



DIGITAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**A HANDBOOK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND
YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS**

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ABBREVIATED TERM

- **ANC:** Amani National Congress
- **ARP:** Association for Research in Personality
- **AYC:** African Youth Charter
- **BBI:** Building Bridges Initiative
- **CAK:** Communications Authority of Kenya
- **CASEL:** The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- **CIRT:** Computer Incident Response Team
- **CPI:** Centre for Public Impact
- **CYC:** Common Youth Council
- **DCI:** Directorate of Criminal Investigations
- **DMIL:** Digital Media and Information Literacy
- **FMF:** Fees Must Fall
- **FGM:** Female Genital Mutilation
- **GBV:** Gender-Based Violence
- **ICT:** Information and Communication Technology
- **IFAP:** Information For All Programme
- **ITU:** International Telecommunication Union
- **KODI:** Kenya Open Data Initiative
- **IAD:** Internet Addiction Disorder
- **IEBC:** Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
- **KLRC:** Kenya Law Reform Commission
- **LDRI:** Local Development Research Institute
- **LGBTQ :** Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
- **MCA:** Member of County Assembly
- **MDES:** Ministry of Digital Economic and Society
- **NAMLE:** National Association for Media Literacy Education
- **NCHRD-K:** National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Kenya
- **NCC:** National Cybersecurity Centre
- **NCIC:** National Cohesion and Integration Commission
- **NDC:** National Democratic Convention
- **NDCC:** Niger Delta Coalition for Change

- **NIS:** National Intelligence Services
- **NPP:** New Patriotic Party
- **ODDC:** Open Data in Developing Countries
- **OHCHR:** Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **PSI:** Public Sector Information
- **RBA:** Right Based Approach
- **SEL:** Social and Emotional Learning
- **SHEG:** Stanford History Education Group
- **SSA:** Sub-Saharan Africa
- **STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- **UNCRC:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **UNDEF:** United Nations Democracy Fund
- **UNICEF:** United Nations Children’s Fund
- **UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- **USAID:** United States Agency for International Development
- **WAY:** World Assembly of Youth
- **WHO:** World Health Organization
- **YAK:** Youth Alive! Kenya
- **YDI:** Young-stars Development Initiative
- **YIAGA:** Youth Initiatives for Advocacy Growth and Advancement

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DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR QUALITY CIVIC PARTICIPATION

This handbook will help young people and youth-led organizations to advance their digital media and information skills. It contains four chapters that have been broken down to address key concepts with regard to digital media and information literacy.

Furthermore, we have brain teasers in **exercises, games, jokes, and interesting facts**. We hope that youth in Kenya and beyond will use this handbook to ensure we all have the right digital and information skills to navigate the ever-dynamic digital and media platforms, especially during elections.

WHY WE USE DIGITAL MEDIA

Living in the 21st Century, media has rapidly become central to everyday life. Through the ever-improving use of technological tools such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and computers, users have the opportunity to engage in anything from political and social debates and educate, inform, and entertain themselves and others around the world.

The point of media today is not only used to communicate, debate, or find solutions to an issue but also to make use of various platforms to inform oneself about the world around them. In doing so, every individual has the opportunity to play a significant role in the way in which media is shared and processed.

This handbook attempts to bridge the gap between digital media literacy and quality civic engagement within the context of youth participation. The importance of the link between the two phenomena is needed to study both the negative and positive effects digital media literacy has on quality civic engagement. There is a vast amount of literature about digital media and civic engagement.

Similarly, we can find several practical examples that clearly understand the use and importance of digital media literacy for quality civic engagement in today's society. This section will also explore a short history explaining youth civic engagement and the importance of media literacy.



WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?



In various sections and chapters of this handbook, civic engagement is broadly defined to introduce the users and readers. However, to reiterate our understanding, it is simply seen that participating in voluntary activities matters for four reasons: developing one's capacities, creating a community, cultivating democratic virtues, and protecting the interests in public life. In the handbook,¹ definitions of digital media literacy have also been given to familiarize the reader and user with youth civic engagement and its importance in involving youth in several causes for change, inclusion, peace, and stability.

According to Camino and Zeldin, plurality in civic engagement is key, "The involvement of a broad range of citizens, with no group excluded, and who have ensured equitable participation set up conditions for heterogeneity of ideas, promoting democratic deliberation and action."² In recent years, there has been an increase in youth digital participation in various causes for the change in government, the environment, and social campaigns for justice.

In modern democratic societies that advanced during the period of the mid-to-late 20th century, the use of communication for political purposes was initiated by authorities who made use of mass media channels to prompt individual identifications with standards or morals that were embodied by political parties, unions, churches, government branches, movements, and the press.³ Through the use of communication tools such as; print (introduced in Africa in the early 1800s), radio (introduced in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1920s to late 1930s), and later on, in the late 1950s, television was used as a means of informing the masses about political and governmental policies and directives. An article posted by "Cultural Survival" explains that these tools were used for good and bad purposes. With the colonization of several African nations, mass media was used for development and production, which resulted in unfortunate forms of cultural alienation, invasion, and disorientation.

Control of wealth, natural resources, and cultural products were the main aims of colonialism".⁴ Later on, after the dawn of growing calls for independence in African states, the use of platforms like radio were used in a positive way to disseminate "limited but vital information to small, local constituents in newly independent societies." The author adds that "The greatest media contribution that helps maintain African culture, language, and continuity has come from radio and television."

21ST CENTURY MEDIA AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Before the advent of the technological boom, media practitioners did pay much attention to the use of media tools and media literacy. What mattered at the time was the media's faction as the guide to people's opinion and being the mediator between the real world and its audiences.⁵



Before, youth who took part in political or social campaigns did not have access to efficient tools in delivery time. Mechanisms such as landline telephones, telegraphs, and letters were used to communicate to the masses. However, due to the slow pace of messaging, a lack of access to those communication tools, and even government censorship, not all of the campaigns gained the traction that modern-day youth civic engagement has.

Things have, however, drastically changed with the advances in media tools as a means for communication, investigation, and verification. The advancement and digitization in media tools “have allowed traditionally passive audiences to become active participants, interact with media, and produce their information” without media involvement.⁶ In the 21st Century, youth have the world at their fingertips and can share much information through online platforms and tools such as smartphones and tablets. This entails that through digital media, youth in the 21st Century have the opportunity to participate in protests, campaigns, and movements of all kinds through the use of digital media. Through these tools, civic engagement is rapid, immediate, and has the potential to reach a wider audience, as the Internet and mobile media are “not only continually feeding today’s youth with information but also enabling them to connect and express and share their viewpoints and emotions.”⁷

Young users interact with digital media materials and platforms to benefit from immediate communication and ensure they stay in the loop with the latest global trends. This might include “conversing with each other, creating, editing, and sharing new forms.”

This, however, goes far beyond what youth are typically involved in doing. Shirky notes that as the communication landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory for users, the “networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action.”⁸ This demonstrates how digital media users use platforms to engage in political, social, and even environmental changes. Several social media platforms target different audiences to allow individuals to share ideas, videos, photos, and connections to form a system of people interested in a common cause.⁹

According to Kim and Yang, the participation of youth online includes “conversing casually about contemporary social issues, mixing cute emoticons and avatars into serious conversations, conversing in chat rooms, participating in online social campaigns via social network service and playing games designed to advance awareness of environmental issues.”¹⁰ It is noted that global youth use the Internet and, in some ways, contribute to civic engagement. The authors further state that these issues not only pertain to political affairs but also social and environmental issues and are more often recognized as legitimate forms of participation. Some scholars believe civic engagement arises naturally from digital media use, others believe that media literacy education is needed to provide the cognitive and social scaffolding that systematically supports civic engagement.”¹¹

It is also known that citizens do not only need access to information but are also in need of the motives to process the information that is given to them effectively.¹² The process of civic engagement does not only include the action of voting, mobilizing for a march or rally, or even public campaigning in public spaces such as shopping centers and university campuses. Culver and Jacobson state that changes in technology have opened the opportunity for the expansion of a new kind of civic engagement.¹³ This might include citizens participating through the use of blogs, vlogs, tweets, and videos to interact with fellow online communities and deepen their commitment to their social, political, or environmental causes. Several examples can be used to highlight the effects of digital media literacy on civic participation in the modern era.

EXAMPLES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA



Monica B. Chibita provides a model through her discussion of the growing tension between the Ugandan government and its citizens becoming more dissatisfied with the ever-increasing concerns of not being able to express themselves through mainstream media platforms adequately.¹⁴ She also led the ‘**Save Mariba**’ campaign of 2007-2011, where several blog posts and Facebook pages were created to support this movement amongst young people. The section then looks at citizens' participation in digital activism and governments' response to these actions.

In South Africa, Bosch discusses the #FeesMustFall protests amongst young tertiary institution students.¹⁵ The protests were sparked by the steep increase in university tuition students in the country struggling to complete schooling due to the exorbitant cost of tertiary schooling.

The author notes the impact of these protests through the use of digital media and social media platforms by stating that: “In an analysis of online coverage of the #FMF protests, research, and monitoring organization, Media Tenor, found that the #FMF hashtag generated nearly 1.3 million tweets during the last two weeks of October 2015; and that Twitter was the most used social media platform for the campaign.”¹⁶ Today, the movement still has a large presence in the space of youth and social media.

These two case studies are just a few of digital media literacy's many positive effects on quality civic engagement. It is, however, imperative that one also looks at the importance of digital media literacy in this modern era to foster civic participation.

Understanding the use of digital media is straightforward. Individuals use digital platforms and tools to communicate, process information, and form a sense of identity and community around a particular cause. However, it is important that one also investigates the need for digital media literacy and its effects and search for what is required in digital media literacy and usage.

THE NEED FOR DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

Over the past ten years, the rapid shift from an electronic to digital media culture has attracted attention from media studies researchers to theorize the impact of communication technology advances on media users.¹⁷ According to Van der Graaf and Livingstone, digital media literacy is the “ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages across various contexts.”¹⁸ The digital information that we have come to know and recognize plays a role in the socio-economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa and is no longer the literacy that we can simply define as the ability to read and write.¹⁹ These basic digital literacy principles go far beyond such actions due to the rapid advancement of media technology. Ondari-Okemwa further states that “digital literacies are essentially a set of academic and professional situated practices supported by diverse and changing technologies.”²⁰ The need for new skills is required for one to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and distribute messages within a global democratic society.²¹

Several practical factors are found in this chapter on why digital media literacy has declined quality civic engagement amongst youth. However, an additional aspect of the “digital gap” essentially plays a role. Blignaut notes that technological advances lack value if people do not have access to technology or “do not use it.”²² In a recent article, Damilola Adeniran pointed out that a report by the International Telecommunication Union stated that more than two-thirds of Africa (75.6%) lacked access to the Internet.²³ Since the beginning of the advancement in media technology, it has been noted that the lack of adequate competencies for digital media can have harmful effects on the distribution of news and information and hinder the progress of democracy or civil causes.

A case study on the adverse impacts of poor media literacy can be found in Kenya. A country with a vibrant media system, where there has been concern over the use of digital technology to deliberately spread false rumors and misinformation that may have served as a contributor to the 2007 post-election violence.²⁴

Another example could be used in the fight against COVID-19. Although several months have passed since the start of the global pandemic, media users, government, and media practitioners still battle to contain the spread of false health information in the context of a pandemic. Nic Fleming stated, "The rapid global spread of COVID-19 has been accompanied by what the World Health Organization has described as a "massive infodemic." The South African government has even released statements to warn the public of the dangers of spreading fake news and misinformation. In an article published by the South African government News Agency (SA News), the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation stated that "What complicates the fight against COVID-19 is that while people are facing the real threat of losing their lives, fake news and misinformation are causing them to be paranoid, and doubting the usefulness of vaccines and other public health interventions."

It is clear, therefore, that the adequate understanding and use of digital media literacy for quality civic participation during a global pandemic such as this one has the potential to educate people in ways that help to lessen the spread of the virus, lower the mortality rates and even has the possibility of increasing chances of finding more affordable and accessible treatment and prevention of the virus, as well as an informed response to future pandemics.

In conclusion, the youth of this modern era is fortunate to be part of a time where communication tools can be used to spread messages, investigate, interpret, and create change. In this introductory text, we have explored how good digital media literacy has the potential to create and influence change, especially within the youth community. The Youth Café, as a well-established pan-African youth-serving and youth-led organization, has taken the initiative to develop a handbook that will educate and inform African youth and youth on a global scale about media literacy and civic participation. The organization has promoted its eight multi-perspective approaches of peace and security through digital media tools, preventing violent extremism, governance and political inclusion, sexual reproductive health, among other themes. In doing so, we hope to be role players in contributing to change in youth civic engagement.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER

01



ABOUT US

The Youth Café is a not-for-profit pan-African youth-led and youth-serving organization headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Since its founding in 2012, The Youth Café has been working with young men and women in Kenya and across Africa as a trailblazer in advancing youth-led approaches toward achieving sustainable development, social equity, innovative solutions, community resilience, and transformative change. The Youth Café has reached over 1.6 million young men and women with our projects and has reached 72 countries, 22 in Africa. While active on several cross-cutting issues, The Youth Café works mainly in eight priority areas to which it brings a multidisciplinary and multi-perspective approach: Peace and Security, including Preventing Violent Extremism; Governance and Political Inclusion (Remittances and Accountability); Culture, Arts, and Sports; Education and Skills; Business, Job Creation and Entrepreneurship; Universal Health Coverage; Environmental Preservation; and Climate Change.

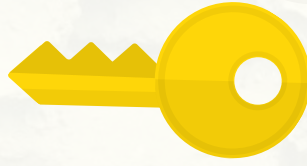
Our current strategic plan looks at today's youth bulge as a promising opportunity for spurring development and economic growth. To this end, we Partner with Young People, Leverage Research, Value Learning, and Adaptation; Cultivate Sustainability and Self Reliance, and Advance Gender-responsive Youth Programming. Our work is underpinned by a set of principles that include: building a more relevant, sustainable, and effective enabling environment for education and work systems for young people that recognize their rights and will; involving young people at all levels in decision-making processes that will affect their lives; partnering with young people to build a better, more resilient world for all generations; and framing youth programs with a gender-responsive Rights-Based Approach (RBA), implying and acknowledging that young people are considered as rights-holders.

