone has the necessary media literacy competences.

OO 3.1: Infrastructure

Research has shown that not yet everybody has access to ICT and to the Internet. Still, these additional channels become increasingly important to open up media content and to take part in them. In addition to the individualised access through the PC at home, there are of course also public spaces where the user can gain access to media infrastructure. In this context, schools also play an important part; they too need to have a sound basic infrastructure. In addition, the (young) media maker needs places to experiment, to create, etc.

- **Action 3.1.1: Basic infrastructure in schools**

Schools are expected to integrate new media in their classes. For this purpose, a sound basic infrastructure is necessary. That is why, from the 2011-2012 school year, a new large-scale programme will be provided for Internet facilities in schools. An agreement in this matter has been reached with Telenet. Schools can use high bandwidths and supporting services such as security and supraschool IT management at reduced rates.

- **Action 3.1.2: A school for the future⁴³**

The social and technological evolutions entail a gigantic challenge with regard to school infrastructure. The young people of today will, as adults in the middle of the 21st century, especially need competences that help them to adapt to new evolutions time and again. How do you adapt a school building to this? How do you integrate media and technology in a sustainable manner? Which demands does this make in terms of didactics, interior and building requirements? The Education and Training policy area wants to develop an innovative overall concept for a school for the future. The aim is to create an efficient, sustainable, user-friendly and flexible learning environment for education that seeks to develop competences. All elements - building, furniture and digital media - are addressed in the project and must be geared to one another perfectly.

- **Action 3.1.3: Affordable Internet rates**

The dossier of the universal service provision and social rates for the Internet needs to be monitored in consultation with the actors involved (the federal government, amongst others).

⁴³ See: <http://www.svdt.be>

In this context, we must focus priority on a full access for people in poverty so that they can take part in the digital society.

In order to weigh more on the decision-making process regarding this issue, a Flemish dossier can be prepared providing better insight into the state of affairs and possible 'policy scope'. In this context, an overview is made first of all of the partners and regulation (also European) involved.

- Action 3.1.4: Innovation labs, media literacy centres, public infrastructures

Through its policy, the authority indirectly also pursues an accessibility policy because the focus lies on participatory projects that are started from centres providing a (semi-)professional media environment. These centres provide support and start projects themselves in which young people or other target groups can set to work with different media and become more media literate as they go along. In this context, it could also be examined how the clustering of expertise and material of such infrastructures with these actors from the media industry can lead to a more sustainable approach of infrastructural issues including the maintenance of hardware.

OO 3.2: Opening up of content

An efficient media literacy policy is just as much connected with the availability of sufficient, diversified and tailor-made content that motivates people to use the diverse media.

In addition to competences to deal with media, it is thus also important to pay attention to the content of the media and the platforms on which these contents are opened up. The actions aimed at content provision and the making available of media platforms for opening up will be enumerated below.

- Action 3.2.1: Ingebeeld and Media Literacy Platform

Ingebeeld 1 and 2 are media packages for primary education that were developed after the Audio-visual training research in Flemish education (2004) in cooperation with different partners and in co-production with Jekino. They are offered to schools at a reduced rate. Ingebeeld 3 is an online module for secondary education. Many possibilities for media literacy have been developed in it within different subjects. Since 2011, the online part has been integrated in the INgeBEELD platform (www.ingebeeld.be). This platform is an open, digital learning environment where pupils, students, teachers and lecturers build up multimedia literacy or media literacy together, by means of relevant practice examples. The platform has been developed in close cooperation with the educational umbrella organisations (through a steering group) and will be managed from the autumn of 2011 by the AOC (Agency for Educational Communication). In execution of the new management agreement with the VRT, talks regarding cooperation with the VRT have been entered into.

There is a separate partial project for teacher training programmes. Within the cultural education network of the teacher training programme (full representation), CANON has geared its 2010 and 2011 lab projects to the further development and sharing of expertise with regard to the platform. Several colleges of higher education and universities have

already subscribed. The first results are already on the platform (project: "koesteren of goesting"). How subjects such as mathematics, sciences, ... can also make use of multimedia and (hence of) the platform is currently outlined.

