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Activity Manual

For Educators

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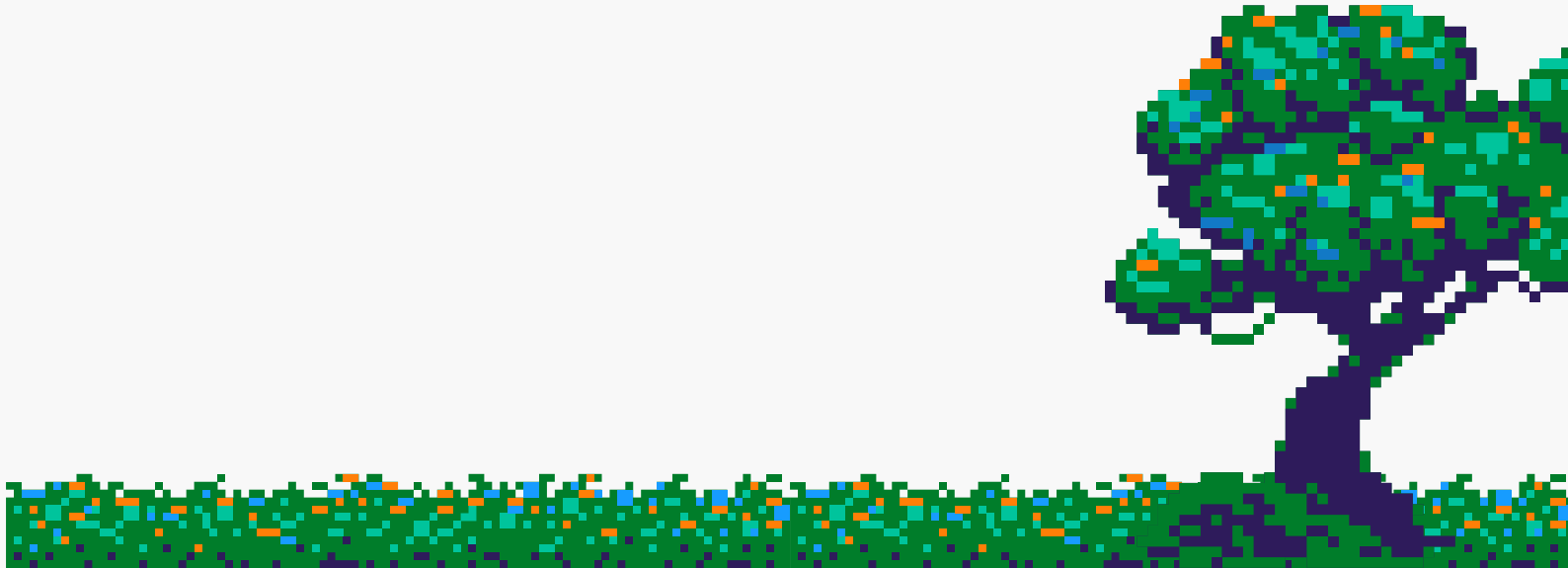
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Introduction

This activity manual provides a comprehensive approach to integrating media literacy into youth education with a key focus on using our project's video game as an interactive learning tool. Designed for educators working with youngsters aged 16 to 30, the manual offers ready-to-use activities and workshop scenarios that explore the complex relationships between media, technology and society.

In today's digital age, media literacy is more than just understanding how media works. It's about empowering young people to think critically, navigate online responsibly, and participate actively in digital debates. This manual supports educators in helping learners recognize the influence of algorithms, social media, and digital storytelling on perception, identity, and participation. Moreover, to make learning more relatable and playful, the manual features step-by-step activities that can be used either independently or as follow-up exercises to the project's video game, ensuring a cohesive learning experience that connects gameplay to reflection and discussion.

Developed collaboratively by project partners across Europe, the manual includes contributions on underexplored aspects of media literacy, such parasocial relationships, cognitive biases, and the emotional impact of digital tools. Each activity includes clear learning objectives, practical instructions, and curated resources to help educators facilitate discussion and exploration.
The manual is available online (PDF format) in six languages: English, Bulgarian, Spanish, French, Italian, and Serbian.
NB: The activities will be further refined once the project's video game is finalized, maintaining continuity between both components and ensuring that gameplay and classroom practice reinforce each other.



About this manual

About Pixel Media:

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This manual is intended to be the practical foundation of 'Pixel Media: Video Game to Develop Media Literacy' (CREA-CROSS-2024-MEDIALITERACY 101186931). This project has been co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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Note on use of generative AI and writing assistant tools in the creation of this manual:

Team members from 6 European partner organisations collaborated to write this manual, none of whom being an English native speaker. An outline was created by the coordinating partner to collectively define the structure and share the work. Considering these factors, partners have used writing assistant tools, such as ChatGPT and Grammarly, to review the correctness of English, to organise their ideas, to share a common writing tone, and to ensure that no parts repeated one another. While most resources in the bibliography has been directly researched by staff members, any additional sources added by generative AI have been reviewed for validity.

Note on use of external infographics:

Partners have included infographics from external sources into this manual, and credited their sources. We have taken the liberty to translate them into partners' languages, while maintaining original source, formatting and crediting, in a fair use approach. Should the copyright holders wish to contact the project team, you may do so by writing to info (at) yuzupulse.eu.

Learn about Media Literacy and climb up the influence ladder.

A video game to raise awareness on Media Literacy

Using “the Influencer Solitaire” video game as a tool to promote media literacy, participants are encouraged to explore how online content influences perceptions and decisions. Through gameplay, they will gain a deeper understanding of questions such as: What makes a post seem credible? How do content creators use tone, visuals, and timing to capture attention? At what point does persuasion cross the line into manipulation?

This activity is designed to help you use the game effectively in your own educational or community setting. It provides practical guidance, tips, and facilitation advice to create an engaging, interactive learning experience that encourages critical thinking and discussion.

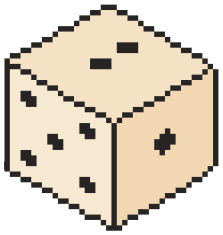


GAME OVERVIEW

Duration:	45 – 60 minutes (at least one hour in total, possible to play in several short sessions by playing “one day” in the game)
Age:	16+ years
Group size:	Group of 15 to 20 or can be done individually.
Aim:	Introduce the key concepts of Media Literacy in an interactive way. Show young people the impact of their online actions : how social media works.
Objectives:	• Introduce learners to Media Literacy concepts such as Fake News, AI impact, content production/ interpretation, etc. • Enable learners to better understand the impact of their online actions and the way social media works. • Encourage learners to learn more about Media Literacy and dig deeper into the topic.
Material needed:	Playable **here** on computer or tablet (in browser and downloadable version) The game don’t require internet connection to be played (except if played online)



STEP BY STEP: HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE GAME



1. Preparation: (15 - 20 minutes)

You should previously play the game and reach at least level 4 so you can have prior knowledge of how the game might advance. Before introducing the game to students, invite them to reflect on what makes an influencer “successful” and what cues they use to judge whether online content is credible or trustworthy. Starting with these questions helps activate their prior knowledge, sparks curiosity, and encourages them to engage more critically with the situations they will encounter during gameplay.

Setup ideas

Entire class: If you can only afford one “copy” of the game, you can host a full classroom session. One student or a small group of students can go behind the PC or the tablet while the rest of the class observes and reacts to their choices. If possible, use a projector or large screen to display the gameplay so that everyone can follow the action and participate in discussions. You can pause the game at key moments to discuss the consequences of decisions and introduce relevant concepts in context.

To ensure active participation, a “speaking token” (such as a ball or pen) can be passed around. Only the student holding the object is allowed to speak. It would help you structure the discussion and avoid huge brouhaha over the topic. While this format may be somewhat unstructured, it can also create a dynamic and engaging learning experience.