THE YOUTH CAFÉ, YOUTH DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY, AND ONLINE CIVIC REASONING

Through its twin pillars of work on Governance and Political Inclusion as well as Education and Skills, The Youth Café is seeking to equip young people with key media literacy skills, including but not limited to: critical thinking, fact-checking, online safety, social media verification, and quality assessment of online information and their sources through a dedicated handbook. Now more than ever, the fact-checking skills of youth need to be enhanced to restore eroded trust perpetuated and proliferated by fake news, improve their civic online reasoning and encourage responsible social media usage, particularly in the context of the electioneering period, in a bid to reduce political incitement, political strife, tarnishing political images and hate speech. During the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation and disinformation hindered health communication in Kenya.²⁵ It caused severe public health consequences such as fear, stigma, stress, and mental morbidity. With the valuable fact-checking skills, youth will have the essential tools to restore and consolidate democracy in Kenya. Research has shown that digital tools and social media networks have enabled the dissemination of distorted narratives which shape public opinions and discourse. Through designing, developing, evaluating, and disseminating a youth-centered media literacy handbook, we hope to highlight and address digital threats to democracy in Kenya.



**WE HOPE THAT THIS HANDBOOK WILL
EMPOWER YOUTH AND ADVANCE YOUTH
DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY AND ONLINE
CIVIC REASONING IN KENYA AND AFRICA!**



KEY CONCEPTS IN CHAPTER ONE

1. Theoretical Background of Media and Information Literacy
2. Basic Concepts of Digital Media and Information Literacy
3. The Relationship between Civic Participation and Digital Media Literacy
4. Digital Media and Information Literacy Skills
5. Digital and Information Literacy in Kenya
6. The importance of Digital and Information Literacy
7. Digital and Online Activism
8. Digital Media Literacy Fact Sheet
9. Quick Facts About Digital-Media Literacy in Kenya
10. Digital Media Literacy and Youth Civic Engagement
11. Importance of Youth Civic Engagement
12. Digital platforms used by young people for digital civic engagement
13. Constraints to digital media literacy and youth civic engagement
14. The role of digital media literacy in supporting youth civic engagement



1. Think about the forthcoming general election and what 2 political information you are getting from digital media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, websites, Twitter, or even Tiktok!). Write down some of that information.
2. Is this information true or false? How did you confirm it is true or not?
3. Do you think this information could/will affect your participation in the general election?
4. Have you partaken in sharing information online, whether true or false and why?
5. Do you think your use of digital tools is ethical in enhancing media literacy and civic engagement?

REFLECTION ONE

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Levels of literacy have been on a steady increase in the 20th and 21st century, and certain types over the years have always been interlinked thanks to their accessibility, convergence, and distribution of information and content via the Internet, media, mobile platforms, and other mediums. Media literacy and Information literacy are examples of such literacies. Information literacy emphasizes the importance of access to information and the evaluation and ethical use of such information. On the other hand, media literacy emphasizes understanding media functions, evaluating how those functions are performed, and engaging with media for self-expression. These two literacies are no longer seen as separate but as interconnected and overlapping. UNESCO combines Media literacy and Information literacy to form Media and Information Literacy (MIL). MIL is defined as a set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate and use, create, as well as share information and media content in all formats, using various tools in a critical, ethical and effective way to participate and engage in personal, professional and societal activities.²⁶



Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’ Through Media and Information Literacy, UNESCO promotes universal human rights by making sure that the freedoms of everyone from different backgrounds are taken into consideration. The competencies of understanding media functions and evaluating the young generation with critical thinking skills will enable them to open up their minds and be skeptical of the daily information. The skills will also enable them to demand high-quality services from media and information providers. This is where teachers come in to enhance MIL among the young people, and training needs to take place for the teachers to be media and information literate. In due time young people will grow up to become well-rounded adults in their society.

2. ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Public libraries have long been great promoters of information literacy and later widened the scope to digital and media literacy. They have, over time, offered access and helped us understand information. Without access to formal educational programs or computers, libraries have enabled information to reach marginalized communities. They have offered those groups that have long been at the risk of exclusion the opportunity to learn information literacy.

The information environment in Africa has predominantly been embedded in oral tradition through fables and storytelling. The African Platform on Access to Information, in its 2013 survey, found that out of the fourteen countries surveyed, only four had access to information laws. With the growth witnessed in information technology and data, access to information in Africa is poor. The question, therefore, stands as to how libraries can bring about media and information literacy in Africa.

Public libraries in the past were depended upon due to information scarcity; however, in the 1990s and 2000s, digital media started to grow in every economic sector and soon became central in every home, office, and school. This led to public libraries offering computers and the internet to those who did have access to it. However, the digital age created a gap where vulnerable groups were left behind and had to play catch up to help someone in need of information. Public libraries have had to ensure that they have access to digital tools and the knowledge to use them. Therefore, public libraries offered an opportunity to such groups to strengthen their Media and Information Literacy skills.²⁷



The In4skill Program by the National Library of Malaysia is an excellent example of one of the library programs that have been designed to bridge the knowledge gap between people living in rural and urban areas. The library program aims to reach rural communities with its information literacy initiative and teach them ways in which they can find, evaluate and organize information for its ethical use and dissemination. Through collaboration with schools and community libraries, literacy programs were implemented to help and train local librarians to become trainers themselves and be capable of organizing their information literacy initiatives.²⁸

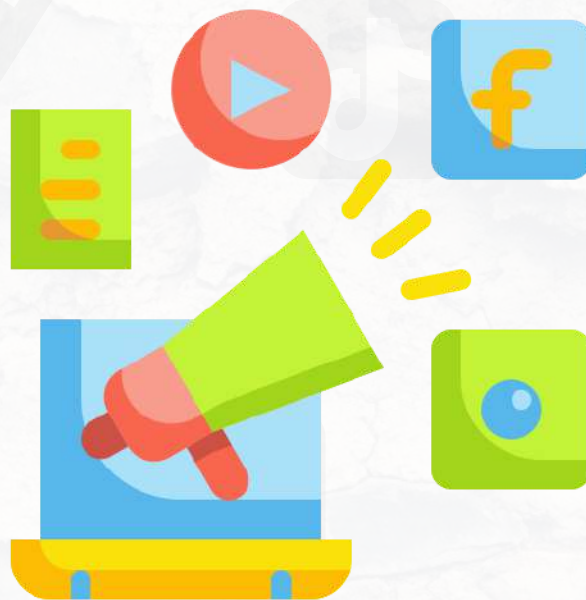
Public libraries in Africa are key players in accessing information and advancing individual economic, political, and educational development. With every human having a right to information, public libraries have a role in ensuring that the public has access to it equitably and equally. This can be achieved through the adaptation of digital technology in their services. The digitization of the information environment in Africa will enable the cultural heritage of different communities to be preserved.

As much as the digitization of Africa's information environment is crucial for media and information literacy, it is important to note that this creates a serious digital divide in the continent. Therefore, public libraries have a duty to learn and understand the information behavior of their communities to provide them with data that is accessible, effective, and relevant for their day-to-day activities.²⁹

3. BASIC CONCEPTS OF DIGITAL MEDIA INFORMATION LITERACY

Digital media refers to technology that is consumed through a machine-readable platform. While the term “digital” encompasses anything with numeral digits, the term “media” refers to a method of transmitting the information. Therefore, digital media is information shared through a digital device or screen.³⁰ Essentially, digital media is any form of media that relies on electronic devices for its creation, distribution, viewing, and storage. Examples of digital media include, but are not limited to audio, video, social media, advertising, news, and literature.³¹

On the other hand, Information Literacy is the ability to know when information is needed to help solve a problem, make a decision, and identify, locate, organize, effectively create, and apply it to address issues or concerns. It is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society and is part of the fundamental human right of education, combined with research skills, critical thinking skills, computer technology skills, and communication skills.³²



In an increasingly digitized, interdependent global world, digital media and information literacy are a basic human right that encourages greater social inclusion³³. It has the ability to bridge the gap between those who have access to a lot of information and those who do not.³⁴ Individuals with understanding of the activities of the media and information systems, as well as the conditions under which they operate, are empowered and endowed with media and information literacy.

We live in a society where the quality of information we get has a significant impact on our decisions and actions, including our ability to exercise fundamental freedoms and self-determination. As a result of technological advancements in telecommunications, there has been a proliferation of media and other information providers through which citizens can access and share information and knowledge³⁵. The issue of determining the relevance and credibility of the information we receive adds to and emanates from this phenomenon.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

Fundamental Principles of Civic Engagement

1. Our duty is to the people, i.e., the common good.
2. Ours is, at its core, a verification discipline.
3. Our practitioners must have the freedom to follow their convictions.
4. Our need to provide a venue for public debate and compromise.

Fundamental Principles of Digital Media Literacy

1. Ours places a strong emphasis on citizen empowerment.
2. Ours is an individual verification discipline.
3. Ours stimulates the faculties of reasoning and conscience, which we all possess.
4. Ours allows people to take part in public debate and dialogue.

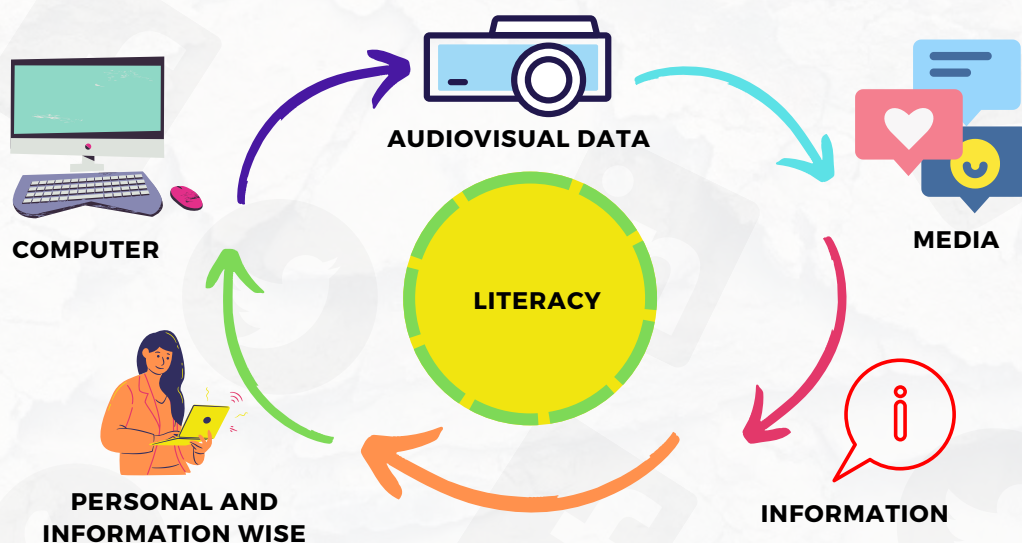
The Relationship between Civic Participation and Digital Media Literacy: Source UNESCO, 2019.³⁶

5. DIGITAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

1. Access - this is an important asset when it comes to digital literacy. It enables one to find digital media using various methods such as digital audio and video, social media, virtual reality, just to mention a few.³⁷

2. Analysis and comprehension - this skill enables one to argue about the work that expresses personal perspectives, interpretation, judgment, or critical evaluation of the context at hand.³⁸

3. Use - the ability to comfortably deploy digital media to accomplish specific goals regarding the matter at hand.³⁹



Concept of Digital Media Literacy: Source UNESCO, 2013.⁴⁰

6. DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN KENYA

According to the Kenyan government, “achieving an information-based society is one of the primary tasks to fulfill national development goals and objectives for wealth and job creation.”⁴¹ As a concept, Digital and Information literacy has been recognized as an essential development facilitator. The government considers education a prerequisite for obtaining digital skills to achieve dynamic and long-term economic growth.⁴² Furthermore, through research and development, capacity growth can ensure the advancement of the quality and efficiency of digital applications in Kenya.⁴³

Likewise, it is widely acknowledged that digital and information literacy is critical for national growth.⁴⁴ Despite the national importance of information literacy, Ayoo and Otike contend that the design of an information strategy in Kenya is hampered by a lack of information skills, particularly among top policymakers, which leads to poor ICT/digital media decisions. They argue that education, literacy, and training programs with the cooperation of all information stakeholders, including the government as the information generator, should be part of any information policy.⁴⁵





CASE STUDY 1: CIVIC SPACE INITIATIVE

A. Purpose, objectives, and activities of the Project.

To protect and expand the civic space, CIVICUS partnered with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), ARTICLE 19, and the World Movement for Democracy on a project to create a legal environment that empowers civil society. In the Civic Space Initiative (CSI), the focus was on the legal initiatives of civil society on a global, regional, and national scale. The Government of Sweden provides financial support for the CSI's activities. Civil Space Campaign International and the Universal Periodic Review (UPI), National Assessments of the Enabling Environment, and a New Social Contract were CIVICUS's responsibilities. It works to ensure that people can come together, collaborate on issues that matter, engage with their governments, and ultimately improve their lives.

B. Duration of the project

Three years

C. Location of the project implementation.

Zambia, Uganda, Burkina Faso.

D. Background History of the media and information literacy intervention.

Governments across the globe are increasingly seeking to impose legislative and extra-legal barriers to the full realization of rights fundamental to the creation of a safe and enabling environment for civil society. In a 2013 report, "Global trends on civil society restrictions," CIVICUS tracked 413 threats to civil society in 87 countries since the beginning of 2012. In an apparent attempt to suppress the influence and impact of independent civil society groups, governments have been imposing unwarranted legal restrictions on civil society, including laws criminalizing access to foreign funding and unduly limiting the scope of their permissible activities. For engaging in legitimate activities, civil society activists, journalists, and human rights defenders faced increasing intimidation, harassment, and retaliation, including imprisonment.

E. Methods, techniques, and tools used during the project implementation.

CIVICUS used UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) sessions and Universal Periodic Review submissions as platforms to advocate for key reforms to create an enabling environment for civil society. To ensure that unwarranted restrictions on civil society were addressed, CIVICUS used its CSI UPR activities, including developing joint UPR submissions, coordinating national realization UPR consultations, and facilitating the attendance of civil society activists at UNHRC sessions. International human rights organizations and prominent capital-based civil society organizations dominated the UNHRC's discourse on human rights. It was possible to significantly increase the number of civil society organizations to effectively contribute to UNHRC discussions on civil society space through the CSI UPR workstream.

