The Violence of Information

E-games for Improving Youth Media Literacy Manual

http://media-youth.org/

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Glossary

Resources
Chapter 1

THE VIOLENCE OF INFORMATION

Keywords
media literacy, searching intelligently, evaluation of information, manipulation of information, safe in Internet, training e-games;

Objectives of the chapter
This is the first introductory chapter to the Manual. In this respect its main aim is to present to the reader the idea behind “The Violence of Information” project, the driving force that led to its implementation. Thus, it is subdivided into 4 sub-chapters, each one of which outlining a different aspect of the project as these were planned and implemented: main aims and objectives, the activities in the frame of the project (both training and development) and the partnership.

1.1. “The Violence of Information” project
“The Violence of Information” project (www.media-youth.org) was launched in the year 2009. It is supported by the “Youth in Action” Programme of the EC, action 4.4. ”Youth support systems: Projects encouraging creativity and innovation in the youth sector”.

The project was initiated by National association SCAS, Bulgaria (www.scas.acad.bg) in partnership with 6 other European organizations from Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Spain (for more details on partner organizations see Section 1.4 from the current chapter).

Although every young person uses Internet today for various purposes, very few are those who really know how to use it to its full potential and avoiding various risks. Fraud, hoax, identity theft – these are just a small part of the crimes that threaten each person who uses Internet, and especially the young people who are frequently negligent and hasty.
underestimating the threats that Internet hides. Everyone knows how to enter a search engine, write something and press the “Search” button, but few are those who are able to go deeper into the searching process and use Boolean logic, for example, or analyze the search results. Everyone sub-consciously can estimate the quality of a given website but few are those who know the exact parameters of evaluating information on the Internet such as checking the last update, the different URLs, the authors etc.

Thus, the partnership in the frame of “The Violence of Information” project has decided that the best way to educate young people on how to use Internet so that they are able to search intelligently, apply an evaluation strategy when reading online texts, avoid risks and manipulation, is by creating 4 training e-games on the topics: searching strategies, evaluating information, manipulation by information and safe in Internet. All these go under the term media literacy or media awareness which is a concept covering various aspects of using modern media and especially the Internet intelligently and safely.

These thematic areas have been identified as the most central ones by means of thorough research on the existing practices in other than European countries – mainly the USA, Canada, New Zealand and others. In these countries there are specially developed materials (tutorials, games and surveys) on these topics which aim at giving advice and step-by-step guidance about what the best strategies for searching information on the Internet are, how young people should present personal information on the Internet, how young people should evaluate the information they find etc. In Europe, however, there is lack of such materials and especially a lack of training e-games regarding these topics. Thus, the project’s main aim is to create such training tools and also to develop the methodology for implementation of these tools in the work of youth organizations and centers throughout Europe. The ultimate goal of this is to prevent the younger generation from misinterpreting and neglecting their behaviour in the virtual world in view of preventing unpleasant and even fatal consequences. The idea is not to tell youngsters how much they do not know about the topics but to use the training e-games in order to initiate discussions and raise awareness about youngsters’ media literacy.

1.2. Project aims and objectives

The main aim of the project is to contribute the media literacy of youngsters and their creativity via developing new tools for youth trainers and youth workers.

In relation to this main aim, the concrete objectives set out at the application stage of the project are:

- To develop 4 online training games in 4 thematic areas: search strategies, evaluating information, manipulation by information, safe in Internet;
- To develop a training model for organizing youth training activities concerning 4 thematic areas (search strategies, evaluating information, manipulation by information, safe in Internet) and involving gaming and social networking as educational tools;
• To develop a **website** with “Learning” section containing information on the 4 thematic areas as well as “Games” section with 4 e-games available for use for free and translated in all partner languages;

• To develop a **Manual** in English both printed and uploaded in .pdf on the project website to be used for free by youth workers, youth trainers and youth leaders, with explanations about the e-games and the training model;

• To train youth workers, youth trainers and youth leaders via including them in specific training events (training course, contact seminar) and via producing concrete training tools;

### 1.3. Project activities

There were **2 main types of activities** in the frame of the project: training activities and development activities.

#### 1.3.1. Training activities

There are **2 main training activities** in the frame of the project – a contact seminar and a training course – accompanied by **2 meetings** and an additionally included **valorisation and evaluation seminar**.

- **Contact-making seminar** “European youth talking about the violence of information” - 27 April – 02 May 2010, Puntas del Calnegre, Spain

*Main aims*: to give an overview of the existing problems and mechanisms of youth dealing
with four thematic areas related to their virtual life on the Internet; to give the floor for
discussion of the main products; to develop the contacts between youth organizations from
six European countries as well as develop their capacity for implementing international
youth projects.

Main activities: inputs about training e-games, e-portfolio and the four thematic areas of the
project; workshops for developing scenarios for the four e-games; interactive workshops
and discussions on the topics related to media literacy.

Main results: ideas for scenarios of the four e-games gathered; participants getting deeper
knowledge into the field of media literacy and the thematic areas of the project: searching
information, evaluating information, manipulation by information, safe in Internet.

• Training course “The violence of information – 4 aspects of media literacy” – 13
  – 20 March 2011, Cagliari, Italy

Main aims: to train youth workers, youth leaders and youth trainers from Bulgaria,
Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Spain into using the 4 e-games on media literacy
that touch upon the 4 main aspects of media literacy.

Main activities: the four aspects of media literacy were presented in detail; workshops and
exercises on the four topics related to media literacy aiming at initiating discussion and
raising awareness; inputs about training e-games and their use in youth work; participants
presented their experience related to media literacy.

Main results: trained 25 youth workers, youth leaders and youth trainers from 6 EU
countries;
More specifically what was really important as a result from the training course was the fact that participants from small organizations comprised mainly of young people were inspired and encouraged by the activities (lectures, discussions, games) to start developing such projects and such e-games in their organizations. At first most participants were reserved towards the possibility of developing such tools in their own organizations. After that, however, they were more willing to do it because they acknowledged the fact that there are ways to do it even if you are not a professional in the field.

The following meetings were carried out in view of the successful implementation of the project:

- **Partner meeting** – 19 – 21 January 2010, Sofia, Bulgaria

*Main aims:* to set the tone for the project and familiarize the partnership with the aims, products etc. in detail; introduce the partners; distribute some of the most recent tasks among the partners; set up the management, dissemination, evaluation plans.

*Main activities:* presentation of the project and the partner organizations; presentation of how partners deal with the topic of media literacy and young people; discussion of aims, future steps, financial aspects of the project.

*Main results:* main tasks distributed; management and financial plan set out;
Main aims: to gather developers and young people from partner countries and give the floor for discussion of scenarios; to gather a set of possible scenarios and choose the best of them for each topic.

Main activities: work in small groups to come up with ideas about scenarios; discussions of scenarios.

Main results: 4 proposed ideas for scenarios for each one of the project topics.

Additional events were also implemented towards the project end aiming at better promotion and dissemination of the project products. These were as follows:

Developers’ meeting – 12 – 15 April 2010, Hvidovre, Denmark
Valorization and Evaluation Seminar – 8 – 11 May 2011, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Main aims: formal and informal evaluation of the final versions of the e-games; presenting the project and the products for more organizations and experts as well as for local Bulgarian media.

Main activities: two specialized inputs on media literacy concepts and e-games’ future; testing the e-games with participants and filling in evaluation questionnaires; two-hour press-conference for Bulgarian media.

Main results: evaluated final products; results spread to more representatives of the target group; promotion of the results.

Some of the most important results from the Valorisation and Evaluation Seminar are related to two trends that were discussed: the new developments in the field of e-games development and the five principles of media literacy.

As a result of the presented materials in the seminar we offer here a list of useful links to world wide conferences and events dedicated to the future of e-games:

The five principles of media literacy discussed are: all media are constructions, the media construct reality, audiences negotiate meaning, media have commercial implications, media contain ideological and value messages. More elaboration on each of the principles can be found at the following link: http://web.cortland.edu/russellk/courses/prjdis/html/5medlit.htm

2 Piloting visits – 20 May 2011 (Müenster, Germany) and 27 May 2011 (Copenhagen, Denmark)
Main aims: to present the final products not only for the partner organizations but also for other local youth organizations in the respective countries.

Main activities: presentation of project idea, aims, products, results, activities implemented, future ideas, discussion on the e-games, answering questions related to the project.

Main results: project results, products, idea etc. spread locally to other than the partner organizations.

1.3.2. Development activities

- 4 training e-games on 4 key topics related to youngsters’ media literacy: searching for information, evaluation of information, manipulation of information, safe in Internet.
- Manual “E-games for Improving Youth Media Literacy”.
- Website available in all partner languages with “Learning” section with information about the topic of media literacy, “Useful resources” and “Games” section where the above mentioned e-games can be used and played for free.

1.4. The partners

“The Violence of Information” partnership involves 7 partners from 6 European countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Spain.

Student Computer Arts Society /SCAS/ - Bulgaria  
www.scas.acad.bg

National Student Information and Career Center /NSICC/ - Bulgaria  
www.infocareercenter.org

Produktionsskøen I Hvidovre (PIH) – Denmark  
www.stevnsbo.dk

European Youth4Media Network e.V (Y4M) – Germany  
www.youth4media.eu

Associazione culturale ORIENTARE – Italy  
www.orientare.info

Association for Culture and Education KIBLA (ACE KIBLA) – Slovenia  
www.kibla.org

Instituto Municipal de Juventud de Lorca (IMJUVE) – Spain
Chapter 2

MEDIA LITERACY AND THE YOUTH WORK

Keywords

media literacy, media literacy education, youth work, searching for information, evaluation of information, manipulation of information, safe in Internet, searching strategy, guidelines for evaluation; social networks;

Objectives of the chapter

This chapter aims at relating the concept of media literacy to youth work: how youth work can support media literacy education. Then the chapter is describing in detail the four key aspects of media literacy education on which the project is focusing as well as the sub-themes and topics related to them. The main aim is, on one hand, that youth workers and youth trainers can use this information as a background and preparation for their activities with young people on the topic of media literacy. On the other hand, this information could be used by young people themselves – to educate them on the topic or to make themselves aware of some main media literacy specifics.

2.1. The role of youth work in media literacy education

The main idea of “The Violence of Information” project is to relate the concepts of media literacy and media literacy education to the domain of non-formal education and youth work by providing concrete tools for youth workers and trainers to use in their work with the young people. However, in order to be able to relate these we have to first clarify what media literacy actually means.
The term “literacy” until recently was understood as referring mainly to the ability to comprehend, analyze, critically evaluate and create printed messages. However, with the advent and rise of mass media and digital technology, print is by no means the only or most popular source of information. Thus, nowadays, in order to be literate people have to be not just literate but something more – they have to be media literate. This means that one should be able to understand, evaluate, critically analyze and create not only printed messages but also messages in all forms of media including electronic media.

There are definitions of the term media literacy formulated in various ways. However, all of them emphasize on the importance of the individual being able to critically evaluate and sift through messages in different media – Internet, TV, radio etc. Thus, media literacy is concerned with the constant questioning of what one sees, reads or hears in his/her life. In this respect media literacy is not a set of rules, principles or statistics, it is rather a dynamic process that is constantly evolving with a set of skills that one can acquire with practice and experience.

2.1.1. How youth work can support youth media literacy education?

Media literacy can be achieved through media education which main goal is not to teach rules and principles but to make people (and especially young people) aware of the specifics related to different media messages. In addition, the second most vital goal of media education is to educate how to question and analyze a message.

On the other hand, youth work is “the process of creating an environment where young people can engage in informal educational activities” (Wikipedia). Youth work is focused on five areas, including: a focus on young people, an emphasis on voluntary participation and relationship, friendly and informal atmosphere, and acting with integrity (Smith, M. K. (2002)).