- Action 3.2.2: Kranten in de Klas (Newspapers in the Classroom)

"Kranten in de Klas" is a reading promotion pathway that started in the 2003-2004 school year. "Kranten in de Klas" is comprehensively working on media literacy. Pupils first of all get to know the entire spectrum of (paying) Dutch-language newspapers. Subsequently, they learn how to deal with media and information in a critical manner. The third pillar of thorough media education is also dealt with: pupils can get to work actively by means of the "Kranten in de Klas" [KrantenMaker](#) (NewspaperMaker). Given the success of this pathway, we will continue it in the future and we will also examine whether it is possible to lay a number of new accents, such as on the link to the digital collection of news.

- Action 3.2.3: Media literacy projects from the library

By means of "De Bib op School" (The library at school), Bibnet wants to stimulate the structural cooperation between the public library and the local schools. Through the electronic learning environment of the school, pupils and teachers gain access to reliable and high-quality sources of the local library. The physical collection (books, CDs, DVDs, ...) can be browsed (and reservations can be made). The digital collection (e-books, digital music, newspaper archive, reviews, ...) is immediately accessible.

However, this opening up is only the first step: in order to work with this wide selection in a meaningful manner, the library offers additional support, varying from content-related support with respect to reading promotion or media literacy, to practical logistic support. In the autumn of 2011, "de Bib op School" started 2 pilot projects. "De Bib op school" focuses first of all on secondary schools. In the coming years, the project can be extended to primary education.

In 2011, Bibnet and the media database Mediargus have extended the current agreement so as to allow members of the library to gain access to all articles in the database as well, from their homes with their library login. The project started in the autumn of 2011 with a pilot in one single province in Flanders. The extension also determines that all libraries that are subscribed to a Mediargus project can share their access rights with the local primary and secondary schools of their municipality as of 2012. This project will improve the access to high-quality media contents in schools.

- Action 3.2.4: Standardisation of digital learning objects

When we want to exchange digital learning materials, it is important that they are standardised and described in a correct manner. Such standardisation and metadating are crucial, for instance to browse collections of visual material (heritage, educational portal, VIAA, VRT archive, ...) in a targeted manner. For two years now, the authority finances the management of the Pubelo metadata standard⁴⁴ for digital learning materials. One of the

⁴⁴ The Pubelo project (2005-2007) has put the issue of the e-learning standards in Flanders on the map. The most important results are a Flemish metadata application profile for the description of digital learning material (based on an internationally accepted standard) and the consultation that has come about between different actors.

tasks for 2009-2010 was that the contractor would develop a broader agenda with regard to e-learning standards. There is currently a need for a more professional structure where standards are not only managed and promoted, but where they are also developed. In 2011-2012, we want to evaluate the role of e-standards again, through existing organisations, and revamp them following a more professional manner.

- Action 3.2.5: Audio-visual archive material for educational purposes

Pending the possible creation of a Flemish Institute for the Archiving of the Audio-visual Heritage (VIAA) in Flanders, it can be said that the digitalisation and opening up of audio-visual archive material would supply a wealth of content that can be used in numerous media literacy projects. The materials must be contextualised for class use, it is true, so that they can be made available to different learning areas and subjects (and are not exclusively used for evident purposes such as history education, for instance). Through good consultation between a Flemish Institute for the Archiving of the Audio-visual Heritage and Education, media can become an added value for different class contents. At the same time, a standard agreement for the use of VIAA material for media literacy projects needs to be established, if necessary, to which organisations from the media literacy field can subscribe.

An important actor in this story is the VRT. In the 2012-2016 management agreement, the necessary arrangements have in any case been made so that the continuity of the digitalisation of the VRT archive is guaranteed. Furthermore, the management agreement provides a framework in which the transition towards a VIAA can take place.