F. Influences, Impacts, Outcomes, and Effects that the project has had.

Threats to civil society space were routinely addressed by governments during UPR examinations due to CIVICUS' joint UPR submissions on restrictions on the rights to association, assembly, and expression. Post-UPR consultations provide a safe and necessary space for civil society to discuss the deteriorating environment. There was an increase in civil society awareness of UNHRC processes, according to several CIVICUS partners, as a result of post-UPR consultations. The support provided to national civil society activists to attend UNHRC and UPR sessions, including through parallel UNHRC side events, organizing high-level meetings with relevant government and OHCHR stakeholders, as well as supporting the composition of oral and written statements, and press releases, continued to provide essential entry points for national civil society activists to provide crucial first-hand information on pressing human rights issues.

G. What lessons have you learned so far?

The unprecedented rifts and systemic disconnects in the world have put us in a state of organized irresponsibility, resulting in outcomes that no one wanted to experience. A collective impact approach was the only way society could make large-scale progress again. Governments routinely addressed threats to civil society space (NSC) workstream due to government in governance processes that affected citizens' lives, being defined through the promotion and analysis of new forms of collaboration around critical economic and social challenges. To assess and compare the local patterns of civic engagement occurring worldwide, the dialogues were designed as a practical and innovative way to gather empirical evidence. An international invitation to express interest resulted in 940 applications being reviewed and eight selected partners. Seven of these partners were able to organize dialogues in their communities about pressing issues.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

In developing countries, there is an increasing number of information and communication technology (ICT)/digital media initiatives. These initiatives are typically rolled out because they are beneficial to social and economic growth. However, the comparatively low degree of information literacy in underdeveloped nations is a barrier to effective ICT/digital media use.

Digital and Information Literacy is defined by UNESCO's Information For All Programme (IFAP) as people's ability to recognize their information needs, locate and evaluate the quality of information, store and retrieve information, use information effectively and ethically, and apply information to create and communicate knowledge.⁴⁶ In other words, information literacy skills empower the people with the critical skills to thrive in the digital media space. Owing to the vast amount of information available in today's culture, information literacy is critical. Aside from exposure to a large amount of knowledge, people must also learn to use it effectively.⁴⁷

The term "data smog" alludes to the idea that having too much information might hinder our lives. In order to employ their educational and economic aims more effectively, society requires a specific skill to handle this information glut. The remedy to the data smog is thought to be information literacy.⁴⁸ Information literacy equips us with the ability to detect when we need information, where to find it, and how to use it effectively and efficiently, allowing us to manage the data smog.

As a result, it will aid decision-making and productivity, which will benefit society. Due to the information boom and data smog, society faces several challenges in locating, evaluating, and communicating data. We acquire a lot of information that isn't analyzed due to the rise of online services, which isn't the case with printed sources. Therefore, the information's authenticity, validity, and dependability are questioned.

The figure below showcases the different aspects of information literacy contained in UNESCO's IFAP definition.



- **Recognising information needs** alludes to the ability of an individual to recognize that information is required to solve or address an issue. According to Catts and Lau, awareness is not a static capacity, but rather one that must be applied to each new situation.⁴⁹
- **Locating and evaluating the quality of information** has two parts: locating information (the ability of an individual to know where to search for the required information based on context) and evaluating the quality of information (the ability to assess accuracy, credibility, and reliability of the obtained piece of information), which goes hand in hand with locating it (the ability to evaluate the accuracy, credibility, and dependability of the information obtained)
- Whether it's information about one's culture and heritage, corporate records and technological know-how, or storing one's personal contacts, the ability to **store and retrieve information** can be tied to a variety of settings.
- The ability to use information optimally in problem-solving and/or critical thinking is represented by the **effectiveness of information use,** whereas the **ethical use of information** comprises using the information in a way that does not infringe on other people's rights.
- The **ability to create and communicate knowledge** is the ultimate product of information literacy since it enables knowledge creation.

The importance of digital media and information literacy in the development process and the significance of media as tools for citizens' active involvement in society should not be overlooked. Digital media enables civic and political engagement to take place. Political participation is distinct from civic involvement, a closely related term. Civic engagement is more concerned with non-political contact, including an individual's closeness to and trust in their immediate community. In contrast, political engagement is more concerned with cognitive or behavioral involvement with events of political consequence. Despite the difference, civic and political engagement are interconnected as acts of civic engagement can lead to political engagement/participation.

Comparative Analysis

To showcase the relationship between digital media/information literacy and civic and political engagement, let's look at a comparative analysis examining the challenges of digital media literacy at international, regional, and national levels. We shall take three countries: The United States (international), Nigeria (regional), and Kenya (national).

According to research undertaken by Texas Tech University, there is evidence that accessing news through digital media is linked positively to both online and offline political activity.⁵⁰ According to these studies, utilizing social media or blogs to get information is as effective as or perhaps more than traditional media in increasing political engagement.

However, the challenge with digital media/information literacy in this context is that voters have relatively limited cognitive process capacity due to information overload from various platforms. As a result, when information overload occurs, decision quality is likely to suffer, potentially leading to people not voting the best candidate in a political race.

45.6%

47.7%

76.2%

Kenya and Nigeria have internet penetration rates of 45.6 percent and 47.7 percent, respectively, compared to 76.2 percent in the United States. State-owned media channels, unlike in the United States, are still prevalent in Africa, particularly Nigeria and Kenya.⁵¹ However, individuals are wary of information coming from state-owned media sources, particularly regarding contentious topics or political concerns involving key political personalities or the government. The Internet and social media are promoted as potential drivers of social transformation by scholars speculating about political engagement in Africa. In a study on political involvement in Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia, it was found that poverty, the inability to adapt technologies for local use, and people's dissatisfaction with political institutions have all hindered Internet use as a platform for engagement.⁵² While the Internet and social media have provided information and forums for political expression, the importance of encouraging offline engagement is still up for dispute. Individuals obtaining news via social media, for example, expressed heightened cynicism about the political process and reported decreased voting levels during the 2010 Tanzanian elections.⁵³

Despite the limitations, studies have highlighted that youth and students in Kenya and Nigeria utilize social media to obtain political information, share it, and express themselves online.⁵⁴ By offering political information, expanding expertise, and connecting social media users with like-minded persons, political actors, and partisan institutions, accessing news via social media may lead to engagement. As a result, social media users are exposed to particular requests for participation in social movements, boosting their chances of participating in collective civic action. One example is youth political participation in Nigeria's electoral processes during the 2015 elections, which was lauded by many.⁵⁵ The reason for this is because of nonviolent efforts carried out by youth organizations around the country in various forms such as "peace promotion, public involvement, political education, election monitoring, and polling administration."⁵⁶

Youth organizations such as the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement (YIAGA) Africa, the Youth Alliance on Constitution and Electoral Reform, Niger Delta Coalition for Change (NDCC), the Young-stars Development Initiative (YDI), and the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) campaigned for a peaceful election. They did so by persuading youth not to engage in violent behavior and insisting that politicians do not use young people to commit acts of violence before, during, or after elections. Faith-based youth groups, civil society organizations, and youth development organizations signed the Youth Peace Accord on February 3, 2015, to demonstrate their commitment to peaceful elections.⁵⁷ Furthermore, youth groups took active steps toward voter education and used social media to educate voters on national concerns.⁵⁸

To ensure digital media's effectiveness in political and civic engagement, youth need to be equipped with digital media literacy skills. These skills include critical thinking, fact-checking, online safety, social media verification, and quality assessment of online information and its sources. In Kenya, The Youth Cafe is committed to ensuring this by providing essential media literacy skills to over ten million young men and women in Africa within five years and aspires to become the preferred reference point in media literacy for African youth. The Youth Cafe hopes to achieve this through a solid institutional approach and Community of Practice centered on mobilizing key actors to entrench democracy. The Youth Cafe has a strong background and demonstrable experience in this area and has won several awards, including winning first place in the 2020 UNESCO Global Awards for Media and Information Literacy for its pioneering work on digital media/information literacy projects with African Youth. The Youth Cafe implemented a media project to cultivate youth power to advance media independence in the recent past. By 2020, The Youth Cafe had trained and mentored a diverse mix of over 2,000 aspiring young leaders to produce over 3,500 effective independent media content on our 'Perspectives Blog,' which is now on Google News and Apple News listings, thereby helping to moderate contentious discourses about issues affecting young people in 22 African countries. The project has further organized webinars and podcasts training to help young people improve their working practices in digital security and media law and understand their rights in challenges to freedom of expression. The Youth Cafe's Podcast is syndicated on Apple Podcast, Anchor, and Google.⁵⁹

8. DIGITAL AND ONLINE ACTIVISM

Digital activism refers to the use of digital media (the internet, social media, mobile phones, etc.) to bring about social/political change.⁶⁰ Online platforms in Kenya, particularly social media sites, have evolved into some of the most dynamic areas for engaging the political establishment on social, economic, and political issues. Youth unemployment, environmental challenges, LGBTQ recognition, reproductive health rights, and sexual violence are just a few topics that have historically struggled to gain public attention but are now being heard more frequently.⁶¹



Examples of digital and online activism

1. #StandwithLiz and #JusticeforLiz on Twitter (about a young girl from Western Kenya who four men gang-raped) trended online for several days, as Kenyans rallied to support a petition started by activist, Nebila Abdulmelik, urging the Inspector-General of Police to re-open the case that had previously been closed, according to Mwaura. On October 31, 2013, the online campaign was complemented by a rally in Nairobi, where demonstrators submitted a petition signed by over 1.2 million people. Police personnel who (mis)handled the case were reprimanded due to the massive public pressure. The Director of Public Prosecutions launched an investigation into the incident, which resulted in the arrest and conviction of one defendant.⁶²
2. Ory Okolloh, a lawyer-turned-activist, co-founded Mzalendo (Swahili for patriot) in 2006, with the goal of increasing government accountability by documenting Parliamentary (National Assembly) sessions and politicians' speeches (<http://info.mzalendo.com/>). The website also allows Kenyans to have conversations through posting their SMSes on critical political matters like the recent Constitution Amendment Bill, commonly referred to as Building Bridges Initiative to a United Kenya (BBI report). The report highlights Kenya's nine core challenges established from consultations with 7000 Kenyan citizens. However, the high court overruled the BBI in May 2021 for being irregular, illegal, and unconstitutional despite its objective of making its politics more inclusive. In 2007, when Kenya was engulfed in post-election violence as a result of a disputed presidential election, Okolloh assisted in the creation of Ushahidi (Swahili for witness). This website allowed Kenyans to collect and share eyewitness reports of the violence via text messages and Google Maps (<http://www.usshahidi.com/>).

3. Okolloh's personal blog, 'Kenyan Pundit,' is featured on Global Voices Online, a web-based community that tries to defend online rights and freedoms and fights censorship by providing isolated and marginalized communities with tools, skills, and support to speak out about their hardships and challenges marginalization (<http://globalvoicesonline.org/about/>).

In Nigeria, the 2011 elections were the “freest and fairest” in Nigerian history due to the widespread usage of social media. Many online platforms, such as "Enough is Enough Nigeria," "Reclaim Naija," "WangoNet," and "IamLagos," have been set up to allow residents to report election-related occurrences via photos, videos, text messages, and voicemails.⁶³ Additionally, smartphone applications like Gbenga's 'Revoda' built by an IT expert were used to file grievances and report any delays in voting materials. Many individuals from both inside and outside the country were able to monitor the election process thanks to this method of reporting. There were 'social media activists' on the lookout for vote manipulation and the spread of violence at voting places. This indicates the magnitude to which social media promotes participatory democracy by increasing openness, citizen participation, political accuracy, and total election results release speed.⁶⁴

9. QUICK FACTS ABOUT DIGITAL-MEDIA LITERACY IN KENYA

According to the 2019 census in Kenya the overall literacy stands at 79%, female literacy accounting for 82%, while male literacy accounts for 85%.⁶⁵ There are 22.86 million Internet users as of January 2020. Additionally, Internet users have increased by 16 % between 2019 and 2020.⁶⁶ 1 in 5 Kenyans has Internet access. This is a remarkable statistic because it shows that Internet penetration in the country is significantly high. There are also over 20 million mobile users in the country, and recent surveys show that more women than men have access⁶⁷ to and use mobile phones.⁶⁸

According to the National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) survey report of the Communications Commission of Kenya in 2018, Internet, computers, and pay television penetration stood at 7.2%, 9.1%, and 4.3%, respectively. The same report indicates that Nairobi has the most significant percentage of internet users, standing at 25.9%, with the Central region (6.7%) and Nyanza (5.5%) taking the second and third positions respectively.⁶⁹ The survey also reported that the Coast and Western provinces had the lowest Internet usage, accounting for 3.5 % and 1.4%, respectively. A much higher percentage of males (7.5% relative to females 5.2%) use the Internet. Interestingly, television sets are not as standard in the country, with only 60% of the participants confirming their access to television. Furthermore, in Kenya, computer and Internet usage and access have penetration rates of approximately 6.3% and 8.4%, respectively.⁷⁰

10. DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that young people have a right to freedom of expression and have their voices listened to and taken into account in decisions that affect their lives.⁷¹ In Africa, The Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information affirms the principles for anchoring the rights to freedom of expression and access to information in conformance with Article 9 of the African Charter, which guarantees individuals the right to receive information as well as the right to express and disseminate information.⁷² In Kenya, Article 33 of the 2010 constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to exercise freedom of expression and shall respect the rights of others.⁷³ Despite these rights, many young people still face backlash and unequal opportunities in civic participation and engagement. This breaches their fundamental human rights enshrined under the constitution and various conventions mentioned above. It limits their understanding of social and civic issues. However, there has been a rise in social media use from 16% to 17% of Kenya's entire population as of January 2019.⁷⁴ This rise in usage has enabled the youth to raise their voices in unprecedented ways. For example, in 2019, the Kenyan rapper known as King Kaka (Kennedy Ombima) produced a song titled, 'Wajinga Nyinyi,' meaning 'You Fools,' which was a castigation to Kenyans for succumbing to politicians stealing their votes and embezzling public money.⁷⁵

With appropriate social media marketing and content creation skills, young people have shown that digital media is their desired means of expression.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is defined as citizens' individual and collective action to improve and shape the well-being of communities or society's future.⁷⁶ Digital civic engagement by youth is the activities that young people participate in that involve digital media.