For example, players may consistently choose cards that increase their follower count, even when these choices negatively affect their community. This behaviour can be used as a starting point to explore topics such as Fake News, encouraging learners to reflect on their decisions and consider whether they would have acted in the same way: why or why not?

Groups:

- Locally

If you can afford several copies of the game, place students in small groups. This creates a strong discussion dynamic and keeps more students actively engaged.

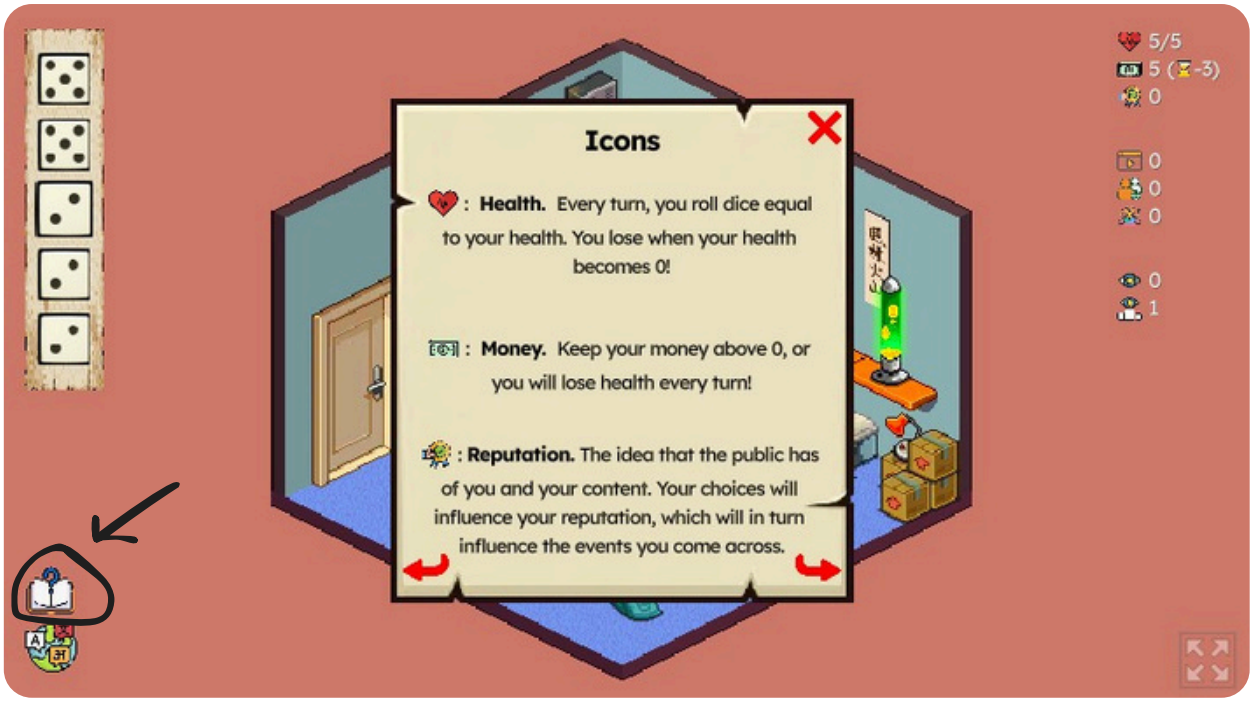
- Remotely

You can host sessions remotely with small groups of students by having a Steam account and making a copy of the game. You can then invite your students to a session. Use vocal apps such as Discord or Steam's built-in chat function. Thanks to the "Remote Play Together" functionality offered by Steam, you can give control of your mouse and keyboard to a remote player when playing a game. Thus, you can host the session and let the students play using your game copy.

Supported languages:
You can perform this sequence in English or in many other languages, as the game exists in the 6 languages of the Pixel Media partnership.

2. Students play the game: (30 - 40 minutes)

Make sure students complete the tutorial by clicking on the icon circled in black. This will provide them with the essential vocabulary, game mechanics, and background knowledge needed to understand and navigate the game effectively.



While they play, help them with vocabulary or with the mechanics.
Your job is to facilitate the aspects of the game. You can also write down the things they have trouble with.

3. Debriefing & Reflection with open-ended questions: (10 minutes)

The game is a starting point for discussion rather than as a stand-alone activity. Ask students what clues helped them judge whether something was trustworthy, what techniques seemed designed to influence them, and how the game represented the challenges of evaluating media messages.

Start the debrief by asking reflexive questions such as:
-What clues helped you decide whether a media message was reliable?
-Which details made you pause and question the content?
-How did the game show the difference between attention and trust?
-What would you check before sharing something like this online?
-Did any of the cards or choices you made made you think of an influencer you know?

You can also ask them if the game made them want to discover a specific media literacy-related topic in details.

Finally, a simple exit task can be:

- Write one thing the game taught you about media messages.
- Name one strategy for checking whether online content is trustworthy.
- Explain how a media message can be persuasive without being fully reliable.

After the discussion, explore the project's other resources for further learning and encourage participants to continue questioning what they share and see online.



Identifying Cognitive Biases: your brain is lying (sometimes)

ACTIVITY 1

Using tools like storytelling, infographics, and group discussion, this 45-60 minute session encourages participants to think critically, question assumptions, and spot the ways their brain might be playing tricks on them. By the end of the activity, participants will gain key insights into cognitive biases and will be able to recognize common thinking traps. This activity will strengthen their media literacy and help them make more informed decisions when navigating the digital world.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	45 – 60 minutes
Age:	16 – 20 years
Group size:	Group of 15 to 20 or can be done individually.
Aim:	Introduce the concept of cognitive biases in a fun and relatable way. Show young people how their brain can play tricks on them without them even realizing it and help them spot those mental shortcuts.
Objectives:	• Make learners understand what cognitive biases are, how they influence our perception and decision-making. • Enable learners to spot and name seven key cognitive biases relevant for news verification. • Encourage learners to look for other sources of information, to take time to evaluate what they read or hear, and actively reflect (no jumping to conclusions). Foster their critical-thinking.
Material needed:	Projector or board (for presenting slides or examples) Printed info sheets on cognitive biases or digital version (download **here**) Printed "bias situations" handout (or digital version if using tablets/laptops) Pens/post its if doing in-person group work

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Introduction to Cognitive Biases: (15 - 20 minutes)

Start by introducing cognitive biases with an analogy: “the brain is like an overworked assistant who takes mental shortcuts to survive”. Here is an engaging way to introduce the topic. Feel free to adapt it and link it to cultural, generational, contemporary events.

Throughout this section of the activity, feel free to encourage students to share their personal experience of cognitive biases (they could have experienced it online or not).

The analogy:
When presenting the activity, you can begin with the following introduction: “Picture this: your brain is like an overworked assistant who is trying to manage thousands if not billions of tasks at once. Every day, your brain tells your eyes to focus, your ears to listen and interpret, your mouth to taste, your body to move...and that’s alongside many other directives that are enabling you to be. Although the human brain is an impressive body feature, there is no way it can handle everything perfectly. So, to cope, it makes shortcuts, ie quick conclusions to make decisions fast. In psychology, it is called heuristics. These shortcuts are very helpful: imagine if your brain wasn’t fast enough to categorize the snake into the category of “dangerous” and venomous animals. But when they lead to mistakes, they become what we call “cognitive biases”.

Everyone has cognitive biases. As highlighted through our snake’s example, they often show up when our brain senses danger or a threat to something important (survival or fitting in). In those moments, your fabulous assistant works in overdrive and sometimes jump to conclusions in order to “save” you.

In this activity, we will explore together the most common cognitive biases. The ones that mess with how we perceive the world and the news (see annex for visuals to illustrate and mention the following cognitive biases)”.