Having in mind these specifics of media literacy education and youth work we can state the following ways in which youth work can support youth media literacy education:

- **learning by doing** – the best thing about non-formal educational activities and youth work in particular is probably the emphasis on experience. Learners in this case are acquiring knowledge, skills and competences by trying out things by themselves. This method is particularly efficient when it comes to young people. They always need to try, to test and prove to themselves and to their peers that they can do something. In this way young people are given the opportunity to take the responsibility for the planning and for the delivery of the respective activity. When it comes to media literacy education it is very important that the young person is capable of creating his/her own media content in order to be able to understand, to analyze and evaluate other media content. For example, when trying to write on one’s own an article for one’s personal website, on a topic of a particular interest, then it becomes more obvious how by using different layouts or different expressions the meaning of the text is altered and in a way the information is manipulated.
• **providing real purpose** – in non-formal education and in youth work the work is activity-based (young people are engaged in diverse training activities where they are encouraged to participate actively in discussions, workshops, confrontation games, simulations and role-play games). All these activities provide a real purpose for the young people also encouraging them to create different media forms while at the same time they are learning some new things. New knowledge or skills are always combined with some already existent knowledge so that young people can feel comfortable and are not too easily discouraged to participate. Diversity of activities is important for keeping youngsters interested and creating a **dynamic learning environment** compared to the learning environment at schools which is often quite static.

• **encouraging creativity and innovation** – an important aspect of youth work is that it encourages creativity and innovation because it is not dependant on the national schemes adopted and mainstreamed in schools by government. It is autonomous meaning that organizations are “free” to employ their own creative methods in addressing the issue of media literacy when working with youngsters, e.g. they might include information which is usually spared in schools, they might use non-formal methods such as games and role-playing which is usually not the case at schools in a more formal and static environment etc.

• **active learning and peer education** – methods and activities in youth work are often not traditional and lecture-based as most methods employed at schools. Some of the methods in youth work include discussions, role-play, confrontation games and recently also **training e-games**. Practicing these is more fun than listening to a lecture at school, for example. And more fun for young people means longer attention span, greater involvement in the topic and more active learning. Being engaged in the learning process youngsters feel more comfortable and free to initiate discussions, to participate in discussions, to ask questions, to reflect, to exchange ideas with their peers. All these are vital when it comes to being critical and always questioning and thinking about what you see, hear or read. Since youth workers and trainers are often young people themselves this helps them focus their work in a way that it is closer to other young people. In this way it often happens that topics and materials part of youth work are driven directly from the needs and interests of young people.

• **engaging disadvantaged young people or young people disaffected with school** – the non-formal sector and youth work is increasingly working with various groups of disadvantaged youth. Youth work can reach out to not only those who go to school but also those who have dropped out of school for some reason. These groups of young people cannot be reached through the formal education but can be reached by youth centres and organizations working in the non-formal education sector.
2.1.2. What types of activities can we consider a part of youth work and media literacy education?

**Events** during which media literacy issues can be presented to the youngsters in the frame of non-formal education and youth work:

- Seminars on the topic of media literacy
- Training courses on the topic of media literacy
- Workshops with e-games on the topic of media literacy
- Workshops using various other creative tools and methods for working on the topic of media literacy – e.g. simulations, role-play games, problem-solving games etc.

**Activities** youth workers may use during the above-mentioned events to address the topic of media literacy in a more creative and engaging way:

- Traditional games
- E-games (for more information on e-games please go to Chapter 3)
- Theatre
- Movie-making
- Applied arts
- Sport
- Discussions
- Work in small groups
- Case studies and others.

2.1.3. Where is youth work necessary when speaking about media literacy education?

At the beginning (1970s) when the terms media literacy and media education appeared the focus was on mass media such as radio, TV, printed mass media. However, with the rise of digital technology and ICT recently, there has been a shift to focus on digital media and especially on Internet as a fast progressing means for communication and information exchange. According to the study “Current Trends and Approaches to Media Literacy in
Europe” in 2007 undertaken by Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona for the European Commission, there has been another shift in media literacy education – the shift from a focus on the “educational context” and “the pedagogical methods” to “a focus on the civic context”. This more or less makes media literacy education closely bound to the concept of life-long learning, non-formal education and finally youth work. The focus on citizenship and the social and cultural perspectives of media literacy make it a topic quite relevant and vital for youth work.

In this respect, if we have to consider where exactly youth work is necessary in support of media literacy education, the answer should be everywhere. Use of ICT and Internet is quickly spreading, thus challenging more and more young people belonging to different social, cultural, economic and ethnic backgrounds. Young people being inexperienced in analyzing information, often naive and innocent recipients of text or visual messages on the Internet, are more likely to become victims of fraud or manipulation and thus need special and targeted media literacy training. That is why youth have to be engaged in media literacy education on all fronts: not only at school but also in other places where youth can find assistance and answers related to media literacy.

As discussed in 2.1. above media literacy education is not so much about learning a group of rules and principles but it is about acquiring certain practical skills for critical evaluation of media messages. Thus, the formal educational systems cannot always fully address the practical needs of the young people because of various reasons: lack of enough time, lack of human resources or insufficient infrastructure. At this point the non-formal sector and youth work come to fill these gaps in communities where formal education cannot provide media literacy education.

### 2.2. Four key aspects of youth media literacy

Nowadays the World Wide Web is becoming the primary source for information for more and more people, especially for young people. Youth dive into the pool of information on the Internet very often without knowing how to swim. Thus, in the frame of “The Violence of Information” project the partnership have identified 4 key aspects of media literacy that young people need to be aware of when dealing with information on the net. Here one can find useful information about them so that one learns how to be a wise user of the Internet. These 4 aspects of media literacy are: searching for information, evaluating information, manipulation by information and safe in Internet.

#### 2.2.1. Searching for information

In relation to the topic of searching of information on the Internet there are a few concepts to consider. First, one has to apply a searching strategy and second one has to consider different searching options and techniques that can be used to improve the searching process – the purpose of this process being finding what one needs in the fastest possible way.
Searching intelligently or an example searching strategy

It is not an unusual experience for most people to search for information on the net and finally being forced to give up searching after getting 1,600,000+ responses. This, however, wouldn’t happen so often if one knows how to approach the searching. Because searching is not only writing randomly what you need to find and then click “search” – searching is a process and like every other process it involves certain strategy that has to be followed. Thus, here we are referring to searching as a process and we are going to embark a little bit on a searching strategy that can be employed in order for successful outcomes to be achieved. Here are the steps that have been identified to be a part of a successful searching strategy:

**Step 1: You have to carefully analyze the topic**

First, think of distinctive words and phrases. If you cannot think of any distinctive words and phrases with clear, not-confusing meaning, you can think of a broader topic that might include those words and phrases, a narrower topic, synonyms, equivalents etc. If you do not know much about your topic, you maybe need to think deeply about it before starting the searching process.

**Step 2: Choose the right search engine**

Choosing the right search engine may seem an easy task but sometimes it can really save you a lot of trouble and time if you know exactly how the search engine functions and how you can use it to your advantage.

The reason for this is that search engines are actually not the same. Although they may use similar software the results you get in one engine are never the same as the results you will get in another engine. This is because the size, speed and content of different search engines are never the same. Search engines use software programs to find the match between the keywords you have typed and indexes of the search engine. Then the matches found are presented in some form of ranking. Nevertheless, search engines use different ranking schemes as well as different search options. Thus, if you are unable to find what you are looking for in one search engine, just try with another. Another option is to look in subject directories and specialized databases. Here is a detailed list with different search engines and search tutorials you may consult when deciding where exactly to search: [http://www.khake.com/page8.html](http://www.khake.com/page8.html)

When using any search engine you should keep in mind to enclose the word or phrase you type in quotation marks “ ”. This will help you get fewer results. You can also use search engines with Boolean OR (e.g. Google), or even full Boolean logic with parentheses (an option usually available on the advanced search page of search engines). Most search engines offer the Implied Boolean and most advanced search pages offer the Boolean logic using search form terminology. For detailed information on Boolean logic see 2.2.1.b.
Step 3: Look for subject directories

Subject directories are different from search engines in that they use human editors to create and select the content and filter the indexes entering the respective directory. The content in directories is organized according to certain standards set by the editors. Thus, the subject directories are rather smaller than the search engines. On the other hand, the quality of the content is higher in subject directories exactly because of the human oversight maintained. Subject directories are suitable for more general searches and for finding information on more popular and commercial topics. If you just go to a directory and browse through the categories in a particular field of interest it will be easier for you to conduct the actual search because you will already know what exactly you are searching for. There are different types of subject directories: general directories, academic directories, commercial directories, portals and vortals. Some of the biggest portals are MSN and Yahoo, also having their search engines. Other subject directories are:


Vortals (mentioned above as a type of subject directory) are actually forms of specialized databases devoted to a single subject. These are usually created by specialists who have interests and deep knowledge in the respective field (professors, researchers etc.). These specialized databases are most suitable when searching for information on a highly specific, concrete topic. One very famous example is www.imdb.com – Internet Movie Database.

Last but not least, library gateways (another type of subject directories) can present another alternative for those of you who are looking for high quality information websites. In library gateways specialists (usually librarians) have reviewed and assembled all the information sites by subject.

Step 4: Try to use Boolean logic

When searching the Internet (via search engines) one can use the rules for searching computer databases since the Internet is a vast computer database. These rules are based on the principles of Boolean logic (named after the mathematician George Boole). Boolean searching is based on constructing logical relationships among the terms searched. These logical relationships are being constructed with the help of logical operators: OR, AND, NOT.

b/ Boolean logic – types

Full Boolean logic with the use of logical operators

There are only a few search engines that offer the use of this method. Most search engines provide information in their help pages on what kind of searching you can do. Don’t forget to type the Boolean operators in capital letters. Here are the most common and useful ways in which you can make use of the operators:
- **OR logic**: retrieve records in which **at least one** of the search terms is present.
  
cats OR dogs

This way you search for synonymous terms or concepts. So, finally, you get records containing the first term + records containing the second term + records containing both terms.

The more terms you combine, the more results you will get.

- **AND logic**: you retrieve only records in which **both** of the terms are present
  
cats AND dogs

The more terms you combine in a search with AND logic, the fewer results you will retrieve.
• **NOT logic**: you retrieve records in which **only one** of the terms is present.

cats NOT dogs

You should be careful when using the NOT logic because this way you can exclude from your search documents that contain important information. Important documents about cats may, for example, contain the word dogs and by avoiding these you exclude these documents from your search.
AND and OR logic can also be applied in combination. In this case you have to surround the OR words with parentheses so that the search engine can process the two related terms as a unit, e.g. psychology AND (adolescents OR teenagers).

**Implied Boolean logic with keywords searching**

Here Boolean operators are not used. Instead, symbols are used to represent the Boolean operators. Even the absence of a symbol is meaningful and the space usually is taken to stand for AND logic. Implied Boolean logic is very common in search engines. For NOT logic the symbol “-“ is used and for OR logic you should use either the OR itself (as in Full Boolean logic) or search form terminology.

**Boolean logic using search form terminology**

Many search engines have an “advanced search menu” where you can fill in a search form and choose among different options to help you. The Boolean operators are expressed by means of different suitable terminology which explains the action you want to perform, e.g. OR – any of the words/at least one of the words/ should contain the words.

**Example:**

In order to find Don Juan plays which are not written by Byron you must type “Don Juan plays -Byron” in the search field of the search engine.

**c/ Meta search engines**

Up to this point we discussed how one can search for information in search engines, subject directories, library gateways etc. All these have their own databases from which they index the web pages containing the search term(s) and rank the results according to some algorithm. These are useful in different ways and have their specific pros and cons. One of the disadvantages we cannot but mention here is that the user has to search separately each search engine so that he/she can find the most useful and relevant results.