Table 1.2 on the relationship between digital media literacy and civic engagement

Fundamental principles of civic engagement ⁷⁷	Fundamental principles of digital media literacy ⁷⁸
<p>Planning and Preparation: Inclusive planning and preparation ensure that the design and process will serve the needs of the Youth.</p>	<p>Comprehension: This is the ability to extract implicit and explicit ideas from a media.</p>
<p>Embracing the Gifts of Diversity: Equitable incorporation of diverse young people from different backgrounds, ideas, and information to serve the needs of the Youth.</p>	<p>Social Factors: Who shares what information with whom and the sources of the information received? Interdependence: This is how media connects with other forms.</p>
<p>Collaboration and shared Purpose: Government and community institutional collaboration on matters to do with the youth will advance their goals.</p>	<p>Curation: The storage of content and information through different platforms to resist data overload.</p>
<p>Transparency and Trust: Expression of transparent and open views and ideas expressed by the youth, organizers, and sponsors.</p>	
<p>Openness and Learning: Helping all the youths listen to each other freely and share ideas.</p>	
<p>Impact and Action: Efforts to be put that will bring sustainable change to the lives of the youth.</p>	
<p>Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture: Implementation programs by institutions that will promote a culture of participation.</p>	

11. IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Youth civic engagement is increasingly recognized as an essential component of every country's development agenda. Strengthening youth programs and activities is a way of unleashing the potential that young people can bring to their societies and communities. Here are some important reasons as to why youth civic engagement matters:

- Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is a right for young people to participate in civic issues that affect their lives as enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁷⁹ The lives of the young generation are impacted by the laws and policies made in the political sphere. Therefore, the governments must ensure that young people are given enough opportunities to engage in political and social forums. Under Article 100 of the Constitution of Kenya, parliament is obligated to enact legislation to promote the representation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups.⁸⁰
- Education and exposure to civic issues while young is an excellent foundation in creating future civic actors. According to the World Bank, participation in civic matters is critical for a healthy transition to adulthood. This is because it helps young people gain soft skills such as interpersonal communication, leadership, and emotional awareness and build relationships with them.⁸¹
- Due to their participation, young people, get to gain social-political empowerment. Their self-esteem and well-being grow. Therefore investing in the development of active and engaged young generation communities will strengthen their civic culture.

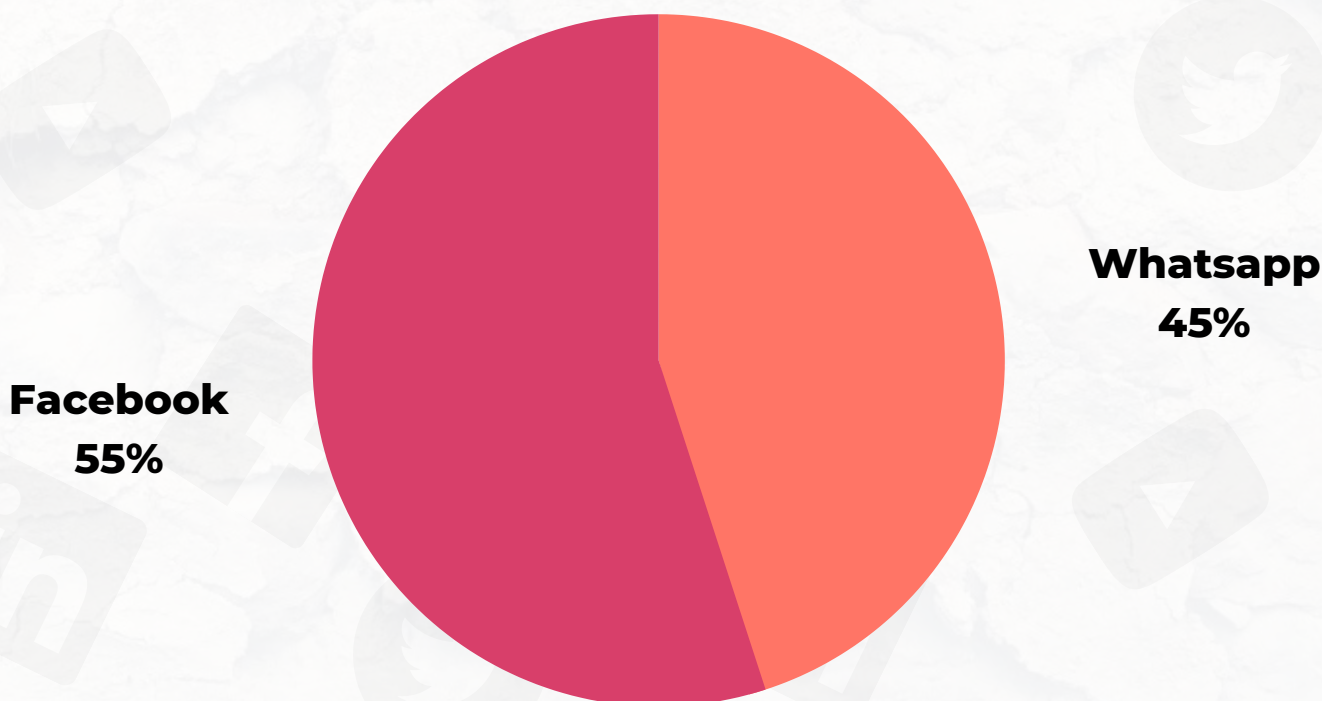


12. DIGITAL PLATFORMS USED BY YOUNG PEOPLE FOR DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Media and Information Literacy Index report done by Deutsche Welle in 2019 shows that most young Kenyans have access to radio and television and go online to a lesser extent.⁸² This is mainly because radio and TV sets are prevalent in households that 15-25 years olds live in. Radio is explicitly used daily in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Three-quarters of 15-25 year-olds who took part in the survey said they own a smartphone, urban areas having 74% and rural areas having 64%. The young people in the metropolitan regions argued that their smartphones replaced the need to use newspapers, television, and radios thanks to Internet access. In rural areas, access to the Internet is lower due to the infrastructural, cultural, and economic factors affecting them. The Digital Literacy Desk review undertaken by The Youth Cafe determined that young people in rural Kenya suffer unequal access to opportunities than their urban counterparts. This hinders their participation in activities such as school councils.

Most popular applications amongst the 15-25 years old



The popular choice among young people was WhatsApp (55%) and Facebook (45%). As much as these platforms can be of great benefit in advancing civic engagement among the youth, it is essential to note and look at them as being part of a range of options instead of relying on any single one of them.

CONSTRAINTS TO DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

One of the constraints to digital media literacy and youth civic engagement is the lack of trust young people have in the digital platforms, information retrieved from these sites, and trust in the country's political processes. This was evident in the MIL Index survey by Deutsche Welle that showed the Kenyan youth were very wary of disinformation and hate speech, with over 60% condemning it and identifying news bias and censorship.

The lack of proper research on digital media literacy and youth civic engagement means there will not be data available to ensure the investment in youth participation in the country. Organizations and governments need to give their attention to matters such as employment creation, mental health, education and training, crime and drugs, environment, and access to financial resources to know how they can change the situation at hand.

The digital platforms used by the youth to express themselves are the same platforms used to oppress them. For the Uyghurs in China, for example, social media has acted as a double-edged sword, providing opportunities for resistance; yet, at the same time, it has created an opportunity for the state to spy on its citizens.⁸³ On the other hand, cyber-bullying and trolling have become a common occurrence in the online space today, with activists facing attacks whenever they voice their opinion on a particular matter. Such actions make young people scared to speak on pertinent issues and avoid using digital applications.

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY IN SUPPORTING YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Evidence suggests that digital civic engagement by young people is positively correlated to offline youth political participation.⁸⁴ Young people who engage in digital participatory politics are more likely to engage in institutional activities such as voting. Below are core enablers that can bridge the gap between media literacy and civic engagement:

- Investment in access to technology: Young people living in rural areas are significantly disadvantaged. They do not have the required skills to engage online with their peers in urban areas without access to such technology. Only after such barriers have been removed can we have a robust online engagement among the youth in the country.
- Instituting civic education in the curriculum and teacher training: There is a need for the government to initiate civic education in the school curriculum and train teachers on the same. This will strengthen children's knowledge and participation in civic and political life, thus enabling them to engage in dialogues on national and global importance issues.
- Instituting education in digital skills: According to the Global Kids Online 2019 survey, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that 43-64% of children looked for news online.⁸⁵ In Ghana, for instance, online participation practiced weekly was as follows:

Table 4. The ladder of online participation in Ghana

Online activities practised weekly or more often	Age group (N=2,060)			All
	9-11yrs (%)	12-14yrs (%)	15-17yrs (%)	(%)
Involved in campaign or protest	6	7	10	8
Created blog, story or website	8	7	10	8
Discussed politics with others	10	10	17	12
Created video or music	12	13	24	17
Resources about neighbourhood	13	16	22	17
Looked for health information	15	19	29	21
Used website for interests or hobbies	16	20	31	23
Talked to distant family or friends	15	23	32	24
Played online games	30	31	30	30
Watched video clips	24	33	48	36
Looked for news online	23	34	49	36
Work or study opportunities	28	34	46	36
Listened to music	28	38	49	39
Talked to people from different backgrounds	27	36	53	40
Posted photos or comments online	35	50	68	52
Used instant messaging	32	50	70	52
Used internet for schoolwork	52	61	65	60
Used social networking site	47	66	80	66
Learned by searching online	58	69	81	70

This shows that digital technology plays a significant role in different activities. Therefore, governments need to institute the advancement of digital skills in schools through training. Rehabilitation programs for out-of-school youths and street children is another instrumental policy that needs to be in effect to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups. Implementing the Digital Literacy Program by the Education and ICT Ministries in Kenya is a positive step in the right direction. Youth-led programs and training such as those carried out by Youth Alive Kenya in economic empowerment and livelihoods illustrate how organizations further implement digital media programs. However, there is a need to include other literacies such as the Internet and media (news, adverts, and cinema). Such recommendations are important because digital media literacy skills go beyond young people knowing how to access the web. Understanding the perils of the Internet, including the identification, prevention, and stopping of vices such as cyberbullying, is a critical element in attaining a solid grounding in digital literacy.



Therefore, cyberbullying and anti-trolling policy legislation can go a long way in streamlining online behavior.

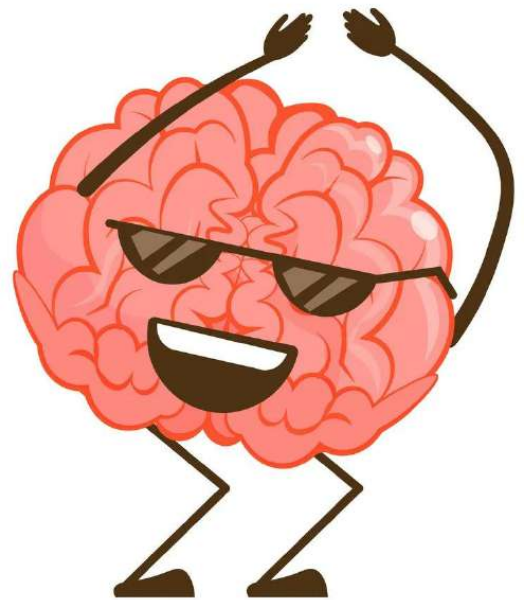
- Creation of structures for civic participation and engagement: As enshrined in Article 11 of the African Youth Charter,⁸⁶ young people have a right to participate in all spheres of the society. States have a responsibility to promote active youth participation. Therefore, having an accessible and inclusive space in all aspects, be it political, economic, or environmental, is vital for young people to bring change in their societies.
- Young people today learn by creating and sharing content with their peers. With organizations such as The Youth Café endeavoring to bring about civic engagement amongst the youth through digital media, it would be better to frame the learning and training from youth-led models of creation and sharing that will appeal to them.
- Local specificity is significant when looking at how technology and different platforms are used. Cultural and gender norms differ from country to country, and as such, these differences need to be taken into consideration because technology across the world is used differently.

There remain unanswered questions regarding young people who live in democracies such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa on how they use digital platforms and their level of engagement. African youth are marginalized in the formal governance and political system, making them less likely to participate than adults.⁸⁷ Therefore, regional policies such as the African Youth Charter have been established to enhance African youth advocacy and enforcement rights.

The Youth Cafe and other organizations looking into improving youth civic engagement will need to research deeply to understand and possibly improve the prevailing political, economic, social, and environmental aspects hindering participation in these areas. In turn, countries such as Kenya need to enact a National Media and Information Literacy Policy that will address the current vacuum in the literacy programs across the country. They can borrow a leaf from Thailand, which in 2019 launched the Anti-Fake News Center to monitor and verify 'fake news' through the Ministry of Digital Economic and Society.⁸⁸ A closer look needs to be taken at the blended context of digital media. Policies that address digital media literacy and youth civic engagement should look at digital modes of engagement as complementary to and inseparable from offline engagement. Even the slightest movements can lead to significant instrumental actions.

REFRESH YOUR MIND! WORD SEARCH

C X M E D I A N Y L B B E Z M
W I M H P Q E A A J Q V S I G
O V V W R P V C X M T D S H B
M W C I O V I I L Y F I W P M
E V F N C H K Z I P N V O U H
Y D E E T Y E A G F F X U A C
L I T E R A C Y O J I D L T U
K Q L W W O T R G H Y P L O J
I S K Q Y C M V O L G N D M E
N X T A P A D G M L V P U H G
G T A G T S J T S G J J C M K
K D P I U J L W W K S Q F I H
A C O J J M S I V I T C A P O
K N O W L E D G E V J L R I H
A V L W O M N T P P C W G G Y



Instructions

1. Use the questions below to fill the puzzle.
2. Words can go in any direction.
3. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.
4. Have fun!

1. _____ refers to a method of transmitting information.
2. Digital and Information _____ is defined by UNESCO's Information For All Programme (IFAP) as people's ability to recognize their information needs, locate and evaluate the quality of information, store and retrieve information, use information effectively and ethically, and apply information to create and communicate knowledge.
3. _____ may have served as a contributor to the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya.
4. Digital _____ refers to the use of digital media (the Internet, social media, mobile phone, etc.) to bring about social/political change.
5. Kenyan rapper known as _____ produced a song titled 'Wajinga Nyinyi' meaning to 'You Fools', which was a castigation to Kenyans for succumbing to politicians stealing their votes and embezzling public money.
6. _____ engagement is defined as citizens' individual and collective action to improve and shape the well-being of communities or society's future.
7. _____ data is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone.
8. The ability to create and communicate _____ is the ultimate product of information literacy.
9. _____ use of information comprises using information in a way that does not infringe on other people's rights.
10. The term data _____ alludes to the idea that having too much information might be a hindrance in our lives.



