REGULATION, AWARENESS, EMPOWERMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE
AND
HARMFUL MEDIA CONTENT
IN THE DIGITAL AGE

ULLA CARLSSON (Ed.)

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, at

Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG, Sweden

Web site:
http://www.nordicom.gu.se

DIRECTOR: Ulla Carlsson

SCIENTIFIC CO-ORDINATOR:
Cecilia von Feilitzen
Tel: +46 8 608 48 58
Fax: +46 8 608 41 00
E-mail: cecilia.von.feilitzen@sh.se

INFORMATION CO-ORDINATOR:
Catharina Bucht
Tel: +46 31 773 49 53
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail:
catharina.bucht@nordicom.gu.se

**THE CLEARINGHOUSE
IS LOCATED AT NORDICOM**

Nordicom is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

Nordicom uses a variety of chan-nels – newsletters, journals, books, databases – to reach researchers, students, decisionmakers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

Nordicom works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

Nordicom also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

Nordicom is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media
A UNESCO INITIATIVE 1997

In 1997, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom), Göteborg University Sweden, began establishment of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, financed by the Swedish government and UNESCO. The overall point of departure for the Clearinghouse's efforts with respect to children, youth and media is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The aim of the Clearinghouse is to increase awareness and knowledge about children, youth and media, thereby providing a basis for relevant policy-making, contributing to a constructive public debate, and enhancing children's and young people's media literacy and media competence. Moreover, it is hoped that the Clearinghouse's work will stimulate further research on children, youth and media.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media informs various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, voluntary organisations, teachers, students and interested individuals – about

- research on children, young people and media, with special attention to media violence

- research and practices regarding media education and children's/young people's participation in the media

- measures, activities and research concerning children's and young people's media environment.

Fundamental to the work of the Clearinghouse is the creation of a global *network.* The Clearinghouse publishes a *yearbook* and a *newsletter.* Several *bibliographies* and a worldwide *register of organisations* concerned with children and media have been compiled. This and other information is available on the Clearinghouse's *web site*: **www.nordicom.gu.se/ clearinghouse.php**

REGULATION, AWARENESS, EMPOWERMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE
AND
HARMFUL MEDIA CONTENT
IN THE DIGITAL AGE

REGULATION, AWARENESS, EMPOWERMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE
AND
HARMFUL MEDIA CONTENT
IN THE DIGITAL AGE

ULLA CARLSSON (Ed.)

**The International Clearinghouse
on Children, Youth and Media**

NORDICOM

GÖTEBORG
UNIVERSITY

norden
Nordic Council of Ministers

UNESCO

Regulation, Awareness, Empowerment

Young People and Harmful Media Content in the Digital Age

Editor:
Ulla Carlsson

Contents

Raising Media and Internet Literacy

Acknowledgement

Foreword

In 2005 UNESCO asked the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media to prepare a publication on "Efforts and Innovative Approaches to Reduce Violence in Electronic and Digital Media". The present volume presents the results of the work the Clearinghouse has done in response to that request.

Modern information technology has transformed the media landscape and the media culture dramatically over the past decade, offering a steadily swelling flow of material through many new channels. Although there are media, digital and information divides in the world, more and more people have access to an enormous array of knowledge and diversions of many kinds – on television, on the Internet, and in mobile telephones. Many parents, teachers and policy-makers are concerned about the negative influence they believe media exert on children and young people. There is particular concern about depictions of violence in the media. But in today's world violence is only part of the problem. There are also pornographic films and images, excessive marketing, stereotypical and disrespectful depictions of young people, women and minorities, hate-mongering messages, and so forth. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use. Violence is no longer an adequate heading; today, terms like "harmful media content" or "harm and offence in media content" are more in keeping with the situation. It is this broader term that forms our point of departure in this work.

The Clearinghouse is pleased to have been able to gather a good number of scholars and other experts who, with an eye to the future, present conclusions that can be drawn from the research to date on offensive and potentially harmful media content and the protection of minors. They do so from a variety of perspectives and with most valuable reflections. The title, *Regulation, Awareness, Empowerment* indicates that whenever protection of minors against media content and reducing the amount of harmful media content are discussed, media literacy and information literacy must always be included.

In addition to the reviews of the research literature the Clearinghouse presents different kinds of efforts at raising media and information literacy through examples of activities, projects and resources from many different parts of the world.

I am deeply indebted to all the contributors who have made this publication possible. May I also express my great appreciation of UNESCO's support, without which the publication could not have come into being. It is my hope that the articles and other material collected here will stimulate further debate, inspire new policy approaches and research initiatives on the topic of young people, media culture and offensive and harmful media content.

Göteborg in June 2006

Ulla Carlsson
Director

Introduction

Media Governance
Harm and Offence in Media Content

Ulla Carlsson

During the past decades, the media landscape and media culture have undergone major changes. Modern information technology has given rise to a constantly increasing supply of media products through many new channels, and our perceptions of time and space, of the bounds between private and public, central and peripheral, have changed. A good share of the people in this world – albeit far from all – have access to an abundance of information, entertainment and games via television, films, radio, books, periodicals, the Internet and mobile telephones. Convergence, fragmentation, diversification and individualization are characteristics that are frequently in the focus of debate on our contemporary media culture.

Without media and modern information technologies the globalization we speak of would not be possible. Access to a variety of media, telephony and online services are increasingly recognized as vital factors for political, economic and cultural development. Properly designed**,** a Knowledge Society – with its starting point in the Declaration of the Human Rights and the principle on Freedom of Expression – has a great potential to support more democratic, just and developed societies.

Communications satellites, digitalization and advances in online services – especially the Internet – have meant an enormous expansion of the global market for media products such as television programs, films, news, computer games and advertising. The categories information, entertainment and advertising are no longer clear-cut; neither are the bounds between hardware and software, and between product and distribution. In the midst of the global development of communication and media are children and youth.

An interactive media society has grown up alongside the traditional mass media society. Young people around the world have already opted into it. These technological changes have made truly global flows of information possible, while they have also opened up transnational markets for global media companies.

The production and distribution of media products is heavily concentrated, with respect to both ownership and content.

How to bridge the digital – or more correctly – the knowledge divide has been the topic of considerable attention and effort. It is not only a question of gaps between north and south; the divide is reproduced within virtually every country and often reflects other gaps – those between income groups, ethnic groups and the sexes. A significant generational gap is also involved. The younger generation today have a command of new media technologies that far surpasses the knowledge and skills the rest of us have managed to develop. Much of the content that is accesssible via, for example, the web and mobile telephones remains *terra incognita* to many adults.

Many parents, teachers and policy-makers are concerned about the negative influence they believe media exert on children and adolescents. Such concerns have been voiced as long as mass media have existed, but the concern has grown in pace with developments in media technology. There is particular concern about depictions of violence in the media and in computer games. Concern is also expressed about pornographic films and images, and other potentially harmful content that is being distributed more widely via satellite/cable television, the Internet, computer games and mobile telephones. The content takes the form of violent and pornographic fiction and non-fiction, offensive advertisements, stereotypical and disrespectful depictions of young people, women and minorities, hate-mongering messages, and so forth. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use. 'Safety risks' are much the same wherever we are: at school, at home, or at the café – or on the Internet. But with the Internet and other online technology we cannot see or be seen by the person at the other end of the communication. Thus, the word "violence" is no longer an adequate heading for the cluster of problems in question. Instead, we speak of 'harmful media content' or 'harm and offence in media content'.

Ways to limit and prohibit the spread of harmful media content in relation to young people has been debated for many years. Protection of minors is generally held to be a matter of the public interest. Underlying this concept is the presumption that children are more impressionable, less critical and therefore more vulnerable than adults inasmuch as they have little experience and thus poorly developed frames of reference to guide their judgment. Therefore, it lies in the public interest to protect children from things like harmful media content until they have become more experienced and more mature. Definitions of content that may be 'harmful' to children and youth vary, however, between countries, which means that many proposed measures arouse strong feeling. In short, the policy area is controversial.

If we are to be able to protect young people from offensive and harmful media content, the level of public understanding and awareness of the media must be raised – among children and youth, among parents and other adults in the children's environment, and among political decision-makers and media professionals.

Protect or promote?

Regulation, self-regulation, co-regulation

Some decades ago, the protection of minors was often discusssed in terms of government regulation and prohibitions. In today's complex society in an era of successive deregulation and globalisation, the role and powers of government have changed. The dispersion of authority both vertically to supranational and subnational institutions and horizontally to non-state actors has challenged the structure and capacity of national governments (Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders 2005). We live in an era of multilevel governance; there are many actors in this field, within public as well as in private sectors including the civil society, and on all levels: local, national, regional and international. Multi-level governance relies on networks, mutual trust and confidence, i.e., on collaboration and partnership. In recent decades, this overall trend in political steering, together with the rapid pace of development in the communications sector have, regarding the protection of young people from harmful media content, shifted the focus from legislation toward a focus on the responsibilities of the parents and other adults. But these adults need help in the form of both political decisions and initiatives on the part of the media industry, e.g., codes of ethics and rules that require the industry to assume its share of responsibility vis-à-vis young people.

Discussions of media governance, particularly on supranational levels, take their starting point in how government relates to the media industry. Kaarle Nordenstreng's typology of media governance is based on two dimensions of these relationships: formal/informal and external/internal. Formal factors include law and regulation (external) and self-regulation (internal); in the informal dimension factors include influences among the various market actors and the general public (external) and professionalisation and branch norms and codes of conduct (internal). (See *Presentation of Preliminary Results of the Study on Co-regulation Measures in the Media Sector,* Hans Bredow Institut, 2005)

Types of media governance

	FORMAL	INFORMAL
EXTERNAL	Law Regulation	Market forces and relations Pressures and lobbies Public opinion and criticism
INTERNAL	Management Financial control Self-regulation	Professionalism Organizational culture Norms and ethics

Source: Kaarle Nordenstreng, Hans Bredow Institut/EMR, Seminar 2005

Self-regulation grew during the 1990's to be the remedy of choice; both na-tional, regional and international documents stress that media should take greater responsibility for protecting children and young people. The idea was that self-regulation would make it possible to reduce reliance on laws and public regula-tion, which quickly become outdated due to the rapid pace of innovation in media technology and are not easily amended. 'Self-regulation' can mean different things, but is generally taken to mean protective measures relating to content that is legal, but can possibly be harmful to children and young people. For obvious reasons, the degree of self-regulation varies between media.

There is a direct correlation between the extent of legislation in a given area and the presence of self-regulatory initiatives, as a comparison of television and the interactive entertainment industry reveals. Media that have existed a long time are also better organized when it comes to policy issues and internal codes of ethics, etc. Consumer pressure can bring about change. It is a well-established fact that, left to their own devices, media companies themselves will not change their ways, unless it returns a profit. New research has pointed out that "multi-level governance appears incapable of providing clear predictions or even ex-planations of outcomes in the governance process". Peters and Pierre, for exam-ple, go on to suggest that "multi-level governance embedded in a regulatory setting that enables weaker actors to define a legal basis for their action might be the best strategy to … cheat darker powers." (Guy Peters and Jon Pierre 2005, p.89)

It is in this context that we should understand the growing interest in co-regu-lation expressed in different quarters, and especially on the supranational level. It is a recipe put forward particularly often with respect to protection of young people from harmful media content. If we consider law/regulation and self-regu-lation as traditional forms of regulation, then co-regulation "consists of more than just a combination of state regulation and self-regulation" (Schulz and Held 2006b, p.50). In this connection, Wolfgang Schultz and Thorsten Held, having surveyed and analyzed recent trends in co-regulation, found: "… in the field of protection of minors models where a regulator – on its own (contracting out) or on request (certification of non-state regulators) – based on a legal act initiates non-state regulation perform high. Generally speaking this seems to be a feasible way to put up co-regulation in this policy field. Theoretical findings back this assump-tion: A strong regulator as a relevant actor within the market is regarded as a benefit to stimulate industry commitment" (Schultz and Held, 2006a, p.124). Simplifying somewhat, one might on the basis of these findings conclude that co-regulation fills an express need for steering of governance and, secondly, that the success of co-regulation in protecting minors from harmful media content depends on how the total regulatory system is organized.

Thus, the approaches to protecting minors from harm and offence in media content largely boil down to three kinds: law and regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation of the media. No one instrument of regulation is sufficient; today and in the future some form of effective interaction between all three kinds of media regulation – that is, between government, the media and civil society –

will be required to reach satisfactory results. All the relevant stakeholders – within government, the media sector and civil society – need to develop effective means by which to collaborate.

To approach young people and harmful media content exclusively from the media industry's perspective, as in Kaarle Nordenstreng's typology above, is limiting. Viewers' and users' perspectives must also be included. Only then will an essential piece of the puzzle fall into place, namely, the necessity of more widespread media and information literacy and awareness in society at large. Children and youth, parents, teachers, media professionals and other adults – all are equally important in this regard.

Empowerment and awareness
– the need for media and information literacy

While the media and new information technologies are believed to cause some problems, they are also valued as social and cultural resources. An often raised question is whether children are helpless victims or are actually capable of meeting the challenges contemporary media present. In this context, the importance of media and information (or digital/Internet) literacy, is often mentioned. Consequently, "protection" is no longer viewed exclusively in terms of keeping young people away from certain content, or vice versa. The importance of strengthening young people in their role as media consumers is recognized.

Media literacy means understanding how mass media work, how they construct reality and produce meaning, how the media are organized, and knowing how to use them wisely. In short, it is seen to empower people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using images, sound and language. The medialized symbolic environment we live in today largely shapes the choices, values and knowledge that determine our everyday lives. Media literacy helps, therefore, to strengthen the critical abilities and communicative skills that give the individual's existence meaning and enable the individual to use communication for change, while promoting a well-oriented, democratic knowledge society.

In the span of a single decade new media like the Internet and mobile telephones have revolutionized media cultures around the world. With the growing convergence of radio, TV and computer solutions, including the emergence of various hybrids and specializations, we see how a variety of electronic media, information and communication is gradually becoming common goods. But with interactivity follows what have come to be known as 'safety risks', which have to do with the fact that we cannot see the person at the other end of the communication. As Insafe puts it: "The problem is further complicated because many people act irresponsibly and feel less accountable when they believe they are acting anonymously – little do they realise that all actions on Internet are traceable." (Insafe, EU 2006). Another new feature of the media culture is computer games.

Traditional media literacy is no longer sufficient. There is a need to develop new skills and competencies that render users and consumers 'information literate". The terminology shifts between digital literacy, cyber-literacy, Internet literacy and web-literacy, but a more gathering term is *information literacy*.

The young need these skills, but so do parents and other adults around them. It is essentially a question of awareness. Research has found that many parents have no idea how their children use the media, or of what the new media make available to their children. Furthermore, young people interpret the content of the media in frames of reference that differ more from adults' experience than ever before (SAFT 2003, 2005).

Information literacy can include: teaching about the Internet and equipping people to assess the value of the sources they encounter, teaching children responsible behaviour when they are online, collaboration between key actors in order to enhance awareness of web-related safety issues, information about filtering software, security services and hotlines. Once again, interaction between different actors and groups is the key to success – cooperation among parents, teachers, the Internet branch, media and responsible authorities.

Promote *and* protect

The answer to the question, "Promote or protect?" is that it is hardly a question of either-or, but a combination of both – different kinds of regulations and a higher degree of media and information literacy among both youth and adults are necessary ingredients in the work to reduce harm and offence in media content. Evaluations of various regulatory measures and literacy-promoting activities on the basis of research findings and public opinion are another necessary ingredient.

When issues like these are discussed, all too often the frame of reference is the media landscape of the western world, even though we know there are major differences among cultures, political systems and faiths, and that all these factors influence media culture. Several countries of the South and Eastern Europe still lack adequate infrastructure for modern mass media and ICT – the differences between town and country are huge – whereas the flow of media content is infinite for those who have access to it. And it remains a fact in many countries that those who can change the situation are not always motivated to do so; those who want to change the situation are not always in a position to.

In the mean time, we are all living in the age of globalisation with its transnational flows of information, and we are all agreed on the value of multicultural societies, of diversity and pluralism in media culture. We need to learn from one another, to share our knowledge and insights. The work of supranational organisations like UNESCO and regional organisations like the EU are therefore of crucial importance today. In the era of globalization, national solutions alone

cannot solve the problems we face. This is particularly true of the issues relating to young people and offensive and harmful media content. It is in this context that this book should be seen.

The publication

In the present volume the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media brings together a number of scholars who, all with the future in mind, point out the main conclusions that can be drawn from the research to date on offensive and harmful media content and the protection of minors. Sonia Livingstone and Andrea Millwood Hargrave's article, "Harmful to children? Drawing conclusions from empirical research on media effects" covers both 'old' media and new media technologies. They conclude that the time for simple media effects approaches has passed. Instead, they argue, the issues of media content and media use need to be contextualised in a multifactor, risk-based framework.

Earlier we noted that new information technologies and globalization have led to fundamental changes in the preconditions for regulation in the media sector, and not least with regard to fundamental objectives like protection of minors. In this connection, Wolfgang Schultz and Thorsten Held survey and analyze recent trends in co-regulation, giving some examples of existing co-regulation in the field of the protection of minors in the media in their article, "Together They Are Strong? – Co-Regulatory Approaches for the Protection of Minors within the European Union".

In a different political and cultural context Bu Wei discusses child protection issues in Chinese Media with a focus on vulnerable children.

More thought-provoking perspectives and reflections are most important on this very complex area; two such articles are "Media Regulation, Self-Regulation and Education. Debunking Some Myths and Retooling Some Working Paradigms" by Divina Frau Meigs and "When Childhood Gets Commerzialized, Can Children be Protected?" by Juliet B. Schor.

A discussion from a more philosophical aspect is presented in Vitor Reia-Baptista's article "New Environments of Media Exposure. Internet and Narrative Structures: From Media Education to Media Pedagogy and Media Literacy".

Another article presents results from a Swedish study of public views regarding various measures – both legislation/regulation and media literacy – that have been proposed to protect children and young people from becoming exposed to harmful content on television, the Internet, in films and computer games.

Finally, the Clearinghouse surveys different kinds of efforts at raising media and information literacy, each of which is accompanied by a catalogue of best practices, activities and innovative approaches. The book also offers examples of activities and projects with a focus on children's and young people's own media production as one of the more effective means to raise their level of knowledge

and awareness. Cecilia von Feilitzen, Scientific Co-ordinator at the Clearinghouse, is responsible for the selection of examples and the elaboration of comments in the section *Raising Media and Internet Literacy.*

Work on the project reported here has progressed parallel with work on the Clearinghouse' yearbook, entitled *In the Service of Young People? Studies and Reflections on Media in the Digital Age.* The two projects are tangential in several respects, and cross-pollination between them was both inevitable and welcome. The fruits of the interaction will be apparent in both publications that are being released in 2006.

In sum, this volume from the International Clearinghouse for Children, Media and Youth presents a comprehensive review of the field, current knowledge and recent trends on the subject of offensive and harmful media content and the protection of minors, evaluative research on different measures, examples of resources and projects from many parts of the world and, not least important, reflections on protective measures and media and information literacy – all forward-looking, with a view to create a better future for our young.

References

Bache, Ian and Flinders, Matthew (eds.): *Multi-level Governance.* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005

Buckingham, David: *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom.* Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media Institute of Education, University of London, London 2005, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_children.pdf

Carlsson, Ulla: "Violence and pornography in the Media. Public Views on the Influence Media Violence and Pornography exert on People". In: Carlsson, U. and von Feilitzen, C. (eds): *In the Service of Young People? Studies and Reflections on Media in the Digital Age.* Y*earbook 2005/2006.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2006

Carlsson, Ulla: "From NWICO to Global Governance of the Information Society". In: Tufte, T. and Hemer, O (eds.) : *Media & Glocal Change. Rethinking Communication for Development.* Nordicom/CLACSO, Buenos Aires 2005

von Feilitzen, Cecilia and Carlsson, Ulla (eds.): *Promote or Protect. Yearbook 2003.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2004

von Feilitzen, Cecilia and Carlsson, Ulla (eds.): *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation. Yearbook 2002.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2002

Insafe. Europe's internet safety portal (www.saferinternet.org)

Livingstone, Sonia; van Couvering, Elisabeth and Thumim, Nancy: "Converging traditions of research on media and information literacies: Disciplinary, critical and methodological issues". In D.J. Leu, Julie Coiro, Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear (eds.): *Handbook of Research on New Literacies.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (forthcoming)

Livingstone, Sonia: *Adult Media Literacy. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom.* Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, London 2005, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/aml.pdf

Livingstone, Sonia; van Couvering, Elizabeth and Thumim, Nancy: "The Changing Nature and Uses of Media Literacy." Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, London 2003 (Media@LSE *Electronic Working Papers*, No 4)

Millwood Hargrave, Andrea and Livingstone, Sonia: *Harm and Offence in Media Content. A review of the evidence.* Intellect, Bristol 2006

Peters, B. Guy and Pierre, Jon: "Multi-level Governance and Democracy: A Faustian Bargain", in Bache, Ian and Flinders, Matthew (eds): *Multi-level Governance.* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005

Presentation of the Draft Final Report of the Study on Co-regulation Measures in the Media Sector. Study commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate General Information Society and Media, Unit A 1. Hans Bredow Institut für Medienforschung an der Universität Hamburg/ EMR 2006 (Seminar 1, Bruxelles 19 January 2006), www.hans-bredow-institut.de

Presentation of Preliminary Results of the Study on Co-regulation Measures in the Media Sector. Study commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate General Information Society and Media, Unit A 1. Hans Bredow Institut für Medienforschung an der Universität Hamburg/EMR 2005 (Seminar 1, Bruxelles 28 April 2005), www.hans-bredow-institut.de

SAFT – Safety, Awareness, Facts and Tools. Stockholm: Media Council, 2003 and 2005, http:// www.saftonline.org, http://www.medieradet.se/ upload/Rapporter_pdf/SAFT_foraldrastudie.pdf

Schulz, Wolfgang and Held, Thorsten: *Final Report. Study on Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector.* Study for the European Commission, Directorate Information Society and Media, Unit A1 Audiovisual and Media Policies. Hans Bredow Institut für Medienforschung an der Universität Hamburg 2006a, www.hans-bredow-institut.de

Schulz, Wolfgang and Held, Thorsten: "Together They Are Strong? – Co-Regulatory Approaches for the Protection of Minors within the European Union". In: Carlsson, Ulla (ed.): *Regulation, Awareness, Empowerment. Young People and Harmful Media Content in the Digital Age.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2006b

Schulz, Wolfgang and Held, Thorsten: *Regulated Self-Regulation as a Form of Modern Government. A Comparative Analysis with Case Studies from Media and Telecommunications Law.* John Libbey, London 2004

Harmful to Children?

*Drawing Conclusions from Empirical Research on Media Effects**

Sonia Livingstone & Andrea Millwood Hargrave

What harm and offence do the media cause?

Teenage boys shooting classmates, fears of increasing xenophobia, rising levels of obesity or appalling murders with sexual elements are commonly linked back to the (mis)use of particular types of media content, be they delivered by film, television, the internet, advertising or even print. That is the public face of the moral panic about media influence. The academic and policy debates that parallel, and respond, to public concerns, focus on the evidence for media harm, particularly that which may be caused to children through viewing inappropriate, especially violent, media content.

Policy makers and regulators are seeking to understand the changing parameters of the possible given the growing convergence of media delivery platforms which offer faster, easier access to material that was hitherto difficult to find. In this process, the concepts of 'harm' and 'offence' are gaining prominence. The *2003 Communications Act* changed the broadcasting standards debate in the UK by moving from the previously held concepts of 'good taste and decency' to offering 'adequate protection... from the inclusion of offensive and harmful material'. These concepts echo those in the European Union's *Television without Frontiers Directive*, currently being debated in a revised form. Although the debate continues to centre on the exposure of minors to potentially harmful or offensive material, there are other sensibilities to be considered, such as offence or harm caused to those from minority groups.

While harmful and offensive material is, in principle, distinguished from that which is illegal (obscenity, child abuse images, incitement to racial hatred, etc), it is not easy to define the boundaries in a robust and consensual fashion. What content is considered acceptable by today's standards, norms and values, and by whom? Borderline and unacceptable material may include a range of contents, most prominently though not exclusively 'adult content' of various kinds, and these

may lead to considerable public concern. While norms of taste and decency can be tracked with some reliability through standard opinion measurement techniques, methods for assessing harm are much more contested and difficult. Arguably too, the research evidence – of which there is a huge amount – is concentrated on a media environment and a regulatory regime that is now rapidly changing, rendering the evidence potentially out of date as regards its usefulness in policy formation.

With the arrival of newer media, particularly the internet (though also digital television, mobile phones, etc.), it is not clear how far the public recognises or feels empowered to respond to the expanding array of content on offer. It is likely that these newer, more interactive media pose a challenge not only to regulators but also to ordinary families. Can they apply familiar domestic practices of regulation and restriction to newer media? What range of concerns do people have regarding new media forms and contents? What do they need to know about whether or not the greatly-expanded range of contents now available to children have been shown to cause harm?

Policy debates attempt to balance the often-conflicting concerns over possible harms against other concerns, most notably, civil liberties and freedom of speech, economic competition, children's rights to exploration and privacy, and parents' capacities or otherwise to regulate their children's media use. Difficult issues arise. How do we draw the line between the offensive and the harmful? Is it a matter of particular kinds of contents, particular forms of media, particular groups of children? What kinds of harms, if any, have received robust empirical support? What is the evidence for offence across diverse sectors of the population?

It was to explore these questions – to give industry, the regulators and, indeed, the public a clear view of the evidence – that we conducted a critical literature review regarding harm and offence across media forms (Millwood Hargrave & Livingstone, 2006). Recent research on television, radio, music, press, film, games, internet, telephony, advertising, as well as the regulation associated with each of these, was evaluated in order to assess the potential for harm and offence in media content, and to identify where future empirical research is needed.[1]

In the present article, we offer a brief overview of findings for each medium in turn, and then present our conclusions. The volume on which this article draws provides a full discussion of the many research findings summarised here, including an extensive and up to date bibliography. There, we distinguish theories of short-term and long-term effects, direct and indirect effects, and harm and offence. We also review the advantages and disadvantages of the main research methods in use (experiments, surveys, qualitative social research), noting the ethical and political issues that structure the field of research and stressing the value of integrating or comparing qualitative and quantitative research findings.

A summary of findings from the research literature

Television

Significant research effort has been expended on this ubiquitous and accessible medium, and many studies of other media are based on those from television. There is also a body of research that examines the benefits of exposure to television content but this is not considered here unless it also refers to a consideration of harm and offence. Methodologically, one must accept that much of the research evidence is flawed. Moreover, much of it derives from a different cultural and regulatory environment (most of the research was conducted in the US). However, it is important to evaluate what the findings are, focusing on those studies that have minimised the methodological and other difficulties so as to understand the indications of influence and effect that they provide.

The evidence suggests that, under certain circumstances, television can negatively influence attitudes in some areas, including those which may affect society (through the creation of prejudice) and those which may affect the individual (by making them unduly fearful, for example). Thus, it seems that television plays a part in contributing to stereotypes, fear of crime and other reality-defining effects, although it remains unclear what other social influences also play a role, or how important television is by comparison with these other factors.

The primary subjects of research have been children and young people, as they are thought to be most vulnerable to negative influences which may, in turn affect long-term attitudes or behaviour. However, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that there are also vulnerable groups of adults who may be negatively affected by certain types of media content; for example, people with particular personality disorders.

Many of the studies use experimental methods, and have been subject to considerable criticism. They demonstrate short-term effects on attitudes and behaviours, among a particular research sample (e.g. college students) and under particular conditions. Too little of the research evidence examines the viewing of age-appropriate material, although a number of studies use content popular among the target group being examined. Other studies use content analysis techniques to examine the nature of content, making assumptions about the way in which the images might be received. In the UK and elsewhere, qualitative and social research techniques show it is valuable to talk to audience groups to understand their reasoning and reactions to content they view.

The review of research showed the importance to the audience of certain variables in making sense of or justifying a portrayed act. These include the context within which the act is set and the importance of identification and empathy with the protagonists. Transmission time remains an important variable within audience attitudes towards current television content, with established conventions designed to reduce the potential for offence. Much of the research evidence shows that most audiences are generally able to distinguish fact from fiction. The

evidence also suggests that the viewing of fictional content does not diminish the distress that may be caused by violence in real-life.

There are clear audience differences based on gender (in particular, boys seem to be more influenced by violent content) and age; but also family settings, a predisposition for a particular programme genre, the way in which the content is used and other such variables all appear to play a part in the way content is viewed and assimilated. Much of the research has been less equivocal in demonstrating evidence for areas of offence caused (such as with regard to offensive language, violence or the depiction of sexual activity) in comparison with harm, and contextual and demographic variables are seen particularly to affect the levels of offence felt.

Radio

Despite being the background to so many people's lives, little recent research on radio was found in relation to questions of harm. Such concern as does arise is concentrated particularly on talk shows and similar programmes based on call-ins or user-generated content, and in relation to the lyrics of popular music. Research shows that radio is found to be offensive on occasion by a substantial minority of the audience – particularly in relation to the treatment of callers by presenters, offensive language and racism.

Music

There is little research which examines harm and offence in relation to music. The research that exists is mainly content analytic rather than based on audience reactions, except for occasional opinion surveys, and is mainly focused on popular music lyrics. These studies reveal consistent messages in music lyrics that may be harmful and are that considered offensive by some – including messages promoting violence among boys/men, homophobic messages, or those encouraging early sexuality among young girls/women. Some argue that these are particularly damaging for ethnic minority audiences. There is a small body of experimental evidence suggesting that, as for other media, these messages can negatively influence the attitudes or emotions of their audience.

Print

The history of the print media and the precedents set in terms of policy making have helped frame debates about other media and have also provided a framework for the way in which much media content is regulated. Research suggests the print media, especially the press, can frame public discourse, providing important civil information. The potential complicity of the media in misinformation is identified as problematic in many studies. Such harm as may result not only affects the individual but also has broader consequences for society. How-

ever, the importance of the public or private nature of different types of print media (e.g. bill boards versus magazines) has not been widely researched, although the evidence suggests that how strongly one is affected by print content is closely linked with this distinction.

Film, video and DVD

The empirical research evidence for harm and offence in relation to film has been concerned primarily with 'adult' or relatively extreme sexual and violent content, such material being more available, though restricted by age, on film and video than – at present – on television. Although concerns are consistently raised regarding the reality-defining (McQuail, 1987) or stereotyping effects of film, we found little recent research on this. Evidence for emotional responses to film, particularly fear, exists and is relatively uncontentious, though whether this constitutes longer-term harm is more difficult to determine given the absence of longitudinal research studies.

Considerable attention has been paid to pornography, focusing variously on harm to those involved in production, to male consumers, to children, and to society (especially, attitudes towards women) more generally. The evidence for harm to men viewing non-violent (or consensual) pornography remains inconclusive or absent. However, the evidence for harm from viewing violent (non-consensual) pornography is rather stronger, resulting in more negative or aggressive attitudes and behaviours towards women as well as supporting the desire to watch more extreme content.

The evidence that viewing pornography harms children remains scarce, given ethical restrictions on the research, though many experts believe it to be harmful. Other vulnerable groups have been researched, however, with some evidence that the harmful effects of violent content especially are greater for those who are already aggressive, for children with behaviour disorders, for young offenders with a history of domestic violence and – for pornographic content – among sexual offenders.

Public attitudes to film content are, generally, more tolerant than for television. This is partly because the public is aware, and supportive of, current levels of regulation in film, and partly because people understand the decision process behind choosing to watch violent or sexual content. Tolerance is lowest (or offence is greatest) for the portrayal of sexual violence. Studies of audience interpretation of potentially harmful or offensive content in film throw some light on the complex judgements made by the public in this area. Nonetheless, as the conditions for viewing film – both at home and in the cinema – are changing, too little is known regarding the conditions under which people, especially children, may gain access to different kinds of potentially harmful content.

Games

Although research on electronic games is relatively new, it is strongly polarised between the psychological/experimental approach that argues that electronic games have harmful effects, and the cultural/qualitative approach that tends to defend games as merely entertaining, even beneficial on occasion.

In the psychological/effects approach, a growing body of research is accumulating which suggests harmful effects, especially for games with violent content, especially on the boys or men who play them. However, this research remains contested in terms of how far it can be applied to aggressive situations in everyday life. It also remains unclear how much this evidence concerns media violence in general and how much it is video-game specific. One empirical comparison across research studies found that the effect of violent video games on aggression is smaller than that found for television violence. However, more research is required to compare the effects of, for example, violent television and video games. On the one hand, it has been argued that television imagery has hitherto been more graphic/realistic and hence more influential (although technical advances in video game technology are allowing them to 'catch up'). On the other hand, it has been argued that video games require a more involved and attentive style of engagement – a 'first person' rather than a 'third person' experience – which may make games more harmful.

Internet

The widespread accessibility of the internet, along with its affordability, anonymity and convenience, is seen by many to increase the likelihood of media harm and offence. While some argue that there is little new about online content, familiar contents merely having moved online, most disagree, expressing concern about the accessibility of more extreme forms of content that are, potentially, harmful and offensive.

The lack of clear definitions of levels or types of pornography, violence, etc on the internet, where the range is considerable, impedes research, as do (necessarily) the ethical restrictions on researching the potentially harmful effects of online content, especially but not only on children. As many defend online pornography as suggest it to be harmful. There is a growing body of research – though still small – suggesting such content to be particularly harmful for vulnerable groups, specifically people who are sexually compulsive and/or sexual abusers.

For children, despite the lack of evidence (and the lack of research) on harm, there is a growing body of national and international research on children's distress when they accidentally come across online pornography and other unwelcome content. There is also a growing literature on the potentially harmful consequences of user-generated contact. This includes everything from the school or workplace bully to the grooming of children by paedophiles. It has become evident that many children and adults experience some risky contact.

Further, research shows that when people – adults and children – receive hostile, bullying or hateful messages, they are generally ill-equipped to respond appropriately or to cope with the emotional upset this causes. Similarly, parents are unclear how they can know about, or intervene in, risky behaviours undertaken – deliberately or inadvertently – by their children. As for pornographic content, the consequences of exposure seem to be more harmful for those who are already vulnerable. People's responses to 'hateful' content tend to be more tolerant, on the grounds of freedom of expression, though they find it offensive. Little as yet is known of how the targeted groups (mainly, ethnic minorities) respond.

In general, the case for further research seems clear, firstly in relation to the characteristics of vulnerable groups (including strategies for intervention) and secondly in relation to the ways in which the internet seems to support or facilitate certain kinds of harmful peer-to-peer activity.

Mobile telephony

There is growing evidence that mobile telephony may cause harm through the creation of fear and humiliation by bullying, for example. Although it is evident that new communication technologies are being incorporated into practices of bullying, harassment and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication, it is not yet clear that these technologies are responsible for an increase in the incidence of such practices.

There is little substantive academic evidence for the potential risk of harm or offence caused through access to the professionally-produced content market for mobiles, although inferences are being made about such possible effects from other media. It is questionable whether mobile technologies are used in the same way as other fixed media, particularly because they have rapidly become personal and private forms of communication. This is an area where the lack of research evidence is especially felt.

Advertising

There is a moderate body of evidence pointing to modest effects of both intentional (i.e. product-promoting) and incidental (i.e. product context) advertising messages. This suggests that advertising has some influence on product choice, and that the nature of its portrayals has some influence on the attitudes and beliefs of its audience. Specifically, a range of reality-defining effects have been examined in relation to the stereotyping of population segments and, most recently, in relation to obesity and other products with health consequences. Research tends to show modest evidence for harmful effects of advertising, particularly on children, although this remains contested. Since the influence of advertising is not large, according to the evidence, research is needed to determine what other factors also influence these harmful outcomes (stereotyping, obesity, smoking, etc).

This question of intent has implications for media literacy. In relation to advertising, the intent to persuade is generally considered acceptable provided the public recognises this intent. In relation to children, considerable research exists on the development of 'advertising literacy' with age, though it has not been clearly shown that more media literate, or advertising literate, consumers are less affected by advertising (or other media), nor that interventions designed to increase literacy have the effect of reducing media harm (Livingstone & Helsper, in press). Little is yet known of how all audiences – adults as well as children – recognise advertising, sponsorship, product placement etc in relation to the new media environment. There is also a body of research linking advertising to offence. This research reveals the considerable cultural variation, both within and across cultures, in what content is found offensive and by whom.

Drawing conclusions

Producing the above summaries has been more difficult that producing the lengthy account of the research on which these are based because the body of research on media harm (less so for offence) has long been subject to considerable contestation on theoretical, political and, particularly, methodological grounds. There can be, therefore, no uncontentious summary of research findings, nor will there be any simple answer to the question of media harm nor any definitive empirical demonstration or 'proof'. Consequently, our strategy in the review has been to incorporate, and balance against each other, the different kinds of findings, based on different methods (from experiments, surveys and qualitative social research) and different perspectives on the debate over media harm and offence, while accepting the different cultural and regulatory perspectives from which they derive. Further, though we do consider that more evidence is needed, especially for new media and for vulnerable groups, we note that the precautionary principle suggests that judgements may be reached assuming probable influence rather than postponing regulatory decisions to await the outcome of further research. On this basis, our conclusions are as follows.

Distinguishing harm and offence

In policy discussions, 'harm and offence' is often used as a single phrase. It is not clear, however, just what the difference between them is taken to be, nor how they each relates to legal and regulatory frameworks. Similarly, harm and offence are often not clearly distinguished in terms of research evidence. Indeed, other than in relation to legal or philosophical discussions of the terms as used in regulation, we have not found these terms used very much at all in the academic literature.

While there is a large literature on harm (usually labelled 'media effects'), we have found little academic research on offence. Our assumption is that this is because, on the one hand, experimental researchers are unimpressed by the self-report methods used, necessarily, to assess offence (i.e. they would identify problems of reliability), while on the other hand, cultural researchers fear that research on offence opens the door to a culture of censorship. Nor have we found any theory relating to 'offence' (though there are many theories of media influence), this also helping to explain the lack of research on offence.

From a regulatory or industry point of view, however, 'offence' provides a route to acknowledging and responding to audiences' or users' concerns about media content precisely without framing this as 'harm'. These bodies have, therefore, conducted a fair body of research, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, charting the extent and focus of 'offence' among the public, including some longitudinal tracking studies.

It follows that the distinction between harm and offence (or their relation to taste and decency) is not always clear. However, we suggest that harm is widely (though not necessarily) conceived in objective terms; harm, it seems, is taken to be observable by others (irrespective of whether harm is acknowledged by the individual concerned), and hence as measurable in a reliable fashion. By contrast, offence is widely (though not necessarily) conceived in subjective terms; offence, it seems, is taken to be that experienced by and reported on by the individual, and hence is difficult to measure reliably (and, equally, difficult to deny in the face of claimed offence).[2]

The terms vary in other ways. It may be argued that media harm can affect both the media user themselves and others around them. Harm may last for a short time or longer (though the evidence is largely lacking for the long-term effects generally hypothesised by media effects theories). The risk of harm may apply at the level of the individual, group or society. Offence, by contrast, may be thought to affect only the media user themselves (or, perhaps, group of individuals), and it is assumed to apply only in the moment (i.e. offence is not taken to last a long time, though it may be remembered). One implication is that it is easier potentially to demonstrate offence than harm, harm setting a high threshold in terms of evidence. Another is that the risk of harm merits greater attempts at prevention than does offence. A third is that the market may be assumed to address offence (since it damages the brand) while public intervention may be additionally required to prevent harm.

Each of these implications and assumptions can, of course, be contested: our point here is that the terms 'harm' and 'offence', although widely used, have attracted surprisingly little discussion or clarification. Interestingly, harm and offence, are generally discussed differently in relation to children and adults. Harm is assumed to vary by vulnerability, being greater for children and for vulnerable adults. Considerable research attention has, therefore, gone into identifying the risk factors for harm, and most research is concentrated on the at-risk groups (typically, children). By contrast, offence is not seen as related to vulnerability.

Older people and women are generally shown to find more media content offensive; yet this is not apparently related to vulnerability except insofar as differential levels of media literacy may make it harder for these groups to control their exposure to certain contents. Notably, there is little research on whether the media offend (rather than harm) children, and only recently is there some research on the response of marginal or low-status groups (adults and children) to the at times negative representations of them in the media (and whether this concerns harm or offence is unclear). This results in some inconsistencies when relating research findings to regulation: for example, if a child is upset by viewing violence, this is taken as evidence of harm; if an adult is upset by the same image, this is likely to be seen as offence.

Limitations of the evidence base

This review has noted a range of theoretical, methodological and political difficulties in researching the possible harm and offence in relation to media content. In many respects, the evidence base is patchy and inconsistent. Many questions remain difficult to research. Particularly, research can only offer evidence towards a judgement based on the balance of probabilities rather than on irrefutable proof.

Persistent questions remain regarding how far the largely American findings in the published academic literature may be applicable to the situation in any other country, given differences in culture, in regulatory context, in the media content available (and researched). Also, doubts persist regarding how far the largely experimental research findings may be applicable to ordinary contexts of media use, given the often unnatural circumstances in which experiments expose people to media content and the ways in which they tend to measure the effects of such exposure; similarly, questions remain as to how correlational evidence (from surveys) relates to causal claims regarding media effects, for few studies eliminate the possibility of alternative explanations.

One must also ask how far the largely television-based research may be applicable to other, especially newer media, given the likelihood that different expectations, knowledge and concerns attach to different kinds of media and communication technology. Other problems also exist. For example, in certain domains (e.g. rap music lyrics or gender stereotyping in advertising), the main body of evidence is based on content analyses; yet qualitative social research consistently shows that different people (e.g. children vs. adults, fans of a genre vs. those who only occasionally view) do not interpret content in the same way, making it risky to draw conclusions about effects from content analysis.

Definitions of media-related harm

A wide range of definitions of harm are suggested in the research literature (McQuail & Windahl, 1993), including:

- Changed attitudes or beliefs affecting the individual (e.g. fear of crime) or society (e.g. stereotypes of the elderly)

- Changed behaviours, particularly the increased propensity to harm others (e.g. aggressive behaviour, this damaging both the perpetrator and his/her possible victims) or for self-harm (e.g. anorexia, obesity, suicide)

- Emotional responses, affecting both self and others, including fear, upset and hate which may lead to harm if they are long-term in effect. Such responses may, arguably, be more appropriately regarded instead as 'offence'.

Of these, we suggest that more attention is often paid to the first two than to the third, yet there are, interestingly, many studies showing that the media can have negative emotional consequences, often but not only in the short-term. It is clear that this is recognised in many policy-related decisions and we recommend that greater consideration is given to emotional responses in future research and policy regarding harm and offence.

Much of the debate about media harms starts from the argument that the negative influence on an individual will, in turn, create harm to society. This view of an inter-relationship between influences and effects has been taken up by the popular media – in reporting crimes, for example, which are linked to supposed (though not always established) media exposure. Those harms that are caused to the individual through the perpetuation of unfair or stereotypical depictions are not much publicly discussed (though they are recognised both in the research literature and in content producers' Codes of Practice. We suggest it would be valuable to distinguish risk of harm to the individual exposed to media content, risk of harm to other people and, third, risk of harm to society in general.

Nevertheless it should be accepted that there may be inter-relationships between these possible harms. For example, to the extent that watching television violence encourages aggressive behaviour among boys, this risks, first, harm to those particular boys, second, harm to those against whom they might be aggressive (e.g. peers in the playground) and, third, harm to society (as aggression, and fear of aggression become more widespread). However, the processes involved, the consequences, and the potential for intervention differ for each kind of harm.

We also note that, among regulators and interest groups there is a call for care in the portrayal of violence or sex, especially to young people (as in the debate over in/appropriate role models for example). Interestingly, a children's rights perspective is beginning to be asserted to complement or counter the view of children as potential aggressors in society; this perspective has become particularly salient in relation to online and mobile media, including the new problem of varieties of user-generated or peer-to-peer harms (Finkelhor & Hashima, 2001).

There are other media-related social harms that are recognised through the regulatory process. For example, the regulation requiring the principal broadcasters in the UK to present balanced and impartial news programming is based on a notion that the audience must be fairly informed so as to make their own judge-

ments. There is evidence, however, particularly from the USA, that the news media negatively affect public opinion (e.g. encouraging a fear of crime by over-representing violent crime), and little is known yet of the potential effects of online or alternative sources of news (for example, research is needed into the effects of misleading or unreliable health care information).

A risk-based approach

When television first arrived in American homes, the founding father of media effects research declared:

> ... for some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful. For some children under the same conditions, or for the same children under other conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children, under most conditions, most television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial (Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961: 11).

We suggest that, after a vast amount of further research findings, on the basis of 'a balance of probabilities', this remains a fair summary of the evidence, even if much of that evidence has been collected under a differently regulated media environment. Hence, this review has argued that the search for simple and direct causal effects of the media is, for the most part, not appropriate. Rather, this should be replaced by an approach that seeks to identify the range of factors that directly, and indirectly through interactions with each other, combine to explain particular social phenomena. As research shows, each social problem of concern (e.g. aggression, prejudice, obesity, bullying, etc) is associated with a distinct and complex array of putative causes.

The task for those concerned with media harm and offence is to identify and contextualise the role of the media within that array. The result will be a more complex explanation of what are, undoubtedly, complex social problems. This should, in turn, permit a balanced judgement of the role played by the media on a case by case basis. In some cases, this may reduce the focus on the media – for example, by bringing into view the many other factors that account for present levels of aggression in society. In other cases, it may increase the focus on the media – for example, in understanding the role played potentially by the internet in facilitating paedophiles' sexual interest in and access to children.

A risk-based approach seeks to take into account a wide range of relevant factors, as these establish the conditions under which any particular factor (such as media exposure) operates. Many such factors are culturally-specific, including national traditions of content regulation, approaches to parenting, and moral frames for judging content or determining offence. In addition to such factors, and in addition to the important differences across the media and hence across media access conditions, we have also sought to stress that content does not affect all audiences equally. Research suggests that there can be greater negative influences

on those who are 'vulnerable'. No standard academic definition of 'vulnerability' exists, but research findings do suggest that vulnerable audiences/users may include children and young people, especially boys, together with a range of other groups among the adult population (including psychologically disturbed individuals, people who are depressed, sexual offenders, young offenders, etc.).

Findings reviewed on a case-by-case basis

As indicated in the medium-by-medium review undertaken in each chapter, the evidence points to a range of conclusions depending on the social problem at stake.

For example, there is a sizeable body of evidence that suggests that televised portrayals of aggression can, under certain circumstances, negatively influence the attitudes and behaviours of children, especially boys. Similar findings exist as regards aggressive content in film, video/DVD and electronic games, though the body of research evidence is somewhat smaller. These media are, at present, all highly regulated in most developed countries through labelling and age-restrictions (or scheduling restrictions in the case of television). It seems likely that the risk of harm will be greater when children view content inappropriate for their age (i.e. intended for those older than them), though research does not always adequately link the effects of exposure to the specific nature or age-appropriateness of the content. However, we suggest that viewing is not always to age-appropriate material and these varying factors should be taken into account when 'reading' the research.

At stake is the likelihood of risk rather than of inevitable harm, for, as the research also shows, not all in the audience are affected equally and many, it appears, are not affected at all. Broadcasters, regulators and parents must continue to make balanced judgements of the likely risk to some children, bearing in mind the conditions of access (e.g. scheduling, intended audience, narrative context) and conditions of mediation (e.g. role of parental discussion of content or restrictions on access).

Taking a different case, we note that there is mounting evidence that internet-based and mobile communication technologies are being incorporated into practices of bullying, harassment and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication. However, it is not yet clear that these technologies are responsible for an increase in the incidence of such practices. This is partly because of a lack of sound data from, say, ten years ago, against which to compare present findings. However, research on the conditions of access points to a relative convenience and ease of use which, combined with highly personalised, private and often anonymous conditions under which these technologies are used, suggests that cyber-bullying, cyber-harassment, etc may introduce new kinds of problems for users, as well as exacerbating old ones. In some ways, it seems, online and offline communication work differently; but in key ways also, they work together. Thus, offline bullying or harassment can be continued or extended online, rather than

remaining entirely distinct. Given the difficulties faced by parents in understanding how to manage the conditions of access to these forms of content and contact, the implications for regulation should be judged in terms of balancing the responsibility across the industry, regulators, parents and children for controlling access and exposure.

For some putative harms, the evidence is generally lacking. For example, despite widespread public concern over the exposure of children to adult or pornographic images, there remains little evidence that such exposure has harmful effects, with the notable exception of material that combines sexual and violent content. This lack of evidence partly reflects the methodological limitations of the evidence (one cannot ethically expose children to certain images, there is no agreed definition of pornography, it is difficult to measure long-term psychological disturbance, etc). But it may also suggest that, at least in our present largely regulated content environment, the images available to children are not harmful, though they may be offensive or even briefly disturbing. If less regulated contents become more accessible to children (e.g. through the internet), researchers will need to find a way to overcome these methodological difficulties, particularly given the apparent growth in material that does combine sexual and violent content.

For yet other putative harms, the cultural context is crucial. Researchers have long pointed to the media's role in relation to reality-defining effects, arguing that the media provide the frameworks or expectations with which the public understands the world around them. This has been, in various ways, considered harmful – potentially reinforcing stereotypes of marginalised groups, providing a biased account of current affairs, exacerbating a fear of crime, promoting a commercialised culture of childhood, encouraging the early sexualisation of girls, and so forth. In general, the evidence for reality-defining effects generally shows modest effects on social attitudes or beliefs across the population. In other words, the findings show that media exposure explains a small proportion of the variation in attitudes or beliefs across the population. By implication, other factors also play a role, though these are not always well-researched. Reality-defining effects are theorised in terms of cultivation effects (the 'drip-drip' effect of repeated messages), agenda setting (defining what people should think about) and mainstreaming (making certain views 'normal' or standard, while marginalising other views). However, here too, the evidence is patchy and, by and large, not very recent. The difficulty here is that, as noted above, any effect of the media operates only in combination with many other social influences, and the effect is to be measured not in terms of an immediate impact on an individual but rather in terms of gradual shifts in social norms over years or decades. While few would suggest that the media play no role in socialisation or cultural influence, it remains difficult to obtain convincing evidence that the media play a primary causal role.

Putting media effects in context

We have evaluated the research on the potential role of the media in contributing to a range of social problems and drawn conclusions where possible. But it is important to note that we have avoided over-arching conclusions to be applied across all media and all segments of the public, for the evidence does not warrant such conclusions. To those who fear, then, that the media are responsible for a growing range of social problems, we would urge that the evidence base is carefully and critically scrutinised, for such findings as exist generally point to more modest, qualified and context-dependent conclusions. To those who hope, however, that the media play little or no role in today's social problems, we would point to the complex and diverse ways in which different media are variably but crucially embedded in most or all aspects of our everyday lives, and that it seems implausible to suggest that they have no influence, whether positive or negative.

Overall, it seems that the research literature points to a range of modest effects, including effects on attitudes and beliefs, effects on emotions, and, more controversially, effects on behaviour (or the predisposition towards certain behaviours). Effects on emotions have, we suggest, received less attention than they should perhaps command, most attention focusing on attitudes and behaviours; yet running through the literature is a series of findings of people being made upset, fearful or anxious by the media.

However, as we have also been at pains to point out, in each of these areas, there are some studies that find no effects, and most published studies have been contested in terms of their methodology and findings. It is particularly difficult to be clear about the scale of these measured media effects since unfortunately these are rarely compared with other putative effects (e.g. of parenting style or social background). Although it is widely argued that the effect of the media often depends on other factors also operating in the situation, the evidence here is generally weaker partly because there is no single theory of how indirect effects occur, partly because indirect effects are difficult to measure, and partly because indirect effects are often held to occur at the level of the culture not the individual (e.g. advertising → peer pressure → consumerism in society). Nonetheless, media effects appear to be one among many factors that account for the various ills in society (e.g. poverty, violence, fear of crime, stereotyping, etc.). Since, unfortunately, it is rare for research to identify or encompass these other factors within the same study, we cannot draw clear conclusions about which of these factors are more or less important.

Although effects are generally treated as direct (exposure to content → effect), increasingly researchers seek to identify mediating factors (exposure → mediating factor → increased or decreased likelihood of effect); such mediating factors include personality, age, gender ethnicity, parental influence, stage of cognitive development, viewing conditions, etc.[3] This process of mediation renders the measured relation between exposure and effect to be indirect but no less significant. For example, Browne & Pennell (2000) report that, although the evidence sug-

gests that violent media → aggression, it fits a more complex story better. This states that poor background → choice of viewing violent media → distorted cognitions → aggressive behaviour. Note that this explanation is also more accurate than the simple claim that poor background → aggressive behaviour. In other words, each intervening step, showing indirect as well as direct effects of the media and other factors, is important.

Consequently, we have recommended turning around the central question in this field and asking not, do the media have harmful effects, but rather, do the media contribute as one among several factors to the explanation of a social phenomenon (violence, racism, etc.). On a balance of probabilities, it seems less contentious to say 'yes' to the second question than to the first. But this also requires that any claims for media harms are contextualised in relation to the other factors also contributing to the explanation. For example, to understand the role that television food advertising may play in children's diet, one must also examine the role of parental diet, school dinners, peer pressure, and so forth. To understand the role that television violence may play in levels of aggressive play among, say, primary school boys, one must also examine parental treatment of aggressive behaviour, the rewards and punishments operating in the playground situation, gender norms in the peer group, the difficulties experienced by some children at home, and so forth.

Which groups may be more vulnerable?

Many research studies suggest that content does not affect all audiences equally, there being more negative influences on those who are 'vulnerable'. In most cases, this concept of vulnerability is applied to children and young people who are in the process of forming attitudes and behaviours for later life. But it is also applied to other groups of people who may be vulnerable, for example, because of specific personality traits or disorders (this includes research on psychologically disturbed individuals, people who are depressed, sexual offenders, young offenders, etc.).

Findings on specific vulnerable groups may be summarised as follows. There does seem to be evidence that young males may be more consistently affected by media content, and so they can be considered among the more vulnerable of the groups. They seem more likely to respond to violent media content with aggressive behaviour than girls, for example, and the data suggest they evince greater changes in attitude when presented with various potentially harmful contents (violence, advertising, pornography, etc.), though there are a fair number of studies where girls also seem to be influenced negatively.

More attention has been paid to the reality-defining effects on girls of stereotyped or sexualised portrayals of gender; to the extent that these studies do show negative effects, however, they seem to occur for both genders. Reality-defining effects are sometimes shown particularly to affect minority or less socially valued groups (women, the elderly, etc.) – harm may thus be understood as en-

couraging negative attitudes both in the majority (e.g. racist stereotypes) and the affected minority (e.g. low self-esteem).

Research has examined different hypothesised harms in relation to different age groups. For example, concerns about the harmful effects of advertising tend to be investigated in relation to young children. Similarly, the effects of violent content are examined across the range from young children to young adults, though for specific media, research tends to follow usage patterns (e.g. film and games are researched for teens/young adults, television among younger children). The risks of malicious or harmful peer-to-peer contact online or by mobile have mainly been researched among teens and adults, although attention is turning to younger children.

Since different studies examine different age groups (often spanning very broad age ranges), evidence is sparse regarding developmental trends over the age range, making it difficult to pinpoint particularly vulnerable ages in relation to different media. It should also be noted that, for the most part, since research examines the effects of media on 'typical users', little is known about the effects on those who are not part of the typical or intended user group – further, ethical issues often preclude investigating the effects of exposure of younger children to material intended for older age groups.

Is there evidence that media contents may be offensive?

While academic research has focused on harms and the effects of the media, research into areas of offence has been conducted mainly by regulators and lobby or advocacy groups. Looking across all media, the research evidence suggests variable levels of offence. For example, in relation to television, around one in three have found something on television offensive, this more often being – as for most findings on offence – women and older people. This overlaps to some degree with our discussion of the risk of emotional effects or harms: recent research on self-reported emotional affects on being portrayed negatively as a marginalised groups (women, the poor, gay and lesbian people, ethnic minorities, the elderly and children) suggests that these groups are often angry and upset at being so portrayed in the media. Further research is needed to track the concerns of marginalised and minority groups.

Intriguingly, little research has been conducted into the offence that might be caused to children, although there have been intriguing projects which have spoken to children about their attitudes to a range of material (e.g. Nightingale, Dickenson, & Griff, 2000). Most of the work on offence is focused on adults. While there may be ethical reasons for this disparity, the research evidence does show that children may be offended by certain depictions, in particular but not exclusively, sexual activity.

Most research shows that, despite a substantial minority being offended, most people are tolerant of others' rights to view such material. The exception to this tends to be the combination of sex plus violence (as in violent pornographic

material), though even for such content, audiences seem to prefer to judge offence (and any regulatory responses that might follow) in relation to the narrative and aesthetic context of the portrayal. Generally, rather than calling for more restrictions on media content, the public is more inclined to call for better and more user-friendly access controls so that they can control what they see. Public support for content restrictions is highest in relation to the protection of children.

New forms of media are discussed more widely currently in relation to regulation than are the more established media for which, in many respects, the public is broadly supportive of the current regulatory framework. However, the findings are mixed on whether people are satisfied with (or even aware of) the available processes for making a complaint about media content.

Comparing evidence across different media

This review has shown that much of the research undertaken has been technology-specific, i.e. applied to particular media. There is relatively little work that has looked at the overall consumption of a particular type of content across the media although some studies have sought to do that, particularly in areas such as sexual depictions and violence.

In recognition of this, many of the regulatory structures are set up with particular technologies in mind. Studies show that consumers of different media forms often approach the content on one platform differently from the way in which they approach similar content on another platform. Nonetheless, there is an avowed determination, in Europe certainly, to move towards technologically-neutral regulation. One of the principles behind this is that the platform will become irrelevant to the consumer as the same or similar content is delivered across different platforms.

However, in a context of converging technologies and media content, we are particularly concerned at the lack of evidence providing a secure basis for making comparisons across media platforms (although see Ofcom, 2006). As we have noted, comparisons across different media regarding the nature or size of effects are difficult in methodological terms, though such research could and should be attempted. For the most part, then, in seeking evidence for harm and offence across media, one can only compare findings conducted for different media in different studies. Research has tended to extend the approach developed for television to video, games, internet, etc. – asking similar questions, and using similar methods, in relation to such potential harms as violence, sex, stereotyping, etc. Where a research study has encompassed or compared across several media, the findings for effects tend to be inconsistent – some research finds the effects of television to be greater than for games; in other studies, the reverse is found.

Therefore, we would question the argument that people respond to content irrespective of platform. Rather, the evidence suggests that people's response to media content is strongly shaped by the particularities of each medium, making it difficult to generalise across platforms, because:

- Different access conditions and different public expectations (linear/ nonlinear, push/pull, chosen on purpose or accidentally, culturally familiar or novel) mean that audiences anticipate and self-regulate their media exposure in different ways.

- Differently regulated content makes it particularly difficult to generalise from research on highly regulated content to content where there is no regulation (e.g. do the levels of violence on regulated, terrestrial television affect audiences in the same way, and to the same degree, as the levels of violence accessible through non-regulated media such as the internet?)

- Broadcast (linear) media can be regulated in relation to the programming/ scheduling context of particular portrayals (e.g. violence): this is important, since the context in which potentially harmful or offensive content is portrayed has often been shown to make a difference to media effects.[4] Yet both narrative/programming contexts and temporal/scheduling contexts are difficult to regulate for new (non-linear) media, especially where short extracts are likely to be viewed (e.g. internet, mobile telephony): the consequence is a greater unpredictability of audience response.

- Older media, in the main, comprise professionally produced, mass market content, and this too is different for new media, where a growing proportion of content is user-generated (peer-to-peer, spam, blogging, forms of self-representation), unregulated, niche-content that may be amateur in production and potentially imbalanced.

In short, there are many difficulties with the premise of regulation that is technology-neutral, because the public does not treat different technologies as equivalent, and because the social and cognitive conditions of access also vary. Indeed, research on the conditions under which people access and use media in their daily lives in the UK makes it clear that many contextual variables are important in framing the ways in which people approach the media – prior familiarity and cultural expectations about a medium, the degree of choice or selection involved, the domestic and technological conditions of access, including media literacy (or technological competence and critical awareness), and the presence or absence of an interpretative context or frame (within the text) – all affect how people approach and respond to different media.

If the mythic hypodermic needle had been accurate (i.e. if content was simply 'injected' into people), then perhaps we would have concluded that violence is always violence, or advertising is always persuasive, whatever the platform. But, since research persistently shows that many factors mediate between the media and the public, increasing or decreasing the possibility of media influence, for better or for worse, we must conclude that different kinds of harm and offence may result from different kinds of media contents and use.

This is evidently the case even for older media – the findings for television, for example, differ from those for print. One might point to the power of the

image compared with the printed word. Others have argued that film is more potent than television, partly because of the conditions of viewing in the cinema, partly because of the power of a lengthy narrative. Others argue that the daily repetition of short messages on television or in computer games is more influential, or that the interactivity in computer gaming may make effects stronger. These arguments remain unresolved, and few research studies have directly compared the influence of (harmful or prosocial) messages across different media. For new forms of media, the differences are also considerable, and even less is known about them, at present.

Regulation often draws on and is legitimated by reference to a complex base of media- and audience- specific research evidence. The balance to be struck between individuals (often, parents) and institutions (industry, regulators) in managing conditions of access should, we have suggested, vary for more established and newer media. Clearly, as homes become more complex, multi-media environments, and as media technologies converge, it must be a priority to develop and extend the available evidence base, so that we sustain our understanding of the differences across, and relations among, the changing array of media and communication technologies. The challenge is to seek ways of minimising risks, while also enabling the many benefits afforded by these technologies for our society and for the socialisation of our children.

New media, new challenges

One purpose of the present review was to determine what lessons could be learned from research on older media to apply to new media, especially since there is very little research on new media as yet, by comparison especially with research on television. However, such evidence as has been produced suggests that new media may pose some new challenges. In consequence, empirical research on new media is now specifically required.

One of the main differences between many of the established media (television, radio, film, press and even advertising) is that of context (meaning, the framing of a portrayal within the text); when content is delivered in a linear way, it comes with a context that tells a story or establishes a framework of expectations that is recognised by and makes sense to the consumer. The research evidence suggests that this contextual setting affects how the content is received – and accepted – by the viewer. For example, the moral framework of a setting which contains violence will affect how 'justified' the violence is considered and, consequently, how it is received.

The newer technologies (including video but also the internet and mobile communications) allow content to be seen out of context. One may see sets of trailers rather than the storyline in which to put the content. There is no research evidence to show how those trailers may be received, although some work on video has shown that certain groups (in this case violent offenders) chose to watch violent scenes repeatedly. It is therefore difficult to project forward the research

evidence from one medium into another. There has been research undertaken on specific areas within internet use, especially areas thought to be harmful to the young such as pornography, anorexia sites or suicide sites. Many of the concerns raised by these studies (and popular discourse) are being applied to the mobile telephone. The evidence is not available to support this view, and it may be argued that the mobile telephone is quite a different technology, with particular characteristics. The chief of these is the personal and private nature of the mobile handset, quite different from a computer that may be shared or accessed by a number of people, or a fixed line telephone.

While the content issues often remain the same (e.g. violence, pornography, stereotyping), the new media allow faster and more convenient access to these contents. They also allow access to more extreme content that would previously have been difficult to access; there are few effective controls available or in use to prevent such access, including by children. The newer media offer greater opportunity to self-select. In terms of the way in which offence is caused there is some research evidence to show that self-selection makes a difference to the way in which content is perceived – people are far more likely to be offended by content on free-to-air channels than they are to content available on a niche channel that they themselves have selected, that is clearly signposted and that they are paying a subscription for. Similarly, some of the research into video games suggests that the self-selecting and active nature of playing may act as a distancing mechanism from the content in a way that passive viewing of television does not. Another key difference that the newer media bring is the ability to produce and widely disseminate user-generated content which has little or no regulation applied to it. The flexibility offered by camera telephones, with both production and diffusion capability, is quite different from hand held video cameras. Similarly, the technologies can be linked so that images from mobile cameras can be downloaded on to the internet and disseminated well beyond one's address book. However, there is little research into these areas as yet.

The importance of conditions of access

Conditions of access strongly influence the research agenda. Television, generally free to air services, is the most researched medium and has received such attention because of its ubiquity and accessibility, because it is a linear (i.e. push) medium, and because of its positive public potential (i.e. there is no real option for audiences to switch it off without missing out). The internet, the newest focus for research, partly merits research attention because of the ambition of ubiquity and public value – again, in an information society, it is increasingly not an option for people not to use it. As a largely unregulated medium, the internet could provide access to a much greater range of potentially harmful and offensive content. This limits the applicability of findings from research on highly regulated media (such as television) to the internet. However, the strictures of research ethics limit the potential to conduct research for this new medium.