- Action 3.2.6: A media literacy website

Knowledge with regard to media literacy is opened up in an active manner through a website. With regard to scientific research, the website makes a clear distinction between the research results themselves and their translation to the user.

The knowledge of the field will be integrated in the website in a conveniently arranged manner as well. Links can be provided to the diverse organisations.

There will be links to the educational portal site and to the gaming website (cf. infra). The website is preferably present on the popular social network sites. In a later stage, the website can evolve towards an online environment where interactivity is encouraged.

- Action 3.2.7: An educational portal site

Thought is currently given to the further development of an educational portal site for the benefit of educational actors. The core task of the educational portal site consists of making learning contents available to end users in a structured and standardised manner. This does not only involve open or free (of charge) contents, but also (references to) educational tools of commercial publishers. In addition, high-quality digital support tools and practice examples can be opened up. It goes without saying that such a portal site can play an important part with regard to media literacy and gaming as well. In this context, we think of the exchange of practice examples, teaching material, multimedia, etc. During the 2011-2012 school year, a new subsite regarding media literacy will be developed with adapted teaching material and methodologies: www.klascement.be/mediawijsheid.

- Action 3.2.8: A more extensive gaming website

The gaming website (www.vlaanderen.be/gaming) will be brought up-to-date and will at the same time be extended by an educational section that refers to the educational portal site, going more deeply into the use of games in education.

OO 3.3: Nuanced and not stereotyping image creation

A nuanced and not stereotyping image creation is crucial for everyone in society. It does justice to the differences that exist and shows the necessary respect that everyone deserves. Image creation initiatives can be aimed at both the media user and the media maker.

- Action 3.3.1: E-inclusion: Media literacy and poverty

Media play an important role with regard to the creation of an image of people in poverty. The Flemish Network of organisations in which poor people take the floor will tackle this issue in 2011-2012 by means of four actions. The project focuses on the creation of a more correct image of people in poverty in the media in Flanders and on media skills of both people in poverty and media actors. For this purpose, the Flemish Network develops the following activities:

1. Media and poverty consultation platform with actors in the media landscape
2. Training for professional journalists/TV producers/... on poverty
3. Training for people in poverty about dealing with (questions from) the media
4. Making the expert database of the Flemish authority better known among experts by experience in poverty and poverty associations

- Action 3.3.2: Actions aimed at media makers regarding a nuanced and not stereotyping image creation within the framework of the Flemish Equal Opportunities Policy

The Flemish Equal Opportunities Policy aims to prevent or to compensate the arrears. It aims in particular at reducing discrimination and exclusion mechanisms that are caused by gender, sexual orientation and inaccessibility. It wants to make them visible and debatable, to fight them and to prevent the development of new such mechanisms.

For this purpose, an objectives framework and a number of actions were developed, regarding media among other things.

Diverse target groups are sometimes shown in an over-simplified and stereotypical manner. Media makers are not always as sensitive to this and/or lack knowledge regarding the subject and the target group.

- In the management agreement with the VRT, the creation of a nuanced and gender-neutral image with respect to target groups receives concrete attention.
- In addition, the expert database is made better known among the users. This database includes data of experts that are women, transgender, allochthonous and/or persons with a functional limitation. Female, transgender, allochthonous and handicapped specialists are present in our society, but are rarely featured in the media. The expert database seeks to promote their visibility in the media and to break through the creation of a stereotypical image. In order to bring about an optimal use,

the expert database will be brought to the attention of its target audience by means of as many channels as possible.

- A third action regarding the creation of an image concerns the inventory and communication of existing practices. The existing good practices and information regarding gender image creation are collected and communicated on the website of the CJSM Department, among others.

In a later stage, they can be included on the Media Literacy website.

SO4: The creation of a safe and sensible media environment

The use of new media in particular does not only hold opportunities but also certain risks. A possible approach is to promote (self-)regulating initiatives, among other things (see action 1.2.2, among others). At any rate, attention must be paid to raising awareness and diverse e-safety initiatives must be worked on.