2. Story Game around Cognitive Biases: "Help Pixel spot the cognitive biases that are playing with him" (25 - 30 minutes)

"Pixel is just a regular guy. He goes to a public school, loves playing tennis, and would eat pasta every day if he could. His favorite influencers are mybodyistrong and smileandchill2. On weekends, he watches car racing with his brother and sister. He believes that climate change is a hoax. He feels overwhelmed and he doesn't know what he wants to do after graduation. He has a crush on someone from his art class, but he doesn't dare talk to them."

After reading aloud this fictional story of Pixel, ask the learners to identify the following cognitive bias behind each of the mistaken beliefs Pixel holds. Depending on group size, they can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Encourage them to use the visuals provided in Annex 1 folder to help them make connections between the situations and the biases.

For each situation encountered by Pixel, they need to spot the one bias that is at play and answer the two following questions:
-What cognitive bias is at play?
-Why is it that one?

A. Pixel watches a TikTok video where a wellness influencer says: "Ozempic is a miracle weight loss drug. Everyone should be on it and doctors are just hiding the truth because if people find out about this alternative, it's not good for the market." Pixel believes it.
-Which bias? -> **Authority Bias**
-Why? Because the influencer sounds confident enough, so Pixel assumes they're credible without checking medical facts or ask a health professional.

B. Pixel sees a Facebook post showing a snowy April day with the caption: "Global warming? Then why is it snowing in April? LOL." Pixel likes the post and shares it with his followers adding "I'm freezing. Isn't it supposed to be sunny by now? Scientists, I dare you to explain this".
-Which bias? -> **Confirmation Bias**
-Why? Pixel already doubts climate change, so he accepts and spreads a post that seems to support his view (even though one cold day doesn't disprove long-term climate trends).

C. Everyone in Pixel's art school is reposting a video claiming that AI-generated art is not real art and is destroying creativity. Although Pixel's mother is working for a company developing AI, Pixel shares it too. He does it not because he's sure that it's true, but because he doesn't want to be the only one defending digital tools.
-Which bias? -> **Group/Conformity Bias**
-Why? Pixel conforms to the general opinion to avoid standing out or being criticized.

D. Pixel sees the same commercial over and over. The commercial features a smiling woman who is thrilled because her clothes came out perfectly clean thanks to a Washing Liquid. After seeing it many times, Pixel starts to believe that Washing Liquid must be a great product and also that doing household chores is "just something women do and like to do."
-Which bias? -> **Illusory Truth Bias**
-Why? The fact that the ad is being seen over and over creates repetition. Repetition makes the message feel familiar and true. Over time, Pixel accepts both the product's effectiveness and the gender stereotype without much questioning.

E. Pixel reads a headline stating that a top player at Roland-Garros faked an injury to avoid a tough opponent. Two days later, the story is debunked and proven false. The player had a legitimate medical issue. However, Pixel keeps repeating the original version to his friends: "Come on, that injury wasn't serious. He just didn't want to lose."
-Which bias? -> **Anchoring Bias**
-Why? The first piece of information (the accusation) "anchors" Pixel's belief, even after new evidence disproves it. Once that initial impression is set, it's sometimes hard to change minds.

F. Pixel reads an article about how car racing events contribute to global emissions and environmental damage. But he only focuses on the part where the articles praises the economic boost the races bring to his hometown. He ignores the rest (especially the environmental concerns).
-Which bias? -> **Selective Perception Bias**
-Why? Pixel filters the information to align with what he cares about or is linked to his concerns (not the facts that challenge his views).

3. Debriefing & Reflection with open-ended questions: (10 minutes)

In this final part of the activity, the aim is to reflect on what participants have learned and why cognitive biases matter (especially in the context of news and digital media).

Start the debrief by asking open-ended questions such as:
-Which bias was the easiest one to spot? Which was the trickiest?
-Why is it important to know about cognitive biases?
-How can this help you think more critically (especially when you're online)?

After the discussion, share resources for further learning and encourage participants to continue exploring cognitive biases. Encourage participants to continue questioning what they see, hear and share.

Para-social interactions & relationship: building your “safe digital ID/passport”

ACTIVITY 2

In today’s media landscape, young people often form intense one-sided connections with influencers, celebrities, streamers, or even fictional characters. This kind of relationship is known as parasocial relationships. They feel real but they are not reciprocal. Although they often offer comfort and inspiration, they also trick the human mind and make it even more difficult to draw the line between reality and illusion (especially when it comes to trust and influence). Thus, this activity aims to help participants to explore what makes a real and healthy online connection. It also offers a way to understand how to recognize the boundaries of this phenomenon. Through the reflection on both the positive and harmful aspects of these digital bonds, youth will build their own safe digital ID/passport.

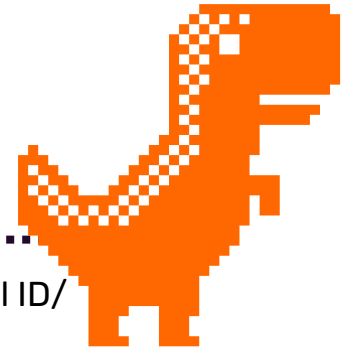
Participants will imagine that they’re preparing for a journey through the media world. What are the tips to navigate safely and make sure that they nurture an healthy digital relationship? What are the red flags they should watch out and leave behind to avoid being emotionally dependent of these online personas?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	30 – 45 minutes
Age:	14 - 18 years
Group size:	Group of 10 to 20 or can be done individually.
Aim:	Introduce parasocial relationships in a fun and interactive way + raise awareness of the effects of these relationships on our perception of ourselves and the world.
Objectives:	• Develop critical awareness of parasocial relationships • Encourage self-reflection on digital habits • Strengthen media literacy • Foster safe and healthy digital identities
Material needed:	A symbolic “digital backpack” Printed/digital version of the Safe digital ID/passport to fill (see Annex 2 folder or download **here**) Post-its (green and red ones) Pencils



WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



Throughout the entire activity, participants create their safe digital ID/ passport (see annex)

1. Reflection (5 - 10 minutes)

You can start by asking participants a few questions to help them reflect on their online relationship with other social media users.

- Who do you follow online and why?
- Have you ever felt like you really “knew” an influencer or celebrity?
- Do you ever compare your life to theirs?
- etc.

Then, individually, the participants write on cards (post-its) what they consider to be positive ("what to keep" -> green post-its) and negative ("what to leave behind" -> red post-its) aspects of digital relationship (e.g., entertainment, communication, harassment…). Place each of their post-its in a symbolic “digital suitcase” (e.g., a computer screen).

2. Group Discussion (5 - 10 minutes)

As a group, participants share and sort the cards by choosing whether to place them on “the computer screen” or not. The facilitator encourages discussion around why they chose to include or exclude something.

3. Debrief and Media Literacy insights (5 - 7 minutes)

Compare the groups’ ideas with expert insights on parasocial relationships (share concrete examples and positive strategies). Don’t hesitate to check out our library of resources (see **here**). Highlight how media is curated, how algorithms play a role, and how emotional needs can be exploited online.

4. Conclusion (10 - 15 minutes)

Participants finalizes their safe digital identity passport with:

- 5 “stamps” illustrating what healthy online relationship means to them:
  - “mutual communication” (check in on each other online just like they would in real life),
  - “respect boundaries” (respect each other’s privacy, time, and space. It’s okay if the other person is in sleeping mode and don’t reply right away),
  - “support not control” (the relationship boosts your moral and gives you confidence, it hypes you up!),
  - “online consent” (to share your online posts, to tag you etc.),
  - “balance between online and offline relationship” (the relationship not only exists virtually),
  - “no pressure to perform” (you can be yourself, you don’t need to impress each other or do some online performance).
- 3 red flags to watch out for in parasocial relationships (e.g., once you feel emotionally dependent, you start believing everything an influencer says, you would defend your favorite influencer at all costs, etc.).
- self-check questions (e.g., would I feel the same way if it was a real friend who did this? Am I projecting my feelings onto someone I don’t actually know? Would this person do the same for me?)
- tips to navigate online safely (to be completed based on the project’s resources).