Research on the internet, unlike that for television, makes a fundamental distinction between potentially harmful material accessed accidentally and that which is sought deliberately. However, it is not clear whether this makes a difference to the degree of harm caused, though it does suggest different types of user or motivations for use (e.g. the child who seeks out pornography online may differ from the child who is upset because they found it accidentally: however, too little is known about user motivations or the consequences of different kinds of exposure). For material accessed deliberately, attention has instead centred on the user's motivations, with evidence suggesting that the search for violent or pornographic contents may contribute to the psychological disturbance for certain individuals. However, for both adults and children, some research suggests that, irrespective of whether content is found accidentally or deliberately, harm may still result (especially from violent pornography). Similarly the paucity of research for mobile telephony rests in part on the relative novelty of the technology. This means that research from the internet is being used to make assumptions about the possibility of harm and offence in this area; whether or not this is valid remains to be seen.

At present, research finds that filters and other (physical) access control mechanisms are rarely used by users or, in the case of children, children's guardians. This seems not to be because people are not concerned– it is evident that the internet especially occasions the greatest concern of all media among the public. Rather, it is because people lack the knowledge and awareness of how to choose, install and use access controls or they feel such mechanisms are not necessary within their own families. Within the UK's Code of Practice for on-demand services, for example, the use of PIN codes and other access management systems are repeatedly advertised and marketed to the user.

The evidence suggests that the children's response to certain media contents can be lessened or heightened by the ways in which families interact and discuss what is seen. Evidence is lacking, however, for the claim that an increase in media literacy will reduce the potential for harm, although this is widely believed (and so should be the subject of future research). We have noted that the evidence for possible harm from violent content is stronger than that for sexual content (with the exception of violent pornography). This might explain why in response to portrayed violence, the public is more likely to call for content regulation, while for portrayed sex, people may or may not object personally but they tend to call for tolerance (respecting the rights of others to view diverse or niche content); the right to view violence appears more difficult to defend, it seems, than the right to view pornography. Given this, it is curious that most research on new media contents have addressed sexual content (especially pornography) rather than violence, there being particularly little on the potentially harmful effects of exposure to non-sexualised violence (this may reflect the ways in which public concern, rather than theory, sets the research agenda).

Looking to the future

The issue of common definitions remains. The concept of 'harm' is implicitly understood but rarely formally defined. Hence, it is not possible to provide clear advice or a check list to regulators or content providers about specific harms. However, the concept remains a valid one; it has a legal foundation and attempts should continue to be made to define and identify it. The concept of offence is more clearly understood. While there is little academic research into this area (though we note the substantial body of regulators' work related to offence, plus the potential of such circumstantial evidence as complaints and other participatory expressions).

The research evidence also suggested some links between offence and harm. In reality-defining effects, for example, on the one hand, opinion research (on offence) shows that certain groups resent their representation in the media; on the other hand, experimental and survey research (on harm) suggests that media representations perpetuate such stereotypes among the general population. Another borderline area between offence and harm concerns user-generated content – racist or sexist messages are offensive to some and harmful to others in ways not yet well understood; nor is it yet understood how processes of offence and harm differ when the message source is a peer rather than a powerful broadcaster, for example. Some of the research also pointed to the crucial role of the media in creating an informed civil society and suggested that this role will need to be monitored, particularly as the information environment expands and innovates faster than the public's critical literacy (to determine reliability or authenticity of information) can keep up.

In general, this literature review has shown that the evidence for harm and offence caused is constantly qualified and such contingent answers do not make life easy for regulators, policy-makers or the industry. Nonetheless, when dealing with complex social phenomena (violence, aggression, sexuality, prejudice, etc.), many factors – including but not solely the media – must be expected to play a role. Given the complexity of this field of research, we would urge researchers and policy makers to ask specific questions of the evidence base, as follows:

- What specific social, cultural or psychological problem is at issue?

- Which media contents are hypothesised to play a role?

- Which segments of the public give rise to concern?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods used to generate the relevant evidence?

- Under what conditions are these media contents being accessed in everyday life?

- What kinds of risk, and what scale of risk, does the evidence point to, if at all, and for whom?

- Given a public consensus in favour of proportionality in regulation, what kinds of intervention, and by whom, are most likely to be effective in reducing the risk, and what advantages and costs might be associated with this?

There is a growing call for arguments that go 'beyond cause and effect', as more and more commentators are frustrated by the simplistic polarisation of censorship versus freedom of expression or regulation versus laissez faire (depending on one's position). Boyle (2000) argues, for example, that the pornography debate must be reoriented towards addressing male violence in society, rather than distracted by arguments over experimental methods. In a similar vein, Adams (2000) draws on philosophical as well as legal arguments to argue that the claim that pornography plays a causal role in rape does not, or should not, 'let the rapist off the hook'. Rather, multiple causes are at work, as they are in many domains of life, and the assertion that pornography plays a causal role does not in any way assume that pornography is the sole, or main, cause and nor that it works in the same way on all its consumers; consequently, 'evidence' for the effects of pornography need not be large or consistent.

Similar arguments have been advanced in other domains. For example, in relation to advertising of foods high in fat, sugar or salt to children, Livingstone (2005) argued that the problem with causal claims is not the question of causality per se but the nature of the question asked (see also Gauntlett, 1998). Instead of asking whether advertising causes children to make unhealthy food choices, the question should be turned around to ask: what are the influences on children's food choice and what role if any does advertising play in this multifactorial explanation?[5] Kline (2003) develops this approach through taking a public health approach: 'rather than the causal hypothesis, the driving force behind the risk factors approach is the quest to understand what it all depends on'. Research should, therefore, focus more on establishing the range of relevant factors contributing to an outcome, identifying how important each is in explaining that outcome.

So, it is more useful, we have suggested, to turn the question around and ask not whether the media harm children but ask instead, of the many causes of particular social ills, what role do the media play? This more contextualised approach is increasingly adopted by those who are looking at vulnerable groups, in particular, and argues for a more public-health facing approach, which advocates the examination of the media's role (and the amenability of media exposure to intervention) as part of a more complete picture of influences and effects (see, for example, Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Kline, 2003; Savage, 2004). Editorial context has always been important in content regulation guidelines, but it may prove difficult to build into parallel guidelines for new media. Since it appears, from research on children's accidental exposure to pornography on the internet, that unexpected and decontextualised content can be particularly upsetting, this poses a challenge for regulators.

The future research agenda

A key aim of this review has been to pinpoint gaps in the existing evidence base. As a result, we identify the following priorities for future research:

- Research on the range of marginalised and/or vulnerable groups (including the elderly, gay, ethnic minorities, and those with psychological difficulties). Too often, the population is not adequately segmented: beyond examining differences by age and gender, research must include ethnicity, sexuality, psychological variables, and so forth when investigating possible harm and offence; even for age, too little is known about the effects of media on different age groups as children develop.

- Research on reality-defining/stereotyping effects that relates to recent changes especially in nationally-originated media content, as well as imported content.

- Longitudinal or long-term panel studies, to follow up the effects of short-term harm, to track changes in levels and kinds of offence, and to identify changing expectations and understandings of media (including the access conditions) among the public. At present, most if not all longitudinal studies of media influence are US-based, though there are tracking studies on media access and use in other countries. The lack of studies of media influence, incorporating content variables that allow replication over time, makes it difficult to examine in combination the matrix of content viewed (amount and type), media platform, personality traits, life stage and other demographic variables.

- In the shorter term, there is strong evidence that triangulated methodologies, bringing together different data collection systems, may work most effectively to give an insight into the way in which the media and users interact, but these too, need to be combined more effectively with other variables, such as those affecting personality. Some methods have been particularly creative – the use of citizens' juries, for example, or the development of the news editing method – but these tend not to be reused, perhaps because they are more effortful or expensive; nonetheless, they reap dividends in terms of research insights.

- Research on the under-researched media, particularly radio and music among the 'established' media and the internet and mobile telephony among the newest delivery systems. For example, music attracts some concern over its lyrics, yet has barely been researched in this regard. As the content available even on familiar and well-researched media changes and diversifies, research must continue to track the possible consequences.

- Research on the new issues arising from new media, particularly in relation to user-generated and malicious peer-to-peer content and contact. For example, research is beginning to accumulate on the harm and offence caused

particularly by unwanted and unsought exposure to inappropriate material on the internet: this agenda must now be extended to include mobile and other emerging digital platforms (research from the advertising literature suggests such effects not only occur but may be harder to defend against). Similarly, little research has examined the effects of interactivity, for example, on the way in which content is chosen and received (note that it is not clear as yet that the active selection of content makes a difference to media effects). Further, research on the commercial or promotional aspects of new media technologies (especially internet, mobile, other new and interactive devices) and new contents (interactive content, new forms of advertising and promotion, niche/extreme content).

- Research that puts media effects in context, seeking to understand how the media play a role in a multi-factor explanation for particular social phenomena (e.g. violence, gender stereotyping, etc.), this to include a comparative account of the relative size of effect for each factor (including the media) in order to enable regulatory decisions based on proportionality.

- Research that directly compares the public's responses to the 'same' content when accessed on different media (e.g. violence on television, in film, in computer games, online) so as to understand whether and how the medium, or the conditions of access to a medium, including the regulatory environment, make a difference. Although it seems clear that the public brings different expectations to different platforms and technologies, as noted earlier, more research is needed on how the respond to the same content when delivered through different media platforms.

- Research on the range of factors that potentially mediate (buffer, or exacerbate) any effects of media exposure (e.g. level of media literacy, role of parental mediation, difference between accidental and deliberate exposure, etc.). Particularly, to inform the regulatory agenda, research is needed to produce a clearer understanding of how regulation can work with other mitigating or buffering processes (such as family mediation or communications literacy) to reduce any negative impact of inappropriate media content. Research on the range of possible mitigating factors remains patchy, being mainly focused on television, and must be updated as users (especially parents) continue to adjust to the changing media environment.

- Similarly, users need to understand how, and when, they can use the self/in-home regulatory tools they are provided with by many of the new delivery systems, such as filters or PIN codes, and more research is needed on whether and when these are effectively used, and why they may not be.

It must be acknowledged that calling for multimethod, long-term, cross-media, culturally-relevant research on a diverse range of audience/user groups is to call for expensive research. Just as regulation increasingly requires a multi-stakeholder

approach, it may be that research also requires the cooperation of government, regulator and industry groups, together with the expertise of the academic research community. Finally, we would stress the importance for evidence-based policy and academic knowledge of sustaining a body of research that is culturally- or nationally-relevant, that is up to date, that has undergone peer-review, and that is available in the public domain.

Notes

1. Note, however, that we did not encompass research evidence for the positive or pro-social benefits of the media, nor other issues of public health currently being debated, such as the potential for physical harm caused by media content triggering epilepsy for example, or the possible effects of using mobile telephone handsets.
2. To call these 'objective' and 'subjective' measures is perhaps too simple, for the judgements of observers are subject to biases (being a form of self report, and influenced most notably by the third-person effect), and the judgements of individuals concerned may be the only available method (how else can fear be assessed?). Of course, there are some studies that rely on self-report for evidence of harm, especially when the harm at issue is emotional, as there are some studies of offence that rely on more objective measures (e.g. letters of complaint).
3. Several studies show greater media effects for already-aggressive participants. Others have shown greater effects of exposure to media violence among clinical populations (Browne & Pennell, 2000). Findings for offenders are more mixed: see Hagell and Newburn (1994) but also Browne and Pennell (2000) who argue that it is the violent backgrounds of young offenders that creates the vulnerability. Among children and young people, the most studied groups, cognitive and social development accounts for different (and various) findings. In many studies, especially of violence, the effects are found to be less, or even absent, for girls. Further, many American studies show different (and various) results for participants of different ethnic backgrounds.
4. Perhaps curiously, both psychological and culturally-oriented researchers agree on the importance of textual (or programme) context, arguing that a violent or sexual act must be interpreted in relation to its narrative and genre context and, more importantly, that people indeed do interpret content in context, this affecting how they respond to content and whether it upsets or influences them.
5. For an influential illustration, in the field of children's food choice and obesity, see Story, Neumark-Sztainer, and French (2002). In an approach that could be applied also in other domains, they suggest that the factors influencing food choice operate at four distinct levels. (1) Individual – psychosocial, biological and behavioural factors. (2) Interpersonal – family, friends and peer networks. (3) Community – accessibility, school food policy and local facilities. (4) Societal – mass media and advertising, social and cultural norms, production and distribution systems and pricing policies.

References

Adams, D. (2000). Can pornography cause rape? *Journal of Social Philosophy, 31*(1), 1-43.

Boyle, K. (2000). The pornography debates – Beyond cause and effect. *Women's Studies International Forum, 23*(2), 187-195(189).

Browne, K. D., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. (2005). The influence of violent media on children and adolescents: A public-health approach. *Lancet, 365*(9460), 702.

Browne, K. D., & Pennell, A. (2000). The Influence of Film and Video on Young People and Violence. In G. Boswell (Ed.), *Violent children and adolescents: asking the question why* (pp. 151-168). London: Whurr.

Finkelhor, D., & Hashima, P. Y. (2001). The Victimisation of Children and Youth. In J. White (Ed.), *Handbook of Youth*: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Gauntlett, D. (1998). Ten things wrong with the "effects model". In O. Linne, R. Dickinson & R. Harindranath (Eds.), *Approaches to Audiences: A Reader*. London: Arnold.

Hagell, A., & Newburn, T. (1994). *Young Offenders and the Media: Viewing Habits and Preferences*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

Kline, S. (2003). Media effects: Redux or reductive? *Particip@tions, 1*(1).

Livingstone, S. (2005). Assessing the research base for the policy debate over the effects of food advertising to children. *International Journal of Advertising, 24*(3), 273-296.

Livingstone, S. M., & Helsper, E. J. (in press). Relating advertising literacy to the effects of advertising on children. *Journal of Communication*.

McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (2 ed.). London: Sage.

McQuail, D., & Windahl, S. (1993). *Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communication* (2 ed.). London: Longman.

Millwood Hargrave, A., & Livingstone, S. (2006). *Harm and Offence in Media Content: A review of the evidence*. Bristol: Intellect.

Nightingale, V., Dickenson, D., & Griff, C. (2000). *Children's Views about Media Harm*. Sydney, Australia: University of Western Sydney, Australian Broadcasting Authority.

Ofcom. (2006). *Media Literacy Audit: Report on adult media literacy*. London: Office of Communications.

Savage, J. (2004). Does viewing violent media really cause criminal violence? A methodological review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 10*, 99-128.

Schramm, W., Lyle, J., & Parker, E. B. (1961). *Television in the Lives of Our Children*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Story, M., Neumark-Sztainer, D., & French, S. (2002). Individual and environmental influences on adolescent eating behaviors. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 102*(3), S40-S51.

Together They Are Strong?

Co-Regulatory Approaches for the
Protection of Minors within the European Union

Wolfgang Schulz & Thorsten Held

Regulation in general and regulation within the media sector in particular has to face the fact that new technologies and internationalization have led to widespread and fundamental changes. These developments, which are often described as a change of former industrial societies into so-called information societies, represent a challenge for the regulating states. Traditional regulation, though successful and efficient in the past, might be unsuitable under changed circumstances. The role of the state needs to be redefined. This is even true for fundamental objectives like the protection of minors. While in most countries, the state has responsibility for preventing children from having access to content that might be harmful to them, this does not mean that regulation in this field is completely in the hands of the state. In some countries, the state has included non-state regulation into its regulatory concept. "Co-regulation" has become a buzzword when it comes to new forms of regulation. Even the European Commision's proposal for an audiovisual media services directive explicitly allows for co-regulation as a way to implement the directive's provisions including those for the protection of minors.[1] According to article 3 of the proposed directive, the member states shall encourage co-regulatory regimes in the fields coordinated by the directive. However, the term "co-regulation" includes a variety of different approaches within different countries and different sectors. In a recently finished project, the Hans-Bredow-Institute and the Institute of European Media Law examined co-regulatory approaches in the media sector in the Member States of the European Union.[2] Most co-regulatory approaches that can be found in the media sector aim at the protection of minors or the protection of consumers (the latter mostly by regulating advertising). This article will give a brief overview on the theoretical background of co-regulation and will point to some examples of existing co-regulation in the field of the protection of minors in the media.

Co-regulation: theoretical background and definition

When it comes to regulation, different concepts can be found. While command-and-control regulation and self-regulation can be seen as traditional forms of regulation, co-regulation seems to be a rather new approach that consists of more than just a combination of state regulation and self-regulation.

The growing interest in new regulatory concepts can be traced back to findings on failures of traditional regulation. Different studies have pinpointed the following main reasons for the failure of traditional "command-and-control" regulation.[3]

- Traditional regulation, such as 'command-and-control' regulation, ignores the interests of its objects, and as a result may engender resistance rather than co-operation; depending on their resources, the objects may be capable of asserting counter-strategies or evading regulation.[4]

- Furthermore, the regulating state tends to suffer increasingly from a knowledge gap.[5] The aim of the welfare state to improve the public good to the extent possible is doomed to failure in ever more complex and rapidly changing societies with fragmented knowledge.[6] Thus, an omniscient state cannot be envisaged as a model, but rather one that makes use of the knowledge of different actors. This means that cooperation with the objects of regulation, that possess the most complete knowledge of their own field, is essential.

- The above-mentioned knowledge gap appears even more dangerous for the regulatory state because information has become the most important 'finite resource' in modern societies and may become an important regulatory resource. However, in contrast to the resource 'power', information is not at the privileged disposal of the state.

- However, there are not only knowledge gaps but also gaps of understanding that cannot be overcome. According to systems theory, regulation is often an attempt to intervene in autonomous social systems, which follow their own internal operating codes. These autonomous systems include the economy, the legal system, education, the media, science and many others. It is impossible for the political system to control the operations of those systems directly.[7] Therefore, indirect forms of regulation have to be used (and have been used already).

- Moreover, traditional regulation does not seem to stimulate creative activities effectively. Initiative, innovation and commitment cannot be imposed by law.[8] Given that modern regulation has to rely on the cooperation of the objects of regulation to achieve its objectives, this aspect becomes significant as well.

- Traditional regulation tends to operate on an item-by-item basis only, not in a process-oriented manner such as would be desirable for complex regu-

latory tasks. If the state wants to influence the outcome of a process, it has to act before a trajectory has been laid out ('preventive state').[9]

- Finally, another obstacle to traditional regulation is globalisation. This facilitates international 'forum shopping' to evade national regulations (see the first point above). This trend is seen as a main reason for the failure of traditional state regulation. In addition, globalisation has created the further problem that, while the economic system now tends primarily toward multi-national or even global structures, legal regulation is still mainly the preserve of the nation state. Structures of non-governmental law now have to be taken into account by nation states.[10]

Against this background different lines of academic debate have highlighted the advantages of more indirect forms of regulation. While some academics refer to the above-mentioned system theory and doubt the ability of the state to directly intervene into autonomous operating social systems like the economy or the media,[11] others follow game theoretical findings and envisage regulation as a 'game' played between the regulatory body and the institution to be regulated.[12] The latter approach recognises that the objects of regulation – mainly regulated companies – have various strategies at their disposal, to which the regulator must respond or anticipate to ensure effective regulation. Including non-state regulation into the regulatory process can be done to avoid that the industry evades regulation or to mobilise 'countervailing power'.

The combination of state and non-state regulation can be considered as an indirect way to regulate the industry. As mentioned above different approaches of such combinations can be found. For the sake of examination and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of co-regulation, it has to be defined which kinds of approaches can be seen as co-regulatory and which not. In the recently completed study on co-regulation[13] the following definition of co-regulation was developed:

Co-regulation means combining non-state regulation and state regulation in such a way that a non-state regulatory system links up with state regulation.

According to the above-mentioned study, the non-state component of the regulatory systems includes:

- the creation of specific organisations, rules or processes

- to influence decisions by persons or, in the case of organisations, decisions by or within such entities

- as long as this is performed – at least partly – by or within the organisations or parts of society whose members are addressees of the (non-state) regulation.

With regard to the link between a non-state regulatory system and state regulation, one can speak of co-regulation if the following criteria are met:

- The system is established to achieve public policy goals targeted at social processes.

- There is a legal connection between the non-state regulatory system and the state regulation (however, the use of non-state regulation need not necessarily be mentioned in parliamentary legislation).

- The state leaves discretionary power to a non-state regulatory system.

- The state uses regulatory resources to influence the outcome of the regulatory process (to guarantee the fulfilment of the regulatory goals).

Co-regulation and protection of minors in the media

Protection of minors in the media has been identified as a field of regulation where the cooperation of the state with non-state actors might be useful.[14] Regulation in this field has to deal with the two horns of the dilemma. On the one hand, the protection of minors against interference that might impair their development is generally accepted as an important value and protected on an international level as well as in many national constitutions (in Germany under art. 2 (1) in connection with art. 1 (2) and art. 6 GG (Grundgesetz = Basic Law, the German Constitution). On the other hand, protecting minors against improper media content means no less than controlling the access to media content, which is restricted for the state since the freedom of opinion protects this communication process (see on a European level art. 10 (1) European Convention on Human Rights, in Germany as a national example art. 5 (1) GG).

Apart from this legal context, interfering in media content directly means to cope with rapidly changing formats of programs, and when it comes to internet communication, there exists a high number of completely different types of services and service providers. Furthermore, the power of the media actors is, as a rule, relatively high thus they are able to effectively establish counter strategies against regulatory burdens. Finally, there are no clear cut and eternal criteria to measure whether content might be improper for children of a given age. Therefore, protection of minors is a regulatory process in which the yardstick is continually redefined within the cultural context.

Some of the above outlined problems with regulating media content to protect children can be more effectively dealt with if the state is not the sole regulator but co-regulatory arrangements exist as described above. However, fundamental problems are connected with such a step. State procedures are legitimized democratically and follow the rule of law. For new co-regulatory settings, this cannot be assumed as a given fact. Debates revolving around the term "governance" show the relevance of those issues.[15] Entrusting the industry with regulating itself has, not withstanding several advantages, always the risk of setting the

fox to run the henhouse. The involvement of non-industry-actors like media watchdogs or associations for the protection of minors might not only be advisable to establish accountability and legitimacy but also to introduce the perspective of others than the industry into the process of defining what is harmful or disintegrating for minors.

However, several countries have already opted for co-regulatory settings to protect minors in the media.[16]

Co-regulation approaches
for the protection of minors within the European Union

When it comes to the protection of minors co-regulatory approaches can be found in different European countries. The fact that the term "co-regulation" includes quite different concepts can be illustrated by looking at the approaches in the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the classification of television programmes, movies, videos and DVDs can be seen as a co-regulatory system. While on the state side the Commissariaat voor de Media (CvdM, Dutch Media Authority) is responsible for regulating the media, non-state regulation is performed by the Nederlands Instituut voor de Classificatie van Audiovisual Media (NICAM, the Dutch Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media), founded 1999 after the government had announced it would be willing to shoulder the costs of such an undertaking if all relevant media organisations were to participate.

The classification system, called "Kijkwijzer" (in the double meaning of "Watch wiser" or "Viewing guide") was developed by independent experts and launched in 2001 by NICAM. It introduces a uniform classification system for film, TV, video and DVD.[17]

In this system, classification is done by the broadcasters, and film and video companies themselves. Specially trained employees use a coding form to describe the content. They do so by answering several questions regarding the appearance of violence, frightening elements, sexual acts, discrimination, drug abuse and bad/ coarse language (possible answers are "yes" or "no" and "never", "once or a few times" or "often" respectively).

A Kijkwijzer computer programme then works out the classification of the given production.

By using special pictograms, broadcasters, film and video companies inform the viewers about the classification. In addition to an age recommendation (all

ages, 6 years, 12 years and 16 years), pictograms are used to display the reason for the recommendation: violence, fear, sex, discrimination, drug and/ or alcohol abuse and coarse language.

The pictograms can be found in television listing magazines, cinemas, film guides, film websites, advertisements, posters and on the packaging of DVDs and videos. The pictograms are also shown at the beginning of a television programme.

Television programmes classified with the classification "12 years" must not be broadcast before 8 pm. According to a second watershed, programmes with the classification "16 years" should not be broadcast before 10 pm.

As long as a provider is a member of NICAM, NICAM is responsible for supervisory compliance including the handling of complaints. It can impose the following sanctions: warnings; fines (the maximum has recently been raised to • 135.000), or revoking the NICAM-membership (only in the case of very severe or repeated violations).

As far as television is concerned, the Mediawet (Dutch Media Act[18]) contains specific requirements for the non-state regulatory system including NICAM: The Media Act states that programmes that may impair the physical, mental or moral development of persons under the age of sixteen can be broadcast only if the operators are members of an organisation accredited by the government on certain criteria laid down in the Media Act, and are subject to the rules and supervision of that accredited organisation.

According to the Media Act, an organisation will qualify for accreditation only if:

(a) Independent supervision by the organisation of compliance with the regulations is guaranteed,

(b) provision has been made for adequate involvement of stakeholders, including in any event consumer representatives, establishments that have obtained broadcasting time, experts in the field of audiovisual media and producers of audiovisual media, and

(c) the financial position of the organisation ensures proper implementation of the activities.

Following the provisions of the Media Act, NICAM was accredited by a decision of the government of 22 February 2001. NICAM is funded by both industry and state. If NICAM failed to meet the legal conditions stated in the Dutch Media Act, the government could decide to withdraw the accreditation.

Broadcasters who do not opt for membership of NICAM fall directly under the supervision of the CvdM. In addition, CvdM has to supervise the absolute prohibition on broadcasting content that can cause serious damage to minors.

Recently the CvdM has been entrusted with the task of performing so-called "meta supervision" of NICAM. Each year NICAM will have to report to the CvdM on how it will safeguard the quality of the classification. In addition, NICAM will have to demonstrate to the CvdM to what extent the classifications are reliable, valid, stable, consistent and precise.

Great Britain

The Communications White Paper of December 2000 already recommended 'co-regulation' as a promising concept. Co-regulation was understood as a form of deregulation. Under the Communications Act of 2003,[19] the state regulator Office of Communications (Ofcom) is required to review its own activities to ensure that it does not impose unnecessary regulatory burdens on telecommunications operators and to consider whether self-regulation or co-regulation is appropriate.[20] Relative to premium rate services (mainly services that provide content transmitted by means of an electronic communications network, e.g. content that can be received via telephone), the Communications Act of 2003 envisions that there is an approved code of conduct and that there is an "enforcement authority", this being a body that under the code has the responsibility for enforcement.[21] Ofcom has approved the code of the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of the Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). Compliance with the ICSTIS code is a specific condition imposed by Ofcom on premium rate operators.

ICSTIS, founded in 1986, is a non-commercial organisation financed by the industry. The members of its committee have to be independent of providers of premium rate services. A secretary assists the committee. ICSTIS deals with complaints by the public, supervises the premium rate services, recommends measures to ensure compliance with the codes and publishes information on its work.

The non-state organisation issues a code of practice for providers of premium rate services, the tenth edition of which came into force on 1 January 2004, after the Communications Act had made it necessary to review the code.[22] It was amended in July of 2005 to implement recommendations of the Ofcom review and to include specifically tailored provisions for new forms of premium rate services such as directory enquiry services, subscription services and SMS chat services.[23] Each provider of premium rate services is bound to comply with the provisions in the code. The service provider has to forward its address and the range of numbers to be used to ICSTIS before launching the service. Some service providers are not allowed to start their service (e.g. those offering "live conversation") until written permission has been granted by the ICSTIS Committee.

The codes contain rules, which guarantee the 'legality', 'decency' and 'honesty' of the content. Thus, the objectives of the code are as follows: the protection of minors, the protection of human dignity, and protection of consumers as far as pricing information, etc. are concerned. The code also contains special rules for so-called live services, services for children, gambling services and online services.

Anyone can submit complaints to ICSTIS, which then initiates measures to enforce the requirements of the codes. The secretary also supervises the services and is authorized to submit complaints to the committee.

ICSTIS has three types of procedures at its disposal for dealing with complaints: an informal procedure for minor breaches of a code, a standard procedure and an emergency procedure for major breaches and in case of urgent calls for action. When using the informal procedure, ICSTIS informs the provider that there

has been a breach of code. If the provider accepts that the complaint is valid, it can take action to end the infringement. If it does not, ICSTIS moves on to the standard procedure. The provider is thereby requested to issue within a given period of time (normally five working days) the required information to ICSTIS. Based on this information, the secretary drafts a report and forwards it to a sub-committee of ICSTIS, the so-called complaints panel, which makes the final decision on whether there has indeed been a breach of the code. If immediate action is necessary, the secretary starts an investigation in respect of the complaint filed. It informs three members of the committee of the findings. If all three members agree that a major breach of code occurred, which must be dealt with immediately, the provider is ordered to discontinue the service. At the same time, a request is issued to the network provider to withhold all payments to the service provider. If ICSTIS does not succeed in informing the service provider, the network provider is requested to block access to the service in question.

Sanctions available to ICSTIS include formal reprimands, fines, an order to pay compensation, blocking of services and prohibiting companies or individuals from offering premium rate services.

As said above, the ICSTIS code was approved by Ofcom. The Communications Act contains criteria a code must meet to obtain Ofcom approval. One of these criteria is that there must be a person who, under the code, has the function of administering and enforcing it and who is sufficiently independent of the premium rate service providers. The provisions of the code must be objectively justifiable, must not discriminate unduly against particular persons, must be proportionate to what the provisions are intended to achieve and must be transparent in relation to what the provisions are intended to achieve.

If Ofcom later comes to the conclusion that the code is inappropriate to regulate premium rate services, it can withdraw approval.

The Communications Act gives Ofcom the power to set conditions for regulating the content and provisions of premium rate services. Such conditions are binding on premium rate service providers and may relate only to compliance with the premium rate services code approved by Ofcom or, in the absence of a code, an order made by Ofcom. As said above, compliance with the ICSTIS code is a condition imposed by Otcom on premium rate operators. The Office has, as required by the Communications Act, drawn up guidelines on penalties. The guidelines state that Ofcom should bear in mind a number of factors when imposing any penalties, including the fact that the company in question has already been subject to sanctions in connexion with the same conduct by another regulatory body.

With regard to commercial content accessed via mobile phones, ICSTIS has established a subsidiary, the Independent Mobile Classification Body (IMCB). This development was at the request of the six mobile telephony operators in the UK, which together established a code of conduct in January 2004.

The IMCB has responsibility for still pictures; video and audiovisual material; and mobile games, including Java-based games. The main function of the IMCB

is to set a classification framework according to which content providers themselves may classify their content. IMCB does also have the function for the investigation of complaints about inappropriate classification. However, complaints in the first instance should be made to the mobile operator. Although a subsidiary of ICSTIS, IMCB is funded and run separately.

Germany

Protection of minors in the movie and video games sector

When it comes to the protection of minors in the film sector in Germany, non-state bodies have traditionally played an important role: they have been, and still are, responsible for age-classification. The federal Jugendschutzgesetz (JuSchG, Federal Act for the Protection of Minors) distinguishes between different levels of content: content that is harmful to children (jugendgefährdend) is classified by the federal Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien[24] (BPjM, Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons). Material that is classified as harmful to minors must not be shown in places where children have access and must not be provided to children. Content that is not harmful to children, but is capable of impairing children's development (entwicklungsbeeinträchtigend) is rated by the Oberste Landesjugendbehörden (State Authorities Responsible for the Protection of Minors). However, this age classification (suitable for all children and adolescents, 6 years and older, 12 years, 16 years, or not suitable for children and adolescents) has been handed over to non-state bodies: Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Filmwirtschaft[25] (FSK, Film Classification Board) is responsible for the age-classification of films. Age classification of video games falls within the responsibility of the Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle[26] (USK, Association for the Self-Monitoring of Entertainment Software).

Persons and organisations offering the respective content or granting access to it have to comply with classifications made by FSK and USK.

While prior to 2003, FSK classified films on the basis of an agreement between the states, the new JuSchG explicitly stipulates that age classification may be performed by non-state bodies ("Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle"). According to the JuSchG, the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors may agree on a joint procedure including decisions of "Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle" funded or supported by industry associations. This agreement may determine that decisions of "Organisationen freiwilliger Selbstkontrolle" are seen as decisions of the state authorities as long as a state authority does not make a different decision.

Although FSK and USK are non-state bodies, there is some state involvement: The majority of the members of the examination boards of FSK is nominated by state authorities. A permanent representative of the state authorities is the chairperson of the examination boards. Representatives of the state and the federal government are also members of the advisory board of USK. In addition, a per-

manent representative of the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors takes part in the examination of video games. This person is responsible for the official labelling of the video games subsequent to the decision of the USK.

According to the rules of FSK and USK, the state authorities that are responsible for the protection of minors may request a second examination of a film or a video game by FSK or USK. In this case, a so-called "Appellationsausschuss" consisting of seven members, decides on the rating of a film. The FSK committee consists of four representatives of the state authorities in addition to the chairman. At USK, all members of the committee are representatives of the state authorities. The rules of FSK and USK contain further provisions regarding a second examination: At FSK, the applicant or – in some cases – the overruled minority within the FSK may appeal a decision. In this case, a so-called "Hauptausschuss" decides on the case. When it comes to USK, the applicant and – in some cases – the permanent representative of the state authorities may appeal a decision. A special "Prüfgremium" decides on the appeal. The applicant and the permanent representative of the state authorities may appeal again (the so-called "Beiratsverfahren").

Compliance with FSK and USK ratings is enforced by the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors. Besides this, there is a non-state procedure: If a film is shown that is not in compliance with FSK ratings, a so-called supervision procedure (Überwachungsverfahren) is conducted by the association FSK is part of. This procedure may lead to a contractual penalty.

Protection of minors in the broadcasting and Internet sector

The enactment of the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag (JMStV, Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media) in 2003 extended the responsibility of non-state bodies ("Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle") and their scope for decision-making. In order to secure compliance with the terms of the interstate treaty, it established a certification requirement for non-state bodies. In the television sector, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Fernsehen[27] (FSF, Organisation for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of Television) was certified under the new law. Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter[28] (FSM, Association for the Voluntary Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers) gained certification for the internet sector. On the state side, responsibility for the supervision of broadcasters and providers lies with the Landesmedienanstalten (State Media Authorities) and the Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz[29] (KJM, Commission for the Protection of Minors in Electronic Media). The KJM makes all decisions regarding the protection of minors to ensure the consistent application of the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag while the Landesmedienanstalten are responsible for executing these decisions.

For the broadcasting sector, it is the task of the certified "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" to classify content and to ensure the enforcement

of rules. Furthermore, it may make exemptions to the watershed regulation for the broadcasting of films, which had been given a rating by the non-state body for film (FSK, see above) under the Jugendschutzgesetz (Federal Act for the Protection of Minors) in the past.

With regard to so-called "Telemedien" (telemedia, mainly internet services), content does not have to be submitted to an "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" beforehand. However, if there is a breach of the law, certified "Einrichtungen der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" have to deal with the matter. FSM has set up a code (Verhaltenskodex Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter e.V.), which refers to the rules of the state law, the JMStV. There is also a special code for search engines (Verhaltenssubkodex für Suchmaschinen-anbieter).

Under the JMStV, instruments are in place to regulate non-state regulation, of which the most important is that "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" need certification. Certification is only granted if:

- independence and competence of the members of the control committees are ensured;

- adequate funding is guaranteed by a multitude of providers;

- guidelines for the decisions of the committees have been worked out in such a way that in practice effective protection of minors is ensured;

- procedural rules have been worked out on the extent of examination, on the obligation on the participating providers to submit relevant content to the "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle", on sanctions and on the revision of decisions (organisations responsible for the protection of minors must be given the chance to request a revision);

- it is ensured that providers are heard before a decision is made, the reasons for the decision are given in writing and are disclosed to interested persons and

- a body responsible for dealing with complaints exists.

Certification may be granted for four years, but may be renewed.

Certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" are supervised by the KJM. If the decisions of a non-state organisation are not in line with the JMStV, the KJM has the authority to revoke its certifications. The JMStV does not stipulate any other sanctions that can be imposed on the non-state organisations.

Where certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" exist, the powers of state regulatory bodies to impose sanctions on broadcasters are limited.

The state media authorities and the KJM may not impose sanctions on broadcasters as long as the following requirements are met: The respective broadcasting content had been submitted to a certified "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" before this content was broadcast, the provider had followed

the decision of this non-state body and the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" had not acted beyond the scope of its discretionary power. When the rules of the JMStV have been broken by the broadcast of content that could not be submitted to a "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" beforehand (e.g. live broadcasts) or by an internet service (Telemedien), certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" have to deal with the matter. As long as a provider follows the decision of the non-state body and this body does not act beyond the scope of its discretionary power, the state media authorities and the KJM cannot impose sanctions on the provider. However, in the case of broadcasting this non-state regulatory "shield" only gives "protection" if the broadcaster is affiliated with the licensed "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" (such affiliation is not necessary, if the respective content is submitted to the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" before the content is broadcast). Internet providers need not be affiliated to the "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" to be protected by the non-state shield. For them it is sufficient to follow the decisions of a licensed "Einrichtung der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" – irrespective of whether they are affiliated to this body or not.

When certified "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" "deal with the matter" this includes imposing sanctions. "Einrichtungen der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" will be certified only if they have issued procedural rules, including rules on possible sanctions.

Besides monitoring by the state media authorities, complaints help to find illegal content. "Einrichtung der Freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle" can be certified only if it is possible to file complaints with them.

Other co-regulatory approaches within the European Union

Co-regulatory approaches for the protection of minors can also be found in Austria, Italy and Slovenia.[30] In Austria, the non-state Jugendmedienkommission (JMK, Commission for the Protection of Minors against Improper Media Contents), which was founded to advise the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture, makes recommendations on age classification of movies, DVDs and CD-ROMs. The state authorities of the Bundesländer (states) that are responsible for age classification regularly follow JMK's recommendations. Some members of JMK are representatives of the federal government and of the states. All members of JMK are appointed by the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture. In addition, JMK is partly funded by the Federation (and partly by the film distributors).

In Italy, the Codice di Autoregolamentazione TV e Minori (Code for TV and Children) has been formally incorporated into a state law, resulting in its obligations being legally binding even for companies that are not signatories. Protection of minors in the internet is addressed by the non-state Code "Internet e Minori". A non-state Comitato di Garanzia per l'attuazione del Codice di autoregola-

mentazione Internet e Minori (Guarantee Committee) is responsible for supervising and enforcement of the Code. This Committee was established by an inter-ministerial decree issued by the Minister for Communication and the Minister for Innovation and Technology. For mobile services, the principal Italian mobile phone operators have signed, under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications, the Codice di condotta per l'offerta dei servizi a sovrapprezzo e la tutela dei minori (Code of Conduct for the Provision of Premium Services and the Protection of Children). The Code mandates the establishment of a non-state Organo di Garanzia (Guarantee Committee), whose task is the coordination of the activities aimed at updating and revising the present provisions of the Code of Conduct. Some members of the Committee are representatives of the Ministry of Communications.

In Slovenia, Sveta za Radiodifuzijo (SRDF, Broadcasting Council) and the broadcasters of TV programmes signed an agreement regarding the television programmes not suitable for minors. The SRDF is an independent expert body in the field of broadcasting regulation and it assists state regulator Agencije za pošto in elektronske komunikacije Republike Slovenije (APEK, Agency for Post and Electronic Communication). The agreement has introduced two types of visual symbols for TV programmes that are broadcast between 5 am and midnight. One symbol shows that a programme is not suitable for children and minors under fifteen; the other symbol is used if a programme is suitable for children and minors only if they watch television in the company of parents or other adults.

Co-regulation approaches beyond Europe: the Australian example

Co-regulation exists also beyond Europe. The Australian approach may even be seen as a role model for co-regulation:[31]

Co-operative regulatory systems in the broadcasting sector were first introduced in 1992 through the Broadcasting Services Act of 1992.[32] The new Act created a new state regulatory authority called the Australian Broadcasting Authority. On 1 July 2005, the Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Australian Communications Authority merged to become the Australian Communications and Media Authority[33] (ACMA).

Key aspects of content regulation are the development of industry codes of practice approved by the state regulatory authority and the administration of a system of complaints submitted by members of the public.

According to the law, groups representing providers of broadcasting services develop, in consultation with the state regulatory authority, codes of practice that are applicable to the broadcasting operations of a certain section of the industry.

Each sector of the broadcasting industry has developed a representative group for setting up codes: Free TV Australia[34] (FTA), Commercial Radio Australia[35] (CRA), Australian subscription television and radio association[36] (ASTRA), Community Broadcasting Association of Australia[37] (CBAA).

The codes developed by the broadcasting industry deal with youth protection through various measures; the main one being age-classification systems and the related broadcast time restrictions for certain classified material. Partly, the codes deal with classification of programmes according to the film classification system (administered by a separate state body, the Office of Film and Literature Classification Board).

Once an industry group has developed a code of practice, the ACMA must include that code in its Register of Codes (and it becomes effective) if the ACMA is satisfied that:

- the code of practice provides appropriate community safeguards for the matters covered by the code; and

- the code is endorsed by a majority of the providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry; and

- members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code.

Once a code is included in the Register of Codes it applies to all licensees in that section of the broadcasting industry regardless of whether they have had a part in its development or not, thus making participation in the code system mandatory.

The ACMA reserves the power to create industry standards at any time if the industry does not follow the request for a code. This power may be exercised even if an industry code fails to a certain degree.

Members of the public have the right to complain about a breach of registered codes. The Act requires that the complaint must be made in the first instance to the relevant broadcaster. Only if the complainant has not received a response within 60 days after making the complaint, or receives a response that the person considers inadequate, the person may submit a complaint to the ACMA.

If the ACMA finds that a code of practice has been breached, it has no direct remedy available although the ACMA may stipulate that compliance with a code is a condition of a broadcaster's licence where it considers this appropriate. If that licence condition is subsequently breached, then the ACMA is able to issue a notice to remedy that breach within a period of up to a month. If compliance with that notice is not forthcoming, an offence under the Act has been committed for which a court of law may impose a significant fine.

Certain matters are still left regulated by stricter regulation, by way of standards made by the state regulatory authority itself and directly enforceable as licence conditions. The quota of Australian content and content specially made for children on television is regulated by standards.

Conclusion

The examples show that the existing co-regulatory approaches differ when it comes to the task of involved non-state regulation as well as the link between state regulation and non-state regulation. For example, in Germany there is a pre-rating of movies and broadcasting programmes done by non-state bodies. Rating is done by the publishers themselves in the Netherlands. Great Britain's regulation of premium services as well as broadcasting regulation in Australia rely on non-state codes including provisions for the protection of minors.

With regard to the regulatory resources the state uses to influence the outcome of the regulatory process to guarantee the fulfilment of the regulatory goals, different approaches can be observed as well: In Germany's broadcasting and internet regulation the non-state bodies that are involved in the co-regulatory process are certified by a state body if they meet certain requirements. The same applies to the NICAM-approach in the Netherlands. In Great Britain's regulation of premium rate services and Australia's broadcasting regulation, the non-state code has to be registered. Other countries do not use the instrument of registration to regulate non-state regulation: Instead, the state influences the outcome of the non-state regulatory process by state representatives being members of the non-state bodies.

Are all these different approaches capable of preventing children from having access to content that might impair their development? Advantages of integrating non-state regulation into the regulatory concept can be seen in the division of work between state and industry (especially as applicable to huge volumes of content of different content providers as on the internet), greater acceptance of the regulatory regime within the industry and the fact that in some cases, non-state regulation might react more quickly to technological and social changes than state regulation is able to respond. On the other hand, there is the risk of non-state regulation being captured or being used as a smoke screen by the regulated industry that wants to avoid regulation. According to existing studies[38], the success of such new regulatory approaches depends on a variety of different factors like the existence of effective and graduated sanctions, incentives for the industry to participate, the culture of the respective country and the respective sector, the severity of possible failures, the existence of a "safety net" in case of failures and the convergence of interests of the different participants of the industry with regard to the regulatory objectives.

The recently completed study on co-regulation shows that there is no reason to believe that co-regulatory approaches are not capable of fulfilling regulatory tasks like the protection of minors.[39] However, the effectiveness of the approach has to be examined in each case. It is not possible to refer to the results of this study in detail in this article. However, one insight is that evaluation requirements are necessary to ensure the permanent adjustment of the existing system.

Another result is that traditional process objectives like openness, transparency and participation (e.g. of interests groups) are not always guaranteed when non-state regulation has been integrated into state regulation.

Overall, co-regulation has the potential to lead to a high level of protection of minors against content that might impair their development. However, it depends on the concrete shaping of the regulatory system whether minors are effectively protected. The approaches in place and their evaluation are capable of helping to learn more about the different ways to achieve the regulatory objectives.

Notes

1. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/modernisation/proposal_2005/index_en.htm.
2. The draft final report Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector* is available at www.hans-bredow-institut.de/forschung/recht/co-reg/Co-Reg-Draft_Final_ Report.pdf.
3. For a summary of these findings see Schulz/ Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, pp 11+.
4. See Renate Mayntz, „Regulative Politik in der Krise?", *Sozialer Wandel in Westeuropa. Verhandlungen des 19. Deutschen Soziologentages*, Joachim Matthes, (ed.), Berlin: 1979, pp. 55+.; Baldwin/ Cave, *Understanding Regulation*, Oxford: 1999, pp. 35+.
5. Jörg Ukrow, *Die Selbstkontrolle im Medienbereich in Europa*, München, Berlin: 2000, pp. 10+.
6. Karl-Heinz Ladeur, "Coping with Uncertainty: Ecological Risks and the Proceduralization of Environmental law", *Environmental Law and Ecological Responsibility,* Gunther Teubner, Lindsay Farmer and Declan Murphy, eds., West Sussex: 1994, pp 301+.
7. See Mayntz and Scharpf, (eds.), *Gesellschaftliche Selbstregelung und politische Steuerung*, Frankfurt am Main et al.: 1995.
8. Renate Mayntz, „Politische Steuerung: Anmerkungen zu einem theoretischen Paradigma", *Jahrbuch zur Staats- und Verwaltungswissenschaft*, Vol. 1., Thomas Ellwein, Joachim Jens Hesse, Renate Mayntz and Fritz W. Scharpf, (eds.), Baden-Baden: 1987, p. 98.
9. Gunnar-Folke Schuppert, „Das Konzept der regulierten Selbstregulierung als Bestandteil einer als Regelungswissenschaft verstandenen Rechtswissenschaft", *Die Verwaltung, special issue* „Regulierte Selbstregulierung" 2001, Beiheft 4: pp. 201+.
10. Gunther Teubner,"The King's Many Bodies: The Self-Deconstruction of Law's Hierarchy", *Law and Society Review* 31, 1997: pp. 763+.
11. See, for example, Gunther Teubner, *Law as an Autopoietic System*, Oxford: 1993; Klaus Eder, „Prozedurale Rationalität", *Zeitschrift für Rechtssoziologie* (ZfRSoz), Vol. 7 (1986, pp. 1+; Helmut Willke, *Supervision des Staates*, Frankfurt am Main: 1997.
12. See, for example, Ian Ayres and John Braithwaite, *Responsive Regulation*, Oxford: 1992, p. 17.
13. Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*. (see Fn. 2)
14. See the findings of Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*. (see Fn. 2)
15. See Gunnar Folke Schuppert: „Governance-Leistungen der Zivilgesellschaft", *Zivilgesellschaft – national und transnationale*, Dieter Gosewinkel, Dieter Rucht, Wolfgang van den Daele, Jürgen Kocka (eds.), Berlin: 2004, pp. 245+, 253 focusing on the theory of legal pluralism; Hans-Heinrich Trute, Doris Kühlers, „Governance in der Verwaltungsrechtswissenschaft", *Die Verwaltung* 2004, pp. 451+; James N. Rosenau: "Governance, Order and Change in World Politics", *Governance without government: order and change in world politics,* James N Rosenau, Ernst-Otto Czempiel (eds.), Cambridge: 2001, pp. 1+.
16. For examples, see below, but also the various country reports in our study Hans-Bredow-Institut/ EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*. (see Fn. 2)
17. See http://www.kijkwijzer.nl.
18. See http://www.cvdm.nl/documents/mediaact.pdf.
19. See http://www.communicationsact.gov.uk/.

20. See Communications Act of 2003, Part 1, Section 6.
21. See Communications Act of 2003, Part 1, Section 121.
22. See ICSTIS Report No. 97 of May 2003 available at www.icstis.org.uk/pdfs_news/IMR97.pdf.
23. The code of practise is available at www.icstis.org.uk.
24. See http://www.bundespruefstelle.de.
25. See http://www.fsk-online.de.
26. See http://www.usk.de.
27. See http://www.fsf.de.
28. See http://www.fsm.de.
29. See http://www.kjm-online.de.
30. For a detailed description, see Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*. (see Fn. 2)
31. See Schulz/Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, pp. 22+.
32. The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 is available at http://www.comlaw.gov.au and http://www.austlii.edu.au.
33. See http://www.acma.gov.au.
34. See http://www.freetvaust.com.au.
35. See http://www.commercialradio.com.au.
36. See http://www.astra.org.au.
37. See http://www.cbaa.org.au.
38. See Ian Ayres and John Braithwaite, *Responsive Regulation,* Oxford: 1992, p. 81; Schulz/Held, *Regulated Self-Regulation*, Eastleigh: 2004, p. 61+.
39. See Hans-Bredow-Institut/EMR, *Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector*. (see Fn. 2)

Child Protection Issues in Chinese Media[1]

Bu Wei

In China, the issue of the growth of vulnerable children is gaining more and more attention from the State and society. *The National Program of Action for Child Development in China 2001-2010*, issued in 2001, states that we shall

> pay close attention to girls and children with special difficulties, and ensure that they have equal opportunities of enjoying healthy growth and participation in development.

Therefore, we should

> provide better conditions for the healthy growth of orphans, children with disabilities and abandoned infants through increasing the input to child welfare efforts and improving facilities and services,

> strengthen the establishment and management of relief and protection centers for street children, and

> strengthen the construction of formal rehabilitation institutions for children with disabilities.[2]

In recent years, an increase has been observed in mass media coverage of the issue of child protection. The issue has entered public spheres through the 'agenda setting' of the mass media. Given the important role and influence of mass media in China, it is necessary for us to survey mass media coverage of vulnerable children, so as to urge society to pay more attention to this issue and take due actions.

However, there has been very little research on mass media coverage of child protection in the communication field. The sources searched showed that merely 12 articles on this topic were published in the major periodicals of journalism

and communication in China's mainland during the period between January 1990 and June 2003, including *Journalism and Communication* (sponsored by the Institute of Journalism and Communication, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), *Modern Communication* (sponsored by the Beijing Broadcasting Institute), *TV Research* (sponsored by the CCTV – China Central Television), *China Radio and TV Academic Journal* (sponsored by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television), *Journal of International Communication* (sponsored by the School of Journalism, Renmin University of China), *Journalism School* (sponsored by the Fudan University in Shanghai), and *The Journalist Monthly* (sponsored by Wenhui-xinmin, United Press Group).

One of the 12 articles was published in 1997 and entitled 'Media and Protection of the Rights of the Child'.[3] Here, the author explores mainland China's laws and regulations on media and the protection of the child and their practice. In Section Four, 'Journalists' Consciousness of Protection of the Rights of the Child', the author found that some reports on violence against children, child labor, sexual abuse of children, abduction and trafficking of children, and abandonment of babies mainly consisted of denouncements and sensational descriptions, neglecting the legal content of the cases and showing a lack of consciousness of protection of the rights of the child.

The other eleven articles are all narrations of the reporters' experiences during the coverage, published in *The Journalist Monthly*. Of these, three are about the journalists' experiences during their interviews with impoverished children, and how they sympathized with and helped the children.[4] Two are about how one can call on society to save children suffering from serious diseases[5] – for example, a serial report on children with leukemia gave prominence to the formulation of local regulations on insurance for children's hospitalization in Shanghai. Five are summaries of experiences in the coverage of 'cracking down on abduction and trafficking of children', where the reporters helped the abducted children contact their parents, rescued the children together with the police, and sent the children back home, all through news and serial reports such as 'Action of Returning Children Home'.[6] Another document is an analysis of a case of a son killing his mother,[7] where the author criticizes the violations of the Law of Protection of Minors in the coverage, including revealing the minor's name, the school he went to, his mother's name and other private information.

The other two important articles, 'A Research Report on Girls' Image Reported by Chinese Mainstream Newspapers'[8] and 'Child Labor Issues in the Chinese Media,'[9] were published outside the communication field. Both are results of content analyses. The former, using a sample of reports on girls from six mainstream newspapers, analyzes from a gender perspective the achievements and problems of girls reported on in mainstream newspapers. The latter, surveying all the reports on child labor from http://www.people.com.cn, attempts to explain the phenomenon of child labor in reality by analyzing the frequency of media coverage of the issue of child labor, number of child laborers, their jobs and living conditions, and ways to save them, in order to explore ways to solve the problem.

The study

From the limited material, we can see that child victims of violence, child labor, abducted children, children suffering from serious diseases, impoverished children and discriminated girls have entered the visual field of researchers and journalists, who are trying to promote social protection of these children through research and reports. But research in this area has rarely included children affected by AIDS, disabled children and abandoned babies. A series of questions require more systematic studies, such as the exact number of reports on vulnerable children in the mass media, how the media describe the issue of vulnerable children, and public attitudes toward the issue. As the problems of vulnerable children are usually based in China's impoverished areas and in the marginalized populations of cities, one significant aim of the study summarized in this article was to analyze in more detail the issue of vulnerable children and public attitudes in the media contents.

By way of content analysis, this study, sponsored by UNICEF China, describes and analyzes how child protection issues have been or have not been addressed by Chinese media, and how media have reported on these issues. The study therefore explores Chinese society's awareness of the situation, as well as the nature of, causes of and solutions to the problems of vulnerable children.

Research questions and method

The study defines vulnerable children as child groups whose survival, development and rights are being threatened.

According to this definition, vulnerable children include:

1) disabled children
2) abandoned and orphaned children
3) children of migrants
4) street children
5) children trafficked within the country and across borders
6) child laborers
7) sexually exploited children
8) violated children, i.e., child abuse including physical, psychological, and sexual violence from family and relatives, school teachers, peers and community
9) girls with survival or developmental obstacles due to gender discrimination (including higher school drop-out rate among girls, unequal treatment by parents of a boy and a girl at home, the higher birth rate of boys, gender stereotyping)
10) children and youth who abuse drugs

11) children with HIV or from AIDS families
12) children of poor families
13) children of criminals and drug addicts
14) children in conflict with the law and juvenile justice.

Information presented on television and in newspapers related to the above-mentioned subjects was collected and analyzed. The study also measured children's background in relation to each of the fourteen categories:

1) ethnic background of the children in the media coverage
2) age group of the children in the coverage
3) gender of the children in the coverage

Questions

The main research questions of the content analysis were the following:

1) Issues and context: What issues or problems are Chinese children in the media actually facing? What are the causes and wider socio-economic context that give rise to the problems? And what is the family/public/government perception of these issues?

2) Legislation and law enforcement and their effectiveness: Which laws related to the issue are mentioned in the media? Does the report mention whether there are enough legislative measures to address the issue and how effective they are? Is there any report on law enforcement?

3) Action taken: What kind of action to address the issue is reported on? Who is responsible for the action, where and how? Is there any mention of support from the public, community institutions, alternative care (i.e., foster care) and NGOs?

The measures of media coverage include:

1) frequency of coverage in the media
2) date of distributed issue
3) page of coverage and its title
4) kind of content (news, drama, documentary, talk show, etc.)
5) ratio of domestic incidents/contents from abroad
6) ratio of urban/rural coverage
7) geographic presentation
8) treatment of children as a victim, as a participant, or the like
9) length of the coverage (and follow-ups)
10) attitudes toward/perception of the child issue
11) protection of the child's identity.

Sample

According to *Statistical Communiqué of The People's Republic of China on the 2002 National Economic and Social Development*[10] released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2003, there were (in 2002) 306 broadcasting stations, 770 medium- and short-wave radio transmitting and relaying stations (with radio coverage of 93.2% of the population), 360 television stations (with TV coverage of 94.5% of the population), and 96.38 million cable television users reached throughout the mainland of China. In 2001, 2,111 newspapers and 8,889 magazines[11] were issued.

It was impossible to cover all media in our study, which is why we could only select some representative media. When making the selection, we mainly considered the following elements: (1) the media coverage – both national and local media should be considered; (2) the media type – comprehensive, professional and segmented media should be considered; (3) the media category – television and newspapers should be included; and (4) the circulation – high circulation and low circulation media should be included. We selected the following media for the study, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1.   Media Sample

Medium	Coverage	Media Type	Media Category	Circulation Number of Average Issue[12]
CCTV Xinwen Lianbo	National	Comprehensive	Television	Estimated 0.1 billion audiences
People's Daily	National	Comprehensive	Newspaper	High circulation: 1.77 million
Beijing Youth Daily	Beijing	Segmented	Newspaper	Mid circulation: 449 thousand
Wenhui Daily	Shanghai	Comprehensive	Newspaper	Mid circulation: 293.8 thousand
Yangcheng Evening Paper	Guangzhou	Evening paper	Newspaper	High circulation: 1.5 million
China Women's News	National	Segmentation	Newspaper	Low circulation: 106 thousand
Legal Daily	National	Professional	Newspaper	Mid circulation: estimated 400-600 thousand[13]

We should point out that this is not a standard representative sample. As national media, *People's Daily* and CCTV Xinwen Lianbo have an incomparable influence on the public. Inevitably, they are the media we should pay close attention to. However, how many reports in such media are actually related to child protection issues? *China Women's News* is also a national medium, but its circulation is much lower and, furthermore, it is a segmented newspaper sponsored by the National Women's Federation. As 'women' and 'children' are often associated with weak groups in China, *China Women's News* reports a great deal on child pro-

tection issues. Particularly, it has a special page – 'For the Children' – on each Wednesday. *Legal Daily* is the only large national comprehensive daily newspaper circulating in domestic and overseas markets, which focuses on promoting democracy and legislative construction. It may concentrate some of its reports on child protection issues. Therefore, *China Women's News* and *Legal Daily* were our study targets, as well.

It was difficult for us to select a sample of local newspapers representing the more than 2,000 newspapers in the country due to our limited budget and other concerns. As a result, the selection of local newspapers was mainly focused on Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the top three flourishing areas in China. The selected newspapers in these three areas include one daily, one segmented and one evening paper. *Wenhui Daily* in Shanghai mainly targets intellectuals with its emphasis on such areas as education, technology, literature and arts, hygiene, theory, science, sports and travel. *Beijing Youth Daily*, sponsored by the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League, reports specially on news that concerns Beijing youth. *Yangcheng Evening Paper* is one of the evening papers with the highest circulation in the country. Like other evening papers, it is closer to the lifestyle of common people. Owing to the characteristics of these three local newspapers, *Beijing Youth Daily* might have more reports related to child protection than do the other two papers.

The study included all reports, news, articles, comments and pictures on issues of child protection in the seven media, published from January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2002. The unit of analysis (the smallest element of the content analysis) was the entire article or story with an independent caption. There were 1,509 units of analysis.

The method of selecting these units was as follows: (1) select all reports according to keywords related to the 14 kinds of vulnerable children mentioned previously, as well as keywords related to the rights of the child, the interests of children, child protection, and protection of minors; (2) read these reports and select those that included a child protection issue in more than half of the space allotted to the report; (3) download these reports and organize them.

Main findings

The purpose of the research project was, thus, to analyze the social awareness of and attitude toward the existence of, conditions of, quality of life of, origins of vulnerable children and the solutions to their problems. We can claim that recognition in the media is fairly consistent with social reality on the ground that the media and society are under control of the same ideology. We made careful deductions concerning the findings of the content analysis. The main findings are summarized in the following.

Reports on vulnerable children

The problems related to vulnerable children were covered on a rather small scale by some of the major media, and they were treated in the CCTV news as if they were global problems or problems only existing in foreign countries. This shows that vulnerable children are still not one of the focal issues of society. In 2002, however, there was an increase in activities aimed at improving the living conditions of these children, which could mean that society has become more sensitive to vulnerable children.

Among the six newspapers, *Legal Daily*, *China Women's News* and *Beijing Youth Daily* were most likely to have reports about vulnerable children. Next came the evening newspapers, while the comprehensive daily newspapers seldom had such reports. At the same time, we made the following observation: *China Women's News* often placed news about vulnerable children on the front page or in the news edition, *Legal Daily* had a special column for such news called 'Young people and Law', while the comprehensive daily newspapers usually put such news on the page for education, science and culture. This shows that vulnerable children's problems are treated as educational problems in comprehensive daily newspapers, as legal problems in *Legal Daily*, and are comparatively important in *China Women's News*. But the latter paper has a low circulation and is run by the Women's Federation, which is why it has limited influence in comparison with those papers that can represent the government's attitudes, such as *People's Daily*. This also indicates that women are seen as the ones who should solve the problems of vulnerable children. 'Protect the legal rights of women and children' is not a slogan set up by the nation, but usually by the Women's Federation. Moreover, women's rights and children's rights are often mentioned simultaneously – women and children are not treated as two independent social groups. This also contributes to the observation that children's problems are regarded not as the nation's problems, but as the Women's Federation's problems.

Vulnerable children living in rural areas were scarcely covered, only in about 7 percent of the cases. In fact, we believe that most of the children facing problems live in the rural areas, as poverty is one of the main causes of their difficult conditions. Thus, reports in the mainstream media stray away from social reality. This can primarily be understood from the following three perspectives: First, most of the media exist in urban areas or are urbanized media. Second, the audience of most of the media are urban dwellers, so the media try to cater to these people. Third, those people who can offer help to vulnerable children are most probably urban dwellers, which is why they become the main characters in the urbanized reports. A large number of reports on children's problems are reports on the 'good deeds' of these urban people. Therefore, the real problems of the vulnerable children are most often overlooked. This finding on the misleading reports of the media is also a reflection of the values of mainstream society.

Another finding related to the above-mentioned one was that reports on children in poverty were the most frequent of the fourteen categories of children in

difficult positions. And the number of reports on abandoned and orphaned children was ranked among the leading four categories. This is connected to the 'charitable donation' of the city dwellers. Children were not the main characters in the reports on vulnerable children or on abandoned and orphaned children, but the main characters were enterprisers, philanthropists, noted public figures, and laborers from other social strata. People care more about 'who' offers help to these children and how much he or she spent on this help than about the difficult conditions the children are living in.

Child abuse, especially sexual abuse, and adolescent criminals were the problems mostly reported on as worthy news. These reports were full of moral condemnation, indignation, exaggerated feelings, etc., but they were lacking in consideration for child rights, gender equity, and law.

Reports on other children in difficult positions, such as children of drug addicts, child laborers, drug-abusing youngsters, sexually exploited children, street children, and children of migrants, were given comparatively less attention in the media. This can also be explained by the involvement of city people and the values usually held by the media, something that reflects the different social attitudes toward children in various kinds of difficult positions.

Social capital of vulnerable children

The identity of vulnerable children entails living with and developing in the face of the problems confronting them. Street children have poor health, safety, and educational resources; sexually abused girls are not only physical and mental victims, but are further pressed by the traditional culture. There is limited social capital available to them for changing their destiny.

Social capital is defined as the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These social resources are developed through networks and connectedness, membership in more formalized groups and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges (DFID Sustainable Livelihoods guidance sheets, 1999). In the World Development Report 2000, the World Bank discerns different ties:[14]

- Bonding social capital – the strong horizontal ties which connect family members, neighbors, close friends and business associates (people who share similar demographic characteristics)

- Bridging social capital – the weak horizontal ties which connect people with different ethnic and occupational backgrounds (people who share broadly comparable economic status and political power)

- Linking social capital – vertical ties which connect poor people with people in positions of influence in formal organizations (banks, agricultural extension offices, the police).

According to our research findings, every kind of social capital is limited for vulnerable children. Most of the social capital vulnerable children can use is *bonding social capital*. For example, the girl violated by her stepfather asked her aunt for help, because the aunt had a friend who knew something about the law; the girl raped by her teacher asked her mother for help, and so on. However, such social capital is also vulnerable for the following reasons: (1) vulnerable children are from poor families, and their family and friends themselves have limited social capital; (2) for children abused by family members, sexually abused female children, street children or child laborers, etc., the family and neighbors cannot be their social capital – on the contrary, these persons may drive the children into further trouble, at the same time as these children lack other social capital.