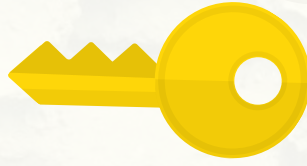
ASSIGNMENT

1. This handbook aims to understand Digital Media and Information Literacy (DMIL). In your own words, what is the meaning of DMIL, and as an active reader of this handbook, what DMIL skills do you require?
2. The local government in your area wishes to involve more youth in civic activities like voting. As a digital activist and influential person in your community, what advice would you give to your local government?

MISINFORMATION ONLINE

CHAPTER

02



KEY CONCEPTS IN CHAPTER ONE

1. The Digital Communication Cycle
2. Misinformation and Manipulation Online
3. Misinformation and Manipulation in the context of Civic Participation
4. Trusted Digital Media Sources in our Community
5. Freedom of expression and Digital Media Literacy
6. Youth Participation, Safety, Privacy, and Security When Using Digital Tools
7. State of Privacy in Kenya
8. Instances of Security breaches
9. Social, Emotional Awareness, and Mental Health Online
10. Social Dissemination and the Spread of Fake News



1. Think about the digital media platforms and sites you use. Are there instances where you felt your privacy was infringed or unsafe while using the platforms?
2. Do you freely express yourself on different digital media platforms?
3. Have you or anyone you know ever been cyberbullied or trolled because of expressing their political views on any digital platforms?
4. What is your opinion on spreading false political information online? Do you think it contributes to mental health issues?
5. Does the idea that some of the information online could be false empower you or discourage you from participating in online platforms?

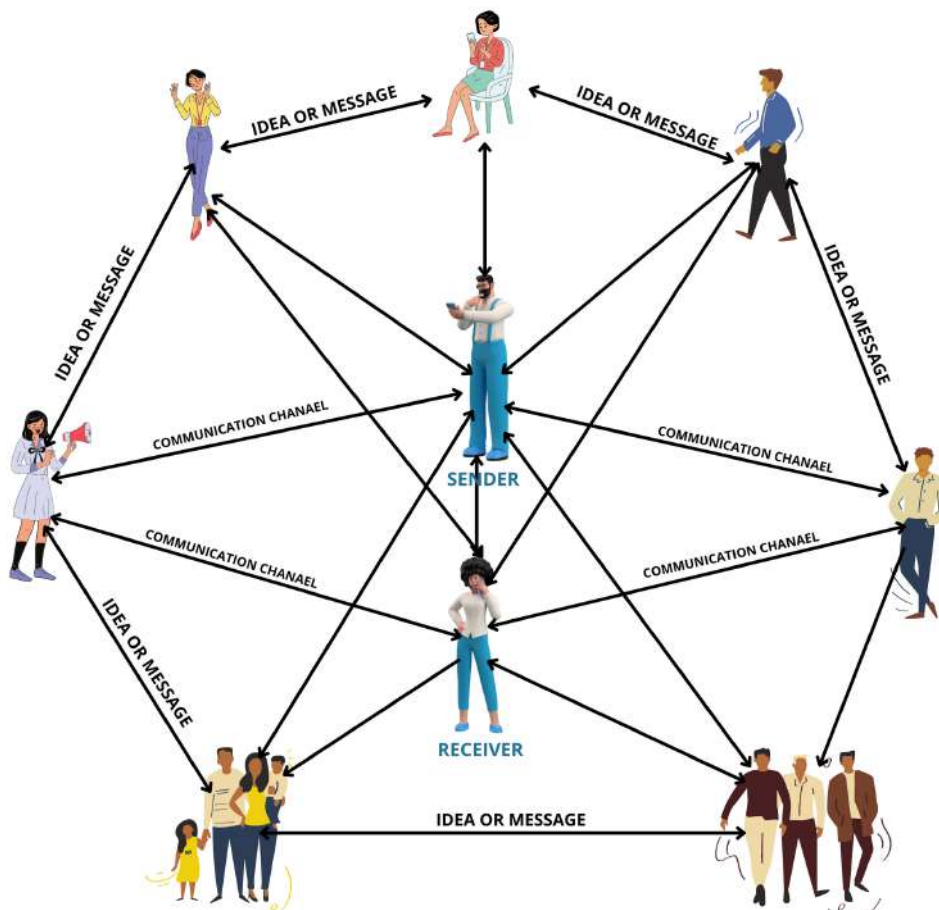
REFLECTION TWO

1. THE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CYCLE

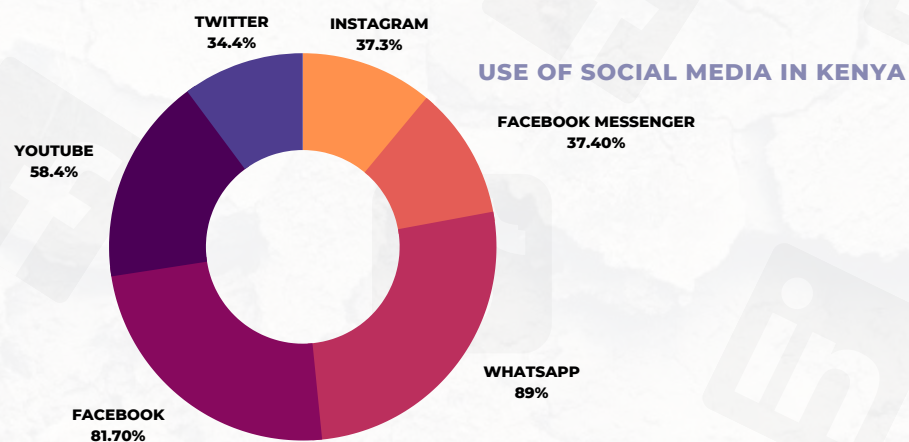
The term communication process is best described as the trade of information between two or more people. For the communication process to be successful, all the parties involved ought to exchange information and comprehend each other.⁸⁹ Since the existence of humans, different forms of communication have been invented: from smoke signals through messenger pigeons to the telephone and email. Among the most significant developments in communication was the invention of the electric telegraph in 1831. However, today digital methods have superseded nearly all forms of communication. Can you remember the last time you sent a letter? In the mid-1990s, the Internet revolutionized communication, such as telephone calls, electronic mail, discussion forums, social networking, and blogs.⁹⁰ The Internet has greatly enhanced communication and has also enabled people to keep in touch despite separation in location and time.

The conventional communication process comprises seven main elements that enable the transmission of the message: the medium, decoding, noise, encoding, the sender, the receiver, the news, and feedback. However, digital media (especially social media) has changed this conventional communication cycle in a confounding way. When a message is sent to the recipients, a web of communication is created because the recipients share the same news with other people and on different social media platforms. In the process of sharing, additional feedback is produced at different levels so that the initial sender of the message is sometimes unable to track the feedback. Besides, the message may also be distorted in sharing so that other recipients do not get the initial news but instead receive altered or misinformation.

7 Major Elements for Communication



As social media is a mainstream platform for today's communication, have you ever considered how significantly social media altered the way we communicate? Our world has changed from just text messages to a giant social media platform, such as Facebook, which is the most heavily used platform across the globe. But what changes does social media bring in Media and Information Literacy, and what does this mean for the youth's civic engagement and reasoning? For local, national, and international governments, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, provide an opportunity to create solid community with and social connections to young people by sharing local news to enhance civic engagement. Following the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the use of social media in the country has continuously been on the rise. In 2020, the United States International University in Kenya conducted a survey on the Kenyan Social Media Landscape which showed the most used social media platforms in Kenya as follows: Whatsapp (89%), Facebook (81.7%), YouTube (58.4%), Facebook Messenger (37.4%), Instagram (37.3%), and Twitter (34.4%).

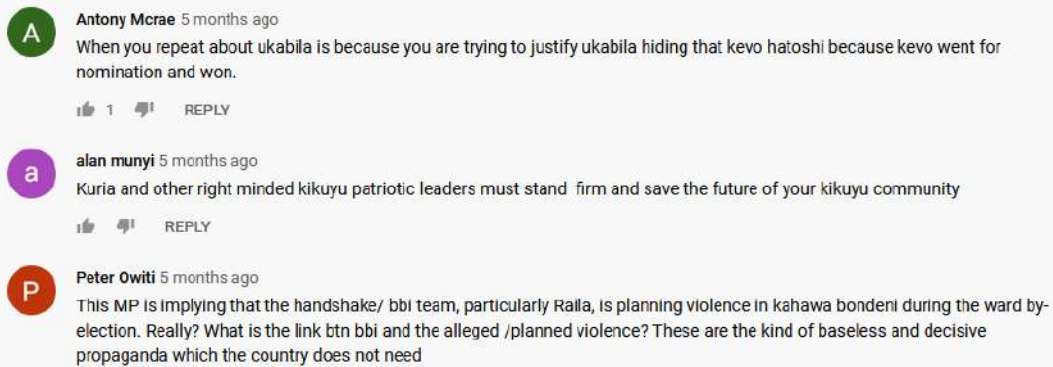


CASE STUDY: YOUTUBE VIDEO

Addressing young voters online has become more crucial than before, considering the COVID-19 shift that has compelled people to stay at home thus leading to an increase in their use of digital media tools. The door-to-door canvassing and in-person online campaigns and fundraising have become less popular and are being replaced by video live streaming through Facebook and Youtube.



YouTube is a video sharing service, which uses a camera to stream a live video as the audience receives it in real-time.⁹¹ The live video can be streamed by anyone connected to the Internet, and they can also “like” the video, share and comment on it. On December 15, 2020, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) carried out six by-elections in the country, including for the Msambweni constituency and Kahawa Wendani Ward. YouTube was mainly used to share political campaign activities for the Jubilee nominee for Kahawa Wendani, Kevin Ochieng. For instance, a video of the “Kahawa Wendani by-election campaign was uploaded on December 13, 2020. The campaign video had 1931 views on Youtube and 45 likes. Different people expressed their feelings and concerns in the comments section. Not surprisingly, some comments elicited hate speech and propelled tribalism.⁹²



In this particular case, the YouTube video for Kevin Ochieng, who was contesting for the MCA position in Kahawa Wendani, comprised potential youth voters in the forthcoming by-election. The video was streamed online and received feedback. In this particular case, anyone watching the video could express his/her concerns and emotions in the comments section. Social media feedback is potent and occurs beyond the confines of the sender. In this case, the viewers can discuss the campaign on a different digital platform like Twitter or Instagram. Negative or positive feedback can be shared without the sender's consent, hence the concept of fake news and misinformation. Today, many youths use Facebook and other platforms for entertainment, research, and education, and experience in political and social dialogues. As seen in the Facebook live-video broadcast example, feedback from social media posts is powerful and can go viral and reach many people. Therefore, it is essential to be cautious when sharing information on social media, especially if it is related to politics since people perceive information differently. The youth must be careful when sharing information online because legal action can be taken against someone who spreads fake news. Article 33 of the constitution of Kenya maintains that:⁹³

"The right to freedom of expression does not extend to --

- (a) propaganda for war;
- (b) incitement to violence;
- (c) hate speech; or
- (d) advocacy of hatred that –
 - (i) constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others or incitement to cause harm; or
 - (ii) is based on any ground of discrimination specified or contemplated in Article 27 (4)."

To avoid such problems as lawsuits, the youth in Kenya must be equipped with key media literacy skills like critical thinking, fact-checking, online safety, social media verification, and quality assessment of online information and their sources.

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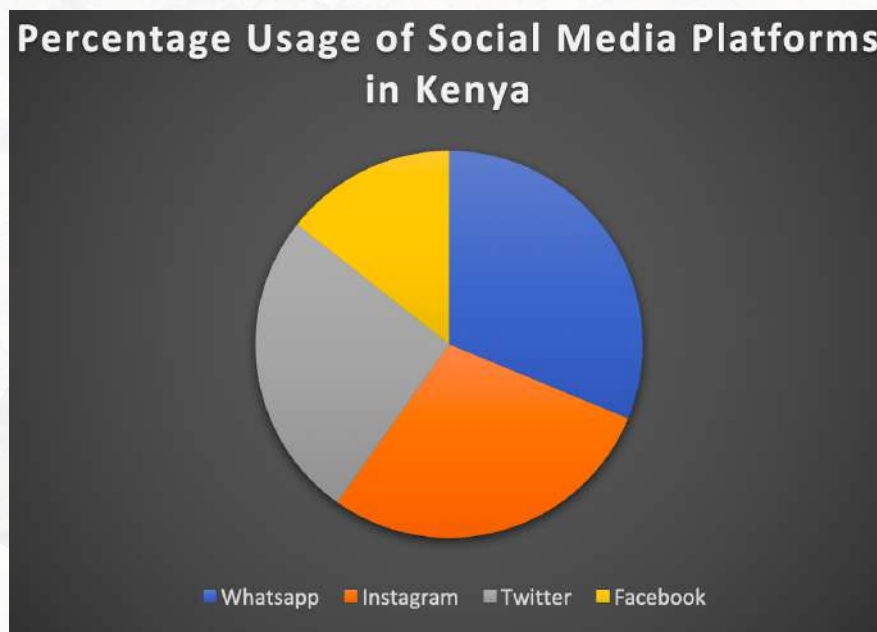
2. MISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATION ONLINE

Manipulation, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is "The ability to manage or utilize successfully," as well as "to control by clever, unfair, or deceptive means, especially to one's advantage."⁹⁴ Media refers to "The method and mechanisms of communication through which knowledge is transferred to numerous individuals." While the term "media manipulation" has been defined in a variety of ways in the past, this legal definition may be the most thorough: "the act of providing a picture or argument that favors a specific viewpoint."

Fake news has been frequently linked to media manipulation issues in recent years. The transmission of false information using "graphics, pictures, and videos or distorted picture and video content," when questionable aspects are exhibited in ways to generate anger or indignation, is known as "fake news" or misinformation.⁹⁵

In this digital age, social media plays a critical role, and because the younger generation is typically regarded as tech-savvy, it is mostly the youth who use social media to spread the word and engage in digital activism. When comparing and mapping the extent to which digital engagement translates to electoral participation or voting, however, the picture is rather different.