However, there is also another type of tools for searching the web called meta search engines. Unlike the search engines and subject directories these do not have their own databases. Instead they search for the information in several search engines and databases, thus providing the user with a list of results comprising the relevant search results from all these search engines. Thus, instead of searching separately in several different search engines you can use a meta search engine and spare yourself a considerable amount of time. Note, however, that meta search engines do not support techniques such as Boolean logic or enclosing the search term in quotation marks which can be considered a kind of disadvantage. There are contradictory opinions on when it is best to use a meta search engine instead of a search engine. Some say that a meta search engine is the best solution when one is searching for some general information or just needs an overview on some topic. Others, however, claim that meta search engines are more appropriate for searching for unique or obscure topics. In any case you'd better find your own best search tool which
you can achieve by testing several different tools. Here is a list of different meta search engines available:
http://www.cryer.co.uk/resources/search-engines/meta.htm

d/ Troubleshooting

The term troubleshooting is related to answering the question: What should be done if the search fails in some way? In the case of searching the web troubleshooting should be understood as the different mechanisms applied when there is certain problem or even failure in the searching process (e.g. if you get too many results for the search. Whatever the problem is there are mechanisms for its solving. Here are some of them:

- Too many results – in this case the problem is probably that the term(s) searched for is something very common. In this case it is better to use a synonym or add more words to your search in order to make it more specific.

- Very few results – this might be the result opposite to the one described above, namely in this case the search is probably too narrow and specific. This means that you better make it wider and more general, exclude some of the terms searched for or try another searching tool that will broaden the results, e.g. a meta search engine.

- Problems finding a webpage – often users want to find a concrete web page of some organization, institution etc. If, however, you cannot find the web page in question it is best to try guessing it by trying different URLs and domain names, for example .org, .com, .net or typing the acronym or some shortened version of the organization’s name.

- Errors – one common problem arising while searching the web are the different kinds of errors. When errors occur different messages will appear explaining what the error is about. One should know some of the most common errors and apply the necessary problem-solving technique in order to find the necessary information again. One of the most common errors is “404 – file not found”. This means that the file has been removed, renamed or simply moved. In this case you should do a phrase search or a field search for the file. Another option is to delete a part of the URL in order to check if the file is on the same server or it has been permanently removed from there. “Server error” or also “Server is busy” means that the server in question has been switched off, crashed or simply very busy with users trying to reach it. In this case you have to just try again later. Another common error is “server does not have a DNS entry”: this means that the browser cannot find this server. This can mean several things: the network is busy, the server has been removed or that the server is taken down for maintenance. In this case it is better to either try reaching the server again later or check once more the spelling of the search.
2.2.2. Evaluating information

Evaluating information on the Internet requires a number of skills: critical thinking, ability to scan through information quickly, ability to distinguish the rubbish in the information, some at least basic literacy skills, in-depth reading, a sense of good judgment and common sense. However, these are skills which can be acquired with time and experience. These skills can be more easily built up by keeping in mind certain basic things you need to look at when evaluating a web page. Here we propose some guidelines for evaluating web pages that can be easily followed and would give you a clue to how you should approach online sources of information. The guidelines are given in the respective order and it is recommendable that one follows this order when applying the guidelines.

a/ After completing the searching process the first thing you need to do to help you decide on the reliability of the web page is to look at the URL. Look for the following information:

- Is the page personal? – if yes a personal name might be found in the very URL of the page. If the web page is personal this does not mean that the content is not reliable but you need to think about it carefully because after all there is no publisher to guarantee for the quality of the information.

- Domain and publisher – here you have to think whether the domain extension is appropriate for your topic. For example, if you are looking for some educational information, you might look for an extension such as .edu. Government websites usually use an extension such as .gov and non-profit organizations sometimes use .org. Be careful with country extensions because these are not controlled and can be easily misused. No matter what the domain says to you, it is better if you look at the publisher after opening the page. The publisher is usually mentioned between the http:// and the first /. This will show you the server of the entity that published the page. Think carefully whether you have heard about it before and whether it corresponds to the name of the site.

b/ Scan the webpage looking for the following:

- The author – look for a name and detailed contact information of the author, no matter whether it is an individual or an organization. Just an e-mail in the contacts section is not enough. It is better if there is also a concrete address and telephone number. If there is a telephone, call this telephone to see whether this entity actually exists. No matter what you do, you have to find somebody who is responsible for the webpage. Think also about the background of the author and whether he/she is an expert on the topic or just a person who expresses some opinion. If the author expresses only his/her opinion think whether this opinion is particular enough. Here you have to distinguish between the “rubbish” in the information – is the author reliable to write about this or he/she is just somebody randomly writing about the topic. Treat the author of the webpage the same way as you would treat the author of a book, for example.
Example:

An article written by a PhD is much more reliable than an article signed by a person using his nickname – “shadoW73”.

- Currency (dates) – carefully look at the dating of the webpage. Most web pages show the last update at the bottom of the page. This will tell you whether the author is still updating the page, in other words, whether he/she is still interested in it. How current the information is, of course, depends on your topic as well. An inundated information, however, is usually not to be trusted.

-c/ Think deeply about the quality of the content:

- Sources – these have to be documented in some way by the author (special section in the menu, footnotes, links). If there are links check whether these work and whether these look reliable to you. If the resources are not stated (especially when you are looking for scholarly information) this is no better than just expressing a random opinion. Having the sources stated puts some weight on the material. If the information on the webpage is reproduced in some way, check if it is not altered or fake. Consider also the copyright issues – if the content is reproduced and used from another source, the author should have the right to do so. This is quite a sensitive issue when talking about Internet and it is quite difficult to identify copyrights problems because more or less everybody is publishing everything on the net. However, be sure to look for copyrights if you need really reliable scholarly information.

- Organization of the information – here you need to look for the following: the logical structure of the text (what follows what and if this order is logical in some way, the text should not be choppy); main points should be clearly presented (if the author is using confusing language this may be a part of his/her style but may also be because the author is not an expert); lack of repetition of the same ideas or arguments.

- Use of good grammar and no spelling mistakes – this is more or less self-explanatory. If the author does not know how to write or express ideas, this will harm the quality of the content severely. Such authors cannot be trusted. This also means that the text has not gone through much editing which again makes it untrustworthy.

- Graphic and multimedia design – here you need to consider whether the design and visual content is appropriate for the topic, whether it helps the user or not. For example, sometimes if there is too much multimedia it may distract the user from the content. Navigation has to be user-friendly as well. Commands and control needs to be clear for the users and work flawlessly.
d/ Others’ opinion:

- Links to the page – here you have to take a look at the websites that link to the page you are looking at, at what they say and what they are about.

- Directories – it will be good if you check whether the website is listed in special directories. Read also what the directory says about the web page.

- Author – check also information about the author. “Google” his/her name and see what others say about his/her.

e/ Final thoughts before deciding on the web page:

- What is the purpose of the web page/author – to inform, to give data, to explain, to persuade, to sell, to share, to disclose etc.

- What is the tone – it may be humorous, ironic, outrageous, satirical, neutral etc. Think also whether the tone suits the content and the purpose. The tone can be very tricky – it can manipulate the reader even on a subconscious level, so you have to be careful about this and avoid being fooled.

- Compare your attitude towards the content online with your attitude towards printed materials – treat the website the way you would treat a printed material. This means that you would not be too mild in your decisions but also do not be too harsh.

2.2.3. Manipulation by information

There are many ways in which information can be manipulated. Manipulation of information on the Internet is related to one of the following: how the information is shaped; “violent” uses of techniques on the Internet to manipulate users (via e-mails or “violent” advertising) and the monopoles on the Internet.

a/ Shaping of the information

It is very important how both text and images are shaped in view of how these affect users’ choices and decisions. Thus here we will look at two basic types of manipulation of information depending on how it is shaped: images and text.

- Manipulation of images or photos - with digital processing, there is almost no limit to what can be done to an image, and many things are done to images with the best intentions. The question is: when does the pursuit of aesthetics violate our ethics? Although today all viewers are used to the fact that all visual representation can be relatively easily manipulated (e.g. we are used to watching sci-fi movies where anything is possible), we can be easily manipulated by images on a sub-conscious level without actually realizing it. Nobody when reading a newspaper, for example, is thinking about how the images could be designed or altered to manipulate him/her in the articles may be used to manipulate.
Here is one example:

A 30-years experienced journalist from the Los Angeles Times was dismissed for forging these two photos of English soldiers in Basra, Iraq.
Manipulation of texts – in all kinds of written media including texts in websites and online articles the text and the actual language serve as powerful tools for manipulating the readers. When considering how language can manipulate we have to look at the following: organization of the text, fonts, colours, graphic design, use of language (e.g. use of more figurative subjective or emotional expressions vs. use of objective matter-of-fact language). We have to always ask ourselves questions such as: why had the author put this in so small letters and that in letters so much bigger? Reading and thinking a bit more deeply will help you learn reading between the lines and avoid being tricked by manipulated texts. For more information about evaluating web pages see section 2.2.2.

Here is one simple example with how easily one can play with text in order to manipulate the readers:

In the first picture the title of the newspaper says that Michael Jackson is dead. However, in the second picture, there is a big title that Michael is alive and in the corner with small letters it’s written that he is alive only in the minds of people. The purpose of the second title is to increase the sales of that newspaper.

b/ “Violence” of information

The word “violence” here implies the “violent” uses of techniques on the Internet to manipulate users. Here we explore several of these techniques:

• Behavioural targeting – this technique originated as an innovative and widely-used way for online publishers and advertisers to reach their potential clients. However, recently there is a growing concern as to the privacy issues related to this kind of targeting. Essentially behavioural targeting means that online publishers
or advertisers can trace one’s browsing history (the web sites you have visited) and use this information to display to this person mostly advertisements that he/she is likely to be interested in. This is a clear example of how nothing on the Internet happens in a vacuum and what you are doing/searching/viewing at the present moment might greatly affect what you will see on the Internet in future which is a kind of manipulation.

- Semantic advertising – this technique is a bit similar to the behavioural targeting in the way that it again aims at displaying only content that is likely to be interesting to the viewers. The difference is that semantic advertising does not analyze the users’ searching/browsing history but it analyzes the web page semantically (analyzes its meaning) in order to determine which ads are appropriate for it and which are not. This again in a way tries to manipulate the users because only advertisements that somebody somewhere thinks are appropriate for the viewers of a given web page will be displayed. Again it is not the user who decides what to view.

- Spamdexing (“spam” + “indexing”) – this manipulation technique was widely used in the rise of the Internet in 1990s. Essentially it manipulates the search engine indexes (the indexes store the data so that you can search quickly through it without waiting for each single document to be searched). There are many methods for spamdexing. For example, one can put a lot of keywords in a web page in order to raise the keyword count in the web page and this way increase its ranking by the search engine making it more likely to be found. This is called keyword stuffing and most contemporary search engines can detect this violation and block the web page. Similarly some hidden text can be put in the webpage so as it is detected by the search engine and again increase the ranking of the page but at the same time is used only to trick and make the users go to the web page thinking they will find there what they want.

- Manipulation of e-mails - recently manipulated e-mails are popular phenomena on the Internet. These are often a way to deceive people for the purposes of illegally obtaining money from them. There are various ways of manipulation by e-mails: ill-intentioned users can make the e-mail appear to be from someone other than the actual sender; they give another e-mail at the end with a different domain to which you are invited to send your answer; they give a satellite phone number; they can also offer a big prize in exchange only some “small” tax etc. For more information and examples of other manipulated e-mails you can play the training e-game “Manipulation of information” in the “Games” section of this website.

c/ Monopoles on the Internet
Nowadays the issue about monopoles on the Internet is a rather controversial one. Here we discuss two of the most controversial aspects related to monopoly on the Internet: its undurability and the networking effect which very often is the reason for monopoly on the Internet.

- Undurability - while there is monopoly on the Internet, the good thing about it is that it is not too durable. Internet and modern technology market are constantly
changing. Within only a few years one Internet company can decline and give a way to another. For example, MySpace was the most popular social network until recently when its first-place position was taken by Facebook. This undurability is a sign of how competitive the Internet market can be because if the users deem the product not appropriate for their needs they simply discard it and replace it with the more competitive one.

