TOOL – WHAT IS MEDIA?

INFORMATION AND DATA LITERACY > 1.1 BROWSING, SEARCHING AND FILTERING DATA, INFORMATION AND DIGITAL CONTENT

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
Facilitators	N/A	Level 1	Preparatory guide	Creative Commons (BY-SA)	English, French

This document contains background information for facilitators before they run the workshop with participants. This is introductory material to enable the facilitator to better explain what is meant by 'media' and the various types that exist.

General Objective	Knowledge acquisition
Preparation time for facilitator	less than 1 hour
Competence area	1 - Information and data literacy
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Resource originally created in	French

WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1   # What is media?

Media is a means of communicating information. Today, we can differentiate two main categories:

1. Mass media: television, radios, newspaper…

We can characterise these as follows:

- Mass media communication can be sourced to one organisation, to one person or to several people
- Information from mass media is unidirectional, meaning that the recipient of the message cannot in most cases react directly or respond with their own input
- Information coming from mass media is the same for everyone

- Digital media: social networks, websites…

These media are closely linked with the appearance of new technologies of information and communication (NTIC). They often go against mass media, engendering personalised information tailored for the recipient, a wide variety of channels (videos, podcasts, social media posts…) and the ability to directly respond via comments and stylised reactions, for example.

Forms of media:

- **Traditional written press (newspapers, magazines)**: written information, illustrated by photographs and printed on paper. The audience comprises magazine and newspaper readers.
- **Audio (radio)**: distributes information in audio form.
- **Audiovisual (television, cinema)**: information distributed on television in the form of sounds and images in tandem.
- **Online/internet**: the source today of enormous amounts of information in written and audio forms. This information is seen by users, who can in turn play in active role by commenting on and sharing information. In this category, some distinguish **social media**, which is based entirely on the sharing of information between and amongst users (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, TikTok, etc.)

Here is a good video on the definition of Media which is the first in a high quality educational series.

2   What is news?

News refers to information brought to the public's awareness. But to be considered as such, 'news' should fulfil at least these three criteria:

- It should be of public interest, as opposed to say an announcement of having left on holiday or to walk one's dog
- It should be factual and not opinion based
- It should be verifiable: not a rumour without an identifiable source. For more on how to verify sources, we recommend you see 'Fake News'

Who relays information in the form of news?

This is done particularly by journalists who observe and report on events for which they search for explanations and verify facts and sources.

Nowadays, everyone can relay information via social media, smartphones, etc. In this case, we should be aware of false information that is constantly circulating and always verify our sources.

3   More information

Here are some examples of online media aimed at a young audience:

- BBC Newsround
- CBC Kids News
- DOGO news