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Media and information Literacy Projects in Libraries to Combat Misinformation

مشاريع التربية الإعلامية والمعلوماتية بالمكتبات لمواجهة المعلومات المضللة

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Abstract:

Libraries face a greater challenge than ever before in navigating the multiple channels through which information is disseminated, as they strive to simplify access to knowledge resources for various community groups. This complicates the differentiation between accurate and false information. This study aims to highlight the role that media and information literacy projects in libraries can play in raising users' awareness of information and developing their skills through the activities and services they provide. It will also analyse the competencies targeted by this process, as well as the fundamental principles for implementing these projects, in order to improve understanding of the mechanisms for countering misinformation. The study concludes with a call for Algerian libraries to offer workshops on media and information literacy within their institutions.

Keywords: Projects; Media and information Literacy; Libraries; Combat; Misinformation.

ملخص:

تواجه المكتبات اليوم أكثر من أي وقت مضى باعتبارها مؤسسات ثقافية تعليمية تهدف الى تسهيل الوصول للموارد المعرفية لفئات مختلفة من المجتمع تحدي تعدد قنوات نشر المعلومات ما يصعب

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التمييز بين الصحيحة والكاذبة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تبيان الدور الذي يمكن أن تلعبه مشاريع التربية الإعلامية والمعلوماتية بالمكتبات في زيادة الوعي المعلوماتي للمستفيدين وتنمية مهاراتهم من خلال الأنشطة والخدمات التي تقدمها، كما ستحلل الكفاءات المستهدفة من هذه العملية. بالإضافة إلى المبادئ الأساسية لتنفيذ هذه المشاريع لفهم آليات التصدي للمعلومات المضللة بشكل أفضل. وهي دعوة للمكتبات الجزائرية لعرض ورش عمل في التربية الإعلامية والمعلوماتية في مؤسساتهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المشاريع؛ الدراية الإعلامية والمعلوماتية؛ المكتبات؛ مكافحة؛ التضليل الإعلامي

1.Introduction:

Libraries of all kinds are now competing to publish and provide accurate and reliable information across various knowledge domains. They are doing this by considering strategies or mechanisms to empower users to evaluate and select information from a vast amount of material, especially in light of the spread of misleading and false information. Thus, media and information literacy is a fundamental pillar, as UNESCO has affirmed (see organisation's website). Various studies have examined media and information literacy from different perspectives, including the role of libraries and information facilities, as these institutions have always been concerned with issues of information, its preservation, processing, and dissemination to their user community. Nowadays, information specialists are not just focused on finding information, but also on understanding it, knowing how to use it and generating it, in order to create citizens who can critically analyse and distinguish between misleading and trustworthy information.

2. Defining Media and Information Literacy

The first international definition dates back[1] to 1973 and was issued by the International Council of Cinema and Television. In 1977, the council released a report titled 'Media Studies in Education', which covered various sectors and specialisations. In 1982, UNESCO organised an international meeting in Groningen to study the impact of major media on public opinion and its implications for the content and methods of education.

List of references:

[1] Petit, Laurent. Media and Information Education: The Position of International Institutions. Presses Universitaires de Grenoble. Available at: https://shs.cairn.info/leducation-aux-medias-et-a-linformation--9782706147272-page-58.html. Accessed on 15/10/2025 at 00:15.

Defining media and information literacy is challenging. To promote this concept, UNESCO has provided the following definition: 'a set of essential competencies to face the challenges of the 21st century, including the spread of misinformation, hate speech, distrust in the media, digital innovations and, in particular, artificial intelligence'[1].

In light of the abundance of knowledge sources and the spread of misinformation via various channels, UNESCO has issued five laws for media and information literacy, inspired by Ranganathan's five laws. These are as follows:[2]

1. First Law: Information, communication, libraries, the media, the internet and other sources of information facilitate active citizen participation and are all of equal importance.

2. Second Law: Every citizen is a creator of information and knowledge, and a messenger. Therefore, they must have channels through which they can access new information and knowledge and express themselves. Media and information literacy is aimed at both women and men, and lies at the heart of human rights.

3. Third Law: Information, knowledge and messages are not always neutral or free from bias. Media and information literacy should be applied in a clear and understandable way that everyone can access.

4. Fourth law: every citizen wishes to understand new information, knowledge and messages, even if they do not recognise or comprehend them. However, their rights must never be infringed upon.

5. Fifth law: media and information literacy cannot be acquired overnight. It is an ongoing process involving the development of knowledge, competencies and behaviours relating to the research, evaluation, production and communication of information and media content.

[1] UNESCO. Available at:: https://www.unesco.org/fr/media-information-literacy . Accessed on 01/11/2025 at 23:30.

[2]UNESCO. Available athttps://www.unesco.org: . Accessed on 02/12/2025 at 15:30.



Figure 1: UNESCO's Five Laws

These five laws, promoted by UNESCO, provide stakeholders, including libraries and information institutions, with guidance on implementing media and information literacy projects. They provide instructions on how to reinforce individuals' right to access and use information, particularly in light of the growing number of available channels. This enables them to confront the challenge of fake news and master the ethical use of digital tools.