<u>Why this activity matters?</u>

- Many young people often don’t realize how emotionally attached they’ve become to influencers or content creators. This activity helps them name but above all question those feelings without judgment.
- Parasocial relationships can blur reality, fuel misinformation, and harm self-esteem. Thus, understanding their mechanisms can empower youth to be more mindful and balanced in their digital lives.
- This reflective and hands-on approach encourages peer learning. It opens space for honest conversations about loneliness, trust, and identity in the era of online personas.

Real vs. Fake

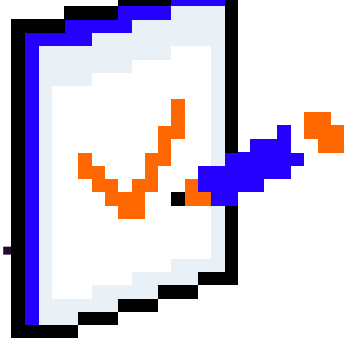
ACTIVITY 3

Fake news is a central tool of disinformation that young people face all the time in their lives. Recognising fake news and discovering its sources is crucial so that young people can counter the continuous attempts to be manipulated. Moreover, as future active citizens, the ability to identify fake news is a key prerequisite for building audience trust. On the other hand, the ability to recognise and report fake news is a tool for reducing its spread and impact. The primary tasks of training in this topic are to raise skills for detecting fake news and uncovering its sources. Various tools can support the development of knowledge and skills in this direction.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	40 minutes
Age:	16+ years
Group size:	Minimum 12 people
Aim:	Fake news is a common form of disinformation that young people regularly encounter, making it essential to develop skills to identify and trace its sources. Training should focus on critical thinking and media literacy skills to reduce the spread of fake news and foster trust.
Objectives:	• To widen awareness of the impact of fake news on society • To develop critical and analytical thinking skills • To cultivate a sense of responsibility and a commitment to the flow of transparent information
Material needed:	Flipchart papers, A4 papers, pens and markers The facilitator should prepare three real and three fake news articles and print them as many times as the groups are.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Step 1 (20 minutes)

The facilitator divides the participants into equal groups and gives them three real and three fake news articles (selected and printed out in advance). Then, participants should read the news, think for 20 minutes and come up with an answer which articles are real and which are fakes and why.

2. Step 2 (10 minutes)

After the groups have decided on real and fake news articles, a discussion follows with all the groups. The facilitator writes on a flipchart paper each group's reasoning behind their choices.

The facilitator emphasises what facts we should verify and what we should not do.

What facts should we verify?

- Statements/Public speeches
- Dates
- Names
- Data/Statistics
- Charts/Graphs

What should we not do?

X Don't look for excuses like lack of time
X Don't let your personal beliefs cloud your objective judgment
X Don't dismiss facts as unimportant – sometimes a single incorrect date can compromise an otherwise excellent and thorough piece of work

3. Debriefing questions (10 minutes)

- What aspects of the articles made you question their authenticity or credibility as you were reading them?
- How did discussions with your group members unfold when evaluating the credibility of different news articles? What were the main points of disagreement or debate?
- What specific methods or strategies did you use to assess the credibility and truthfulness of the articles you encountered?
- In what ways were you able to apply the concepts and techniques you learned during this exercise? Can you describe specific instances where you put theory into practice?

Digital Journey Map: “Navigating the noise”

ACTIVITY 4

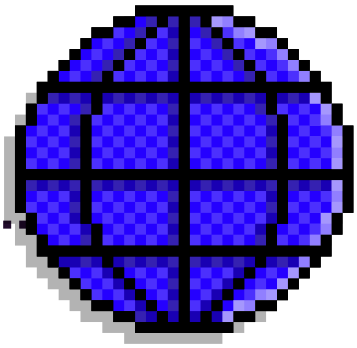
This workshop incorporates a user experience approach to help participants self-regulate their use of digital devices and apps, taking into consideration the impact on their well-being. It empowers participants to discuss themes that are meaningful and relevant to them and reflect on their personal experiences by creating a persona they can relate to. Through the process of defining mutual digital habits and engaging in small-group discussions, topics such as information fatigue may naturally emerge, prompted by the participants themselves.

This activity promotes teamwork, creativity, and presentation skills while also raising awareness of the emotional impact of technology in everyday life. The structure of the persona and digital journey map is inspired by user experience design, and aligns with the DigComp 2.2: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, specifically addressing 4.3: Protecting health and well-being and 1.1: Browsing, searching, and filtering data, information and digital content.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	50 - 60 minutes
Age:	16+ years
Group size:	Groups of 4-5 people
Aim:	To help participants recognise the signs and sources of information fatigue and apply digital strategies to manage cognitive overload effectively.
Objectives:	• To be able to avoid health risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using digital technologies • To articulate information needs • To identify symptoms and triggers of information fatigue. • To analyse information flows and their emotional impact. • To formulate personal media-use guidelines.
Material needed:	Flipchart paper and markers. The workshop can be conducted also online using platforms like Miro

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Creating a Persona (10 minutes)

Based on the participants' typical daily digital experiences, each group will collaborate to create a digital avatar (referred to as a persona). Together, they will define and agree on the persona's:

- Name, age, place of residence, and gender
- Education and occupation (including background)
- Technical abilities and the devices he/she uses regularly
- Needs and motivations for using digital tools and apps (at least three)
- One fear or concern related to using digital tools and apps
- A quote that reflects their personality, perspective, or voice

Each group will draw their persona on a sheet of paper or in the upper corner of a flipchart sheet and list all of the details. They should aim to create a persona that is realistic and relevant to their own digital experiences. Groups have 10 minutes to complete this step.

2. Experience Map (20 minutes)

Using the persona created in Step One (for example, "Max"), each group will explore a daily digital journey.

If the group is large, multiple personas (one per group) will be developed, each following its own digital routine. The groups remain the same as in Step One. The facilitator introduces the structure of the day using the following timeline: Morning routine, Transportation, School/Work, Free time activities, Dinner, Evening routine.

Each group will arrange these steps horizontally as columns on a flipchart, creating the framework for a table. For each time block, they will describe the following in rows:

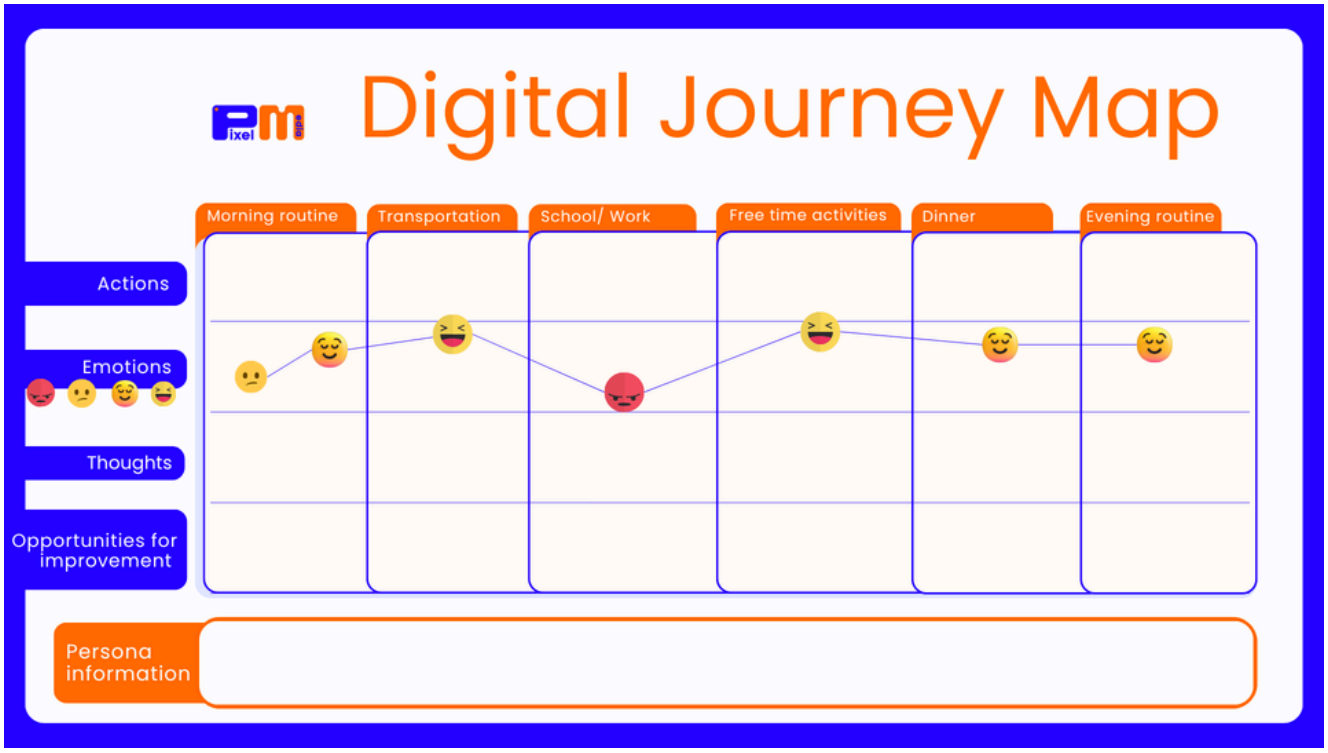
1.Actions: This row forms the story of their daily digital interactions. What digital tools and apps the persona interacts with during each step and why (i.e., 1.1 identifying information needs).

2.Emotions: How the persona feels at each step (4.3). Emojis can be used to symbolise the emotions (😊😐😔). The happy emoji is positioned at the top of the line, while the sad emoji is at the bottom. Together, the emojis form a diagram representing various emotional states when connected.

3.Thoughts: What thoughts the persona has while engaging with the tools or content.

4.Opportunities for Improvement: Identify whether there is potential for a better experience. If the interaction is positive, this may be left blank. If negative or causes stress/anxiety, groups are encouraged to suggest digital well-being strategies.

Example of a digital journey map table (see annex for a blank template or download it **HERE**):



The recommended order of filling in the table is actions, emotions, thoughts, opportunities for Improvement. To visualise emotional dynamics, groups can connect the emojis in a line graph to illustrate the emotional highs and lows throughout the digital day.

3. Presentations (10 - 15 minutes)

Each group presents their persona and the completed daily digital journey map, including their suggestions for improving the persona's digital well-being. After each presentation, the rest of the participants are encouraged to:

- Compliment thoughtful observations
- Suggest additional digital well-being strategies
- Reflect on whether the presented journey relates to their own experiences

Debriefing: Final conclusion by the facilitator (10 - 15 minutes)

The digital experience map they create illustrates the persona's interactions with technology throughout a typical day—highlighting when, why, and how the technology is used, what emotional states are triggered, and whether digital tools are contributing to anxiety or being used in a balanced, healthy way. By addressing the needs and motivations of their persona, participants can evaluate which needs might also be met offline and explore strategies for improving digital balance.

The emotional tracking aspect of the activity encourages reflection and supports the development of healthier daily habits. By the end of the session, participants will have co-created a self-guide to improve their digital well-being, using their persona's journey as a reference point. The use of a fictional character adds playfulness and emotional distance, helping to create a safe, open environment for sharing ideas and suggestions.

Burst the Bubble: “Understanding Filter Bubbles”

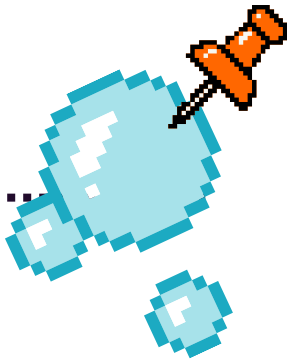
ACTIVITY 5

The idea behind this activity is to make young people aware of filter bubbles, because this phenomenon often goes unnoticed. In addition to raising awareness, the activity aims at creating a simulation in which learners can see, on concrete examples, how filter bubbles can affect our daily lives and how we perceive news and media. Lastly, the activity offers different ways on how to ‘burst the bubble’, and in that way develop learners’ critical thinking skills and enable them to become more active and responsible citizens.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	45 minutes
Age:	15 – 20 years
Group size:	Group between 10 and 15 people
Aim:	The aim of the activity is to raise awareness about the phenomenon of filter bubbles and their effects in digital environments.
Objectives:	• Understand what filter bubbles are and how algorithms contribute to them • Encourage critical thinking about personal online experiences • Raise awareness about diversity of information and sources • Develop strategies to 'escape the bubble'
Material needed:	Flipchart or whiteboard Post-it notes and pens or markers Cards with online personas (see annex 5 folder or download **here**) Access to short video explanation (e.g., Eli Pariser's TED Talk – optional)

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Start with a brief explanation of filter bubbles – that this phenomenon happens when the internet content is filtered before it reaches a user. Explain that filter bubbles occur because the algorithms that operate behind social media and platforms track our likes, shares, subscriptions, and even how long we look at specific videos or photos and then based on our behaviour start to serve content which is similar.

Start a discussion by asking learners the following question:
-"What we see online is filtered based on what platforms think we like. But is that always a good thing?"

Try to gauge if the group is more or less aware of the importance of analysing news from different sources.

You can optionally show a 2–3-minute video or ask:
-"What do you usually see on your social media feeds?"
-"Do your friends see the same content?"

Write key terms on the board: 'algorithm', 'personalization', 'confirmation bias', 'filter bubble' as key words to remember from the discussion. Try to elicit them from the group if the learners are more informed. Otherwise, make sure you explain them and check if everyone understood them.

2. Simulation (15 minutes)

Each Split participants into small groups. Each group receives a set of cards representing one online persona's browsing history (e.g., likes animal videos, reads conservative news, buys sports gear).

Task:
-Examine the feed and guess what kind of content this person will see tomorrow.
-What content might be hidden from them? In other words, what is less likely to show up on their feeds.
-If necessary, do one card together with the group:
-'Based on Maria's likes and dislikes on her card, she will probably see a make-up tutorial, or a video of someone doing the choreography from the latest music video. The profiles related to political commentary or current state of affairs will probably be hidden from Maria, especially because she will actively avoid this type of content.'
-Groups note answers on post-its under categories: "Visible to them" / "Invisible to them".

3. Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Each group shares what their persona saw or didn't see. Discussion prompts:
-Did the person receive diverse information?
-How could this affect their understanding of the world?
-Have you ever felt like you were in a bubble online?

4. How to burst the bubble? (10 minutes)

Write the question 'How to burst the bubble?' on whiteboard or flipchart. As a group, brainstorm ways to escape or reduce the effect of filter bubbles. Learners write suggestions on coloured cards (e.g., 'Follow people you disagree with', 'Use different platforms', 'Clear search history').

All suggestions are placed on the whiteboard or flipchart.

5. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Discuss with the group any outstanding questions and reiterate the fact that although algorithms are powerful, they can be outsmarted and that it is important to be informed, see the whole picture, and consult multiple sources.