A research done by ARP in Kenya, which limited social media to Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram, found that 92% of the youth used WhatsApp as their primary social media platform, 84% used Instagram, 76% used Twitter and 42.3% used Facebook. 175 respondents were interviewed.⁹⁶



These four social media platforms were the most popular and widely used by young people on a regular basis. Through social media platforms and among friends and coworkers, these youth can share, tweet, and publish news they find interesting. Because of the ease and efficiency with which individuals may tweet, remark, and share, news can travel quickly without the need for gatekeepers or regulation of the content's legitimacy. This is something that has been mentioned much too often on social media. Unlike traditional media such as newspapers and radio, social media offers a new level of freedom of expression. For instance, WhatsApp's encrypted nature provides some privacy because it is nearly impossible to track who sent or exchanged the messages. This gives political candidates and their followers more leeway to propagate "false news", raising the likelihood of election violence. WhatsApp's role during the 2019 Nigerian elections enabled the circulation of fake news.⁹⁷

3. MISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION

In this context, democracy and political participation need to be explicated since comprehending, interpreting, and engaging with media, communications, information, and news, is critical for education, political and media literacy, and genuine citizen engagement.⁹⁸

- **Ethnic Violence and Fake News**

A misinformation campaign was conducted against a Muslim candidate who was represented as aiding and abetting the LGBTQ community in Nigeria's 2019 general election. Oak (an interviewee) claims that religious and ethnic tensions in Nigeria have become politicized, with people using social media to propagate fake news about each other.⁹⁹

- **Government Regulations and Fake News**

Instability in Kenya has been exacerbated by hate speech as a result of ethnic tensions, as shown during the post-election period in 2007.¹⁰⁰ Following the political and ethnic unrest, the government blocked SMS to prevent individuals from sending out "provocative texts." Since the 2007 election, a major source of worry has been the migration of hate speech from SMS to social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.¹⁰¹ In October 2019, the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Bill, popularly known as the 'Social Media Bill,' was introduced in parliament. Despite the fact that the bill is ambiguous, the government argues that it will control the spread of fake news and avoid political and ethnic violence.

- **Misinformation and Democracy**

Fake news demeans elections and undermines the authority of electoral bodies, and it is almost always perpetrated between/among political opponents. The spread of misinformation on social media can be used to manipulate popular conversations and discussions. These disputes frequently stoke public opinion and have the potential to influence elections, exacerbate tensions within the country, and propagate hatred both directly and indirectly. In most African countries, religion and ethnicity have been used as political tools to construct dividing narratives and misinformation plays a key role in fostering division, undermining democracy and suffocating democratic processes.

Fake news takes advantage of people's preconceptions, fears, impressionable nature, and illiteracy. In the end, misinformation influences voting decisions and behaviors, and this, along with a lack of infrastructure for information dissemination, gives fake news the upper hand in society. Because freedom of speech is a fundamental human right, many governments are finding it impossible to restrict the dissemination of misinformation on these social media sites and have not imposed any restrictions.

- **Misinformation and Youth Engagement in Electoral Processes**

According to research undertaken by ARP, it was difficult to establish a relationship between misinformation and youth political participation in Nigeria and Kenya.¹⁰²

According to the research, misinformation is mostly a problem for older generations. Lack of transparency at the polls, electoral violence, corruption, and a lack of qualified candidates are only a few of the reasons given by respondents for not voting or taking part in electoral processes. The youngsters who propagate fake news are usually fully aware of the nature of the information they are disseminating, but they do it because they are unemployed and need to survive. They are pawns in the hands of these politicians and their political parties in order to promote narratives.

- **Solutions to Misinformation and Manipulation**

Hence, having stated the above, incorporating digital media and information literacy into educational systems and curricula is critical because it promotes critical thinking and inquiry about media and information. It allows one to assess, investigate, comprehend, enjoy, and analyze information from a variety of sources. It also helps students develop critical thinking abilities and have a better understanding of the media's power and position in society. This type of education is necessary, especially in light of the advent of technology and social media, which has increased access to information, as well as the propagation of disinformation. With this new and increasing social media generation, the ability to determine what information is reliable and what information is not will come in handy.

An example of a program in Kenya that equips individuals with the necessary media literacy skills is [The Digital Learning Programme](#). The government established it to provide the country's young people with the skills they need to function and thrive in the rising digital world.

- **Regulations should be put in place to prevent the spread of disinformation** on social media by ensuring that information shared online is based on evidence and facts. To sort through the material posted across networks, we recommend using independent fact-checking organizations such as [Africa Check](#) and [PesaCheck](#), just to mention a few in Africa. At the same time, social media platforms should incorporate fact-checking tools into their apps. For example, a recent feature on Twitter (Seana Davis, 2020) reminds one to double-check the legitimacy of the material they are retweeting or liking, and it asks one to double-check the information they are sharing.



CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

A. Purpose, objectives, and activities of the Project.

The main goal is to embrace an integrated approach to skilling and empowering communities, the public and private sector, the business fraternity as well as governments and stakeholders in the uptake, utilization and application of Information and communications technology (ICT). Key areas of focus revolve around; Internet Governance, Digital Skilling, Digitization, Online Child Safety, Combating Cyber Bullying through campaigns, employing Social Media and Digital platforms in the Healthcare service sector, ICTs for Persons With Disability (PwD), empowering Girls through coding, and helping Women In the Cyberspace receive equal rights and respect like their male counterparts, as well as empower the 21st Century learners.

B. Location of the project implementation.

Uganda and Africa as a whole

C. Methods, techniques, and tools used during the project implementation.

Digital Media Literacy works with strategic partners to achieve their goals, as well as skill the next generation of thought leaders, professionals & stakeholders in the Information & communications technology (ICT) sector through training, Social Media & Digital campaigns & networking events.

D. Influences, Impacts, Outcomes and Effects that the project has had.

15,000 + Girls who are either studying an I.T. course or are working in Information and Communications Technology establishments across Uganda.
Number 1 Successful campaign under the Community of Practice (CoP) of ICT for Advocacy on #ChildSafetyOnlineUG under the Digital Human Rights lab
10,000+ Youths Trained in ICT

E. Methods, techniques, and tools used during the project implementation.

CIVICUS used UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) sessions and Universal Periodic Review submissions as platforms to advocate for key reforms to create an enabling environment for civil society. To ensure that unwarranted restrictions on civil society were addressed, CIVICUS used its CSI UPR activities, including developing joint UPR submissions, coordinating national realization UPR consultations, and facilitating the attendance of civil society activists at UNHRC sessions. International human rights organizations and prominent capital-based civil society organizations dominated the UNHRC's discourse on human rights. It was possible to significantly increase the number of civil society organizations to effectively contribute to UNHRC discussions on civil society space through the CSI UPR workstream.

F. Influences, Impacts, Outcomes, and Effects that the project has had.

Threats to civil society space were routinely addressed by governments during UPR examinations due to CIVICUS' joint UPR submissions on restrictions on the rights to association, assembly, and expression. Post-UPR consultations provide a safe and necessary space for civil society to discuss the deteriorating environment. There was an increase in civil society awareness of UNHRC processes, according to several CIVICUS partners, as a result of post-UPR consultations. The support provided to national civil society activists to attend UNHRC and UPR sessions, including through parallel UNHRC side events, organizing high-level meetings with relevant government and OHCHR stakeholders, as well as supporting the composition of oral and written statements, and press releases, continued to provide essential entry points for national civil society activists to provide crucial first-hand information on pressing human rights issues.

G. What lessons have you learned so far?

The unprecedented rifts and systemic disconnects in the world have put us in a state of organized irresponsibility, resulting in outcomes that no one wanted to experience. A collective impact approach was the only way society could make large-scale progress again. Governments routinely addressed threats to civil society space (NSC) workstream due to government in governance processes that affected citizens' lives, being defined through the promotion and analysis of new forms of collaboration around critical economic and social challenges. To assess and compare the local patterns of civic engagement occurring worldwide, the dialogues were designed as a practical and innovative way to gather empirical evidence. An international invitation to express interest resulted in 940 applications being reviewed and eight selected partners. Seven of these partners were able to organize dialogues in their communities about pressing issues.

[Link: https://www.irex.org/project/learn-discern-l2d-media-literacy-training](https://www.irex.org/project/learn-discern-l2d-media-literacy-training)

4. TRUSTED DIGITAL MEDIA SOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Digital media is defined as any information broadcasted via a screen. According to a survey conducted by USIU University in Nairobi, 2020, 31% of Kenyans used digital media as a source of news and information. Digital media sources in Kenya include videos, websites, digital images, social media, and electronic documents among others. Kenya's 2010 constitution is seen as a key positive development in making sure there is free flow of information in all its counties. The constitution gives freedom to the media and section 34 specifically ensures independence of digital media, hindering any utterance of propaganda for war, hate speech, or incitement to violence. According to Similarweb and Alexa.com, which are all website ranking tools, the most trusted sources of digital media in Kenya are ranked as follows:

Ranking in Kenya	Digital Media Source
1.	Google.com
2.	YouTube Kenya
3.	Standardmedia.co.ke
4.	Nation.co.ke

Alexa Rankings maintain that the most trusted digital sources of news are Google, YouTube, Standard and Nation, taking positions 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. For some time, Kenya's national newsrooms have ballooned their digital presence from just reposting news to generating hybrid content characterized by advertising. Nevertheless, the increase in television-backed sites and social media usage have been supported by the growth of social network's video engagement and the affordability of data.

Other trusted digital media sources in Kenya include Tuko.co.ke, Kenyans.co.ke, Facebook.com, Citizentv.co.ke, Yahoo.com, and Wikipedia.org. These digital media sources are also among the most visited sites by Kenyans, and their visits increased especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Google.com is still the basic uncontended source of digital media information in the country, as well as the most visited website across the globe. It is interesting to note that an average Kenyan uses approximately 12 minutes browsing google.com. Run by the nation media group, nation.co.ke is one of the most trusted online news platforms in the country, and Similarweb ranks it number 9 nationwide. The website has 11.45 million visits per month. The report also indicates that trust is low for information obtained online due to issues like disinformation and online manipulation as well as schemes on social media mushroomed during the 2017 elections seasons.

The period during which 2017 elections were held was characterized by various hacking trials of the election commission's website. A significant number of news websites imitated the names of legitimate news websites to spread fake news, such as cnnchannel1.com, and therefore compromised the standards of online information.

The table below shows trust level for information sources on current affairs and political issues based on gender.

Trust “A lot”	Female	Male
Internet (social media sites)	12%	20%
Radio	43%	45%
Magazine/ Newspaper	28%	31%
Television	39%	41%

From this, men are more likely to trust digital media sources for current affairs and political issues than men with a significant difference of 8%. In terms of age groups, the youth are more likely to trust digital media sources than older people. For instance, 6% of persons aged 65 years and above trust digital media sources less as compared to 21% of persons aged between 14 and 24 years.

The materializing power shift, in which smaller players are getting more voice and visibility is especially crucial to the youth in Kenya. When looking at the youth via the lens of digital media, this population has for a long time been subjected to a high level of institutional and systemic control in the types of social communication and information they have got. While a significant number of youth and media studies have for a long time emphasized on the status of the youth as proficient and replete with social subjects, digital media continues to affirm that we recognize this perspective. The youth should therefore be viewed as both political and social actors as well as drivers and innovators of new media change.



5. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

Freedom of Expression is primarily protected under Article 33 of the Constitution while Article 34 protects freedom of the media which includes electronic media. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and all other legislation is subject to the Constitution and must adhere to the Constitution. Article 34 provides that the State shall not exercise control over or interfere with any person engaged in, among other things, the dissemination of information by any medium. This, read together with Article 33, would serve to protect freedom of expression on digital media. Article 31 on the other hand provides for the right to privacy.¹⁰³ However, freedom of expression is limited in that it does not extend to matters such as propaganda for war, incitement to violence, hate speech or advocacy for the hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others, or incitement to cause harm or that is based on grounds of discrimination or that encourages discrimination on the basis of race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, color, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth.¹⁰⁴ Hate speech is penalized under Article 13 of the 2008 National Cohesion and Integration Act, a law that was passed in response to widespread ethnic violence following the 2007 general elections. Individuals found guilty of spreading hate speech, broadly defined, can be fined up to KES 1 million, sentenced to up to three years in prison, or both. For instance, hate speech was a major source of conflict as Kenya prepared for its general election in August 2017, where two WhatsApp group administrators were charged over hate messages that claimed to be a threat to National Security.¹⁰⁵



Since Kenya is becoming increasingly digitized, freedom of expression is also taking over the digital space of Kenya in terms of overseeing what Kenyans are consuming from digital social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to mention but a few.

Despite continuing worries about the speed and quality of service, as well as the political influence of advertising on digital media coverage, politicians in Kenya's 2007 elections used social media sparingly.

However, in the 2013 elections, there was a huge surge in use, and even more so in the 2017 elections. Over 80% of candidates had an Internet presence, with Jubilee, the winning political coalition, utilizing social media the most making digital media freedom in Kenya has remained reasonably strong.¹⁰⁶

Manipulation of the online information landscape was less common than it had been in the run-up to the contentious 2017 presidential election. Kenya is a multiparty democracy where elections are held on a regular basis.¹⁰⁷

From the above data, Kenyans are taking over the digital space to solve social problems and as evidence in court. For example, the hashtag #SwitchoffKENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY led by @JerotichSeii¹⁰⁸ was used on Twitter to raise awareness and mobilize citizens to protest the Kenya Power and Lighting Company, which owns and operates most of the electricity transmission and distribution systems in the country, over inflated consumer bills. Online activists urged customers to submit their power bills to a Nairobi lawyer, who used them as evidence to file a petition against the company in court. In July 2018, 20 Kenya Power And Lighting Company managers were charged with economic crimes and abuse of office, partly substantiating the city lawyer's petition.¹⁰⁹

The case was settled out of court in October 2018, which led to mixed reactions from the public, as many people felt the settlement was too lenient. The agreement stipulated that the Kenya Power and Lighting Company establish billing query centers across the country. According to the deal, customers can have their actual meter readings weighed against Kenya Power And Lighting Company's estimates to determine the amount owed to the electricity supplier.

Finally, in Kenya people have the Freedom of Expression and Association not only other forms of expressing their expressions such as barazas¹¹⁰ but also Digital Media Literacy, where Kenyans highly use to express different views that rarely promote propaganda for war, incitement to violence, hate speech and advocacy of hatred.