- Networking effect - there also exists the opposite tendency –monopoly going on years after years in the various fields of the Internet market (shopping, searching etc.) The so called networking effect builds monopolies on the Internet – if most people you know use a definite search engine it is most likely that you start using it as well. What could be considered as a negative aspect about this is not that they harm the users or charge them more than other companies would but that they cut down on competition and innovation which is again a kind of manipulation. Moreover, if, for example, more and more people are using only one social network so all these people will see one and the same adverts chosen by this social network. While this is a kind of manipulation, it is also the result of these people's free will to choose this site instead of the other one for which decision they might have had their reasons.

In conclusion, that is why monopoly on the Internet is controversial: it is changing, it is to a great extend a result of people's individual decisions and is not always harmful. Nevertheless, we decided to include this topic in order to raise awareness about it because before forming a definite opinion one should first think carefully on the topic.

2.2.4. Safe in Internet

The “Safe in Internet” topic is related to two main issues that need to be considered when using the Internet: Internet security or more specifically theft of personal information and social networks and the concerns they have recently aroused. In relation with these two there are a number of mechanisms that one should be aware of in order to avoid problems and theft of personal data.

a/ Stealing of personal data on the Internet

There are different ways in which one can get his/her personal information stolen and misused on the Internet. Here we look at three different aspects or situations which one has to consider when entering any personal information in a web page: when shopping online, when using e-mails and when using passwords. Some basic clues and tips are given for each one of these that might be of use when protecting your personal information on the Internet.

When shopping online

There are many security devices that you have to check for before typing any credit card details:
- secure https:// connection because http:// sends all the data as a plain text and the information can be easily stolen;

- a golden lock at the bottom of the page or in the browser;

- look at the domain name (.org is not an appropriate domain for online shopping web sites, it is for web sites of organizations);

- pay attention to details and look for the exact name of the web site because very often the name is slightly changed in order to confuse people and make them enter their details in the wrong website.

**When using e-mails**

There are many ways in which an e-mail can threaten your Internet security:

- attachments from unknown or spam e-mails should not be opened because these usually contain viruses;

- **phishing** is when somebody sends you an e-mail pretending to be from a big famous company and asks you to give them your password and personal data in order to verify it, such e-mails and requests must not be answered because most companies do not actually request such sensitive information from their clients;

- e-mails offering you big money prizes or claiming you have won a lottery are fake and are only trying to make you send money to them in advance promising to give you more afterwards.

**Example:**

Here you can see an e-mail which is trying to manipulate you:

Sir/Madam,

*We are pleased to inform you of the result of the Lottery Winners International programs held on the 9th February 2004. Your e-mail address attached to ticket number 278511465896-4872 with serial Number 3772-554 drew lucky numbers 5-14-18-23-33-39 which consequently won in the 1st category, you have therefore been approved for a lump sum pay out of US$1,000,000 (One Million United States Dollars) CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Due to some numbers and names, we ask that you keep your winning information confidential until you file for your claim. This is part of our security protocol to avoid double claiming and unwarranted abuse of this program by some participants.

All participants were selected through a computer ballot system drawn from over...*
20,000 company and 30,000,000 individual email addresses and names from all over the World. This promotional program takes place every year. This lottery was promoted and sponsored by some eminent personalities who do not wish to declare their identity for security reasons.

To file for your claim, please contact our fiducial Agent:
Mr Mike Moore
Email: alliedtrust@gmail.net

Remember, all winning must be filed not later than 15th of March 2004 or when authentic proof is given for the delay of filing. Please note in order to avoid unnecessary delays and complications, remember to quote your reference number and batch numbers in all correspondence.

Furthermore, should there be any change of address do inform our agent as soon as possible. Congratulations once more from our members of staff and thank you for being a Winner in our promotional program.

Note: Anybody under the age of 18 is automatically disqualified.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs Silver Luc.
Telephone: +870-16-5428-7921
Lottery Co-ordinator.

In case you reply to the given e-mail address you will be asked to deposit money for lawyer expenses. After depositing the lawyer’s fee you will not be transferred any prize. The only purpose here is that the authors of the e-mail obtain some money from you. For achieving this purpose they have used different manipulation tricks.

They have given a concrete number of the “winning ticket” to make the lottery look real.

They are assuring you that your e-mail has participated in a ballot system along with many others.

You are asked to contact a third person via e-mail, but the given e-mail is from Gmail instead of the “company’s” domain, which no self-respecting company which is giving away $1,000,000 as a prize will do.

These and many other manipulation techniques can be found in the above e-mail. Such e-mails are quite common nowadays. In order to prevent problems and minimize risks, consider carefully the e-mails you receive before answering.

Passwords

The issue about passwords is related to both security and information theft. For example, often e-mail passwords are stolen so that it is easier for criminals to get into your personal e-mail and extract other information about your finances, bank details etc.
Possible tricks that you can use for protecting your passwords are:

- Changing regularly your passwords prevents theft and hacking;
- Making your password a random mix of letters and numbers;
- Try to remember your passwords and do not write them down on pieces of paper, in your phone etc.

In general any personal information provided on the Internet (in chat, social networks, blogs, personal websites etc.) can be stolen and used ill intentionally. Thus, it is not recommendable to leave your address, phone number, credit card number, e-mail, etc. because often criminals go through social networks and such web sites in search of personal information left by the users.

**Example:**

A good password would be “myPass10". A bad example would be “1234”.

b/ Social networks – a friend or foe for the young people

The issue about social networks has recently become quite a controversial subject for debate. Widely used by young people, social networks have become a primary tool for communication amongst peers, friends, relatives and even strangers. The fact that this tool is cheap (one only needs Internet connection) has made it quite preferable especially when communicating with people we hardly know or even with complete strangers. This is undoubtedly an advantage of the social networks but also more and more often misleads people to think that communication in social networks is as secure as face-to-face communication. Thus, very often young people tend to reveal in social networks more information than they would normally reveal when communicating face-to-face with people they hardly know. This leads to certain problems related to privacy in social networks that need to be considered carefully when using this tool:

**Amount and type of shared information and the risks it involves**

The first thing that usually comes to our minds when considering privacy issues in social networks is the information shared by users. Different people have different habits for sharing information online. For example, some use pseudonyms and nicknames, others use their full names. However, sharing any personal information in social networks may more or less lead to re-identification. For example, provided that users often re-use one and the same photo in different social networking sites, their identity might be traced from one site to the other by means of comparing the photos. Other means for re-identification of people are demographic data (where one lives/is born etc.) or representation of interests and hobbies. All personal information shared may be misused in a way by ill-intended users: social security or credit card information may be retraced using one’s address, phone and full name, for example. Risks related to the information one discloses in a social network
are quite diverse: from identity theft to online and even physical stalking. However, it is worth mentioning that in social networks it is the user who controls how much and what information to share with the other users. Considering this fact it is interesting to mention some of the factors influencing information revelation in social networks.

Factors influencing information revelation in social networks

- peer pressure;
- thinking that the advantages of disclosing personal information are more than the disadvantages;
- herding behaviour;
- disinterestedness in personal privacy;
- lack of enough information in the social network about the implications of revealing certain information;
- putting too much trust into the privacy of the social network;
- underestimating the risks of disclosing too much private information;
- the interface of some social networks may make the user unknowingly accept some privacy settings.

Privacy settings

Finally we come to the question about the privacy settings in a social network. Many young people (and not only) do not take much time for studying the privacy settings of the social network they use which makes them vulnerable in terms of the information they sometimes unknowingly expose. Different social networks offer different options and possibilities for privacy settings. However, most of them give the freedom to the user to choose on his/her own what information to be visible for other users. In order to fully use this privacy potential, however, one has to go a bit deeper and surpass the factors described above that might often lead people into neglecting privacy issues. After all, it all comes to being careful about what you share and with whom you share it. More information on the positive role of social networks as supporters of youth media literacy is available in 3.3.2.

Example:

You can modify the thing you share with people, and more precisely exactly what to exactly who you share.
Spyware and malware in social network applications

Malware (short for “malicious software”) is a kind of software or programme that is designed to harm/annoy/cause problems to users in a variety of ways: to disrupt or deny operation, to gather information that leads to loss of privacy or exploitation, to gain unauthorized access to system resources, and other abusive behavior. In this respect there are various types of malware, e.g. spyware, trojan horses, worms and others.

Spyware is a kind of malware. It is a small programme installed in a computer (most often via the Internet) which programme can collect information about Internet surfing habits and sites that have been visited, but can also interfere with user control of the computer in other ways, such as installing additional software and redirecting web browser activity. Spyware is known to change computer settings, resulting in slow connection speeds, different home pages, and/or loss of Internet connection or functionality of other programs.

Malware, including spyware, can often reach the Internet users via different web sites and more specifically via the applications in social networks. These applications (for example, small games or tests) are not always trustworthy because it is not clear who the author is or what the purpose of the application is. Thus, when you use an application in a social network always have in mind that it may contain malware. Although there are programmes that can be installed for protecting your computer from malware this cannot guarantee you complete safety.

c/ Copyright and ownership of art media on the Internet

Young people sometimes do not get to think much about copyrights of images or text used in their creations, in the www sites or CD/DVD projects. In the social networks or in someone’s portfolio one can often notice a lot of photos, graphics or videos just copied from some other www sites. Here we wanted to highlight some basic things one should take into consideration in such cases.

First, we should understand, in general, what ownership of media products means. Authorship and ownership issues are treated differently in different legislations but in most of the countries there are similar concepts about what is incorporated in the law. For example, the writers and painters remain authors of their products even if the products belonged to someone else (have been sold). This leads to some rights even after their products are in someone else’s hands. The author’s rights of software products, for example, usually belong to the company that has developed them and the individual developers are not considered as authors (unless there are some other arrangements made in advance). Author’s rights are usually kept until some time after the author’s death, in average 70 years after that. The relatives of the author may use these rights during that period. One interesting issue is that ideas do not have ownership and copyright (legally). Only if they are developed in a particular way and described as products or technologies they could be patented and in this way protected from unauthorized use.
In some countries, media products could be used for educational or information non-commercial purposes without authorization. Usually in such cases there are limitations for their quality in order to prevent the production of commercial copies. For example, if some journalist is using an image of some movie to present this movie in a newspaper, the quality of the image should be low and it should not be possible to copy and use this image to produce posters or souvenirs, for example. Even in such cases the official enquiry is sometimes necessary. All these intricacies related to online information (and not only) are subject to a lot of debate.

Copyright usually specifies the person/organization that is authorized to give permission for making copies and/or distributing a product. If the copyright legal person is different from the author usually there is some agreement between them.

In the net, there are different types and levels of copyright protection. Some examples could be observed in wikipedia.org. For example, there are:

- **Copyrighted works** (all-rights reserved copyright, sometimes indicated as ©) – they should not be used without official permission from the copyright owner. The modification is also not allowed without prior permission.

- **Public domain works** - works are in the public domain if they are not covered by intellectual property rights at all, if the intellectual property rights have expired, or if the intellectual property rights are forfeited.

- **Creative Commons (Attribution) License** (sometimes indicated as CC) – works could be freely used and modified but on some conditions, for example the author should be mentioned and some limitations should be respected. These licenses allow creators to communicate which rights they reserve, and which rights they waive for the benefit of recipients or other creators.

In the net, sometimes publishers are including the so called “water-marks” on images and video or publish the text as an image (not as .doc file) in order to warn the users that this work has intellectual property and is copyrighted. Sometimes, special players and drivers are incorporated in the www sites in order to prevent copy-paste operations. All of us should be aware about the sources from which we are using different media - images, text, video, graphics, music etc. And, we should carefully explore in advance the rights to use such intellectual property works.
Chapter 3

E-GAMES, E-PORTFOLIO AND SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR IMPROVING YOUTH MEDIA LITERACY

Keywords

training e-games; edutainment games, serious games, game development process, ePortfolio, social networks, youth media literacy, game development tools;

Objectives of the chapter

This chapter is dedicated to presenting the advantages and importance of modern media tools for improving youth media literacy. The main focus is on the use of training e-games in youth work, but also some special attention is paid to the importance of social networks and ePortfolio tools. In order to be up-to-date, competitive and useful for youth, youth workers should be aware of the opportunities provided by these modern media tools and take advantage of them in planning and implementing youth activities on the topic of youth media literacy.