OO 4.1: Raising awareness

Through diverse initiatives to raise awareness, Flemings need to be made more aware of the opportunities and risks that exist when using media. Such actions can also inform them and make them aware of the instruments that allow them to deal with media in a more media literate manner. The websites mentioned above are one of the tools that can also fulfil an awareness-raising role.

- **Action 4.1.1: Make parents and educators more aware**

The 2012 e-safety campaign fits in with the European annual theme of Safer Internet Day 2012: “Connecting generations and educating each other”.

Between March 2012 and September 2013, at least 120 parents' evenings will be organised in schools of compulsory education. The organisation of these evenings lies in the hands of Child Focus and the Gezinsbond. Target groups that are difficult to reach will also be involved. The focus as to content of this campaign lies on the opportunities that are provided by new media and the Internet.

- **Action 4.1.2: Campaign regarding commercial communication**

A campaign to raise awareness regarding commercial communication and image literacy will be organised. It should in particular deal with a critical view and raising awareness, and focus on children and young people as priority target group. This campaign builds on the research regarding advertising mentioned under point 1.3.5.

- **Action 4.1.3: Privacy and Social Network Sites Campaign**

A campaign to raise awareness regarding privacy, digital identity and the use of social network sites will be organised. It should in particular deal with a critical view and raising awareness, and focus on children and young people as priority target group. The central message is “Who am I online?” and “How do I behave online?”. The campaign provides supporting tips en tricks for teachers and students and provides teaching material to deal with this theme at classroom level.

- **Action 4.1.4: Dynamo days, culture days and the day of cultural education**

Within the training provision of the CANON Cultural Unit and in collaboration with diverse partners, every 'media literacy' workshop is incorporated within a cultural view on talent development and self-awareness (cultural identity).

OO 4.2: Safe and sensible media use (e-safety)

Dealing with media does not only entail positive but also negative effects. Media content often requires a manual. Tools and instruments are developed to indicate the right direction to parents, educators and users.

- Action 4.2.1: Make PEGI better known

The Pan European Game Information (PEGI) age rating system has been designed to help parents make well-considered decisions with respect to buying computer games. It was introduced in the spring of 2003 and replaced a number of national age rating systems by one system that is currently used in most European countries.

The PEGI age rating logos are on the front and back of the packing and indicate one of the following categories: 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18. They provide a reliable indication of the suitability of the game with a view to the protection of minors. The age rating does not take the level of difficulty or the skills required to play a game into account.

Content descriptors on the back of the packing show the most important reasons why a game has received a certain age rating. There are eight such content descriptors: violence, bad language, fear, drugs, sex, discrimination, gambling and playing online with other people.

PEGI can also be made better known in Flanders through an awareness-raising campaign.

- Action 4.2.2: Child Focus teaching material regarding safe ICT use

Through the structural collaboration with Child Focus, teaching packages and other materials regarding safe ICT use are distributed to the different target groups. The Clicksafe platform (www.clicksafe.be) is used as the joint distribution channel of information and teaching material, and as a central reporting point for issues regarding e-safety. In Belgium, Child Focus coordinates the Safer Internet initiative through the BE SIC project (= Belgian Safer Internet Centre). This action encompasses the promotion of www.clicksafe.be and the distribution of new teaching packages in collaboration with Child Focus. Child Focus will also be involved in the awareness-raising campaigns as content expert (see the component "Raising awareness").

- Action 4.2.3: e-Safety label

With 5 other countries/regions, Flanders takes part in an international "e-safety label" pilot project where instruments for self-evaluation are provided to schools with the aim of promoting the development of a vision and raising awareness regarding ICT safety and developing a safe ICT policy at the school level. Schools can obtain a safe ICT label on the basis of standardised (self-)evaluation tools. The results of this pilot project are to be expected by the end of 2011. A roll-out is scheduled from September 2012.