We also found in the study that vulnerable children can obtain *bridging social capital* through receiving various types of aid, legal aid, relief, training, etc. In a report in the *China Women's News*, 4th January 2001 issue, all circles in Fuyang City provided aid to the Funan female children classes. In the 22nd August 2001 issue, there was a report on street children in Wuxi joining the training course of 'protecting the rights of street children'. In the *Legal Daily's* 22nd October 2001 issue, the Nanchang Women's Federation opened a hotline to provide impoverished children with legal support. In the *Legal Daily's* 23rd February 2001 issue, an old man in Yimong adopted five babies discarded by their parents. In the *Beijing Youth Daily's* 9th April 2001 issue, college students provided a free of charge second classroom for street children. In such conditions, when impoverished children receive aid, abandoned and orphaned children and disabled children may have access to bridging social capital. But if the aid is one time only, it may not give these children a chance to contact the aid-provider, and in this sense such social capital is unreliable. As seen from the reports, when some of the social capital is one-to-one and when aid-providers keep regular contact with vulnerable children, the aid-providers can be social capital for the children. The aid-providers bring not only money, but also strong support for the children's mental and physical health.

Some reports showed that vulnerable children have access to *linking social capital*. For example, the *Legal Daily's* 1st July 2001 issue reported that the director of the police office in Yongnian in the Hebei Province helped the children of convicts to continue their study in school. The *China Women's News'* 28th May 2002 issue reported that the governor of the Liaoning Province visited orphans and handicapped children. But this kind of relationship is unstable and vulnerable children are still in a negative and passive position.

We saw in the reports that some vulnerable children made positive use of the indirect social capital in order to change their condition, such as through reading and studying law and legal magazines. However, this only happens under certain conditions, for example, when the children grow older, leave the origin of their troubles or obtain certain knowledge. Therefore, generally speaking, vulnerable children need social capital to protect themselves as a consequence of their vulnerable state.

Solutions in the framework of social protection

Social protection comprises all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized, with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups.[15] For different vulnerable people, social protection has different ways of intervening. The above-mentioned findings of the content analysis of reports regarding child protection in the media were put into the framework of social protection.

We saw that in the media reports the most frequently recommended solution – offering charitable donations and aid – belongs to the category of 'social assistance'. The second most frequently recommended intervention was social insurance. Few reports suggested interventions belonging to the category of social equity. According to the framework of social protection analysis, the following important actions were overlooked:

- Propagating for changing social attitudes and promoting social equity in order to build up an optimal environment for the healthy growth of children. Propaganda and education on social equity are especially needed in communities and families in which vulnerable children live.

- Providing mental and physical medical aid to abused children in order to help them return to society in a state of good health. For example, after being violated, many girls drop out of school or run away from home under the pressure from society and family, causing their social vulnerability and loneliness to increase.

- Encouraging children's participation in society and enhancing their ability through training and special actions.

Action takers and social exclusion

According to the mass media, most of the action takers who are trying to improve the environment in which vulnerable children grow up are the public and individuals, departments in local governments, NGOs, the judicature, the nation, enterprises, schools, media, and the military. Generally speaking, governmental departments play a key role in legislation and policymaking, while the public and individuals, NGOs, and other bodies usually adopt an intervention policy that involves transfering social support, such as a 'donation'. However, these two kinds of movements are unilateral adult movements – there is no room for children to take part or be heard.

This is a kind of 'natural' social exclusion of vulnerable children. However, we made the following observations in many media reports: First, the real re-

quirements of vulnerable children have not been presented and met – for example, people overlooked the requirements of children who endure long-term suffering from domestic violence and sexual abuse, which is why these children remain in helpless conditions. Second, without any help, the children might take possible action to protect themselves from the persecution, and some more courageous ones might even search actively for social resources to improve their living conditions, but their activities are often ignored. Third, if given proper instruction and education, vulnerable children can become very different; for instance, it was reported that homeless girls who received training on child rights became more willing to air their views.[16]

In short, we should let these children join in on the process of taking intervening actions and making policies concerning the improvement of their lives.

Significance of intervention from public rights and law

The content analysis showed that when the perpetrators of sexual abuse are fathers, stepfathers and teachers, the reports often used such language as 'beast', 'animal' and 'more cruel than the tiger which loves its whelp'. For example, the raping of a 13-year-old girl by the man who was adopting her was described as 'Suhebater raped Wendulari beastly'.[17] Another report with the title 'Demon father was caught raping his little girl' described how a 14-year-old girl had been repeatedly raped by her father for nearly seven years and that she was found several months pregnant.[18] What is more, expressions such as 'beast teacher' and 'the sinful hand of the old teacher' were also common in the reports. It should be stressed that such expressions reveal the moral requirement of the society, but have nothing to do with the child's rights and the state law. One of the reports in the *China Women's News'* issue on 17th July 2003 is called 'Wicked mother forces her daughter to be prostitute'. The 12-year-old girl had been raped many times since she was 5 years old. Although this report does not belong to our sampled reports, it is typical in that all villagers were aware of the crime and condemned the family, but none of them thought they should take any actions or report it to the authority. That is to say, the public lacks the sensitivity to use citizenship to intervene and simply avoids such 'vice' through their moral indignation. Therefore, the girl's living conditions become even worse. The angry expressions such as 'beast' actually mean that sexual violence is regarded as a kind of personal affair, instead of as a human rights abuse of children in a wider sense. Moreover, in reports in which stepfathers and teachers were also husbands and fathers in other contexts, some people questioned those sinners and asked what they would do if the victims were their own daughters: 'His own daughter is of the same age as Anan. What would his reaction be if his daughter were persecuted like Anan?'[19] This is a typical example of traditional logic – 'you shouldn't force the other to do things you yourself don't like to do'. This way of thinking regards child rights abuse on the basis of social morality.

No matter whose daughter she is (including the criminal's), she should never be the target of sexual abuse and her rights should be protected.

We ought to understand that violence and abuse directed at children are usually regarded as 'inhumane' household affairs, which is why many children in difficult positions are forced to keep silent under the intangible pressure given by feudal virginity and the idea of 'keeping the scandal within the household'. The media affirm 'natural' and 'normal' behaviors (e.g., raping one's own daughter is beastly) so as to maintain the existing social order. But this maintenance is harmful for children and keeps them from getting on their feet and struggling for their rights. For example, the mother who forced her daughter to be a prostitute was treated as a 'scoundrel', and the villagers stopped all relations with her family. When the media reported this as a normal phenomenon, they overlooked two important factors that might have brought change to the child's living conditions: First, the villagers estranged the mother as a 'scoundrel', resulting in the child having even less access to social help and becoming more and more isolated. Second, the fact that the villagers estranged the mother as a 'scoundrel' shows that they viewed this crime only as an immoral scandal instead of an abuse of child rights, making the girl even more vulnerable. Therefore, what the media and the whole of society must do is relate vulnerable children to citizenship and use the law to maintain children's rights.

The nature of children in difficult positions and the cause of these positions

According to the media reports, most of the difficult positions vulnerable children are in are caused by long-term poverty. In 54 percent of the 633 reports in which causes of children's vulnerability were mentioned, it was stated that 'economic poverty' is the reason. But economic poverty alone cannot cause economical problems; also involved are a shortage of social resources used for sustaining development and shortage of social capital used for maintaining bilateral relations. Economic poverty, thus, may contribute to exclusion from the personal environment of vulnerable children and to their difficulty in getting out of their vulnerable positions. The economically poverty-stricken group has the highest risk and is the frailest group in society. Many of the vulnerable children are forced into difficult living conditions for some incidental reasons, such as being kidnapped and sold, being raped, suffering from domestic violence, being handicapped, being infected by AIDS, etc. The environments in which these children find themselves are poverty-stricken in terms of economy, backward in culture, poor in domestic protection, exclusive with regard to the personal environment, lacking in usable resources, and almost without awareness of child rights. In these respects, changing these children's environments requires support at all levels: national, social, and legal.

The cause of the problems – that there are children in difficult positions – lies in the fact that no efficient system for the protection of child rights has yet been

established. In most cases, the right to survive, the right to development, and the right to being protected, which should be enjoyed by all children, are treated as an individual problem, a domestic problem, a problem related to personal morality (such as the traditional idea of respecting the old and loving the young, and the idea of helping the poor and supporting the weak) or social morality (such as that it is forbidden to commit incest). This is why public and legal intervention are absent. We have already seen that it is difficult to make any change in living conditions and develop the environment of children by strengthening this kind of traditional support model.

Recommendations

Based on the above analysis and conclusions, this research study makes the following recommendations:

1. Set up beneficial living circumstances for children in difficult positions by

- using national movements and media propaganda to further education on child rights in the whole society, realizing that the problem is not only one of the Women's Federation but also a problem of the nation and the entire society;

- urging relevant authority departments and policy makers to shoulder the responsibility of protecting and improving children's rights, and on top of that increasing purposeful and planned changes;

- increasing opportunities for vulnerable children to be reported on by mainstream news through training media professionals, and encouraging the media to report on children in difficult positions from the angles of child rights, gender equity, and law;

- strengthening the education of people in the community, schools and families in which children in difficult positions live, so as to help people treat these children venerably and build up a friendly and suitable environment for them to grow up in.

2. Cultivate vulnerable children's ability and strengthen their rights by

- increasing activities that can help these children acquire social capital – for instance, setting up personal relations that go beyond cities and towns or areas, building up all kinds of social nets that can help protect the children, helping them to join proper organizations and helping their families to develop social capital;

- ensuring that children in difficult positions have the right to information, regarding public resources as their social capital in an indirect way, and providing children with knowledge related to legislation and child rights;

- through study and surveys, trying to find and meet these children's real requirements, listening to their voices, and forming an efficient system through which they can be heard by relevant departments and media;

- making strategies to ensure that these children will become social participants, and increasing their ability to make decisions to change their fate;

- training and activities, increasing the children's capability to take part in and change their situation and the societal process – in this way they are empowered.

3. Make social intervention happen by

- increasing the intervention activities of social insurance;

- increasing intervention activities concerning social equity, spreading propaganda about social equity and gender equity in these children's families, schools, and communities;

- setting up agencies, such as centers supporting children in difficult positions, in order to provide psychological and somatic medical services and to help return them to the society with a healthy body and heart;

- engaging in actions that relate vulnerable children to citizenship, using the law to protect their rights, and intensifying society's sensibility with regard to child rights protection.

4. Report on children in difficult positions by

- showing vulnerable children's right to be anonymous, to maintain their privacy and dignity;

- realizing that these children, especially those unfortunately injured and killed ones, all have the right to their dignity – therefore, no naked photos of these victims should be used in the reports and no photos in which these children are improperly-dressed or are belittled;

- not only reporting on the case itself, but investigating underlying causes so as to reveal the main source of child discrimination, thereby making society reflect on the issue;

- standing on the side of and protecting these children and reporting in a serious and accurate way so as to decrease all titillating details and to avoid denouncement of the victims;

- interviewing the vulnerable children and letting their voices be heard in the report;

- trying to find and report on how children themselves can take part in and take action to change their life, and avoiding a lifeless description of vulnerable children.

Notes

1. This article is based on a longer report by the author. Ms Liu Xiaohong, Associate Professor at the Institute of Journalism Communication of CASS, contributed her efforts to data statistics in the study. Ms Zhang Qi and Pang Minghui, graduate students in the CASS, contributed collection and registering of the data.

2. State Council, PRC, *The National Program of Action for Child Development in China 2001-2010*, May 2001.

3. Bu Wei, 'Media and Protection of the Rights of the Child', *Journalism and Communication*, Vol. 3, 1997, pp. 25-35.

4. Xiong Mingyin, 'A Journalist and Destitute Pupil', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 11, 1998, pp. 46-48; Cui Yijun, 'Children of Jing Gang Shan', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 11, 1997, pp. 48-50; Chen Xinyu, 'Interview with Child Journalists', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 11, 1996, pp. 34-35.

5. Wang Wenjian et al., 'A Mentally Retarded Child Saved by 'Bridge of Hearts'', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 4, 1997, pp. 50-51; Yan Lili, 'SOS, SOS, a Call Imbued with Love', *The Journalist Monthly,* Vol. 10, 1991, pp. 24-29.

6. These reports are: Whang Yong, 'Anti-trafficking Action Taken', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 9, 2001, pp. 51-55; Tang Yangchuan, 'Where Are You, My Child?', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 9, 2000, pp. 50-51; Wang Guangxiang, 'It Is so Warm in our Society like Spring', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 4, 1994, pp. 12-16; Li Peng, 'Action for Children Returning Home', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 3, 1996, pp. 28-30; Lei Mingde, 'Little Wen Juan Coming Back to Home', *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 10, 1991, pp. 40-41.

7. Chen Zhongyuan, 'Reflection upon the Coverage of the 'Son Killing Mother' Case,' *The Journalist Monthly*, Vol. 3, 2000, pp. 16-18.

8. Bu Wei, 'A Research Report on Girls' Image Reported by Chinese Mainstream Newspapers', published in part.

9. Bu Wei, 'Child Labour Issues in the Chinese Media', *Study of Youth*, Vol. 8, 2002, pp. 10-19.

10 *Statistical Communiqué of The People's Republic of China on the 2002 National and Economic and Social Development,* National Bureau of Statistics in China, February 28, 2003, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjgb/ndtjgb/qgndtjgb/1200302280214.htm, August 1, 2003.

11. China Press Office, *China Statistical Data Collection of Press and Publication*, China Labour and Social Protection Publishing House, pp. 4-5, 2002.

12. Data from *The Yearbook of Chinese News* (2002), edited by Institute of Journalism and Communication, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, pp. 522-526. The audience data of CCTV were estimated based on multiple media coverage.

13. Neither *The Yearbook of Chinese News* nor the News Publishing Statistics Collection provided the related data on the circulation of *Legal Daily*. Data here are estimated.

14. Social Capital, DFID Social Development Consultant Training, China, 24-28 February, 2003.

15. DFID Social Development Consultant Training, China, 24-28 February, 2003.

16. Feng Yuan, 'Rights – Entering into Migrant Childhood', *China Women's News*, August 22, 2001.

17. 'Police in Inner Mongolia Rescued Wendurila – Little Girl Was Saved from the Hell', *China Women's News*, March 28, 2002.

18. 'Demon Father Was Caught Raping his Little Girl', *China Women's News*, July 18, 2002.

19. 'Girl, How Could You Endure for 7 Years?', *Beijing Youth,* February 3, 2002.

Media Regulation, Self-regulation and Education

Debunking Some Myths and
Retooling Some Working Paradigms*

Divina Frau-Meigs

The tastes, preferences and references of young people in Europe are developing in a context of widely open mediascape, of massive imports from the United States and of recycling of cultural products on a variety of increasingly intrusive devices. A close look at the conditions of reception of young people in France reveals that they have acquired American "as seen on TV" tastes, without showing any particular leanings towards the United States (Frau-Meigs and Jehel 2003b). The values associated with such tastes reflect the narcissistic interests of adolescence rather than a belief in the American lifestyle of individualism and competition. Young people tend to look for media characters of their own age with whom they can identify and whose situations they recognize. Their taste for media violence, real as it maybe, is blurred by the fact that it comes packaged within a complex of human relations and of aesthetic and kinetic sensations. When considering how these tastes affect their references in their own culture, the national terrain seems to hold its ground, with a recognition of the role of the State and of education and an interpretation of violence as a social disease that can be prevented and cured. However, when issues of justice, police and the law are considered, French young people tend to subscribe to the procedures and behaviors of the United States, as seen on the screen.

These results show a partial erosion of emotional and cognitive references that can be associated with the socialization process due to media culture. They point to a situation of transition, with the co-presence of American cultural scraps and enduring blocks of national culture (Frau-Meigs 2001b). The most striking fact is the dissonance between the values and behaviors resulting from their visual experience (or modified by it) and their interpretation of the deep meaning of the institutions they live with. This cognitive dissonance seems characteristic of a situation of cultural scrambling produced by an ill-mastered acculturation process (Lonner and Berry 1987; Varan 1998). As a result of this current state of acculturation, young people seem to be in a general state of confusion about their

values and this leads them to a feeling of powerlessness and of inarticulate and somewhat constrained consent.

Acculturation is not a new phenomenon nor is it good or bad per se, but due to globalization and the increase in media trade, its conditions of penetration and its working mechanisms need to be reassessed, especially in the light of the European Union situation (Frau-Meigs 2003 ; Demorgon *et al* 2003). Given the conditions in reception, what are the answers provided by the State, the family, the educational system— all the caretakers that revolve around young people?

These answers are framed within the directive "Television without Frontiers", with its broadcasting quotas and its financial support system for European production, buttressed by programs such as Eurimages (1988-) and MEDIA (1990-). They are also framed by the European Union Recommendation on the protection of minors (1998), calling for self-regulation of the media, and by the conclusions of the European Council (December. 17, 1999), asking for renewed efforts in media education (Frau-Meigs et Jehel 2003a 88-91).

These policies tend to reflect the vision of governance promoted within the European union, which leaves a wide range of initiative to the individual States in the application of guidelines and recommendations. France is one of the countries that apply the directive most severely, in open resistance to the quasi-monopoly of American fiction, in the name of pluralism and cultural diversity (Frau-Meigs 2002). Other countries, less keen on quotas, such as England, have moved toward implementing media education curricula in their schools. Assessing the French and European situation, a good ten years after the creation of these policies, allows for an evaluation of the impact of regulation, self-regulation and education, in a comparative perspective. However, the gaping discrepancies between the tastes of young people, the expectations of civil society, and the choices operated by decision-makers all seem to point to the need for developing a more coherent and efficient set of policies. This necessary retooling cannot be accomplished without a clear assessment of the received ideas on the family, the industry and the school system, not only around issues of violence but also around wider issues of socialization by the media.

1. Some myths of self-regulation and regulation

A large and wide discrepancy appears in Western countries when the State is dealing with the complex phenomenon of the tastes of young people and of their acculturation to image-and-action-driven programs, mostly American origin. To justify the regulation of violence, the State refers to the youth welfare and protection rights often after public opinion has been stirred by triggering events, such as the case of little Silje in Norway, of Virginie Larivière in Canada or the Killing of Nanterre in France. However, this right runs counter the right to freedom of expression, which tends to overrule any other rights in democratic nations

and which is brought to call any time public opinion or decision-makers require more regulation of the audiovisual sector, branding any move of the kind as censorship. Hence the solutions generally adopted to deal with violence on television all tend to favor self-regulation, semi-controlled by the State, with the paradoxical situation that deregulation is fostered by the regulator, the State thus disengaging itself from its engagements.

France, as most European and North-American countries, has come up with a whole range of self-censorship solutions for media accountability: the family hour (prime time and its watershed), parental warnings (*signalétique* or parental advisories, with prior classification of programs), the ombudsmen (journalists acting as mediators between the network and public complaints) and technological filtering (scrambling, the V-chip) (Frau-Meigs 2004; Potter and Warren 1996). The underlying assumptions of these four types of solutions rest on a number of ideal claims that are being belied by the reality of reception patterns and the rapid evolution of society and technology.

Outdated family patterns

The reception patterns that justify the family hour and the advisories posit that an ideal family is watching the screen. The expectations weighing on parents are then enormous: they are expected to take full responsibility for the television consumption of their children. The logic of self-regulation does not question the sources of production prior to programming; it thrusts the burden of choice a posteriori onto the unwitting watchers.

These solutions posit that parents are watching television with their kids. But research shows that children often are alone with that uncanny nanny, two thirds of them watching programs not intended for them, and more than 10 per cent of them staying after the watershed. The deregulation frenzy of the 1980s, together with the surge in cable consumption have played havoc with children's programming, which is in free fall on traditional networks (Frau-Meigs 2003b). These solutions also assume that parents are making educated choices with their children, using the specialized press and all possible parental guidance on a regular basis. Research shows that parents are less aware than their kids of the meaning of *signalétique*'s warnings, especially in troubled families, and that some children will use it to select programs that are not intended for their eyes. Parents are also rarely aware that they can have access to mediators and complain to the network or to higher authorities for audiovisual matters, such as the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA). As for the scrambling devices, the assumption is that parents are apt programmers of complex machines and will adjust their selection criteria to suit the development of the child. Research shows that kids tend to be more proficient with this type of technology than adults and that when parents use filtering devices their purpose seems to be more the monitoring of time and phone and electricity bills than of content.

This ideal family does not stand in the face of reality. According to data from Union Nationale des Associations Familiales (UNAF), kids spend on average per year 154 hours of quality time with their parents, versus 1400 hours with their various screens and 850 hours with their teachers. Besides, approximately one family out of two is either divorced, extended or recomposed in our modern societies; those that stay together can be highly dysfunctional. So these solutions only serve those children who least need them, as their educated and watchful parents will always avoid the pitfalls of television over-consumption. The other family situations are not addressed by these solutions: parents are absent or gone, use television as a baby sitter and can not or do not want to antagonize their children.

An opaque audiovisual sector

With respect to the conditions of production and broadcasting, these solutions posit that the commercial and private sector will respond to gentle pressure. Decision-makers believe that the industry will risk losing highly-profitable advertising slots in primetime scheduling, that it will invest in the production of costly non-violent and original programming (when it can access cheaper packages from the United States) and that it will proceed to classify its own programs in all due transparency.

Less naively, decision-makers hope that classifying violent (or pornographic) content will be effective less in terms of declared benefits for parents than in terms of its hidden impact on industry practices. They think that the industry will eventually modify their trade patterns (diversify their sources of supply, scrap their stock of programs, etc.). They expect the same impact on producers, hoping they will modify their editorial lines and their scenario choices in order to avoid classification, thus effectively affecting content at production level.

Research shows that most broadcasters have integrated parental warnings into their contracts with producers, with thresholds for classification clearly spelled out. However the cost, extent and weight of such a task have caused the networks to negotiate on their own terms, especially keeping a high hand on their criteria for classification. In the process they are both judge and party. As a result the committees they have set up, in France and elsewhere, lack transparency at all levels (choice of members, coding criteria). As for the role of mediators, within the public sector, in dealing with issues of violence and ethics in news and fiction, it remains to be given a real status, and a legitimacy all the harder to acquire as the journalists who volunteer as mediators are also both judge and party and are given little authority (Frau-Meigs et Jehel 2003a).

The most efficient solutions seem to be those emerging from the constraints of regulation. Framing regulatory policies and directives, such as production and broadcasting quotas, taxes or percentages of benefits channeled to audiovisual and cinema production funds, etc., are starting to bear fruit. They have succeeded

in modifying some consumption patterns among young people, who, when given the choice, tend to select the national products. Since 2000, French investments in the production process have started to bring profits, especially as far as cinema is concerned: more than 190 million entries (compared to 150 million in the 1990s), more than 50 per cent of French movies at the box office (compared to 30 to 40 % in previous years). Public sector funding for the European industry has increased by 13 per cent in 2000-2001 (compared to 10% in previous years), France alone contributing more than a third of the total funding (Observatoire européen de l'audiovisuel, 2003). The general trends confirm the national preference – production permitting: the privileged position of cinema in relation to television (which reflects choices of cultural exception), the drop in imports of American films, especially those aimed at prime time, a drop not compensated however by a wider circulation of European productions but by greater consumption of local productions (Frau-Meigs 2002).

A controversial definition of violence

In relation to content, the basic tenet posits that violence can be universally defined once and for all, a most thorny issue in the research world. Researchers, in their eagerness to provide data for decision-makers, have aligned themselves on quantitative procedures, like violent acts count, frequencies, etc. (e.g. Gerbner *et al* 1980). Their validity has been criticized, especially in France, where research traditions tend to privilege qualitative analysis. As for producers and broadcasters, they are alien to any notion of accounting, if not of accountability, though they have no problem with audience ratings. Since they classify their own programs (including films), in the long run, they determine what violence is for the general public, with the paradoxical result that they tend to be more censorial than the cinema classificatory commission! Besides, parental warnings, in France, seem to be relatively transparent, as all networks have adopted the same labeling icons (changed twice because of their lack of clarity) but in fact they are quite opaque because the criteria are not harmonized across networks, nor across media (cinema, video games, etc.), often unbeknownst to the public.

The recent evolution of news content blurs the issue additionally. News programs have been excluded from any classificatory effort, as they are constructed as part of the right to freedom of expression and the press. However these programs have been increasingly broadcasting images of graphic violence, which causes people to evaluate them in polls as even more violent than fiction (and children tend to find their proximity and relation to reality quite shocking). The self-regulatory solution adopted, the call for "mediators" in public service networks, is bolstered by media accountability systems set up in English-speaking countries. But these self-elected mediators are not real third parties, are not trained for mediation, and, being journalists, can be suspected of practicing self-censorship, dependent as they are on the profession that feeds them.

Public perception adds another perplexing twist to the issue: people tend to confuse criteria of violence with those of vulgarity and sensationalism, which is to say what "aggresses" their sensitivity. They perceive less violence per se than do researchers in their counts, they are not as wary as researchers of diluted and humorous violence, but they will denounce graphic news and info-trash as violent (Potter 2003). Their perceptions of the impact of violence also show a knowledge gap in relation to researchers: people in general emphasize imitative behavior, while researchers stress intimidation, fear factors and cognitive and emotional stress. This points to another difficulty in defining violence, due to its cultural variability within a country and across countries within a same regional area, as any quick comparison of film classification applied to a single movie across Northern America and Europe will show (Frau-Meigs 2004). The task of encoding tolerance threshold for violence, and consensus is difficult to achieve within the same country, let alone over the whole of Europe. The construction of the European union and the context of globalization both push the States toward the logical quest for a uniform classification, but this runs the risk of accepting as criteria the most common denominators, thus falling short of local cultural expectations and of adequate filtering of obnoxious programs.

Implementing self-regulation solutions is therefore characterized by some measure of inadequacy and inefficiency, all the more so as they may become obsolete with respect to the most recent technological changes, affecting portable and broadband media. Current media conditions are already pointing to some loopholes. They are characterized by transfrontier exchanges of cultural products, in a neo-liberal economy, the consequence being that violence-driven programs are allowed to circulate without much control. The lack of international standards becomes glaringly abusive and unfair as some countries are able to resist and others are not.

France and other States also ignore another media strategy, which is the tendency to create a coherent system of signs across media, establishing a sort of "media ring", a consciously organized circularity among media, especially those aimed at young people. Current marketing techniques and the industrial logic of minimizing risk and incrementing stock value of successful (and less successful) products leads to the widespread recycling of violent programs onto other media, such as video game boxes, the Internet, portable phones, etc. Controlling television alone is no longer sufficient, as it is difficult for any child to be free from these violent contents. Very few countries classify the other media, and even fewer do so within a uniform set of criteria. Great-Britain and Canada do have parental warnings for video games; only the Netherlands has an established system of cross-media classification, via a program set up by a private-public Foundation, NICAM. The main drawback of that system seems to be its reliance on a technological solution (electronic questionnaires filled by producers), which may lead to total human withdrawal from the process.

Reception conditions within families reinforce the dependency toward the whole media ring: more and more children, regardless of class, find themselves

alone with violent programs. In some countries, like Great-Britain or the United States, one child out of two has his or her own TV set and other media appliances, in what Sonia Livingstone (2002) has called the "bedroom culture". This culture places them beyond the pale of parental vigilance. It endangers the very idea of "watershed" and of the family hour, even if audience ratings point to a certain resilience of this ritual.

The new media are endangering it even more: they aim at creating a continuous flow around children, that can not be accounted for in hours spent facing the screen but being immersed in it. In this digital context, ads and publicity breaks are upsetting as they interrupt the one-to-one interaction between marketers and consumer kids; so they tend to be erased, the program itself being an incorporated brand-carrier (Montgomery 2001). In 2006, the revision of the directive "Television without Frontiers" allows such marketing on-line, as well as product-placement, thus acknowledging the procedures already established by the marketers.

However, despite these blatant disparities between sense and sensitivity in various Western nations, there seems to be a consensus on a few points: the need to protect children; the need to balance rights to expression with other rights such as those of children; the preference for self-regulation and the refusal of censorship; the acceptance of a posteriori monitoring kept to its basics; the relative efficiency of quotas, especially in terms of national public tastes and expectations, if not in terms of financial profits.

II. Some myths in education

The school system too has its own set of received wisdoms in relation to its understanding of media education. It has fluctuated and, to some degree, continues to do so between three different pedagogical stances: the protectionist perspective (dominant in the 60s), the cultural perspective (dominant in the 80s) and the participatory perspective (promoted in the mid-90s). These perspectives tend to coexist, in a variety of combinations, in all Western countries. As a result great gaps exist between countries that fully include media education in their curricula, such as Austria and England, and those that resist such inclusion, such as France, Spain or Italy (Buckingham *et al*, 2002).

Contradictory pedagogical stances

These perspectives carry with them a whole set of pedagogical aims and methods that are not always mutually compatible with each other. The protectionist perspective either focuses on the risks of manipulation (targeting advertising mostly) or uses audiovisual material as an illustration of the classical canons of

some other branch of learning (literature, history, the arts). The cultural perspective too can use media in a traditional and illustrative setting but it aims primarily at creating a critical citizenry and focuses on content analysis of audiovisual productions (Gonnet 1995). In France, it tends to privilege news, to the detriment of fiction, across media (written press primarily, and increasingly TV and the Internet). The participatory perspective prefers to facilitate access to the means of production, and to empower young people via mastery of the tool. Familiarity with the techniques of audiovisual creation and production is supposed to bring about a critical reading of the media.

These perspectives all run against the stumbling block of evaluation of procedures and assessment of knowledge acquisition; their efficiency still needs to be proved systematically, beyond the measurement of the students' enthusiasm. As a result they are often considered with suspicion by the teaching body and the school administration. Besides, their full integration into the school system entails disruptions in a number of areas: pedagogical (how to evaluate?), legal (how to deal with copyright issues?), technical (how to keep up with advances in equipment). As a result, the last two perspectives tend to be implemented outside the school system (e.g., by Centre de Liaison de l'Enseignement et des Moyens d'Information, CLEMI, and Centre d'Entrainement aux Méthodes Actives, CEMEA), with all sorts of local initiatives but no national focus.

These perspectives tend to deny or exclude the actual media environment of youngsters, considered as much too popular or as too far from the higher objectives of education. As a matter of fact, the pleasure of young people – and the attendant motivation – seems to be a sure criterion for the exclusion of media from the school environment. Such an exclusion entails a number of deficits: the lack of decoding of fiction genres, the absence of clarification of confusing issues such as acculturation or violence, the misperceptions related to (self)regulatory policies and economic production strategies, etc.

However, research shows how much enthusiasm media activities can create among young people: they can be reconciled with their everyday imagination and their cultural practices (Gonnet 2003 ; Jacquinot 2002). Censoring their media culture tends to make them feel guilty and uneasy: they cannot speak with adults of their basic preferences and references. This lack of communication, perversely, increases their dependency on media productions, whereas they could establish an aesthetic and critical distance if allowed to voice their tastes and their questions. Young people find themselves in a double bind of denial, which ties in knots their values and references while not allowing them to criticize those fostered by the school system. This double bind can account for the two most common reproaches the teachers currently and recurringly aim at them: their deplorable state of *ennui*, or their crass incivility (Frau-Meigs 2001b).

This double bind, unproductive as it is, fosters a rift of mistrust between the two parties concerned; it underlines the wider and wider discrepancy between the youngsters' life inside school and outside its protective precincts. The divergent missions of the media culture (entertainment) and the school culture (know-

ledge acquisition and social integration) are in no way clarified by these contradictory pedagogical stances. The media consumed by young people tend to foster values in direct opposition to those taught at school. Where education promotes discipline, work, long-term investment, critical distance, evaluation, media (television especially) promote effortless success, instant gratification, exposure of privacy, glamorized perverse or violent behavior. Besides, media tend to introduce foreign values (mostly of American origin) into French and European society, whereas school tends to promote national values and attitudes, parochial and limited as they sometimes may be.

Ideal conditions of practice

In its relation to media and violence, the school system stands by its republican mission, that legitimizes its historical roles of transmission and integration; it dismisses the competitive encroachments of media upon its own turf. The school also considers itself as prime time harbor of peace against violence and it traditionally requires weapons to be left at the entrance. Media and their entertainment stance are no more welcome than real violence in that they are disruptive of the transmission of knowledge and of the integration of a whole population of youngsters. Transmitting knowledge works like a long-term self-regulating system, as it brings vigilance and critical distance; integrating young people diminishes the chances for aggression and racism. In the long run these strategies can deflect violence and the impact of media. Where the protection of children or child welfare is concerned, the school system acts as a buffer between the youngster and the outside world, especially the dysfunctional family; it can be very efficient in identifying abusive parents and ensuring psychological follow up. In Western countries especially, it creates a real break around junior high school (the crucial years around pre-adolescence), when it strongly isolates children from their caretakers and from the conditions of production. In doing so, school seeks to increase the autonomy of young people while preparing them for their future choices in life.

This republican mission rests on ideal conditions of practice that are being constantly thwarted by the incursions of reality in the protected space of the school. Violence has become the daily lot of school life, with around 80 000 officially reported aggressions in 2001-2002 (according to the French ministry database Signa), and it is less predictable than some years ago when it seemed to be confined to about a 100 high school in impoverished suburban zones. School violence added to media violence, though one should not draw direct relations of causality, all point to a similar mood: *ennui*, boredom packaged within a deep sense of loss of references, characteristic of anomia, of an acculturation process ill-mastered. This confirms the double bind of denial, the unbridgeable gap between the values taught by the audiovisual experience and the ones taught by the school experience, both vying for the child's attention on a daily basis. This

gap undermines deeply the child's understanding of the school system and its purposes: transmission of knowledge remains a vague notion, often modified by the media experience; social ideals and values are disconnected from working conditions and everyday behavior and procedures. This lack of connection is particularly damaging in the case of young people who have learning problems and dysfunctional families. It can increase in cases of media over-consumption, which tends to decrease investment in school work.

As for media literacy, research shows that, even though young people show a capacity to decode some media content, their spontaneous and familiar consumption does not necessarily lead to real knowledge, especially when they lack the intellectual and physical maturity to understand some content (violent or porno-graphic). They need the adults to help them make sense of what they see. Be-sides, being familiar with the media does not necessarily cause children to resist their manipulation: seeing isn't believing, but seeing isn't switching off the screen either. Being aware of manipulation does not bring about the desire to extract oneself from the fluid media ring, as exemplified by the phenomena of fan cultures around some cult series or of the reality programming frenzies in Europe and Northern America (Frau-Meigs 2003a). Collateral gains, in terms of identity-formation, group identification, and peer relations can be much stronger than all rational reasoning. And the school system is expected to mend the collateral damages…

It does so by adopting an entrenched, bunker-like position of refusal: the school system insulates children from the media and provides a derogatory clause to the otherwise pervasive market laws. This stance has the positive effect of pro-viding respite and of delaying some of the impact of media on socialization. However, too much insulation can lead to a negative feeling of ossification that may warp the child-educator relation. When dealing with children references and preferences, teachers have to accept the fact that they are not abandoning their authority as teachers or their responsibility as adults. They should assume their role of value transmitters, in an explicit, overt context of constant elucidation and interpretation of the media phenomena, as they are induced by the global mar-ket of programs and products that target young people and create their world culture. No wonder some countries are considering the return to "civics" (*instruc-tion civique*) in their curricula, though it displaces the problem without solving it. It might prove more fruitful to insert within media education curricula the basics of laws and regulations concerning the right to expression and information as well as of youth protection issues, such as the right to your own privacy, to the control of your own privacy, to the control of your own image, etc. (Frau-Meigs and Jehel 2003a).

Youth protection remains a valid mission of the school system but it has to shed its paternalistic slough. Teachers need to be sensitized to what is at stake in the socialization and identity-formation of children. They must protect the psy-chological balance of the child (in relation to violence and other traumatic or harmful content) and his or her sensitivity (essential to the development of tastes, access to individual references, openness to others and cultural identity). They

must also aim at accompanying the child in his or her own self-protection and empowerment.

Hence the crucial question remains one of the basic training of teachers, which is not always attuned to the child's development and to the new challenges set by media. Currently most media education curricula focus on secondary education. Necessary as it maybe, this training cannot do without reaching out also to teachers in lower grades, such as primary schools and even kindergarten. Research shows that the impact of media literacy training is most efficient on children aged 9 to 12, when they are more likely to trust adults and accept rational knowledge; older age groups tend to be more preoccupied with identity formation and construction of otherness. At younger ages, adults can still vie with peers for influence, a possibility that dwindles when full adolescence kicks in.

Inordinate expectations

Laying the weight of the solution to all problems connected with the socialization of children by media on media education represents an expectation beyond the scope of the school, out of proportion with what it can do, that can only bring failure. School cannot be held responsible for all actions in this domain. The role of parents remains crucial, as does the part played by broadcasters, not to forget creators. All the actors present in the media world, close or distant from the child, need to be implicated.

Media literacy has to be placed on an educational continuum, within which parents, educators, broadcasters play an active role, which implies sensitizing them to issues of socialization, even training them. Media over-consumption is not the lot of children only: family environments of over-consumption may often lead them to it. Thus, educating children does not make sense if such steps are not framed within preventive family safety policies. In the context of dysfunctional families, however, the authority of the adult may not be necessarily the one of the parent(s) only. Other places than the family home and other adults than the parents may be found. The environment of children in our modern societies is relatively rich in possible adult mediators: social workers, media center workers, resource center librarians, school psychologists, child welfare personnel, tutors for children under police protection, etc. As for places, regions and local municipalities offer a variety of structures. They can play a key part in today's situation of governance, which fosters the autonomy of local players. They can provide special locations in school and off-school premises, they can give access to technological equipment (computers, DVDs, etc.). Some already help finance media programs, especially those related to e-learning. Some already support collective spaces (multimedia centers, libraries) that offer activities for young people and facilitate local school projects.

On the educational continuum, the media themselves can play and important role. Education is part of the obligations of public service of radio and television

and media education should naturally find its place within this mission. In France, most of the producing and programming with educational content is shown on France 5 (one of the three public service channels, targeting pre-adolescents mostly). The channel works with parents, researchers and teachers to produce programs such as *Cas d'école* or *Les maternelles*, which build on the relation between children and their mothers.

Partnerships also exist with France 3 (the regional public service channel), the channel Arte, local radio stations and the regional press. National, yearly events such as *semaine de la presse* (a week with the press), organized by CLEMI, provide an opportunity to bring them together in the public light. However media education on television should not be constrained only to public service. Teachers and students are sensitive to analytical programs such as *Culture Pub*, on M6 (the youth music channel) which reviews advertising throughout the world until 2005. The private sector has the means to produce entertaining programs that can also touch and educate a young public. This know-how ought to be tapped for the better decoding of some media productions, with the additional advantage that it would improve their somewhat damaged image (Frau-Meigs and Jehel 2003a). Innovative programs and initiatives should be encouraged on all networks, including cable networks targeting children, possibly with tax breaks and other incentives. The planned arrival of digital television and of the Internet should not create delusions about the so-called *new* economy: it is still television which will be used as a test of people's tastes and as a financial lifeline for other media ring productions, as the AOL-Time Warner venture in 2000 has recently proved – by becoming Time Warner again in 2006, having fully digested its online sector. The media industry is caught in a co-dependency relation similar to that binding *haute couture* to ready-to-wear in the clothing business.

To mitigate the risk of seeing the family hour disappear on the new digital mediascape, the public service philosophy needs to be extended to the Internet, especially by creating and developing a public domain for youngsters, free from advertising and of unnecessarily shocking or harmful content. This public service zone could thus both preserve the period of latency so important for childhood and serve the desire for participation of adolescence (Frau-Meigs 2003b; 2006). The public sector and government decision-makers can also develop media resource centers and visual databases on the Internet, and make these available to educators. Such is the case in France with websites like eduscole (www.education.gouv/eduscole.fr), or of UNESCO programs developed with the European Union, such as MENTOR (UNESCO 2003), which have led to the creation of a fully-integrated media education kit (UNESCO 2006). Among the options now available to a larger public of teachers there is the DVD collection, *Apprendre la television* (Learning About Television), the first volume of which is devoted to the news hour. Developed by INA (Institut national de l'audiovisuel) in partnership with CLEMI and tested by CEMEA, it offers navigational tools in a large database of audiovisual materials together with a series of exercises to be practiced in learning situations. It was first tested in real time with eight French

cities connected via broadband Internet technically facilitated by a partnership with France Telecom.

Finally, to accommodate the dual requirements of freedom of expression and of child welfare, the most elegant and least painful solution entails the participation of artists and creators themselves. Some writers and film-makers are willing to meet children in the schools and to develop materials with them, such as Quentin Blake or Lionel Delplanque. Partnerships of this kind and with other media professionals need to be given more opportunities to develop and to gain visibility, via youth film festivals for instance, such as the one held yearly in Barcelona by the Observatori Europeo de Televisio Infantil (OETI).

III. What are the recommendations? Reaching a balance between media environmental protection and sustainable development...

This critical analysis does not radically call into question the solutions that democratic societies have come up with over the years. It tries to show their inconsistencies, their need to be updated and adapted to a changing environment; it also warns against the illusion of a single solve-it-all approach and points toward a variety of sustainable solutions over time. Self-regulation, regulation and education bodies seem to ignore each other; they all function on premises and solutions that ignore the recent developments in preferences, references and needs among young people and their various care-givers. The gaps and discrepancies in the missions and functions of these entities are not bad per se; they each fulfill a task in society and introduce some flexibility in the social fabric,—which justifies their very existence. However if the gaps turn into chiasms, and the discrepancies into disparities, they may well prove to be dysfunctional and destructive of the feeling of trust citizens place in their decision-makers and their institutions.

Hence no viable solution can come as a single panacea, only a composite patchwork can provide satisfaction to each and all, with their different life patterns, needs and expectations. This should come as a warning against the current temptation for the State to disengage itself from its duties, including its arbitration competence, and rely heavily and only on self-regulation. Implementing a balanced governance and moving toward a viable co-regulation system as promoted by the European Union, both imply the need to call on all major actors of the media environment (decision-makers, producers and broadcasters, educators and parents, not forgetting researchers)… and to hold them accountable. Hence changing paradigms from a protectionist view of the media environment to a more participatory sustainable development view requires some fine-tuning in all the sectors considered.

1. Self-regulation and mediation must be given real means. This can be achieved by giving more legitimacy to the status of mediators, with in-depth training and independence; creating and maintaining debate around guidelines and codes of ethics within the profession; including consumers and members of civil society in monitoring committees; homogenizing classificatory criteria within networks and across media, with more transparency.

2. Regulatory pressure must be kept on, especially by turning issues of violence (but also pornography and advertising) into public health matters. This implies that several entities must look after the media environment and promote its sustainable development, not just the ministry for communication and culture (when it exists) but also the ministries for health, family, education, youth, etc. Cross-sector bodies must be created to help these administrations work together and act as liaison agencies. Classificatory efforts must be supported as an aid to adult decision-making, not as censorship, and they need to be monitored from outside the industry as well as from within, not entrusted to a technological device. Members of associations representing civil society should be incorporated in regulatory bodies such as CSA, and these should increase their communication toward civil society, with an established bureau of complaints and the publication of annual reports.

3. Public service activities and public domain productions must be supported financially and legally to allow for advertising-free zones and pluralism of programs and content in the media fodder. The public service must slough off its protectionist paternalistic robes to endorse those of diversity and plurality and to address issues of socialization crucial to all, issues such as acculturation, equity, gender, etc. It should take the lead in offering programs that decode media productions, as in the case of *Arrêt sur Images* on France 5, in France. It should be given access to educational channels in the bouquets being prepared for digital television.

4. Media education is probably the best long-term filter. It must be promoted on a larger, coherent national scale. It can best accommodate the balance in paradigms, between an environmental perspective, that pushes for control and protection, and a sustainable development view that promotes empowerment and participation of all actors involved, especially young people. Media literacy should therefore address non-canonical issues that preoccupy public opinion and youngsters (violence, advertising, identity, etc.); it should emphasize selective patterns of media consumption together with media use for opinion-formation and citizenship. The objectives in the long run should be to make young people aware of their rights, their tastes, their national and European references, their capacity to express themselves through media and with media.

5. Research must be developed and extended, especially in terms of media acculturation and socialization of children, beyond controversies of effects and/or uses and gratifications. This research should be lead within a comparative framework, among the different countries of the European Union, and in collaboration with Northern America. It would provide regional and longitudinal databases for use by decision-makers and other interested parties. It seems urgent to bridge the knowledge gap between researchers and members of the public, especially in their respective perceptions of violence and of media impact, and a special effort should be made to disseminate results using understandable and yet not oversimplified language.

6. A European Foundation for Media and Youth should be established, to act as interface and to foster dialogue among the different entities, private and public, as well as the various actors (decision-makers, producers and broadcasters, educators and parents, researchers). It should endeavor to create synergy among already existing regional and national foundations and research centers. It should take the initiative to promote research in areas of public concern or interest (violence, pornography, health, memory, cognition, …). It should monitor and evaluate independently media education, regulation and regulation, as well as produce international comparisons on all these issues and solutions.

7. As for violence in the media, campaigns to heighten or increase public awareness must be launched, directed towards all various actors, including decision-makers, producers and broadcasters who often consider themselves above the fray when in reality they are in the thick of it. These campaigns should aim at destroying a certain amount of perceived ideas, related to the critical analysis of the conditions of (self)regulation and education, such as:
   - violent content is not necessarily the most graphic : softened violence can harden people or loosen their inhibitions at all ages, though the youngest are most at risk. So, parental warnings are not enough, especially if not accompanied by programming constraints aiming at the maintenance of the family hour;
   - imitative behavior, harmful as it maybe and alarming to public opinion, is only the tip of the iceberg: other consequences (effects on cognition, emotion, tastes, references, lifelong political stances, etc.) are less visible and yet affect individuals in the long run. So, preventive policies and educational strategies are very important and they should be analyzed less in terms of effects or gratifications than in terms of risk management (Potter 2003);
   - the tastes of young people and their references do not alter drastically after adolescence: they affect their perception of the world (fear, inhibition, law and order leanings, etc.) throughout their adult life. So, focalizing on young people isn't enough;

- the tastes of young people do not necessarily lean towards violence and violent solutions: they are framed by international strategies of supply rather than demand. Demand tends to lean on issues such as family, friendship, identity (Frau-Meigs and Jehel 2003b). So, creators and producers all over Europe should be encouraged to meet that demand, for young people to find sources of identification and models of behavior related to the European values on which their future rests;

- the representation of violence is neither innocent nor neutral. This explains the various reasons for public opinion outbursts in France and in Europe: excessive representation in fiction, gratuitous graphics, recurrence of stereotyped formats, lack of context, survival of the strongest, etc. Thus, while recognizing that violence is a part of life and should not be excluded from all representation, its place should be relative, other formats and human relationships should also find their place, especially whith respect to conflict resolution (such as humor, intelligence, mediation, law, respect for others, etc.);

- violence is not for free: it has a cost in production and in distribution, a cost partly supported by viewers, which entitles them to ask for accountability (Potter 2003). The commercial encouragement of consumption comes with an assorted bag of accessories, one of which is the right of the consumers to express their opinion. The argument of freedom of expression behind which producers and broadcasters shield themselves does not allow them to forsake all responsibility in its name. Thus, because freedom of expression may have secondary effects unrelated to it, in a situation of co-regulation, accountability should be shared by all parties, including producers and broadcasters.

References

Berry, John W. "The Assessment of Acculturation", in W.J. Lonner and J.W. Berry. *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research*. London, Sage, 1987.

Banerjee, I. and Seneviratne, K. (eds.) *Public Service Broadcsting. A Best Practices Sourcebook.* Paris, Unesco, 2005.

Buckingham, David *et al. Youth Media Education, The Seville Seminar*, UNESCO, ci.com series, 2, 2002 (CD-ROM in French and English).

Demorgon, Jacques, Lipiansky Edmond-Marc, Muller Burkhard and Nicklas Hans. *Dynamiques Interculturelles pour l'Europe.* Paris, Anthropos, 2003.

Forum des droits sur l'internet. Les enfants du net, tomes 1 et 2. Rapport au Ministère des Solidarités de la Santé det de lam Famille. Paris, mars 2004 et janvier 2005. Available at www.Forumeinternet. org/recommendations

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "La réglementation des contenus à la télévision: enjeux et limites des solutions actuelles", *Questions de Communication*, hors série "Télévision, justice, regulation", 2004.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "*Les écrans de la violence*: cinq ans après", in P. Lardellier (ed.) *Violences Médiatiques*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003a.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "L'acculturation: du décodage au recodage", in P. Frémont et E. Bevort (eds) *Médias, violence et education*. Paris, CLEMI, 2001b.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "*Big Brother* et la téléréalité en Europe. Fragments d'une théorie de l'acculturation par les medias". *Cahiers du CIRCAV* (Lille) 15 (octobre 2003a).

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "Cultivating Crime and Criminalizing Culture: Screening Violence From the Depression to the Cold War", in D. Sipière (ed.). *Le Crime organisé à la ville et à l'écran*. Paris, Ellipses, 2001c.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "Exception culturelle, politiques nationales et mondialisation: enjeux de démocratisation et de promotion du contemporain", *Quaderns del CAC*, special issue on globalisation, 14 (sept/oct. 2002), English, French, Spanish, Catalan, available on www.audiovisualcat.net.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: *Médiamorphoses américaines*. Paris, Économica, 2001a.

Frau-Meigs, Divina: (ed.). "Les programmes jeunesse: réenchanter la télévision", *Dossiers de l'Audiovisuel* (INA) 108 (mars-avril 2003b).

Frau-Meigs, Divina: "Public Service on Digital Media: Letting Young People's Situation Determine the Timing and Format", in The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Yearbook 2006, Göteborg, Nordicom, 2006 (forthcoming).

Frau-Meigs, Divina and Jehel, Sophie: *Jeunes, Médias, Violences*. Paris, Economica, 2003a.

Frau-Meigs, Divina and Jehel, Sophie: "Acculturation et américanisation des jeunes par les médias, en France" Paris, GRREM, 2003b.

Frau-Meigs, Divina and Jehel, Sophie: *Les écrans de la violence. Enjeux économiques et responsabilités sociales*. Paris, Economica, 1997.

Gerbner, George, Gross, Larry, Morgan, Michael and Signorielli, Nancy: "The 'mainstreaming' of America: Violence profile N 11", *Journal of Communication*, 30 (3) (1980): 10-29.

Gonnet, Jacques: *De l'actualité à l'école. Pour des ateliers de Démocratie*. Paris, Armand Colin, 1995.

Gonnet, Jacques: *Les médias et la curiosité du monde*. Paris, PUF, 2003.

Jacquinot, Geneviève (ed.). *Les jeunes et les médias. Perspectives de recherche dans le monde*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002.

Lipiansky, Edmond-Marc: "Existe-t-il une personnalité de base?", in J.C. Ruano-Borbalan (ed.) *L'identité*. Paris, Éditions Sciences Humaines, 1998.

Livingstone, Sonia: *Young People and New Media. Childhood and the Changing Media Environment*. London, Sage, 2002.

Mahler, V.: *Ados, comment on vous manipule*. Paris, Albin Michel, 2004.

Montgomery, Kathryn C.: "Digital Kids: The New Online Children's Consumer Culture", in Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer (eds). *Handbook of Children and the Media*. London, Sage, 2001.

Observatoire Européen de l'Audiovisuel. *Annuaire statistique 2002*, volumes 3 et 5. Strasbourg, Conseil de l'Europe, 2003.

Potter, W. James and Warren, Ron: "Considering Policies to Protect Children from TV Violence", *Journal of Communication*, 46 (4) 1996: 116-138.

Potter, W. James: *The 11 Myths on Media Violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.

Thoraval, J. *Protection de l'enfant et usages de l'internet*. Rapport. Ministère des Solidarités, de la Santé et de la Famille, Conférence de la famille, 2005.

UNESCO. *MENTOR. A Media Education Curriculum for Teachers in the Mediterranean*. Ci.com Series, 5, March 2003 (CD-ROM in French, English, Spanish, Arabic and Turkish).

UNESCO. *(S')Eduquer aux Medias/(Self-)Educating to Media*. Divina Frau-Meigs (ed.). Paris, Unesco, 2006 (in French and English).

Varan, Duane: "The Cultural Erosion Metaphor," *Journal of Communication* 48 (2) (Spring 1998): 58-85.

When Childhood Gets Commercialized, Can Children Be Protected?[1]

Juliet B. Schor

In 2004, a significant debate about the effects and even the ethics of marketing to children emerged in the U.S. The catalyst has been the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and the related rise in medical diseases such as hypertension and type II diabetes (Surgeon General 2001). Children's advocates have argued that food marketing is a major cause of the shift to unhealthy diets dominated by added sugar, fat and salt. They point to the billions of dollars of food advertising and marketing which children are exposed to, on television, in schools, on the Internet, and in the grocery store (Nestle 2002, Brownell and Horgen 2003).

Although it did not gain much traction before the recent attention to junk food marketing, the critique goes beyond food to include other addictive substances such as tobacco and alcohol, as well as the marketing of violence, unhealthy body images, and materialism. Social scientists and pediatricians have compiled an impressive array of research results about the impact of various aspects of consumer culture on children. (See Robinson et al. 1998, 2001, Sargent et al. 2001, Kasser 2002, Strasburger and Wilson 2002; and Schor 2004, among others.) Activists have argued that children are suffering from 'marketing-related diseases' (see commercialalert.org), and that marketers are engaging in a 'hostile takeover of childhood' (Linn 2004, see also Nader 1996). In addition to their opposition to particular products and messages, many critics believe that advertising to children is inherently unfair, even exploitative, because children are unable to understand ads or resist their persuasiveness.

The critics are motivated in part by adverse trends in child well-being. Youth are suffering from rising rates of obesity, obesity-related diseases, mental and emotional disorders such as depression, substance abuse, suicide, attention disorders, mood disorders, behavioral disorders, and eating disorders (Kelleher et al. 2000). Record numbers of children are on drugs to address these problems. The average level of anxiety among American youth is now equivalent to the rate recorded among children admitted to psychiatric facilities in the 1950s

(Twenge 2000). And in 2001, self-reports of physical and emotional health among college freshmen reached their lowest level in 16 years of surveying (Sax et al. 2001). While the 1990s economic boom yielded gains in well-being by reducing child poverty rates, middle class and wealthy children are now increasingly at risk.

In addition to the critiques of researchers and activists, action from the legal community has focused attention on activities of junk food producers. A number of lawsuits have been filed against fast food companies, for marketing addictive and dangerous products to children. Some of the lawyers active in the fight against Big Tobacco have turned their attention to junk food marketing. Throughout both the activist community and the industry, there is a common view that junk food could be 'the next tobacco' (Branch 2003).

Industry has responded on a number of fronts. Politically, it has enlisted the support of the Bush Administration to forestall legislation, and to shift the focus of the debate from food to exercise. (For a discussion of this point, see Schor 2004, and also a series of press releases on Bush Administration actions at commercialalert.org) In 2004, before the Congressional recess, the food industry was able to get a bill through the House that protects them from liability for consumer harm. It was not taken up by the Senate, but it is likely it will be re-introduced.

The food corporations have also tried to control the discourse by making some concessions, and through skillful use of public relations concerning those concessions. For example, Kraft recently got wide coverage for an announce-ment that was interpreted as a commitment to stop advertising a subset of its most unhealthy products to children, although the actual change will likely be less significant than was widely interpreted (Mayer 2005). McDonald's garnered widespread positive attention for an announcement that it was abandoning the use of trans-fats, a shift it has failed to carry out. The Center for Consumer Freedom, a group originally funded by Philip Morris, which also receives funding from res-taurant chains, soft drink companies and other food corporations, has engaged in substantial public relations, advertising, research and lobbying activity in or-der to discredit food industry critics (see Schor 2004, Sargent 2005). In January 2005, industry formed the Alliance for American Advertising (AAA), a new organization whose purpose is to protect companies' rights to advertise to child-ren. The Alliance includes Kellogg, General Mills and Kraft, and has openly ques-tioned the link between advertising and obesity, a reprise of tobacco strategy (Ellison 2005). The formation of the AAA should be interpreted as a sign that the critics are making progress – however, the current political environment is hardly favorable.

The commercialization of childhood

The debate about marketing has developed not only because of food, but also because what industry participants call the 'children's space' has become one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing areas of advertising and marketing. Children, by which I refer to persons in the zero to twelve age range, are a segment of the consumer market with rapidly growing purchasing power. It is currently estimated that children command over US$40 billion in direct purchasing power, and that number is expected to rise to $51.8 billion in 2006 (marketresearch.com). Direct purchasing power is money children themselves have control over and spend. The leading product category children spend on is food and beverages, followed by play items, apparel, movies and sports, and video arcades (McNeal 1999, p. 57).

As a result of their growing market power, advertising and marketing to children has risen dramatically in recent years, and is now estimated to exceed $15 billion a year in the U.S. (Schor 2004). Food accounts for the lion's share of total expenditures. As markets for many adult products reach saturation, the advertising industry has averted disaster in large part by doing work for drug companies and corporations that target children.

Marketers' interest in children goes well beyond the $40 billion that fills their piggy banks. Their greater attraction is that children are influencing a far larger slice of consumer purchasing, through what industry analysts call the 'influence market', or their role in determining parental purchases. The influence market is estimated by McNeal to be more than $670 billion (McNeal 1999 and communication with author). Influence ranges from a child's request for a particular brand of cereal to weighing in with on the brand of minivan their parents should choose. The growth of child influence is enabled by more democratic styles of parenting, but it is propelled by an increasing volume of direct-to-child ads for food, cars, hotel and restaurant chains, tourist destinations, and consumer electronics, which are placed on children's media. An initial opening of influence identified by marketers has been capitalized on by an intense targeting effort. This triangulation among child, parent and marketer is altering basic family dynamics in complex and not always healthy ways.

The transformation of family purchasing dynamics has been most consequential in food choices. Children now request not only long-advertised products such as sugared cereals, but new items such as entrees, dairy goods, special luncheon items such as Oscar Meyers' 'Lunchables', salty snacks, sugared snacks, desserts and even condiments. (Some famous industry examples in this category include Heinz' green ketchup and Parkay's blue margarine.) Indeed, marketers have found that children have moved beyond the traditional product request model ('Mommy, I want this', or 'Buy me that!') to 'train' their parents to purchase the items they prefer. Children who have trained their parents exercise more control over total purchases because most parents limit children to a certain number of product requests. These changes have become central to the deterioration of children's diets (Schor 2004, see also Nader 1996, and on diets, Muñoz et al. 1997).

The proliferation of ads

Parents are probably most aware of, and certainly policy makers have paid most attention to, television advertising, but innovation and expansion in the targeting of children is increasingly happening outside the TV box. Advertisers and marketers have opened up a number of new fronts for capturing children's attention and imaginations. Indeed, television advertising represents only a fraction of total marketing expenditure. New advertising frontiers include the Internet, movies, cultural institutions, schools, playgrounds, social service organizations, and even private homes. These venues are in addition to the ongoing commercialization of public space that is targeted at both adults and children (McAllister 1996). Examples include corporate naming of stadiums, the growth of advertising in sport, advertising on subways and buses, the airport and hospital channels, advertising in restaurants, and other place-based advertising such as the illumination of sidewalks with ads, and the growth of street advertising such as product giveaways and what are called 'guerrilla teams' doing marketing on the street. Real life product placement is another growing trend, in which companies pay people or even enlist volunteers to use, tout, or otherwise promote a product in everyday life.

The Internet has become a highly commercialized medium, which includes very few non-commercial sites for children. A wide range of problematic practices, which violate industry guidelines for advertising to children, have been discovered on the Internet, only some of which have been eliminated (Center for Media Education 1996, 2001, Aufderheide 2001). A growing practice is advergaming, in which companies create branded game environments (e.g., Nabisco's Chips Ahoy game, or Nike's Slam Dunk contest). Delineation between ads and content is often very weak on the Internet, in violation of a widely accepted basic principle of children's advertising. Movies have become another growth area for advertising, as paid product placements have become ubiquitous in children's films, and because commercials are now routinely shown before the coming attractions.

In the non-electronic world, advertising to children is also growing rapidly. Zoos and museums are increasingly offering corporations the chance to sponsor exhibits and in return giving them opportunities to market their brands and products. In the last decade, schools have opened their doors to advertisers in a major way. Examples of in-school advertising include so-called 'sponsored educational materials' or ads in the guise of free curricula provided to teachers; Channel One's in-classroom 'news' broadcast and daily mandatory viewing of commercials; ads on school hallways, buses, and gymnasium floors; branded product giveaways (such as Philip Morris's 'free' textbook covers); the sale of naming rights for gyms and even schools to corporate sponsors; exclusive soft-drink contracts; corporate art, homework, and other contests; and field trip programs which introduce children to particular stores (e.g., a trip to Petco rather than the zoo). Schools have also offered their pupils as participants in market research exercises in re-

turn for small sums of money. (For details on in-school advertising see Schor 2004 ch. 5, Molnar 1996, 2002.)

Marketing is also infiltrating social institutions and social dynamics in unprecedented ways. For example, non-profit organizations such as the Girl Scouts and the Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as churches, are now collaborating with marketers. The Girl Scouts offer a 'fashion adventure' badge that consists of a trip to the mall, and an introduction to the 'Limited Two', a clothing store which targets pre-teen girls. The national Boys and Girls Clubs are collaborating with market research firms to provide children who will serve as 'consultants' and 'informants'. Ministers and youth service workers who participate in sports leagues are enlisted by footwear and apparel manufacturers to test out products with the children they work with (Schor 2004). Finally, marketers entice kids themselves to practice what is called 'viral' marketing, or word-of-mouth advertising to their friends, relatives and acquaintances. The firms operate by finding trend-setting, popular kids and recruiting them to serve as marketing 'agents'. The children are instructed to market particular products or extract consumer information from their friends. One company, active among tween girls, claims to have organized thousands of slumber parties in 'agents" homes, at which girls provide market research to client companies and gain access to new products (Schor 2004). Proctor and Gamble has 250,000 youth involved in Tremor, its word-of-mouth arm (Vranica 2004).

I include these developments in some detail because they are important for understanding the broad context in which current debates about marketing to children are taking place. Marketing and advertising have moved out from the bounded world of television, and even the world of media, to virtually all the spaces and places inhabited by children. The nature of an 'ad' is also changing, as companies are utilizing many types of communication to convey brand messages to children. This of course complicates efforts to regulate, control or alter the advertising and marketing, and it increases the areas and types of influence advertising is having on children.

The case against marketing and advertising to children: ads are exploitative

There are two major lines of criticisms of marketing to children. The first is that all advertising is problematic because children are unable to adequately understand and resist its messages. This position relies on theories of development that argue that children's capacities to understand the world around them develop gradually throughout childhood. The second identifies negative impacts of particular advertised products, and opposes advertising because it increases the consumption of these products. A related harm argument is that ad messages themselves often have negative effects because they promote unhealthy behaviors and attitudes.

The view that ads are inherently unfair and exploitative comes from a series of research studies begun in the 1970s whose aim was to assess what children can understand about ads and how they receive them. The studies ask questions such as: At what age can children discriminate between advertising and programs? When do they understand the purpose of advertising? When are they able to understand the notion of 'persuasive intent', that is, the idea that commercials are attempting to persuade viewers to buy products? The critics' argument is that because children cannot adequately understand ads and their purpose, they cannot resist ads' persuasive powers, and therefore the practice of directly targeting children is inherently unfair and exploitative. Many believe that the all advertising to children under 12 should be banned on these grounds, regardless of the product being advertised (Kasser and Kanner 2004).

On the first question, the age at which children can discriminate between TV ads and programming, the evidence varies to some extent with research design, however reviews of the literature typically conclude that by age five, most, but not all children are able to differentiate (Roedder John 1999, Gunter and Furnham 1998, Young 1990, Strasburger and Wilson 2002, Kunkel 2001, Macklin and Carlson 1999, Martin 1997). At five years, children are usually able to describe the differences between ads and programming in very limited terms, noting that ads are shorter, or funnier. Advertising is mainly seen as entertainment or unbiased information. The research also shows that the usual practice for differentiating ads from programs, the insertion of a separator, is not effective as a signaling device for this age group (Strasburger and Wilson 1992, Comstock 1991). Similarly, disclaimers and explanations such as 'assembly necessary' or 'batteries required', that are designed to prevent unrealistic expectations have also been found to be ineffective with young children (Comstock 1991).

A second question is whether children can articulate the purpose of ads, once they can identify them. At early ages children typically say things like 'ads show you a product' or 'they are to sell a product'. Deeper understanding of the persuasive intent of ads occurs by about age eight. One study in which children were asked 'what is a commercial' and 'what does a commercial try to get you to do', found that 53 percent of first graders (ages 6-7), 87 percent of third graders (8-9), and 99 percent of fifth graders (ages 10-11) noted the persuasive dimension of ads (Roberston and Rossiter 1974). A 1992 study found that only 32 percent of four to six year olds mentioned that ads try to sell products, instead noting that ads are there to entertain or give information (Wilson and Weiss 1992). Other research finds that watching more ads does not lead to earlier or more complete ability to discern advertising intent (Faber, Perloff and Hawkins 1982).