3.1. Use of e-games in youth work

The use of the so-called training e-games (also referred to as serious or edutainment games) has proven to be of great value for nowadays youth work field. A good reason to use games in youth work is that they help present a boring subject in an attractive and enjoyable manner. Games make learning a lot more interesting and encourage participants to interact and communicate. Thus, passive participants are easily turned into active ones. Furthermore, games create a relaxed atmosphere, where participants absorb and remember things faster and more effectively, sometimes even unconsciously.

Meantime, games can be used for different purposes such as: developing practical skills, improving the participants’ communication competence, finding one’s own place in a
group, etc. Youth workers can use the games as simple exercises that bring pedagogical or psychological value. The role of games (and e-games in particular) is to reinforce the understanding of presented material, to invoke discussions or to add variety in training. Games reinforce learning by means of their ability to offer immediate feedback to learners.

In the context of using games in media literacy education, there are two important issues to be taken into account: critical thinking and creative production. Youth play and interpret games in a certain context. Creative production refers to the ways in which youth can themselves become the designers and creators of media.

3.1.1. What is a training e-game?

In order to be able to discuss how training e-games can be used in youth work and in youth media literacy we have to first clarify what a training e-game is.

Games can be divided according to their genre, the online or offline playing modes and the involvement of one or more players. However, the so-called edutainment games have recently gained in popularity.

There are various definitions of the term “edutainment”. Hannafin & Peck (1988) describe it as a type of computer-based instruction designed to motivate the player using the characteristics. Actually, edutainment games combine educational function and content with entertainment form. They have the main goal of developing an attractive learning environment that enhances learning and motivates the learner. The idea of competition plays an important role, as in the context of edutainment games it is understood as the means for achieving the best possible performance in learning. In playing games learning is implicit, but in order that it is successfully achieved correct and well-researched content is required.

Edutainment games are a type of serious games. Serious games are those games designed for a purpose other than pure entertainment. Of course, they can have entertainment elements, but their main purpose is to train, teach or investigate certain topic. Educational games are specifically designed to teach people about a certain subject, expand concepts, reinforce development, assist them in learning a skill as they play, etc.

3.1.2. Educational aspects of games

There are two important issues related to the educational aspects of e-games: gaming that leads to fun and learning that leads to acquiring skills and transferring knowledge. On one hand, gaming and fun is a way to provide a motivating experience, they contribute to making games engaging, enjoyable and self satisfactory. On the other hand, games are mainly concerned with providing a learning experience with educational outcomes that could be transferred to real life.
a/ Ten reasons for using games for educational purposes (Prof. Henry Ellington, 1996) where the last five reasons are of particular significance for non-formal education and youth work:

- To reinforce teaching of basic facts and principles;
- To demonstrate applications of theory;
- To develop higher cognitive skills of all types;
- To support and supplement laboratory and studio work;
- To develop research skills;
- To act as an "icebreaker";
- To develop communication skills;
- To develop interpersonal skills;
- To develop multifaceted work-related skills;
- To achieve affective objectives of all types;

b/ Main characteristics of edutainment games

Each edutainment game has some main characteristics that are inherently interdependent but at the same time each brings about added value to the main purpose of the game. Dennis Charsky (2010) defines the following main characteristics: competition and goals, rules, choice, challenges and fantasy.

**Competition and goals**

In edutainment, the game goals match the learning goals. Competition is added to make the learning enjoyable. Using competition is supposed to motivate learners to complete the game activities because they want to win.

**Rules**

In edutainment, the rules (actions that the player can or cannot make) are fixed. They are of crucial importance for educational games because they represent reality. More complex serious games can integrate simulation allowing for an unlimited number of outcomes thus providing players with unique experience many times.
Choice

Choice is related to how many options and decisions are available for the player during the game. There are three main types of choice:

- Strategic choice: choice that affects the general manner in which a game is played, the strategy. In edutainment, gamers usually select the level of difficulty prior to play.

- Tactical choice: choice that refers to the learner’s ability to make decisions about how to play the game.

- Expressive choice: choice that has little effect on learning, but at the same time can improve learner’s motivation.

Challenges (tasks)

All edutainment games provide the learner with challenges, where he/she must complete challenges to solve a problem or practice their learning.

Fantasy

In an attempt to provide motivating and exciting experience for the player, almost every game contains fantasy elements. It either reinforces correct behaviour with reward (exogenous fantasy) or develops the learner’s knowledge (endogenous fantasy).

c/ When to use e-games for training - to break up a training session, to initiate a learning event or to conclude a learning event.

Use of e-games before the traditional training activity

- To create friendly atmosphere;
- To make participants get to know each other in a more informal way;

Use of e-games during the traditional training activity

- To educate young people in specific knowledge and skills;
- To raise awareness about a concrete topic;
- To measure criterion performance;
- For formative and summary evaluation;
Use of e-games after the traditional training activity

- To assess the level of acquired knowledge;
- To check whether the information has been conveyed properly and whether young people have understood it;
- To provoke creativity and inspiration;
- To initiate discussion on the topic;

3.1.3. Types of e-games

There are different types of non-entertainment games that can be applied to a broad spectrum of areas. They can be categorized in a number of different ways: by purpose, by playing environment and with relation to youth work.

a/ E-games categorized by purpose:

- Educational games: they support skills development (e.g. communication, strategic thinking, planning, collaboration, group decision-making);
- Public policy games: they educate on different policy aspects, aiming to provide better understanding citizen’s rights and obligations in the society;
- Political and social games: they target identification and are educating on dealing with different political/social issues, such as: health care policy issues, ethics training, etc.
- Games for health: they target health care issues such as promoting healthy habits, education in health/self-directed care; training and simulation, etc;
- Commercial games: they are used for corporate training purposes on different topics. These commercial games are mostly simulations and are used by companies to train their employees.

b/ E-games categorized by playing environment:

- Online Single Player Games;
- Online Multi-Player/Multi-Team Games;
- Offline Games;
- Mobile Games (handheld and cell-phone);
c/ In *youth work*, the following categories of non-entertainment games can be enumerated:

- Youth Information games: supporting young people identify their own resources, take their own actions and make their own decisions;
- Intercultural learning games: promoting the recognition of cultural differences, tolerance, added value of the intercultural understanding;
- Youth project management games: teaching young people how to plan, prepare, implement and report their own projects;
- Human rights games: based on general human rights, international documents and mechanisms of legal protection of human rights;
- Youth career development games: raising awareness in young people and making them think about their competences, interests and talents in view of their future career path. There also a number of multimedia tests focusing on this issue.

### 3.1.4. Advantages of e-games

The advantages of e-games as a tool in youth work are multifaceted. They bring about added value in different aspects: motivation, engagement, interaction, and learning.

With a view to learning, the following advantages of e-games can be identified:

- Games help youth develop key learning skills such as: cognitive processing, logical thinking and independent decision making.
- Games encourage interpersonal relationships, leading to cooperative and competitive behaviour.
- Games enable learners to embody different characters thus helping to breed attitudes of tolerance and understanding.
- Games can be used as a means of preparing learners for the world of work.
- Games provide a safe artificial environment within which learners with low self-esteem may feel more inclined to express themselves.

Among the other advantages we can mention that games have an implicit logic of how the world works which logic is built into their interactive systems. Thus, in order to succeed, learners must be able to master these systems. Meantime, e-games offer the possibility for learners to try different identities. Last but not least, games offer the possibility to earn one’s own identity, because after playing the game, the learner perceives his/her actions as significantly influencing the success or failure of the game character.
3.2. Stages and tools in the game development process

This section is dedicated to providing basic knowledge about key game concepts, as well as practical tips on game development - from choosing the goal and the topic through design and programming to testing and post-production. Also, some of the main tools for games development are briefly introduced.

3.2.1. Main game development stages

A typical game-development process involves 3 main phases: pre-production, production and post-production. Each phase encompasses several stages.

a/ Pre-production phase

- Concept development - generating the game concept is a creative process. It is important that brainstorming is carried out in order to develop a pool of ideas and scenarios to be used in the game development. At this concept level, several things have to be clarified: topic of the game, target group, goals and objectives of the game; expected learning outcomes.

- Scenario and storyboard development - a storyboard discloses the main scenes of animation or represents the behaviour of a game character. No artistic ability is required at this stage. The scenario is the plan of what will happen in the game with all details in it. It is very useful to draw graphics. When diagrams of the upcoming work are available, it is quite easy to plan the next step. The idea here is to give the production team enough information so each member can take the storyboard and start developing his/her portion of the final product.
E-games, ePortfolio and Social Networks for Improving Youth Media Literacy
• Design of characters and game environment - this stage includes 2 main processes—graphic design of the character(s), as well as the development of the game environment. In the characters design process, it is important that all details about a given character are clarified in advance: role, behaviour, interaction, appearance. Environment development is one of the crucial stages in game development, as it brings together all elements together, making them look like entity.
b/ Production phase

- Putting all in motion - at this stage, the game characters are animated with the support of animation techniques, depending on the type of game and motion desired. In some games the motions of a human actor are captured using a special suit of sensors to represent the control points of the character's skeleton.

- Programming - programming the game code is what makes all of the game elements work together, though unseen by the user. The code is the set of computer language instructions that controls every aspect of the game. Most games are written with custom code based on the C++ programming language. When 3D games are being created there is another important aspect of the code - artificial intelligence component. This is the logic of the game, and it also establishes the physics of the game world, detecting the interactions and collisions between objects and controlling their movement.
c/ Post-production phase

- Testing - this is one of the most important phases of the game development process. It helps finding out if there are alternate solutions or errors in the rules. Also, testing provides for trying whether the game is easy or difficult (this can be difficult to predict in advance). It also helps discovering whether the game is amusing and interesting for the user. In this respect a good tester is one who not only finds bugs but digs deeper, figures out how to make it happen again, and, knowing how the game works, figures out what's really going wrong. One has to consider that maybe the circumstances that caused the crash are deeper than the ones seen at the first glance.

- Deployment - deployment work on a game includes creating the install program that installs the game onto a computer system and writing the game manual. If you are going to distribute the game via the Internet, you should definitely create a web site with screenshots and description of the game.

3.2.2. Tools for game development

a/ How to choose a game development tool?

There are different types of game development tools with a view to what the purpose of the application is – some of them are intended specifically for game development, others can be used for creating different types of interactive media, dynamic content, etc. The more complex tools avail of a large number of features for creating various types of content, while the more specific ones have more restrictions. Meantime, the limited tools are developed only for the purpose of creating games. These tools are suitable for
a game without animations, databases, etc. Adding functionalities to such games is done via the built-in script language of the program that allows people with little programming experience to have greater control on the game they develop.

Nowadays, there is a great variety of game development tools. For this reason, it is very important to be aware of the requirements, functionalities and level of complexity, before making the choice of a game development tool. A bad choice of a development tool might lead to huge problems in the implementation phase, as well as endanger the whole project.

Selection of tools also depends on whether the game is expected to be available for different platforms and operating systems or not. Also, if some simple games are to be developed, a more user-friendly game design tools can be used. A key element in the whole process is the player/user. This means that when developing a game, some pre-requisites related to the users should be taken into account: type of platform and software used, compatibility, etc.

b/ Examples of game development tools

- Game Maker - Game Maker allows you to make exciting computer games, without the need to write a code. Using easy to learn drag-and-drop actions, you can create professional looking games within very little time. You can make games with backgrounds, animated graphics, music and sound effects, and even 3d games. And when you’ve become more experienced, there is a built-in programming language, which gives you the full flexibility of creating games with Game Maker. Game Maker can be used free of charge.

- Game Editor - Game Editor is a game design software that gives you the opportunity to create computer games. Games can be developed in a quite intuitive way. With Game Editor you can build a game prototype, including graphics and sound, with minimal programming. Game Editor supports almost all image and audio formats. So, you can use your images, animations, musics and sounds in your game project.