Spotting Deepfakes

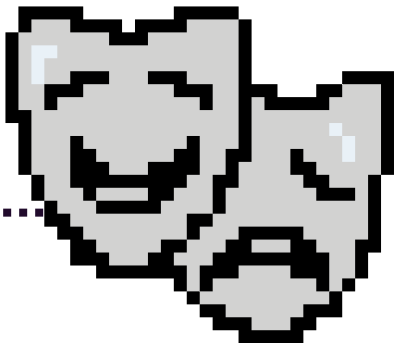
ACTIVITY 6

This workshop aims to explain the phenomenon of deepfakes, demonstrate on real-life examples what deepfakes look like, show various tools to use and steps to make to better recognise deepfakes, and discuss their ethical usage. The activity is divided into four parts, the first one should be an introduction contrasting two videos, one of which is deepfake. The second part is theoretical, it explains what deepfakes are and how they are made. The third one is a practical exercise for students, where they can train their skills in detecting which videos are fake. The last part is a discussion about the danger of deepfakes and the importance of being informed.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	60 minutes
Age:	15 – 20 years
Group size:	Group between 10 and 20 people
Aim:	Develop critical awareness of deepfake technology and its potential uses, risks, and impact.
Objectives:	• Understand what deepfakes are and how they're made • Learn to spot signs of deepfakes and assess media credibility • Reflect on the ethical implications of synthetic media • Practice verification strategies
Material needed:	Internet access and projector or interactive whiteboard Short real/fake video clips 'Spot the Deepfake' worksheet (**checklist**) - see annex 6 Pens or devices

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Introduction (10 minutes)

Start Facilitator asks:
-'Are these clips real or fake?'
Then shows 2 short clips (1 real, 1 deepfake—without telling which is which).
Students vote: which one is fake? Why?

2. Understanding Deepfakes (15 minutes)

Short presentation that answers the following questions:
-What are deepfakes?
-How are they made?
-Where are they used? (satire, scams, politics, etc.) Include real examples if possible.

3. Spot the Deepfake Challenge (20 minutes)

In small groups, students receive 3-4 short videos or screenshots (pre-downloaded from reliable sources). Using the checklist (going through criteria like unnatural blinking, mismatched lighting, distorted facial expressions, robotic voice, etc.), they decide which videos/screenshots are real and which ones are fake. Each group presents work and offer explanations.

4. Reflection (15 minutes)

The facilitator uses questions such as:
-'Should technology used to create deepfakes be banned completely?',
-'Is technology used to create deepfakes just a tool?,
-'Are people making it evil?',
-'Should the laws be stricter when it comes to AI-generated content?', etc.
To spark a debate and gauge the learners' attitudes. At the end of the reflection, the facilitator should wrap up with a message that we need to be aware of the existence of deepfakes and train ourselves to recognise them.

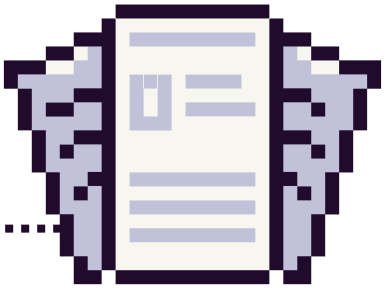
Rewrite the News

ACTIVITY 7

In this hands-on activity, participants explore how artificial intelligence can shape the way news is written and perceived. Working in small groups, they receive a short neutral news article and use a generative AI tool to rewrite it for different audiences and platforms. After presenting their AI-generated articles, participants reflect together on how tone, structure and audience targeting can subtly (or not so subtly) shift the message. The activity builds media literacy and awareness of how digital tools can influence public opinion and engagement.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	60 - 90 minutes
Age:	16 – 30 years old
Group size:	6 to 20 participants, working in small groups of 3-5
Aim:	The activity helps young people understand how AI can influence media content by rewriting a news story for different audiences. It builds critical thinking about how tone, framing and platform shape the way information is received and interpreted.
Objectives:	• Understand how AI tools can influence media framing and tone • Develop critical thinking about audience targeting and bias • Reflect on ethical and social implications of AI in media
Material needed:	A short, neutral news article (printed or shared digitally) Devices with internet access (laptops, tablets or phones) Access to an AI tool (e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, etc.) **Brief cards** (printed or shared digitally) - see annex 7 Flipchart or shared whiteboard for group discussion



WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

1. Warm-up Discussion (10 - 15minutes)

Ask learners:

- “Where do you usually read news?”
- “Have you ever seen AI-generated posts, articles or headlines?”
- “What do you think makes a news article reliable or biased?”

Facilitator tip: keep this informal and relatable. Use recent media trends to grab attention. For instance:

- AI-generated celebrity stories (e.g., fake interviews, fabricated quotes, or imagined scandals).
- Deepfakes in videos or images showing politicians or public figures saying or doing things they never did.
- You will find many fact-checking web resources listed in the Fake News section of our Pixelpedia. Check them out to get inspired!

2. AI Article Rewrite Task (30 minutes)

Divide participants into 2-4 small groups of 3-5 people.
Provide the same short, neutral news article to all groups and allow some time to read the article.
You can search for recent news headlines online or invent one yourself. For example: “Driver hurts people crossing the street.”
Look for something neutral enough where additional details (like age, nationality, occupation or family background) can subtly change the tone and perception of the story.
Then, ask participants to use a generative AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Claude) to rewrite the article according to the brief cards (Target, Tone, Emotional Impact).
Assign the brief cards sequentially, revising the article after each brief (3 times in total).
Use the provided briefs or blank cards to add content more suitable for your audience.
Facilitator tip: offer a few pre-written prompts to help participants get started, if needed. Walk around and help with any tech issues or brainstorming.
Suggested AI Prompts:

- “Rewrite this article as if it were aimed at [audience] and published on [platform]. Use a [tone: persuasive, formal, emotional, etc.].”
- “Add an engaging headline for [audience].”
- “Emphasise the emotional/social/political impact of this story for [group].”

3. Group Presentations & Discussion (15-25 minutes)

Ask each group to read or summarise their AI-generated article. Then, lead a group discussion:

- What differences did you notice between the versions?
- How did tone, word choice or emphasis change?
- Could the new version be misleading or emotionally manipulative?
- How easy is it to distort facts while keeping them “technically” true?

Facilitator tip: encourage debate! Some groups may feel their version is better or more engaging. Guide the discussion toward critical awareness, not just creativity.

4. Wrap-up & Reflection (15-20 minutes)

Possible questions to de-brief:

- What will you now look for when reading content online?
- How can you be more mindful about what you share or believe?
- What role does you play as an active, responsible media participant?
- What would you expect from a trustworthy media outlet when it comes to using AI?

Facilitator tip: AI isn’t inherently good or bad. It’s a tool. What matters is how it’s used, and whether creators are being transparent and ethical. Encourage participants to reflect on what role we play as media users and/or creators in our society.

Annexes

Download the brief cards from the Canva template and print them out. Make sure to use double-sided printing so that the front and back of each card align correctly.

Each sheet includes 4 cards, which should be cut out and used during the activity. For every round of the activity, give each group one card so they have a clear brief to follow.

There is also one sheet with blank cards that facilitators can use to create custom briefs (e.g. different targets, platforms, tones or impacts more suitable to participants’ profiles).

Finally, a digital version of the cards is available on Genially and can be used if the workshop is delivered online.

Who Gets Seen?

ACTIVITY 8

Participants simulate the behaviour of a social media algorithm by curating a feed for fictional users. Through group discussion and analysis, they explore who gets visibility online, who doesn't and why it matters for democracy, inclusion and digital citizenship.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	60 - 90 minutes
Age:	16 – 30 years old
Group size:	6 to 20 participants, working in small groups of 3-5
Aim:	This activity helps young people understand how algorithms influence what content is promoted or hidden online. It encourages critical reflection on online visibility, bias, and ethical digital participation.
Objectives:	• Understand how algorithms influence what content gets visibility online • Reflect on whose voices are amplified or silenced • Encourage conscious, ethical participation in digital spaces
Material needed:	**Content cards** (printed or shared digitally) - see annex 8 Post-its or stickers (for quick feedback or group reflections) Flipchart paper or whiteboard for group discussion

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



1. Warm-up Discussion (10 - 15minutes)

Start by asking learners:

- "What kinds of posts do you usually see first on social media?"
- "Why do some posts go viral while others barely get seen?"
- "Do you think everyone's voice has the same chance to be heard online?"