By eight, children also recognize that ads do not always tell the truth and they have begun to figure out why. The research also finds that as they age, children become less trusting of ads (Roedder John 1999, Mangleburg and Bristol 1998). In a study of middle-school students, most agreed with statements such as 'Advertisers care more about getting you to buy things than what is good for you', and 'TV commercials tell only the good things about a product; they don't tell

you the bad things' (Bousch, Friestad and Rose 1994). Industry practitioners point to this mistrust as proof that children cannot be influenced. But the available research finds that the presence of skepticism does not affect desire for the advertised product, even for nine and ten year olds. Despite expressing doubts about ads, kids remain vulnerable to their persuasive powers (Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg 1998, Roedder John 1999). Furthermore, although media literacy has been encouraged as a solution to some of the problems raised by children's inability to watch ads critically, at least some research finds that it does not affect children while they are actually watching ads (Roedder John 1999). In one study of nine and ten year olds, exposure to a media literacy film did not subsequently affect their thoughts while they viewed advertisements, because they did not retrieve the consumer knowledge they learned from the film (Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg 1998). In recent years, advertisers have studied children's skepticism and tried to use it to their advantage, allying themselves with the skepticism, by lampooning advertising, admonishing kids not to trust celebrity endorsers, or imparting a gritty realism to commercials. These tactics are often successful in breaking down children's defenses, and fooling them about what is and is not an ad.

There is debate among scholars of media and advertising about the theoretical underpinnings of these findings. Most researchers follow a Piagetian developmental framework, which has distinct stages for ages 3-7, 7-11 and 11-16 corresponding to the ability to perform mental tasks such as abstraction. Some critics, such as Young (1990) and Davies (1997), argue for a linguistic framework, which looks at when children can understand things like metaphor, ambiguity, irony, and so forth, a perspective which yields a different timetable for understanding (see also Buckingham 2002). In my view, the universalist stage-oriented approach characteristic of most child development theory has been cogently critiqued and empirically undermined, although it remains highly influential in the field of child development (see Keating 1990). I believe this is part of the failure of this approach to gain adherents.

Most of the research noted above was done some time ago, when the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) was interested in these questions. Today, the public stance of those in industry is that children are savvy, more sophisticated than in the past, and incapable of being fooled by advertising. (They rarely address the ability to withstand ads' persuasive powers.) Whether industry is right that children today are unlike those of the 1970s and 1980s, is an unexamined, although reasonable point of view. Developmentalists discount that argument, because their models rely on 'biological' categories, which see children as unchanging, at least over short periods of time. However, it is curious that privately industry professionals are closer to the developmentalist psychologists than they admit in public. A 2004 Harris survey of 878 children's marketers found that the age at which they believe young people are capable of making 'intelligent choices as consumers' is 11.7 years (average response), not far from the 12 years that psychologists identify (Grimm 2004). The survey also found that the average age at which marketers believe it is 'appropriate to begin marketing to children' is 7 years, the

age at which children can view advertising critically is 9.1 years, and that the age at which children can begin distinguishing between 'fantasy and reality in media and advertising' is 9.3 years. Of course, actual practices diverge substantially from these beliefs.

The case against marketing (II): the production of harm

In contrast to the previous argument, which has gained relatively few adherents in recent years, arguments against marketing based on the harms done by marketed products have attracted attention and proponents. As noted above, opposition to food marketing has become significant. Food companies are estimated to spend thirty-three billion a year in direct advertising, and increasingly those dollars are targeted to children. Seventy percent of expenditures are for convenience foods, candy and snacks, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts. Fruits, vegetables, grains and beans comprise only 2.2 percent (Nestle 2002, p. 22). McDonald's, the world's largest fast food restaurant chain, reportedly spends $500 million a year on ads, of which approximately 40 percent is targeted to children (Horgen et al. 2001 cited in Strasburger and Wilson 2002). Virtually all children's food advertising is for junk food, and in addition to child-targeted ads, children are heavily exposed to food advertising nominally directed at adults (Byrd-Bredbenner and Grasso 1999). Nationwide, schools are reported to receive $750 million a year in marketing dollars from snack and processed food companies (Egan 2002).

Decades of studies show that food marketing to children is effective (Goldberg 1990). In the 1978s, Marvin Goldberg studied differences between children who saw and did not see television advertising and found that sugared cereals were more likely to be present in the homes of the former (Gorn and Goldberg 1982). H.L. Taras and colleagues (1989) found that for children aged 3-8 weekly television viewing time is significantly correlated with requests for specified advertised products as well as overall caloric intake. More recently, Dina Borzekowski's and Thomas Robinson's research (2001) on low-income preschoolers found that even brief exposure to ads led the children to choose advertised food products more often. And a study of fourth and fifth graders found that higher television viewing is related to poor nutritional habits, even controlling for social and other factors (Signorielli and Lears (1992), cited in Strasburger and Wilson 2002, p. 245).

Food advertising is contributing to major changes in eating habits. Snacking among children has increased markedly over the past two decades, and the fraction of calories that comes from snacks, rather than meals, has risen by 30 percent (Jahns, Siega-Riz and Popkin 2001; see also Cullen et al. 2002 on deteriorating diets). Marketing has also boosted sugar consumption, especially through soft drinks. The roughly 45 g of added sugar in each drink is just about the total daily recommended limit for added sugar (see Ludwig 2001 on soft drinks and obes-

ity). The fraction of calories consumed outside the home, with their higher fat and sugar content, has also risen markedly, to about a third of the total. By the mid-1990s, fast food comprised 10 percent of kids' daily caloric intake, up from 2 percent twenty years earlier (McLellan 2002). The marked rise in unhealthy eating is central to understanding what the Surgeon General has called an epidemic of obesity among U.S. children (Surgeon General 2001). Over the long term, food marketing is likely to prove to be the most harmful commercial influence on children, because it will affect so much a large fraction of children, with such serious consequences for their health and well-being.

Alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful products continue to be extensively advertised to children. In late 2002, the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth reported that not only are underage youth viewing large numbers of alcohol ads, but they are also more likely to see certain ads than adults (ibid.). The companies are in clear violation of the voluntary guidelines the companies agreed to not to air ads when underage viewers comprise more than half the audience (Schor 2004). Tobacco companies' print advertising to youth reached record levels after the settlement outlawing youth marketing, as they stepped up ads in youth magazines (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids 2003). Children are also exposed to alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs in television programs, films, and music videos. A major content study found that alcohol and tobacco appeared in more than 90 percent of the 200 most popular films from 1996 and 1997 and illicit drugs appeared in 22 percent (Roberts, Henriksen and Christenson 1999). In fact, smoking and alcohol use are more prevalent in film and television than they are in the real world. While illegal drugs are not formally 'advertised' in the media, there is accumulating evidence of marketing and promotion of performance-enhancing illegal substances such as steroids through athletic coaches. Drug companies are also beginning to advertise prescription drugs to youth. Johnson and Johnson has an extensive marketing campaign for acne remedy Retin-A Micro, and anti-anxiety drugs such as Paxil have ads which are as appropriate to youth as adults. Children have also been heavily exposed to many other drug ads.

The companies are also using street marketing campaigns, which inevitably reach the under-aged. In 2000, Sky Vodka hired Look-Look, a trends research firm founded by 'cool-hunter' DeeDee Gordon, which conceived a campaign to propagate the urban myth that Sky Vodka didn't cause hangovers. Sales among young people rose almost instantly (Goldstein 2000). Other street marketing tactics used by alcohol companies include paint wraps on subway cars in metropolitan areas, postering, and T-shirt giveaways. Tobacco companies have also expanded beyond traditional media. In 2001, a group of child advocates and public health organizations requested an investigation into millions of Philip Morris textbook covers distributed in schools.

There is now a considerable body of evidence showing that children and adolescents are more likely to smoke, drink and use drugs when they are exposed to ads or programming depicting these products. Major new longitudinal studies by researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research show that

advertising has a strong positive influence on demand, especially for girls, in contrast to earlier studies based on far cruder data (Saffer and Dave 2003 on alcohol, see also Saffer and Chaloupka 1999 on tobacco). In a California study of 9th grade students, Thomas Robinson et al. (1998) found that each extra hour of MTV watched per day was associated with a 31 percent increased risk of starting to drink alcohol over the next 18 months, controlling for a variety of factors. Furthermore, each additional hour of any television programming watched led to a 9 percent higher likelihood the student would start to drink during the following 18 months. A study of nearly 5,000 students in grades five through eight by James Sargent of Dartmouth Medical School found that the most important variable predicting whether a student would try a first cigarette was the amount of time spent watching Hollywood movies. This was true even after controlling for parental smoking and attitudes, personality traits, self-esteem, and propensity to take risks (Sargent et al. 2001, see also Pierce et al. 1998). Given the high prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug use among American youth (beginning, typically in grade eight), and the use of millions in taxpayer monies for anti-drug advertising, the continued tolerance of widespread explicit and implicit advertising to youth for these harmful, addictive substances is remarkable.

These products (junk food, tobacco, alcohol and drugs) do not exhaust the list of harmful or potentially harmful items marketed to children. There is an extensive literature on violent products, media and messages, which I do not have the space to detail (see Schor 2004 for some citations, also Ravitch and Vitieritti 2003). Other issues on which research now exists include the marketing of unrealistic body images and their connection to eating disorders, the adverse impact of media exposure on academic achievement, the promotion of early and risky sexual activity through highly sexualized products (fashion, music, media), and the continued media prevalence of harmful racial, gendered, and heteronormative stereotypes.

In recent years, a new literature on harmful commercial influences has emerged, which addresses whether the commercialization of childhood is contributing to materialism and the adoption of consumerist ideology. While advertising and marketing promote particular products, they also convey cultural messages. Common themes include the view that products lead to social validation (or being 'cool'), that they yield happiness and well-being, and that it is important to be rich. These consumerist or materialist values are prevalent throughout both advertising and the media programming that is increasingly intertwined with ads. Surveys of children and teens suggest that they are more materialistic than previous generations, that being rich is currently the most popular aspiration of American youth, and that youth have an unprecedented level of brand awareness and passion (for data on materialism among youth, see Schor 2004).

In the first study of its kind, I (Schor 2004) developed a model of 'consumer involvement' in which media (and advertising) exposure affects how psychically and, to a lesser extent, behaviorally, children become involved in consumer culture. (Scale items include aspirations for wealth, attitudes toward shopping, ads, col-

lecting, and designer labels, the importance of being cool, the intensity of social comparisons of money and goods, and the strength of ongoing desires for products.) The model finds that media exposure (measured as time spent with television and other media) predicts higher consumer involvement. Consumer involvement in turn predicts higher rates of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic complaints such as headache, stomachache and boredom, as well as lower self-esteem. The model was tested on 300 children aged 10-13 across the socio-economic spectrum, using a structural equation model that is designed to illuminate not merely correlations but causal relations. The interpretation of these results is that the general consumer environment, rather than merely individual harmful products, has become an important part of what is ailing America's children.

These findings are in line with a now very substantial literature on the adverse effects of materialist values on teens and adults. (Virtually no materialism research has been done with children, see Kasser 2002 for a survey of this research.) These studies, done by psychologists, find that materialism is highly correlated with a large number of negative outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, low 'life vitality', poor social functioning, psychosomatic medical conditions, risky behaviors in youth, and psychological disorders. To the extent that consumer culture is cultivating materialist values in children, this literature suggests that those values may well become a source of problems.

Conventional responses: self-regulation and ad bans

In response to the critics, industry has been vigilant about fending off government regulation and control. In cases where industry accepts the need to 'protect' children (e.g., alcohol, violence and other adult content), it has turned to 'self-regulation' and voluntary ratings schemes. Typically, these rely on parental oversight. (This is consistent with an over-arching industry position, which is that the responsibility for protecting children lies mainly with parents, not corporations or the government. I return to this point below.)

After years of experience with 'self-regulation' of alcohol and tobacco ads, and ratings systems for movies, television, and video games, it is clear that these efforts have not lived up to their ostensible goals of protecting children. Consider, for example, the guideline that alcohol advertising should not appear in programming where over 50 percent of the audience is underage. On the one hand, the alcohol companies have repeatedly violated this guideline, with little or no response from the FTC. But even if they were in compliance, the guideline is ineffective. Underage youth, defined as those aged 12-20, comprise just 15 percent of the population. As a result, only about 1 percent of the 14,359 cable and network programs surveyed by Nielsen Media Research are excluded under the 50 percent rule. Furthermore, many youth watch adult programming. For example, in 2001, 89 percent of youth were exposed to alcohol advertising (Center on

Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). As noted above, underage drinkers are more likely than legal age drinkers to be exposed to alcohol advertising. Clearly, the current guidelines are not a serious attempt to avoid exposing children to alcohol ads.

The media ratings systems have also been major failures (Bogart 2005). In general, the ratings systems are designed to inform parents about violent, sexual, profane, or other 'adult' content. In the case of movies, the very existence of these ratings fairly quickly led to increased market demand for higher-rated content (PG-13, parents strongly cautioned; some material may be inappropriate for children under 13, and R, restricted), which in turn led producers to artificially increase 'adult' content in order to obtain coveted PG-13 and R status. This is known in the literature as the 'forbidden fruit' syndrome (Grier 2001). An example of the perversity of the current system is what happened after the Clinton Administration, through the FTC, exposed the studios' widespread marketing of R-rated movies to children as young as nine (Federal Trade Commission 2000). Embarrassed, industry tightened up, and theaters began requiring parents to accompany kids to R movies. But quickly, adult content, including a disproportionate rise in smoking, migrated to the PG-13 category, where many films are now often equivalent to what R-rated films were before the FTC investigation (Bogart 2005, Kennedy 2002). More generally, the institution of a rating system has been accompanied by a significant increase in adult content, across a variety of metrics. By contrast, the television and video game ratings schemes have had less effect, but that is because adults are far less aware of them. The V-Chip has been difficult to understand, program, and use, and parental awareness is very low (Bogart 2005).

Failures like these, as well as industry's unwillingness to self-regulate in important areas such as junk food and violent and sexualized products has led to calls for outright bans on direct advertising to children under 12 (Linn 2004). There are precedents for such bans in some Western European countries, such as Sweden, which prohibits television advertising to children under 12, as does Quebec in Canada. Bans have some certain appeal, but with some exceptions, they also have significant drawbacks. The two most obvious are the legal and political feasibility of such regulation. With respect to the former, corporations are claiming First Amendment protection for direct targeting of children (see Ellison 2005). Of course, the courts have a long history of protecting children, and have been willing to restrict speech in various areas, but recent decisions (e.g., Lorrillard versus State of Massachusetts) are not encouraging. Prohibitions on junk food marketing may be more feasible to enact than comprehensive bans, at least if the case for harm and addictiveness of these foods can be made cogently. In any case, the likely outcome of such legal issues is complex, and beyond the scope of this article. However, even if the legal barriers were to be overcome, the political obstacles to enacting regulation are significant, a point I return to below.

There are also logistical and practical questions associated with advertising bans, especially given the size and power of the corporate entities that are involved. For example, the expansion of advertising beyond television, radio and

print venues raises the question of what media a ban would apply to. While television has been the major focus of advertising bans, and it is a relatively easy medium to regulate, even television bans are not without challenges. In Sweden, children are exposed to ads through the growing presence of unregulated satellite television. However, much of the logic of banning ads applies to all types of marketing, including Internet, place-based, and word of mouth. Given that companies are already active in these areas, it will be more difficult to police and enforce generalized bans than it would have been where these practices had not taken root. (And, as one word of mouth marketer noted recently, 'I can't begin to imagine how one can regulate an industry that thrives on its covert nature' (Vranica 2005). However, if bans apply to only some media (e.g., radio and television), the companies can easily shift their expenditures to other outlets, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the ban. The example of the tobacco industry's decision to pull television advertising decades ago shows that companies can continue to market, attract youthful new customers, and thrive without television. Would Big Food have a similar experience?

Bans also raise the possibility of negative unintended consequences. For example, if a ban on advertising to children were to be enacted, it would reduce the financing available for children's programming. If the quantity and quality of their programming declined, children would be likely to watch more adult media. This, in turn, would expose them to other types of inappropriate advertising and content. At the very least, government regulations on advertising need to be coupled with adequate financing mechanisms for quality children's programming.

My pessimism about advertising bans recognizes one important exception – schools. These are proving to be both popular and logistically feasible. Large majorities of parents and even nearly half of all marketers believe that advertising in schools is inappropriate (Schor 2004 on parents, Grimm 2004 on marketers). Schools are bounded environments with workable mechanisms of control, and advertising is a marginal revenue source. This makes the logistics of school bans easier than in other venues. In recent years, a significant number of states, cities and districts have enacted regulations on soft drinks and other junk food marketing in schools. The Seattle School District has gone farthest, outlawing all forms of advertising as well as the provision of junk food (defined in terms of percentages of added sugar, fat and salt). This may be a rare wedge issue that has the potential to galvanize children's advocates.

An alternative to ad bans is counter-advertising. This approach is not common in the traditional children's advocacy community, in part because of the longstanding belief by developmentalists that advertising is unfair, whatever its message. The counter-advertising strategy is also currently a major thrust of Big Food's response to its critics. For example, the first response of the Bush Administration to the obesity crisis was to give millions of taxpayers' dollars to the ad agencies and media corporations that represent Big Food in order to produce ads that touted the benefits of exercise. As the debate has evolved, the companies themselves are committing advertising dollars to nutritional messaging. Re-

cently, McDonald's announced a global ad campaign encouraging children to get the proper 'energy balance' (Sanders 2005). These developments have rightly led activists to be cautious about a solution that is premised on more advertising.

But the anodyne messages of Kraft and McDonald's about exercise and 'eating right' should not blind us to the possibilities for hard-hitting campaigns which tell the truth about the properties and effects of junk food, or even broader messages that cast doubt on the consumer culture itself. The graphic and powerful anti-tobacco ads of more than 30 years ago were widely credited for leading the tobacco companies to withdraw from television, and the equally powerful ads of the Truth campaign are credited with reducing youth smoking. (Research by the National Bureau of Economic Research finds that industry anti-smoking campaigns are associated with either no change or an increased likelihood of smoking, but that government sponsored campaigns significantly reduce smoking, Saffer and Choulapka 1999.)

The counter-advertising approach comes from theories of culture in a post-modern age (see for example, Baudrillard 1994, Lasn 1999). Because media and advertising have become so dominant in the construction of everyday life, especially for youth, post-modern theory argues that it is only through media and advertising that people can be reached. However, only some counter-advertising is effective. Messages must either be emotionally powerful and hard-hitting enough to pierce the zone of complacency about consumer culture that is characteristic of everyday life. Or they must be humorous and undermine the legitimacy of ordinary advertising, as in the genre of 'sub-vertising' or 'spoof ads' practiced by Adbusters.

To date, this strategy has been stymied by the fact that truly powerful anti-ad messaging is difficult to get on the airwaves and almost impossible to sustain. The Truth campaign was ended quickly. The networks have repeatedly refused to show Adbusters anti-consumerist ads, in part on grounds that they will offend their advertisers. Surprisingly, there are no First Amendment rights for groups that want to promote an anti-consumerist message. Media outlets are corporate entities that depend on other corporate entities to earn profits, and they have historically resisted messages that jeopardize that relationship.

The problem of corporate power
and the new realities of public policy

The drawbacks of the standard responses to the problem are ultimately due to the larger economic and political environment in which they are being proposed. Today, the bulk of advertising to children is done by a small number of multi-billion dollar corporations. In many of the major product categories, the market is dominated by a small number of companies, sometimes only two. In soft drinks, it is Coca-Cola and Pepsico, in toys Mattel and Hasbro, in fast food McDonald's

and Burger King, in candy Mars and Hershey. In beer, Anheuser-Busch and Miller dominate. In food there are more than two, but few – Kraft (Philip Morris), Nabisco (RJR), General Foods, Pepsico, Unilever and Nestle are major players. Among media companies, rapid consolidation has occurred, and children's media is dominated by Viacom, Disney, Fox, and Time Warner. Indeed, it is estimated that five media corporations now control the majority of U.S. media outlets (Bagdikian 2004). The annual revenue streams of these companies are enormous – Viacom, for example, has reported annual revenues exceeding $25 billion; last year Coca-Cola earned just under $22 billion. The companies themselves are valued at hundreds of billions of dollars.

These corporations not only have enormous economic power, but their political influence has never been greater. They have funneled unprecedented sums of money to political parties and officials. For example, between 1995 and 2002, Philip Morris gave more than $9 million dollars to the two political parties, with the bulk ($7.8 million) going to the Republicans. Time Warner gave more than $4 million, Disney $3.6 million, and the U.S. Sugar Corporation gave $2.3 million (Schor 2004). For three decades, corporate power and influence have been expanding.

The power wielded by these corporations is evident in many ways, from their ability to eliminate competitors to their ability to mobilize state power in their interest. Consider developments relating to food. In 2005, the expert panel advising the government on revisions to federal nutrition guidelines, a majority of whom had strong links to industry, proposed guidelines that made no mention of limiting sugar consumption, despite its role in rising obesity. While sugar did eventually appear in the final guidelines, after protests by activists, it is buried inside the report under carbohydrates (see OMB Watch 2004). The sugar industry has also bullied the WHO with threats that their anti-obesity initiative would result in a withdrawal of U.S. funds to the industry. Agriculture and food lobbies have pushed through food disparagement laws in twelve states where they are politically powerful. Oprah Winfrey was sued by a group of Texas cattlemen under their 'veggie libel law' after she did a show on Mad Cow Disease. Biotech giant Monsanto not only used its clout to have recombinant bovine growth hormone approved by the Food and Drug Administration, despite the fact that it is banned in every other industrialized country for its links to cancer and early puberty, but the company has pressured the United States Department of Agriculture to prevent farmers from informing consumers that they do not use the hormone (Mohl 2003, Schor 2004). In schools, the soft drink companies have demanded exclusive access. The companies tout 'nutrition education' as the solution to poor diets and obesity, but have fiercely resisted government attempts to require labeling on their products. (For more on the political clout of Big Food, see Nestle 2002, Schor 2004.)

Recent actions of the FTC also illustrate the growing reach of corporate power. In early 2005, the FTC dismissed Commercial Alert's petition to require disclosure of product placements in television. The rationale for the petition was that

product placement is a form of advertising, about which consumers have the right to be informed. The FTC's refusal to act not only violates its longstanding view that advertising should not be deceptive, but also that ads to children should be clearly marked and identifiable as such. A second example is the failure of the FTC to take action against alcohol companies in the face of evidence that they have failed to comply even with their own voluntary guidelines (Schor 2004). Meanwhile, at the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), the agency only belatedly acted on the fact that major networks have routinely been in violation of rules regulating the maximal amount of ad time per hour.

If the earlier arguments about harms are correct, then children's enhanced market clout has earned them a powerful set of enemies. And as childhood becomes more completely commercialized, or more accurately, corporatized, those harms are likely to grow. Indeed, I argue a strong version of this point. *The unchecked growth of corporate power, and its fusion with state power, has led to a situation in which children's interests and well-being cannot be adequately ensured*. What children eat, the programming they watch, the toys they play with, the curriculums they learn in schools, perhaps the name of their school gymnasium (or school), and even the books they read (M&Ms or Cheerios counting book) are provided by companies whose commitment to their welfare is minimal or absent. Furthermore, even corporations whose products are relatively benign are deeply and profoundly entwined through licensing, co-branding, and other financial ties with companies whose products are not (e.g., Big Food). Political developments since 2000, and since November 2004 especially, have made children more vulnerable. Public policy to protect children, which for decades has been the basis of society's response to problems generated in the market, will not be forthcoming. This is the new reality that children's advocates must confront.

Corporate and state abdication of responsibility is rationalized on the grounds that responsibility for adverse child outcomes (e.g., obesity, psychological disorders) lies with parents. Both the ad agencies and their client companies take this point of view. The corporation's mandate is to make money, the government's is to help them do so. While sometimes corporations act in superficially pro-social ways which might seem to indicate responsibility (e.g., funding exercise programs or positive nutritional messages), they are usually quite open about the fact that they are acting to forestall regulatory action, and avoid adverse publicity, rather than because they are willing to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. However, the industry position relies on an excessively 'heroic' view of parents, and their ability to prevail against the corporate giants. Indeed, parents are losing control over their children's environments in profound ways. This is due to a number of factors, including the concerted attempts of the corporations to wrest that control. At the core of the corporate strategy is the attempt to undermine parental authority, through direct targeting of children, so-called 'nag factor' marketing, deliberate anti-parent messages, and infiltration of parent-free environments such as schools. (See Nader 1996 and Schor 2004 for details on

the deliberate undermining of parental authority.) These activities are the components of the 'transformation of family dynamics' discussed above and they reveal that industry's stance is self-serving and hypocritical.

Economic pressures, such as the need for households to work many more hours to support themselves have also undermined parental control. Between 1979 and 2000, the average married couple aged 25-54 with children added 388 hours of work to their annual schedule (Mishel et al. 2003, Table 1.27, p. 100). Furthermore, the parental responsibility position does not protect the millions of children whose parents are either unable or unwilling to shield them from corporate-induced harms. Does the state not have a responsibility to those children? It acknowledges its role when parents fail to prevent or engage in violence, neglect and sexual abuse, situations that rarely directly involve a corporate role. The refusal to address corporate-induced harms is inconsistent, and a powerful example of corporate power.

Where does this leave us? Conventional remedies such as ad bans may be heuristically useful to build support for more broad-reaching measures. But activists need to be clear about the scope of the problem and the profound structural changes that are necessary. I would argue that doing well, indeed, even the lesser goal of doing right by children now requires a direct challenge to the status, legitimacy and power of the corporations that sell to them. The liberal assumption that the harms of the market can be mitigated by state policy is no longer tenable. There is ample evidence that these harms are not being addressed, nor will they be any time soon. Children's advocates who have failed to confront industry need to re-think their strategies. The National PTA's (Parent Teacher Association) acceptance of a large donation from Coca-Cola and putting Coke's top lobbyist on its board, and the Pediatric Dental Association's acceptance of money from Coca-Cola are examples of actions which will make these organizations part of the problem, rather than part of the solution (Burros 2003). But even advocacy organizations that are not in danger of being corrupted by corporate monies need to recognize that the policy environment has shifted dramatically, and take on the power of the companies directly.

There is already a nascent movement against corporate power, which includes groups trying to revoke corporate charters, Nader-connected entities such as Commercial Alert, and elements of the global social justice movement such as the International Forum on Globalization. For those of us concerned about children, it is time to join it. It is also important not to legitimate the strategies the junk food companies have been pursuing to deflect attention and blame, but to ratchet up the pressure on them. One way is to expose the ties between the pariah corporations (tobacco companies) and those that still enjoy considerable public good will (packaged goods). As academics, we should refuse to take corporate monies for our research and oppose the rapid corporatization of the university. It is time to Just say no to developments such as junk food funded chairs (e.g., Kentucky Fried Chicken Professorship of marketing), and exclusive soft drink contracts. And we should do so explicitly on grounds of rolling back corporate

power and influence. Some of the groups active on this issue have had success organizing market-based campaigns against major corporations (see, for example, commercialalert.org, newdream.org, dadsanddaughters.org and commercialfreechildhood.org). The corporations are exquisitely sensitive to consumer pressure and bad public relations, which provides opportunities for activism.

And what of the political landscape of this issue? Clearly, the Bush Administration, the Republican Congress, and the Republican Party represent corporate interests and are using the state to further those interests. But this is not a simple Republican-Democrat divide. While some Democrats have been stalwart advocates of children (Kennedy and Harkin has been particularly good on these issues), many are taking money from the corporations who are the problem. The Democratic Leadership Council, which has dominated the Democratic Party since the beginning of the Clinton Administration, is as tied to corporate cash and influence as is the Republican Party. The Clinton Administration did virtually nothing to prevent corporate induced harms to children. In a recent speech that addressed how children are affected by media and marketing, Hillary Clinton called for industry guidelines, rather than government action, a stance for which she drew praise from an ad industry spokesman (Teinowitz 2005). While Democrats may ultimately prove to be allies, it will only be if the grassroots activism awakened in the 2004 election translates into a substantial shift away from corporate influence within the party.

Intriguingly, religious and social conservatives have been allies on some of these issues. James Dodson and Phyllis Schafly have participated in a number of anti-commericalism efforts. Conservative religious groups have been active against Channel One. The right wing family values movement has long criticized Hollywood for content (on issues connected to sex and profanity); it is also unhappy about negative depictions of parents, and marketers' successes in undermining parental authority. Richard Shelby, Republican of Alabama, co-sponsored a children's privacy act with Christopher Dodd that passed in 2000. Substantively, there is considerable common ground between the right and the left here. However, since Bush took office in 2000, the Administration has consolidated control over these groups, and the space for joint action has narrowed. The corporate agenda is once taking precedence over the social one, which means that religious conservatives' concerns will be pushed aside. Whether the grassroots of these movements understand that shift and are willing to respond to it remains to be seen, however, that seems unlikely.

Note

1. This article is based on a paper prepared by the author for Yale Legal Theory Workshop, U.S.A., March 31, 2005. Thanks to Gary Ruskin and Prasannan Parthasarathi for useful conversations.

References

Aufderheide, Patricia. 'Activities Available on Children's Websites: A Survey.' April 17, 2001.

Bagdikian, Ben. *The Media Monopoly,* 7th edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1994.

Blosser, B.J. and D.F. Roberts. 'Age differences in children's perceptions of message intent: response to TV news, commercials, educational spots, and public service announcements', *Communications Research*, 12:455-484, 1985.

Borzekowski, Dina L. and Thomas N. Robinson. 'The 30-second effect: an experiment revealing the impact of television commercials on food preferences of preschoolers', *Journal of the American Dietary Association*, 10(1):42-46, 2001.

Bogart, Leo. 'Paul Starr. The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69(3):479-483, 2005.

Bousch, D.M., M. Friestad, and G.M. Rose. 'Adolescent skepticism toward TV advertising and knowledge of advertiser tactics', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(1):165-175.

Branch, Shelly. 'Is Food the Next Tobacco? As Obesity Concerns Mount, Companies Fret Their Snacks, Drinks May Take the Blame', *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2003.

Brownell, Kelly and Katherine Battle Horgen. *Food Fight: The Inside Story of the Food Industry, America's Obesity Crisis, and What We Can Do About It.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Brucks, Merrie, Gary M. Armstrong, and Marvin E. Goldberg. 'Children' s Use of Cognitive Defenses Against Television Advertising: A Cognitive Response Approach', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14:471-482, 1988.

Buckingham, David. *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.

Burros, Marian. 'Dental Group is Under Fire for Coke Deal', *New York Times*, March 24, 2003.

Byrd-Bredbenner, Carol and Darlene Grasso. 'Prime-Time Health: An Analysis of Health Content in Television Commercials Broadcast During Programs Viewed Heavily By Children', *International Electronic Journal of Health Education*, 2(4):159-169, 1999.

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 'Tobacco Industry Continues to Market to Kids', August 20, 2003, available at http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0156.pdf

Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. Television: Alcohol's Vast Adland, December 2002.

Center for Media Education. Web of Deception: Threats to Children from Online Marketing. Washington, DC: Center for Media Education, 1996.

Center for Media Education. COPPA: The First Year, A Survey of Sites. Washington, DC: Center for Media Education, 2001.

Comstock, George. *Television and the American Child*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1991.

Cullen, K.W., D.M. Ash, C. Warneke and C. de Moor. 'Intake of soft drinks, fruit-flavored beverages, and fruits and vegetables by children in grades 4-6', *American Journal of Public Health*, 92:1475-1478, 2002.

Davies, Marie. *Fact, Fake and Fantasy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997.

Egan, Timothy. 'In Bid to Improve Nutrition, Schools Expel Soda and Chips', *New York Times*, p. A1, May 20, 2002.

Ellison, Sarah. 'Companies Fight for Right to Plug Kids' Food', *Wall Street Journal,* January 26, 2005.

Faber, Ronald J., R.M. Perloff and R.P. Hawkins. 'Antecedents of children's comprehension of television advertising', *Journal of Broadcasting*, 26:575-584, 1982.

Federal Trade Commission. Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children, 2000.

Goldberg, Marvin. E. 'A Quasi-Experiment Assessing the Effectiveness of TV Advertising Directed to Children', *Journal of Marketing Research*, XXVII:445-54, November 1990.

Gorn, Gerald and Marvin E. Goldberg. 'Behavioral evidence of the effects of televised food messages on children', *Journal of Consumer Research* 9:200-205, 1982.

Goldstein, Patrick. 'Untangling the Web of Teen Trends', *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 2000.

Grier, Sonya A. 'The Federal Trade Commission's Report on the Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Youths', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 20(1):123-141, 2001.

Grimm, Matthew, 'Research and Insight: Is Marketing to Kids Ethical? *Brandweek,* April 5, 2004.

Gunter, Barrie and J. McAleer. *Children and Television, second edition.* London: Routledge, 1997.

Gunter, Barrie and Adrian Furnham. *Children as Consumers*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Jahns, Lisa, Anna Maria Siega-Riz and Barry M. Popkin. 'The increasing prevalence of snacking among US children from 1977 to 1997', *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 138:493-8, 2001.

Kasser, Tim. *The High Price of Materialism.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Kasser, Tim and Allen D. Kanner. *Psychology and Consumer Culture: The Struggle for a Good Life in a Materialistic World*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004.

Keating, D. 'Adolescent thinking,' in S. Felman and G. R. Elliott (Eds.) *At the threshold: A developing adolescent.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Kelleher, Kelly J. et al. 'Increasing Identification of Psychosocial Problems 1979-1996', *The Pediatrics Journal*, 105(6):1313-1321 June 1, 2000.

Kennedy, Louise. 'The rating game', *Boston Globe*, June 30, 2002, N13.

Kunkel, Dale. 'Children and Television Advertising', in Singer and Singer (Eds.) *Handbook of Children and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 375-393, 2001.

Lasn, Kalle. *Culture Jamming: The Uncooling of America.* New York: Eagle Brook, 1999.

Linn, Susan E. *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*. New York: New Press, 2004.

Ludwig, David. 'Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity: a prospective, observational analysis', *The Lancet* 357:505-508, 2001.

Macklin, M. Carole and Les Carlson. *Advertising to Children: Concepts and Controversies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999.

Mangleburg, Tamara F. and Terry Bristol. 'Socialization and Adolescents' Skepticism Toward Advertising', *Journal of Advertising*, 27(3), 1998.

Martin, Mary C. 'Children's understanding of the intent of advertising: A meta-analysis', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 16(2):205-216, Fall 1997.

Mayer, Caroline E. 'Kraft to Curb Snack-Food Advertising', *Washington Post*, January 12, 2005.

McAllister, Matthew P. *The Commercialization of American Culture*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996.

McLellan, Faith. 'Marketing and advertising: harmful to children's health', *The Lancet*, September 28, 2002, p. 1001.

McNeal, James. *The Kids Market: Myths and Realites*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Paramount Publishing Inc, 1999.

Mishel, Lawrence et al. *The State of Working America, 2002/3*. Ithaca: Cornell, 2003.

Mohl, Bruce. 'Got Growth Hormone?' *Boston Sunday Globe*, September 28, 2003.

Molnar, Alex. *Giving Kids the Business: The Commercialization of America's Schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

Molnar, Alex. 'What's in a Name? The Corporate Branding of America's Schools. The Fifth Annual Report on Trends in Schoolhouse Commercialism.' Tempe: Commercialism in Education Research Unit, 2002, available at http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/CERU/CERU_Annual_Report.htm

Muñoz, K.A., S.M. Krebs-Smith, R. Ballard-Barbash and S.E. Cleveland. 'Food intakes of US children and adolescents compared with recommendations', *Pediatrics*, 100:323-329, 1997.

Nader, Ralph. *Children First! A Parent's Guide to Fighting Corporate Predators*. Washington, D.C.: Corporate Accountability Research Group, 1996.

Nestle, Marion. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

OMB Watch 10/04/2004: 'Industry Influence Weakens USDA Dietary Guidelines', available at http://www.ombwatch.org/article/articleprint/2435/-1/235

Pierce, John P. et al. 'Tobacco Industry Promotion of Cigarettes and Adolescent Smoking', *JAMA*, 279:511-515, 1998.

Ravitch, Diane and Joseph P. Viteritti (Eds.) *Kid Stuff: Marketing Sex and Violence to America's Children*. Baltimore: The John's Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Roberts, Donald, Lisa Henriksen and Peter G. Christenson. *Substance Use in Popular Movies and Music*. Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, April 1999.

Robertson, T.S. and J. Rossiter. 'Children and commercial persuasion: An attributional theory analysis', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1:13-20, 1974.

Robinson, Thomas N., Helen L. Chen and Joel D. Killen. 'Television and Music Video Exposure and Risk of Adolescent Alcohol Use', *Pediatrics* 1998, 102(5):e54.

Robinson, T.N., M.L. Wilde, L.C. Navracruz, K.F. Haydel and A. Varady. 'Effects of reducing children's television and video game use on aggressive behavior: a randomized controlled trial', *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 155(1):17-23, January 2001.

Roedder John, Deborah. 'Consumer Socialization of Children: A Retrospective Look at Twenty-Five Years of Research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 183, December 1, 1999.

Saffer, Henry and Frank Chaloupka. 'Tobacco Advertising: Economic Theory and International Evidence, 6', National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper #6958, 1999.

Saffer, Henry and Dhaval Dave. 'Alcohol Advertising and Alcohol Consumption by Adolescents', National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper #9676, 2003.

Sargent, Greg. 'Berman's Battle', *The American Prospect*, January 5, 2005.

Sargent, James D. et al. 'Effect of seeing tobacco use in film on trying smoking among adolescents: cross sectional study', *BMJ*, 323:1-16, 2001.

Sax, Linda J. et al. *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2001*. Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, 2001, available at www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/norms_pr_01.html

Schor, Juliet B. *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. New York: Scribner, 2004.

Singer, Dorothy G. and Jerome L. Singer. *Handbook of Children and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001.

Strasburger, Victor C. and Wilson, Barbara J. *Children, Adolescents and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002.

Surgeon General (Office of the Surgeon General). The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Obesity and Disease. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001.

Taras, H.L. et al. 'Television's influence on children's diet and physical activity', *Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 10:176-180, 1989.

Teinowitz, Ira. 'Kaiser Study Documents Childhood Media Saturation', *Ad Age*, March 9, 2005.

Twenge, Jean M. 'The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism, 1952-1993', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(6):1007-1021, 2000.

Young, Michael, *Television Advertising and Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

New Environments of Media Exposure

Internet and Narrative Structures: From Media Education to Media Pedagogy and Media Literacy

Vítor Reia-Baptista

By observing some of the new environments of media exposure, such as the internet, the mobile communication devices and situations, or the console games' interaction patterns, we discern that there is a great need for research into, and development of, the field. In order to gather better knowledge about our individual and social situation in the private and public spheres of daily life, the emergent new media usage, or their appropriations, and the levels of credibility surrounding the information sources connected to those environments available everywhere, on-line and off-line, need to be studied in a multi-disciplinary approach.

Since mankind knows itself as mankind, such knowledge has probably been constructed and expressed through different narrative communication layers, structuring themselves one upon another and giving rise to new patterns of narrative strategies. Simultaneously, new communication instruments and devices emerge, such as, new gestures, sounds, images, words, languages, discourses and all the new channels of communicative diffusion and exposure. These range from ancient theatre to modern film, or post-modern mobile audio and video messages deconstructed within computer processing networks, that is, the media as we know them in their evolution until today.

When we speak about new media, we generally speak about devices that have emerged in our daily life environment rather recently. They have, however, rather quickly accomplished a reshaping of some of our ancient habits of personal communication and our most common communicative patterns of media usage. At first glance, these new patterns of communication and media usage seem many times to be so complex that we feel tempted to claim that we are entering, with them and via them, into a new paradigm of personal and social communication. It may well be so, and that is why we must observe and study them. However, when we look more closely at these new patterns, we see that although they are developing devices and postures upon new complex and differentiated chan-

nels of communication, these new environments of media exposure may not have developed, apparently, any new narrative functions that would differentiate the new from older and more canonical environments, like the folktales or the various narrative arts and genres. This probably implies that although we have definitely got some new complex environments of media exposure we may still study them and their processes, in accordance with some of the best known narrative structural dispositions and their analytical models. However, we really don't know if this is so, and therefore there is an urgent need for research and in-depth studies into the new environments of media exposure and their publics, that is, their dramatis personae. If, however the functions appear to be essentially the same, we already know that the structures of exposure and their patterns of reception are much more fragmentary than before. Therefore, the knowledge we may glean about the appropriations of new media, in terms of a better understanding of the public sphere of media literacy, may also come in fragments, and so are not necessarily included in a global context of comprehension and understanding of this new literacy. Aiming at such a global context of new 'literary' comprehension is, in my opinion, one of the most important roles of the actual research within media and communication studies.

The geo-cultural context of the studies

In the field of Cultural Studies in general, and in Communication and Media Studies, in particular, it is possible to develop different analytical approaches according to the main goals relating to the different cultural, pedagogical and mediatic contexts.

At the Centre for Research in Communication Sciences at the University of Algarve, CICCOM, we have been developing some projects concerning various themes of pedagogical interest and cultural, or 'literary', implications. They are related to the primary characteristics of the information available in new public spaces, such as the Internet, the Bloggs, Mobile/Virtual Communities and Strategy Games. We aim to compare them with other characteristics already known from older media and communication contexts. These studies have also been concerned with the question of emergent risks, namely in terms of information credibility and reliability within the adequate contextualization of the available information, as well as the correct identification of the respective sources and channels.

We therefore introduce some media pedagogical approaches and propositions for analyses especially related to the Internet and its character as a public platform of communication. The present article presents examples of new cultural communication environments of media exposure in southern Portugal, showing that, in fact, there is little difference between these and other new European social and cultural environments of media exposure.

The Internet as a new communication platform within a new paradigm of media literacy

Digitalization is the basis for modern day communication, presenting a techno-logical system of digital treatment and information control programs. The Internet and its components (in particular the World Wide Web), must be included in the set of mass media, on account of its production and archiving capacities, its so-cial system and economic characteristics, thus improving its capacity to extend the categories already defined in relation to the communication channels, tech-nologies and processes including their narrative structures.

Therefore, one of the main questions must be: what are the new skills and competences that individuals and groups must acquire in order to allow them to participate as active, or passive, members of the new media literacy public sphere? While trying to find some answers to this question, we have realized that some very old narrative aspects and functions contribute to shaping the communica-tion processes. Whether they depart from the traditional world of verbal narra-tive, such as folktales, or from pictorial iconography, they still play a very impor-tant part in these new environments of media exposure. Such completely differ-ent sets of channels also include the photographic composite imagery or the filmic montage of images and sounds, verbal and non-verbal.

The Internet must be recognized as a communication platform, a multimedia galaxy undergoing permanent expansion and reorganization. This enables mil-lions of people to partake in the dissemination and exchange of information via conventional telephone network lines, optical-fibre, satellite links and radio waves, but also between individuals in a virtual peer to peer close relation. Its existence has become so common-place as to be considered ubiquitous, replacing man to man communication experiences. Its human-machine-human mediation interfaces are not always obvious, what with innumerable computers, mobile devices and software possibilities. For many of us, it has become part of every day life in terms of ease of access and information consultancy, and also for the multitude of communication services it provides.

Email is a remarkable process, to send and receive, in a fast and cheap way, instant and/or elaborated information over short or long distances. It has almost replaced the old reliable postal services, but it can also, very easily, become an incredibly troublesome tool. What then are the skills that every citizen has to develop to be a critical, independent and literate user of this tool?

Newsgroups are structured communication platforms, on most varied subjects, where the users can discuss and receive information about their favourite sub-jects via their personal mail, mail-lists or newsletters. But who filters and scruti-nizes the information flow? And who confronts the sources, or how?

Internet Relay Chat rooms allow conversation among individuals in groups and peer to peer in real time on the most varied subjects, through written messages, generally in SMS formatted language and dialects, that are grouped in diverse channels, available for whoever may find it on the net. However, even if the user

is a skilled SMS user and has a good knowledge of the majority of the acronyms in local and global usage, how does he, or she, recognize different aims in similar narrative strategies? And how can he/she decode if those aims are related to common daily life issues or are, instead, hidden narrative strategies of harassment, personal trespassing and deceiving? But, on the other hand, are those strategies so much different from the Big Bad Wolf's deceiving narrative towards the Little Red Hood?

Because of its characteristics, the Internet is actually the largest database for information support in the daily life of individuals but even institutions and services. Among those we can count students and teachers, but also media and opinion makers, as well as information providers including journalists. When it is essentially used as a path for communication channels for electronic messages, the web contains a series of useful information, presented by individuals, institutions, governments, associations and all types of commercial and non commercial organizations. But who are the gate-keepers of that electronic flow? Who makes up the major streamlines of the global agenda? How and where are the most powerful editorial lines shaped?

Beyond the boundless and instantaneous allocation of data, the Internet developed new ways for cultural, economic and social life. This development is related to communication instruments and access to the communication and information industries. It is apparent in politics, education, commerce, and in many other fields of public and private character. All these areas contribute to the rapid change of our traditional paradigms of public sphere and space and we don't know yet if our position as individual and social actors in the above is changing as quickly and maybe we are not yet completely aware of the implications of such changes. The potential threat of widespread alienation in such new environments of media exposure should not be dismissed lightly.

The mass media established the traditional idea of message transmission from an emission centre to a plurality of receiving individuals. Contrary to this immediate personal communication, the Internet redefined this mode through the incorporation of a communication system that can embrace the media systems previously known, and the individual's facilitated capacity to produce online content. The Internet is usually seen as the "net of the nets", displaying an apparently organic and dynamic development towards a "supra net", where the source of the message no longer displays a steady, central and explicit character, and where the methods of production and reception are available and accessible at any moment, in any place, at reduced costs and higher returns. However, it may also be regarded as a vast quantity of fragmented, non structured and non scrutinized information. This means that the Internet is frequently used as a source that disseminates the information or distributes subject matter, such as the transmission of manifestos, conferences, concerts or congresses. In so doing it complements the information offered by the press, radio, television and other media. However, it is seldom looked upon as a pedagogical medium in itself with its non-structured function that may shape fragmented cultural patterns of message

reception and of message production in the most open, non regulated and apparently free environments of media exposure. It can be seen as the most available example of what may be termed an open work of multimedia texts, or text of texts and hypertexts.

The Internet as a world wide open work

This proposition that considers the internet documents, or texts, to be open works refers directly to the methodological strategy of text analysis once presented by Umberto Eco, before we could even dream about the internet. However, that can be defined as the analysis of the relationship between the contemplation and the utilization of any "work of art", or "text", or "communication document" with the qualities of an "open work" – *L'oeuvre ouverte*[1].

This notion of "open work" is, of course, also influenced by Eco's later writings developing the subject in relation to the notion of "absent structure"[2] and to the structural role of "metaphor" in a broader sense of *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*[3].

The implications of such a relationship that Umberto Eco called the "poetics of the open work" were already the object of study in his early book *L'oeuvre ouverte* and introduced a complementary notion of the work as a pedagogical metaphor of knowledge, which can be summarized with the following quotation:

> ...si une forme artistique ne peut fournir un substitut de la conaissance scientifique, on peut y voir en revanche une métaphore épistémologique: à chaque époque, la manière dont se structurent les diverses formes d'art révèle – au sens large, par similitude, métaphore, résolution du concept en figure – la manière dont la science ou, en tout cas, la culture contemporaine voient la réalité.[4]

For this proposition, it is most pertinent to identify the epistemological metaphors that the documents can represent within the field of human communication, and consequently to determine how those metaphors can be contemplated and utilized within a contemporary cultural context, like the "internet culture".

The Internet as a work of tales

Some of these metaphors cannot be analyzed using the traditional instruments of literary criticism, which have been used too frequently as instruments of traditional literary criticism and are therefore marked as such, despite their unsuitability for their actual narrative forms. To approach the pedagogical value of the Internet multiple text imagery requires more than a mere identification of the

tenors and vehicles within the metaphors. Essentially, it requires the identification of functions and themes, patterns of information structure, signs and contexts of signification. This implies that, on occasions, we are not too far away from Vladimir Propp's study of the folk tales, which he defined as a "study of the folktale according to the functions of its dramatis personae"[5].

The Internet metaphors (and the modern multimedia in general), indeed, often assume the role of the ancient folk tales in their relationship to myths, religion and transcendental mysteries. They are modern tales and parts of modern myths with specific functions, and we can find some structural similarity between these and those analyzed by Propp in the folk tales, which he formulated as follows in his first thesis and which we could easily adopt as a point of reference for the narrative nature of the Internet multimedia functions:

> Function must be taken as an act of dramatis personae, which is defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action of a tale as whole ... Functions serve as stable, constant elements in folktales, independent of who performs them, and how they are fulfilled by the dramatis personae. They constitute the components of a folktale.[1]

Unfortunately, we cannot apply Propp's second and third thesis so easily to the Internet. The number of functions known to the multimedia components is not necessarily limited, even if it can, apparently, be so in the case of the most closed genres and structures, nor is the sequence of functions always identical. Quite the contrary, the Internet multimedia texts, in their quality of open works, are examples of non-identical unlimited sequences of functions. They are, in fact, "heretical" approaches to the folk tales, but tales nevertheless. This means that we can also find some theoretical support in Propp's formalistic and structural approach, but we cannot completely follow his method for the analysis of our material. However, although it has not been our aim to accomplish a morphology of the internet "tales" (which, per se, is a very interesting task for future research), it would nevertheless appear that we could use some of Propp's functional nomenclature to designate the most relevant functions in some internet genres, exactly as has been done for other media, namely in the field of film and photographic studies, i.e. a work of tales or their equivalent metaphors.

The Internet as
an equivalent of social information and metaphor

The shortcomings of the methods of traditional literary criticism and of formal structuralism, when applied to multimedia and hypermedia analysis, may be compensated with elements that determine another specific matter of expression embodying the virtual metaphors' imagery. For this purpose it is especially

interesting to determine the metaphoric implications of the notion *Equivalence*, and here we could borrow some of the work that has been done in the field of photographic studies, namely by Susan Sontag in relation to the notion of "photographic equivalents" by the great north American photographer Alfred Stieglitz:

> "Equivalents", that is, statements of his (Stieglitz) inner feelings. ... Photography is the paradigm of an inherently equivocal connection between self and the world – its version of the ideology of realism sometimes dictating an effacement of the self in relation to the world, sometimes authorizing an aggressive relation to the world which celebrates the self .[7]

The available readings of these texts are in fact wide open and it is necessary to tutor the reader (the user) to find the patterns of narrativity that may exist in the text structure of real referents, their metaphors and/or equivalents. Or, last but not least, to understand the function of their absence. When doing this, we usually find ourselves in a learning process, in the widest sense of the expression, and that is why the pedagogical dimensions that are involved and relayed in the different multimedia channels usually prove to be highly effective, especially if the readers are not quite aware of them.

The Internet facilitates the information research, but it requires a redoubled attention to the verification of the information. The credibility and authenticity of the data found on the Internet is one of its greater problems. It is generally ignored in favour of the idea that the present information is free from errors, and therefore, freely available for gratuitous use without any type of verification. This is really one of the greatest dangers that our students are exposed to, probably, at a much higher degree than they are exposed to more explicit "dangerous" contents like pornography and similar subjects. The diversification of the production, and the absence of evaluation filters, articulate a redistribution of data, less conditional and therefore more prone to suffer from all types of negative or "positive" influences.

The databases and the Internet contents allow access to innumerable quantities of information in a simple and fast way, but they can become useless, without a previous ability to use them. Moreover, the easy and free access to all sorts of information does not mean that the user will be able to contextualize it, in face of its cultural universe. This possibility is, therefore, as important as the acquisition of the necessary skills to look up and to know what to make of the collected data. The technological system of the Internet and its auto-legitimacy, resolve an extensive set of questions and inequalities concerning information access, transforming the technological performance into the guarantee of content veracity, which is often assumed by many national and even international authorities as a safe way of regulation and self-regulation. However, such an assumption can be misleading and instead of knowledge, skills and competence, we may find ourselves working within a maze of ineffective rules and dubious laws at the global level.

The democratization of the communication channels discloses the capacity to exceed the receiving condition and move to an individual reflection, allowing also an individual leading form of participation, while individual users who interact through the multimedia channels are free to assume different positions and opinions, which is not always seen as a very "healthy" characteristic of the Internet. And these phenomena, along with the digital divide, also need our attention and research.

The Internet as
a research object and as a research environment

In this context we may now refer to the "Educaunet"[8], "Glocal Youth"[9], "Mediappro"[10], or even the "European Charter for Media Literacy"[11], all projects that attempt to relate different situations of media usage to the common local and global outcomes and in which the CICCOM has been deeply involved.

Educaunet was a critical educational programme, researching and teaching about Internet and its possible risks. It was developed in collaboration with several European countries to implement an awareness campaign and training sessions for educational publics. Its educational model advocates an active commitment to risk-taking, based on a set of pedagogical tools and activities produced in close cooperation with all the participants – schools, teachers, students and parents. The major objective was to train the children's ability to assess and become aware of the risks when using the net. The Portuguese approach to these problems was a bit different from other European countries, specially the Northern European ones, where children were already familiar with the Internet and frequently used it at home and at school when the project started. In those countries, the Educaunet project had its focus especially on the Internet hidden risks, because the challenges of usage were already known. In Portugal, we had to focus both on the risks and on the challenges, since many children, some young people and some adults even had not yet used the Internet, or had only done it a few times. Part of the Portuguese population still do not have any computer link to the Internet at home. Using Internet at school, or in other public places, is a good way to bridge the common situation of digital divide.

The major aim of the Glocal Youth project was to study the different social and geographical appropriations within similar age groups. However, there is a common belief that the use of computers may contribute to a decline in social differences. However, it is not that simple since the circulation of the information through the net is not universalized and often presents two distinct features: development and exclusion concerning access to, and the capacity to select and operate the different information channels. Although there is a global process of production and diffusion of the main information streams, there is no exact parallel on the receptive side and those who do not master the techniques may even be suppressed, regarding the languages and the narrative devices used to com-

Educaunet www.educaunet.org

With partners in seven European countries the approach of the Educaunet programme is based in media education. By using a critical educational approach they aim at developing an independent and responsible attitude in children and adolescents when using the Internet. Through the web site Educaunet provides educational material to be used by teachers, parents and educators as input for training sessions to enhance awareness of the Internet and possible risks. The project is financed by the European commission and has partners in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Glocal Youth www.glocalyouth.net

The Glocal Youth website is about media education and interculture and aims to teach young people (14-20 years old) awareness of their relation with the media and to promote the development of critical thinking skills and responsible citizenship. It is hoped this will enhance understanding and knowledge about youth like themselves in different countries and cultures in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and foster dialogue and exchange. The material, with texts in several languages, can be used as a guide and instructional kit for teachers and educators, young people and others interested. The Glocal Youth project is carried out with support from the e-Learning programme of the European Union.

Mediappro www.mediappro.org

Mediappro is an international project (Europe and Canada) on how young people (12-18 years) appropriate new media such as mobile phones, Internet and video games. The aim of the project is to contribute to the education of young people in safer use of the Internet and other new portable audio-scripto-visual media connected on telecommunication networks by empowering leaders and persons engaged in the field of education. The project is carried out with the support of the European Commission/ Safer Internet Action Plan and in co-operation with ten different European national media education organisations.

The European Charter for Media Literacy www.euromedialiteracy.eu

The charter is developed in order to support the establishment of media literacy across Europe. Signing the charter means endorsing a specific and common definition of media literacy, facilitating consensus and networking amongst organisations and individuals working for media literacy. The site offers a discussion forum as well as a list of resources/links to organisations and projects concerned with media literacy. The charter is developed on initiative from the UK Film Council and the British Film Institute (BFI).

municate. The online communication patterns have produced a new specific net culture, which in turn introduced new patterns of social and personal communication within the public spheres of different countries on different continents.

Those patterns are frequently cultural forms of narrative absence in a structural sense, and of close communication boundaries leading to processes of unawareness and even alienation that can still be observed in some geographical, cultural and generational European contexts. These are apparent in some more recent research approaches like those studied in the Mediappro project. They revealed an impressive amount of information on new media usage, skills and appropriations by the younger Portuguese population concerning the cultural and generational use of mobile phones, especially with SMS language, video and strategy games, Bloggs and other interactive devices.

That fact led some of the participants in the project to start a movement towards a European Charter for Media Literacy, which is just beginning, but which may well become an important platform for discussion and intervention towards the acquisition of general media literacy skills and concepts in the most problematic fields of media exposure.

In this context, it would be both interesting and fruitful to connect these reflections to other well known cultural environments of media exposure that have not always been regarded as such given environments of literacy, mostly because of their "lack" of canonical literary structure, which has frequently been apparent in the case of some specific film genres and languages.

The Internet as
an absent structure, its filmic and pedagogical functions

This proposition is an exercise that, isolated from the organic structure of the object, may function as a source of information in direct connection with the study of its most important components and their respective equivalents of virtual transfiguration. They serve as an instrument of evaluation, comparison and assessment of the information flow connected to content and form of the multimediatic "themes", or genres, and to the group of functions assumed by the characters within the themes. They are generally very difficult to define because their number varies with the nature of the themes and, sometimes, even with their apparent absence in the main structure. In this context we should focus on those that embody the requisites of the moralities, abstractions of vice and virtue and other ethical values, or those that in their "heretical" relationship with the themes make their contribution to generate a sense of absence of values. Again, it is very important and useful to be able to identify the functions, from the structure of the old folk tales that emerge from such a modern fragmentary structure[12].

The titles, for example, that, according to the notion of the "open work", are absolutely determinant factors in the interpretation processes, can open or close the structure of a work completely[13], turning it into virtual absence.

The pedagogical dimension of such devices may be a result of the character of their structural function within the "open work", and it may assume, in fact, some aspects of education values that can be developed within the process of confrontation between the expectations, or apparent reasons, and the answers (or the lack of them) that strike the reader, or the user. This process includes the manipulation of thematic and semantic items and, generally, it is an embedded way of conditioned literacy and pedagogical awareness. We can say that the "poetics of the open work" may constitute the pedagogical dimension of such a reading process. Either it is wide open in its significance or apparently absent of signification. Luis Buñuel's comments on the constrictions relating to the under-standing of neo-realist film could be used to help us fathom some of the con-strictions within the internet approach and its pluralism of signs and of contexts of signification which turns the semiosis behind the "obvious" meanings, and their denotative and connotative paradigms, into a useful instrument that offers some accuracy to this kind of analysis. Although Buñuel hated such jargon, it was he himself who exposed this problem as an argument against the "monolithic" views of the neo-realist cinematography and of the daily media, and we could add – the internet, where apparently "a glass is a glass and nothing more":

> ... this same glass, contemplated by different beings, can be a thousand different things, because each one charges what he sees with affectivity; no one sees things as they are, but as his desires and his state of soul make him see. I fight for the cinema which will show me this kind of glass, because this cinema will give me an integral vision of reality, will broaden my knowledge of things and people, will open up to me the marvellous world of the unknown, of all that which I find nei-ther in the newspaper nor in the street[14].

In fact, we should also be fighting for a world wide media that could give us such an integral vision of reality and therefore broaden our knowledge, as has been proposed in other visionary works like those of Ted Nelson, Nicholas Negroponte, or Serge Proulx. However, we'll always need a global critical ap-proach, as well as an ethical one, as in the sense of the work of Neil Postman and Ignacio Ramonet. as well as a multiple media cultural and critical perspec-tive, like the ones offered by the more specifically aimed media educational tra-dition but also by the more general media pedagogical perspective. Neverthe-less, whichever methodological or theoretical approach that we may choose from any of the abovementioned, we will only be attempting different processes of approach to media pedagogical problems, because the common goal to aim for is, and will always be, a better and more developed general state of media literacy.

Notes

1. Eco, 1962.
2. Eco, 1968.
3. Eco, 1984, pp. 87-129.
4. Eco, op. cit., p. 28.
5. Propp, 1928, p. 18.
6. Ibidem, p. 20.
7. Sontag, 1973, p. 123.
8. www.educaunet.org
9. www.glocalyouth.net
10. www.mediappro.org
11. www.euromedialiteracy.eu
12. Propp, op. cit.
13. Eco, 1962.
14. Reia-Baptista, 1987, p. 9.

Bibliography

Eco, Umberto (1962) *L'œuvre ouverte*. Éditions du Soleil, Paris. (ed. 1965)

Eco, Umberto (1968) *Den Frånvarande Strukturen*. Bo Cavefors Bokförlag, Lund (ed. 1971).

Eco, Umberto (1979) *The Role of the Reader*. Hutchinson & Co., London, (ed. 1983).

Eco, Umberto (1984) *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Macmillan Press, London.

Habermas, Jürgen (1987) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Cambridge, MIT Press.

Negroponte, Nicholas (1995) *Being Digital*. Vintage Books, New York.

Nelson, T. Holm (1981) *Literary Machines*. Mindful Press, Sausalito.

Postman, Neil (1993) *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Vintage Books, New York.

Prince, Stephen (2000) *Screening Violence*. Athlone Press, London.

Propp, Vladimir (1928) '*Morphology of the Folktale*', *International Journal of American Linguistics*. Vol. 24 Nr 4, Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Bloomington, October 1958.

Proulx, S. & Bretton, P. (2002) *L'explosion de la communication*. La Découverte, Paris.

Ramonet, Ignacio (1999) *La Tyrannie de la communication*. Galilée, París.

Reia-Baptista, Vítor (1987) *The Heretical Pedagogy of Luís Buñuel*. Department of Drama-Teater-Film, Lund University, Lund.

Reia-Baptista, Vítor (1994) *The Training of Teachers for the Age of Filmic Multimedia and Virtual – Reality*. University of Wolverhampton Press, Walsall.

Reia-Baptista, Vítor (2003) *Pedagogia dos Media, O Caso das Linguagens Fílmicas na Pedagogia da Comunicação*. Universidade do Algarve, Faro.

Reia-Baptista, Vítor (2005) '*The Pedagogical Value of Cinema*', in *Âmbitos*, n. 13-14, Univ. Sevilla.

Sontag, Susan (1973) *On Photography*. Penguin Books, New York, (ed.1979). Wolton, Dominic

Sontag, Susan (2000) *E Depois da Internet?* Difel, Lisboa.

Violence and Pornography in the Media

*Public Views on the Influence Media Violence
and Pornography Exert on Young People*

Ulla Carlsson

Modern information technology has transformed the media landscape dramatically over the past decade, offering a steadily swelling flow of material through many new channels. Potentially, we all have access to an enormous array of knowledge and diversions of many kinds. On television, in books, magazines, on the Internet, and in mobile telephones. At the same time, many parents, teachers and policy-makers are concerned about the negative influence they believe media exert on children and adolescents. Such concerns have been voiced as long as mass media have existed, but the concern has grown in pace with developments in media technology.

There are indications that the incidence of violence in society may be related to the abundance of depictions of violence shown on television, video, the Internet and in computer games. Greater accessibility of pornography in today's media is another factor that causes concern about young people's welfare and possible negative impacts on young people's development. For example, what ideas about sexuality does pornography instill? Various measures to limit the distribution of content that is believed to be harmful to children and youth have been discussed. These include both voluntary measures and binding legislation. Dialogues between authorities, media companies and members of the general public have been initiated with a view to establishing consensus on basic principles. These dialogues are taking place at national, regional and international levels.

Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides an international framework for policy with regard to such content. Governments that have ratified the Convention are bound "to ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health". Toward this end, the governments should "encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being". In recent

years we have seen a shift in emphasis from ideas about legislative regulation and prohibition toward an emphasis on parents' and other adults' responsibility for the well-being of children and young people. 'Protection' is now understood to be more than a question of keeping children away from certain television programs, but extends to strengthening young viewers in their roles as consumers and users of media.

In the SOM 2004 survey[1] a number of questions concerned questions about public perceptions of the influence media violence and pornography exert on young people, and views regarding various measures that have been proposed to protect children and young people from becoming exposed to harmful content on television and the Internet and in films and computer games are asked.

Mass media and the increase in violence in society

The SOM surveys in 1995, 2000 and 2004 have asked essentially the same questions concerning what people believe has contributed to the rise in violence, and particularly the importance they assign to mass media in this regard (Weibull 1996, Carlsson 2001). Other factors asked about, besides media-related factors – video films, television, cinema films, celebrities/ 'pop idols', computer and television games (from 2000 on) and the Internet (new in 2004) – are alcohol and drugs, unemployment, the schools, parents, and peer pressure and influence. The aim is to measure public perceptions of the importance of the respective factors, how the perceptions are interrelated, and changes in them over time.

The three factors that are assigned the greatest importance in relation to violence are alcohol/drugs, parents, and peers. A large majority of respondents (97, 95 and 89 per cent, respectively) believe these factors have a strong or significant influence. The same results were found in 1995 and 2000, as well. These factors are followed by a cluster of factors that include media like video films (77%), television (75%), computer and TV games (70%), but also unemployment (76%) and the schools (74%). Fewer blame factors like cinema films (62%), the Internet (60%) and celebrities/ 'pop idols' (54%). All the factors are mentioned by rather many respondents, and few rate them as having only a slight effect.