- Adobe Flash - Flash is the industry’s most advanced authoring environment for creating interactive websites, digital experiences and mobile content. With Flash, creative professionals design and author interactive content rich with video, graphics, and animation for truly unique, engaging websites, presentations or mobile content.

- XNA studio - XNA Game Studio Express enables hobbyists, academics, and small, independent game developers to easily create video games for Windows and the Xbox 360 console using new, optimized cross-platform gaming libraries based on .NET. This official release enables the creation of games for Windows XP SP2-based PCs. Combined with an active membership in the XNA Creators Club (available from Xbox Live Marketplace), you can also create, debug, and play games on your Xbox 360 console.
• Blender - Blender is the open source software for 3D modeling, animation, rendering, post-production, interactive creation and playback. Available for all major operating systems under the GNU Public License.

• OGRE - OGRE (Object-Oriented Graphics Rendering Engine) is a scene-oriented, flexible 3D engine written in C++ designed to make it easier and more intuitive for developers to produce applications utilising hardware-accelerated 3D graphics. The class library abstracts all the details of using the underlying system libraries like Direct3D and OpenGL and provides an interface based on world objects and other intuitive classes.

• Java - Java is an object-oriented programming language, widely used for game development in mobile devices such as tablets and mobile phones. To write a game in Java, a programming environment is needed. It is called IDE (Integrated development environment). Famous IDEs for Java are Eclipse and NetBeans. The developer needs also JDK (Java Development Kit) which provides special tools and features, and the player needs an installed Java Runtime Environment (JRE – consisting of Java Virtual Machine (JVM), Java platform core classes, and supporting Java platform libraries) on his/her computer or mobile device.

3.3. Use of ePortfolio tools and social networks in youth non-formal education

E-games are only one of the means of using modern media tools in youth work and non-formal education. The rapid development of ePortfolio systems and constantly increasing use and importance of social networks pose new challenges to youth work – namely how to take advantage of them in non-formal education. Youth workers and trainers should be well aware of the advantages of social networks as means of youth media education and training. Meantime, the use of ePortfolio as a method for recognition of non-formal education should be also used in youth work activities.

3.3.1. ePortfolio tools in non-formal education

a/ Definitions of an ePortfolio

The ePortfolio is an electronic portfolio of learning that has been acquired from all learning environments – a digitally created and managed archive of acquired skills and knowledge. Beyond the classroom, it has a vast array of applications that represent both opportunities and challenges to all of us. The ePortfolio, as defined by the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (2003), is “a collection of authentic and diverse evidence, drawn from a larger archive representing what a person or organization has learned over time.” The person or entity that owns the ePortfolio should reflect on its content. This content is “designed for presentation to one or more audiences for a particular rhetorical purpose.”
The goal of the portfolio work is to document and support the learning processes and learning results. What is important is that ePortfolio is a concept and as such it refers not only to the digital collection of artefacts, achievements etc. but it refers to the whole process of planning, documentation and reflecting upon these artefacts, achievements etc. Thus, all definitions of ePortfolio are related to a process that:

- focuses on learning products and learning processes;
- uses ICT;
- supports self-directed learning, its planning, documentation and reflection;
- includes the opportunity for an authentic and holistic approach of assessment.

b/ Components of an ePortfolio

From a more technical view, the ePortfolio integrates the following components:

- **An online personal workspace** where an individual can easily write and publish text-based information, links, digital images and audio or video clips. Everything can be published in an ePortfolio: projects, pictures, drawings, articles, publications, one’s CV, interests, hobbies, educational and work history and more.

- **Social networking facilities** allowing the reaching out and discovery of other young people or educators/trainers with similar interests, sharing the use of similar knowledge resources. Via the ePortfolio young people can communicate and exchange information on topics that are of interest for them, they can share knowledge, experience etc., just any kind of information.

- **Tools for publishing and distributing the content** in multiple ways;

- **Features to categorize tag and classify** the content. These features are one of the most significant and differentiate the normal paper-based portfolio from the ePortfolio. One can organize the content in an ePortfolio a lot more easily and quickly. Thus, a major advantage of an ePortfolio is that it saves a lot of time for its owner and at the same time can be a lot more complete.

- **Search and filtering tools** allowing easy extraction of relevant and related information on any specific topic captured by the learner;

- **Management and rights access facilities** to allow personalized access to specific content sections to different stakeholders – for example, a young person may want your peers to see his/her hobbies and interests but not the teacher or the trainer. In this case there might be different “views” for these different stakeholders. The friends will be presented with the complete view together with the hobbies and interests and teachers/trainers will be presented to another view without the
hobbies and interests. The rights for the access are entirely in the hands of the owner who is the only person who decides what should be visible for the others and what not.

c/ Types of ePortfolios

There are **three main types** of ePortfolios: developmental, reflective, representational. These three types can be mixed in different ways to achieve different learning, personal or work-related outcomes or to serve different purposes. That is why when it comes to categorizing ePortfolios we speak of: types of ePortfolios and then of purposes of ePortfolios. Here we first discuss the three main types of ePortfolios:

**Developmental ePortfolios**

Developmental ePortfolios are a record of artefacts that the owner has done over a period of time. They are called this way because they demonstrate the advancement and development of the owner over a period of time. Developmental ePortfolios are work in progress and may include reflection, feedback and self-assessment. A kind of developmental ePortfolio can be the working ePortfolio.

**Reflective ePortfolios**

Reflective ePortfolios include personal reflection on the content and also information on what this content means for the owner of the ePortfolio, what this content means for the owner's development. For example, a young person, publishing in his/her ePortfolio information about participation in a youth seminar on the topic of media literacy may reflect on this participation and state what he/she has learned on the topic or how this seminar has changed his/her views about safe in Internet issues etc. After 1 year passes the young person may go back to this reflection written down in the ePortfolio and reflect again this time on the basis of some other experience on the topic gained in the meantime.

When it comes to ePortfolio, reflection is very important for learning and development, where this is valid especially for young people who very often gain knowledge and experience quickly and chaotically. Thus, it is of great help and use for them to have some space of their own where they can put down information about these knowledge and experience – this way they subconsciously are made to think over what they have learned and what good this has done them or think about what more they need to know.

**Representational ePortfolios**

Representational ePortfolios show the owner's achievements in relation to particular work and are, therefore, selective. Young people choose some artefacts (samples of projects, publications, writings etc.) to represent what they have achieved in the course of a project, for example. These are most often used when young people wish to apply for a job, for example. When this ePortfolio is used for job application it is sometimes called Career ePortfolio. Representational ePortfolios are also called Showcase ePortfolios.
d/ Purposes of an ePortfolio

**A tool for active learning**

In the context of non-formal education and youth work it is very important to acknowledge the advantages of the ePortfolio because it is on the first place a tool for active learning. Active learning means that learners are not passive recipients of information but they are active participants in the learning process. This makes them feel responsible for this learning process which on its own leads to better learning outcomes.

In an ePortfolio for active learning young people can have their own space where they collect artefacts of their own choice, present those in a way they would like to see them and finally show those artefacts to whoever they decide. This process is conducive to active learning because it encourages reflection on one's own achievements and construction of knowledge over a period of time. Thus, the Learning ePortfolio has to document young people's development over time and nurture learning. Young people are owners of their ePortfolios – they decide what, when and how to put inside their Learning ePortfolio which makes them responsible and active learners. It is very important for the learning process that the ePortfolio provides possibilities for communication and information exchange between peers because feedback also guarantees improvement and reflection on the part of the ePortfolio owner.

**Presentational ePortfolio**

The ePortfolio can be used as a tool for presenting achievements. In this case the young person can collect and sort out artefacts that are representative for a specific field he/she has excelled in or a specific work done, course completed etc. This type of ePortfolio stores the digital artefacts that the young person can later use or finds necessary for presenting himself/herself for a concrete audience.

**Assessment ePortfolio**

ePortfolios are also known as alternative assessment tool. In contrary to classical assessment concepts, ePortfolios provide a possibility for the learners to present their individual knowledge in their own preferred way. Using ePortfolios for assessment purposes is more than “handing in a presentation and getting a mark”. When working with ePortfolios in the assessment context, it is necessary to look at the portfolio from a wider perspective.

Moreover, with an ePortfolio, learners get the possibility to lead the assessment process and to present their skills, knowledge and competences from a pro-active perspective. Learner involvement in their own assessment is an important part of the preparation for life and work. In self-assessment learners take on more responsibility for their own learning and become more aware of their own knowledge gaps (if any) since they assess themselves in relation to the course objectives. Through assessment, viewed as part of the learning process, the learner can track his/her personal development resulting in a deeper learning experience. Learners will be working on tasks at their own pace and will then
receive feedback expressed in private messages (this could be particularly advantageous for reserved pupils). Such feedback could be more frequent and could better cater for individual needs then in traditional classroom settings.

**Career development ePortfolio**

Last but not least, the ePortfolio can be used by young people for the purposes of career planning and career development. The ePortfolio tool can assist young people in creating and maintaining the following aspects necessary for a successful career development:

- career goals;
- keeping track of work experience and accomplishments;
- creating, updating and keeping reliable storage of the resume.

Moreover, young people’s ePortfolios can be used for the purposes of giving career advice by career counsellors. A career consultant can enter the ePortfolio system and go through the profiles of young people (only if they have granted access to their profiles). After that the career consultant can give professional career advice and consultations to these young people depending on what they have found in their ePortfolios.

**e/ Use of the ePortfolio in non-formal education**

In the field of non-formal education, the ePortfolio development can:

- improve understanding of the self and the curriculum;
- engage and motivate learners, both individually and as part of a community of practice;
- personalise learning;
- support models of learning appropriate to a digital age;
- promote reflective practice;

ePortfolios can be used as a method for recognition of non-formal education. They provide evidence of learners’ progress over time, and, in the developmental sense, they engage learners in ongoing self-evaluation through reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses, recognising gaps in existing knowledge and competences and evaluating how to move forward.
3.3.2. Role of social networks in support of youth media literacy

A comprehensive research report about youth work and social networking (UK National Youth Agency, 2008) explores in detail the role of youth work in supporting youth on media literacy and social networking skills. The report discloses that youth work should play an important role in supporting young people to navigate the risks of online social networking. Youth workers can be actively involved in providing space for young people to reflect upon their online activity, and to develop their media literacy in this space is one of the most promising strategies for promoting safety and the uptake of opportunities.

In this respect youth workers should avail of skills that support offering:

- Individual interventions to address risk behaviours, or to encourage the take up of opportunities, based upon existing youth work relationships;
- Group work to support the development and spread of positive online social networking behaviours;
- Group work to support young people to become peer-mentors and peer-trainers – supporting each other in their learning about, and safe use of, social networks;
- Reflective learning opportunities to develop media literacy;

Online social networking tools can be used to complement existing youth work activities, as well as promote youth services to young people.

Professional youth work has a specific and unique contribution to make in order to ensure young people can navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking. The importance of the youth work contribution is underlined by the effectiveness of youth work approaches in engaging and working with socially excluded young people and young people with complex needs.

Last but not least, youth work methods have a particular contribution to make in encouraging and supporting young people to adopt safe and positive online behaviours.

In the meantime, youth workers should be aware that social networks provide opportunities in terms of:

- promotion and recruitment – letting young people know about activities and events;
- engagement – seeking views from young people;
- keeping in contact – sending messages to young people;
- sharing media – including photos from events or music from young bands.
Youth workers should undergo some training and capacity building with a view to social networks, including:

- Applying youth work skills and policies in the online social networking space;
- Knowledge about social network sites – to “remove the fear” of sites and allow workers to identify, assess and respond to young people’s use of these sites;
- Knowledge about opportunities and risks – to support services in adopting balanced and nuanced responses;
- Identifying emerging trends – so that responses to future developments can be well prepared.