3. Fundamental Principles for Developing Media and Information Literacy Projects:

Many specialists agree that media and information literacy involves acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and evaluate informational content provided by the media and libraries for use in various contexts.

On 12–13 September 2019, experts in media and information literacy from 22 countries convened in Belgrade for an international advisory meeting to update the media and information literacy programme developed by UNESCO for educators. They also made recommendations aimed at establishing global standards related to the development of media and information literacy programmes.

Some fundamental principles to consider when designing media literacy programmes include[1]:

- Contributing to sustainable development.
- Promoting peace and combating hate speech.
- Advancing human rights.

[1] UNESCO. Global Standards for Guidelines on the Development of Media and Information Literacy Programmes. Available at: www.unesco.org . Page accessed on 05/01/2026 at 11:20.

- Enhancing security and the rule of law.
- Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Enhancing gender equality.

Reducing barriers to mutual understanding.

- Reducing inequality.

Strengthening security and the rule of law.

Finding a balance between citizens' responsibilities and the measures necessary to protect them from risks.

By adopting media and information literacy projects, libraries can empower users to actively participate in society, leveraging media, information services and digital technologies to build a better, hate-speech- and racism-free world, while opening the door to dialogue with various stakeholders.

4-Educational Curricula for Media and Information Literacy Projects

We will present a set of curricula that libraries can adapt or incorporate into programs and projects related to media and information literacy. The curricula are as follows:[1]

4.1. Problem-Based Curriculum:

This curriculum focuses on learners and issues related to media and information literacy in contemporary society. It integrates various problem-solving and decision-making points, through which learners acquire new knowledge and skills via the following research stages:

- Identifying the problem: Recognizing complete situations and beliefs.
- Clarifying the facts and principles related to the problem.
- Identifying, organizing, and analyzing paths.
- Interpreting and solving the question.
- Taking action and reconsidering the consequences and results of each stage.

4.2. Problem-Based Learning Curriculum:

[1] UNESCO. Think critically and wisely! Media and Information Literacy Education Program for Educators and Learners. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384502/PDF/384502fre.pdf. Accessed on December 2, 2005, at 11:30 p.m

This educational approach develops learners' foundational skills and knowledge across multiple disciplines while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. This approach aims to:

- Enhance individual and collective knowledge by involving learners/citizens in critical, in-depth research processes that start with real-life problems.
- Manage learning objectives, questions, and research methods.

4.3. Experimental Method and Scientific Verification:

The experimental method is a set of techniques that scientists use to explore the natural world and provide evidence-based explanations. The research process is often presented as a simplified set of steps called the research cycle. This cycle includes activities such as making observations, asking questions, verifying pre-existing knowledge, planning the research, examining existing knowledge in light of empirical evidence, and using tools to collect, analyze, interpret, and publish results.

4.4. Case Study:

In this curriculum, learners study a single case or event and apply theoretical knowledge to real situations inspired by real facts. This approach is ideal for teaching media and information literacy, as learners are exposed daily to various messages from different content providers. It provides a systematic way to observe events, collect data, analyze it, and publish the results. This allows learners to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the causes that led to the events.

4.5. Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is an educational approach that brings learners together to work collaboratively toward common goals. It can range from simple pair work to more complex methods, such as project-based learning and reciprocal teaching. These methods are aimed at acquiring skills, such as developing an understanding of terminology and advanced thinking, dealing with others positively, and considering how to manage diversity in core competencies.

4.6. Textual Analysis:

Learners can use this method to analyze texts from various media, such as audio-visual, print, and oral. This semiotic analysis can lead to a deeper understanding of the fundamental concepts being studied. Through this method, learners can identify visual symbols, create

representations targeting specific audiences, and decode the narrative and technical symbols of any type of text. The process includes techniques such as visual and image analysis and can be applied to real-life examples.

4.7. Context Analysis:

This approach teaches learners how to analyze specific content, questions, situations, or events in context. Text analysis, regardless of its form, can be learned based on its historical or social context. The analysis also evaluates the quality of the content according to various criteria, such as the arguments, logic, and evidence presented. Additionally, this method highlights dimensions related to gender relations, the economy, culture, etc. (For other curricula, refer to the source.)

The goals of presenting some educational curricula for media and information literacy are:

- To encourage Algerian libraries of all types to adopt one of the presented approaches to managing their media and information education projects.
- Addressing the difficulty of defining media education program topics due to their overlap with various issues.
- Encourage Algerian libraries to lead media and information literacy projects.
- Provide an opportunity for libraries to reevaluate their methods and techniques for teaching media literacy to users.

5. Target competencies in media and information literacy

The digital revolution has significantly influenced people's behaviour and understanding of the world around them by sharing information, making it difficult to distinguish between right and wrong, and the potential impact of informational deception. Many countries have adopted media and information literacy as a means of teaching citizens essential skills for living and working effectively, including the ability to search for, analyse and evaluate media content and information, and to share ideas and make informed decisions.

The competencies that can be targeted in this area relate to various social and political issues, as outlined below[1]:

Information technology competencies: knowledge of computer usage, internet browsing and office application use.