On the whole, the the pattern of views appears to be rather similar to that registered in 1995 and 2000. A calculation of balance scores for the different factors shows that the rank-order is roughly the same. A closer examination reveals some changes, however. The top three factors remain stable throughout, whereas unemployment is mentioned less frequently as a factor behind violence in the most recent measure, a change that most likely has to do with fluctuations of the business cycle. The schools are mentioned to roughly the same extent as in 2000. The main differences relate to the importance accorded the media. One factor that is mentioned considerably more in 2004 than in 2000 is computer and TV games. Half the respondents perceived these games to have a strong or signifi-

Figure 1. Factors believed to have a strong/significant influence and little/slight influence on the incidence of violence in society 1995, 2000 och 2004 (per cent).
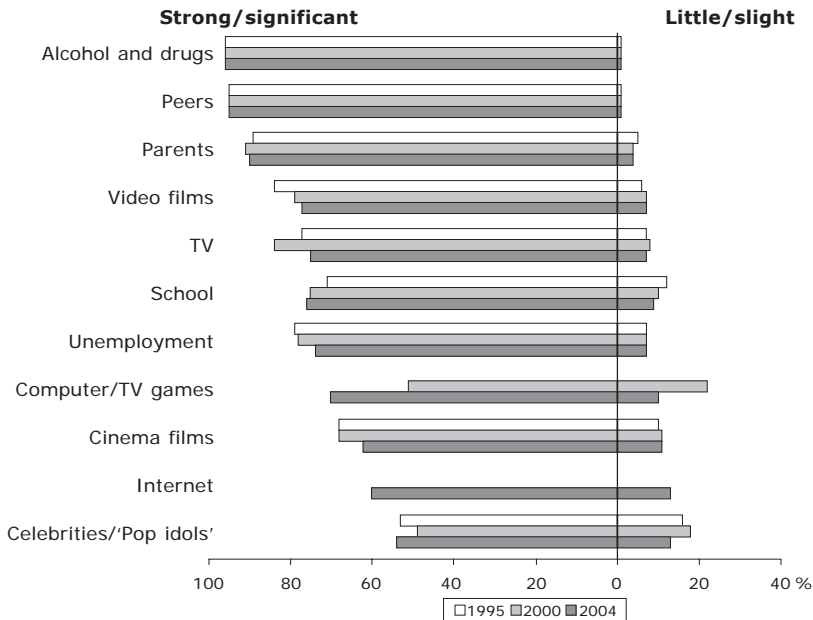
Note: Internet was first included in 2004.

cant influence in 2000; four years later the figure had risen to 70 per cent. The Internet was first included as a factor for violence in SOM 2004. Sixty per cent of the respondents say the web has a strong or significant influence. A certain shift away from video films, cinema films and television toward newer media technologies like computer games and the Internet, and celebrities/ 'pop idols' is apparent. All told, the media are accorded greater importance in relation to violence in society today than they were in 2000 and 1995.

In many respects ideas about what is behind the increase in violence in society are the same in different demographic groups. Essentially irrespective of their sex, age and education, respondents believe that alcohol and drugs have a strong or significant effect. Alcohol tops the list in another, comparable study, as well (von Feilitzen & Carlsson 2000). The next-strongest factor is peer pressure, followed by parental influence. Here, too, perceptions are fairly homogeneous. Although perceptions differ regarding the influence of the schools and unemployment on the incidence of violence, views are more or less consonant across subgroups based on sex, age and education. Young people, however, register lower values across the board.

Perceptions of the media-related factors show more marked variation, however. Age turns out to be a strong differentiating factor when it comes to perceptions of the influence of media-related factors. Young people are consistently more likely to assign these factors a less important role, whereas a majority of their elders say they have a strong or substantial influence. These findings largely coincide with those obtained in 2000 and 1995 and are in no way surprising. The younger generation has grown up with many different media and their content. We must bear in mind the *digital generation gap* that characterizes the media landscape today. The younger generation is comfortable with and has mastered media technology down to the last byte and Herz, whereas a considerable portion of the totality of media output remains unknown to a good share of the adult population. The Unknown in new media tends to be perceived as a danger. Time and again we have experienced 'moral panics' at the expense of dispassionate discussion (Dahlquist 1998, Drotner 1999).

Interesting, however, is the fact that four years ago hardly any younger respondents felt that computer and TV games had anything to do with violence in society, whereas in 2004, a majority of those aged 15-29 years think that games have a substantial influence. Four years ago, computer games were still a novelty and terra incognita for many, whereas today many in this age group have several years' first-hand experience of them. That is, the change is more likely attributable to personal experience rather than to impressions from public discourse. A similar tendency, albeit less pronounced, is noted with relation to celebrities/celebrities/'pop idols', and 45 per cent of the age group consider the Internet a strong or significant factor.

Table 1. Factors believed to contribute to the incidence of violence in society 2004 by sex, education and age (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				All		
				Med.-	Med.-		15-	30-	50-	65-			
Factor	F	M	Low	low	high	High	29	49	64	85	1995	2000	2004
Alcohol and drugs	+97	+94	+97	+96	+94	+97	+93	+94	+98	+99	+95	+95	+96
Peers	+95	+92	+95	+93	+94	+95	+90	+93	+95	+97	+94	+94	+94
Parents	+85	+86	+85	+83	+85	+89	+77	+88	+85	+90	+84	+87	+86
Video films	+78	+62	+81	+65	+70	+66	+42	+63	+83	+93	+78	+72	+70
TV	+75	+61	+75	+66	+66	+66	+53	+62	+75	+85	+71	+68	+68
Unemployment	+71	+62	+75	+63	+60	+69	+39	+65	+77	+84	+72	+71	+67
School	+65	+69	+79	+65	+63	+56	+55	+65	+68	+80	+59	+65	+67
Computer/TV games	+70	+48	+70	+55	+60	+54	+35	+53	+71	+80	/	+29	+60
Cinema films	+59	+42	+63	+47	+49	+45	+29	+43	+63	+71	+58	+57	+51
Internet	+59	+36	+58	+44	+45	+44	+25	+45	+57	+64	/	/	+48
Celebrities/'Pop idols'	+46	+36	+54	+39	+35	+36	+17	+35	+54	+61	+38	+31	+41
N responses	869-	808-	416-	571-	319-	346-	361-	519-	496-	299-	1 680-	1 743	1 690
	907	836	450	583	328	354	365	532	517	330	1 743	1 774	1 730

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "strong" or "significant" influence, minus the shares who have answered "little" or "slight" influence. Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "strong") and -100 (all answer "slight").

Young respondents also mention the schools in relation to violence less than other age groups in SOM 2004, whereas the schools are more frequently mentioned than previously in other age groups. Patterns of response for other factors are less distinct.

Looking at the differences in responses among women and men, we find more marked differences in the case of media-related factors than others; this applies to all media, but particularly computer and TV games and the Internet, which considerably more women than men feel play a role. Men are considerably more likely to mention celebrities/ 'pop idols' as a contributing factor in 2004 than was the case in 2000.

Looking at education, we find some clear-cut distinctions – the less one's formal education, the more importance one tends to accord the media as a factor that contributes to violence. Several of the media-related factors are more frequently mentioned in 2004 than in 2000. Once again, the increase relates mainly to computer and TV games, while television and cinema films remain at about the same level as in previous measures. The pattern of responses regarding the schools follows essentially the same pattern; patterns relating to other factors are less distinct.

Upon closer examination of the responses we find evidence of the existence of a *media factor* in public perceptions of the causes of violence in society. Factor analysis of all the factors studied produced three principal clusters of explanatory factors: a *media factor* (video films, television, cinema films, computer games, celebrities/ 'pop idols'), a *social factor* (alcohol and drugs, peer pressure, unemployment), and an *institutional factor* (parents, the schools). The factors in each pattern of response are closely interrelated; that is, respondents who consider video games important also mention cinema films and computer games as causes. The same patterns were found in the 2000 and 1995 surveys (Weibull 1996; Carlsson 2001).

Views on the influence of media violence

Many researchers have studied the issue of violence in the media and its influence on audiences, and several plausible interpretations of findings have been offered (Carlsson & Feilitzen 1998; Feilitzen 2001). No unequivocal answer as to how much media violence may influence children and young people is apparent, however. Many different and complex situations and factors are at play. The media may be one among many factors that contribute to the increase in violence. That media violence exerts some influence on viewers' sensations, feelings, thoughts, preferences and frames of reference is generally accepted, but that is not to say that it necessarily leads to manifest aggression and acts of violence. The influence can, however, be both powerful and lasting (Frau-Meigs 2004). This suggests that the focus of research should be broadened and trained more on the role of mass media in children's socialization and cultural upbringing than on media influences per se (Feilitzen & Carlsson 2004). This impression is reinforced when considering the SOM data.

Are young people influenced by violent content in the media?

SOM 2004 asks both about people's views about the influence of media violence and about the respondent's personal experience of such influence. A majority of the respondents consider the violence in computer and TV games (75%), reality television (67%) and feature films/TV drama (65%) very or somewhat harmful to children and young people. More say "somewhat harmful" than "very harmful" except in the case of computer and TV games, where the reverse applies. In the case of violence in documentaries, news and cartoons, however, the result is different: about 60 per cent say that violence in these kinds of programs is not harmful. Very few respondents have no opinion.

Table 2. Views as to how harmful different kinds of media content are for children and young people 2004 (per cent)

	Very harmful	Somewhat harmful	Not very harmful	Not at all harmful	No opinion	Total %	N
Computer/TV games	38	36	16	4	5	100	1 749
Reality TV	28	39	23	4	6	100	1 723
Feature films/TV drama	24	41	27	4	4	100	1 740
News	10	27	49	11	4	100	1 724
Cartoons	13	22	42	17	6	100	1 724
Documentaries	9	25	49	12	4	100	1 711

More women than men think that media violence, particularly in computer games and reality television, is harmful to young people. Among 15- to 29-year-olds, 75 per cent of young women think that the violence in computer and TV games is very or somewhat harmful to young people; among men of the same age the figure is 43 per cent. Meanwhile, we know that boys and men predominate among those who play these games (*Nordicoms Mediebarometer 2004*). The older the respondent, the more likely he or she considers depictions of violence harmful to some extent. Significantly more among the eldest respondents answer "very harmful" than younger respondents do.

Only slight distinctions are found between education groups, except in the case of reality television and cartoons. Considerably more highly educated respondents consider violence in these kinds of programs harmful to children and young people than respondents with little formal education. Other studies have found that parents with little formal education tend more than others to consider animated cartoons inappropriate for young viewers, but the most decisive factor for whether or not parents consider cartoon violence harmful is their habit of viewing (or not viewing) the programs with their children. The most frequently mentioned reason why cartoons are considered inappropriate is the violence in them. (Feilitzen 2004)

How do young people react to violence in the media?

SOM 2004 inquired about respondents' first-hand experience of various kinds of influence from violence on television and in films and computer/TV games. The influences asked about were a greater propensity on the part of young people to commit acts of violence, to display aggression, feelings of anxiety and fear, a distorted perception of reality, and weaker feelings of empathy. A strong majority, 64-75 per cent, of the respondents felt there were influences on all these dimensions. Fully three-quarters of the respondents say that depictions of violence in audiovisual media distort reality perceptions, and on this dimension more people responded "strongly" (40%) than "significantly" (35%). The relationship was the reverse with respect to other dimensions. Most respondents express a view; few express neutrality.

Table 3. Views based on personal experience on the extent to which exposure to media violence (TV, film, computer/TV games) influence children and youth 2004 (balance scores)

| | Sex | | | Education | | | Age | | | | |
Influence	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Distorted perception of reality	+65	+51	+67	+51	+57	+59	+30	+50	+74	+78	+58
Anxiety and fear	+60	+33	+59	+38	+44	+50	+10	+39	+68	+71	+47
Propensity to commit acts of violence	+54	+34	+55	+40	+45	+36	+9	+38	+60	+70	+45
Lack of empathy	+50	+37	+55	+33	+42	+46	+6	+33	+62	+72	+43
Manifest aggression	+44	+28	+52	+29	+30	+32	-4	+27	+54	+68	+37
N responses	896-605	829-836	439-452	580-583	326-328	351-355	363-364	530-532	507-513	324-335	1 326-1 744

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "very great extent" eller "great extent", minus the shares who have answered "little extent" or "very little". Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "very great") and -100 (all answer "very little").

Nearly 70 per cent of respondents say that media violence increases young people's propensity to commit acts of violence and to experience anxiety and fear. Somewhat fewer, 64 per cent, feel that it contributes to aggressive behavior. SOM 2000 included a similar question, and although the phrasing differed slightly, the results are similar. The Swedish public are more convinced that media have a negative influence on young people than research to date has been able to demonstrate.

More women than men, and more people with little formal education than highly educated people, feel that the media have a negative influence on young people. The differences are even more marked between age groups. The eldest age group shows the highest frequencies on all dimensions. Nearly 80 per cent of the eldest say they have personal experience of media-inspired aggressive behavior on the part of young people; the corresponding figure among the youngest is just over 40 per cent. It should be noted that on the other dimensions young respondents' views

that media violence has a strong or significant influence rested around 50 per cent; 61 per cent of the youngest say that violence in the media contributes to a distorted perception of reality. In all probability, these views are based on personal experience.

Views on pornography and explicit sex in the media

It has often been observed that a greater number of television channels, some distributed via satellite and cable, and the Internet have meant a greater incidence of scenes and programs that are pornographic or explicitly sexual. Some researchers speak of an ongoing cultural process, whereby pornography is becoming part of everyday life and in some cases even an idealized element in our cultures (Knudsen & Sørensen 2004). Films and images that would once have been considered pornographic are openly accessible today via numerous media and channels. What constituted pornography some twenty years ago is perceived quite differently today, particularly among young people. Some of the pornography that is available on video and the Internet contains elements of violence. The forms such violence takes important components in the social order that would keep women subordinate to men.

Sex scenes and sexist messages are encountered not only in television programs and on the Internet, but also in advertising, music video clips, the tabloid press and magazines. Many researchers have taken an interest in the role media play in an ongoing intimization and sexualization of the public sphere.

> It is increasingly as sexual beings that we are addressed, whether the message has to do with our choice of bank, shampoo, shaving cream or television program. And the formula is nearly always the same: young women in inviting poses flatter an imagined male gaze and impress on the imagined man behind the gaze the importance of being attractive, desirable. An indication that being desirable is a widely valued trait among young women today is a clearly increasing eagerness to display oneself. The 'pin-up' ideal has become a form of validation: I am worth others' gaze. More and more frequently, we are enticed into voyeuristic pleasures. Reality television programs promise that we will follow people to the toilet, see them break down and cry, fight, drink and (above all) have sex (Hirdman 2004).

Researchers and other initiated observers believe that attitudes toward sexuality have changed, as have sex habits. Consumption of pornography is on the rise, due in part to the medialization of sexuality. A review of the research literature on young people and sexuality (Forsberg 2000) found an increase in the consumption of pornography among young men and women alike; 70 per cent of the men and 50 per cent of the women had all partaken of pornography in one form or another in the media. There are also many indications that consumption of pornography is also closely related to different forms of sexual experimentation.

The influence of pornography and sex scenes in the media

When SOM 2004 asked respondents, "To what extent do you think pornography and sex scenes have a negative influence on children and young people," eight of every ten respondents answer either "to a great extent" or "rather much" in connection with pornographic films; over 50 per cent answered "to a great extent". Considerably more women than men hold this view. Only slight differences are to be noted between age and education groups. There is, in other words, a good measure of consensus around the view that porno films have a negative influence.

Seven of ten feel the same about pornography on Internet websites. Here, too, there is a marked difference between women and men. We also find a greater share highly educated respondents than people with little formal education among those who feel that pornography exerts a negative influence. When it comes to the Internet, young people, aged 15-29, express largely the same views as other age groups. In the case of all other program categories, the eldest respondents show the highest scores, and the youngest, the lowest scores on a scale from negative influence "to a great extent" down to "little or not at all".

Table 4. Views on the extent to which pornography/sex scenes in selected media content have a negative influence on children and youth 2004 (per cent)

	Greatly	Rather much	Rather little	Very little	No opinion	Total %	N responses
Porno film	52	28	9	3	8	100	1 754
Websites	40	32	9	3	16	100	1 726
Reality TV	28	36	21	7	8	100	1 718
Music videos	21	33	25	10	11	100	1 714
Feature films/TV drama	19	32	33	9	7	100	1 731
TV commercials	17	24	35	14	10	100	1 713

A majority of the respondents say they believe that pornography and sex scenes in reality TV (54%) and feature films/TV drama (52%) have a negative influence on young people to a great or rather great extent. The patterns of response are quite distinct: the values are higher among women, highly educated and elder respondents. Those who watch 'docusoaps' several times a week express basically the same views as those who seldom or never watch them. We note a rather substantial difference in views between young women who frequently watch the programs and young men who do the same. More than 60 per cent of the women aged 15-29 answer that pornography and sex scenes in 'docusoaps' exert a negative influence on children and young people, whereas the corresponding figure among men of the same ages is 40 per cent. This is notable inasmuch as heavy consumers of a given genre generally register lower-than-average values when it comes to negative influences of the genre in question.

In the case of television commercials, views tend toward the opposite: about half the respondents say that sex in commercials influences young viewers "rather little" or "very little". Women and the eldest age group are, however, considerably more negative than others in their estimation of the influences of pornography and sex in TV commercials on young viewers.

How are young people influenced by pornography and sex in the media?

SOM 2004 also asked respondents about possible consequences of exposure to pornography and sex scenes on television, in films and on the Internet. Does it lead to more sexual violence, changes in sexual behavior among adolescents, distorted conceptions of men's and women's sexuality, more knowledge about sexual relationships, weakened self-confidence among the young, greater tolerance of sexual expressions?

Over 80 per cent of the respondents think that pornography and sex scenes in the above-mentioned media strongly or significantly distort young people's ideas about women's and men's sexuality; the same number feel that they lead to changes in young people's sexual behavior. A larger share of women and older respondents think so, whereas the share of young people, especially young men, is smaller than in other groups.

Somewhat fewer, 72 per cent, believe that this kind of content leads to more sexual violence. Here the differences are more marked, with a larger share among women and older respondents sharing this belief than other groups. Young people doubt there is any relationship, but among young people there are marked differences between the sexes: 67 per cent of young women believe that pornography and sex scenes lead to more sexual violence, compared to 40 per cent among young men.

Some 62 per cent of all respondents believe that sex scenes and pornography on television, in films and on the Internet weaken young people's self-confidence/self-respect. The only distinction noted is that between women (72%) and men (56%). Views on this point are otherwise fairly homogeneous. Interestingly, as many as 60 per cent of the men who watch 'docusoaps' several times a week say that such content can weaken young people's self-confidence/self-respect.

Influences that are more decidedly negative are more widely endorsed than influences like "more knowledge about sexual relationships" (29%) and "greater tolerance of sexual expressions" (27%). More young respondents mention these possible effects than others, particularly the influence on knowledge. Among the most positive respondents are young men who regularly watch reality TV programs. Otherwise, we find no greater differences between men and women on this dimension.

Several studies have shown that young people tend to turn to the media for information about sex, love and relationships. It is a well established fact that they tend not to turn to their parents (Buckingham & Bragg 2003).

Table 5. Views on the extent to which pornography/sex scenes on TV and websites and in films influence children and youth 2004 (balance scores)

Influence	Sex		Education				Age				
	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Distorted conception of men's and women's sexuality	+82	+54	+72	+63	+69	+72	+55	+68	+73	+78	+69
Changes in sexual behavior among adolescents	+77	+56	+67	+62	+65	+76	+59	+65	+66	+80	+67
More sexual violence	+69	+34	+65	+46	+47	+51	+28	+45	+61	+78	+52
Weakens self-confidence/self-respect	+54	+24	+41	+35	+40	+45	+21	+44	+45	+46	+40
Greater tolerance of sexual expression	-34	-27	-12	-29	-40	-49	-28	-44	-37	-2	-31
Youth know more about sexual relationships	-31	-35	-15	-31	-42	-50	-23	-47	-40	-8	-33
N responses	889-911	824-840	430-458	581-585	324-326	353-537	360-363	529-535	505-515	315-338	1 713-1 751

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "very great extent" eller "great extent", minus the shares who have answered "little extent" or "very little". Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "very great") and -100 (all answer "very little").

Still, it is clear that many young people feel that the media in many respects have influences that may be regarded as negative. These views have been formed in a time when the bounds between the private and public spheres are in flux, by a generation that has had access to computers, the web, satellit/cable TV, video and cell phones practically since infancy. Young people are far more familiar with new media like the Internet, with its risks as well as its positive potentialities, than their parents are. Parents know rather little about how their children use these new media. The difference between what parents think their children are doing on the Internet and what they actually do was revealed by the European SAFT project (SAFT 2002, 2003). This generational gap means that young people interpret media content in a context that differs more from their parents' frame of reference than ever before. The gap also adds a measure of urgency to the question of what happens when commercial media and channels present pornography as something positive, whereas a more troubled and moralizing attitude prevails in society as a whole.

What measures to reduce the negative impacts of violence and pornography in the media is the public prepared to accept?

How to limit and prohibit the spread of harmful content – depictions of violence, pornography, offensive advertisements, stereotypical and disrespectful depictions of young people, women and minorities, hate-mongering messages, and so forth – through legislation and self-regulation has been debated for many years. Over the past decade, however, emphasis has shifted from legislation and prohibitions toward a focus on the responsibilities of parents and other adults.

While the media are believed to cause some problems, they are also valued as social and cultural resources. An often raised question is whether children are helpless victims or are actually capable of meeting the challenges contemporary media present. In this context, the importance of media literacy, of knowing how the media are organized, how they work, and how they influence their audiences, is often mentioned. It is a question of strengthening children and youth in their role as consumers of media content so that they can use the media and keep a level head. Overall, it is a matter of enhancing young people's critical faculties as well as enabling them to express themselves in many different ways, by means of sound, image and word. More and more people are coming to understand the value of media education in school curricula. In the European Union, for example, there is widespread agreement that the schools should assume responsibility for ensuring that children's media culture is incorporated into the curriculum. Not only theoretical knowledge, but hands-on experience is envisaged.

Various EU documents define protection of minors as a matter of the *public interest*. Underlying this concept is the presumption that children are more impressionable, less critical and therefore more vulnerable than adults inasmuch as they have little experience and thus poorly developed frames of reference to guide their judgment. Therefore, it lies in the public interest to protect children from thing like harmful media content until they have become more experienced and more mature. Certain kinds of depictions of violence are thought to be harmful.

All the EU instruments in the area are consonant as to the assignment of responsibility for European children's well-being. First and foremost, responsibility for protecting young people from harmful media content rests with the adults – parents and others – in children's surroundings. But these adults need help in the form of both political decisions and initiatives on the part of the media industry, e.g., codes of ethics and rules that require the industry to assume its share of responsibility vis-à-vis children and youth. Proposed measures include the drafting of criteria whereby content may be classified and the establishment of consumer relations offices to field and follow up complaints.

Definitions of content that may be 'harmful' to children, youth and, in some cases adults vary, however, between countries, which means that many proposed measures arouse strong feeling. In short, the policy area is controversial.

Co-relulation and self-regulation have clearly become the remedy of choice in recent years; both Swedish and European documents stress that media should

---

**The legal framework in the European Community (EU)
for the protection of minors from harmful media content**

- The Directive, *Television Without Frontiers* (adopted in 1989 and amended in 1997), calls upon broadcasters to take measures to ensure that their program output is not detrimental to the physical, mental and moral development of minors. The Directive also points to the responsibility of parents and other adults to guide and control children's exposure to television fare. The Directive is currently undergoing a revision that has been under way for several years. A draft put forward in December 2005 includes the Internet and other digital media.

- A Recommendation on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity (1998) includes all the new electronic media and calls upon broadcasters and operators of on-line services to develop new methods to enhance parents' control over their children's use of the media, e.g., the introduction of a Code of Ethics. In other words, self-regulation. Two evaluations of the implementation of the Recommendation by Member States have been reported, in 2001 and 2003. After the second of these, the Commission in 2004 proposed a sup-plementary recommendation "on the protection of minors and human dignity and the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and information services industry" (European Commission, AV Policy, press release 04/598).

  The proposed supplement, an attempt to meet the rapid pace of technological development, makes refer-ence to media literacy and media education programs, institutions for collaboration between regulators and self-regulating institutions, and systems of classification of content and other measures designed to counteract and prevent "discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age in all media" (http://europa.eu.int./comm/avpolicy/regul/new_srv/pmhd_en.htm).

- One of the goals of the *Community Action Plan on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet* (2005) is to combat illegal content (monitoring, hotlines, etc.), control undesirable and harmful content (software solutions, e.g. filters), and promote a safer environment (self-regulation), plus measures to raise users/consumers' aware-ness.

---

take greater responsibility for protecting children and young people. The idea is that self-regulation – and co-regulation – will make it possible to reduce reliance on laws and public regulation, which quickly become outdated due to the rapid pace of innovation in media technology and are not easily amended.

'Self-regulation' can mean different things but is generally taken to mean pro-tective measures relating to content that is legal, but can possibly be harmful to children and young people. Measures in this category include: information to users/consumers (e.g., at point of sale of technical equipment and on websites); product information (via warning texts, a light our sound signal, descriptive labelling and/or classification of content, systems for checking the age of the user); support to parental control (e.g., by limiting acess to certain websites, filter soft-ware); and following up complaints.

For obvious reasons, the degree of self-regulation varies between media. There is a direct correlation between the extent of legislation in a given area and the presence of self-regulatory initiatives, as a comparison of television and the in-teractive entertainment industry reveals. Media that have existed a long time also are better organized when it comes to policy issues and internal codes of ethics, etc. Consumer pressure can bring about change. It is a well-established fact that, left to their own devices, media companies themselves will not change their ways, unless it returns a profit.

Swedish legislation

TV

Radio and Television Act

The Swedish Radio and Television Act applies to channels that originate in Sweden. Today these are SVT1, SVT2, TV4 and their auxiliary channels, digital and otherwise. The definition of corporate domicile is somewhat equivocal, however, and in time more channels may come under the law. The basis for all national regulation of television is the Community Directive, *Television without Frontiers*.

The Act instructs channels to bear in mind "the dominant position the medium enjoys" when scheduling programs that have violent content. In practice, the channels are restrictive about airing violent fiction earlier than 9 PM, and documentary records of acts of violence before 7 PM.

Since 1999, television programs that contain explicit or prolonged depictions of violence must be preceded by a warning in sound and picture or accompanied by a warning in the picture throughout the program.

The legal restrictions on depictions of violence mentioned below also apply to television programs.

Films and Video

The Film Censorship Act

All films and videograms that are intended for public screening in cinemas or public gatherings must have the prior approval of the Film Censorship Board. This is an exception to the Freedom of Expression Act, part of the Swedish Constitution, which otherwise forbids prior censorship.

The Film Censorship Board sets lower age limits for admission to films according to the content. There are four categories: Suitable for children; From 7 years; From 11 years; and From 15 years. The Board can require certain scenes to be cut, or deny entire films approval for public screening.

The Penal Code and the Freedom of Expression Act

"Technical recording" in the sense of the law means all forms of moving pictures, regardless of medium or carrier.

Illicit depiction of violence

Penal Code, ch. 16 para. 6b: "Persons who depict sexual violence or coercion with the intention of distributing the image or images, unless circumstances justify the depiction or distribution, shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to two years. The same applies to graphic or detailed depictions in motion pictures of gross abuse of human beings or animals that are intended for distribution or distributed to others."

Illicit distribution

Penal Code, ch. 16 para 10c: "Persons who deliberately, or through gross negligence in professional or other commercial activity, distribute a film, videogram or other motion picture that includes images showing detailed, naturalistic depictions of acts of gross violence toward, or threat of violence toward human beings or animals shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to six months."

Perversion of minors

Penal Code, ch. 16 para 12: "Persons who distribute a text, image or technical recording, the content of which can have a brutalizing effect or otherwise seriously impact on minors' moral upbringing, shall be fined or sentenced to prison for up to six months."

Translator's note: The above quotations are not official translations, but reflect the sense of the law. The official translation of the Code is currently unavailable due to revision.

The Internet

Falls under the Freedom of Expression Act. The general principle is that anything that is not condoned in other media is not condoned on the Internet.

Self-regulation

Computer and TV games

Sixteen European countries, Sweden among them, have adopted the age classification and labeling system, PEGI (Pan-European Game Information). PEGI is a branch initiative that recommends appropriate age limits for computer and TV games. For further information see www.pegi.info

What kinds of measures does the Swedish public find acceptable?

SOM 2000 included a question designed to find out what the public thought of different kinds of measures that might be taken to protect children and young people from harmful influences of violence on TV, in films and on the Internet. About then, the EU was beginning to draft policy on the issue, and Sweden had taken an active interest in it, as well. For one thing, during the Swedish presidency a conference of experts was convened to discuss the issue. The responses to the question in the SOM survey confirm that the Swedish people, too, are very interested in different ways to protect children from the harmful influence of media violence.

The same question in SOM 2004 included pornography in addition to media violence. New in the 2004 survey, respondents were asked to rate various measures in a scale, ranging from "very effective" to "very ineffective", whereas the scale in 2000 asked whether measures were good or bad. Some of the measures were also defined more precisely. As a consequence, responses to the question in the two surveys are not entirely comparable.

In 2000, the vast majority of respondents preferred measures that tend toward self-regulation and help parents make decisions about programs – measures like recommended age limits, rating and labelling, information to parents, and on-air warnings before and during programs. All these measures are informative rather than restrictive (like, for example, obligatory vetting). A high degree of covariance was noted between the measures, age limits, labelling and on-air warnings. That is, essentially the same people advocated all three. More than three respondents in four also endorsed the adoption of codes of conduct by the media industry.

When the question was changed to deal with effectiveness of the measures, a different rank-order emerged. Besides a change in the rankings, the 2004 frequences are also generally lower, and many more respondents respond neutrally, "neither effective nor ineffective" than was the case in 2000. It seems that it is considerably more difficult to decide whether a measure is effective or ineffective than whether it is good or bad.

Codes of ethics ("codes of conduct" in EU terminology) in the media industry are the measure that most respondents in the 2004 survey, 74 per cent, rate as effective. That is roughly the same share that felt that they were a "good" measure in SOM 2000. Thus, taking into account the differences due to the change in the question, we may conclude that public confidence in this kind of measure has grown. It is also a sign that consumers are more inclined to demand that the media themselves take responsibility for their program policies.

Information campaigns directed to parents also receive a strong vote of confidence; 68 per cent of the respondents consider them a "very effective" or "fairly effective" measure. We find other informative measures like recommended ages, labelling of program content and on-air warnings at the low end of the order.

Approval of more restrictive measures like obligatory vetting and technical filters that can block specified content is fairly widespread. Just under 60 per cent of the respondents consider legislation that would allow vetting "very effective"

Table 6. Views on the effectiveness of measures proposed to protect children and youth from violent and pornographic content in selected media: TV, films, websites and computer games 2004* (per cent)

Measure	Very effective/Fairly effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Very/Fairly ineffective	Total %	Balance
Media industry codes of ethics	74 (77)	19 (19)	7 (4)	100	+67 (+73)
Information to parents	68 (78)	23 (18)	9 (4)	100	+59 (+74)
Obligatory prior censorship	59 (66)	26 (21)	16 (13)	100	+ 43 (+53)
Technical filters to block certain content	57 (48)	28 (24)	14 (28)	100	+43 (+20)
Obligatory media education in school	51 (64)	37 (29)	12 (7)	100	+39 (57)
Labelling of explicit content	52 (82)	32 (15)	15 (3)	100	+37 (79)
Audio/visual warnings before transmission	52 (78)	30 (17)	18 (5)	100	+34 (73)
Classification/labelling of appropriate minimum age	49 (85)	32 (11)	18 (4)	100	+31 (81)

Note: The responses were given on a 5-point scale: Very effective measure; Fairly effective measure; Neither effective nor ineffective measure; Fairly ineffective; Very ineffective. "Very" and "Fairly" ratings at each end of the scale have been combined in the table. The number of responses to each part of the question varied between 1669 and 1705.

* In SOM 2000 the scale had the following heading: Very good measure; Rather good measure; Neither good nor bad; Rather bad measure; Very bad measure. The scores from 2000 are given in parentheses.

or "fairly effective"; technical filters are the only measure that receives more widespread support, 57 per cent, in SOM 2004 (effectiveness) than in 2000 (good).

Half of the respondents consider obligatory media education as an effective measure in a time when a number of researchers and other experts have urged protective measures of this kind. Measures that are discussed more in terms of risk management and public health strategies than as responses to media influences (Potter 2004).

Besides the change in the question, the differences in the public's rankings noted between 2000 and 2004 may also have historical causes. In recent years a number of widely publicized violent crimes have occurred in which minors, even very young children, have been involved, both as victims and as perpetrators. Greater support for more coercive measures might reflect a higher overall level of concern. A shift of public attention from broadcast media toward the Internet might explain the more widespread emphasis on filters.

We note marked differences between men's and women's attitudes toward the different measures. Women are considerably more favorable to obligatory censorship and filtering, but to industry codes of ethics, as well. Women would appear to be more inclined to endorse prohibitive measures. Men appear to be more doubting of the measures suggested and respond "neither effective nor in-

Table 7. Ratings of various proposed measures to protect children and young people from media violence and pornography in selected media: TV, films, computer games and websites 2004 (balance scores)

	Sex		Education				Age				
Influence	F	M	Low	Med.-low	Med.-high	High	15–29	30–49	50–64	65–85	All
Media industry codes of ethics	+76	+57	+62	+63	+66	+79	+50	+70	+70	+75	+67 (+73)
Information to parents	+66	+52	+55	+56	+63	+64	+42	+61	+61	+73	+59 (+75)
Obligatory prior censorship	+59	+26	+41	+42	+40	+50	+31	+41	+44	+60	+43 (+53)
Technical filters to block certain content	+53	+32	+44	+41	+39	+49	+31	+45	+44	+51	+43 (+20)
Obligatory media education in school	+42	+34	+50	+33	+38	+33	+26	+34	+41	+58	+39 (+57)
Labelling of explicit content	+43	+31	+48	+35	+33	+29	+27	+33	+37	+54	+37 (+79)
Audio/visual warnings before transmission	+41	+26	+46	+35	+26	+25	+30	+34	+30	+45	+34 (+73)
Classification/ labelling of appropriate minimum age	+33	+29	+46	+30	+21	+23	+14	+25	+33	+58	+31 (+81)
N responses 2004	858-887	810-818	420-435	566-576	319-325	344-350	356-361	520-528	492-502	294-314	1 669-1 705

Note: The balance score indicates the shares or respondents who have answered "very great extent" eller "great extent", minus the shares who have answered "little extent" or "very little". Thus, the values may range between +100 (all answer "very great") and -100 (all answer "very little").

* The balance scores for SOM 2000 are given in parentheses. In SOM 2000 the scale had the following heading: Very good measure; Rather good measure; Neither good nor bad; Rather bad measure; Very bad measure.

effective" more frequently than women. Education groups show a similar pattern of response: Highly educated respondents tend to endorse restrictive measures more than those with little formal education. Approval of all the proposed methods is higher among low education groups. Information campaigns that target parents constitute an exception here, too.

Age correlates positively with confidence in the various measures. The largest differences between age groups concern recommended ages, information to parents, and obligatory vetting; the least age-related differences are noted for on-air warnings and technical filters. On the whole, however, the rankings are the same among all age groups.

Relatively many of the youngest respondents, too, endorse technical filters that block transmission of specified content. Legislation to permit obligatory vetting receives the same support as in 2000, which (again because of the change in the question itself) indicates an increase in support among 15- to 29 year-olds.

Summary

For decades mass media have aroused fears as to the influence they may have on children and young people. In recent years the volume of media output has mushroomed, and public anxiety about media influence has reached new heights. Today, not only media violence, but pornography and explicit sex on the Internet and satellite/cable television cause concern. Many see a relationship between what the media show and the rising incidence of crime and antisocial behavior in society at large.

A majority of the population believe that depictions of violence in computer games, reality TV, feature films and TV drama are harmful to minors. As for first-hand experience of how violence on TV and in films and computer games affect young people, a majority say they have observed that young people tend to have "distorted perceptions of reality", a propensity for violent behavior, feelings of anxiety and fear, and aggressive behavior. But when asked what they believe the causes of these problems may be, mass media are not the "prime suspects". Instead, the vast majority of the Swedish public – irrespective of sex, education or age – point to social factors like alcohol and drugs and peer pressure as the principal causes. This pattern remains unchanged since previous surveys in 1995 and 2000.

That the media do exert influence, alongside social and institutional factors, is clear. The media, particularly computer and TV games and the Internet, are also assigned greater influence in 2004 than in 2000, and more young people say that computer and TV games influence violence in society than in 2000.

A majority also believe that pornography and explicit sex scenes have a negative influence. A majority feel that these kinds of media content lead to a "distorted conception of women's and men's sexuality", "changes in young people's sexual behavior", and "more sexual violence". Negative influences are cited much more widely than influences that might be taken as positive, e.g., "more knowledge about sexual relationships" and "greater tolerance of sexual expressions". These latter influences are most commonly cited by young people, particularly young men.

When the Swedish people are asked their opinion of various measures designed to protect children and young people from the negative influence of media violence and pornography and sex on television, in films and computer games, and on the Internet, they express confidence in industry codes of ethics and information campaigns directed toward parents. Legislation to permit vetting of program content and technical filters of specified content are also widely believed to be effective. Young people have traditionally questioned the wisdom of restrictive measures, but in the most recent measure they rate them as effective. A possible explanation may lie in recent trends in media output, with new kinds of programs and more widespread use of the Internet. Today, young people have a different, richer experience of the media; it may also be that traditional kinds of informative measures directed to parents have proven to be relatively futile. It will be very interesting to follow the trend in young people's opinions on this subject in coming few years.

The findings of SOM 2004 show that public concern that some kinds of media content have negative influences on children and young people is at least as widespread with respect to pornography and explicit sex scenes as with respect to media violence. Decidedly more women than men, and more older respondents than young, feel that the media do exert a negative influence. Women are much more inclined to support restrictive measures to shield young people from violence and pornography in the media – measures that are the responsibility of government and the media industry.

In extension of these findings, there is reason to reflect on how the media may affect the rise in violence in contemporary society. How violence and sex are depicted, and how victims and perpetrators are depicted. And not least, how responsibility for the acts is assigned. How do the media – and pornography in particular – define what is masculine, what is feminine? That is, to what extent do the media contribute to sustaining a social order in which women are subordinate to men? The media mirror reality, yes, but they also contribute to constructing hegemonic definitions that all too frequently are depicted as self-evident – as natural, all-pervasive and invisible as the air we breathe.

Note

1. The SOM Institute is managed jointly by three departments at Göteborg University: the School of Public Administration, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMG) and the Department of Political Science. Annual surveys of Sweden and Western Sweden form the core of the Institute's work. Both are mail surveys and involve 6000 respondents between the ages of 15 and 85. The questionnaires cover a broad range of issues relating to society, the media and public opinion. Reponsible for the questions asked about media violence and pornography is Nordicom in cooperation with the Swedish Media Council.

References

Buckingham, D & Bragg, S (2003) *Young People, Media and Personal Relationships*. London: BBC and Broadcasting Standards Commission.

Carlsson, U (2001) Medierna och våldet i samhället [The media and violence in society]. In Holmberg, S & Weibull, L (red.): *Land du välsignade? SOM-undersökningen 2000.* Göteborg: SOM-institutet, Göteborgs universitet. (Som-rapport 26)

Carlsson, U & von Feilitzen, C (eds.) (1998) *Children and Media Violence: Yearbook 1998 from the Unesco International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.* Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborg University.

Dalquist, U (1998) *Större våld än vad nöden kräver? Medievåldsdebatten i Sverige 1980-1995* [Overkill? The debate on media violence in Sweden 1980-1995]. Umeå: Boréa förlag.

Drotner, K (1999) *Unge, medier og modernitet: Pejlinger i et forunderligt landskab* [Youth, media and modernity: Explorations in a strange and wondrous landscape]. Valby: Borgen/Medier. (Skriftserie fra Center for Ungdomsmedier 5)

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon & Heide-Smith, Jonas: *Playing with Fire. How do computers influence the player?* The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University, 2005.

von Feilitzen, C (2004) *Mer tecknat....? Animerade TV-program – marknad, utbud, barn, föräldrar* [More cartoons....? Animated TV programs – the market, channel output, children, parents]. Stockholm: Medierådet. (Våldsskildringsrådets skriftserie 31)

von Feilitzen, C (2004) *Influences of Media Violence. A Brief Research Summary,* Göteborg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University.

von Feilitzen, C & Carlsson, U (eds.) (2004) *Promote or Protect. Yearbook 2003 from the Unesco International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.* Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborg University.

von Feilitzen, C & Carlsson, U (eds.) (2000) *Children in the New Media Landscape. Yearbook 2000 from the Unesco International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.* Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborg University.

Forsberg, M (2000) *Ungdomar och sexualitet: En kunskapsöversikt år 2000* [Youth and sexuality: a review of the literature 2000]. Stockholm: Folkhälsoinstitutet.

Frau-Meigs, D (2004) Media Regulation, Self-Regulation and Education: Debunking some myths and retooling some working paradigms. In von Feilitzen, C & Carlsson, U (eds.) *Promote or Protect. Yearbook 2003 from the Unesco International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.* Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborg University.

Hirdman, A (2004) *Tilltalande bilder: Genus, sexualitet och publiksyn i Veckorevyn och Fib aktuellt* [Gender, sexuality and conception of the reader in two Swedish photojournalistic magazines]. Stockholm: Atlas.

Hirdman, A (2004) Medialiserad sexualitet [Medialized sexuality]. In *Vad har mitt liv med Lilja att göra?* Stockholm: Filminstitutet/Rädda Barnen.

Hirdman, A, Kleberg, M & Widestedt, K (2005) *Journalistikens intimisering: Den mediala offentlighetens förändringar från 1880-talet till nutid* [The intimization of journalism: Changes in the public sphere since the 1880s]. Stockholm: Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation, Stockholms universitet.

Månsson, S-A (2003) *Kärlek och sex på internet* [Love and sex on the Internet]. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

Pollack, E (2001) *En studie i medier och brott* [On crime and the media]. Stockholm: Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation, Stockholms universitet.

Potter, W J (2004) The Myth that the Rating Systems and V-chip Will Help Solve the Problem. In von Feilitzen, C & Carlsson, U (eds.) *Promote or Protect. Yearbook 2003 from the Unesco International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen.* Göteborg: Nordicom, Göteborg University.

Reiner, R (2002) Media-Made Criminality: The Representation of Crime in the Mass Media. In Maguire, M, Morgan, R & Reiner, R (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SAFT – Safety, Awareness, Facts and Tools. Stockholm: Medierådet, 2002 and 2003. http://www.saftonline.org, http://www.medieradet.se/ upload/Rapporter_pdf/SAFT_foraldrastudie.pdf

Weibull, L (1996) Våld, samhälle och medier [Violence, society and media]. In Holmberg, S & Weibull, L: *Mitt i Nittiotalet: SOM-undersökningen 1995.* Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet. (SOM rapport 16)

Raising Media
and Internet Literacy

Activities, Projects and Resources

Contents

What is Media and Information Literacy?*

During the past decades, the media landscape and media culture have undergone major changes. Modern information technology has given rise to a constantly increasing supply of media products – increasingly unbound to time and space. Convergence, fragmentation, diversification and individualization are characteristics frequently taken up in the debate on our contemporary media culture. This phase of development was already discernible in the 1980s, with the advent of new forms of distribution such as video, satellite TV and cable TV. Even then, many parents, teachers and political decision-makers expressed their concerns about the negative effects of the media on children and young people. As long as modern mass media have existed, there have been some concerns about how the media affect particularly children and young people, but these concerns have increased along with technological development in the media field. The topic of violence in the media has received a great deal of attention.

Different actors have during recent decades discussed how legislation and voluntary self-regulation might be used to limit the spread of media content classifiable as harmful. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989 provides a framework in the form of Article 17, which states that those countries that have ratified the convention shall ensure that children and young people have access to information from different national and international sources, particularly information intended to promote their social, spiritual and moral well-being as well as their physical and mental health. To this end, appropriate guidelines shall be developed to protect children and young people from information and material that are detrimental to their well-being. In various official documents from as well national public authorities as regional and international organisations protection of minors is described as an issue of great public interest. One basic point of departure is that children are different from adults in that they are more vulnerable, less critical and more susceptible to influence because they lack the experience and frames of reference necessary for understanding certain circumstances.

Early on in the debate, children and young people were often viewed as helpless victims seated before the TV screen. The questions at issue developed during the 1990s, and there was increased interest in media culture in a broader sense. Most researchers pointed out that while the media are assumed to create problems, they also constitute social and cultural resources, and that, in many respects, young people are quite capable of meeting the challenges of today's media products. Thus, during recent decades, the main focus of the debate has shifted from legislation and restrictions to adult responsibility, which includes the media industry, parents and the schools. In this connection, the importance of knowledge about the media and media influences – or 'media literacy' – is stressed. Inherent in media literacy is the notion that 'protection' need not mean that children and young people should be kept from watching, e.g., certain TV programmes, but that it instead means promoting their media knowledge and helping them to become cognizant media consumers.

Among the prerequisites of media literacy are understanding how the media function, how they construct reality and create meaning, and how they are organized as well as knowing how to use the media in a sensible way. Overall, this is a question of strengthening children's and young people's critical abilities as well as their ability to express themselves in many different ways, through pictures, sounds and words. This does not merely involve providing theoretical knowledge, but also knowledge gained through practical experience. Considerable emphasis is placed on allowing young people to actively participate in programme production.

The concept of 'media literacy' was established in the US during the 1980s and was, at first, closely tied to children's media environment, where media violence and commercialism were under scrutiny. Yet media literacy is a considerably broader concept than 'media education', which only refers to the mission of the schools (where there is great consensus, e.g., within the EU, that the schools are responsible for introducing children's media culture into teaching). The point of departure of the two concepts is, however, the same, that is, that the media construct reality, that audiences interpret media content on the basis of their own preferences, that the media have commercial as well as social and political significations, that the media contain ideological messages, that form and content are closely related and that every medium has an aesthetic form.

With time, media literacy has even come to include *adults*. Media literacy embraces everything from having the knowledge needed to use old and new media technology to having a critical relationship to media content in a time when the media constitute one of the most powerful forces in society. Proponents of media literacy view increased media knowledge in society as contributing to participation, active citizenship, competence development and life-long learning. In this way, the population's media literacy becomes a necessary part of ensuring a democratic society.

Several books and articles have been written about media literacy, and many attempts at defining the concept have been made. Leading researchers in the field

often use the following trichotomy: media literacy implies having *access* to the media, *understanding* the media and *creating/expressing* oneself using the media. (Buckingham 2005, Livingstone 2005)

Access includes having the use of media as well as media habits: the ability to use functions and navigation competence (e.g., changing TV channels/channel orientation, using Internet links): competence in controlling media (e.g., using interactive on-line systems, making financial transactions on the Internet); knowledge of legislation and other regulations in the area (e.g., freedom of speech, protection of privacy, knowledge of the meaning of harmful material, protection from 'spam').

Understanding includes having the ability both to understand/interpret and to gain perspective on media content as well as having a critical attitude.

Creating includes interacting with the media (calling radio programmes to express ideas, participating in discussion rooms on the Internet, e-voting, etc.) as well as producing media content. Having the experience of producing material for different media helps form both a better understanding of and a critical approach to media content.

The concept of media literacy has primarily engaged researchers in Western countries as England, Canada and the US. Many of them start from the notion that, in a democratic society, an individual who has knowledge of the media will more easily acquire a well-founded opinion on societal issues/events and, thereby, will be better equipped to express his/her opinion, individually as well as collectively, in public and other social contexts.

Thus, media literacy is a question of skills, knowledge and competencies, but it is also dependent on the institutions, texts and techniques through which information and communication are mediated. Analytically, the concept of media literacy is used both at the individual and the societal level.

New information and communication technologies face young media users with new media formats through the convergence and more often a distinction is done between *media literacy* and literacy regarding new skills where the terminology shifts between digital literacy, cyber-literacy, internet literacy and web-literacy. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in real life in connection with media use A more gathering term is *information literacy*. UNESCO has initiated several projects and one definition among others is the following: "information literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues and problems at hand" (US National Information Literacy Meeting on Experts, 2003).

Media literacy, has been defined and developed in relation to audiovisual media, while the information literacy has been developed in relation to various new digital systems for representing and distributing information. Media literacy has tended to focus on cultural expression and is marked by a critical dimension. This critical dimension is often missing in the current concept of "information literacy", which focuses more on "technical" skills, such as using ICT to find and gather and to

"Central to any discussion of literacy is the question of purpose. What is the purpose of media literacy, information literacy, or any other literacy, and why do they matter? From the literature discussed in this chapter, we draw out three broad purposes to which media and information literacies may contribute. These purposes also, though often only implicitly, drive the policy debates over literacy. First, democracy, participation and active citizenship: in a democratic society, a media and information-literate individual is more able to gain an informed opinion on matters of the day, and to be able to express their opinion individually and collectively in public, civic and political domains, while a media and information-literate society would thus support a sophisticated, critical and inclusive public sphere. Second, knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice: in a market economy increasingly based on information, often in a complex and mediated form, a media and information-literate individual is likely to have more to offer and so achieve at a higher level in the workplace, and a media and information-literate society would be innovative and competitive, sustaining a rich array of choices for the consumer. Third, lifelong learning, cultural expression and personal fulfillment: since our highly reflexive, heavily mediated symbolic environment informs and frames the choices, values and knowledge that give significance to everyday life, media and information literacy contributes to the critical and expressive skills that support a full and meaningful life, and to an informed, creative and ethical society."

Livingstone, S., van Couvering, E., and Thumim, N.: Converging traditions of research on media and information literacies: Disciplinary, critical and methodological issues. In D.J. Leu, J. Coiro, M. Knobel and C. Lankshear (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on New Literacies.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

distribute information. One might say that the focus is on users of ICT rather than on citizens who use ICT. Given the increasing convergence of radio, television, and computer technology "information literacy" is increasingly linked up with issues of democracy and active, participatory citizenship. A conclusion is that there is a need for bringing media literacy and information literacy (e-strategy, e-culture, e-learning) together in a multi-factor, riskbased framework to further promote the role of citizens and their participation in society. (Livingstone 2005 and 2006).

Having media- and information literate individuals in a society promotes a critical, open and all-embracing public sphere. The medialized symbolic environment we live in today largely shapes the choices, values and knowledge that determine our everyday lives. At the same time communication through the media can contribute to development and social change. Media and information literacy helps, therefore, to strengthen the critical abilities and communicative skills that give the individual's existence meaning, while promoting a well-oriented, democratic knowledge society.

* This introduction is compiled by Ulla Carlsson

Literature

Buckingham, David: *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom.* Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media Institute of Education, University of London, London 2005, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_children.pdf

Carlsson, Ulla and Feilitzen (eds.): *In the Service of Young People? Studies and reflections on media in the digital age, Yearbook 2005/2006.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2006

von Feilitzen, Cecilia and Carlsson, Ulla (eds.): *Promote or Protect. Yearbook 2003.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University 2004

Final Report. Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, Fourth Session, 20-22 March 2006, UNESCO. Paris 2006-06-13

Insafe. Europe's internet safety portal (www.saferinternet.org)

Livingstone, Sonia, van Couvering, Elizabeth and Thumim, Nancy: Converging Traditions of Research on Media and Information Literacies: Disciplinary, critical and methodological issues. In D.J. Leu, J. Coiro, M. Knobel and C. Lankshear (Eds.): *Handbook of Research on New Literacies.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ 2006 (forthcoming)

Livingstone, Sonia: *Adult Media Literacy. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom.* Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, London 2005, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/aml.pdf

Livingstone, Sonia, van Couvering, Elizabeth and Thumim, Nancy: "The Changing Nature and Uses of Media Literacy". Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, London 2003 *(Media@LSE Electronic Working Papers*, No 4)

The Prague Declaration. Towards an Information Literate Society (2003) Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, organized by the US national Commission on Library and Information Science and the National Forum on Information Literacy with the support of UNESCO, September 2003, http://www.nclis.gov/libinter/infolitconf&meet/postinfolitconf&meet/PragueDeclaration.pdf

Tufte, Thomas and Hemer, Oscar (eds.) : *Media & Glocal Change. Rethinking Communication for Development.* Nordicom/CLACSO, Buenos Aires 2005

Varis, Tapio**:** *New Literacies and e-Learning Competences.* e-leariningeuropa.info 2005. http://www.elearningeuropa.info/index.php?page=doc&doc_id=595&doclng=1

Virkus, Sirje: "Information Literacy in Europe. A Literature Review", *Information Research* 8(4)2003.

I Media Literacy for Children, Young People and Parents

How media literate are children and young people? This varies, of course, depending on the child's age, personality, interests, motivation, social relations and context, etc., and obviously to a great extent also on access to, use of, understanding of and own creation of media contents. Media literacy among the young therefore differs among individuals, groups and nations.

Ofcom, the independent regulator and competition authority for the U.K. communications industries, defines media literacy as 'the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts'. Without such skills, people's ability to participate effectively in the workplace and in society may be greatly diminished, Ofcom says (http://www.ofcom.org.uk).

In 2005, Ofcom published a review of research, mostly performed in the U.K., about children's media literacy (Buckingham 2005).

The report concludes, among other things, that in terms of *access*, the research literature suggests that children and young people in the U.K. possess quite high levels of *functional* literacy – that is, the skills and competencies needed to gain access to media content, using the available technologies and associated software.

Many findings in the review point to a growing media literacy by age. For example, older children are generally aware of regulatory mechanisms and systems of guidance, and take these into account in seeking to make their own decisions. The large majority of young people also show some awareness of risks relating to sexual dangers on the Internet, although they are less aware of potential economic risks.

The review adds that several studies regarding regulations and risk on the Internet conclude that education in media literacy may be a more effective strategy than blocking or filtering.

In a similar vein, children's *understanding* of television – e.g., children's awareness of areas such as television 'language', the difference between representation and reality, and the persuasive role of advertising – develops both as a function of their increasing knowledge of the world, and as a result of their broader cognitive and social development. When the children grow older, they also learn to cope with potentially unwanted or upsetting emotional responses, and to make critical judgments about areas such as television violence, by employing forms of media literacy.

For example, Andrea Millwood Hargrave (2003) found that children aged 9-13 could clearly distinguish between fictional violence and violence that is 'real' in the media. The children made judgements about the justified use of violence, and this could affect how 'violent' an image was perceived to be in the first place. Although this kind of result does not tell fully about influences of media violence, it implies that the meaning of a particular form of media content is not pre-given but actively constructed also by the reader or viewer (something that, in turn, is an important fact to take into account in research on media influences).

The review by Buckingham found considerably less research about how children and young people interpret, evaluate and respond to other media contents than on television.

By contrast, when it comes to *creativity*, there has been less academic research relating to 'older' media such as video and analogue radio than to new media, particularly the Internet. The review found research suggesting that there is considerable potential for media to be used as means of communication and self-expression, not least by socially disadvantaged groups; that creative involvement in media production (particularly in the context of education) can make an important contribution to the development of critical understanding; and that new media such as online gaming and mobile telephony provide possibilities for new forms of interaction.

In sum, the review shows that there are gaps in research about how media literate children and young people are. At the same time, it shows that media literacy is partly developing with increasing age.

This is not to say that adults are in all respects media literate or that they always are more media literate than young people – the contrary can also be the case. In another review of research on adults' media literacy in the U.K. for Ofcom (Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumim 2005) the authors say that much research raises concerns that adult audiences lack the more complex skills for a sufficiently discerning or critical understanding to deal with the highly sophisticated construction of media messages. For example, the audience's trust of news is not always associated with good understanding or critical judgment, and many viewers are overwhelmed by multiple content sources that they find difficult to evaluate or compare. Studies also suggest that adults are often unaware of the provenance of information on the Internet and may lack the skills to take into account the point of view from which information is presented.

In May 2006, Ofcom released *Media Literacy Audit. Report on media literacy amongst children* (see http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/ medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/children.pdf) (and a corresponding empirical report on adults). The aim of the child study was to assess the extent of media literacy amongst children aged 8-15 across the U.K. in order to provide stakeholders with a source of information about children's levels of such literacy. To a great extent this empirical investigation deals with 8- to 11- and 12- to 15-year-olds' uptake and usage of the media, but also their attitudes to media and towards

learning. In addition, there were questions to children's parents about the extent and type of rules in the home regarding the media platforms.

A main conclusion from the report is that although children's access to and usage of media technologies in the U.K. is widespread, children's levels of critical understanding and of creativity as regards the media are highly variable. So are steps taken to ensure online safety at home, as well as lessons about media at school.

A few examples of findings in the report that support this conclusion are:

- Some 78 per cent of children aged 12-15 feel that news programmes are true either 'always' or 'most of the time', and 76 per cent feel similarly about nature and wildlife programmes. Slightly more than half say this for current affairs programmes (with only 11% saying they are true 'all the time' compared to 35% saying this about news programmes). One third of 12-15-year-olds say that reality TV programmes are true 'all' or 'most of the time', although 20 per cent say they are 'never' true.

- Whilst two in three children aged 12-15 who use the Internet at home agree that they trust most of what they find on the Internet, 20 per cent disagrees, and a further 13 per cent is unsure. Children from minority ethnic groups are more likely to disagree (at 30%) that they trust most of what they find on the Internet.

- One in five of 12-15-year-olds say they have set up their own website. Around half of this age group has either experience of or interest in setting up their own website or making a short film using a digital camcorder, and rather fewer are interested in making a short film using a mobile phone.

- Most parents say they have rules for the Internet, although only around half of all parents with Internet access say they have blocking systems in place to stop their children viewing certain types of websites, with no significant differences by the age of the child. Parents who do not have blocks in place give reasons for this largely relating to trusting their child, although around one in five of these parents say they do not have controls set because they are unsure how to do this or were not aware it was possible.

- Significant minorities of children are consuming media largely on their own, especially in the 12-15 age group.

- Around two-thirds (64%) of all children aged 8-11 say they have had any lessons at school that teach them about the Internet, and just one in ten in this age group (9%) say they have had any lessons that teach them about television or films.

- Among 12-15-year-olds, three quarters (74%) say they have learned about the Internet at school and some 40 per cent that they have had any lessons about television or films.

Although the above-mentioned research reports for Ofcom geographically represent only one corner of the world, there is no evidence that children's and young people's level of media literacy in other countries is higher. At the same time, much research tells that a great amount of children and young people run across offensive media contents, and that some children feel upset or disturbed about it. Other research deals with potentially harmful media contents – such as portrayals of physical media violence; underrepresentation and stereotypes of population groups, peoples or nations; hate and racism; violent and child pornography; cyber bullying; excessive marketing, etc. – which for some children and young people under certain circumstances may reinforce or contribute to biased ideas about other people and the world, and to fear, anxiety, depression and destructive aggression, rather than to pleasurable experiences, social relations and learning; self-expression and personal fulfillment; health; and communication and participation for change towards a better environment, democracy and peace.

A common argument, not least among commercial media professionals, is that it is the parents' responsibility to take care of and teach their children about the media.

Research gives evidence that parents can be of great importance in this regard:

- The parental example plays an essential role, that is, the way parents themselves use the media often makes a lasting impresson on how their children use – and in the future will use – media.

- Children and young people who live in a harmonious social environment – have good relations to their parents, peers, other adults and in the school – are more seldom influenced by media contents in undesirable ways than children who live in tangled social environments.

- Parents can mediate children's media use with the aim of reinforcing desirable and counteracting undesirable influences of media contents by 1) using media together with their children (co-using), 2) talking about media contents with their child (active mediation), and 3) setting rules in relation to the child's media use (restrictive mediation). Research on only 'restrictive mediation' (setting rules) and only 'co-using' the media has produced somewhat inconsistent findings, whereas 'active mediation' (talking about the media and their contents) seems successful in a variety of domains. At the same time, different kinds of mediations, and combinations of them, are, naturally, more or less suitable for different ages (Nathanson and Cantor 2000).

On the other hand, research also points to the fact that children's and young people's media use cannot only be the responsibility of parents alone:

- Much research concludes that parents are not especially well informed about their children's media use, and that communication between children and parents about media use and media contents many times is lacking. Sev-

eral studies show that parents often overestimate their own engagement in children's media use (e.g., Larsson 2004), as well as their children's satisfaction with talking with them about the media (e.g., Casas, González and Figuer 2004).

- In media-saturated countries, there are nowadays often many television sets and computers in the home, and great proportions of children and young people also have a television set and other media equipment in their own room. This means that the conditions of using media together, talking about media contents, and setting rules have radically changed – joint media use is in these countries becoming less common.

- There are always a great many parents who do not have time to engage in their children's media use, who do not know about or how to handle possible filtering methods, who do not care since they are in entangled situations themselves but instead rely on media as sitter-ins, or who do not think of extensive media use or certain media contents as anything to be concerned about.

The conclusion is that relying solely on parents is not an effective regulatory strategy in the media field (a conclusion also drawn by many others, e.g., Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumim 2005).

However, this conclusion does not contradict the fact that parents need information and support to better interact with their children in relation to the media. Different awareness-raising efforts for parents are highly relevant – both in order to increase their own media literacy as adults and to make them realise the importance of their own role in helping children to become more competent, responsible and critical media users.

1. Television, Films, Videos/DVDs – What Is New?

We will here temporarily put media literacy as regards the Internet aside, since this is dealt with in a separate section further ahead. We will here also leave the creativity aspect away, since there is a special section on children's and young people's own media production later on.

Methods for increasing children's media literacy when it comes to television and films are more rarely addressed directly at children, especially young children, than to their parents. And, naturally, advice about using television and films in sensible ways has existed since these media were introduced. Nevertheless, the media landscape has basically changed in that national television channels today are accompanied by 'inumerable' transnational satellite channels that are outside national control, in that movies in the theatres are for rent and purchase in the form of videos and DVDs in private stores of many kinds, and that television and films are also currently finding their way onto the Internet.

Traditional means of awareness-raising as regards national media still exist in many countries, but they have been supplemented with new efforts at increasing information and media literacy among children and parents. Thus, traditional and new methods exist side by side.

Parents in many countries can find advice on how to mediate children's use of television and films in, for instance, the following ways:

- in parental magazines
- through campaigns of different kinds initiated by interest organisations or, sometimes, the government
- by participating in 'turn-off TV' weeks
- by watching television programmes on media literacy (e.g., the Swedish public educational television channel has produced special TV series on media literacy for children as well as for adults, series that are broadcast on ordinary television and also are available for use in schools)
- by watching so-called Public Service Announcements on TV use
- by paying attention to age recommendations/labellings associated with TV programmes and similar governmental rules for films
- by paying attention to programme schedules, reviews, possible content ratings/ labellings, etc.
- by paying attention to the 'watershed' on television (meaning that programmes broadcast late in the evening are for adults)

- by complaining to authorities and (if possible) taking part in audience councils
- by joining associations with the objective of promoting a better television milieu
- by using blocking devices for television (the so-called V-chip in North America or set-top-boxes for digital television in several countries)
- by paying attention to acoustic or visual warnings shown on the TV screen or told by the programme presenters (in, e.g., Europe)
- by turning on the Internet to voluntary or interest organisations, consumer bodies, or to media authorities or taking part in parents' chat communities

The newer additions to traditional media literacy methods for children and parents in this list are apparently blocking devices for television, clear acoustic or visual warnings on national television channels, and the possibility to turn to different platforms on the Internet for getting advice about television and film contents.

Awareness-raising methods of the above-mentioned kinds have developed differently in different social, cultural and media contexts. Compare, for example, the V-chip in North America, and the acoustic and visual warnings on national television in Europe – methods, that for the rest, have turned out insufficient in that many parents do not use the V-chip and that 'warnings' sometimes get the function of 'forbidden fruit' for certain children and young people, thus, may be more tempting than deterrant.

Furthermore, the list of awareness-raising methods in the list above are, as a rule, more common in countries with much media. A tiny selection of examples in this section of what can be found on the Internet today for parents and children are therefore collected from voluntary and interest organisations in the media-rich North America.

● Don't Buy it – Get Media Smart!, U.S.A., http:// www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit

This organisation is addressing children and young people – as well as parents and teachers – about commercial messages/consumerism.

By teaching media literacy skills young people are supposed to be encouraged to think critically about media and become smart consumers. The aim of the organisation is to provide the user with skills to question, analyse, interpret and evaluate media messages. For instance, young people can learn how to discover advertising tricks (e.g., food advertising tricks), how to be a smart buyer, and how to react on or report something seen or heard in the media. The site also provides links to other similar organisations and media education sites and gives tips on literature.