6. YOUTH PARTICIPATION, SAFETY, PRIVACY AND SECURITY WHEN USING DIGITAL TOOLS

Youth concerns have dominated the world agenda in recent years among them being; Girls and Young Women, HIV/AIDS, Armed Conflicts, Democracy, Disability, Drugs, Education, Unemployment, Health, Human Rights, Population, Intergenerational Relationships, Juvenile Delinquency, and Poverty, as cited by the World Assembly of Youth (WAY). ICT, Globalisation, and Environment are some of the youth-related issues that have arisen as a result of today's life, as are some of the issues that are closely related to youth development, such as Leisure-Activities, Volunteerism, Decision Making Process, Leadership Training, and Human Development.¹¹¹ In all societies, the youth fuel innovation, creativity, equality, and justice. In Africa today, youth politics exhibit some continuity with a history of youth co-optation by official political authority (chieftaincy, state, or political parties), as well as signs of a disengagement of young people from official politics, which contrasts with their desire for independence. Africa's youth have long been a powerful political force, serving as voters, activists, party members, members of parliament, ministers, party "foot soldiers," and apparatchiks, among other roles. Kenya is a country of the youth according to the 2019 Population and Census results which shows that 75% of the 47.6 million population is under the age of 35.



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Young people, despite their relative marginalization within party institutions, can act as pressure groups inside their individual parties to push for greater democracy. In Ghana, for example, youth from the New Patriotic Party (NPP), one of two major parties, demonstrated in 2008, 2012, and 2016 against what they regarded as the party leadership's imposition of candidates on people. Youth party members lobbied for young people to be included in their party's management and as candidates, and they were successful to the point where the National Democratic Convention (NDC), the second of the two major parties, now has youth representation at party levels. The similar yearning for greater democracy sparked protests in Burundi in June 2015, when President Pierre Nkurunziza declared he would run for re-election for another three-year term. Thousands of young people took to the streets as a result of these protests. Rwanda's Second Annual Summer School for Young Leaders from African Political Parties was conducted in Kigali on the 6th and 8th of June 2018. The conference's overarching theme was "Youth Participation in Political Processes: Emerging Trends of Negative Aspects of Money in Politics." The Summer School's stated goal was to engage young African political leaders on challenges that hinder them from participating in politics, increasing their ability for and confidence in positive and effective political participation.¹¹²

Kenyan youth bloggers (like Dikembe December, the admin of Kenya Today, "a site that mostly posts about politics," and Timothy Obare Rioba, the founder of Kenyan Daily Post, "a propaganda and gossip site") who better understand the rise of digital media and communication as an essential social component of modernity and the resulting changes in politics, communities, cultures, and economies and relevant connections to empowerment, civic engagement, and democracy, have made significant contributions to the digital spaces – mass media, social media and print media, which cannot be overstated. For example, during Kenya's 2013 general elections, the growth of independent bloggers was brave enough to report on things that the mainstream media couldn't have a significant influence on. The youth have, however, been accused by both society and the government of being the main perpetrators of crime and other acts of violence. Many political bloggers have been detained since Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee government came to office. The most well-known is Cyprian Nyakundi, a notorious blogger who has been in court multiple times for his provocative blogs targeting political elites. After the first confirmed case was revealed on March 15, 2020, he was arrested for releasing false information about the government's management of the coronavirus epidemic. In Kenya, youth violence has arisen as a significant phenomenon at times of political dispute, particularly around elections (2007-2008,¹¹³ 2013,¹¹⁴ and most recently 2017¹¹⁵) as forms of protest against oppressive regimes, tribes, and socioeconomic classes.

The use of social media for personal and public purposes in transparent, directionally civic, and outwardly involved ways is facilitated by media literacy as a connection of sorts. As a result, engaging the youth in such digital spaces must be framed in terms of topics that are important to them, as well as their underlying social reasons for participating in social networks.¹¹⁶ **The Youth Cafés Digital Media Literacy Handbook** seeks to teach the youth how to surf the Internet safely and use interactive websites to protect themselves from online dangers.

7. STATE OF PRIVACY IN KENYA

Privacy International (a registered charity based in London that works at the intersection of modern technologies and rights for a world where technology empowers and enables us, not exploits our data for profit and power) and the **National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Kenya** (championing for the safety, security and well being of Human Rights Defenders) collaborated on the State of Privacy in Kenya.

The right to privacy is particularly protected by Article 31 of the Constitution. It states, "Every person has the right to privacy, which includes the right not to have— (a) their person, home, or property searched; (b) their belongings seized; (c) needlessly demanded or divulged on details about their family or personal matters; or (d) the confidentiality of their conversations violated."

Several recent legal developments, however, have undermined surveillance protections and enhanced the interception abilities of intelligence and law enforcement organizations. "(1) The right to privacy set out in Article 31 of the Constitution may be limited in respect of a person suspected of having committed an offense to the extent that, subject to section 42, the privacy of a person's communications may be investigated, monitored, or otherwise interfered with," according to Article 36 of the **National Intelligence Service (NIS) Act** (2012).

(2) Prior to taking any action under this section, the Service must first obtain a warrant under Part V.”¹¹⁷

The Data Protection Act that was enacted in 2019 is one of the fundamental laws in Kenya that guides how data should be handled. The purpose of the Act is to regulate the collection and processing of personal data in Kenya. The Act establishes the office of the Data Protection Commissioner whose role is to oversee the implementation of the Act, establish and maintain a register of data controllers and data processors, exercise oversight on data processing operations, receiving and investigate any complaint by any person on infringement of the rights under the Act.

The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act No. 5 of 2018 aims to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of computer systems, programs and data as well as facilitate the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes.

8. INSTANCES OF SECURITY BREACHES

On June 22, 2021, the lobby group, Amnesty International-Kenya, called for investigations over the recent revelation that a section of political parties might illegally acquire personal data during their recruitment process. To the dismay of many, some who have never registered for a political party, their names and other identification details were listed under membership of a certain party. Not even former Prime Minister, Raila Odinga’s son, Raila junior, who is listed as an Amani National Congress (ANC), was spared.

Cyber dangers have become more prevalent in Kenya due to its great Internet penetration in Africa, of more than 31 million people. Kenya is one among the African countries that may see an upsurge in cybercrime in 2021, attributed by COVID-19 economic uncertainties. Malware assaults accounted for 46 million of threats detected by National Computer Incident Response Team Coordination Centre, followed by web application attacks at 7.8 million and 2.2 million Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks.¹¹⁸

The National Cybersecurity Centre (a nonprofit for cyber innovation and awareness) detected 3.82 million cyber threats in the first quarter of 2018/19, up from 3.46 million reported in the previous quarter (last three months), according to the Communications Authority (mandated to develop a national cybersecurity management framework through the establishment of a national Computer Incident Response Team, CIRT).¹¹⁹ The banking sector was the most targeted industry throughout the review period, followed by government entities. For instance, on 4th February 2021, the cybersecurity debate once again dominated social media platforms after intruders infiltrated Kenya’s World Cancer Day virtual meeting and posted obscene pictures. The event was attended by Health CS Mutahi Kagwe, doctors and other stakeholders. The meeting had just started at around 10:50 am, and the only person who had spoken was Oncologist David Makumi. At this point, the intruders took control of the platform and posted explicit images, obscene messages and videos, prompting the organizers to end the meeting.

The top 5 security threats in Kenya include:

1. Botnets

The term "botnet" is derived from the phrases "robot" and "network." Botnets can be infected with malware that allows hackers to take control of multiple devices at once, often without the device owner's knowledge. Installing reliable, effective antivirus software on your computer; enabling your software settings to update automatically; and being cautious about what you click, download, or open are all ways to avoid botnet infection.

2. Social Engineering

The technique of persuading others into doing things, particularly security-related actions like giving away computer access or divulging secret information, is known as social engineering. Social engineers utilize psychological techniques on humans rather than hacking into computer networks or systems. Education and training are the best defenses against social engineering.

3. Ransomware

This type of harmful malware takes control of your computer and threatens you by denying you access to your system or data. The attacker demands a ransom from the victim, promising restoration once the ransom is paid. Users are given information on how to obtain the decryption key by paying a charge in Bitcoin. To avoid this attack users should keep their operating systems patched and up-to-date; install antivirus software to detect malicious programs like ransomware and whitelisting software to prevent unauthorized applications from running.

4. Crypto-jacking

Hackers achieve this via infecting a website or online ad with JavaScript code that auto-executes once loaded in the victim's browser, or by convincing the victim to click on a malicious link in an email that loads crypto mining code on the machine. When you visit a website that uses a malicious script to hijack your CPU, this is known as crypto-jacking. You can prevent this from occurring by installing browser extensions.

5. Denial-of-Service (DoS)

Denial-of-service attacks have been used for amusement, extortion, diversion from another attack, and protest. During a denial-of-service (DoS) assault, the attacker overwhelms a website with more traffic than it was designed to manage. They cause the website's server to become overburdened, making it difficult for users to access the site's content.

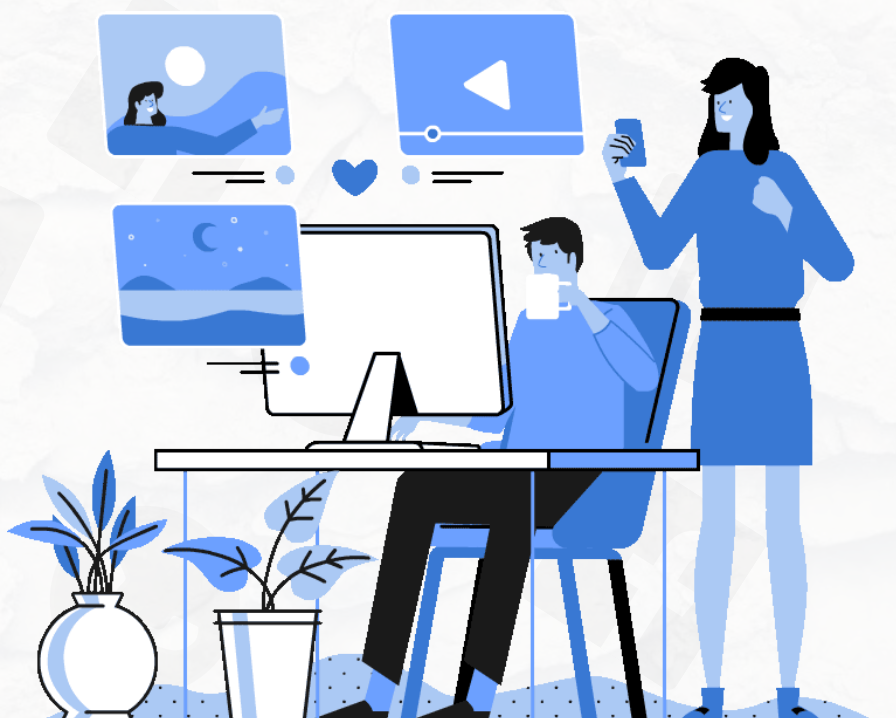
According to the Kenya Cybersecurity Report by Serianu, an information technology services consultancy organization, Kenya lost Sh21.1 billion in 2017 to cybercrime, up 40% from Sh15.1 billion in 2015.¹²⁰

MTN provides an end-to-end security solution that protects users from a variety of cyber attacks, including endpoint protection (antivirus), network edge protection (firewall), mail security, and web security.¹²¹

According to The Youth Cafés Needs Assessment Tool on Youth Digital Media Skills and Civic Engagement in Kenya, 49.3 percent of 144 respondents felt their online safety was threatened, compared to 50.7 percent who did not; 58.5 percent of 147 respondents intend to participate in the 2022 general elections, compared to 18.4 percent who won't and 23.1 percent who are not sure. The proliferation of fake news and online hate, on the other hand, has not been a significant reason why some respondents (70.5%) will not vote in the elections, with only 29.5 percent citing it as a reason enough not to vote; also out of 147 respondents, 71.4 percent have ever encountered false political information on the internet, 10.9 percent haven't and 17.7 percent are not sure. Finally, 88.4 percent believe that a lack of true and relevant civic knowledge influences adolescent voting decisions. In this regard, the youth think that they should be educated on topics like; cyber security, online hate speech, mental health, and digital media safety among others in order to ensure the responsible use of digital media space.

To summarize, for safety and security when using these digital tools, the youth should do the following: keep their information secure, be vigilant about what information they upload or download, and use common sense when handling their devices, especially in public areas; not lend their devices to anyone because, while one can use sensible online practices, one cannot guarantee that the information they upload or download is secure. They should also avoid connecting unknown devices to their computers, such as thumb drives. In addition, youth should set up lock codes or strong passwords on their devices to secure them from unauthorized access. If possible, they can handle their banking at home. Still, when using unprotected WiFi networks, users should avoid visiting sites that need them to input a password or other sensitive information, such as banks or credit card firms; if this is required, they should use a connected connection rather than public WiFi.

It's all too easy to overlook digital security. Digital devices are simple to operate, and internet access is readily available. The ease of use, on the other hand, can obscure hidden threats. When using these digital devices, it is critical that they keep safety at the forefront of their minds.¹²²



9. SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AWARENESS, AND MENTAL HEALTH ONLINE

Awareness

The term 'awareness' can be described as the 'knowledge that something exists or understanding of a situation or subject at present based on information or experience.' To gain knowledge and understanding on a particular issue, one needs to acquire that information or skill through learning (education) or experience.¹²³

Therefore, when discussing social and emotional awareness online, the basis of what we look at is 'social and emotional learning. This is because to be aware of the social and emotional issues online; one has to 'learn'.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a fundamental aspect of human development. In everything that we do as human beings, we need to consider how our actions affect our society and influence people's emotions.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a trusted source for knowledge that produces high-quality evidence-based social and emotional learning resources to advance and implement its practices and policies. CASEL describes Social Emotional Learning as the "process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge and skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions."¹²⁴

With the constant growth of technology and growing penetration of digital media usage in Kenya, it is of high importance that both rural and urban youth are trained and educated on its social and ethical norms. Through social and emotional learning, various forms of inequity in digital media literacy among the youth, such as access to data and the internet, poverty, and education, will be addressed and help empower them to create a thriving, safe and healthy digital space.¹²⁵

Areas of Competence

Social and emotional learning addresses five instrumental competencies when training the youth on matters of digital media literacy.¹²⁶

- **Self-awareness:** The capability of understanding one's own emotions, thoughts, and values. A youth with such capabilities will use digital media with honesty and integrity and develop a sense of purpose.
- **Self-management:** The capability of managing one's thoughts, emotions and behavior effectively to achieve your aspirations. This competence enables youth to have self-discipline in the manner they use digital media. It includes the capacities to set personal and collective goals on what they want to gain from the information they receive online.
- **Social-awareness:** The capability to empathize and understand other people's perspectives, especially from different cultures and backgrounds. The digital space has diverse personalities, and when young people interact online amongst themselves, they must identify the various social and historical norms and demonstrate compassion.