Information Competencies: Understanding how to search for, evaluate, process and utilise information.

- Expressive and artistic competencies: ability to express oneself using digital media and tools.

- Behavioural competencies: knowing how to behave ethically in digital networks.

- Critical Competencies: The ability to critique media messages and works.

- Critical and artistic judgment competencies: understanding how to question your values and the ways in which you receive and process information.

The European Charter for Media Education has identified seven fundamental competencies[2]:

1. Effective use of media technologies: efficiently accessing, storing, searching for and sharing content to meet the needs and interests of individuals and communities.

2. Access to a variety of media forms: engaging with a wide range of media formats and content from diverse cultural and institutional sources, and making decisions about them.

3. Understanding media content production: Grasping how media content is produced and the reasons behind it.

4. Critical analysis of techniques and symbols: analysing the techniques and symbols used by the media and the messages they convey.

5. Creative use of media: utilising media creatively to express ideas, information and opinions effectively.

[1] Landry, N., & Lefebvre, S. Media Education: What You Need to Know. Available at: https://pedagogie.uquebec.ca/le-tableau/education-aux-medias-que-faut-il-savoir Accessed on 12 December 2025 at 15:13.

[2] Landry, Normand and Basque, Joëlle. Media Education: Contributions, Practices, and Research Perspectives in Communication Studies. Journal of Social and Public Communication. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4000/communiquer.1664. Accessed on 5 November 2025 at 13:45.

6. Identifying and avoiding undesirable content: recognising and questioning media content and services that may be undesirable or harmful.

7. Using media to exercise democratic rights: engaging with media in the practice of democratic rights.

Although it is challenging to determine the specific competencies required for media and information literacy, we have attempted to present some to help define the desired objectives for such projects. Libraries can adopt or develop these competencies when designing their programmes.

It is clear from the above that, as a pedagogical process, media and information literacy focuses on developing individuals' cognitive and informational skills relating to the internet and social networks, through identifying, analysing and evaluating reliable information sources. In this context, all types of library should train their staff in media literacy topics to perform their duties effectively and foster a critical mindset among their users, particularly those lacking extensive digital literacy concerning media and access to information.

6. Professional Training for Information Specialists: A necessity to ensure the implementation of media and information literacy projects

Libraries are undergoing a fundamental change in their relationship with information, as individuals have become its creators —– especially since the advent of social media, the information explosion and the proliferation of channels. Recent events have seen misinformation spread, making it more difficult for specialists to detect, as these platforms often propagate anxiety in professional fields, particularly on Facebook and Instagram. This transformation has compelled information professionals to reconsider their role as intermediaries in accessing knowledge.

In order to combat rumours and misinformation, it is crucial to provide librarians with training in various areas, including[1] :

[1] Bourdet, Julienne. Training Librarians in Media Education: Evolving Skills, Evolving Training?' Available at: https://bbf.enssib.fr/matieres-a-penser/former-les-bibliothecaires-a-l-education-aux-medias_68978. Page accessed on 18/12/2025.

- Strategies and tools for finding reliable information: developing methods for effective information retrieval.

- Management of electronic information: understanding the organisation and management of digital content.

- Content production on the internet: Skills related to creating and disseminating content online.

Copyright and data privacy: awareness of intellectual property rights and the importance of protecting personal data.

Media literacy is considered a complex issue due to the interplay of various aspects. However, training provides professionals with the opportunity to implement projects and workshops, exchange ideas, and develop their practices in this field. Libraries should consider important aspects when implementing programmes related to media and information literacy that align with the training agenda of the 2030 Agenda. The ultimate goal is to achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all[1]

To promote effective training, the focus should include:

- Formal education levels, such as primary, intermediate and secondary education.

Non-formal education practices at the individual level, such as self-training, online courses for everyone, access to valuable sources and free educational resources.

Community levels: study and reading groups, interactive sessions in libraries, community engagement workshops, etc.

- Professional practices targeting political leaders, journalists, healthcare professionals, government officials, civil society organisation employees and campaign managers, among others.

Training programmes related to media and information literacy must be designed across these three educational levels to reach diverse community groups. Additionally, leveraging information and communication technology (ICT) in this context, such as digital platforms and artificial intelligence, will enhance training opportunities for all.

Consclusion:

[1] UNESCO.O.p cit

The objective of media and information literacy projects in libraries is to foster cognitive abilities and practices that empower users to critically analyse media content and utilise technological resources judiciously. In this paper, we have attempted to present the key principles that libraries can adopt for such projects, along with the essential competencies that should be developed. In light of the above, we can formulate the following ideas that may impact our libraries:

Implement basic principles: adopt foundational principles inspired by international organisations for these projects due to their political, media and cultural implications.

- Focus on reliable information: searching for trustworthy information should be a core concern of libraries.
- Train users in technological tools: this is an essential activity for information specialists.
- Educating users in information literacy and digital search techniques is a necessity.
- Developing digital cultural competencies for information specialists to guide users towards accurate information.

Engaging all stakeholders by encouraging collaboration and adopting mechanisms and solutions from international organizations.