Get Media Smart is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in the United States. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a nonprofit organisation created by the U.S. Congress and funded by American taxpayers. CPB provides funds to develop educational television, radio and online projects. It also funds more than 1,000 local public radio and television stations. The Public Broadcasting Service is a nonprofit organisation with PBS mem-

ber television stations in all 50 states. PBS gets its funding from PBS member stations, CPB, grants, video sales, royalties, license fees and investment income.

● **National Institute on Media and the Family, U.S.A,** http://www.mediafamily.org

The National Institute on Media and the Family is 'a research-based organisation on the positive and harmful effects of media on children and youth'. The organisation declares itself to be independent, nonpartisan, nonsectarian and nonprofit. Its 'MediaWise movement' aims to help families make wiser media choices and encourage parents to 'Watch What their Kids Watch'. The mission is to maximise the benefits and minimise the harm of media on children and families through research, education, and advocacy.

The website further says: 'We do not advocate censorship of any kind. We are committed to partnering with parents and other caregivers, organizations, and corporations in using the power of the free market to create healthier media choices for families, so that we have healthier, less violent communities. We seek to educate and inform the public, and to encourage practices and policies that promote positive change in the production and use of mass media.'

Various fact sheets are available on the website as well as tips to parents about how to use media and suggestions for how to talk to children about certain media
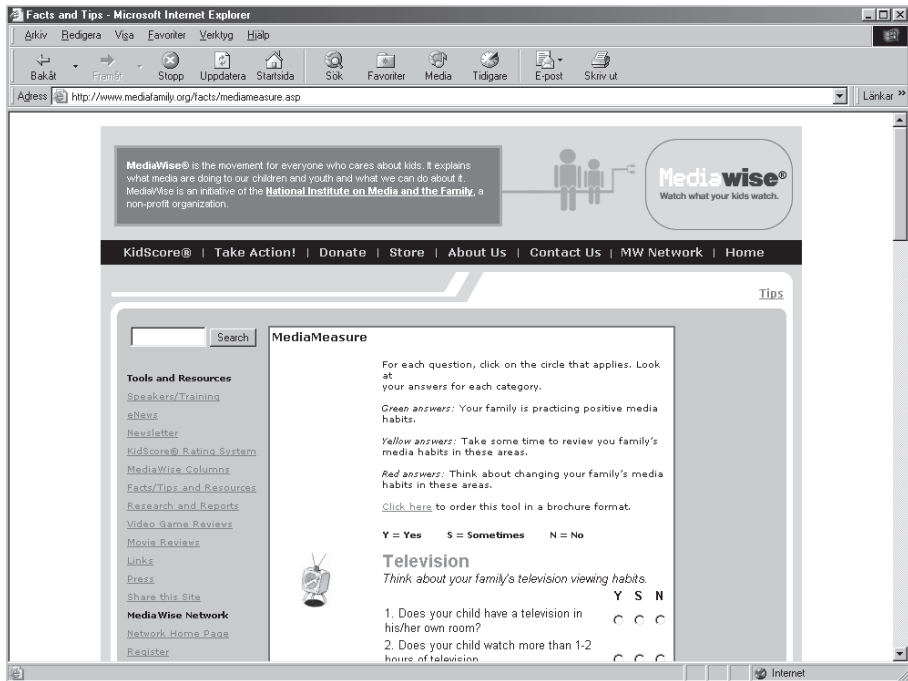
contents, for example, about war and terrorism. 'MediaMeasure' is a 'self test' with questions about the family's media habits and suggestions for improving them. There are also quizzes and practical tips about different activities for children and parents, together or separately, to raise awareness about media contents and their impact. Moreover, the organisation offers a newsletter, research reports, and reviews of video games and movies.

● **Parents Television Council, U.S.A.,** http://www.parentstv.org

Parents Television Council (PTC) is a grassroot, non-governmental organisation funded by donations from interested individuals and based in the United States. The mission of the PTC is to promote and restore responsibility and decency in American entertainment industry and to promote 'family friendly' television programming. The organisation was founded in 1995 to ensure that children are not constantly assaulted by sex, violence and profanity on television and in other media. The PTC uses a content-based rating system for 'informed viewing decisions'. On the website a traffic light is used as symbol for the classification of different TV series. The series are evaluated on basis of their suitability to viewers of all ages (and not on artistic merits). Time of transmission is also taken into account. A team of entertainment analysts screen the programmes and enter their results in a database for producing the 'Family Guide to Prime Time Television'. Among the organisation's actions are calls to file complaints or

comments to advertisers, television networks, and the Federal Communications Commission about unsuitable television content. The organisation also presents reviews of movies and video games and a guide to Internet safety.

● Control Your TV, U.S.A., http://www.controlyourtv.org

The cable industry in the United States – through National Cable and Telecommunications Association and 'Cable in the Classroom' (CIC) – supports this website. 'Cable in the Classroom' (www.ciconline.org) is the U.S. cable industry's education foundation. Its expressed mission is to foster the use of cable content and technology to expand and enhance learning for children and youth nationwide. CIC is mainly addressing teachers, giving tips and examples of its educational programming.

Control your TV, on the other hand, is addressing parents' concerns about what their children view on television. The approach to address violence and indecency on television is 'Choice', 'Control' and 'Education'. Under the heading 'Control' instructions are given for how to use the set-top-box to block unwanted programmes or channels and/or how to use the V-chip installed in the TV set. The V-chip utilises the ratings of TV-programmes made by the industry. 'Choice' describes how to find 'programs suitable for the family'. 'Education' gives links and tips about where to find information on media literacy for the family and other resources to get media smart and be able to 'navigate in the children's media landscape'. By transmitting Public Service Announcements on cable networks the cable industry also tries to educate their customers and viewers how to make responsible viewing decisions in the family.

● American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S.A., http://www.aap.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a non-profit professional organisation of pediatrics in the United States established to meet the needs of information and education of its about 60,000 members. The main focus of the organisation is children's health issues in general – but it is also engaged in children and the media. The website offers practical advice to medical doctors to meet the questions and worries of parents regarding their children's media use and the possible health effects – and includes direct advice to parents, as well. There are many articles, guidelines and tips addressing parents about, e.g., television's impact on children, using television wisely, and rules for Internet use.

In 1997, the AAP initiated a project called Media Matters – a national public education campaign on awareness of influence on the health of children and young people of the media to help pediatricians, parents and children. Through the campaign the AAP advocates media education to mitigate problems with harmful contents, such as media violence. 'Everyday Media Education Ideas' and 'Media Education Basics' are examples of tips and guidelines to parents. There is also a letter-writing campaign which encourages parents to send letters to movie theatres, video stores, etc., about the importance of: following ratings, being concerned and aware of the reasons behind these ratings, and informing the media staff about them.

Now, which media guidelines from the AAP will a parent find? The AAP says on its website under 'Media Guidelines for Parents':

> Just as a print-literate child learns to be critical of the things he reads, he should also be able to do the same with moving pictures and sounds. Your child can learn to understand both the obvious and hidden messages in all media. Once children learn media education skills, they will begin to ask questions and think about the media messages they watch, read and hear. And they usually will enjoy doing it.
>
> Following are basic media education points your child should know:
>
> **People create media messages.** Any media message, whether it's a magazine article or a TV talk show, is created by a team of people. Those people write it, decide what pictures to use and what to leave out. All of these things give the message a purpose. Each media form uses its own language. For example, newspapers make headlines large to attract readers to certain stories.
>
> **Media with sound may use music to make people feel a range of emotions.** When children learn about these techniques, they are able to understand how a message is delivered instead of only being affected by it. No two people experience the same media message in exactly the same way. How a person interprets a message depends on things unique to that person's life. These can include age, values, memories and education.
>
> **Media messages have their own values and points of view.** These are built into the message itself. Children should compare the promoted values against their own values. It is important for children to learn that they have a choice in whether to accept the values that are being promoted in any media message.
>
> You can use these lessons as part of your everyday life. Besides asking how and why media messages are created, children of various ages can do everyday activities with you or other adults to help build media education skills.

After that the AAP suggests parents to make educational games for their children out of advertising, movies, music videos, etc. – for full information, see AAP's website.

The AAP also underlines the importance of good viewing habits early and in the home, such as:

- Making a media plan.
- Setting media time limits. (The AAP recommends no more than one to two hours of quality TV and videos a day for older children and no screen time for children under the age of 2.)
- Setting family guidelines for media content.
- Being clear and consistent with children about media rules.
- Keeping TV sets, VCRs, video games and computers out of children's bedrooms.
- Making media a family activity.
- 'Talking back', or asking questions about media messages, something which builds the lifelong skills the child's needs to be a critical media consumer.

- Looking for media 'side effects' (of, e.g., violence, sex or graphic language), such as poor school performance, hitting or pushing other kids often, aggressively talking back to adults, fequent nightmares, increased eating of unhealthy foods, and soking, drinking or drug use.

(For more complete information under each recommendation, please, see the AAP's website.)

Furthermore, the organisation has the following recommendations for parents (we refer again to the website for full information):

1. Set limits as regards your child's use of TV, movies and computer games to no more than one or two hours per day.
2. Plan your child's viewing
3. Watch TV with your child
4. Find the right message (Some television programs may portray people as stereotypes. Talk with your child about the real-life roles of women, the elderly and people of other races that may not be shown on television.)
5. Help your child resist commercials
6. Look for quality children's videos and DVDs
7. Give other options (than watching TV)
8. Set a good example (You are the most important role model in your child's life. Limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your child do the same.)
9. Express your views
10. Get more information (through your pediatrician, public service groups, parent organisations or just talking to other parents)

● Media Awareness Network, Canada, http://www.media-awareness.ca

The Media Awareness Network in Canada are mainly addressing teachers but has a special section for parents, as well.

The following text is an example of what parents can read about television on the website of Media Awareness Network:

> *Instead of two or three stations we now have hundreds, with shows for every taste and interest. This increased selection means that there are fewer opportunities for the whole family to sit down and enjoy a show together. Watching television has become a more solitary activity and less shared time means that parents are less able to monitor what their kids are watching.*

The parent can then click on the following headings for getting further advice:

The Good Things About Television
Kids can learn a lot from television, if parents are involved in their kids' viewing habits.

Television's Impact on Kids

A look at the issues of concern to parents: age-inappropriate content, violence, and the "too much TV" dilemma.

Special Issues for Young Children

How young is too young to watch TV? Managing superhero play and helping young children to distinguish fantasy from reality.

Special Issues for Teens

Sexual content in prime time is on the rise, and parents worry that values absorbed from TV can be at odds with family values.

Understanding Television Rating Systems and Codes

Learn what the TV ratings mean and the guidelines Canadian TV broadcasters have to follow.

Managing Television in the Home

Take control of your family's viewing habits with these strategies for different ages.

Talking to Your Kids About Television

Use TV to help your kids learn to think critically. This section contains tip sheets on talking to kids about everything from stereotypes and violence to TV news.

Taking Action

Voicing your opinion to the TV industry, promoting parent education through your school council, and organizing a TV Turnoff Week in your home or community.

2. Video and Computer Games

Video and computer games used on a large-scale can be regarded as an even newer medium than satellite television. Many organisations, associations and networks give recommendations about how to use video and computer games wisely – through media such as magazines and the Internet.

Yet, the most obvious media literacy method regarding digital games are rating and labelling. Below are brief descriptions of these methods in Europe, U.S.A. and Australia. Besides the rating/labelling systems, the websites mentioned here contain several other kinds of consumer information.

● **The PEGI system, Europe,** http://www.pegi.info/pegi/index.do

The Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) age rating system was established in 2003 to help European parents make informed decisions on buying interactive games. Designed to ensure that minors are not exposed to games that are unsuitable for their particular age group, the system is supported by the major console manufacturers, including PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo, as well as by publishers and developers of interactive games throughout Europe.

The PEGI system was developed and based on existing systems in Europe. In the drafting of the PEGI assessment form and the shaping of the system organisation, society representatives such as consumers, parents and religious groups have been involved.

The age rating system comprises two separate but complementary elements. The first is an age rating, similar to some existing rating systems. The PEGI age bands are 3+, 7+, 12+, 16+, 18+. The second element is a number of game descriptors. These are icons, displayed on the back of the game box that describe the type of content to be found in the game. Depending on the type of game, there may be up to six such descriptors. The intensity of the content is appropriate to the age rating of the game. The content types/game descriptors are: bad language, discrimination, drugs, fear, sex, and violence, respectively – see below in the same order:

The PEGI system is a voluntary system in which the ratings are carried out by members of the game industry itself. This takes place by means of a self assessment form. Rat-

ings proposed by publishers are then checked by NICAM the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audio-visual Media. A few single variations of symbols and agents exist. In the U.K., for example, The British Board of Film Classification (http://www.bbfc.co.uk), an independent, non-governmental body, is previewing digital games and functions as an agent for NICAM.

● Entertainment Software Rating Board, U.S.A., http://www.esrb.org

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) in the U.S.A. ESRB applies and enforces ratings, advertising guidelines, and online privacy principles adopted by the industry.

ESRB ratings have two equal parts: Rating symbols (on the front of the game box) suggest age appropriateness for the game and content descriptors (on the back) indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

ESRB age rating symbols

EARLY CHILDHOOD Titles rated **EC (Early Childhood)** have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.

EVERYONE Titles rated **E (Everyone)** have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

EVERYONE 10+ Titles rated **E10+ (Everyone 10 and older)** have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.

TEEN Titles rated **T (Teen)** have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language.

MATURE Titles rated **M (Mature)** have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.

ADULTS ONLY Titles rated **AO (Adults Only)** have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.

RATING PENDING Titles listed as **RP (Rating Pending)** have been submitted to the ESRB and are awaiting final rating. (This symbol appears only in advertising prior to a game's release.)

ESRB content descriptors

- **Alcohol Reference** – Reference to and/or images of alcoholic beverages
- **Animated Blood** – Discolored and/or unrealistic depictions of blood
- **Blood** – Depictions of blood
- **Blood and Gore** – Depictions of blood or the mutilation of body parts
- **Cartoon Violence** – Violent actions involving cartoon-like situations and characters. May include violence where a character is unharmed after the action has been inflicted
- **Comic Mischief** – Depictions or dialogue involving slapstick or suggestive humor
- **Crude Humor** – Depictions or dialogue involving vulgar antics, including 'bathroom' humor
- **Drug Reference** – Reference to and/or images of illegal drugs
- **Edutainment** – Content of product provides user with specific skills development or reinforcement learning within an entertainment setting. Skill development is an integral part of product
- **Fantasy Violence** – Violent actions of a fantasy nature, involving human or non-human characters in situations easily distinguishable from real life
- **Informational** – Overall content of product contains data, facts, resource information, reference materials or instructional text
- **Intense Violence** – Graphic and realistic-looking depictions of physical conflict. May involve extreme and/or realistic blood, gore, weapons and depictions of human injury and death

- **Language** – Mild to moderate use of profanity
- **Lyrics** – Mild references to profanity, sexuality, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
- **Mature Humor** – Depictions or dialogue involving 'adult' humor, including sexual references
- **Mild Violence** – Mild scenes depicting characters in unsafe and/or violent situations
- **Nudity** – Graphic or prolonged depictions of nudity
- **Partial Nudity** – Brief and/or mild depictions of nudity
- **Real Gambling** – Player can gamble, including betting or wagering real cash or currency
- **Sexual Themes** – Mild to moderate sexual references and/or depictions. May include partial nudity
- **Sexual Violence** – Depictions of rape or other violent sexual acts
- **Simulated Gambling** – Player can gamble without betting or wagering real cash or currency
- **Some Adult Assistance May Be Needed** – Intended for very young ages
- **Strong Language** – Explicit and/or frequent use of profanity
- **Strong Lyrics** – Explicit and/or frequent references to profanity, sex, violence, alcohol or drug use in music
- **Strong Sexual Content** – Graphic references to and/or depictions of sexual behavior, possibly including nudity
- **Suggestive Themes** – Mild provocative references or materials
- **Tobacco Reference** – Reference to and/or images of tobacco products
- **Use of Drugs** – The consumption or use of illegal drugs
- **Use of Alcohol** – The consumption of alcoholic beverages
- **Use of Tobacco** – The consumption of tobacco products
- **Violence** – Scenes involving aggressive conflict

Online rating notice

Online games that include user-generated content (e.g., chat, maps, skins) carry the notice 'Game Experience May Change During Online Play' to warn consumers that content created by players of the game has not been rated by the ESRB.

● **Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification, Australia,** http://www.oflc.gov.au

In Australia, video and computer games – as well as all kinds of films – are classified in the same way by the governmental body Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification. The classifications are: G (General), PG (Parental Guidance recom-

mended), M (recommended for Mature audiences) or MA 15+ (Not suitable for people under 15 – under 15s must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian).

Films can also be classified R 18+ or X 18+ (both meaning Restricted to 18 and over). R 18+ and X 18+ are not classifications for computer games.

There are, thus, two types of classification – advisory (G, PG and M) and restricted (MA 15+, R 18+ and X 18+).

In most circumstances, there is also a space next to this coloured symbol that contains brief consumer advice, specific to the film or computer game that has been classified and designed to provide assistant information about the content. Examples of consumer advice may be: mild violence, moderate sex scenes, strong violence, frequent coarse language, etc.

II Media Literacy for Children, Young People, Adults and Media Educators

As is evident from the previous section, awareness-raising methods among parents is by no means a sufficient method to 'regulate' the media environment. We turn in this section to media literacy in and outside school. However, when talking about media literacy and media education, adults most often associate it with only children and young people – but media literacy is needed among parents, media educators, media professionals and other adults, as well.

This is supported by, among others, UNESCO that since long has worked for media education, media literacy and information literacy – and successively widened its scope.

For instance, in the early 80s, UNESCO published a book by Sirkka Minkkinen, titled *A General Curricular Model for Mass Media Education* (Paris, UNESCO, 1981). In this book, the Finnish author presents a model for mass media education programmes within secondary school curricula aiming at understanding and critical use of different media. The first part deals with 'mass media education' and its relationship to 'film education' (which in several countries had been on the agenda for decades), as well as reasons for the importance of mass media education and for connections between media education and general education in schools. The second part treats the goals of media education and teaching methods.

International symposium on education of the public in the use of mass media: problems, trends and prospects, 1982

In 1982, however, UNESCO supported an international symposium on media education in Grünwald, the Federal Republic of Germany. The participating experts said that government agencies, educational systems, community organisations and parents should not overlook the role of media in the process of personal and social development, as well as instruments for an individual's active participation as a citizen in society.

The outcome of the symposium was the 'Grünwald Declaration on Media Education'. Recommendations of the declaration include:

- Initiating and supporting comprehensive media education programs – from pre-school to university level, and in adult education – the purpose of which

is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will encourage the growth of critical awareness and, consequently, of greater competence among the users of electronic and print media.

- Developing training courses for teachers and intermediaries both to increase their knowledge and understanding of the media and train them in appropriate teaching methods, which would take into account the already considerable but fragmented acquaintance with media already possessed by many students.

- Stimulating research and development activities for the benefit of media education, from such domains as psychology, sociology, and communication science.

- Supporting and strengthening the actions undertaken or envisaged by UNESCO and which aim at encouraging international co-operation in media education.

New directions in media education, 1990

A next step was the international colloquy 'New Directions in Media Education', held in Toulouse, France, in July 1990 and organised by the British Film Institute (BFI), the Centre de Liaison de l'Enseignement et des Moyens d'Information (CLEMI), France, in association with UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and with the support of academic institutions. Above all representatives of advisory and administrative sectors of education, teachers, journalists and broadcasters from 45 countries attended this colloquy.

Themes discussed were, among others, the nature, location and support of media education; the role and influences of the media; media involvement in media education; the term 'literacy'; and the relationship between theory and practice as regards media education.

The Toulouse meeting helped many participants to realise that established definitions of media education needed radical revision in face of the changing media scenario, new communication research, and different cultural contexts. Alternative definitions were offered by participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The colloquy is documented in Cary Bazalgette, Evelyne Bevort & Josiane Savino (eds.) (1992) *New Directions. Media Education Worldwide*. London, BFI, CLEMI, UNESCO.

Educating for the media and the digital age, 1999

The Twenty-Ninth General Conference of UNESCO in adopting Draft Resolution 61, approved that, for its programme in 1998-1999, support for media education should be ensured through different modalities and actions.

In April 1999, the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in co-operation with UNESCO organised the international conference 'Educating for the Media and the Digital Age' in Vienna, Austria. Invited representatives – media educators, researchers, administrators, etc. – from 33 countries in all continents attended the conference. The meeting resulted in recommendations addressed to UNESCO (see the box). It must be underlined that the concept of 'media education' in these recommendations equals the concept of 'media literacy', something that is understood by the definition and principles in the document.

In brief, this definition and these principles signify that media education must deal with *all communication media*, should be aimed at empowering *all citizens*, and should be present in all possible contexts during *the whole life*. Furthermore, media education should enable people to gain *understanding of how* and for what reasons *the media act* and operate in society, and to learn to analyse and *critically reflect* upon media messages. Since these processes are, among other things, obtained by people's own media production, individuals and groups must gain, or demand, *access to media for own production*. They must acquire *skills in using the media* to communicate with others, and to communicate *their own messages or stories*. It is, namely, the case that everyone not only shall have the right to information but also the right to *freedom of expression*, to *participation in society* and to building and sustaining *democracy*. In this context, media education also has a critical role in, and should be responsive to *situations of social and political conflicts*, war, natural and ecological disasters, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressed to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO adopted by the Vienna Conference 'Educating for the Media and the Digital Age' 18-20 April 1999

General definition, principles and statements of policy
Media Education . . .
- deals with all communication media and includes the printed word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology;
- enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills in using these media to communicate with others;
- ensures that people learn how to
  - analyse, critically reflect upon and create media texts;
  - identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts;
  - interpret the messages and values offered by the media;

- select appropriate media for communicating their own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience;
- gain, or demand access to media for both reception and production.

Media Education is part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy. While recognizing the disparities in the nature and development of Media Education in different countries, the participants of the conference "Educating for the Media and the Digital Age" recommend that Media Education should be introduced wherever possible within national curricula as well as in tertiary, non-formal and lifelong education.

- Media Education addresses a wide range of texts in all media (print, still image, audio and moving image) which provide people with rich and diverse cultural experiences.

- In countries moving towards the introduction of new technologies, Media Education can assist citizens to recognise the potential of the media to represent/misrepresent their culture and traditions.

- In situations where access to electronic or digital technologies is limited or non existent, Media Education can be based on available media texts in that context.

- Media Education should be aimed at empowering all citizens in every society and should ensure that people with special needs and those socially and economically disadvantaged have access to it.

- Media Education also has a critical role to play in, and should be responsive to, situations of social and political conflicts, war, natural disaster, ecological catastrophe, etc.

In the light of these general definitions and statements of policy, the Participants of the Vienna Conference recommend that

1. UNESCO should facilitate several forms of research at local and international levels to address different aspects of Media Education, including:
- exploratory projects in locations that wish to introduce or to develop Media Education programmes
- comparative international studies
- rigorous evaluation to provide evidence about the efficacy of Media Education programmes and practices

2. UNESCO should facilitate cross-cultural evaluation of initial and in-service teacher training methods and programmes, and ensure the sharing of experience in their utilisation.

3. UNESCO should develop appropriate guidelines, based on ethical principles, that address corporate sponsorship of Media Education initiatives and programmes to ensure that the educational integrity of curricula, pedagogies and resources are not compromised

4. UNESCO should facilitate partnerships and finance to fulfil the recommendations of the Vienna Conference and help to design an action plan.

5. UNESCO should make better known the existing copyright conventions and should encourage the development of national and regional copyright instruments which take full account of the needs of Media Education and which provide that the right to copy audio-visual and digital media for educational purposes is no less than for print material.

6. To facilitate and co-ordinate all these actions, UNESCO should set up an international Clearing House for Media Education.

This Clearing House should collaborate with functioning national and international networks and organisations that deal with Media Education. It should stress co-operation among all experts and organisations dealing in a formal or informal way with Media Education. It should:

- share strategies, disseminate Media Education materials, promote and stress awareness of Media Education;
- be a permanent observatory for the development of Media Education;
- give special attention to wide dissemination in order to encourage equality in development of Media Education in all countries and languages.

The Clearing House should be set up as soon as possible to fulfil all the recommendations adopted during the Vienna Conference

The participants urgently recommend that UNESCO review its programme for Media Education and allocate the resources required to implement these Recommendations.

UNESCO and all the participants of the Vienna Conference should endeavour to transmit and disseminate these recommendations to the national representatives of UNESCO and other interested institutions.

Approved unanimously by the participants of the Vienna Conference in plenary session.

Vienna, April 20th 1999

Following the recommendations of the Vienna Conference, the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO in 1999 approved to integrate into its programmes of 2000 and 2001 activities concerning Media Education both in the field of the Communication and the Education Sector.

UNESCO seminar on youth media education, 2002

In the light of the previous above-mentioned – and other – conferences on media education and media literacy, UNESCO's Communication Development Division, Paris, started to more radically reorient its actions in this field. The fact that media education, media literacy, community participation, etc., in practice is locally anchored, and differ markedly over the world, implies that most successful for promoting the realisation of media education or media literacy will probably be strategies of *regional and*

decentralised sustained actions among researchers, practitioners, national regulatory authorities, media professionals, educationalists, etc., and networks between them.

Therefore in February 2002, UNESCO – together with the Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, Spain, the European Observatory on Children and Television, Spain, the University of London, U.K., and The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, Nordicom, Sweden – arranged a seminar in Seville, Spain, hosted by Andalusia Television and the International Association of Educational Televisions (AITED). Experts from fourteen countries were invited to formulate recommendations addressed to UNESCO on how to bring about media literacy programs through decentralized actions and synergies of relevant groups (Buckingham, Frau-Meigs, Tornero and Artigas 2002).

A range of regional activities

UNESCO's website now presents a range of regional media development activities in the information society. UNESCO helps to strenghten the capacities of communication institutions to improve the training of media professionals and to raise awareness among the public in making best use of communication resources.

Particular attention is given to

- training of media specialists, particularly *women journalists*, in developing countries
- strenghtening news agencies, *public service broadcasting* and *community media* in developing countries
- assisting media in improving the quality of their *local contents* by providing training, production and distribution opportunities
- training in *media literacy* for users, particularly children and youth.

UNESCO, through its Communication and Information Sector, is therefore actively assisting young people to produce information themselves by supporting *youth media*, by facilitating the creation of media education and of youth information and communication networks, and by providing appropriate technologies to youth organisations.

UNESCO further says: 'Indeed, *media education* for youth should be part of the basic entitlement of every citizen. While recognising the disparities in the nature and development of media education in different countries UNESCO is encouraging efforts to introduce media education wherever possible within national curricula as well as in tertiary, non-formal and lifelong education.

Another important initiative for UNESCO is *INFOYOUTH*, a worldwide information network of government authorities, relevant agencies and youth organizations on youth-related issues. The establishment of various information structures all over the world is a high priority, reflecting a key concern to secure better conditions with which young people can access information.

By collecting information concerning different youth activities and projects and providing training, these info-structures meet the constantly increasing needs of young people and youth NGOs for an increased access to information for education and development. INFOYOUTH also supports the global preventive effort against HIV/AIDS.'

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4625&URL_DO=DO_ TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Information literacy

Furthermore, UNESCO is to an increasing extent using the concept of 'information literacy'. The organisation says: 'Empowerment of people through Information Literacy is an important prerequisite for harnessing ICTs [information and communication technologies] for education and fostering equitable access to information and knowledge. Information literacy enhances the pursuit of knowledge by equipping individuals with the skills and abilities for critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives.

UNESCO's main strategy in the area of Information Literacy consists of awareness-raising about the importance of information literacy at all levels of the education process – basic education, primary and secondary education, technical and vocational training and lifelong education – and of establishing guidelines for integrating information literacy issues in curricula.

A particular focus will be on training teachers to sensitize them to the importance of information literacy in the education process to enable them to incorporate information literacy into their teaching and to provide them with appropriate pedagogical methods and curricula.

An essential element of the strategy is the integration of libraries into information literacy programmes as they provide resources and services in an environment that fosters free and open inquiry and serve as a catalyst for the interpretation, integration, and application of knowledge in all fields of learning.'

Source: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15886&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

1. Other International Meetings on Media Education

Three world meetings on media education, 1995-2000

In 1995, a 'World Meeting on Media Education' was held in La Coruña, Spain. As one result the World Council for Media Education (WCME; Consejo Mundial de Educación para los Medios) was created in 1996, an international forum of researchers, educators and non-governmental organisations committed to media education.

A Committee of WCME then organised the 'II. World Meeting on Media Education' and, in co-operation with the University of São Paulo, the 'International Congress on Communication and Education' in May 1998 in São Paulo, Brazil. More than 200 persons from 30 countries participated in the congress, besides some hundred Brazilian teachers and journalists invited by the city.

At the Summit 2000 in Toronto, Canada (see below), the WCME held its 'III. World Meeting on Media Education' and decided to sustain its work through an on-line component called the World Network for Media Education (WNME).

● Summit 2000

The probably biggest international event in media education ever, 'Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media – Beyond the Millennium', took place in Toronto, Canada, in May 2000. Summit 2000 was driven by the concerns and issues of children's media education in North America and was organised by The Alliance for Children and Television, Canada, The American Center for Children and Media, USA, The Association for Media Literacy, Ontario, Canada, and the Jesuit Communication Project, Canada. However, the event became an opportunity for those who create and distribute media television, film and new media for young people to meet with media educators from the whole world. The conference program consisted of three pillars:

- Media section – with topics such as: creative development, global business, social issues, changing technology, and research and education.
- Media education section – workshops, panels and papers on themes such as: marketing to youth audiences, media and multiculturalism, reading audiences, identity and cyberspace, debates in media education, television's representation of young people, etc.
- Academic section – with papers related to media and media education.

Some 1,400 participants from the media, media education, and the academic sectors and representing 55 different countries participated in plenary sessions and parallel seminars including nearly 250 presentations.

An overview of Summit 2000 is given in *Clipboard – A Media Education Newsletter from Canada*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, 2000, edited by John J. Pungente, SJ, Jesuit Communication Project, and also chairperson of the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO). Of special relevance from a researcher's view-point is the fact that almost thirty academic papers written for the Summit 2000 are available on CD.

● Two international forums of children and media researchers

The need for researchers active in the field of children and media to exchange theories, methods and findings also led to their first major international meeting ever – The International Forum of Children and Media Researchers, 'Youth and Media – Tomorrow'. This Forum was held in Paris in April 1997 and organised by a small network in France, GRREM (Group de Recherche sur la Relation Enfants/Médias; Research Group on the Relationship between Children and the Media). UNESCO undertook patronage of the Forum, which was supported by France Télévision and others, and attended by 350 participants, not only researchers but also teachers, media professionals and regulators from nearly 40 countries.

GRREM underlined the need to better understand – in light of information provided by researchers – what positive role the media might play in children's lives, and what children and young people are making of the media that surround them. Research presented related mainly to the daily themes: beyond media effects?; media and social concerns; the why and future of research; and media education, media literacy.

The Second International Forum of Children and Media Researchers, 'Young People and the Media – Tomorrow. Issues and Outlook', in November 2000 in Sydney, Australia, was hosted by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO with organisational support from the Australian Broadcasting Authority. This Second Forum of Children and Media Researchers promoted discussions on a diversity of research and policy issues in all areas of the media, including television, print, radio and the Internet. It also provided an occasion for dialogue and interaction between members of the research community and representatives of research user groups, such as regulators, producers and educators.

The Forum was attended by some 300 participants. Papers and posters focused on the main themes given in advance: youth production and consumption of media; globalisation and socialisation; policy and regulation of media for young people; and, interwoven with the these themes, approaches to research methodologies.

● EU media literacy activities

The European Commission has also been demonstrating a growing interest in media literacy. For example, media literacy is a subject that has been given priority in calls for proposals of the EU *e*Learning Programme launched in 2000. Projects considered

for funding have, among others, been those encouraging the production and distribution of media literacy related content, or intensifying networking around media education related issues. Several workshops and expert groups on media literacy have also been organised by the Commission, and a survey mapping the situation of media education and media literacy in the EU member states has been conducted.

One of many media literacy projects funded by EU has been Media-Educ, meaning, among other things, a conference organised by the British Film Institute's Education Department and taking place in Northern Ireland especially for media educators. The majority of delegates came from various kinds of regional and national initiatives, whether run by charities, local government, multi-agency consortia or universities, and from film institutes and government departments.

A majority of delegates expressed the strong need and desire for a media educators' network across Europe, for regular network events, for a forum to exchange best practice across Europe, for dialogue with a relevant EC department, for a coordinated European Media Education policy to reach official policy makers, and for the further development and sustainability of initiatives at a European level.

Another outcome of Media-Educ is The European Charter for Media Literacy to support the establishment of media literacy across Europe. By signing the Charter, organisations and individuals endorse a specific definition of media literacy, and commit to actions that will contribute to its development. The Charter, available on http://www.euromedialiteracy.eu, thus facilitates consensus and networking amongst those working for media literacy in different European countries. The website also offers a forum for discussion, and links, an archive and research listings. The aims of the Charter are

- to foster greater clarity and wider consensus in Europe on media literacy and media education

- to raise the public profile of media literacy and media education in each European nation, and in Europe as a whole

- to encourage the development of a permanent and voluntary network of media educators in Europe, bound together by their common aims, and enabled by their institutional commitment.

The European Charter for Media Literacy has been developed out of an initiative/idea of the U.K. Film Council and the British Film Institute by a Steering Group representing major institutions in a limited number of countries, who have each committed to ensuring support for Steering Group meeting costs for an initial three year period (2005-2008).

Another example of a media literacy project funded by EC is Mediappro – a comparable project in Europe and North America about the way young people (12-18) appropriate the new media in network, including new portable audio-scripto-visual media (mobile phone, Internet, video games, multimedia supports). The findings will be presented in June 2006.

Mediappro tends to contribute to a safer use of the Internet and the new portable audio-scripto-visual technologies. Its final aim is to identify relevant pedagogical orientations to help persons from the educational field (teachers, educators, parents) to develop educational practices to make young people responsible, autonomous and aware about the Internet.

2. On the Local Level

All over the world there are countless organisations, associations and networks dedicated to media education and media literacy for children, young people, teachers in school and other media educators outside school in informal settings. Many of the organisations and networks offer advice, lessons and facts and arrange conferences and seminars. (On the Clearinghouse website, we have collected a database of some 250 organisations and networks over the world engaged in children, young people and media, and many of them focus on media education/media literacy (see http:// www.nordicom. gu.se/clearinghouse.php). In some countries media education and media literacy initiatives are initiated or supported by the state – but much more often they are run by voluntary organisations or grass-roots movements both in and outside school. It is, naturally, impossible to give an overview of the progress of media literacy across the world on this local level.

Media literacy in practice

Considering media literacy in practice – how is it realised after all? On the one hand, there are many positive reports on case studies. Here are a few different examples, of which some are supported by research:

Canada

● **Media education a compulsory subject**

Canada is often considered the country in which media literacy is most developed. In 1999, media education became a compulsory subject in Canadian schools. Before that, teachers had been networking and establishing teachers' associations for media education; they also arranged conferences, and exerted pressure on the authorities. 1989, ten years earlier, was a milestone in the Canadian teachers' struggle to include media education in the curriculum, since their book *Media Literacy Resource Guide* (Duncan 1989) was accepted and released by the Ministry of Education of Ontario, one of Canada's provinces. This book includes numerous tips about how to practise media education in the classroom.

Other provinces in the country made similar documents. As a base the resource guide explains eight key concepts that teachers and students should focus on. These key concepts have inspired many other countries, as well:

1. All media are constructions
2. The media construct reality
3. Audiences negotiate meaning in media
4. Media have commercial implications

5. Media contain ideological and value messages

6. Media have social and political implications

7. Form and content are closely related in the media

8. Each medium has unique aesthetic forms

Many other resources have been made available for Canadian teachers, such as *Scanning Television* (Hartcourt Brace, Canada 1997) consisting of forty short videos, mostly documentary, that were culled by teachers from over a hundred items and copyright cleared for classroom use. The collection was designed mostly for secondary classrooms, and deals with all of the eight key concepts. There is also a teachers' guide to the videos. Another boon has been *Cable in the Classroom* beginning in 1995 and founded by the cable operators and programmers to provide from all their shows some that are for educational use. An ongoing concern about media violence gave rise to a Metro Toronto School Board publication, *Responding to Media Violence* (Andersen, Duncan and Pungente 1999).

● Media education and at-risk adolescents

A more specific Canadian project is The Alternative Career Education (ACE) Program (Rother 2000) assisting at-risk students (16-19 years of age), who struggle with conventional educational approaches. The ACE Program is a student-centered, multi-media/technology learning environment. The ACE curriculum includes learning about the mass media and the technologies associated with it, reading/analysing and studying popular culture texts, having students write/produce their own media texts, and making connections between the English Language Arts and Media Education. Media texts are here referring to print texts, such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, as well as non-print texts, such as videos, television and radio commercials.

The ACE students are physically and socially indistinguishable from typical high school students – but their reading levels are low and their negative experiences in the school, and at home, have left many students 'turned off' to schooling.

Rother's methodology was a single case, classroom based action research design, focusing on the ACE Program and the ACE students, from 1991 to 1997. The results demonstrated that the ACE students

*   read media texts with considerable sophistication. They were not only able to read/analyse the literal denotative aspects of texts, but were also able to interpret the connotative level;

*   were able to identify ideologies in a text and relate them to their own experiences;

*   acquired and used specific aspects of media languages and concepts in their writings and productions;

*   were more willing to undertake the kind of school writing they are expected to do, using media texts as a source for their writing;

*   demonstrated a critical, reflective stance, revealing insights about themselves as individuals and learners.

The conclusion of the study is that the ACE students are literate, and that traditional practices of literacy education have prevented adults from acknowledging their literacy. Schooling's notion of literacy which uses de-contextualized print texts as the only data source to determine the ACE students' literacy reflects a model of literacy that is outdated and inadequate.

USA

● A media literacy curriculum on media violence

Many of the Washington State's media literacy initiatives in the U.S. have not been directly orchestrated by the state but overseen by a media literacy advocacy organisation, the Teen Futures Media Network (http://www.teenhealthandthemedia.org). In 1998, this organisation with support of the State undertook a four-year project to develop a media literacy curriculum to be presented in the Seattle public schools. The curriculum was designed to address the issue of media and violence. The curricular design involved six lessons: 1) defining violence, 2) examining why people watch media violence, 3) deconstructing media, 4) deconstructing media violence, 5) examining conflict resolution, and 6) developing violence prevention recommendations for a middle or high school. As part of the curriculum's design, the Teen Futures Media Network held annual instructional sessions before the start of each year for the middle and high school teachers who would be using the curriculum.

In addition to presenting this curriculum to nearly four thousand students in the Seattle Public School System during a four-year period, an evaluation team (Lisosky, Cohen and Sager 2002, 2003) assessed the effectiveness of the lessons among the student participants and the faculty instructors using both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The evaluation team gathered data from pre- and post-tests distributed to the students who participated in this media literacy instruction. These data annually revealed that after completing the unit, the students' definition of the term 'violence' had broadened in scope, and their ability to critique violent media messages in their environment had grown. Significant gains were also found in the students' knowledge of media strategies used to capture an audience's attention and in their knowledge of how to use media themselves to prevent violence around their home and school. Remarkably, a control group of students surveyed in year four exhibited no significant changes in these outcome measures.

To augment the survey data, nearly one hundred student participants and a dozen faculty instructors were interviewed to assess their opinions of the media and violence curriculum. Through these interviews it was revealed that the unit on violence and media significantly influenced students who participated.

● Less television, less aggression

The objective of a U.S. field experiment (Robinson et al. 2001) was to assess the effects of general reduction of children's television, video films, and video game use on

aggressive behavior, as well as on children's perceptions of the world as mean and scary. Before the study, the children (mean age 8.9 years) used these media combined about 3 hours and 20 minutes a day on average.

105 third and fourth graders in one public elementary school received an 18-lesson, 6-month classroom curriculum during 1999-2000 with tips and advice on how to reduce the media use in question. At the end of the period, they used the three media on average 2 hours a day.

Compared to 120 children in a socio-demographically and scholastically matched elementary school who did not receive this intervention and used the media as usual, aggression among the 'test children' significantly decreased as measured by 'peer ratings of aggression' and 'observed verbal aggression on the playground'. ('Observed physical aggression on the playground' and 'parental reports of aggressive behavior' gave no statistically significant differences although they pointed in the same direction. The same was true of children's self-reported perceptions of the world as mean and scary.)

● Active mediation reduced aggression-proneness after a cartoon

An experiment (Nathanson and Cantor 2000) found that talking to children ('active mediation') reduced aggression-proneness after a cartoon. The two researchers performed the study with 351 second through sixth graders in different U.S. schools. Before viewing a 5 minutes' episode of the cartoon *Woody Woodpecker*, one group of children (of three) were encouraged to think about the consequences of violence from the victim's perspective, i.e., these children's 'fictional involvement' with the victim was increased. In the episode, Woody Woodpecker is annoyed, because a well-intentioned man, a 'tree medic', has interrupted his nap. Woody spends the episode trying to get rid of the man by committing various violent acts against him. The episode ends when Woody knocks the man unconscious and then happily returns to his nap.

The findings were statistically significant. The boys, even the oldest ones, who watched this unrealistic cartoon without the mediation were more aggression-prone after viewing. However, the boys who received the mediation did not show an increase in aggressive tendencies. Neither the cartoon nor the mediation affected the girls' aggression-proneness.

Some likely explanations, supported by the children's answers, are that children who received the mediation perceived the violence inflicted on the victim to be less justified. Rather than identifying with the more attractively portrayed and humorous perpetrator of violence (conditions that, according to previous research, encourage viewers' aggression), these children viewed the violence differently. And although the actual consequences of violence for the victim were not shown (research indicates that depiction of the negative consequences of televised violence inhibits aggressive responses), these children could imagine such consequences.

Japan

● **Media literacy for Japanese third graders**

Komaya and Muto (2002) at Ochanomizu University in Japan created media literacy educational materials to help elementary school teachers new to this area to introduce lessons to third graders. The material, *Ukkie Has Fun Exploring TV*, consists of two parts, 'Exploration 1: The media and the creation of fashion through commercials and character goods' and 'Exploration 2: Reality and fantasy on TV including the issue of violence', each consisting of a 30-minute introductory teaching video, a teacher's guidebook, a 14-minute classroom video, and children's activity sheets.

Using this material, the researchers implemented a short introductory media literacy curriculum for first and third graders (6-7 and 8-9 years of age) focusing on 'Exploration 1'. It has two building blocks: (1) to help children learn about, and gain a greater understanding of, both the process of construction and the business intentions behind making TV commercials and character goods, (2) to create an opportunity for active participation as creators of the media.

The effectiveness of the materials was verified with a pretest and a posttest in a piece of quasi-experimental research: Three classes in the first and third grades were divided into two experimental groups and one control group. Before beginning, teachers in all groups attended a four-hour orientation on the project. The children in Experimental Group 1 were given a treatment of four hours of media literacy lessons using all material. The children in Experimental Group 2 were given a short treatment, only watching the classroom video. As a control, the final class had no treatment at all.

The 'Commercials test' consisted of five categories, including the concept of commercialism, specific qualities of commercials, the purpose of making commercials and character goods, and existence of sponsors.

The findings showed that the majority of first and third graders enjoyed the lessons and classroom video much. Understanding of commercials increased significantly although many children felt the lessons were difficult. Moreover, especially the third graders came to pay attention to TV commercials, as well as those in printed media such as flyers or newspaper advertisements, and to compare goods with commercial images at supermarkets. The children wanted to make and study more commercials by themselves. In sum, the project showed that especially third grade children developed the ability to read and comprehend the media subjectively and critically.

Argentina

● **A national media education program**

The National Ministry of Education in Argentina created in 2003-2004 a national Media Education Program to coordinate various initiatives between the media and the schools across the country. The program has the media industry as its main partners and coordinates several different projects. The main goal is to consider the students as cultural producers who know how to read different texts (media contents) and, certainly, how to produce them.

The project 'The School Goes to the Cinema' allows 10,000 secondary school students (13 and 14 years old) across the country from very poor neighborhoods to go to the cinema, during school hours, to see three Argentine films per year. After the film, the director, writer, actors and other professionals who took part in the film production talk with the students about the way the film was made. For most of the students it is their first time in front of the big screen.

The project 'The School Makes Television' invites all 11- and 12-year-old primary students in urban schools to write a fictional story about a certain subject. Six stories from the entire country (one per region) are then produced as 'advertisements' and shown on all Argentine TV channels for a month. In order to produce a story, a student needs to investigate, learn about publicity (be critical), conduct research on the issue and write the story.

'Moments of Radio' invites primary schools in rural areas to write a story on 'Legends and characters in my town'. Twenty-three stories (one per province) are chosen and broadcast on all AM and FM radio stations in the country for a month on radio shows with the highest audience ratings. The project connects rural students with their roots and the elderly in their towns, and displays the value of their culture and traditions for the rest of the country (mostly the urban population, which ignores rural areas).

'Journalists for a Day' invites all 16- and 17-year-old secondary students to write an in-depth report on a subject that interests them. A jury consisting of editors of all newspapers chooses some 70 reports from across the country. The first Sunday in December, the newspapers publish on a full page a report written by the students. In order to write their report, students read newspapers and professional reports, investigate the social problems affecting their own lives – and write.

It is hoped that students through this media education program already from primary school, will learn that they have a voice, that they will be able to study how the media function, and learn how to use them. And the entire Argentine society, no matter where one lives, will be able to watch a TV campaign written by small children, listen to rural traditions on the radio selected and expressed by rural children who do not normally have a voice in the public sphere, and read about what affects, worries and interests the country's youths.

Sources: Morduchowicz (2004) and http://mailman.me.gov.ar/escuelaymedios

Sweden

● **Learning by making media**

A Swedish research project (Danielsson 2002) dealt with children's creation of videos and other media at school. The theoretical base of the project included experiences from aesthetic praxis, as well as children's reception and perception of images. Creativity, language and communication were key concepts.

Empirically, the project consisted of three qualitative and ethnographic studies: The first concerned pupils making videos in four schools during one term in two Stockholm suburbs, characterized by a culturally diverse population. Half were high school seniors (13-15/16 years old), and half were elementary school students in first to third grades

(7-9/10 years old). The second study was part of a broader national two-year investigation of 40 schools participating in developmental work on images and media. The third study was based on eleven seminars for teachers and media pedagogues in different parts of the country during one year.

Among other findings, the pupils' media productions show 1) the importance of creativity and its functions in an aesthetic process, 2) how children of different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds provide a rich variation of media messages, and 3) that communication can grow via the process of creating a video or in the product itself. Examples: Children and young people willingly tell about themselves and their own realities if allowed to choose subjects themselves. Especially the students in the culturally diverse school environments pointed out that they had learned more of the Swedish language and of co-operation through the video production process. Girls' activity could increase dramatically when the more technically experienced boys were not nearby and the media pedagogue discreetly stepped aside. Important for all children were the feeling of being taken seriously, having responsibility of one's own, *daring*, and strengthened self-esteem.

The project also underlines the necessity of more media literacy in teacher training colleges and in teachers' continuing training, so that the adults can be better prepared to meet their students through media education.

South Africa

● Soap operas for education and social change

The functionality of media in tackling social ills and motivating young people is what is aimed at in many countries in particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America, where producers use the format of radio and TV drama, soap operas, *telenovelas*, docu-soaps and other entertaining genres for *education*, that is, in order to raise debate and con- tribute to solving health and other problems in society. Within primarily non-formal education, the use of entertainment-education (EE) in an integrated manner and of- ten in the form of multimedia initiatives has been growing significantly over the past decade, not least addressing health-related issues such as HIV/AIDS. The ideal com- municative scenario in this respect is 'communication for social change', i.e., to deal with the challenge of providing an information and dialogue-rich enabling environment where the media contents contribute to empowering the audiences in facing health- related and other social issues and fighting them in everyday life.

One of hundreds of such programs is the youth-oriented South African drama se- ries *Yizo Yizo* with extremely high audience ratings – aiming at reflecting reality (ordi- nary black South Africans living in townships) rudely and toughly (portraying children's experiences of formal schooling, including violence, sexual harassment and rape, and drug abuse). The series is commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corpora- tion's Education Television. Research indicates that the aim of the series at revealing the depth and complexity of social crises, and at raising debate and action in society, succeeded to a great extent (Gultig 2004).

3. Media Literacy for Media Educators

Although strong voices from many places in the world are heard urging for media education and media literacy, and although there are successful examples, the practical realisation of media education/media literacy has not gone on fairly well in most countries as a whole. This is the case regarding media education in school. The same is valid for media literacy in the wider sense. Information about children, young people and the media to adults and the process of making all citizens media literate have not found effective forms.

Thus, we can conclude that there are – internationally and in many countries – principles and statements on paper confirming that media education and media literacy are essential. There are also bright spots in practice – but they are shining in isolation. In most cases and nations, media education or media literacy is leading a languishing life in practice, mostly relying on grass-roots movements and single enthusiasts.

There is also a strong claim for more research, evaluations and assessments. Even if some research studies showing that students have learnt what they have been taught, we know very little about the long term consequences of media literacy education. Are they lasting? Is the level of media literacy generally raised?

Obstacles to media education

There are many factors preventing media education and media literacy. Even if also these factors differ between countries and regions in the world, some recurrent ones are the following:

Media literacy may be hampered by *the media themselves*. This can manifest itself in, for instance, difficulties in copying and clearing copyrights of audio-visual material for educational use – especially if the goals of media education are to teach students and ordinary people critical media thinking and democratic participation. Another example is that it can be difficult to persuade the established media to broadcast successful programmes made by ordinary children, young people and adults. The media may argue that such programmes do not fit into the schedule, or that the ordinary audience lacks interest in programmes made by non-professionals.

There is also in many countries a *lack of genuine political will and support*, on the national or local level. If there is media education at all, it is mostly initiated by a solitary fiery spirits. This is in itself an advantage, as media education must be rooted in the needs of children, young people and the local community, but the movement also has to be supported, be integrated into a general media policy. Solitary fiery spirits may at last be burnt out.

A third complex of factors preventing media education is *the media educators' situation. Training of teachers* in media education is mostly lacking or insufficient, or, if it exists, it is almost always implemented as an optional area in teacher training colleges and not as a compulsory element. This is related to the fact that in most countries,

where media education is supposed to be taught in school, media education is not a subject of its own but shall, according to the curricula, be integrated in other 'mother disciplines'. Moreover media literacy for young people is almost solely implemented in secondary education, although it would be at least as pertinent to younger children. Actually, the most urgent need identified for better media education in school in an international survey performed by David Buckingham and Kate Domaille (2004) is in-depth teacher training.

One consequence for media educators is, mostly, low status of, and no one really responsible for, *the subject*. (This is in contrast to the high status of the more techni-cal learning how to handle computers and the Internet.) Other consequences are *lack of teaching resources* and difficulties in formulating and assessing *goals* for media education.

This might be further complicated by *the kind of education system* – one must bear in mind that the education system is different in different countries, sometimes being centralised, sometimes decentralised; sometimes public, sometimes private; some-times controlled, sometimes not.

If looking upon media education as something limited to school, we must also re-member that *some children in the world never attend school* and of those who do, many do not reach grade five, and many more never go to secondary school.

In several countries projects of 'media education', 'media literacy/media competence', 'education for communication' and 'communication for social change' are, actually, happening outside school, often led by voluntary organisations and/or in the forms of local youth and community-based projects. When talking about media education globally, it is therefore, as mentioned, necessary to widen the scope and *include all kinds of non-formal contexts*, as well.

Furthermore, teachers in school – or other media educators – often lack *interdisci-plinary, national and international networks* which facilitate conferences and newsletters providing input from various directions – tips about new pedagogic methods, books, audio-visual material, and so on. To be prosperous, media education also has to be based on a continuous *co-operation with groups other than teachers,* for example, parents, researchers, media practitioners and viewer action groups, something that seldom is the case. Moreover, teachers and media ecudators themselves often belong to the *middle class*, which means that they are striving for other kinds of symbolic capital than those conveyed by popular media and which most of their students use.

All these – and other – hindering factors often contribute to confusion on part of the teachers and others with interest in media education, and, consequently, a *peda-gogy of media education not thoroughly thought out*.

The conclusion is that if media literacy shall be realised and successful in and out-side school, teachers' and other adults' training must be implemented and improved, and school leaders' and politicians' awareness of the need for media education must be raised.

Media literacy for media educators are of utmost concern.

Pedagogy

The multidisciplinary nature of media education or media literacy, and the lack of clear goals and assessments, lead, thus, often to the fact that its pedagogy rests on different and obscure grounds, creating confusion. Let us give two concrete examples:

● Russian teachers and media education

Are Russian teachers ready for the implementation of media education? What is their general attitude regarding media education in school and at university? What objectives of media education are most important to them? To what extent do they use elements of media education in their teaching?

The answers of 57 teachers at secondary schools in Taganrog, Russia (Fedorov 2005) showed that three quarters of the teachers support the idea of media education in school, and that more than half feel the need for the introduction of a new major – Media Education – at pedagogical institutes of higher learning. Most of the teachers surveyed also believe that a combination of autonomous and integrated media lessons is the most effective way to develop media education in Russia and thus increase media literacy in the young generation.

However, despite the fact that the majority of the teachers in the study felt that developing the audience's critical thinking is one of the most important aims of media education, the same teachers place great stress on the value of a 'protectionist' approach. They undervalue goals to develop democratic thinking among pupils and increase students' knowledge about theory and history of media and media culture.

Moreover, despite most of the teachers' general support of media education (in theory), only one-third of them actually use elements of media education in their lessons.

According to the teachers surveyed, the greatest obstacle on the path to media education in the Russian classrooms is the absence of financial motivation. However, the researcher asserts that important factors also include the passive anticipation of the authority's directives and the insufficient level of knowledge among today's Russian teachers in terms of theory and methods of media education.

● Computer use in school – conflicting views among young children and teachers in Sweden?

In a Swedish research project on children and new information and communication technology (ICT) (Hernwall 2003) the author questions whether Swedish teachers have learned how to integrate computer use into young children's schoolwork. The study presents qualitative data on computer use among four school classes in Sweden – in grades 2-3 (ca. 8-9 years of age) and grade 6 (ca. 12 years of age). The author found that these children experienced the computer as offering them many uses: games, writing, surfing on the Internet, chatting, e-mail use, creating home pages, etc. – all children seemed to be able to find a use that appealed to them. Generally, especially

the 8 to 9-year-olds had an obvious interest in e-communication – that is, they mentioned primarily social interaction on the Internet when discussing their computer use. This e-communication gave them the opportunity to keep in contact with other children, find new friends (generally or in a more simple, interesting and different way), test different roles, check out which behaviour is acceptable and which is not, exchange experiences, and so on. Communicating and acting in the different arenas of the Internet thus also contribute to children's ongoing identity formation, the researcher says.

However, the children in the study were hesitant about the functions of the computer as regards schoolwork and felt that fewer – rather than more – computers are needed in school. The children found it difficult to imagine the 'useful' computer, and regarded it more as something fun that has to do with things other than usual schoolwork, or something that constitutes a 'space between' school and leisure. All four classes had computers at their schools, but the children perceived the value of the computers and ICT at school as 'limited'; the computer brought the opposition of work and amusement to the fore.

In sum, the researcher underlines that it is not possible to introduce computers in school unless pedagogical practice is well planned. The Internet, which teachers often regard as a basis of knowledge where the students can collect knowledge to critically scrutinize and treat, is instead viewed by young children (at least the 8 to 12-year-olds studied) as a space in which to participate in a dialogue – a social forum. (Other studies indicate that older students, naturally, place more stress on the usefulness of computers for schoolwork.) According to the study, a fruitful pedagogy should start from the children's – the agents' – perspective and should not seek to incorporate Internet use within the frame of an adult idea of how school ought to be.

Sometimes, and in some countries more than others, the claims for media education or media literacy are of a *protective* nature – e.g., to protect the audience against undesired influences of prejudices, stereotypes, violent images, etc., in the media contents. This is what Masterman (1985) referred to as the inoculationist approach.

Sometimes, and more and more often in an increasingly number of countries, the claims for media education are instead of a *participatory* nature – e.g., to teach and *empower* children in school and other population groups to use the audiovisual media, as well as computers and the Internet, for communication and participation.

Often – but not in all countries – one central aim of media education, both when it is of a protective and when it is of a participatory nature, is that it shall lead to *critical thinking and reflection*.

We will touch somewhat more on these basic lines within media literacy pedagogy in the next section, 'Children's and Young People's Own Media Production'.

III Children's and Young People's Own Media Production

Nowadays many websites, as well as voluntary and formal organisations, are offering children and young people advice or lessons about how to produce media content – making a short film, setting up a website, etc. There are also several school networks where classes exchange experience online or send 'video letters' about their experiences to other classes in the same or other countries. Moreover, there are quite a number of festivals and awards for short films, videos and websites made by children and young people.

However, there is less research about the *consequences* of children's and young people's own media production, both in the short and, especially, in the long run. During the latest years, much research in richer countries has focused on children's creativity online – in chat rooms, communities, when making blogs, setting up websites, editing digital pictures, etc. Often, this research concludes that young people's or certain groups' Internet creativity plays a role for their identity seeking and identity construction, self-expression, and social communication with peers in different regards. More recently, children's and young people's mobile telephony has been included in the studies. In addition, there is current research (by David Buckingham and Andrew Burn, see http://www.childrenyouthandmediacentre.co.uk) developing a prototype, which will enable young people to create their own adventure and role-playing games.

Even less research seems to have analysed the consequences of children's and young people's production of contents for traditional media – print media, radio, television, film, etc. Scattered studies performed in school settings show that such media work may lead to a better understanding of how media works – but there are also studies indicating that certain media production can be problematic, because of, among other things, lack of appropriate equipment, lack of time, or lack of motivation among children to communicate with people they do not know in projects designed by adults (Ai-Leen 1999, de Block et al., 2004).

This may also have to do with the fact that the pedagogic approach is not well thought-out. Experiences of media education and media literacy initiatives among children tend to show that media education often fails if it only seeks to get the audience dissociate itself from bad TV programmes and other media contents, that is, media education often fails if it attempts to 'vaccinate' or 'inoculate' students or viewers. Neither will that media education succeed very well, which only trains students in critical analyses of various programmes and other

media content, because this procedure becomes too abstract for many students. Instead, that media education stands a good chance of succeeding that sandwiches critical analysis and students' own production, a production – and this is important – that at the same time emanates from the young people's own pleasure and motivation. The first times students make, for instance, video films, they often imitate popular products. However, if students are allowed to make more films in the long run, the production process in itself will instead lead to choice of other topics and formats, and to reflection and critique.

The Danish media researcher and pedagogue Birgitte Tufte (1995) has worked out a useful zigzag model based on such reasoning and which consists of three stages:

- to critically analyse professional TV programmes, films, or other media contents

- to produce video films, or other media contents oneself; and

- to critically analyse one's own production together with other people.

And then the model begins all over again.

Evidence that this kind of zigzag media education with great emphasis on children's and young people's own participation in media production – i.e., learning by doing – often is increasing media literacy and understanding of how the media function is found in several sources. The Clearinghouse has collected in yearbooks (e.g., von Feilitzen and Carlsson 1999, von Feilitzen and Bucht 2001) and in several newsletters more than fifty practical examples of 'media by children', presented by teachers, single media professionals, researchers and organisations all over the world. The examples have different backgrounds and aims and represent projects both inside but more often outside school. They also apply to different media – TV, video, film, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines, photography, books, CDs, and others. Here one finds, for example, Swedish children making animated films; Austrian children formulating a declaration of what good television is for them; Japanese children sending video letters in English to school classes in other countries; children in Ghana and Spain making radio programmes; Indian working children regularly producing a wall paper on the rights of working children; Australian children making own music and recording it on CDs, as well as writing short stories for a book collection; children and young people producing on the Internet; and much much more.

These examples are what one usually calls 'best practices' of children's and young people's media production – where the media professionals, researchers, teachers, voluntary organisations, etc., have observed positive consequences either through practical experience or, in a few cases, by means of more strict evaluations or research.

Taken together these over fifty best practices show interesting consequences:

- *Pride, power, self-esteem*
  The examples clearly show that children through their creative media participation have become empowered – that the participation has *strengthened their pride, sense of power, and self-esteem* since they have felt that their voices are worth listening to, that they belong to their community, that they have achieved an understanding of others and of their own culture.

- *Wish to meet everyday dreams and local reality in the media – cultural identity*
  Certain examples show – as do children's explicitly expressed viewpoints about what they want to see, hear and read about in the media – that children often wish to meet their *own everyday dreams and their own local, social and ethnic culture and reality* in the media. This means that children strengthen their *own cultural identity*.

- *Critical understanding and increased media competence*
  Moreover, the examples support the thesis that many of the goals set up by media education are realised through children's participation in the media: participation in 'real' media strengthens children's ability and curiosity, gives them *a critical understanding of the media,* and *increases their media competence*.

- *Greater social justice with audio-visual media*
  Some examples also demonstrate that children's participation in especially *audio-visual media* production is particularly suitable for children who otherwise do not manage well in the traditional school with its print-based culture, which is why media production in itself brings about *greater social justice*.

- *Interest in society, steps towards increased democracy*
  Several examples also show that children's participation in the media bridges the gap between media use, on one hand, and children's participation in their community, on the other, something which, in turn, has had further consequences: When the media participation has been something real for them (on terms not only directed or controlled by adults), the media participation has led to *knowledge of and interest in the local community* and *inspired collective action*, or the children have been able to use the media in order to *improve their situation in the community*. With that some progress towards more worthy media representations of children, as well as towards *increased democracy*, could be made.

These consequences are especially noticeable if the own media production has been included in a 'real' context, that is real radio programmes, video films, magazines, web sites, etc., *that have a real child and/or adult audience*. The examples also show that *project success requires that adults* not only listen to children but also *participate with the children and young people in equal partnership*, a partnership where all involved are experts.

Increased participation in the media by children and youth may, thus – besides counteracting the clear underrepresentation of children in the media contents – contribute to realising children's right to freedom of expression and children's right to participate in media and in society. At the same time, children will – at least to some extent – be protected against offensive and potentially harmful media contents, since they through their media participation will develop a critical thinking towards the media.

It is important to underline again that not all attempts at own media production are successful – they require, as mentioned, the participating children's pleasure and motivation, as well as time, adult support and certain resources.

1. Two Examples of Best Practices

This section reproduces two brief articles from *News from ICCVOS*, No. 1, 2004, about children's and young people's own media production, where the consequences of their taking part in the media production are described.

Children's Media Production in Lanalhue, Chile

In the rural areas of Chile, children between the ages of 6 and 14 study in public boarding schools far away from their parents. One of these schools is in Lanalhue, which means 'lost soul' in the native language, situated 700 kilometers south of the capital of Santiago. The 90 pupils come from farmer families of extreme poverty. Seventy per cent of them descend from the native population. During the weekends, the pupils return back home and work in agricultural farming. Many of them have to walk an hour or more to get to school. The closest city is situated 16 kilometers away, but the children do not have resources to travel to the city.

In the face of the school's isolation and insufficient infrastructure, broadcast television and radio are the main ways of contact with the outside world. We went there with the purpose to teach the children to be radio reporters and to produce their own news about their school and community.[1]

Children as protagonists in the production process

The pupils did not have any experience of media education, media literacy or education in communication via media (von Feilitzen 2002).[2] Despite the educational reform that the government carried out in the 90s, a high correlation still persists between schools of extreme poverty and lack of education in media and technologies. In this case, the teachers needed support in learning how to use radio equipment. To help them, a method of teach-and-learn was designed.

The method solved the education problem of the teachers through the use of the children as protagonists in the process of radio production. The implied presumption is that media are a tool in the service of the basic human communication needs between persons and their surroundings in accordance with their own experiences, problems and interests. It implies acknowledgement of the significance of community and culture in each situation that is to be investigated. As communication educators we are more concerned with teaching the children to be protagonists in the whole communi-

cation process than focusing on the medium itself. Therefore the work centered on the children's active learning in being reporters.

Results

Educating the children to be reporters entails that we use the radio as a pretext to develop better skills in thinking in such areas as communication, expression, discussion, analysis of reality, selection and reproduction of events that are enduring and independent of the chosen medium. During the three days the project lasted, the children produced 33 minutes of news-broadcast on their own. They were able to define what news is, to report news items, to edit and finally also to record them.