Facilitator tip: if needed, encourage participants by starting with simple and relatable questions like "What's the last thing you liked or shared online?" to get them thinking about their own feed habits.

2. Simulation Game: "Be the Algorithm" (30 minutes)

Divide participants into 2-4 small groups of 3-5 people.

Give each group one of the fictional user profile card (or let them choose the ones most relevant to them):

Provide each group with a set of sample content cards (headlines, memes, news updates, ads, personal stories, etc.).
Each group plays the role of a social media algorithm. Their job is to curate a feed for their assigned user profile to maximise engagement by:

- Selecting which content appears first (top 3)
- Explaining why they chose to promote or hide certain content
- Thinking about how the algorithm "knows" what to show (likes, follows, comments, etc.)

Facilitator tip: make sure each group clearly understands their user profile and the goal: they are not posting content but curating a feed as if they were the algorithm.

3. Group Presentations & Reflection (15-25 minutes)

Each group shares their user profile, curated feed and rationale behind their choices.

Then guide a reflection with questions like:

- “Which voices were amplified? Which were silenced?”
- “Did the content selected create a balanced view or reinforce a narrow one?”
- “How does this relate to your own experience online?”

Facilitator tip: ask comparison questions like “Did any groups boost or hide the same content for different reasons?” to highlight how algorithms can create very different realities.

4. Takeaway & Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

Wrap up with one or two closing prompts such as:

- “What surprised you about this activity?”
- “What will you now pay more attention to in your own feed?”
- “What’s one thing you could do to be more intentional about who and what you engage with online?”

Facilitator tip: help participants link the activity to their own experience by asking them to name one voice they’d like to hear more from in their feed, and why.

Annexes

The activity uses two sets of cards: user profile cards and content cards.

- You can download the Canva template from the link provided (see annex)
- Each sheet contains 4 cards that should be printed double-sided (if possible) and then cut out.
- The template includes:

4 fictional user profile cards
12 sample content cards (headlines, memes, ads, personal posts, etc.)
4 blank cards that facilitators can fill in with new users or content to make the activity more relevant to the participants’ context.

For online delivery, a Genially digital version of the cards is available. This allows participants to select and sort cards on screen, replicating the activity without printed materials.

We Become What We Behold: “The Power of Social Media”

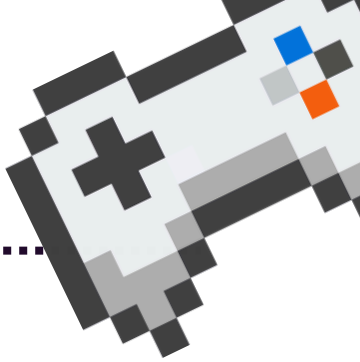
ACTIVITY 9

When users post something on social media, they offer a narrow representation of the reality that can often become the only window to the world that people have.

By playing a short free online game called “We Become What We Behold” players will be able to reflect critically on the effect that social medias have on our behaviours and our society.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	50 minutes
Age:	16+ years old
Group size:	Minimum 12 people
Aim:	Stress the influence power of social media.
Objectives:	• To widen awareness of the impact of social media on society • To develop critical and analytical thinking skills • To cultivate a sense of responsibility of one's own social media behaviour • To nurture and maintain a critical discussion with other peers about the role of social media in our society
Material needed:	A computer or mobile device connected to the internet A projector / interactive whiteboard with sound speakers Link to the game: https://ncase.itch.io/wbwwb



WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

1. Introduction & Context (5minutes)

Brief presentation of the game (without spoilers):
"We're going to play a short video game that simulates how the media works. Your task is simple, but in the end we will reflect on some important questions."

Instructions: "Pay close attention to what happens and what your role in the game is."

2. Collective Gameplay (10 minutes)

Divide participants into 2-4 small groups of 3-5 people.
The educator (or a voluntary learner) plays the game projected on a screen or interactive whiteboard. Learners suggest what to photograph or focus on.
Alternatively, if devices are available, students can play in small groups (2–3 students per computer/tablet), while the facilitator circulates and observes.

3. Guided Discussion (10 minutes)

The teacher engages the classroom into a collective discussion using these questions as prompt:

- "What happened in the game?"
- "What was our role?"
- "What emotions did you feel?"
- "Why do you think the game ends the way it does?"
- "Does this seem realistic in terms of how the media works in real life?"

4. Debriefing (15 minutes)

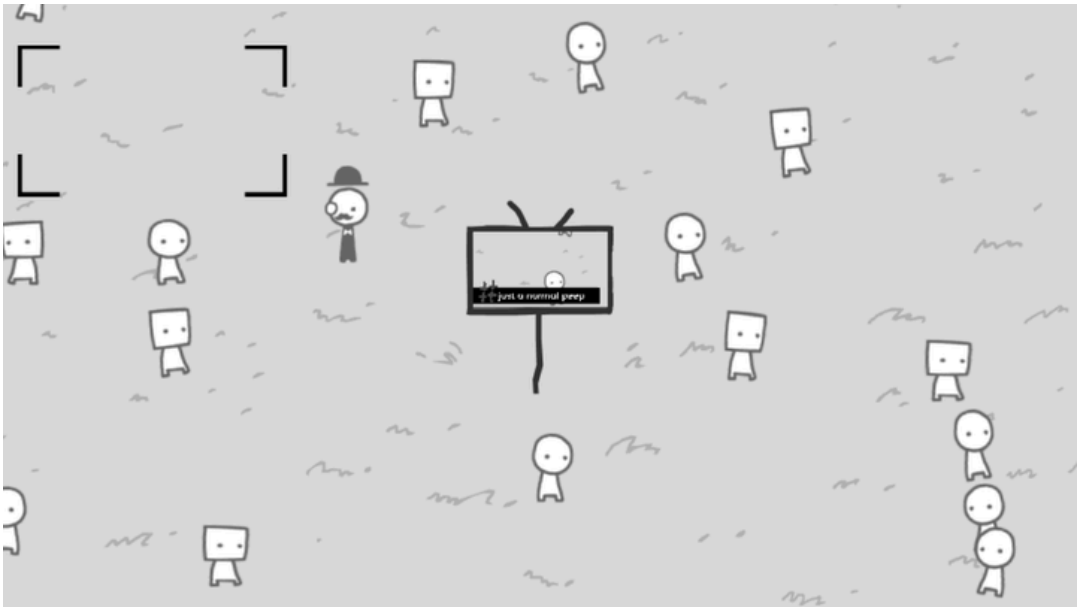
Divide the class into small groups. Each group receives a question or task:
Group A: "What do the game's characters represent in real society?"
Group B: "What is the role of the photographer? Are they truly neutral?"
Group C: "Which real media mechanisms are represented in the game?"
Group D: "How could we avoid the negative effects shown in the game in real life?"

Each group prepares a short summary (2–3 sentences).

5. Sharing and Wrap-up (10 minutes)

Each group presents their ideas briefly.
The facilitator closes with a link to civic education and media literacy:

- "This game showed us how easily reality can be manipulated. How can we become critical citizens when facing what we see every day on social media, TV, or online?"