**Example – “The Violence of Information” Facebook group**

In the frame of “The Violence of Information” project we have decided to develop a Facebook group of the project. All partners, participants in project events, developers, young people who took part in the e-games scenario contests and all others interested in the project can join in this group. The idea was on the one hand to spread information about the project and on the other hand – to show youth workers, youth trainers, youth leaders and also young people how social networks such as Facebook can be used not only for communication but also for promotion, campaigning, presentation of organizations and more.

The good thing about social networks is that they are tools ready for use – one has to just register, create the profile, give it a name, upload the necessary information and invite people to join. After that some time has to be allocated every week for maintenance of the page but nonetheless this takes only about half an hour – to answer some questions of other users, to upload new information, to delete spam or to update some old information. The fact that such social networks are easy to use and do not require a lot of efforts or resources to maintain is enough to make them an appropriate tool for youth organizations and centres to use.

As you will the opportunities provided by social networks for youth work were described in the section above 3.3.2. For each one of these opportunities here we give a concrete example about how we have taken advantage from it and how we implemented it in practice.

In the case of the current project we have used the Facebook page “The Violence of Information” in the following ways:
| Promotion and recruitment | Information about upcoming project events – programme, application form and descriptions were posted for the project events. All who see these and would like to participate can download the application form and send it back to us for participation. Information about the project products – the web site, the e-games etc. This is also a part of the promotion of the whole project. |
| Dissemination | Upload of materials related to the project -we uploaded, for example, the press materials from the press conference that took place till the end of the project including a TV interview with representatives of the partnership that was broadcasted on National Bulgarian TV. This added to the dissemination of the project results. |
| Sharing media | Upload of photos from events – photos from all events in the frame of the project were uploaded on this Facebook page. This added to the page looking more attractive and also it made it possible for participants and partners to download the photos from the page for their archives. |
| Keeping in contact | Regular timely communication with partners and participants – nowadays when it comes to young people we have to agree that most of them (if not all of them) have Facebook profiles. We used this tendency to our advantage and through the project Facebook group we communicated with our partners and participants discussing in real time our work. |
| Engagement | Asking young people what they thought about the project and the products or asking them to think about possible scenarios for the e-games. Using the Facebook chat system we contacted a lot of young people: some we have previously worked with, some who are our friends or friends of our friends etc. Asking young people in person and in real time about their opinion always makes them feel special and active. This is motivating for them and makes them give feedback which was of great use for us in view of improving the project and making it adequate for the needs of the youngsters as well. |
In conclusion, we might say that our experience with social network sites proved that they do have their own place in youth work and to a great extent can help youth workers, youth trainers and youth leaders reach out the young people as well as successfully promote and disseminate their work. We hope this could be used as a best practice also by other youth organizations and centres.
Chapter 4

E-GAMES IMPLEMENTATION

Keywords

non-formal education, e-games, youth exchanges, workshops, tips for facilitators, youth training course;

Objectives of the chapter

The main aim of the chapter is to present the developed e-games and to propose some scenarios of workshops in which the already developed games (or similar ones) could be implemented. All the games are mainly dedicated for guided learning (with a facilitator) and are suitable for youth exchanges and youth training activities (youth TC’s, youth seminars, workshops during multilateral exchanges etc.). The games and the training materials could be used by youth trainers or youth workers during such events.

4.1. Presentation of the developed e-games with tips for facilitators

One of the major aims of “The Violence of the Information” project is to develop a set of training e-games, covering some important topics of media literacy that could be used in non-formal youth activities. In addition to the developed set of e-games, online training materials and a Manual are developed. The chapter contributes that project aims by providing more detailed explanations of the games as well as some examples about how they could be implemented. All the games are free to access and download (www.media-youth.org).

The developed e-games are not only concrete tools for the youth workshops but are also some kind of a model (an example) for the instructional designers and youth organizations; they could develop their own games for their specific purposes. Nowadays it is possible
even for the small or middle-scale organizations to develop e-games using authoring systems like Adobe Flash or Game Maker which could be used by non-programmers. Sometimes, a small team of 1-2 programmers (they could be students having knowledge of programming) and 1-2 designers could develop a small game for some reasonable time. Nevertheless trainers and/or instructional designers should participate in the scenario development in order to guarantee the particular training objectives of the game. During the training and contact events of “The Violence of Information” project we always encouraged young leaders and workers to initiate some experimental development activities in their organizations and try to develop their own games.

In order to play the developed games the learners don’t need any specific ICT skills, it is only supposed that they have some general skills how to use a computer. The system requirements are also very simple, games could be started and played on almost every PC or MAC connected to Internet, only Flash should be installed in advance.

4.1.1. “Searching strategy” e-game

Searching Strategy

![Image of the Searching Strategy e-game]

Size: 3 MB
Platform: PC, MAC
Playable online: Yes
Time: 15 - 20 min
a/ Game abstract

The aim of the game is to train young people how to search in Internet using advance search approaches (like Boolean logic). By playing this game the users will brainstorm about different search issues like how to formulate the search query, how to use keywords, and what Boolean logic means.

Firstly, you will be introduced to the map of Europe. You have the opportunity to visit five countries. In each country you visit you will be asked a few questions. The answers to these questions you have to find on the Internet with the help of search engines. For every question there are tips for searching. You have to use the right technique and logic to get the right answer. For every right answer you will win a Boolean logic symbol. In the “Help” section there is an explanation of the Boolean logic symbols. Consider that in order to play the game you need Internet connection because the answers to the questions need to be searched on the Internet by means of applying different searching techniques.

b/ Educational goals

- to raise awareness about formulating the search query;
- to teach the player about Boolean logic;
- to learn different and better ways of searching for information on the Internet;

c/ Some guidelines on how to use the e-game

The game, like the other games in this manual, is suitable for guided learning which means for groups of trainees guided and assisted by a facilitator or a trainer. The game is suitable for illustrating one of the media literacy topics – searching approaches in Internet. It
could be used, for example, in workshops during youth non-formal activities (e.g. youth exchanges). One more concrete example of how to organize a workshop with this kind of e-games is detailed in the 4.2. below. Here are some general guidelines on how to use the game:

- it is preferable that the game is played in groups guided and assisted by a facilitator;
- before starting the game the facilitator could shortly brief the audience about the topic, searching strategies in Internet;
- there should be computers connected to the Internet and it is preferable that each trainee has a computer to work on but in case there are not enough computers, two or three users may sit in front of one computer.
- after playing the game the facilitator may ask the trainees if they learned something new from the game, what kind of problems concerning the searching approaches they noticed while playing, what kind of other problems (not covered by the game) they faced in their previous experience etc.
- after playing the game the facilitator may initiate a discussion about the problems of searching strategies in the Net.

4.1.2. “Manipulation of information” e-game

**Manipulation of information**

*Size: 3.3 MB*
*Platform: PC, MAC*
*Playable online: Yes*
*Time: 15 - 20 min*
a/ Game abstract

In this game you will learn about the manipulation of information, which is trying to trick you. There are 3 scenes: the living room, where you have an image gallery on your laptop, the office, where you have to discern the manipulative e-mails among the other more useful ones, and the park where you will be confronted with the manipulation in the everyday press. In this particular game you will see some examples of manipulated images and texts which are in a way distorting the information and thus misleading the recipient. You have 15-20 minutes to play the game and then you will be introduced to a quiz, which will test your knowledge about the “manipulation of information” topic.
b/ Educational goals

- to raise awareness about manipulated information;
- to learn about different ways of manipulating the information and present some widely spread cases of manipulation;

c/ Some guidelines on how to use the game

The guidelines about implementation of this game are similar to those above referring to “Searching Strategy” game. It is also designed to be used in guided learning with a facilitator; the group could be given some information on the topic in advance before playing the game so that they are prepared and more or less know what to expect. After playing the game, a discussion could be initiated by the facilitator. The game is suitable for youth exchanges (training course, seminars etc.) on the topic of media literacy.

4.1.3. “Evaluation of information” e-game

**Evaluation of information**

Size: 1.5 MB  
Platform: PC, MAC  
Playable online: Yes  
Time: 20 - 30 min
a/ Game abstract

In this game you will learn how to evaluate information. There are 3 scenes in the game: the art class, where you have to read and evaluate four articles about Leonardo da Vinci and Impressionism; workshop scene, where you have to read a text for certain limited time and answer five questions. The last scene is environment scene, where you have to sort out 11 notes deciding which ones are “rubbish” and which one are valuable information. You earn a different grade, depending of your right or wrong evaluation and performance in each scene.
b/ Educational goals

- to teach how to better scan through texts;
- to help us distinguish the rubbish information from the important one;

c/ Some guidelines how to use the game

Like the previous games, this game is meant for guided learning. The facilitator/trainer could present briefly the “evaluation of information” topic and then could offer the trainees the possibility to play the game. More details on how to organize a workshop are mentioned below.

4.1.4. “Safe in Internet” e-game

**Safe in Internet**

*Size: 2.5 MB  
Platform: PC, MAC  
Playable online: Yes  
Time: 25 - 30 min*
a/ Game abstract

The interface of the game is designed in a way that it simulates/looks like the normal computer screen. On this screen you will see different applications like a social network and an online trading portal. You have to search for the valuable information throughout all the applications, collect it and fill it into a data blank, without falling into the trap of the spam and security frauds. This way the game is showing some ways for stealing the information on the Internet.

b/ Educational goals

- to teach about the dangers related to information stealing in popular Internet applications;
- to raise the security awareness and explain some security issues in the Net;

c/ Some guidelines on how to use the game

The game is meant for guided learning. The facilitator/trainer could present briefly the “safe in Internet” topic and then could offer the trainees the possibility to play the game. After playing the game a discussion could be organized. More details on how to organize a workshop are mentioned in 4.2. below.
4.2. Planning training activities with “The Violence of Information” project e-games

Media literacy e-games could be implemented in non-formal youth activities like youth training courses, youth exchanges, youth seminars and other types of out-of-school activities. They are mainly designed for guided learning (with a trainer/facilitator). Although the main purpose of the games is to be implemented in the non-formal training youth events they could be also useful in other types of trainings like school activities or self-guided (home-based) learning. The games cover 4 main aspects of media literacy – searching in Internet, manipulation of information, evaluation of information and safe in Internet.

We will present one typical example how to organize a workshop using the developed e-games and one typical example of youth training course that may include such workshop.

4.2.1. Workshop model with “The Violence of Information” project e-games

Here you can find an example of how to organize a workshop during non-formal youth activities using the 4 e-games.

a/ Preparation for the workshop

Before starting the workshop the following steps have to be undertaken and considered:

- Every workshop takes place in the frame of a training programme, e.g. a training course. So, first you have to decide on the place of the workshop in whole training programme, how the workshop relates to the other forms of training (inputs, other workshops, discussions etc.) and to other topics covered in the programme (content of the training programme);

- You have to know the profile of the participants, their background, their prior knowledge, their expectations and their motivation to participate in such trainings;

- The trainer has to be prepared as well, he/she has to learn about the topics (media literacy), he/she has to learn about how youth exchanges and youth non-formal training activities are usually organized. As you could see here, the preparation of the trainer has two aspects: first the trainer should know in details some of the topics (searching in Internet, evaluating the information, manipulation of the information, safe in Internet etc.), should know about the problems covered by those topics and secondly, the trainer should have some experience in youth exchanges (their purpose, their format etc.). It is good if the trainer has attended some youth exchanges before.
In order to use such games you also need a computer hall with PC or Mac connected to Internet. It is preferable to have one computer for each user but in case of shortage of computers two or three users may sit in front of one computer. There are no special requirements about the computers or Internet speed but it is necessary that the computers have Flash player installed. Also, it is advisable that the trainer had tried out the games in advance as well as the stability of the Net connection etc.

The trainer has to play the games in advance, read carefully the “Help” sections of the games and also understand the educational purposes of the games. The games are not covering every sub-topic (sub-problem) - they are just raising the users’ awareness. So, it should not be expected that the games will replace the other training activities. The trainer/facilitator should be ready to explain the game in details, if necessary.