To achieve this we organized different workshops for training: 'The Ear', to develop the ability of monitoring; 'Components of the Radio', to handle the language of broadcasting; 'Expression', where the children learned how to breath and to announce; and, finally, 'Interview', to handle the recorder, to interview and to relate histories through the radio. Through teamwork and by assuming the real roles in a process of production the children had a meeting to discuss the important events in the area and to select the subjects for the programme. Then the children went out in the district to make reports: they made manuscripts, edited and recorded the news. The news was broadcast at school. The news was also transmitted to the whole rural district thanks to the radio station in the closest city, which became interested in transmitting the programme. The children walked all the way to the professional broadcasting studio to present it to the local community.

Impacts of the children's experiences

The first emotionally moving indicator is the children's happiness, pleasure and satisfaction while learning. Even though the working day started early in the morning they insisted on working until eight o'clock in the evening.

We threw ourselves out in the adventure of being reporters, they said.

When they understood that messages represent the reality in which they live they came to appreciate teamwork and expressed that they felt responsible and important. They articulated expressions, such as:

I never thought that I would be capable of producing a programme.

I've never felt intelligent before.

Another consequence is that the children developed a sense of utility in relation to their own community. They became conscious that even though they live in poverty, their surroundings are full of information and histories. They became aware of the necessity to document their daily life. This strengthens their identity:

We discovered that our grandparents had to work with farming because they didn't have the opportunity to study. Those who were able to study didn't use uniform and went barefooted to school during the winter.

This experience also allowed the children to open up a door to the future as they dream of being reporters as grown-ups. Perhaps the words of Magdalena 11 years old express the common feeling of what this experience meant for the pupils:

Child radio reporters in
Lanalhue.
Photo: José Antonio Soto

*It's unbelievable to feel like a reporter, because it allows us to see more than our
own square meter.[3]*

The method especially designed for this project[4] has been acknowledged in different
seminars and has been replicated by other universities in Chile because of its innova-
tive focus on pupils' media production.[5] To our country this method seems relevant,
but we also need to promote other learning processes for children.

by Rayén Condeza

Journalist, Master in Instruction Design, Lecturer in the
Master Program in Communication and Education
Institute of Media studies, Faculty of Communications
The Catholic University of Chile
Santiago de Chile, Chile
E-mail: rcondeza@puc.cl
Web page: http://www.puc.cl/fcom

Notes

1. Part of the Catholic University mission is to contribute professionally to areas of great social
   need in the country. The project was carried out in July, 2002.
2. von Feilitzen, Cecilia (2002) Aprender haciendo: reflexiones sobre la educación y los medios
   de comunicación, *Revista Comunicar* 18, 2002, ISSN: 1134-3478, pp. 21-26.
3. A documentary for television was made based on the experience of the project. It shows the
   children in their learning process. The documentary was awarded an honourable mention at
   the 'Festival de Video Educativo de Chile, Videas 2002'. It has also been broadcast on television.
4. Condeza, Rayén (2002) 'Producir para los medios: niños y niñas protagonistas y su relación
   con el desarrollo de habilidades afectivas y de pensamiento de calidad. Hacia una metodología
   de intervención educativa'. A document written on account of the seminar 'Radio, Ciudad y
   Educación' (Radio, City and Education), Santiago de Chile, August 2002, 10 pp. Institute of
   Media Studies, The Catholic University of Chile.
5. It can be added that this project, among others, was selected (out of 400 proposals) for
   exposition at the World Panorama Session at the 4th World Summit on Children for Media and
   Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro, April 19-23, 2004. One of the adolescents participating in the
   Lanalhue project was also the only Chilean young person taking part in the Adolescents Fo-
   rum at the Summit.

The Young Web of Citizenship in Brazil

The Young Web of Citizenship is a net of information, culture and citizenship that connects young people in the nine administrative regions of the city of Belo Horizonte in Brazil. Based on a program in which adolescents aged 13 to 22 years develop abilities related to participation and communal mobilisation, the net promotes participation in and production of media.

The net benefits hitherto approximately 250 cultural groups and social institutions that develop socio-cultural products directed at young people in the city. These productions are coordinated by adolescents themselves with permanent support of a team of professionals. The weaving process has also mobilised more than 5,000 young people from communities spread across Belo Horizonte. Moreover, the information produced and transmitted via the media reaches more than 100,000 viewers, listeners, readers and Internet users of different ages and social conditions.

The Young Web of Citizenship is managed by a non-governmental organisation called the Communal Image Association (Associação Imagem Comunitária), which has been working since 1993 with ideas of media education and public participation in the media. The net was established in 2002, gathering youngsters from several previous activities promoted by the Communal Image Association. In order to construct the net, the adolescents have attended educational workshops and receive continuous advice from a professional team from the Communal Image Association. Articulating a wide range of projects in the area of culture and citizenship, the net allows disadvantaged adolescents to make their issues visible. In this process, they become protagonists of their citizenship by expressing their ideas in the public sphere.

Media literacy and children's participation in the media

Different media products

Sixty-six adolescents are responsible for local mobilisation and communal creation of the following media products:

- television programs (a weekly 15-minute program broadcast on local channels in Belo Horizonte)
- radio programs (a weekly 60-minute live program broadcast by the educational station Favela FM)
- newspapers (30,000 copies per edition; distributed freely in the public schools of Belo Horizonte every six weeks)
- a website: www.redejovembh.org.br
- a syndicate of news (weekly bulletins with information about communities and cultural manifestations, sent to conventional media)

The net will also publish two books: an Alternative Guide of Culture and Citizenship and a methodological book, *Mídias Comunitárias, Jovens e Cidadania* (Communal Media: Youngsters and Citizenship). The guide intends to present groups and institutions that promote culture and citizenship, and the book will present results of the establishment of the net, as well as ways of reproducing it in other contexts. There will also be a CD-

ROM containing some of the net's productions. These products will be distributed freely to public schools and libraries in the city, and to civil organizations in the entire country.

All these actions have been possible thanks to sponsorship from the oil company Petrobras and other supporters (City Hall of Belo Horizonte, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Municipal Secretariat of Citizenship, Canal Saúde – Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, the National Ministry of Health, and the National Ministries of Justice and Communication).

Inclusion in the public sphere

The Young Web of Citizenship is a grassroots project, attempting to provide a deep and lasting transformation of society via cultural development. Education for communication and participation in the media is seen as an important tool that can generate opportunities that surpass hurdles to social and individual development. Results are already being reached. What can be observed are, among other things, the following consequences:

The Young Web of Citizenship is comprised of adolescents who live in areas of social risk – slums, *favelas* and areas characterised by problems of urban infrastructure and low-income population groups. An important result is, hence, the consolidation of a net of inter-community communication produced and managed by people who are frequently outside public spaces, including the traditional media. The project shows a way to overcome current forms of exclusion, such as the symbolic invisibility that outsiders face. The net is a space for expression that divulges issues and understandings of poor youngsters – all the net's media addresses issues, groups and spaces that they want to make visible. The web also presents opportunities for formal and informal education, social projects, and tips for preventive health and quality of life. Humor, critique and art are significant features of this way of producing communication that attempts to represent a complex reality and overcome simplifications.

All the net's media products have had great feedback, which is evident in hundreds of phone calls, thousands of e-mails and increasing participation of different social and cultural groups. In addition, several themes suggested by the informative bulletins have acquired visibility in local and national conventional media.

Positive impacts on the adolescents' development

Evaluation meetings (involving participants, parents, communal leaders and school members) and qualitative research inquiries have also pointed out that the participants in the net have shown improvement concerning: self-esteem; effective participation; will for teamwork; fluency of expression of their ideas through texts and audio-visual works; interest in and searching for information about subjects related to culture and citizenship; improvement of school performance (greater motivation and involvement in school and extra-curricular activities, bringing into class new topics and inquiries to be discussed). The adolescents have also become more involved in their communities, taking part in social projects and cultural groups in their neighbourhoods.

It must also be mentioned that several adolescents have got educational opportunities and opportunities to act professionally. They were invited to participate in other

educational and cultural activities offered by Centro Cultural of the Federal University of Minas Gerais and to take part in internships and training periods at large audiovisual companies. Finally, it must be highlighted that the core group of adolescents most involved in the Young Web of Citizenship will receive a scholarship in order to enable other adolescents to work with media in 2004.

In sum, the Young Web of Citizenship has enhanced intense youth mobilization in social and cultural actions and has strengthened such projects leading to youth citizenship. When communication comes closer to youngsters, and their actions are given visibility, youngsters come closer to citizenship.

Recognition

The Communal Image Association, through the Young Web of Citizenship, has won the Award of Human Rights 2003 (Prêmio Direitos Humanos 2003), granted by the National Ministry of Justice. The net has also been considered a good social technology by UNESCO and Fundação Banco do Brasil. In addition, it was a semi-finalist in the National Itaú/UNICEF Award (for experiences of education and participation) and a finalist in the International Betinho Award for Communication (which gathered experiences that used information and communication technologies for the promotion of communal development and social justice). One of the television programs produced within the net was presented in Festival Internacional de Cinema do Rio 2003, the greatest event in Latin America in the area of cinematography. The Young Web of Citizenship has also received much attention from traditional local and national media.

by Ricardo Fabrino Mendonça and Rafaela Lima
Media Coordinator and General Coordinator, respectively
Associação Imagem Comunitária
Belo Horizonte, MG
Brazil
Website: http://www.aic.org.br

2. Other Youth Media Productions – a Selection

In the following paragraphs we give a few succinct examples of children's and young people's media production in the world most often led by voluntary organisations outside school. Occasionally we include excerpts from, or just point to, evaluations of the projects, evaluation reports that also contain recommendations for other groups and organisations that want to start similar projects.

⬤ **Plan International,** http://www.plan-international.org

Plan International works across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in communities where many people struggle to meet their basic needs. Working in partnership with local people of all ages, supporting them to end poverty in their community, Plan believes that every child should have the opportunity to realise her/his potential.

Plan implements close to 60 media projects worldwide. The text below provides examples of some of Plan's projects.

• Kid Waves, West Africa

Kids Waves is a regional radio project implemented at the national level in eleven West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Kids Waves is a 30-minute weekly show broadcast in local languages. The show is hosted by children and 'travels' to a different location/village each week. It involves different children each week coming from the visited community. Each show evolves around a theme linked to the rights of the child that is explained to the audience along with the responsibilities of children and of those influencing their lives.

In Senegal, *Kids Waves* is called *Radio Gune Yi*. Created in 1995, it is the first Plan radio project. The *Kids Waves* show is called *Deviwo be Radio* in Togo, *Etoto Deviwo* in Benin, *Bibir Radio* in Burkina Faso, *La voix de Alpha et Finda* in Guinea, *Denmisenw Kun Kan* in Mali.

• The radio campaign 'I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!', West Africa

The regional radio campaign *I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!* has been produced since 1998 by Plan in West Africa in collaboration with close to 100 radio stations. The show informs parents, children and authorities on their roles and responsibilities to respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Seven West-African countries have implemented the project: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo, Mali, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Benin. Two countries, Niger and Cameroon, will start broadcast in 2006. Dramas and sketches are produced with children and professional comedians. Interviews, debates and radio contests are also included in the shows. They are broad-

cast by up to twenty (public, private and community) radio stations in each country. More than 700 productions of the stories promoting child rights have been made and thousands of broadcasts have been heard throughout the region. The show has won international awards.

Evaluation

Radio Campaign in West Africa: I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too! is an evaluation report by Rosita Ericsson, 2005, for Plan Region of West Africa (available at http://www.plan-international.org).

This evaluation report of the awareness campaign on the rights of the child *I Am a Child but I Have My Rights Too!* says that children have active roles at all stages of the project. The campaign is produced and implemented by the participating country offices in collaboration with national and local broadcasters, authorities and NGO partners. The radio spots have been produced in more than 20 different languages.

The evaluation shows that the campaign has become something more than radio since theatre and school activities have become integral parts of the project. Hundreds of children have been involved in the production and broadcast of the show and many thousands have participated in its contests and public recordings.

Presenters, journalists and technicians from more than 90 radio stations have been trained to host the show. The stories are appreciated by both children and adults. The identification factor is high and children can relate the stories directly to their own lives. The messages give children courage to seek support from adults and to look for solutions to their problems. Listening children gain knowledge, which they pass on to others by discussing what they have heard with their families and friends. Hearing other young people talk on the radio encourages and motivates children to participate themselves or in other ways make their voices heard. Children who have participated in production and broadcast of the radio programmes have acquired a range of new skills, including communication and vocational skills. They are often empowered to take on new roles and responsibilities in their communities. Parents and other adults are starting to change their attitudes and value children as actors in the communities, the report says.

Furthermore, the campaign has contributed to breaking taboos surrounding excision and to raise the awareness about issues such as girls' education, discrimination of disabled children and ill-treatment of step-children.

The report shows that the impact of the project is particularly strong when it is implemented directly in the communities and involves young people directly through mobile radio stations, listening clubs or as an integrated part of Plan's advocacy work.

In sum, the project has greatly exceeded its planned outputs and original scope, according to the report, which also includes recommendations for media initiatives by other organisations.

- ## Sauti ya Watoto wa Dida (Give Children a Voice), Kenya and Tanzania

In this video magazine project in Kenya and Tanzania children are involved in the preparation and production of each film, both in front of and behind the camera. Each film focuses on an issue chosen by the children, including child labour, early marriage and street children.

- ## Rights of the Child, Malawi

Rights of the Child is a radio programme in Malawi, in partnership with Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and funded by UNICEF. Children produce radio shows about their rights.

- ## Agami (Future), Bangladesh

Agami is a weekly television show in Bangladesh broadcast by BTV, the national public network. Children host the shows and talk about issues relevant to their lives. The show reaches millions of viewers.

- ## Children Have Something to Say, India

Children Have Something to Say is a video project in India, which involves young people in creating short films (documentary, drama-documentary and animation) focusing on child rights. The stories are selected by the children themselves and relate to issues that affect their lives: child labour, child abuse, health and environmental issues and many others concerning the violation of the rights of children. The project won the One World Media Award for Special Achievement in a contest in the U.K. that recognises excellence in communication about the wider world through television, radio, print and new media.

Evaluation

Children Have Something to Say: Video Project in India is an evaluation report submitted to Plan India in 2003 and written by Sarah McNeill and Mimi Brazeau with the participation of three youth evaluators. (The report is available at, e.g., http://www.iicrd.org)

   Children Have Something to Say was initiated by Plan India in 1999 and funded by the Plan National Office in the Netherlands. It had in 2003 been implemented in collaboration with eleven local NGO partners from seven states in India. The project is a (still on-going) children's media development project in involving young people, usually 14-18 years of age. A very high percentage of the project is child led, the evaluation report says.

   The overall objective of the video project is to promote child rights and provide a platform from which the voice of youth can reach out to adults. More than 20 workshops, usually 20 days each, had been organized when the report was written. The workshops enable young people to reflect on and analyse various situations and circumstances faced by children in their local communities. The children spend time on researching stories and learning how to present a case study in a logical and

---

interesting storyline. Workshops also provide them with basic technical skills in the use of video camera and sound recording to present their story to the public by means of a short film.

The report found that the way this project enables children to have so much input to the final product makes it a special example of good practice. The project demonstrated that children have the ability to produce high quality films with minimal – though vital – assistance from professional filmmakers.

Thirty-six films had then been produced – all from the perspective of the child. According to the report, the films create a vivid, shocking and very moving picture of children's experience of childhood. The films were screened in communities and at training sessions for community workers. The messages targeted adults with the aim of sensitising parents, community leaders and government authorities about child rights issues in order that they will take action to improve the situation of children in India and respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report further says that the project's impact is certain on child participants, parents, NGO partners and viewers. The experience also provides children with the confidence and skills to become a productive force as potential partners in the community's development activities.

In terms of the objectives set out, many outcomes exceeded expectations, the report concludes. In spite of certain weaknesses (which are also dealt with in the publication), the project is said to be a very effective way of putting children's participation in media activity into the service of child rights and be a successful means of making the views and voices of children heard. The report includes recommendations for similar and further work by other countries and organisations.

• Children's Voice, Nepal

The radio project *Children's Voice* produced and broadcast in Nepal has involved more than 100 children. The show aims to promote child rights and child participation.

• Bidang bulilit (Children Are the Stars), Philippines

Since 1999, children in partnership with a local radio station in the Philippines prepare, manage and produce one-hour weekly shows about children's rights, called *Bidang bulilit*. More than three million people listen to the programme.

• Young media clubs, Viet Nam

Since 1998, hundreds of children in Viet Nam have been trained in journalism including radio broadcasting on the initiative of Plan.

• Child media projects, Latin America

Since 1999, close to 2,000 children have been involved in producing radio programmes, videos and printed materials promoting the rights of the child in Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala and Dominican Republic.

- Comunicando os direitos das crianças (Communicating Children's Rights), Brazil

In Brazil, young people are trained by professional radio workers to produce programmes. The project is run in partnership with a local NGO called the Centro das Mulheres do Cabo (Cabo Women's Center).

- Caja magica (Magic Box), Colombia

Caja magica is a magazine produced for and by children in Colombia.

- Aquí los chicos (Here We Are), Ecuador

In Ecuador a production team of 40 children, supported by a network of 300 community reporters, prepare and edit reports on child rights issues for a weekly live radio programme titled *Aquí los chicos*.

⬤ **Africa Animated!,** http://portal.unesco.org

Africa Animated! is a series of cartoon productions in which young people from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are trained in multimedia animation techniques and then produce their own cartoons. Despite efforts by regional broadcasters and the audiovisual community in Africa, children's programmes in Africa and in particular animated cartoons are mostly imported from abroad. In order to address this lack of local content production, UNESCO launched *Africa Animated!* in 2004, an initiative that assembles resources and expertise for the production of children's animated cartoons in Africa. The initiative was started in collaboration with specialized partners such as the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation), Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa (URTNA), the National Film and Television Institute of Ghana (NAFTI) and the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA).

⬤ **Curious Minds, Ghana**

A group of young people from 8 to 18 who are part of the Children and Youth in Broadcasting/Child Survival and Development Action Club are producing a radio programme called *Curious Minds* in Ghana, broadcast by Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. Children act as presenters and producers of the show under the supervision of a professional journalist who coordinates the activities of the group. The purpose of the programme is to help make Ghana's citizens aware of issues related to children's rights. Two radio programmes per week are broadcast on national radio, one in English, the other in Ga. Some programmes involve resource people, some involve only the children framing the discussions from their perspective.

Source: http://www.comminit.com/experiences/pdskdv42003/experiences-1327.html

● **Mundo sem segredos (A World of Secrets), Mozambique,**
  http://www.mediasupport.org

Mundo sem segredos is a 30 minutes' children's radio programme in Mozambique that addresses the issue of HIV/AIDS. Media Support Partnership, a British non-governmental organisation, is training children to participate in the programming and presenting the radio shows for their peers. The project is funded by DANIDA (the Danish government). Since 2004, the weekly programmes are broadcast bilingually through Rádio Moçambique provincial stations in Portuguese and local languages. They contain a mix of interviews, drama, live reports, testimonials, music, and poetry. Children are encouraged to participate through letters, phone calls, and competitions. A weekly counselling session with a trained counsellor provides advice and solutions to listeners' questions or problems. Partners are the Ministry of Education and Rádio Moçambique.

● **Radio Infantil, Mozambique,** http://www.ibis.dk

Radio Infantil is a participatory children's radio programme in the community of Alto Molócuè in Mozambique. Run by the Danish NGO Ibis, the programme explores issues affecting children including child rights, HIV/AIDS, health, and education. The programmes are in Portuguese and Lomwé. The slogan of *Radio Infantil* is 'a voz da criança – a voz do futuro' (the voice of the child is the voice of the future). The project also supports the development of new media initiatives by providing training to radio journalists from Mozambique to produce more children's programmes.

● **Soul Buddyz, South Africa,** http://www.soulcity.org.za

In 2005, the third *Soul Buddyz* series was launched by Soul City, Institute for Health and Development, in South Africa and broadcast by SABC1. *Soul Buddyz* is a real-life television drama specifically developed to empower 8- to 12-year-olds and the adults in their lives. Each time it is broadcast it has been the most popular television programme in the country for children.

   With strong real-life stories that affect children, their parents and their teachers, the programme delivers the positive message that all irrespective of age should – and can – talk about issues. It also breaks the stereotype that children are incapable of making informed choices and reinforces the message that kids can be active citizens in society. After the first two series, 1,900 *Soul Buddyz* Clubs had been set up across the country and had attracted 12,000 children country-wide who are interested in being agents for social change in their communities and in their own lives.

   Additionally, the series *Buddyz on the Move* has been developed by Soul City in partnership with SABC Education and with support of the South African government.

   Several evaluation and audience research reports with children and adults about the programme series are available on Soul City's website.

● **Talking Drum Studio, Sierra Leone,** http://www.sfcg.org

This project, supported by the NGO Search for Common Ground, Washington D.C., U.S.A., is also implemented in Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Macedonia and Ukraine. Talking Drum Studio creates and airs radio programmes with different formats that are designed to encourage peace and reconciliation. The radio stations collaborate with government agencies and local and international organisations. The show *Golden Kids News* in Sierra Leone brings together children of mixed backgrounds to serve as reporters, producers, and actors. This show creates a forum for children to share their hopes and fears, advocate on various issues, and discuss events related to war.

● **Children's Media Centre, Kyrgyzstan,** www.neboscreb.kg

The Children's Media Centre (CMC) works in audio-visual and print media and the productions are done exclusively by children and young people. The project aims at promoting the child's self-expression. The members of the CMC study the problems faced by children and young people in Kyrgyzstan and evaluate their observations from the children's own point of view. In addition to that, the members spread information about child rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CMC members work on many different topics highlighting the problems of youth, including child protection, gender issues and HIV/AIDS. CMC produces videos and print media articles about homeless children, HIV infected people and women's rights violations.

● **Little Masters, China,** www.xzrcn.com

Little Masters is a national magazine in China, written, edited and produced by children under the age of 15. The project has been running for over 20 years and is considered to be a successful partnership between children and adults. Initially developed as a newspaper, *Little Masters* has been adapted to other media such as radio, television and most recently the web.

● **ANKURODGAM, India**

Koraput is one of the developing districts of Orissa in India. The monthly magazine *ANKURODGAM* in Koraput, carrying exclusive contributions of news and views from children, is an initiative of UNICEF. Children contribute their views on issues such as health, education and sanitation in their villages. There are now 100 child reporters from 10 villages in the district – and the plans are to reach every village and every child.

Children are provided with diaries where they write their daily observations. They also interview people and visitors and interact with officials on the development in their villages. This has developed children's confidence to ask questions – they want to be

equipped with more knowledge and information. This, in turn, has further strength-ened their social belongingness and they have been participating actively in all possible developmental activities.

Source: Chelapila Santakar, Orissa, India, in an announcement on http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=6925

● **Voice of the Children, the Philippines,** http://www.ecpat.net

In the Philippines, the most popular medium is radio, especially in remote areas where newspapers and television are not available. Every Sunday morning since 1999, a 30-minute radio programme – *Tingog sa Kabataan* (Voice of the Children) – is being aired on a local AM band radio station in the province of Cebu. It is the first and only radio programme in the area of Central Visayas that is produced *by* children (aged 9 to 18) *for* children. Its primary goal is to let children with experience of violence and abuse talk about and advocate for changes related to issues that affect them.

The programme, which started as a joint project of five NGOs with ECPATCebu as the lead implementing agency, is much listened to and received an award from, among others, the Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines. The BBC, U.K., considers it one of the best practices in the combat against commercial sexual exploitation.

The project has a direct effect on the children and youth who produce the programme, in the form of renewed self-assurance and more participation at school and in the community. Indirectly, the programme serves other victims of child abuse, helping them to recover from their own experiences.

Children's way to participation in the radio production, as well as necessary factors for replicating the project, are described more in detail on the above-mentioned website, where the full report of the project can be accessed.

● **PYALARA, Palestine,** http://www.pyalara.org

Pyalara – Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation – is a communication and media-oriented Palestinian NGO established for Palestinian youth. *The Youth Times*, which gives space to contributions from young journalists between 14 and 25 years of age, has developed into a 24-page bilingual Palestinian youth paper, published on a monthly basis. On average, a total of 20,000 copies are distributed per month to 100,000–120,000 readers. The paper was established in 1997 and is considered the first paper for Palestinian youth to be published in Palestine with a nation-wide distribution.

Since December 2000, PYALARA has also produced, with the support of UNICEF and the cooperation of Palestine TV, a weekly two-hour TV programme called *Alli Sowtak* (Speak Up) with much representation of youth. An average of 300,000 Palestinian children and teenagers watch every episode, each of which has a major theme, for example: education, children's talents, health, and children's awareness concerning their various rights.

● Cámara ! Ahí nos vemos, Mexico, www.rostrosyvoces.org

This project, launched in 2001, uses video production as an educational tool for young people, especially those living in the margin to learn about their communities, their peers and themselves. The programme *¡Cámara! ahí nos vemos* which has engaged several thousands of young people, is implemented by Rostros y Voces and is part of the global programme Make a Connection that operates in eighteen countries.

● Sisichakunaq Pukllaynin, Peru, www.pukllasunchis.org

Sisichakunaq Pukllaynin is a partnership between several schools and two radio stations in Cusco, Peru, that produces regular programming for and with children.

● Just Think, U.S.A., http://www.justthink.org

Just Think is a non-profit organisation supported by foundations and government grants located in the United States. The organisation targets under-resourced populations from low-income communities teaching young people media literacy skills, critical thinking and creative media production. This is done by teaching and producing media arts in- and after school. The aim is 'to teach young people to lead healthy, responsible, independent lives in a culture highly impacted by media'. The website provides many examples of young people's own media production and presentations of the different programmes conducted by the organisation.

One example of the programmes is the Family Media Forum, a workshop involving children and their parents aiming at promoting the dialogue between them around media and media issues. Media habits of the youth are surveyed as well as the concerns of the parents. Some of the different themes of the workshops have been body image, media violence, culture/identity/diversity and video games. The students create their own media production and share it with their parents and there is also a package of activities and resources for use at home.

● Educational Video Center, U.S.A., http://www.evc.org

Educational Video Center (EVC) is a not-for-profit media arts center teaching documentary video production and media analysis to youth, educators and community organisers in New York City. The centre's work is financed by public and private foundations, corporate and individual donors, and earned income. Since 1984, the EVC has used video and multimedia as means to develop the literacy, research, public speaking and work preparation skills of, in particular, at-risk-youth. By producing documentaries on issues from their everyday life these youth with social and/or academic difficulties

develop critical thinking skills and group collaboration. Many of the youth produced documentaries have also been broadcast on national U.S. television networks.

Publications, classroom curricula, production handbooks, research papers, viewer guides based on their work can be found on the website.

● Let's Talk Children, http://www.unicef.org

Let's Talk Children is a global radio service from UNICEF, focusing on the health, education, equality and protection of children. There are many different programmes featuring news and in-depth stories about, with and by children and young people around the world.

● A summarising report

What Works in Youth Media. Case Studies from Around the World by Sheila Kinkade and Christy Macy 2003 and published by International Youth Foundation, based in Baltimore, M.D., U.S.A., reports on

- how young people in Mexico learn to see their community with new eyes through the lens of a video camera (see the project *Cámara ! Ahí nos vemos* mentioned above)
- how young reporters of Children's Express U.K. express their views while learning life skills and has forged long term relationships with *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, Sky News, the BBC, and numerous other media outlets
- how Chinese children under the age of 15 write, edit and produce a national magazine, *Little Masters* (see also above how this project has developed into other media)
- how *Trendsetters* in Zambia, a magazine by and for youth is dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS
- how *Troç* ('straight talk'), a youth-run television programme in Albania, educates the public about critical issues facing children
- how the Young Journalists Group, Viet Nam, seeks to engage their generation and through its twice-weekly broadcasts reaches over 30 million radio listeners
- how *Youth Outlook*, United States, is chronicling life through the eyes and voices of young people.

According to the report, the case studies show that youth media programmes such as these, where young people's voices are being heard, promote children's and young people's personal growth and development. For many young people, the experience they gain in analysing and presenting news make them more informed consumers of the news they receive, and more active citizens in their communities and nations. The young people also learn about critical issues, such as education, the environment, human rights, child abuse, the growing divide between rich and poor, and the impact

of globalisation. A strong thread running through the conversations with young people involved in youth media projects was also, the report says, that they were involved in an activity that was interesting, that engaged them creatively and intellectually, and that could make a difference.

The foreword quotes Sandy Close, Executive Editor of the Pacific News Service, who for years has supported youth-led media projects in the United States. She underscores the growing 'hunger' of today's young people to be visible in the media culture. 'It is as if these new media outlets have become the bonding tissue that holds young people together. Being visible – expressing oneself and being read or seen by others – means you exist.' That 'hunger' among young people to have a voice has coincided with a revolution in technology, and the result has been a dramatic increase in youth media projects around the world (p. 8).

3. Further Resources

● **The Communication Initiative,** http://www.comminit.com

The Communication Initiative (CI) network is an online space for sharing the experiences of, and building bridges between, the people and organisations engaged in or supporting communication as a fundamental strategy for economic and social development and change.

The CI has, among other things, an extensive website (of summarised information – 17,000-plus pages – related to communication for development) which includes facts, evaluations, planning methodologies, change theories, programme descriptions, articles, reports and documents, and much more. The CI also releases several e-publications.

'Children', 'young people' and 'media' are special entries on the website and in the e-publications – one can find many examples of children and young people in Africa, Asia and Latin America taking part in and producing media communication for social change.

Currently, the CI network process includes: The Communication Initiative – in English, with a worldwide overview and focus; La Iniciativa de Comunicación – in Spanish, with a worldwide overview and focus on the Latin American experience and context; and Soul Beat Africa – in English, with a focus on the African experience and context.

The CI is a partnership of development organisations seeking to support advances in the effectiveness and scale of communication interventions for positive international development.

● **The Child Rights Information Network,** http://www.crin.org

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), established in 1995, is a global network that disseminates information about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights amongst non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organisations, educational institutions, and other child rights experts. CRIN's objectives are, among others, to support and promote the implementation of the Convention.

CRIN is supported, and receives funding from, Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children UK, UNICEF, Plan International and the International Save the Children Alliance. Project funding is also received from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worldvision.

CRIN has a membership of more than 1,400 organisations in over 130 countries. About 85 per cent of the members are NGOs and 65 per cent are in the Africa, Asia and Latin America. In addition to working with member organisations, CRIN services

the information needs of 2,500 organisations and individuals who have joined CRIN's mailing lists.

On CRIN's website and mailing lists, there is also information on activities and research as regards media, for example projects involving children's and young people's own media production.

● MAGIC, http://www.unicef.org/magic

Another network and data bank is MAGIC (Media Activities and Good Ideas by, with and for Children) on UNICEF's website. The associated network, which was set up for professionals and organisations working in the field of children and media to share information and ideas, coummunicates through the e-mail group Young People's Media Network.

● INFOYOUTH, http://portal.unesco.org

As mentioned previously (see the section 'Media Literacy for Children, Young People, Adults and Media Educators'), UNESCO has initiated The INFOYOUTH Network. Among the 2006 activities is 'Youth and Media. A UNESCO workshop in Beirut', where students met from Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Tunisia and the Palestinian Territories for a workshop to learn more about media, and their role in it. A 2005 activity was the opening of a children's and youth's library in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The library – operated by Impact Libarary, an Ethiopian NGO – aims at offering young visitors a range of useful and interactive learning activities that incorporate multimedia tools.

IV Media Literacy for Media Professionals

Media professionals are, naturally, in many ways 'media literate'. On the other hand, much research all over the world successively finds that media contents often underrepresent and give biased pictures of population groups (children, women, ethnic and linguistic minority groups, etc.) and of entire populations and nations. There are also in many media other offensive and potentially harmful contents, such as representations of physical violence, pornography, and increasingly excessive marketing. While research on portrayals of physical violence and the influences of them has been carried out since the 1920s and by now amounts to many thousands of studies, and examples of research on stereotypes of groups, peoples of nations goes back to many decades, research on pornography and commercial elements in – or products connected to – the media contents is of more recent dates but is engaging a growing number of scholars.

Nevertheless, there are – in general – no signs of more balanced media contents in these respects within the explosive media flow as a whole, especially not as regards satellite television, commercial films and the newer digital media. On the contrary, research studies over time often find the same or more representations of offensive and potentially harmful media contents.

The reasons for such media violence in a broad sense – thus, including not only portrayals of physical violence but also biased psychic and structural oppression, etc. – are many. Examples of reasons are ignorance or lack of ethics among certain media professionals, as well as stressing production conditions, but, to a greater extent, the ideology and societal culture in which the media work, the dependence of media on the political power elite, and the media's policy and economy. The strive for economic profit among most mainstream media in a more and more competitive and globalised media landscape supported by the rapid development of information technology means that the observance of codes of conducts and ethical guidelines often comes in the second place or is thrown into the shade.

Combating the root of media's offensive and potentially harmful contents must therefore primarily mean analysing and changing the relations of the prevailing media globalisation process to economy and market forces, politics, technological development, dominance/dependence between countries and rich and poor people, cultural identity and human/children's rights.

As regards media's relation to children and young people, the main question that must be asked is, according to Robert McChesney (2002): 'What sort of media policies would produce positive externalities for children and all of society?' The issue of externalities (the economic and social costs of market transactions that society as a whole must care and pay for, for example, non-desirable influences of advertising or media violence) makes this a mandatory public policy issue. It is therefore imperative, he says, that debates over media and media directed to children receive widespread public participation and deliberation. Without a new direction in media policy, the current trends point to dubious outcomes for democracy, culture and public health.

Cees J. Hamelink's (2002) conclusion also is that the prevailing process of media globalisation – the neo-liberal market-centred globalisation-from-above – hampers implementation of children's information rights expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that is ratified by 191 of the 193 UN member states. Hamelink points to the need of a different humanitarian form of globalisation – globalisation-from-below that is people-centred and prefers the protection of basic human rights to trading interests. Fundamental to the implementation and protection of human rights is an environment of empowerment. This is equally important for grown-ups and minors and maybe even more crucial for the latter as there is in most cultures a strong tendency to silence them and spend more energy on filtering messages for them rather than on producing materials specifically suited for them. Implementation of a humanitarian agenda is urgent, this researcher says, since the current globalisation process of the media contributes to limiting people's free space for expression and thought, violating their privacy, and undermining their citizenship by perceiving them primarily as consumers.

There are many researchers that underline the need for research on the consequences of the prevailing media globalisation. Francis B. Nyamnjoh (2002) puts forward the hypothesis that even if media globalisation is homogenising consumer tastes, it also appears to accelerate the production of differences, heterogeneities or boundaries through the structures of inequalities inherent in global capitalism. Poverty accelerates conflict. It may well be that globalisation and media globalisation intensifies age-old boundaries and divisions.

Research, empowerment of people, and political measures are thus important means for changing media's economy and policy and their offensive and potentially harmful media contents.

Increased awareness among media professionals and policy-makers of the need for such change is therefore essential. It is reasonable to say that although media professionals and policy-makers in one way are 'media literate', they are on another plane the groups in society most in need of media literacy.

Limiting us here to media professionals' need for increased awareness of children and young people and of offensive and potentially harmful contents for them, there are also several other initiatives – on minor levels – to increase media literacy among media professionals and policy makers. We will in the following pages give a few examples.

1. Reporting on Children and Young People

● **International Federation of Journalists,** http://www.ifj.org

Putting Children in the Right

In the booklet *Putting Children in the Right. Guidelines for Journalists and Media Professionals* published in 2002 by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) with the support of the European Commission, General Secretary Aidan White considers in the introduction the fact that children and young people are seldom seen and heard in the media. This reflects a weakness that resonates through any discussion on media and the rights of children. Raising awareness about the rights of children and the promotion of children's rights is a challenge to media. Media must not just report fairly, honestly and accurately on the experience of childhood, the author says, but they must also provide space for the diverse, colourful and creative opinions of children themselves.

At the same time, the media must be freed from the reins of political and economic control, which limit professionalism and undermine ethical standards. The author points to several delicate dilemmas facing the media professionals and which are dependent on their working conditions, the issues of standards, regulation and self-regulation, and their relations to economic, political and cultural institutions in society.

Running throughout Aidan White's introduction is the issue of how to balance the right to freedom of expression and the rights of children. Media professionals can both give a voice in the media to children, listening to their views and aspirations, and protect the identity of children who should not be exposed to the glare of publicity.

The booklet *Putting Children in the Right* includes guidelines for reporting on children (see below); recommendations for raising awareness of child rights; awareness training for media professionals; a section on interviewing, photographing and filming children; and much more.

Objectives of the IFJ

The IFJ has in this respect integrated the following objectives in its programmes: awareness raising, integrating child rights in the professional code of ethics, supporting an international exchange of best practices between the unions, countering the commercial pressures on journalists and media for 'sensational news' and enabling children to be seen and heard.

Guidelines for reporting on children

The above-mentioned objectives are, among other things, realised by the IFJ's guidelines for reporting on children. These guidelines were initially adopted in draft by journalists organisations from 70 countries at the world's first international consultative conference on journalism and child rights held in Recife, Brazil, in May 1998. After regional conferences and workshops the guidelines were finally adopted at the Annual Congress of the International Federation of Journalists in Seoul in 2001. The guidelines were presented by the IFJ at the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children held at Yokohama, Japan, in December 2001.

Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children

Preamble

Informed, sensitive and professional journalism is a key element in any media strategy for improving the quality of reporting concerning human rights and society. The daily challenge to journalists and media organisations is particularly felt in coverage of children and their rights.

Although the human rights of children have only recently been defined in international law, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is already so widely supported that it will shortly become the first universal law of humankind.

To do their job of informing the public effectively, journalists must be fully aware of the need to protect children and to enhance their rights without in any way damaging freedom of expression or interfering with the fabric of journalistic independence. Journalists must also be provided with training to achieve high ethical standards.

The following guidelines for journalists have been drawn up by the International Federation of Journalists on the basis of an extensive survey of codes of conduct and standards already in force across the world. The purpose is to raise media awareness of children's rights issues and to stimulate debate among media professionals about the value of a common approach which will reinforce journalistic standards and contribute to the protections and enhancement of children's rights.

Principles

All journalists and media professionals have a duty to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and should promote within the industry the widest possible dissemination of information about the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for the exercise of independent journalism.

Media organisations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children's safety, privacy, security, their education, health and social welfare and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigations and public debate. Children have an absolute right to privacy, the only exceptions being those explicitly set out in these guidelines.

Journalistic activity which touches on the lives and welfare of children should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children.

The following statement was also endorsed at the Recife Media and Child Rights Conference:

'The IFJ is deeply concerned at the creation of paedophile Internet sites and the fact that certain media publish or broadcast classified advertisements promoting child prostitution.

The IFJ calls on its member unions to:

- intervene with media owners over the publication or broadcasting of these advertisements;
- to campaign with public authorities for the elimination of these sites and advertisements.

Guidelines

Journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs and, in particular, they shall

1. **strive** for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children;

2. **avoid** programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them;

3. **avoid** the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children;

4. **consider** carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and shall minimise harm to children;

5. **guard** against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;

6. **give** children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind;

7. **ensure** independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk;

8. **avoid** the use of sexualised images of children;

9. **use** fair, open and straight forward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer;

10. **verify** the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children.

11. **not** make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.

Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by Governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead or leading to the occurrence of these events.

Seoul, June 11-15, 2001

IFJ reports

Available on the IFJ's website are also reports on

- *Promoting Children's Rights in the Media*, a workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, 2003

- *Reporting Children's Rights in Eastern Africa*, a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, 2003

- *Reporting Children's Rights – A Case Study in Ethiopia*, 2003

- *How the Kenyan Media Covers the Children's Rights Issues: A Content Analysis and an Assessment on the Implementation of the CRC Provisions in Kenya since the Country Ratified It Including the Children's Act 2001* by Emily Habwe Nwankwo and Arthur Okwemba, 2002

● **The MediaWise Trust,** http://www.mediawise.org.uk

MediaWise (formerly PressWise) is an independent charity, set up in 1993 by 'victims of media abuse', supported by concerned journalists, media lawyers and politicians in the U.K.

The Media and Children's Rights – a guidebook

MediaWise has published *The Media and Children's Rights. A resource for journalists by journalists*. Devised for UNICEF by MediaWise. MediaWise & UNICEF, 2005. This guidebook was written to assist media professionals and others to consider how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child might impact upon the way children are represented in and by the media. Based on the practical experience of working journalists, it aims to generate responsible coverage of children and the impact of adult behaviour and decisions on their lives, as well as to encourage media professionals to consider how best to protect the rights of children and help children to play a role in the mass media.

The handbook outlines two milestones for children's rights: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and A World Fit for Children, the declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2002. It contains the International Federation of Journalists guidelines (see above) and over 60 international contacts for journalists seeking facts, figures, quotes and advice about children's rights.

Key topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- children with disabilities
- child labour
- children and armed conflict
- children's health and welfare
- the child's identity
- children's opinions and civil freedoms
- children and the media.

First published in 1999, a revised and expanded second edition was published in February 2005 and is available on the website of MediaWise Trust and elsewhere.

Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe

MediaWise presents on its website several other activities and articles on children and the media. One of these is training material for print and broadcast journalists to improve media coverage of children affected by violence. The material consists of modules for use in vocational, in-service and distance learning settings and is free to use by everyone. Three sets of training modules were devised and then tested and reformulated in response to evaluation. They cover:

- The Rights of Children & Codes of Conduct
- Uses of Images
- Interviewing Children

The modules are the result of a pilot training project called 'Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe' (2001) funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Initiative.

Codes of conduct

MediaWise has also assembled a large collection of journalistic Codes of Conduct from around the world.

● The Media Monitoring Project, South Africa,
http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za

The Media Monitoring Project (MMP) monitors the media with the aim to promote the development of a free, fair, ethical and critical media culture in South Africa and the rest of the continent. MMP is an independent non-governmental organisation that has been monitoring the South African media since 1993.

The core objectives of the organisation are as follows:

- To be the pre-eminent media 'watchdog' in Africa
- To inform and engage media professionals and other key stakeholders to improve the quality and ethics of news reporting in Africa
- To influence the development of robust and effective communication legislation and media codes of conduct in Africa.

The MMP has released several reports about children and media, of which the following are some examples:

- *Reporting on Children in the Context of HIV/AIDS: A Journalist's Resource*, 2005
  In the context of widespread HIV/AIDS and poverty, this booklet provides reference information about children affected by HIV/AIDS and related policy issues,

which need urgent and in-depth coverage by the media. With the imperative to 'put children first', the booklet challenges some of the limitations and misleading messages in current coverage, and offers a resource list to help media with the task of shaping an appropriate national response to children affected by the epidemic.

- *A Resource Kit for Journalists: Children's Media Mentoring Project*, 2005
  This resource kit provides journalists with the necessary information to enable children's voices to become a part of daily media coverage, without violating children's rights, South African laws or international norms and standards. The resource kit is designed to allow journalists and editors easy access to guidelines and laws during the production of news. MMP hopes that the resource kit can help to bring more children's voices into the South African media, in positive ways, which do not harm children.

- *What Children Want*, 2005
  The MMP's latest research with children and media challenges a number of preconceived ideas about children's programming, how it is understood, and how it should be regulated. The study aimed to give practical realisation to children's right to participate in all matters that affect them, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The research was conducted as part of the MMP's submission on the draft licence conditions of the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) and was supported by Save the Children Sweden.

The Empowering Children & Media project

The MMP has also performed a special project, The Empowering Children & Media (ECM) project, which monitored the representation of children and children's rights in the South African news media. The project analysed over 22,000 items from 36 different South African media, including print, radio and television media. From March to May 2003, every item that contained a reference to a child or children was monitored.

The most innovative part of the project was the participation of children themselves. The children engaged in a parallel monitoring project where they monitored the media for a two-week period. This was done so that the children could express their views directly, and so that they could see for themselves how the media represented children.

A few findings from ECM are:

- Only 6 per cent of all monitored news items contained children up to 18 years of age. When children were represented, their newsworthiness seemed to be defined by the extreme and/or dramatic nature of stories.

  The children who participated in the workshops commented on this lack of representation:

  > There is nothing on the radio news about children. These guys, they don't think our issues are important.

  In newspapers made by the children themselves, on the other hand, 54 per cent of all people identified were children. The children made sure to include children but there was also a clear adult component.

- Children are rarely accessed for their opinions. Children were quoted directly or indirectly in only 13 per cent of the items on children. When children were sourced, their comments were limited to sport, arts/culture, and war/conflict/violence.

  Children in all of the workshops talked about how few journalists interviewed children or asked them to tell their stories.

  > *I realised that we can understand what is going on around us. If it is about us we are the best people to say something about it.*

  The names the children chose for their own newspapers indicated that the children recognised that this was an inclusive forum through which they could express themselves. It also demonstrated strong ownership of the newspaper and recognition for what children are capable of achieving.

  > *We called it "Children's Voices". We made this newspaper and it is our voice.*

  > *We chose that because we put things that are happening in "Our World Today", things that are affecting us.*

- The results showed that almost 50 per cent of stories on children were negative. While it is a common feature of news to report on 'bad news' (stories such as crime, violence and abuse), this severely narrows the representation of children and helps locate children more often as victims in 'bad news' stories.

  The children in the workshops were acutely aware that most of the coverage afforded to children in the media tends to be negative:

  > *They only show bad things that happen to children. They never speak about good things that we do as children.*

  > *I feel sad because nothing is said about the good children do.*

  In addition, the children raised the fact that the media tend to focus on dramatic issues, such as child abuse, and may ignore other children's issues. This was also reflected in the monitoring done by adults, thereby indicating a fairly narrow representation of children in the news media, both in terms of topics and roles.

  In their own newspapers, the children strived to maintain a balance between positive and negative news stories, and often tended to juxtapose a positive item with a negative item. Even though they used negative images or stories, there was a distinct sense that these were employed in order to deliver more positive or meaningful messages. The children also demonstrated a need for news that is relevant to their lives.

Guidelines for interviewing children

The MMP has published on its website the Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children adopted by the International Federation of Journalists (see above) and has also released own guidelines for interviewing children.

● ANDI – Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância,
http://www.andi.org.br

Below is an excerpt from the article 'Journalism on Children's Rights in Brazil' by Geraldinho Vieira, Executive Director of ANDI, Brazil, in *News from ICCVOS,* No. 1, 2002, p. 16:

The News Agency for Children's Rights (ANDI – Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância) was created during the 1990s with the aim to contribute to the building of a culture in which the press gives priority to a children's and adolescents' agenda. In other words, the Agency argues that the promotion and defense of children's and adolescents' rights and their access to basic social rights is fundamental to the achievement of social equity. The Agency, in contrast to standard news agencies, acts as a center of reference where journalists can find the best story ideas, the best ways of telling their stories, and the most up-to-date sources of information, thereby establishing connections between the press, innovators and specialists.

ANDI cooperates with the Brazilian mass media to promote a new system of investigative journalism. The organization believes that it is not enough when a newspaper publishes a story with facts that, for example, four million children are exploited as slaves or that five hundred thousand little girls are driven to prostitution. In a country with such social inequalities and lack of efficient public services [as Brazil], ANDI has discovered that solutions must be sought in order to promote the changes that have to be made. This does not mean that the press should only publish 'positive' or 'optimistic' stories. On the contrary, the sooner society learns about the actions and policies that have been proven to make change possible, the greater impact the stories will have

One of the most effective strategies developed by ANDI to increase awareness of the problem in newsrooms is the promotion of regular studies (in early 2004, 14 issues had been released beside special analyses, *editor's remark*), showing how more than 50 of the most important newspapers and magazines are reporting on subjects relevant to children's rights. After the Agency's research began to be published in 1996, the various news media launched a healthy competition among themselves. Several years later, ANDI has detected that the number of stories dedicated to themes related to children's rights has increased from 10 thousand, in 1996, to 65 thousand in 2000. Moreover, 41 per cent of these stories focus not only on social problems, but also on their possible solutions.

Therefore, it can be said that it has become easier for society to understand that street kids are not potential criminals, but instead children whose families have been destroyed by misery and unemployment. These children are, after all, kids out of home and out of school, whose essential rights have been stolen. If they are on the streets of big cities, it means that the streets provide the only way of making a living. In order to survive, get educated and contribute for the country's future, these children need help and the mobilization of the entire society. This is the change that ANDI is helping to promote.

● **Red ANDI América Latina,** http://www.redandi.org

The success of ANDI in Brazil (see above) has led to the creation of a network of non-governmental news agencies for children's rights across Latin America – Red ANDI América Latina. Each agency represents a Latin American country (at present nine countries) and is responsible for carrying out, on a national scale, a number of strategic actions based on the work of ANDI in Brazil.

Red ANDI América Latina was officially created in 2003 and the practical work of the network started in 2004.

● **Hatemalo Sanchar, Nepal,** http://www.hatemalo.org

As a pioneer child rights organisation, Hatemalo Sanchar in Nepal has been involved in advocating child rights through media campaigning – both print and broadcast – since 1982. Hatemalo Sanchar (Hatemalo meaning 'hand in hand' in Nepali) has been broadcasting radio programmes for children, has been regularly publishing a monthly child magazine from 1990, has initiated child club activities, and is engaged in research work, seminars for media professionals, and media monitoring programmes. In 1994, Hatemalo Sanchar was established formally as an independent social organisation for child right promotion. As Nepal ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990, the Hatemalo group started encompassing children's rights through a multi-media approach. One of several initiatives for raising media professionals' media literacy is, beside seminars, the Media Monitoring Programme.

The Media Monitoring Programme

The Media Monitoring Programme was first initiated in 2002. In the third report *Print Coverage of Children's Issues 2004* by Saurav Kiran Shrestha and released by Hatemalo Sanchar in 2005, it is said: The main aim of the programme is to raise general consciousness on various child-related issues among mass media institutions, journalists and children so as to create child-friendly mass media. This comparative programme also endeavors to study pattern of media coverage on children. The report deals with coverage on children's issues during 2004 from nine national dailies. The study tried to reveal the pattern of print coverage under the four categories of child rights stated in the UNCRC – right to survival, right to development, right to protection and right to participation. All news/articles regarding children aged between 0-18 were taken into account.

The findings show that since 2002, there is a trend of steady increase in coverage of child-related issues in Nepal's national dailies. In fact, while comparing the coverage of the year 2003 and 2004, it has doubled. With the escalation of violence in the country, children have been equally affected and this must be attributed to, albeit partly, the increase in the coverage of children's issues.

Despite the increase in the coverage, most of the news/articles on children have been attributed to negative consequences, i.e., deaths in armed conflict, and accidents and crimes.

- Hence, the report recommends that there should be a shift in news selection priority from 'death reporting' to positive sides.

Other findings and recommendations are:

- Though some improvements vis-à-vis coverage of children's issues geographically have been observed, yet the children's issues from far-flung districts and inner hinterlands have been consistently overlooked. This has excluded the majority of the children, which should be avoided.

- Most of the news/articles are event-oriented. Hence, the reporting should go beyond covering a mere formal programme. Further exploration and in-depth investigation into the issues arising in such programmes can be taken into consideration by reporters/analysts.

- Over years, most newspapers have started publishing special supplements or segments on children's issues. But some of the dailies have either stopped publishing such things or have decreased space meant for children, which should not have been done.

- Whenever it is reported on children, the media personnel should rise above the customary/regular issues such as educational activities, health-related reports, and conflict, among others. Even these issues could be reported differently. And many overlooked issues should be covered.

- If the number of supporting pictures or sketches alongside the news report is increased, it draws more readers and makes the case stronger.

In sum, the study found many things to be worked upon in order to ensure child rights for their development: The print media have challenges ahead in reporting sufficiently many identified and unidentified issues of children, letting the voices of children residing in remote areas be heard, and practicing possible participation of children in the publication process. The print media have a challenge of rising above its existing nature of being city-centric and event-oriented in order to empower voiceless people and children.

The study also explicitly argues for the need to establish an effective and authorized body/mechanism that helps and supports media to implement codes of conduct. Likewise, the report advocates for the need of practice of professional journalism that well considers child rights principles – the best interest of children, non-discrimination, children's development and participation.

2. International and Regional Conferences
   – and Declarations, Resolutions, Charters

Another means to raise media professionals' awareness about children's and young people's relations to the media is seminars and conferences. It must be emphasised that many national, as well as some international and regional events about children, young people and media are long standing and regular. However, as a response to the globalised media flow with satellite television channels spreading rapidly all over the world since the late 1980s, and then the digital media, the international and regional meetings and conferences on children, young people and media have multiplied since the early 1990s.

These conferences have had different contexts and aims. There are, for instance, meetings mainly for professionals working with children's media. The objectives of these gatherings have been to improve the profile of children's programming and other child media contents throughout the world, to prompt initiatives to advance the diversity and quality of children's broadcasting, and to promote research, co-operation, exchange and training for those concerned with children's broadcasting and other media.

Furthermore, there are meetings with children, youth and media on the agenda arranged by UN agencies or on a regional supranational plane by, for example, the European Union. The objectives of these meetings have been partly to support states in their cultural policies, and partly to give media professionals ideas on how to promote and protect the rights of the child.

Other examples of meetings are those where most participants have been researchers and media educators. A few such international and regional conferences are mentioned under the heading 'Media Literacy for Media Educators', but one must bear in mind that these events have often invited media professionals and policy-makers, as well, beside researchers, teachers and interest organisations. Thus, there are often no sharp dividing lines between the growing amount of international and regional meetings. Most of them have been open for representatives of all groups – media professionals in traditional and new electronic and digital media, policy-makers, researchers, media educators, voluntary organisations and other interested individuals. Many of the meetings have also invited children.

However, below are listed a few examples of international and regional meetings where delegates to a greater extent have been media professionals and/or policy makers.

In addition, many of the meetings have resulted in declarations, resolutions and charters distributed to media professionals and others all over the world as expressions of opinions on how to ameliorate children's and young people's media environment. (The declarations, etc., are available on the website of the Clearinghouse, http://www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse.php).

● Non-violence, Tolerance and Television, 1994

Coinciding with the 125th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet of non-violence and tolerance, an international roundtable on 'Non-violence, Tolerance and Television', was organised in New Dehli in April 1994 by UNESCO, the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) and the Indian Government. The roundtable was restricted to a number of broadcasting professionals in order to analyse problems related to the theme of the roundtable and put forward solutions in a practical way.

The document *Non-violence, Tolerance and Television. Report of the Chairman to the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication*, UNESCO, 1994, summarises the viewpoints.

● The Bratislava Meeting, 1994

A meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November 1994, arranged by the International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (Centre International du Film pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse, CIFEJ) based in Canada, invited heads and producers of children's programming from Eastern and Western European television stations to find ways of dealing with the down-turn of national production for children.

Three days of informal talks gave rise to **the Bratislava Resolution**, which, according to the participants, outlines the minimum requirements for a worthy film and television production for children.

● AGORA

From the mid 90s till 2005, AGORA, organised by the European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C), has been held every year in Greece, Cyprus or Italy. AGORA has been an opportunity for key players of production and research in the international children's audio-visual field to gather in order to explore the needs of the area, to plan specific productions and research, and to exchange information and programmes. Special emphasis has been given to the promotion and the improvement of programmes from the Balkan, Mediterranean and small European countries.

● KID SCREEN

Established in the mid-90s, KID SCREEN has been an annual international seminar and meeting point for teachers, researchers and media professionals to discuss children's film and media education. It has been organised by the European Children's Film Association (E.C.F.A), based in Brussels, Belgium, with support of the Cultural Department of the Lombardy Region, Italy. For example, the theme of the 1999 seminar held in Como, Italy, was violence on the screen, and the 2000 seminar in Varese, Italy, dealt with children's creativity in a digital age. Importance is attached to nuanced

and interdisciplinary characterisation of the relationships between children and the media.

Seminar reports are released in Italian.

● The first World Summit on Television and Children, 1995

The first World Summit on Television and Children, held in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1995, was hosted by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF). The main reason for organising the Summit was that programming for children was changing and under threat in a variety of ways and could no longer remain purely a domestic issue for most nations, if it was to survive with the values and objectives that professionals in the industry believe should apply to children's programmes.

At the Summit a charter on children and television was proposed Anna Home, Head of Children's Television Programmes, British Broadcasting Corporation. **The Children's Television Charter** was revised and adopted in Munich, Germany, in May 1995.

World Summit on Television and Children. Final Report. Carlton, Australia, The Australian Children's Television Foundation, 1995, documents this first World Summit, which provided the incentive for several other regional and global summits on children and media.

● Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child, 1995

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO in co-operation with UNESCO and UNICEF organised the international seminar 'Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child' in September 1995 in Lund, Sweden, bringing together participants from all continents representing the media business, universities, government institutions, teachers and parents associations, etc.

A report comprising the speeches and conclusions and with the same title as the seminar is available in English.

As a direct outcome of the seminar, The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media (formerly The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen) was established by Nordicom, Göteborg University, Sweden, in 1997, with support from UNESCO and the Swedish government.

● The Southern African Developing Countries' Summit on Children and Broadcasting, 1996

This regional Summit held in May 1996 by The Children and Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) for Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa, was a direct result of the first World Summit on Children and Television in Australia in 1995 (see above). The delegates from Africa were concerned that Africa's voice was not being heard at the World Summit,

and felt that an environment must be created in which children's broadcasting issues could be discussed within the region.

At this SADC plus Kenya Summit discussions concentrated on, among other things, how to make the Children's Television Charter emanating from the first World Summit more relevant to Africa, and **The SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter** was adopted.

● The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, 1996

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media was held in July 1996 in Manila, the Philippines. The major organising members included the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Philippines, and UNICEF. Issues examined at the Summit were: child rights and the media; influence of media; access to media; promoting cultural diversity; children's media; media and values; issues of portrayal; and media education.

Delegates at the Summit – including ministers and senior officials of Asian governments, journalists, media executives, educators and child rights advocates – adopted the **Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media**.

A report of the Asian Summit is available from AMIC.

● The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1996

In October 1996, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the mechanism tasked with monitoring progress in the realisation of children's rights and with advising on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) held a theme day on children and the media. The Committee had invited representatives of UN organs, bodies and specialised agencies, other competent bodies, including non-governmental organisations, media representatives, research and academic organisations, and children, to contribute to the discussions and provide expert advice. Three main areas were considered during the debate: child participation in the media; protection of the child against harmful influences through the media; and respect for the integrity of the child in media reporting. The discussion resulted in twelve recommendations (see the box, which includes an excerpt from an article by Thomas Hammarberg 1997).

The Committee also set a up a multisectoral working group that met in Paris in April, 1997, to consider constructive ways of ensuring implementation of these recommendations.

THE COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED three main areas to be considered during the debate:

- Child Participation in the Media

 In short, the discussion here centred around the importance of children participating not just as commentators, but at all levels of the information and media production process. Therefore, adequate mechanisms must be developed to

enable the child to participate. Not only the media as such but also parents and professionals working with and for children must help children to make their voices heard.

Among many other things mentioned, the potential positive impact of technology for children's rights was underlined, as well as the importance of their access also to all traditional media.

• Protection of the Child against Harmful Influences through the Media

It was said, that States should take concrete measures to encourage the media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child, as called for in article 17(a) [of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child]. The clear identification of harmful influences in media was considered essential, as well as the need to raise, through school and other fora, the awareness of children on how to tackle media issues in a critical and constructive manner.

Also, a better balance ought to be reached in the media between concern for protection and accurate reflection of the real world. A better balance is needed, too, regarding cultural diversity and gender bias. It was recognized that freedom of expression was not incompatible with the strong prohibition of material injurious to the child's well-being. Specific reference was also made to Internet, for example, the idea to develop in all countries hot-lines where Internet users can transmit information on existing harmful sites.

• Respect for the Integrity of the Child in Media Reporting

In short, it was stressed that media play an essential role in the promotion and protection of human rights in general, and should be particularly vigilant in trying to safeguard the integrity of the child. For example, media must take into account the best interests of the child when children are sources of information, as in interviews or simulations with child victims of violence and abuse. Reference was also made to the most common stereotypes in media reporting about children, such as the 'violent teen-ager' or the misrepresentation of children from specific groups.

ON THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS on the three areas and in my capacity as rapporteur of the meeting, I formulated the following recommendations:

1. Child Media: A dossier should be compiled on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in media, like 'Children's Express' in the United Kingdom and the United States.

2. Child Forum within Internet: The UNICEF-initiated 'Voices of Youth' at the World Wide Web should be further promoted and advertised as a positive facility for international discussion on important issues between young people.

3. Active Child Libraries: The experience of dynamic child libraries, or child departments within public libraries, should be documented and disseminated.

4. Media Education: Knowledge about media, their impact and functioning should be taught in schools at all levels. Students should be enabled to relate to and use the media in a participatory manner as well as to learn how to decode media messages, including in the advertising. Good experiences in some countries should be made available to others.

5. State Support to Media for Children: There is a need for budgetary support to ensure the production and dissemination of children's books, magazines and papers; music, theatre and other artistic expressions for children as well as child oriented films and videos. Assistance through international co-operation should also support media and art for children.

6. Constructive Agreements with Media Companies to Protect Children against Harmful Influences: Facts should be gathered about various attempts of voluntary agreements with media companies on positive measures such as not broadcasting violent programmes during certain hours, clear presentations before programmes about their content and the development of technical devices – like 'V-chips'– to help consumers to bloc out certain types of programmes. Likewise, experiences of voluntary ethical standards and mechanisms to encourage respect for them should be assembled and evaluated; this should include an analysis of the effectiveness of existing Codes of Conduct, professional guidelines, Press Councils, Broadcast Councils, Press Ombudsmen and similar bodies.

7. Comprehensive National Plans of Action to Empower Parents in the Media Market: Governments should initiate a national discussion on means to promote positive alternatives to the negative tendencies in the media market, to encourage media knowledge and support parents in their role as guides to their children when relating with electronic and other media. An international workshop should be organized to promote a discussion on this approach.

8. Advice on Implementation of article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A study should be conducted with the purpose of developing advice to governments on how they could encourage the development of 'guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being'. Such a study should also serve the purpose of assisting the Committee on the Rights of the Child in drafting a General Comment on article 17.

9. Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Child Abuse: To encourage further discussions in the news rooms and within the media community as a whole guidelines should be drafted by relevant journalist bodies on how to report on abuse of children and at the same time protect the dignity of the children involved. Special emphasis should be placed on the issue of not exposing the identity of the child.

10. Handbook Material for Journalist Education on Child Rights: Material should be produced to assist journalist and media schools on child rights standards, established procedures for child rights monitoring, existing international, regional and national institutions working with children as well as basic aspects of child development. The manual planned by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights as a tool for journalist education on human rights should be widely disseminated when produced.

11. Network for Media Watchgroups: The positive experiences of media watchgroups in various countries should be further encouraged and 'good ideas' transferred between countries. The purpose is to give media consumers a voice in the discussion on media ethics and children. A focal point for exchanges should be established.

12. Service to 'Child Rights Correspondents': Interested journalists should be invited to sign in to a list of 'Child Rights Correspondents'. They should receive regular information about important child issues, interesting reports by others and be seen as media advisers to the international child rights community.

Source: Thomas Hammarberg 1997

● **The first All African Summit, 1997**

The first All African Summit was arranged in Accra, Ghana, in October 1997. The most important thing that occurred at this Summit was the adoption of the **Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting**. The Charter is an amendment of The SADC Children's Broadcasting Charter in 1996 (see above) and is in keeping with the international Children's Television Charter in 1995 (see above), but expands on issues relevant to the African continent, and includes radio as well. In particular greater emphasis is placed on the educational and developmental needs of Africa's children and protection from all forms of commercial exploitation.

The Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting was ratified at the general assembly of URTNA (Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa) in 2000 in Algiers, where all African broadcasters were asked to make necessary amendments. The final Charter was then further adopted by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) in 2000 in Cape Town, South Africa.

● **The Second World Summit on Television for Children, 1998**

The Second World Summit on Television for Children took place in March 1998 in London and was hosted jointly by the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Nickelodeon UK. A large number of keynote addresses, debates, seminars, and workshops dealt with: the nature of the child audience; different programme genres; production and policy; financing; advertising; new media; globalisation vs. local survival; and co-operative ventures. Master classes and screenings of children's programmes ran parallel. There were also sessions on research.

A report from the Summit was published with support of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, U.S.A.: Anna Home & Amy B. Jordan *The Second World Summit on Television for Children 1998. Final report.* University of Pennsylvania, The Annenberg Public Policy Center.

● The Power of Culture – Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, 1998

The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development – the greatest manifestation for culture on a governmental level ever – held in Stockholm in March-April 1998 was designed by UNESCO to transform the ideas from the report *Our Creative Diversity,* UNESCO, 1995, into policy and practice. This report was presented by the World Commission on Culture and Development, established by the United Nations and UNESCO and led by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. The document presents a programme of action with the purpose of influencing the international political agenda and actively engaging individuals, groups, organisations and states. One chapter is devoted to children and young people, another to mass media.