Picture taken from “We become what we behold” game: https://ncase.itch.io/wbwwb

“We become what we behold. We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us.” (Marshall McLuhan)

Beyond The Pixel: “Gender identity in videogames”

ACTIVITY 10

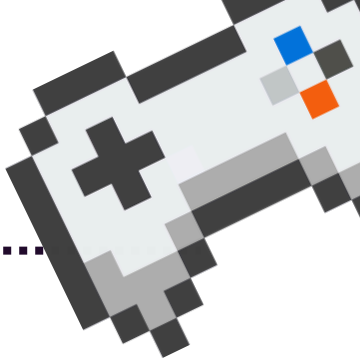
Issues such as the representations of gender, sexuality, race, and social class, to name a few, have taken on particular relevance in the consumption of contemporary media. Video games, in particular, are among the cultural products that influence and contribute to the construction of a socially shared imaginary of gender roles, informally educating about femininity and masculinity. Video games were a form of media traditionally aimed at the primary target of the heterosexual white male, with standardized gender role proposals, are increasingly offering complex and evolving representations. Specifically, the representation of female figures has witnessed an important transformation, where the classic archetype of the damsel in distress, present in early video games of the 1980s, has been progressively replaced by new models that are more multifaceted, articulated, and not easily classifiable, and which could lead videogame players – adolescents and adults, males and females – to experiment with new experiences and internalize non-traditional gender models. This not only from an "aesthetic-narrative" point of view, but also structurally, through gameplay that proposes broader actions and choices.

Therefore, a reflection on video game experiences and their role as a communication system is proposed, articulating the workshop into two different moments.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Duration:	2 sessions for a total of 3 and half hours (or less activity in one day)
Age:	16+ years old
Group size:	Minimum 15 people
Aim:	Develop critical awareness of gender identity representation in digital media and promote respectful and inclusive discussions on gender issues
Objectives:	• Recognize stereotypes and innovative representations in video games • Understand the importance of authentic representation in interactive narratives • Develop critical analysis skills for multimedia content • Foster empathy through shared gaming experiences • Analyze how video games can be powerful narrative tools to explore complex identities
Material needed:	At least computer connected to the internet A projector / interactive whiteboard with sound speakers A3 and A4 paper Colored pencils, markers Flipchart or whiteboard Colored post-its Videogames: (access see annexes) Florence (iOS/Android/PC) Tell Me Why (PC/PlayStation/Xbox): Life is Strange: True Colors (PC/PlayStation/Xbox

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



First session (day)

1. Group introduction with activity “Avatar and Identity” (30 minutes)

Start a presentation circle with name and "favorite videogame character" and why

- Activity: “Draw an avatar that represents you in a videogame. It doesn't have to be realistic, but it should communicate something important about you. It could be in any type of game (realistic, cartoonish, block-based, etc)." – use paper, colored pencils)
- Sharing: each participant briefly presents their avatar

2. Participatory theoretical exploration (10 minutes brainstorming + 30 minutes of group discussion = 40 minutes)

Divide participants into 2-4 small groups of 3-5 people.

- Start a collective brainstorming session by asking the question: "When you think about videogame characters, what differences do you notice between male and female characters?"

The teacher collects the observations on whiteboard/flipchart

- Division into small groups (3-4 people per group). Each group discusses the questions:

“What gender stereotypes have you noticed in video games you know?”
“Do you know characters that escape these stereotypes?”
“What makes a character "authentic" for you?”
which can be collected on a poster/infographic.

3. Plenary sharing and debriefing (20 minutes)

Each group shares 2-3 insights from their discussion.

Second session (day)

1. In-depth gaming experience (60 minutes)

Start Three stations with rotation (about 20 minutes each) to play three different and new videogame models:

- Florence: Intimacy and relationships
- Tell Me Why: Transgender identity and family
- Life is Strange-True Colors: Diversity and community

2. Collaborative analysis (30 minutes)

Mixed groups for comparison between the three titles.
Creation of comparative concept maps about this focus:

- narrative mechanics in relation of the gender identity
- aesthetic representations
- “What did you expect? Did what you expected happen?”
- “Could you have done other or different things?”
- “What would you change about the game?”
- “What mechanics would you like to see added?

Presentation of main discoveries.

3. Creative design (20 minutes)

- "The video game I would want": What activities and performances would you like to see? Ideas for authentic representations
- OR “How would you improve representations of gender identity in your favourite game? Are there already good points? What aspects do you find negative?”

Closure with final word of the journey.

ANNEXES

ACTIVITY 1 - Identifying Cognitive Biases: “your brain is lying (sometimes)”

Click **HERE** to download the visuals to explain and illustrate the activity’s cognitive biases

ACTIVITY 2 - Para-social interactions & relationship: “Building your safe digital ID/passport”

Click **HERE** to download or use the digital version of the Safe digital ID/ passport to fill during the activity

ACTIVITY 4 - Digital Journey Map: “Navigating the noise”

See following page.

ACTIVITY 5 - Burst the Bubble: “Understanding Filter Bubbles”

Click **HERE** to download the cards.

ACTIVITY 4 - Digital Journey Map: “Navigating the noise”

Digital Journey Map

	Morning routine	Transportation	School/ Work	Free time activities	Dinner	Evening routine
Actions						
Emotions 						
Thoughts						
Opportunities for improvement						

Persona information	

ACTIVITY 6 - Spotting Deepfakes

Pixel Media

YuzuPulse · LogoPsyCom · PENS · RINOVA

Co-funded by the European Union

SPOTTING DEEPFAKES

Tip for students

If something feels "uncanny" (weird, slightly fake, hard to explain why), trust that feeling—DeepFakes often live in those small details. When watching a video or looking at a photo, ask yourself:

Face

- Does the face look too smooth or too wrinkly compared to the rest of the body? ☐
- Do the skin, hair, and eyes look like they belong to the same age? ☐

Eyes & Eyebrows

- Do the shadows around the eyes and eyebrows look natural? ☐
- Does the light hit the eyes the way you'd expect in that scene? ☐

Glasses

- Is there glare or reflection in the glasses? ☐
- Does the glare move naturally when the person moves their head? ☐

Facial Hair

- Does the beard, mustache, or sideburns look natural—or more like it's been "painted on"? ☐
- If they don't have facial hair, does their skin look too flat or odd where the hair should be? ☐

Facial Details

- Do moles or freckles look realistic — or do they stay perfectly still when theface moves? ☐

Blinking

- Do they blink too little, too often, or in a strange rhythm? ☐

Mouth & Lips

- Do the lip movements match the words naturally, or do they feel slightly off (like bad dubbing)? ☐

ACTIVITY 7 - Rewrite the News

Download the brief cards from **HERE** and print them out. Make sure to use double-sided printing so that the front and back of each card align correctly. Each sheet includes 4 cards, which should be cut out and used during the activity. For every round of the activity, give each group one card so they have a clear brief to follow.
There is also one sheet with blank cards that facilitators can use to create custom briefs (e.g. different targets, platforms, tones or impacts more suitable to participants' profiles).
Finally, a digital version of the cards is available on Genially and can be used if the workshop is delivered online.
Genially: https://view.genially.com/68aed1fa5afc2d9230759b72

ACTIVITY 8 - Who Gets Seen?

The activity uses two sets of cards: user profile cards and content cards.

- You can download the Canva template from **HERE.**
- Each sheet contains 4 cards that should be printed double-sided (if possible) and then cut out.
- The template includes:

4 fictional user profile cards
12 sample content cards (headlines, memes, ads, personal posts, etc.)
4 blank cards that facilitators can fill in with new users or content to make the activity more relevant to the participants' context.
For online delivery, a Genially digital version of the cards is available. Genially: https://view.genially.com/68aed4a895fc669c1406371d

ACTIVITY 10 - Beyond The Pixel: "Gender Identity in videogames"

Videogames:
Florence (iOS/Android/PC)

- Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gkx0Jh3hClU
- Full gameplay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0Hmvev5r7A&t=1212s
- Game: https://annapurnainteractive.com/en/games/florence

Tell Me Why (PC/PlayStation/Xbox):

- Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRN2VgTB-J8
- Full gameplay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9vr6WYQFVc
- Game: https://www.tellmewhygame.com/

Life is Strange: True Colors (PC/PlayStation/Xbox)

- Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpRhaXfvG_0
- Full gameplay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYnhpWf20So
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