The trainer/facilitator should be ready to organize the workshop, should imagine in advance how the workshop will pass (example is below).

b/ Workshop example

**Duration:** Approximately 90 min.

**Users and groups:** Training course or seminars including between 5 and 30 people.

**Technical requirements:** A hall with computers connected to the Internet and with Flash player installed. It is preferable to have one computer for each user but in case of small number of computers, 2-3 users may sit in front of one computer. The computers have to be separated (if possible) at least 2 meters from one another in order to avoid interference between the players. If the players have lap-tops (portable computers) and there is a Wi-Fi, they may stay in different places and even not in one hall.

**Warming-up:** The introduction could be approximately 10-15 minutes. The facilitator may explain briefly about the media literacy topics and give some examples about searching strategies, manipulation of information, evaluation of information and safe in Internet etc. This could be also included in a special input somewhere in the training course programme (outside the workshop).

**Defining the tasks:** Approximately 5 minutes. The facilitator has to explain the tasks the trainees have to perform while they play the game. For example, to play the game for certain time, to think what kind of problems the game covers, where such cases could be seen, to record their thoughts/findings and present them afterwards in front of the others.

**Assisting during the game playing:** Each game could be played for approximately 20-30 minutes. During the practical work the facilitator/trainer has to monitor the play and help, if necessary, the users to start the game, to finalize it etc. Approximately 5 minutes before
the end the trainer may ask the users to finalize the game and if necessary, to assist them. Of course, if necessary, the time for the execution of the games could be prolonged but not much.

Discussion after playing: 30-40 minutes. After playing the game the trainees may join the plenary and the facilitator may give the floor to them to explain how they played the game, what they think about the problems covered, if they like the game, what they think could be included in the game as well (additional topics, additional examples, other interactions etc.). If some of the media literacy topics focused the attention of the game users these topics could be discussed into details with examples from the trainees’ experience etc. At the end of the discussion the facilitator could summarize some of the media literacy problems and could present them in a more structured way in front of the audience. Also, the facilitator may discuss how such games could be developed in small youth organizations with limited resources.

4.2.2. Training course model with “The Violence of Information” project e-games

Youth training courses or seminars organized in the frame of “Youth in Action” Programme have some specifics related to the target group and to the format of non-formal learning. The youth events need active participation on the part of the trainees, a lot of interactions between them and exchange of experience. Also, there are different types of events – youth exchanges (bi-lateral or multi-lateral), study visits, seminars, training courses and more.

The training course format is mostly related to intensive learning. The youth training course usually includes not only the specialized topic (main course topic) but also the intercultural activities (visits to local organizations, cultural programme) which help the youngsters to understand the differences and arise their sense for tolerance. Also, the training course includes different types of evaluation activities helping the trainers to estimate the trainees’ progress, feelings and motivation.

Here we offer you a framework example of a training course (TC) about media literacy with a duration of 6 days.

Preparation: Usually the preparation for one TC starts months beforehand. There are some important steps to be considered throughout this preparation phase - defining the needs of learning, defining the programme framework (discussed with project partners), defining the selection procedure for the participants, preparing and distributing information and applications, selecting the participants, logistics (choosing the place, accommodation, food, training halls, how to travel etc.). The trainers should be identified and negotiated; the selected trainees should prepare themselves in advance.

Another important part of the preparation process is funding, sometimes it needs a lot of efforts one year before (applying in Youth in Action programme, European Youth Foundation, Open Society Foundation or other sources supporting youth activities).
Day(s) before the TC starts: It is advisable to form a Leadership team (could be one representative from each partner/country) which could discuss the programme into details, could distribute tasks, could discuss the logistics etc. The trainers could be also included in the Leadership team. The trainers could be either youth workers from the partners or externally invited experts.

Day one: Arrival of participants. Getting to know each other, expectations, general presentation of the programme, presentation of the TC idea. It is important to give the floor to the participants to introduce themselves and their organizations, to get to know each other and to organize some games or workshops to facilitate that. During the evening: International evening: each participant could prepare some typical food/music.

Day two: TC introduction via inputs and workshops, main topics about media literacy could be presented. During the evening: games or movie projection on media literacy topics.

Day three: Giving the floor to the participants to present/share their experience about the topic (each of them should prepare some presentations in advance); Middle evaluation should be organized to estimate the participants’ level of satisfaction etc.

Day four: Half of the day – going into details in the selected topics (workshops with e-games could be organized, example is available above in 4.2.1.), the other half of the day – cultural programme and visiting local youth organization/centers or meeting local youth authorities related to the TC topic etc.

Day five: Half of the day – going into details in the selected topics (workshops with e-games could be organized), half of the day- future projects discussion, presentation of the “Youth in Action” programme possibilities etc. It is important to allocate some time to discuss future cooperation and follow-up. There should also be final evaluation of the TC in the form of questionnaires, for example, that should be filled in by participants.

Sometimes, during such events, the Leadership team should meet every evening and discuss the current problems and suggest how to solve them. There should be different forms of evaluation in order to estimate the trainees’ status – discussions with them, talks in small groups, sharing suggestions in plenary, formal evaluation via questionnaires etc.

Day six: Departure of the participants.

Closing issues and follow-up: Usually such events have follow-up, like planning next steps, other meetings, developing some future projects etc. It is not bad if some www site or at least some pages in Facebook or other social networks are prepared in order to keep in touch with the participants and discuss future ideas. Making an e-mail list is also advisable. Last but not least, there is usually administrative work like reporting and some financial issues to be settled (tickets reimbursement, covering other expenses) etc. Sometimes, the administrative work and reporting takes a lot of time and there should be clear responsibilities distribution between the partners.
Of course, the above mentioned example is just a model of one typical youth TC. Depending on the target group and conditions the organizers have to be creative and propose an adequate programme. Having in mind that the non-formal trainings need a lot of motivation and obligatory issues are not much (in comparison to formal education) the programme should be really interesting and useful for the participants in order to keep their attention during the whole TC.
Glossary

active learning – learners being actively engaged in the material and the learning process and not being just passive listeners or observers. There are various models of active learning proposing different activities considered as active learning. Most of them focus on engaging learners in discussions, dialogues, simulations, role-plays etc.

behavioural targeting – a technique through which online publishers or advertisers can trace one's browsing history (the web sites you have visited) and use this information to display to this person mostly advertisements that he/she is likely to be interested in.

Boolean logic - Boolean searching is based on constructing logical relationships among the terms searched. These logical relationships are being constructed with the help of logical operators: OR, AND, NOT.

Boolean operator (logical operator) - OR, AND, NOT. Used in Boolean searching to find queries in databases (including in Internet considered the biggest database). These are combined in different ways to make the Internet search more efficient.

domain (domain name) – a component of the URL. There is hierarchy of domains: top-level domains and subdomains. A top-level domain is, for example, com. A subdomain belonging to the domain com is example.com. In this manual when we are discussing the term domain we mean the top-level domain of a URL.

e-games – a device or a computer program that provides entertainment by challenging a person's eye-hand coordination or mental abilities. The games may be contested among several players, or an individual may engage in a test of skill against the computer. Some Internet-based games involve thousands of individuals interacting with each other in ongoing, open-ended play.

ePortfolio – an electronic portfolio, also known as an ePortfolio or a digital portfolio, is a collection of electronic evidence assembled and managed by a user, usually on the web. It is a method and a tool for competence development. In an ePortfolio the competence development process is documented and provides a personal and reflective insight in the learning and development process.

fraud e-mail – these are e-mails that try to get money from the user by applying different manipulation schemes: spoofing (e-mail sent from someone pretending to be someone else), phishing, bogus offers, requests for help and more.

game development - the process by which a game is produced, starting form the idea and finishing with the testing and implementation. Today this term refers to the development of all the variety of electronic games - computer-based, console games, mobile games etc.
HTTPS – stands for HyperText Transfer Protocol over SSL (Secure Socket Layer). It is a TCP/IP protocol used by Web servers to transfer and display Web content securely. The data transferred is encrypted so that it cannot be read by anyone except the recipient. HTTPS should be used by any Web site that is collecting sensitive customer data such as banking information or purchasing information.

junk e-mail – a subset of spam; it is an unsolicited e-mail which main aim is to sell something. It is usually anonymous and sent as spam to thousands of recipients.

library gateway - type of subject directories; specialists (usually librarians) have reviewed and assembled all the information sites by subject; appropriate for searching high quality information websites.

malware - software or programme that is designed to harm/annoy/cause problems to users in a variety of ways: to disrupt or deny operation, to gather information that leads to loss of privacy or exploitation, to gain unauthorized access to system resources, and other abusive behavior.

media literacy – using different kinds of media intelligently and making informed decisions about the information they present; a dynamic process of acquiring skills for critically evaluating and sifting through messages in different media; constant questioning of what one sees, reads or hears in his/her life.

media literacy education – an ongoing process; aims at making people aware of the specifics related to different media messages and educating how to question and analyze a message;

“a means of facilitating the integration of critical thinking skills, aesthetics, the study of value messages, and the study of the social and political implications of media texts.” Barry Duncan

meta search engine - search for the information in several search engines and databases thus providing the user with a list of results comprising the relevant search results from these several search engines.

non-entertainment games (serious games) - the use of games and gaming dynamics for non-entertainment purposes.

non-formal education – learning that occurs in a formal learning environment such as an educational organ, but that is not formally recognised within a curriculum or syllabus framework. It typically involves workshops, community courses, interest based courses, short courses, or seminars.

peer education – an approach to health promotion. It revolves around the fact that the influence of young people upon one another is stronger than the influence of adults upon the youths. Peer educators usually go through special training programmes beforehand.
**phishing** – attempting to get from a person in an electronic communication some personal data such as usernames, passwords and credit card details by deceiving this person that you belong to a trustworthy entity.

**re-identification** - the process by which anonymized personal data is matched with its true owner.

**search engine** – a term used to describe systems like Google, Yahoo and alike. Search engines use software programs to find the match between the keywords you have typed and indexes of the search engine. Then the matches found are presented in some form of ranking. But search engines use different ranking schemes as well as different search options.

**semantic advertising** – a technique that aims at displaying only content that is likely to be interesting to the viewers by analyzing the web page semantically (analyzing its meaning) in order to determine which ads are appropriate for it and which are not.

**social network (social network site)** – e.g. Facebook, MySpace etc.; these sites consist of a profile for each user, his/her social links, and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging etc.

**spamdexing** - (“spam” + “indexing”) – a technique that manipulates the search engine indexes (the indexes store the data so that you can search quickly through it without waiting for each single documents to be searched). For example, one can put a lot of keywords in a web page in order to raise the keyword count in the web page and this way increase its ranking by the search engine making it more likely to be found.

**spyware** - kind of malware. It is a small programme installed in a computer (most often via the Internet) which programme can collect various kinds of personal information – e.g. surfing history.

**storyboard** - a sequence of images and annotations for a cartoon, animation or video drawn on paper or rendered in the computer. Storyboards are previews of the final version and typically contain mockups rather than final art and images.

**subject directory** – web sites organized by subjects; uses human editors to create/select the content and filter the indexes entering the respective directory. The content in directories is organized according to certain standards set by the editors.

**troubleshooting** - the different mechanisms applied when there is certain problem or even failure in the searching process (e.g. errors).

**URL** - the address of a web site or file on the Internet. (e.g. http://www.example.net/index.html)
vortal – a kind of subject directories; forms of specialized databases devoted to a single subject. These are usually created by specialists who have interests and deep knowledge in the respective field.

youth work - “the process of creating an environment where young people can engage in informal educational activities” (Wikipedia)


E-games for Improving Youth Media Literacy

MANUAL

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Produktionsskolen I Hvidovre (PIH) – Denmark
www.stevnsbo.dk
European Youth4Media Network e.V (Y4M) – Germany
www.youth4media.eu
Associazione culturale ORIENTARE – Italy
www.orientare.info
Association for Culture and Education KIBLA (ACE KIBLA) – Slovenia
www.kibla.org
Instituto Municipal de Juventud de Lorca (IMJUVE) – Spain
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