The UNESCO Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development was agreed upon that shall serve as an inspiration for the Member States' international and national cultural policy and be a tool for UNESCO's continued cultural work. Certain policy objectives explicitly mention children and young people.

● Journalism 2000: Child Rights and the Media, 1998-2001

In May 1998, the international conference 'Journalism 2000: Child Rights and the Media', arranged by The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), was held in Recife, Brazil. The conference focused on reporting on children.

The meeting resulted in the adoption of the **IFJ Child Rights and the Media: Guidelines for Journalists** (see also under the heading 'Reporting on Children and Young People') as a draft for debate and development among the world's journalists – a process that was expected to take three years. After regional conferences and workshops the guidelines were finally adopted at the Annual Congress of the IFJ in Seoul in 2001 and presented at the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children held at Yokohama, Japan, in 2001.

● The Oslo Challenge, 1999

In late 1998, the Norwegian Government and UNICEF responded to a request from the working group set up by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1997 (see above) to initiate a longer process that would continue this work – meaning, for example, to identify examples of good practice in fulfilling Articles 12, 13 and 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), to forge co-operative links among the many sectors involved in the issue of children and media, and to produce a checklist for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to facilitate consideration of submission by State Parties in relation to these articles. In connection with an international working group of media professionals, young people, UN and voluntary sector workers, researchers and creative thinkers from different continents, **The Oslo Challenge** was launched on the 20th of November 1999 – the 10th anniversary of the UN CRC. The

Challenge is a call to action with the aim to ensure that the overwhelming power of the media for good in the lives of children is identified, encouraged and supported, while the potential harmful effects are recognised and reduced.

● West African Regional Summit on Media for Children, 2000

In May 2000, a West African Regional Summit on Media for Children was held in Abuja, Nigeria. The Summit was co-ordinated by Glorious Diamond Productions and Children and Broadcasting Foundation for Africa (CBF; Nigeria Chapter) in collaboration with UNICEF for the organisers, African Children Broadcasting Network (ACBN). The Summit focused largely on the forthcoming 3rd World Summit on Media for Children in Greece, March 2001.

● Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth, 2001

An Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth was organised by the Korea Educational Broadcast System (EBS), the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), and UNICEF in Seoul, South Korea, in February 2001. The object was to provide television practitioners from across the region an opportunity to discuss television's critical role and responsibility in promoting the understanding of and helping to protect the rights of the region's children and young people.

The **Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth** was adopted at the Forum and an action blueprint developed. The action points are practical ideas for TV news and children's programmes recommended as starting points to better serve the interests of children in local and national television markets.

● EU Expert Seminar: Children and Young People in the New Media Landscape, 2001

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union, in co-operation with the European Commission, organised an expert seminar in Stockholm in February 2001, under the above heading. The seminar brought together representatives from governments and authorities within the Member States and Candidate countries, EU institutions, media industries and non-governmental organisations.

The theme of the seminar was the situation of minors in relation to the media, seen in the light of the rapidly evolving media landscape due to the impact of globalisation, digitalisation, the emergence of new media and the growth of media output. The issues discussed were protection of minors from harmful content on the Internet, in computer and video games and on television, and also television advertising directed at children. The full document and other material from the seminar are available on the website http://www.eu2001.se/eu2001

● **The 3rd World Summit on Media for Children, 2001**

The 3rd World Summit on Media for Children took off during March 2001 in Thessaloniki, Greece. It was produced by the European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C.) under the auspices of several institutions, supervised by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (I.O.M.), and organised by Children's Media Development (CMD). The Summit aimed at enhancing media quality and media awareness worldwide and at demonstrating the emerging relation between television, radio and the new media. The participants were above all media professionals across the world, but also researchers, media educators, politicians, voluntary organisations, and children.

There were four main themes with plenary sessions and workshops: 'Going Global', 'Media for All', 'New Technologies', and 'Children Have a Say'. The I.O.M. put forward the draft **Declaration of Thessaloniki: Commitment for the Future** as regards children and media, a declaration which was amended and finally adopted in 2002.

● **MAGIC – An Oslo Challenge Follow-Up, 2001**

In 2001, as a response to the Oslo Challenge (see above), UNICEF with the support of the Government of Norway launched the project MAGIC – a compilation of Media Actions and Good Ideas by, with and for Children. A resource pack of good ideas, which have been tried and tested by media industry players, organisations working for and with children, governments and academic/educational institutions, is continuously being put together (see http://www.unicef.org/magic) in order to be a working tool for a wider circle of people and organisations. The aim of the pack is to encourage and support new initiatives that will contribute to developing the relationship between children and the media.

Along with the resource pack, an e-mail network has been expanded and energised so that ideas and information can be shared and more players can be brought into this Oslo Challenge follow-up.

● **Asian Seminar on Children and the Internet, 2001**

In August 2001, academics, media practitioners, new media experts and NGO representatives from six Asian countries met in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss 'The Impact on Children of New Media and the Internet in Southeast Asia'. The seminar was held under the auspices of AMIC (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore) with support from the Netherlands Government, UNESCO, UNICEF, and Thailand's Public Relations Department.

The participants generated a set of recommendations to help protect children in cyberspace. Among them are educational programmes targeted towards children, parents, teachers, educational institutions, media, policy-makers, law enforcers, civil society organisations, unions, Internet service providers and telecom companies. Other recommendations comprise guiding principles for regulatory and self-regulatory envi-

ronments. The papers and recommendations are collected in Kavitha Shetty (ed.), *Kids On-line. Promoting Responsible Use and a Safe Environment on the Net in Asia.* Asian Media Information and Communication Centre & School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, 2002.

● 2nd Asian-Pacific Television Forum, 2002

In March 2002, the 2nd Asian-Pacific Television Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, attracted delegates from across the East Asia-Pacific region representing public and private sectors such as television, advertising, corporate, government and civil society organizations. The theme was 'Children's TV – Partnerships for Quality'. The Forum was organized by UNICEF and the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia (CASBAA), and hosted by the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) and Thailand's United Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). Recommendations aimed at building sustained partnerships for quality children's television were adopted at the closing session.

The recommendations included:

* Making existing producers of quality productions aware of child rights issues and urging them to incorporate those issues in the programmes they are already producing.

* Encourage and ensure the authentic participation of children and youth in the production of quality children's programming.

* Using integrated media – on-air, off-air, on-line and on-the-ground – to ensure maximum reach and relevance.

* Support for training/production workshops in technical and storytelling techniques, as well as exchange programmes for children's programme producers from developing countries with their counterparts in industrialized countries.

● The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents, 2004

The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents came off in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in April 2004. On the agenda were the rights of children and adolescents to quality media; 'Media from All, Media for All' was the overriding theme. Attendees were producers, researchers, educators, journalists, publicity and marketing professionals, students, representatives of non-governmental organisations, national and international cooperation organisations, regulatory agencies, and funding institutions. Many persons were also attending the Summit on-line via real time web casts of the principal sessions.

The Summit was organised by Rio Prefeitura Educação/MULTIRIO (Rio Prefecture of Education) and Midiativa (Centro Brasileiro de Mídia para Crianças e Adolescentes;

Brazilian Centre of Media for Children and Adolescents). On the closing day the **Rio de Janeiro Charter: Media from All, Media for All** was adopted.

● The Radio Manifesto, 2004

Three years of discussions and workshops by children and youth around the world have resulted in an international document, **The Radio Manifesto**, launched at The 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents in 2004 (see above). The Radio Manifesto – addressed by young people to radio broadcasters – began in 2001 with youth radio broadcasters at Bush Radio in Cape Town, South Africa. Since then, the World Radio Forum has helped young broadcasters in other countries in Africa and the rest of the world to develop the text of their Radio Manifesto. Youth 8 to 18 years of age contributed from townships, remote villages, and the streets of capital cities, together with the new young citizens of emerging democracies. Their Manifesto proclaims strongly to radio authorities the rights, needs, and hopes of young people.

The Radio Manifesto is available in several languages at http://www.worldradioforum.org and is open for further contributions from child and youth's radio groups.

● European Association for Viewers Interests, 2004

Television is an increasingly consolidated and globalised industry and its daily impact has continued to grow during the last years. Nevertheless, audience power and audience satisfaction have not increased proportionally, according to the European Association for Viewers Interests (EAVI). EAVI is an independent, not-for-profit association with the aim to identify, represent and advance the interests of the television viewers, and was initiated under the European Commission's eLearning initiative. Many of EAVI's objectives are of high relevance to children and young people.

In October 2004, EAVI held its first meeting, 'Advancing the European Viewers Interests', with several interest groups and associations in Lucca, Italy. Participants discussed the themes: 'viewers participation', 'media accountability' and 'media literacy and education'.

EAVI has also identified the current procedures that European citizens have at their disposal in order to effectively participate in media governance and the legal basis for citizens to exercise their rights as viewers, see http://www.eavi.org

● The Arab Child Subject to Different Cultural Influences, 2005

A regional conference on the above-mentioned theme was held at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, in September 2005. The event was organized by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, a non-governmental organization with

legal entity that was established on the initiative of HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz after a resolution of the Arab League Conference on Childhood in Tunisia in 1986.

The concern of the 2005 conference was to investigate the theme within the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that includes the cultural rights of children, and the respect of ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Attendees were experts on children's culture, researchers, governmental authorities, voluntary organizations, the press and other media, as well as children.

A printed booklet with abstracts of all speeches is available in Arabic and English and **The Arab Child Subject to Different Cultural Influences** is also the name of the Final Statement and Recommendations of the conference.

3. Festivals, Awards, Prizes – and Programme Item Exchange

Another means of raising media professionals' awareness of children, young people and media and increasing media professionals' media literacy is festivals, awards and prizes. Certain major international festivals for children's and young people's films and TV-programmes are well-established. This is true of, for example, **PRIX JEUNESSE International**, established in 1964 and held every second (even) year in Munich, Germany (http://www.prixjeunesse.de); **PRIX DANUBE** established a few years later and held every second (uneven) year in Bratislava, Slovak Republic (http://prixdanube.stv.sk); and **Japan Prize International Educational Programme Contest** starting in the 1970s and taking place each year in Japan (http://www.nhk.or.jp/jp-prize).

However, there are also many new and a growing number of film and television festivals and awards around the world, for example, the regional **Asia-Pacific Children's TV Festival** held for the first time in Beijing, China, in 2005 and the regional **PRIX JEUNESSE Iberoamericano** held in Santiago de Chile in 2003 and 2005. And there are many many more. The **International Centre of Films for Children and Young People, CIFEJ**, is continuously producing a worldwide calendar of such festivals and awards as regards film and TV programmes for, as well as by, children and young people around the world. The calendar is available on CIFEJ's website http://www.cifej.com

There are also awards for websites created by and for children and young people.

● The Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, http://www.anaktv.com

As example of another kind of reward we will bring out the ANAK TV Seal in the Philippines as a tool for making broadcasters – and the audience – sensitive about television programmes for children. It is the ordinary TV audience that is the jurors of this award.

In 1996, the major television networks in the country formed the Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television (SEAFCTV), since few TV programmes are produced locally for children in the Philippines. Children consequently watch much Western imports and adult programming. SEAFCTV was established with the aim of protecting children from media violence, cultural decay, and crass commercialism. The Foundation invented the Anak TV Seal (Anak meaning child in the local language) as an award for TV shows that promote wholesome and child-friendly, quality programming.

The process is as follows: The TV network members send their programme entries to the SEAFCTV, which in turn organizes jury screenings all over the country. In a year, it means that some 2,000 people from all sectors of society, including children, are asked to look at episodes of TV programmes and asked to evaluate the programmes

from their own point of view as elder or parent: Is this programme safe for the children in my house or community to watch?

When a programme entry makes the grade in at least two separate jury-screening rounds, it is elevated to a higher jury level in Manila consisting of a panel of ca. 100 specialists representing various disciplines. Entries that pass the second level jury in Manila are forwarded to SEAFCTV, which declares them child-sensitive enough to deserve the Anak TV Seal.

In the 2004 ceremonies, over fifty programmes were bestowed the Seal. The winning shows install the seal in the lower left corner of the frame during broadcast, announcing to viewers that the programme has received the approval of thousands of jurors nationwide and that it is safe to let children watch, even unattended by adults.

Sources: Mag Cruz Hatol, Secretary General, Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television, Quezon City, Philippines, and several online articles.

● **Programme item exchange**

Since long, European producers of programmes for children and young people have met for exchanging programme items in organised forms. **The European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** had in 2005 had such a Children's TV Programme Item Exchange scheme for 31 years, and there are also children's TV programme item exchanges within smaller regions in Europe, such as in the Nordic countries.

More recently, children's TV programme item exchanges have started in other continents. The meetings also provide opportunities for producers to exchange ideas and engage in co-operations across borders. Usually the events include workshops for training, as well. The main idea behind the exchange meetings are for members to increase the quality of children's programme, to contribute more local television content for children and young people, and through the exchange eke out financial resources since money for producing domestic programmes for young people often is all too insufficient.

In 2005, **the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)** had been running a Children's Programme Item Exchange scheme for 15 years. The workshop in 2005 was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with some forty participants from twenty-one countries and twenty-eight organisations taking part. Among the activities was a two-day workshop dedicated to children's documentary productions. Besides going through storytelling, cinematography, sound effects and ethics, best practices from the EBU documentary exchange were screened. Another half-day workshop was devoted to children's drama and became the starting point for an ABU co-production series.

The Union of National Radio and Television Organisations of Africa, URTNA, had its first meeting for starting an exchange scheme in Nairobi in 1999 and has after that established a regular Children's TV Programme Item Exchange.

In **Latin America** an Item Exchange is at present being built up under the chairmanship of Beth Carmona, President of TVE Rede Brasil. There have been two brainstorming meetings in connection with the festival PRIX JEUNESSE Iberoamericana (see above).

The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) had its first workshop and training for a coming Children's TV Programme Item Exchange Scheme in July 2005.

These regional events also attract interest from other parts of the world. Producers from outside countries attend the exchange meetings to an increasing intent and items from their companies are partly screened, as well, meaning that these regional events have the potential to become international gatherings.

4. A Positive Counterculture

The main idea behind the growing programme item exchange schemes, the increasing number of workshops and training events, festivals and awards, international and regional meetings, monitoring organisations of media contents, charters, declarations, resolutions, recommendations and guidelines – in short, means of increasing media professionals' media literacy – is a growing global awareness of that counteraction is a way to minimise offensive and potentially harmful contents in transnational media – for instance, those global satellite television channels that are driven only by commercial profit and therefore almost impossible to influence by nations. Thus, the idea is to create a positive counterculture – a plurality of domestically produced media contents of high quality aimed specifically at children and young people and that children like. Research all over the world shows that if there are such high quality, home-produced entertaining and informative TV-programmes, books, magazines, radio programmes, websites on the Internet, etc., directed at children and easily available (for example, broadcast at the most appropriate times of the day) – media contents where children recognise themselves – then children will prefer to view, and listen to, and read, and search for these contents.

Research from, for instance, Australia, Japan and Sweden shows that children prefer to watch the home-produced TV programmes, and often live drama and informative children's programming instead of packages of imported routine cartoons (e.g., Rydin 2000, von Feilitzen 2004). In these countries there are also explicit media policies to safeguard children's programming.

For example, Australia has since the late 1970s made great efforts to develop children's television (whereas television programming earlier consisted largely of cheaper imports from other English-speaking countries, mainly the U.S. and the U.K.). Regulations were introduced, and in 1982 the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) was established. Nowadays it is stipulated that domestically produced children's and adult programmes must be broadcast, and that there shall be financial and other support for such production. The Australian Communications and Media Authority also plays an important role in regulating the quality of children's programming.

A joint research report released in 2000 and commissioned by the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Children's Television Foundation, and the Australian Film Finance Corporation (*Twenty Years of C*, see http://www.acma.gov.au/ACMAINTER.65640:STANDARD:1620029812:pc=PC_91032) shows significant improvement in the quantity, quality, diversity and Australianness of children's programmes on commercial television over 20 years, i.e., since regulation was introduced. In particular, domestically produced children's dramas have increased. The regulation from 1979 imposes C (children's) classification and quota requirements for the broadcast of C programmes.

Thus, media regulation or other media policies in a supportive rather than a prohibiting sense can without doubt be very successful. Leaving regulations aside, counteraction has started occuring in other ways. Tim Westcott (2002) questions if the

strategy of global satellite channels for children – particularly the U.S. based Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney Channel – also will mean global domination. Among other things, he underlines that competition from these three big channels has mobilised local players. Many European countries have started children's channels or branded blocks of their own. Local players have also learnt from the strategies of the U.S. players in developing a more concerted approach to rights ownership. In addition, an increasing part of animation is now being produced in Europe and Canada, beside the U.S.A. and Japan that previously completely overshadowed the market. An important reason for the growing number of animated children's programmes from other countries on the international arena is public policy initiatives (for example, in France and Canada), which give financial backing to help the development of domestic production. Support schemes have also aided development in other countries like Germany and Australia and were in 2002 under consideration in Asian countries, notably China and South Korea, the author says.

A final example of counteraction is the new children's channel JCC – Al Jazeera Children's Channel – a pan-Arabic channel funded in 1995 by Quatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science and Community Development. On JCC's website (http://www.qf.edu.qa/output/page469.asp) one can read:

> *In view of the existing state of television, where children are exposed to violent and inappropriate material on a daily basis, QF has the willingness and the capacity to offer a vivid and compelling alternative to the current trends in television broadcasting. More than a channel, JCC is an innovative concept for Arab television. JCC is an ideal balance between education and entertainment for the Arab family.*

JCC has developed TV programmes for the age groups: 3-6 years of age, 7-10 years of age and 11-15 years of age, and says that 40-45 per cent are produced in-house with a minimum of six hours a day consisting of original and fresh programmes. JCC will be supported by an interactive website for children and has already set up a website for the 3- to 6-year-olds.

V Internet Literacy

When talking about measures aiming to restrict undesirable content and its influences on the Internet, one has to distinguish between *illegal* content on the one hand and *offensive and harmful* content on the other. While there are laws against illegal content, measures against offensive and harmful content mostly consists of awareness-raising or media literacy methods among Internet users and Internet service and content providers.

Different countries define differently what is illegal. As a rule of thumb, what is illegal in society is also illegal on the Internet. In practice this means that illegal content on the Internet often refers to child pornography, extreme violence, political extremism, incitement to hatred against minority or other groups in society, economic crimes and serious encroachment on privacy, business firms, authorities and the nation.

However, it is important to remember that what is illegal in one country can be protected as free speech in another. Illegal Internet content may also be produced in one country, stored in a second and accessed in a third, complicating law enforcement.

The law enforcement agencies are in charge of handling illegal content. Often the police collaborates in this respect with the Internet Service Providers. Internet users can report illegal content they find on the Internet to these agents. In several countries there are also hotlines to facilitate such reporting (see further on in this section under the heading 'INHOPE').

In contrast to *illegal* content, *harmful* content on the Internet is defined by the European Union as content which parents, teachers or other adults responsible for children consider harmful to them. Definitions consequently vary from one culture – and one person – to the next, EU says (http://europa.eu.int/ information_society/doc/factsheets/018-saferinternetplus.pdf).

There is, however, reason to distinguish *harmful* content from *offensive* content. While children and adults mostly can tell themselves which contents have *offended* them, the question of what is *harmful* is not always that obvious. A person might, e.g., be deeply involved in, and find pleasure from, violent games or pornography, although too much involvement in such Internet contents might reinforce and aggravate the person's already tangled living circumstances. In the same vein, stereotyping of, for example, gender and minority groups might not be experienced as immediately offensive, but constant patterns of stereotypes

in the media contents might harmfully contribute to persons' prejudiced views of gender and minority groups in the long run.

Existing research on the influences of use of the Internet and its various contents is mostly limited to direct questions to Internet users about what they themselves find *offensive* (have made them upset, what they fear, and the like), while in-depth research on possible *harmful* influences of the Internet is still in embryo.

Offensive and potentially *harmful* contents on the Internet may be various kinds of portrayals of physical violence, pornography, stereotyping of or expressed hate or racism addressed to societal groups and nations, cyberbullying and harrassment, excessive marketing, etc., including consequences in real life (such as destructive personal meetings). Offensive and potentially harmful contents on the Internet are, thus, physical, psychic and structural violence and oppression in a wide sense.

Although we know much more about offensive than about harmful Internet contents, adults do often not know that Internet contents have offended their children. Several research studies with both children and parents show that parents are often not aware of what their children are doing on the Internet. According to, for example, the SAFT project (Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools), supported by the European Union's (EU) Safer Internet Action Plan and conducted in Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden in 2002-2003, many parents did not know that children had come across pornography and sexual material on the Internet (which made some of the children upset), that many children had received unwanted sexual comments on the Internet, or that a great deal of the children had met someone in real life whom they first got to know on-line (persons that in some cases turned out to be adults although they had introduced themselves as a child on the Internet). Relatively many of the children had not told their parents about these happenings (Larsson 2004).

New similar surveys about the Internet (and mobile phones) conducted or commissioned by public and private companies are continually released. For example, a special Eurobarometer report, 'Safer Internet', was published in May, 2006, presenting field work during December 2005-January 2006 in the twenty-five EU Member States (and the four accession and candidate countries) (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/eurobarometer/index_en.htm).

According to this Eurobarometer survey, half of the parents in the member states say their children (under 18 years of age) use the Internet (ranging from 24% to 85% in the different countries). And on average, just over one third of the parents say that their child owns a mobile phone (ranging from 28% to 57% in the countries in question).

Nearly one parent in five believes their child has come across harmful or illegal content while on-line, and this belief increases with the child's age.

Furthermore, almost half of the respondents say filtering or blocking tools are applied, most likely among parents of younger children. A quarter of the parents regularly sit with their child, which is also most common with younger children. However, close to half of the parents state they never do. Two out of five parents have rules for the use of Internet, mostly when children are aged 10 to 13.

The most usual rule is prohibition to visit certain sites, followed by limited time spent on the Internet. Not to give out personal information is the third most common rule among the group declaring they have set rules. The rules vary with the age of the child.

The survey also found that there is a widespread interest in obtaining more information about safer Internet among the parents. Schools, Internet service providers and the media are the senders that parents and caretakers are most interested in receiving information from.

To take another recent survey example, Common Sense Media – a national organisation in the U.S.A. led by concerned parents and individuals with experience in child advocacy, public policy, education, media and entertainment – published a poll in June 2006. This national poll contained questions to parents with Internet access and who have 11-16 year old children who go online at least once per week. The findings indicate that the number one media concern among these U.S. parents has shifted from television to the Internet, with 85 per cent saying that the Internet poses the greatest risk to their children among all forms of media. (The poll comes in advance of a national public education campaign by Common Sense Media targeting parents) (http://www.commonsensemedia.org/news).

All over the world, different kinds of public, private and voluntary organisations and networks are offering advice and help to children, parents, teachers/media educators, librarians and others about how especially children and young people shall behave safely on the Internet, while at the same time getting most out of the medium. There is also advice for and collaboration with the Internet service providers and content providers/webmasters, as well as for and with policy makers.

The target groups are, thus, most of society. And the advice or awareness raising and Internet literacy measures take many forms – such as, for example,

- online/paper booklets/fact sheets for parents, as well as community events, campaigns, and trainings in real life

- online/paper information tool kits, trainings, lesson plans, suggestions of activities, and awards for schools and classes

- educational games, quizzes, story telling competitions, blogs, and 'contracts to sign' for children

- offers of filtering and rating systems for all Internet users

- Public Service Announcements on radio and television

- hotlines for users' reporting of offensive or potentially illegal material

- recommendations to service and content providers on ethics, guidelines, and codes of conduct

- research

- conferences and round tables for relevant agents and groups involved.

Since the medium is the Internet, information about all these awareness raising or Internet literacy methods are most often available on the websites/portals of the organisations and networks engaged.

The websites or portals, in turn, are usually not targeting just one group or offering just one measure but are often sites comprising several subsites with advice for increasing the levels of Internet literacy among different groups. It is, therefore, not feasible or fair to organise the following text after special target groups (such as parents, children, media educators, Internet service providers, etc.) or after special awareness raising measures. Instead, we have selected just a few of hundreds of organisations and networks on Internet safety from different parts of the world to give some illustrating examples of their services.

1. Europe

● **European Union Safer Internet Programme,** http://
europa.eu.int/saferinternet

In 1998, the EU adopted *The Recommendation on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity in Audiovisual and Information Services* (98/560/EC) that provides national legislative guidelines regarding illegal and harmful content over all electronic media.[1]

With this recommendation as a basis, the European Commission launched the *Safer Internet programme* (1999-2004). It covered technologies as diverse as 3G, online games and chat rooms, and dealt with content ranging from child pornography to racism. By the end of the programme, it had financed over 80 projects with the aims to

- create a safer environment via a European network of hot-lines to report illegal content
- encourage self-regulation and codes of conduct
- develop filtering and rating systems
- encourage awareness actions.

The follow-up, also launched by the European Commission, is called *Safer Internet plus programme* (2005-2008). It will support co-operation among the different actors – from mobile operators to child welfare NGOs. The programme aims to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user, as part of a coherent approach by the European Union.

There are four action lines:

i) Hotlines: fighting illegal content

Hotlines are set up in order to facilitate for people to report illegal content on the Internet. Since the host website or content provider in many cases is in another country, cross-border networks of hotlines are essential.

---

[1] Other EU policy documents in this area are:

– The *Directive on Electronic Commerce* (2000/31/EC, June 2000) regulating important aspects of the liability of intermediary service providers for 'mere conduit', caching and hosting.

– The *Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications* (2002/58/EC, October 2003), fighting against spam.

– The *Framework Decision on child pornography* (2004/68/JHA, December 2003), setting out minimum requirements for Member States in the definition of offences and for sanctions.

ii) Raising awareness

Measures are taken in order to raise awareness of safer Internet. In this respect the Commission use multiplier organisations and electronic dissemination channels. It also considers using mass media as well as distributing information to schools and Internet cafés. For example, a European network of *'awareness nodes'* has been set up. Nodes are carrying out awareness actions and programmes in co-operation with concerned parties at national, regional and local levels. The ambition is to extend the network. Another example is the *Safer Internet Day* that took place for the first time on 8 February 2005 in 30 countries.

iii) Unwanted and harmful content

Technologies can be developed to limit the amount of unwanted and harmful content users receive, and help them manage it when they do. Projects will

- assess the effectiveness and support the development of filtering technology – a call for tenders was published in December 2004
- improve information exchanges and best practices on effectively fighting spam
- continue work on content rating, and give opportunities for child welfare specialists and technical experts to develop tools for protecting minors.

iv) Promoting a safer environment

EU emphasises a self-regulatory approach among Internet service providers and allows different codes of conduct. However, these codes should share essential features such as effectiveness, fairness and transparency. To exchange best practices and encourage dialogue, the Safer Internet programme has set up the *Safer Internet Forum*, where the industry, child welfare organisations and policy makers can discuss safer Internet topics. Furthermore, a first *Call for proposals* was published in September 2005.

Here follow a few examples of the Safer Internet plus programme more in detail.

● **Insafe,** http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/index.htm

Insafe, mentioned above and funded under the *Safer Internet plus programme*, is meant to be Europe's Internet safety information resource. Insafe is a network of hitherto (2006) 23 'nodes' in 21 countries (mostly within the European Union but also Australia, Canada, Bulgaria, Russia and Singapore). On Insafe's website we can read that

Insafe is a network of national nodes that coordinate Internet safety awareness in Europe. The mission of the Insafe cooperation network is to empower citizens to use the Internet, as well as other information and communication technologies, safely and effectively.

Insafe promotes positive, ethical use of online information and communication technologies. The network calls for shared responsibility for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and youths, by government, educators, parents, media, industry and all other relevant actors.

> *Insafe partners work closely together to share best practice, information and resources. The network will interact with industry, schools and families with the aim of empowering people to bridge the digital divide between home and school and between generations.*
>
> *Insafe partners will monitor and address emerging trends, while seeking to reinforce the image of the Internet as a place to learn. It will raise awareness on reporting harmful or illegal content and services.*
>
> *Through close cooperation between partners and other actors, Insafe aims to raise Internet safety-awareness standards and support the development of information literacy for all.*

Furthermore, Insafe's web site gives information and advice for parents and educators about, for example,

- Blogging
- Chat
- CyberBullying
- Hate speech/Racism
- Instant messaging
- Mobiles
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Phishing/Spoofing
- Privacy
- Spam
- Spyware
- Virus

Insafe recommends these links for further information about *CyberBullying*:
http://www.cyberbullying.org
http://www.cyberbully.org
Insafe recommends these links for further information about *Online gambling*:
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/olgamble.htm (U.S. Federal Trade Commission)
http://www.gamcare.org.uk (Gamcare – pages dedicated to young people)

● **INHOPE,** http://www.inhope.org/en/index.html

Besides *Insafe* (see above), that carries out awareness actions (events, trainings) and run websites to inform parents, children and teachers on the safe use of Internet, the *Safer Internet programme* is funding *INHOPE* – the International Association of Internet Hotlines. INHOPE was founded in 1999 under the EU Safer Internet Action Plan and represents (in 2006) Internet hotlines in 23 countries over the world, supporting them

in their aim to respond to reports of illegal content from Internet users to make the Internet safer.

According to INHOPE the last number of years has seen an increase in illegal content online.

If the content reported is found illegal, the hotline will refer this onto law enforcement agencies and also to the Internet service provider for removal. INHOPE member hotlines collaborate and have the support of law enforcement agencies, local governments and child welfare organisations.

Once the source is traced hotlines pass reports over to the relevant country. For example a case of illegal content reported in Germany but traced to France, will be passed onto the French hotline for further investigation and action. For countries where there are no hotlines, the report will be passed onto the local law enforcement agency.

INHOPE Members

Country	Membership Status	Organisation Name	Web Address	Membership Date
Australia	Full	ACMA	www.au.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Austria	Full	Stopline	www.at.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Belgium	Full	Child Focus	www.be.inhope.org	2001-01-09
Brazil	Provisional	hotline.br	www.br.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Canada	Provisional	cybertip.ca	www.ca.inhope.org	2005-05-12
Cyprus	Provisional	Safeweb	www.cy.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Denmark	Full	Red Barnet	www.dk.inhope.org	2002-01-05
Finland	Full	STC Finland	www.fi.inhope.org	2002-01-09
France	Full	AFA	www.fr.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	ECO	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	FSM	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Germany	Full	jugendschutz.net	www.de.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Greece	Full	SafeNet	www.gr.inhope.org	2004-02-05
Hungary	Provisional	MATISZ	www.hu.inhope.org	2005-05-12
Iceland	Full	Barnaheill	www.is.inhope.org	2001-01-09
Ireland	Full	ISPAI	www.ie.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Italy	Full	STC Italy	www.it.inhope.org	2003-01-23
Lithuania	Provisional	BITE Lietuva	www.lt.inhope.org	2005-10-19
Netherlands	Full	Meldpunt	www.nl.inhope.org	1999-11-01
Poland	Provisional	NASK	www.pl.inhope.org	2005-01-28
South Korea	Full	ICEC	www.kr.inhope.org	2003-10-19
Spain	Full	Protegeles	www.es.inhope.org	2002-01-05
Taiwan	Full	ECPAT Taiwan	www.tw.inhope.org	2005-05-12
United Kingdom	Full	Internet Watch Foundation	www.uk.inhope.org	1999-11-01
United States	Full	Cybertipline	www.us.inhope.org	1999-11-01

Source: http://www.inhope.org/en/index.html

● **Safer Internet Forum,** http://europa.eu.int/information_society/ activities/ sip/si_forum/forum_june_2006/index_en.htm

Within the Safer Internet programme, there are also conferences and research projects. For example, the *Safer Internet Forum* in Luxembourg in June 2006 is open for all

interested. The meeting will focus on two topics: 'Children's use of new media' and 'Blocking access to illegal content: child sexual abuse images'.

The half-day devoted to children's use of new media will analyse the results of the Eurobarometer survey (see the introduction to this section 'Internet Literacy' and the Mediappro project (Applied research for media education) (http://europa.eu.int/ information_society/activities/sip/projects/awareness/mediappro/index_en.htm). Discussion will focus on awareness-raising tools and ideas on how to exploit research results for practical awareness-raising work. During the other half-day, the problematic of notice and take-down of illegal content blocking access to child sexual abuse images and server-level filtering of illegal content will be addressed.

The purpose of the *Safer Internet Forum* 2006 is to contribute to improve the common understanding of these issues at European level. As was the case in 2005, participants will include representatives of industry, law enforcement authorities, child welfare organisations and policy makers.

● **Call for proposals,** http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/ call/proposals_2006/index_en.htm

Call for proposals are launched under the *Safer Internet plus programme* (as they were under the *Safer Internet programme*). Date for publication of a new one is end of June 2006.

● **Safer Internet Day**

The first *Safer Internet Day* took place in 2005. Sixty-five organisations from 30 countries took part. This event included the launch of a storytelling competition for children.

In 2006, *Safer Internet Day* took place on 7 February with around 100 organisations in 37 countries across the world. Among the events, *Insafe*, the EU network for Internet safety awareness (see above), supported by MSN, organised a global 'blogathon' for safer Internet. This meant that a range of organisations active in promoting Internet safety and special guests posted entries on a blog and invited comments from visitors, children, schools and parents. The blog, with content in several languages, had a geographical focus that moved west through the global time zones, from New Zealand to Argentina, during the day.

The press release announcing the 'blogathon' said that

> according to blog tracking site Technorati, 70,000 new blogs are created every day, many by young people. A Guardian/ICM poll in the U.K. found a third of young people published content online on a personal blog or website. Blogs offer exciting possibilities for education and self-expression. However many young people are unaware of important ethical, legal and safety issues. Posting of personal information and publishing of copyright material are among the online practices that have caused concern. (http:// www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/insafe20060118.htm)

The aim of the blogathon was to raise awareness about such issues and enable parents, teachers and young people in particular to share experiences and cultural attitudes about their use of new technologies.

Other events ranged from interactive activities such as quizzes, online games, storytelling competitions, and round table discussions. In Belgium, the Netherlands and Lithuania, children reversed roles by giving their teachers, parents and grandparents lessons in how to use Internet and surf safely. In Norway and Malta results of recent surveys were launched (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/news_events/events/si_day/index_en.htm).

● Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int

The advice to parents, teachers, other media educators, young people, etc., is – as mentioned – often available in the form of booklets and fact sheets on the organisations' websites and sometimes in paper versions. One example of such a booklet is produced by the Council of Europe:[2]
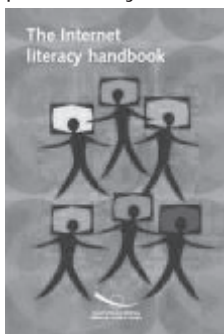
The Internet Literacy Handbook – A guide for parents, teachers and young people issued by Council of Europe (Media Division, Directorate General II – Human Rights & Good Governance in the Information Society Project, Directorate General of Political Affairs).

The second edition of this booklet, updated in January 2006, is available in English and French (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Media/hbk_en.html). In early 2006, it consists of 21 fact sheets but is an ongoing project, in that the fact sheets will continuously be updated and new ones added, and in that users are welcome to participate in the project by sending feedback or ideas on classroom activities, best practices or pertinent links to Council of Europe at: media.IS@coe.int

The booklet offers technical know-how and highlights ethical issues, provides ideas for creative activities and best practices on the Internet, not least classroom activities, and points out certain dangers in combination with giving recommendations of how to avoid these dangers. There are also several links to other Internet resources.

At present the fact sheets deals with the following aspects:

- Getting connected
- Setting up websites
- Searching for information
- Games
- Distance learning
- Labelling and filtering

---

[2] The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest political organisation, founded in 1949. It:
- groups together 46 countries, including 21 countries from Central and Eastern Europe,
- has application from 1 more country (Bélarus),
- has granted observer status to 5 more countries (the Holy See, the United States, Canada, Japan and Mexico),
- is distinct from the 25-nation European Union, but no country has ever joined the Union without first belonging to the Council of Europe,
- has its headquarters in Strasbourg, in north-eastern France.

- Portals
- E-mail
- Spam
- Chat
- Newsgroups
- World-wide libraries
- Music and images on the Internet
- Creativity
- Privacy
- Security
- Bullying and harassment
- Shopping online
- Becoming an active e-citizen
- Mobile technology
- Blogs

To take but one example, the Council of Europe's fact sheet about labelling and filtering says, among other things:

Labelling

Labelling refers to a quality-assurance tag or label displayed on software and websites, or integrated into the content of websites. It ensures that the product meets the criteria and standards designated by rating agencies such as Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) and the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA).

Sites are labelled in order to protect minors, increase public trust and use of online transactions, and also to comply with legal standards. When labelling website content, a code is written into the webpage html, thereby detailing its contents so that the page can be rated. This rating – which is invisible on the page itself, details the nature of the content and is detected by filtering mechanisms, which will subsequently either block or load the page.

Websites can also be branded with 'Quality Labels' and 'Trustmarks', labels which signify that specific regulations have been met. These regulations often include prescriptions about secure transactions. Two well-known quality labels include Verisign, http://www.verisign.com and Trust-e, http://www.truste.org

Filtering

Filtering is the process of detecting and blocking inappropriate content on the Internet. It can be done within browsers and proxies, or by installing software censors.

An alternative to filtering is 'white listing', whereby access is allowed only to certain pre-approved sites.

Education

Filters can be valuable in reducing the risk of students accessing inappropriate or harmful material.

The issues raised by labelling and filtering practices are rich in material for citizenship and/or social studies themes. Start a debate on the subject of online filtering. Is it an acceptable and necessary form of censorship?

Issues

The labelling and rating of websites remains a largely voluntary practice, except where countries have laws to enforce certain standards.

Currently only a small percentage of pages are labelled by the authors.

Filtering software-services label pages according to their value systems and social agendas.

Filters may block useful sites relating to contraception or sex education due to certain key words they contain.

Some countries block sites of opposing political parties or ideologies.

Some people consider filtering as a form of censorship and therefore against the spirit of the Internet. Others claim that if filter software did not exist, governments would be under pressure to regulate online content.

How to

To label content you have created on a site of your own, follow instructions on a rating site such as ICRA at http://www.icra.org

You will be asked to classify the material according to a number of set criteria.

Most browsers can be set to filter out specific sites. For example, in Microsoft Explorer, this option can be found under 'security options'.

Very few computers are sold with filter software pre-installed. You will need to purchase a dedicated filter program for a more sophisticated approach to filtering sites. A number of products are available on the market.

Most filter programs will allow you to specify what types of content you wish to filter or allow.

Best practice

Have a close look at how a filter works before you install it. Does it make any ideological or cultural decisions in its filtering that you do not agree with?

Use electronic aids with discrimination, and do not believe the hype. Test product claims against personal experience.

Talk to students, parents and staff about their usage and needs, and do so regularly. Creating an open discussion environment will do more to add value to your learners' Internet experience than censorship or witch-hunts.

Consider 'white listing' options – allowing access only to approved sites – for the youngest Internet users.

Experts recommend that parents should take an interest in their children's online activities and spend time online together.

Children and young people should be encouraged to talk about inappropriate material they find on the Internet. Report potentially illegal content to a hotline: http://www.inhope.org

2. Asia-Pacific

⬤ **NetAlert, Australia,** http://www.netalert.net.au

NetAlert is Australia's Internet safety advisory body, a not-for-profit community organisation established in late 1999 by the Australian government to provide independent advice and education on managing access to online content. The organisation works with authorities, the Internet industry and community organisations. NetAlert's vision is a safer Internet experience, particularly for young people and their families.

  NetAlert's services are comprehensive and include, among other things:

- *advice* to *parents*, *schools*, *libraries*, *children* and the *industry.* The website can be accessed in seven languages (English, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, Greek, Vietnamese and Japanese).

- services for *reporting offensive material*.

- *research* on filtering and technologies for Internet Service Providers, Internet content hosts and their clients.

- *awareness and education campaigns*. From August 2005 to June 2007, 'NetAlert Expo' travels around Australia promoting Internet safety, visiting every state and territory and holding events in local communities. The events are tailored to suit each different audience and take different formats (a presentation or workshop for example) and are run in various venues (such as community centres, libraries or schools).

- *different subsites for different audiences* (parents, children, schools, libraries and the industry). For children, for example, there are two different sites with fun, games and adventures surrounding the advice – Netty's world for young children and CyberQuoll for older kids.

- *a helpline* answering e-mails or telephone calls about advice on Internet safety.

- *free information kits* on Internet safety and free resources and materials to schools, community organisations, libraries and other interested organisations and individuals. For example, NetAlert has sent Internet safety information materials to every school in Australia.

- *'awards for excellence'* for which schools and classes might apply if they have innovative ideas about Internet safety.

- *community service announcements* for television and radio during 2005, announcements that highlighted the dangers that children face in chat rooms and some of the words and terms that children may be exposed to when they are online.

- *conferences*, for example, an international conference in 2002 designed to provide a forum for policy makers, governments, the IT industry, community groups and the broader Australian community to participate together in 'growing Australia online'.

● **PAGi, Singapore,** http://www.pagi.org.sg – **in 2006 forming into CAC**

Singapore is a country with one of the world's highest computer take-up, Internet usage and Internet household penetration rate.[3] While many Singaporean parents perceive the Internet as an essential educational tool, there are concerns about problems and potential dangers on the Internet such as pornographic web sites, cyber predators and Internet addiction.

Since 1996, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (http://www.mda. gov.sg) has established an Internet regulatory framework to meet these concerns. The authority has adopted a three-pronged approach involving collaboration between government, industry and the public – (a) instituting a light-touch regulatory framework; (b) encouraging industry self-regulation; and (c) promoting on-line safety awareness through public education.

The Parents Advisory Group for the Internet (PAGi), a volunteer group formed in 1999, has been active in implementing Internet public education initiatives. PAGi partnered the Internet industry and government agencies to

- promote safe surfing, and educate parents about online safety

- advise and give feedback to the industry, on tools for online safety

- recommend safe and fun sites for children

- help familiarise parents with the Internet so that they can supervise their children better

- keep up with developments in child online protection

- educate children on safety in the Internet.

PAGi embarked on research in 2001 and 2003 in order to study the level of awareness Singaporean parents and children have of Internet problems and potential dangers, as well as their concerns for these problems and potential dangers. The studies also examined children's and parents' perceptions of measures or strategies to safeguard children from these problems and dangers.

---

[3] The text about PAGi is partly from PAGi's web site, partly from Khoo, Cheong and Liau (2004)

The findings of the first study had three implications for PAGi. Firstly, the organisation had to double its efforts in reaching non-English speaking parents who were less aware of the importance of Internet safety. Secondly, as the results indicated that teenagers, especially those between 13 and 15 are more resistant to parental advice, PAGi could play an important role in encouraging parents of pre-teen children to take advantage of pre-teen years to inculcate healthy surfing. Thirdly, a deeper understanding of the 13 to 15 year-olds was required in order for public education efforts reaching teenagers to be more effective.

In response to the findings, PAGi embarked on a series of initiatives to aggressively reach out to the non-English speaking parents. Some of these initiatives included:

- *Participation in community events* – to create greater awareness of the importance of Internet safety especially among heartlanders. PAGi's volunteers were mobilised to speak to participants about Internet safety and, at the same time, multi-lingual brochures were distributed to reinforce the Internet safety messages.

- *'Making the Internet Journey Safe' multi-lingual training* – PAGi co-developed training materials with Childnet International, United Kingdom, to empower parents, and these materials were translated into Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Training sessions were conducted through schools and companies.

- *'Caught in the Web' VCD* – PAGi produced a multi-lingual educational video in VCD format, a medium that is easily accessible for non-English speaking parents. The production marked the birth of SPEEDi, PAGi's mascot and everybody's cyber buddy. SPEEDi starred as a guide for the family that encountered various Internet pitfalls.

- *PAGi Families Week '03* – The culmination of PAGi's efforts to create awareness and educate the heartlander parents was PAGi Families Week '03, comprising a series of events aimed to highlight the positive and safe use of the Internet. Some of these included: story-telling sessions at libraries; road shows at the heartland shopping malls; Cyber Families Race, a virtual and on-line treasure hunt for families; and Cool Kidz Search '03, a pageant in search for Singapore's most Internet-savvy teenagers. PAGi also invited international speakers from Canada and U.K. to share their knowledge and expertise on Internet safety.

Although PAGi reached out to almost 60,000 parents, the second study showed that there had been no significant changes over time in teenagers' Internet behaviour and parents' understanding of their children's on-line activities. And still, the teenagers at most risk would be those aged 13 to 15. At the same time, the findings showed that parental involvement plays a significant role in their children's safety on the Internet. These findings were in accordance with other international research.

One of several conslusions was, however, that Internet public education initiatives cannot be shouldered by one agency alone but rather requires that of a multi-prong approach involving inter-agency and international collaboration.

In 2006, a new committee, Community Advisory Committee (CAC), will be formed. The CAC brings together the Parents Advisory Group for the internet (PAGi), Cyber Wellness Task Force (CWTF) and the Public Education Sub-Committee (PESC) under

one committee. The CAC will advise the Media Development Authority on ways to cultivate greater media appreciation amongst the public as well as promote positive use of new media such as High-Definition TV. Specifically, the CAC will provide feedback, input and champion projects that will help the MDA achieve its community objective of cultivating a media literate population – particularly in the light of emerging new media technologies.

3. North America

● **The Media Awareness Network, Canada,** http://
   www.media-awareness.ca

The Media Awareness Network (Mnet) is a Canadian non-profit organization that has developed media literacy programs since 1996. Members of Mnet's team have backgrounds in education, journalism, mass communications, and cultural policy. The network promotes media and Internet education by producing online programs and resources, working in partnership with Canadian and international organizations, and speaking to audiences across Canada and around the world. MNet's programs are funded primarily through the contributions of private sector sponsors and the Government of Canada, with additional support from the annual memberships of individuals, non-profit organizations and small businesses.

Hitherto MNet has focused its efforts on equipping *adults* (parents, teachers, librarians) with information and tools to help young people to understand how the media work, how the media may affect their lifestyle choices and the extent to which they, as consumers and citizens, are being well informed. MNet also provides reference materials for use by adults and youth alike in examining media issues from a variety of perspectives.

However, the Internet literacy section – Web Awareness Canada – will expand to include Internet literacy resources designed for use by *young people*.

Already now, there are *educational games* about Internet safety for children and young people. For younger children of school age there are stories about the CyberPigs – how they learn about online marketing, and about protecting their privacy as they surf the Internet, and when they explore the world of chat rooms and learn to distinguish between fact and fiction and to detect bias and harmful stereotyping in online content.

An interactive online game takes older students through a series of mock sites that test their savvy surfing skills. The game ends with an online quiz, that gives students an even more in-depth level of information. Another animated module takes students on a mission from Planet Earth to assess the varying degrees of prejudice, misinformation, and hate propaganda on the 'Galactic Web'.

There is also a *Media toolkit for youth* designed to help young people understand what drives the news industry, why youth stereotyping happens and how they can access the news media – including the Internet to make their voices and issues heard.

In sum, MNet has developed the following core programs offered on its web site:

Media education

- *The Parents section* offers tips for talking to kids about the media, and advice on managing media use in the home.

- *The Educators section* includes teaching units and supporting materials designed to Canadian provincial media education outcomes for grades K-12. (There are more than 300 lesson plans for educators to use in classrooms.)

- *The Media Issues section* examines media-related topics such as stereotyping, violence, privacy, marketing to children, the portrayal of diversity in the media, and online hate.

Web Awareness Canada

- This program uses a delivery model based on partnerships with public libraries, the education sector, parent groups, and community organizations. Its primary focus has been to help bring *teachers* and *librarians* up to speed on the issues emerging as young people go online. Mnet has done this by licensing workshop tools that can be purchased for professional development. The workshop topics include online safety, protecting personal privacy, authenticating information, and marketing to young people.

- As mentioned, this Internet literacy section will expand to include resources designed for use by *young people.*

Research

- In the beginning of the 2000s MNet developed its *Young Canadians In A Wired World* (YCWW) research program in order to build an extensive database about the role of the Internet in the lives of young people. The second stage of the research project is (2006) under planning.

● **The Federal Trade Commission, U.S.A.,** http://www.ftc.gov/ bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec13.htm

The Federal Trade Commission, the United States consumer protection agency, urges parents to talk to their tweens and teens about social networking sites, and elaborates in a parents' guide these issues for using such sites safely:

- In some circumstances, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and Rule require social networking sites to get parental consent before they collect, maintain, or use personal information from children under age 13.

- Keep the computer in an open area.

- Use the Internet with your kids.

- Talk to your kids about their online habits. If they use social networking sites, tell them why it's important to keep information like their name, Social Security number, address, phone number, and family financial information — like bank or credit card account numbers — to themselves. Remind them that they should not share that information about other people in the family or about their friends, either.

- Your children should be cautious about sharing other information too.

- Make sure your kids' screen names don't say too much about them.

- Use privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your child's website.

- Your kids should post only information that you – and they – are comfortable with others seeing – and knowing.

- Remind your kids that once they post information online, they can't take it back.

- Warn your kids about the dangers of flirting with strangers online.

- Tell your children to trust their gut if they have suspicions.

- If you're concerned that your child is engaging in risky online behavior, you can search the blog sites they visit

- Check site privacy policies.

For full advice, see http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec13.htm

⬤ American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S.A, http://www.aap.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics gives the following Internet advice to parents:

Setting Rules for Internet Use

Just like you have rules for how your children should deal with strangers and which TV shows, movies, and videos they are allowed to watch, it is important to have a set of rules when they use the Internet. Be wary of people on the Net who can be mean, rude, or even criminal. To keep your child's time on the Internet safe, productive, and fun, follow these guidelines:

- Set limits on the amount of time your child can spend on-line each day or week. Consider using an alarm clock or timer in case you or your child loses track of time.

- Do not let surfing the Net take the place of homework, playing outside or with friends, and pursuing other interests.

- Make sure your child knows that people on-line are not always who they say they are and that on-line information is not necessarily private.

Teach your child the following:

- NEVER give out personal information (including name, address, phone number, age, race, school name or location, or friends' names) without your permission.

- NEVER use a credit card on-line without your permission.

- NEVER share passwords, even with friends.

- NEVER arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone she meets on-line, unless you approve of the meeting and go with your child to a public place. Teenagers in particular need to be aware of the risks.

- NEVER respond to messages that make her feel confused or uncomfortable. Your child should ignore the sender, end the communication, and tell you or another trusted adult right away.

- NEVER use bad language or send mean messages on-line.

Source: http://www.aap.org/pubed/ZZZQJ9C0B7C.htm?&sub_cat=17

● CyberAngels. U.S.A., http://www.cyberangels.org

CyberAngels says it might be the oldest association fighting for Internet safety since it was formed in 1995 in the U.S., a mere year and a-half after the World Wide Web was launched. The volunteers of CyberAngels are comprised mainly of law enforcement officers, information technology specialists, and educators from all over the world, as well as parents, librarians, technical writers and legal professionals. The association is especially focused on online criminal activity.

CyberAngels has:

- *Programs for Schools:* Internet safety information for educators through online classes and published materials and speakers for schools and public libraries.

- *Programs for Families:* assistance to children and parents on a wide range of concerns relating to Internet use.

- *Victim Assistance:* assistance to victims of the Internet and computer crimes such as stalking, harrassment, identity theft and fraud

- *Internet 101:* a wide variety of materials related to general Internet knowledge, online security, safety and privacy.

4. International

● Internet Content Rating Association, http://www.icra.org

ICRA The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA), registered since 1999 in the U.K. and U.S.A, is an international, non-profit organization of Internet leaders working to develop a safer internet through self-regulation. ICRA addresses mainly webmasters and parents.

Content providers (webmasters) can label their websites by using 'the ICRA questionnaire', that is, they check which of the elements in the questionnaire are present or absent from their web sites (such as details of violent representations, sexual content, etc.). This generates a small file containing the labels that is linked to the content on one or more domains. The ICRA questionnaire can be completed in several different languages; however, the labels themselves are expressed as computer code.

Users, especially parents of young children, can then use free filtering software to allow or disallow access to web sites based on the information declared in the label. Parents can create their own block or allow lists, set up different filtering profiles for different family members and easily override a blocked site that they deem appropriate for their child.

In order to create a comprehensive filtering system that will block or allow access to websites, including unlabelled sites, ICRA also allows users to install additional modules that can use other methods to filter Internet access.

On its website ICRA also turns to children. For example, there is a list of advice to children such as keeping personal details (name, adress, password) private, asking for parents' permission if wanting to meet someone in real life that one has met online, and telling a parent or teacher if coming across anything that makes the child uncomfortable.

Furthermore children are encouraged to print *The Children's Bill of Rights for the Internet*, produced by Childnet International (see below).

There is also *The Family Online Internet Safety Contract* to be printed and signed by Child and Parent on how they should behave towards each other as regards the Internet.

● Childnet International, http://www.childnet-int.org

Childnet International Childnet International, established in 1996, is a non-profit organisation based in the U.K. working with others to 'help make the Internet a great and safe place for children'. Childnet works in three main areas of access, awareness, and protection & policy. This web site is another portal offering information and advice in many different forms to, above all, children, parents and educators.

To single out only a few of Childnet International's activities, there is the well-known *Childnet Academy*, a unique competition for young people around the world who are developing Internet projects or exciting online ideas to benefit other children. This international project has been run for eight years with yearly international awards.

Kidsmart is a practical Internet safety programme subsite for schools, young people, parents, and agencies. Resources include lesson plans, leaflets, posters, activity days and interactive games

Chatdanger is a site about the potential dangers on interactive services online, such as chat, instant messaging, online games, e-mail and online mobiles

Peer2Peer, file-sharing and downloading on the Internet is a site and leaflet that gives advice when downloading and sharing music and films. There are also useful links to other organisations and resources.

Mobile phones – the mobile Internet

Childnet International is one of very few organisations that hitherto has given explicit attention to mobile phones – the mobile Internet. On Childnet's website its booklet *Children & Mobile Phones: An Agenda for Action* was published in 2004.

The booklet says: Mobile phones offer access to a diverse mix of broadcast and entertainment media, including photography, video, radio and music, games, Internet browsing and personal software applications, including SMS, MMS and video messaging, chat, contact, dating and adult subscription services. Mobile payment mechanisms are also in use. Therefore mobile phones are also a mobile Internet which can be much more attractive, not least for children and young people, than the traditional fixed Internet.

This means that mobile phone technology also is a further possible medium for abuse and may potentially be more difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace.

Concern for children's safety extends beyond pornography and gambling to race hate content, and information on tools for violence, cults, drugs, and eating disorders, etc.

Contacts of different kinds are also a serious area of concern. In Japan, for example, many young people are using 3G phones to access online dating sites leading in some cases to sexual abuse and other crime.

Among young people themselves, bullying can be perpetrated and potentially intensified using mobile phones, and there are also many new and intimate forms of marketing through these phones.

And it is important to remember the privacy that mobile phones afford their users, in particular children, who can now communicate with anyone far from parental supervision.

Future implications of the development of mobile phone technology are as a payment mechanism and as a repository of detailed or even sensitive personal data, extending potentially to include biometric information. Given the high incidence of mobile phone theft, this presents huge challenges in terms of ensuring that personal identifying data does not fall into the wrong hands even if the phone itself does.

Childnet International offers different lists of advice in the booklet to all these target groups:

- children and young people
- parents and carers
- educators and schools
- government and law enforcement
- mobile network operators
- product developers
- content providers
- retailers

References
(besides links and publications with bibliographical data
in the running text)

Ai-Leen, Lin (1999) 'TV By Teens, For Teens. Developing and Evaluating a Production Model', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Children and Media. Image, Education, Participation*. Yearbook 1999 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 331-335

Andersen, Neil, Duncan, Barry & Pungente, John J. (1999) 'Media Education in Canada – the Second Spring', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Children and Media. Image, Education, Participation*. Yearbook 1999 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 139-161

de Block, Liesbeth, Buckingham, David, Holzwarth, Peter & Niestyo, Horst (2004) *Visions Across Cultures: Migrant children using visual images to communicate. Report for EC-funded project CHICAM (Children In Communication about Migration)* (http://www.chicam.net/reports/download/visions_across_cultures.pdf, retrieved November 2005)

Buckingham, David & Domaille, Kate (2004) 'Where Are We Going and How Can We Get There? General Findings from the UNESCO Youth Media Education Survey 2001', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Promote or Protect? Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations*. Yearbook 2003 from The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 41-54

Buckingham, David, Frau-Meigs, Divina, Tornero, José Manuel & Artigas, Lluís (eds.) *Youth Media Education. The Seville Seminar, February 2002* (CD-ROM). Paris, UNESCO, Communication Development Division

Buckingham, David with contributions from Shaku Banaji, Andrew Burn, Diane Carr, Sue Cranmer & Rebekah Willett (2005) *The Media Literacy of Children and Young People. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom*. London, Ofcom (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_children.pdf, retrieved December 2005)

Casas, Ferran, González, Mònica & Figuer, Cristina (2004) 'Parents, Children and Media: Some Data from Spain, Brazil, Norway, South Africa and India', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Promote or Protect? Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations*. Yearbook 2003 from The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 129-146

Danielsson, Helena (2002) *Att lära med media – Om det språkliga skapandets villkor i skolan med fokus på video* (Learning with Media: Conditions for language creation at school with focus on video). Stockholm University, Department of Education (in Swedish)

Duncan, Barry (ed.) (1989) *Media Literacy Resource Guide*. Ministry of Education of Ontario, Publications Branch, the Queen's Printer

Fedorov, Alexander (2005) Russian Teachers' Attitudes to the Problem of Media Education of Pupils and University Students. Taganrog, Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute

von Feilitzen, Cecilia (2004) *Mer tecknat...? Animerade TV-program – marknad, utbud, barn, föräldrar* (More Cartoons...? Animated TV programmes – Market, Output, Children, Parents). Stockholm, Våldsskildringsrådet, nr 31 (in Swedish)

von Feilitzen, Cecilia & Bucht, Catharina (2001) *Outlooks on Children and Media. Child Rights, Media Trends, Media Research, Media Literacy, Child Participation, Declarations*. (2nd revised edition). Yearbook 2001 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. Göteborg University, Nordicom

von Feilitzen, Cecilia & Carlsson, Ulla (eds.) (1999) *Children and Media. Image, Education, Participation*. Yearbook 1999 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. Göteborg University, Nordicom

Gultig, John (2004) ' "This is it" – South African Youth's Reading of YizoYizo 2', in Cecilia von Feilitzen (ed.) *Young People, Soap Operas and Reality TV*. Yearbook 2004 from The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 227-240

Hamelink, Cees J. (2002) 'Media Globalisation: Consequnces for the Rights of Children', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation*. Yearbook 2002 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 33-41

Hammarberg, Thomas (1997) 'The Media and the Convention on the Rights of the Child', *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, pp. 5-7

Hernwall, Patrik (2003) *barn@com – att växa upp i det nya mediasamhället* (children@com – growing up in the new media society). Stockholm, HLS förlag (in Swedish)

Khoo, Angeline, Cheong, Tyng-Tyng & Liau, Albert (2004) 'Understanding Our Youths and Protecting Them: Singapore's Efforts in Promoting Internet Safety', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Promote or Protect. Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations*. Yearbook 2003 from The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 121-128

Komaya, Mami & Muto, Takashi (2002) 'Media Literacy for Japanese Third Graders', *News from ICCVOS*, No. 2, 2002, p. 8

Larsson, Karin (2004) 'Children's On-line Life – and What Parents Believe: A Survey in Five Countries', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Promote or Protect? Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations*. Yearbook 2003 from The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 113-119

Lisosky, Joanne M., Cohen, M. & Sager, K.L. (2002) *Violence and media curriculum project in Seattle public schools*. Report submitted to Washington State Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, June, 2002

Lisosky, Joanne M., Cohen, M. & Sager, K.L. (2003) *Violence and media curriculum project in Seattle public schools*. Report submitted to Washington State Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, June, 2003

Livingstone, Sonia, Van Couvering, Elizabeth & Thumim, Nancy (1995) *Adult Media Literacy. A review of the research literature on behalf of Ofcom*. London, Ofcom (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/aml.pdf, retrieved December 1995)

Masterman, Len (1985) *Teaching the Media*. London, Routledge

McChesney, Robert W. (2002) 'Children, Globalisation and Media Policy', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation*. Yearbook 2002 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 23-31

Millwood Hargrave, Andrea (2003) *How Children Interpret Screen Violence*. London, Broadcasting Standards Council/ITC

Morduchowicz, Roxana (2004) 'National Media Education Program in Argentina', *News from ICCVOS*, No. 1, 2004, pp. 14-15

Nathanson, Amy I. & Cantor, Joanne (2000) 'Reducing the Aggression-Promoting Effect of Violent Cartoons by Increasing Children's Fictional Involvement with the Victim: A Study of Active Mediation', *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, Vol. 44:1, pp. 125-142

Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (2002) 'Children, Media and Globalisation: A Research Agenda for Africa', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation*. Yearbook 2002 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 43-52

Robinson, Thomas N., Wilde, Marta L., Navracruz, Lisa C., Haydel, K. Farish & Varady, Ann (2001) 'Effects of Reducing Children's Television and Video Game Use on Aggressive Behavior. A Randomized Controlled Trial', *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 155:1, pp. 17-23

Rother, Lee (2000) *The Impact of a Media Literacy Curriculum on the Literate Behaviour of At-risk Adolescents.* Montreal, Quebec, McGill University, Department of Educational Studies

Rydin, Ingegerd (2000) 'Children's TV Programs on the Global Market', *News from ICCVOS*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 17-23

Tufte, Birgitte (1995) *Skole og medier. Byggesæt til de levende billeders pædagogik* (School and Media. Building Stones for a Pedagogy of Live Pictures). Copenhagen, Akademisk Forlag (in Danish)

Westcott, Tim (2002) 'Globalisation of Children's TV and Strategies of the "Big Three" ', in Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (eds.) (2002) *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation.* Yearbook 2002 from The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Göteborg University, Nordicom, pp. 69-76

Authors

Ulla Carlsson
Dr., Professor, Director
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Göteborg
Sweden

Cecilia von Feilitzen
Ph.D., Scientific Co-ordinator
The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth
and Media
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Göteborg
Sweden

Divina Frau-Meigs
Dr., Professor
Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne
Paris
France

Thorsten Held
Dr., Researcher
Hans-Bredow-Institut für Medienforschung
Hamburg
Germany

Sonia Livingstone
Dr., Professor of Social Psychology
Department of Media and Communications
London School of Economics and Political Science
London
United Kingdom

Andrea Millwood Hargrave
Independent adviser on media regulatory policy,
formerly Research Director of the UK's Broadcasting
Standards Commission
Millwood Hargrave Ltd
Walton on Thames
Surrey
United Kingdom

Vítor Reia-Baptista
Dr., Professor
Ciências da Comunicação
Universidade do Algarve
Faro
Portugal

Juliet B. Schor   Dr., Professor, Chairperson
                         Boston College
                         Department of Sociology
                         Chestnut Hill, MA
                         U.S.A.

Wolfgang Schulz   Dr., Director
                         Hans-Bredow-Institut für Medienforschung
                         Hamburg
                         Germany

Bu Wei   Dr., Professor
                         Research Center on Media and Children
                         The Institute of Journalism and Communication
                         Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
                         Beijing
                         China

Books on children, young people and media

Clearinghouse Yearbooks

Ulla Carlsson & Cecilia von Feilitzen (Eds): *In the Service of Young People? Studies and Reflections on Media in the Digital Age. Yearbook 2005/2006.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen (Ed): *Young People, Soap Operas and Reality TV. Yearbook 2004.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (Eds): *Promote or Protect? Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations. Yearbook 2003.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (Eds): *Children, Young People and Media Globalisation. Yearbook 2002.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Catharina Bucht: *Outlooks on Children and Media. Child Rights, Media Trends, Media Research, Media Literacy, Child Participation, Declarations. Yearbook 2001.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (Eds): *Children in the New Media Landscape. Games, Pornography, Perceptions. Yearbook 2000.*

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Ulla Carlsson (Eds): *Children and Media. Image, Education, Participation. Yearbook 1999.*

Ulla Carlsson & Cecilia von Feilitzen (Eds): *Children and Media Violence. Yearbook 1998.*

Other publications

Maria Jacobson: *Young People and Gendered Media Messages.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, 2005.

Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen & Jonas Heide Smith: *Playing with Fire. How do Computer Games Influence the Player?* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, 2004.

Ingegerd Rydin (Ed): *Media Fascinations. Perspectives on Young People's Meaning Making.* Nordicom, Göteborg University, 2003.

Cecilia von Feilitzen: *Influences of Media Violence. A Brief Research Summary.* International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, 2001.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media

with the support from UNESCO in producing the book

GÖTEBORG
UNIVERSITY

norden

Nordic Council of Ministers

UNESCO