Responsible decision-making: The capability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and online social interactions. The youth need to be educated on the importance of privacy and digital ethical standards. That way, they learn to make a reasoned judgment on the information and data they receive online.

Relationship Skills: The capability of establishing and maintaining relationships with individuals from different backgrounds. This competence proves to be valuable amongst the youth because it includes listening actively, communicating clearly, and working collaboratively in the digital space to solve different social and cultural problems.

Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning

Educating young people on the social and emotional use of digital media improves their ability to partake in the perspectives of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It enables them to see that there are many different contexts they need to understand about everyone they associate with.

Less aggressive and disruptive online practices are aspects that young people are strengthened to take up when they go through the learning process. An article by Options for Youth, a network of free public charter high schools offering students a flexible, personalized approach to education, notes that young people who have taken part in social and emotional learning programs have a long-term improvement in areas of aggression and disruption.¹²⁷ This means that online social and emotional training will enable young Kenyans to understand the limits they can go to.

The social and emotional learning programs enable young people to improve their cognitive functions, improving their ability to develop more vital self-regulation skills. This means information online that is false or misleading will not distract them so easily.

Key Settings

All the areas of competence need to be enhanced amongst the youth. To do this, systematic approaches have to be made at home, in the education, health sector, governments, and Kenyan communities to establish equitable learning environments coordinating practices. These practices foster youth literacy in digital media and give them a voice and agency to engage in civic matters.

Education Sector: To carry out the social and emotional learning instructions in a nurturing, safe and caring manner, firstly, there is a need for the education sector in the country to set up social and emotional online awareness policies that will make it mandatory for it to be taught in the primary and high school curriculums. This will allow schools to integrate the Social and Emotional Learning online programs with other academic subjects such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), social studies, arts and health.

Home: Social and emotional online awareness should always start at home. Families and caregivers are the youth first teachers. Their knowledge of the development, experiences, and culture of the young people enables them to have insight into the best ways to inform the young ones to use digital media mindfully.

Health: The relationship between social media use and mental disorders has given rise to Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) over the years. IAD can be described as the dependence and overuse of technology such as gaming, gambling, information

A cross sectional survey conducted at a private university in Kenya revealed that 70% of participants who gambled met the criteria for gambling disorder. On the other hand, out of the 70% of participants that gambled every week, 15% of them gambled five times a week.¹²⁹ This shows how much time gambling takes away from students studying and participating in civic matters. As much as social media has not been established as the actual cause, it is clear that many young people are developing certain mental disorders such as depression, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and anxiety due to how they associate with digital media.¹³⁰

With such issues on the rise, there is a need for systematic mental health policies and laws that will aid in the programs and training on social and emotional awareness that will help the youth in Kenya going through such problems. Ghana is one of the few countries in Africa that has set out a mental health policy. In the year 2012 the country passed Act 846, also known as the Mental Health Act.¹³¹

Communities: Youth community centres such as Mathare Social Justice Center provide a safe setting for young people to learn and develop new skills. With the right partners who understand the needs and assets of these communities, programs such as digital media literacy and civic engagement that offer opportunities for young people to practise their social and emotional skills in their settings will open up a door for them to prosper in future. Such skills will also give the youth confidence to share their opinions and thoughts on matters that they were afraid of taking part in. Such programs will also enable the youth to learn social media marketing and management, skills that can help them get jobs and earn a living.

10. SOCIAL DISSEMINATION AND THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS

The rise of social media communications has the potential to improve research and social dissemination both within and outside the scientific community.¹³² If philosophers are correct in their assertion that humans are social beings, then social media might be viewed as a response to the human desire to socialize.

Fake news is news and stories that are false, whereby; the story itself is fabricated, with no verifiable facts, sources or quotes.¹³³ In the context of internet-based media, fake news, which is obviously incorrect, has become a big phenomenon. Scholars like Dumisani Moyo are looking at the antecedents, characteristics, and effects of its production and spread in a range of domains. There is more concern about the nature of the disinformation contained in false news, in order to better detect and distinguish it from legitimate news. Others focus on user susceptibility, why we believe misleading news, and how we may defend ourselves from this risk. Both are aimed at increasing media literacy in order to safeguard consumers from misleading information.¹³⁴

Comparatively, fake news spreads even beyond internet-based interface; hence, social dissemination can be classified as a chain to spread fake news due to the social nature of human beings. Unless one verifies the news they spread, the fake news intensifies like bush fire and people find their own ways of interpreting and reacting to them thereby.

For instance, the spread of misinformation on Social Media undermines democracy and the role of the youth in political processes in Kenya by increasing the ability of traditional democracy by creating more areas for information distribution.

As a result, the political discourse has broadened, allowing for more reasonable political decisions to be made. Democratic procedures such as public participation in Kenya, predictably, are among those adversely affected by the digital era, opening the way for e-democracy or Internet Democracy. The phrases refer to the use of new-age gadgets, information, communication, and technology, in political and governance processes such as demonstrating Twitter's democratic strength in mobilizing resources and fighting the government in real-time. During the Westgate terrorist incident in Nairobi in 2013, for example, Kenyans used Twitter to organize emergency services. In 2015, social media users questioned the government's explanation for the attack on Garissa University, blaming it on government corruption by showing a viral Instagram photo of the helicopter that should have been available to police responding to the Garissa attack that was instead flying a police official's daughter to a resort city.¹³⁵ Due to this, it portrayed the existence of corruption in Kenya.¹³⁶

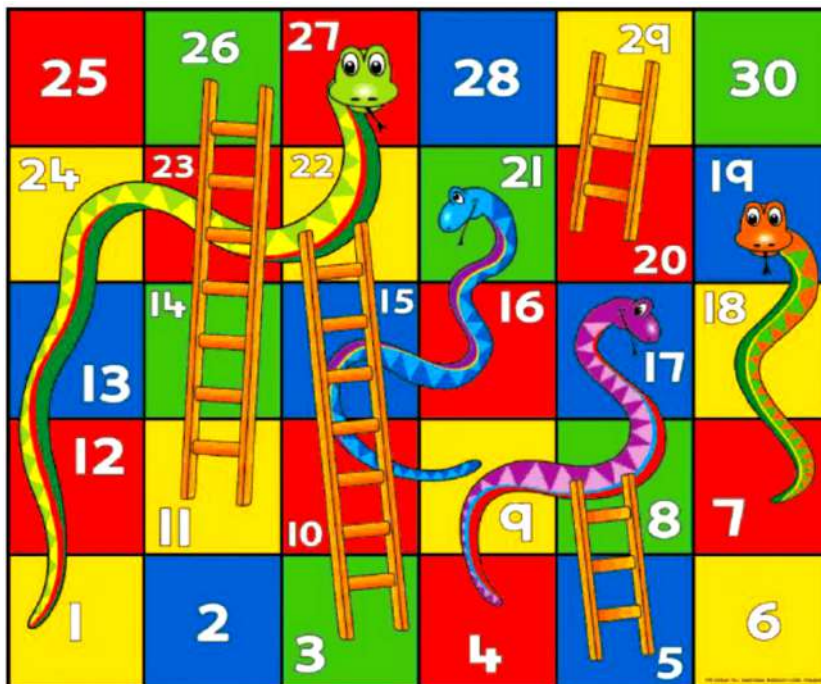
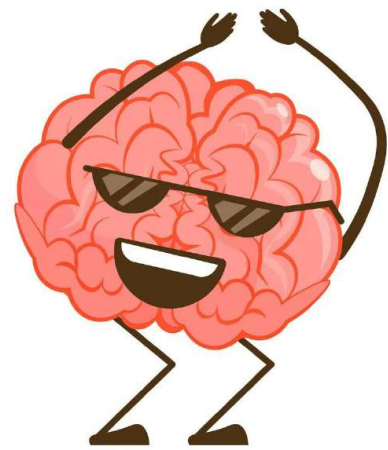
To curb the spread of fake news, the Government of Kenya enacted the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act, which contains provisions that criminalize "false publication" and the "publication of false information."¹³⁷ The constitutionality of various parts of the Act, including these two provisions, was immediately challenged before the Constitutional and Human Rights Division of the Kenyan High Court, due to the lack of public participation as vested in Article 1(1) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, vests all sovereign power in the Kenyan people. This power is to be exercised either directly by the people through public participation or indirectly through their democratically elected representatives, which suspended the implementation of the provisions pending an outcome of the case.¹³⁸

Finally, in 2017, the Communications Authority of Kenya issued guidelines that include provisions on the responsibility of mobile network operators and mobile virtual network operators to vet the political messages they transmit. The Guidelines also require political content authors to ensure the accuracy of the content they publish.

In addition, they direct social media platform administrators to moderate and control undesirable content and social media service providers to take down accounts used in the dissemination of undesirable political content.¹³⁹



REFRESH YOUR MIND! SNAKES AND LADDERS



Instructions

1. The snake swallows you to where the tail points.
2. The ladder takes you up.
3. Roll the dice and move the total steps of the upside of the dice.
4. Have fun!

Question: You are scrolling through your Facebook Account, you come across information that the President has passed on. What do you do?

KEY

1. **START**
2. **Meaningfully engage in an online conversation.**
3. **Ask the person to politely pull down the information posted.**
4. **Wait for mainstream news for correlation.**
5. **Check sources of information.**
6. **Protect your mental health through block, delete or mute features.**
7. **Confirm the hot news by checking twitter.**
8. **Cite the sources of information you get.**
9. **Refer people to The Youth Cafe's website to learn more details.**
10. **Cry and meditate.**
11. **Confirm hot news by checking if accounts/ websites are verified**
12. **Call someone who is a news fanatic to confirm the news.**
13. **Take the chance to read the constitution on the death of a president.**
14. **Check if the hashtag is trending on twitter and follow closely.**
15. **Search online for different versions of the story.**
16. **Check peoples whatsapp status.**
17. **Laugh and make a meme out of the information.**
18. **Remain silent and calm.**
19. **Spice up information to gain attention on social media.**
20. **Ask the person where they got the information they have just posted.**
21. **Follow closely without engagement. Afterall, it's none of your business.**
22. **Share with the person established and verified sites where they could fact check information before posting.**
23. **Interrupt your own reflex of sharing posts that outrage you**
24. **Help to flag parts of the story that are already established as false**
25. **Wait for confirmation from close family members.**
26. **Remind your followers to be weary of clickbait headlines, decontextualized information, propaganda and emotional decisions.**
27. **Share the news with "his teanness" Edgar Obare.**
28. **Write information you have seen on the news in the comment section using a mindful tone.**
29. **Assess the objectivity of the content**
30. **YOU WON**



ASSIGNMENT

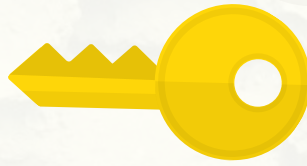
1. Security breach refers to any incident that results in unauthorized access to computer data, applications, networks, or devices. What are the top 5 security threats in Kenya, and as a youth, to ensure safety and security when using digital tools, what actions should you take?

2. Define social and emotional learning. What are the competencies addressed by these two aspects when addressing matters of digital literacy. In addition, all the areas of competence need to be enhanced amongst the youth. To do this systematic approaches have to be made at home, in the education, health sector, governments, and Kenyan communities. Explain these systematic approaches in each key setting.

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR US

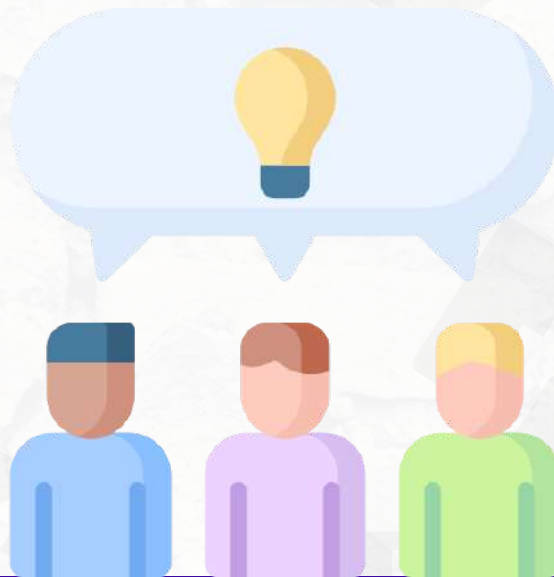
CHAPTER

03



KEY CONCEPTS IN CHAPTER THREE

1. Key Concepts in this Chapter
2. Benefits of Principles of Digital Media Literacy
3. Regulations of Application of Principles of Digital Media Literacy
4. Digital Media literacy for Youth
5. Digital Media Literacy for Youth Organizations
6. Digital Media Literacy: Gender lens



1. think about your peers, friends, colleagues, family and other young people you know; do you think they have skills and knowledge to navigate the digital media platforms and have meaningful civic engagement online? Why?
2. What skills do you have that helps you engage meaningfully in the digital media platforms?
3. How do you think your gender is differently affected in digital media platforms?
4. Do you think the available information on media literacy and civic engagement incorporates the views of women, men and marginalized groups?
5. Are you able to understand and relate the role of digital media literacy in democracy?

REFLECTION THREE

1. THE YOUTH CAFÉ'S PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

In a media-saturated and technologically driven world, young people must effectively engage with digital media and information providers across the Internet. The Youth Cafe envisages and seeks to promote principles of digital media literacy in an effort to nurture a more inclusive, knowledge-driven, open, democratic, and pluralistic society. Digital media principles are necessary for youth citizenship and modern governance survival in the digital world. Without these principles, a projected increase in disparities between those with and without media and information literacy is possible. Furthermore, disparities are also likely to arise between those with and those without freedom of expression and the ability to locate, understand, analyze, evaluate and apply media content in sound decision-making processes.

New technologies, media, and information pose great privacy, security, and safety issues whilst at the same time creating improved opportunities for youth engagement, focused on eliminating inequalities and freedom of expression and content access. Besides, these media frameworks bring up tensions between the dire need to protect and empower the youth and the local and global cultures, which threaten free appreciation and expression of pluralism, multilingualism, and cultural diversity. Digital media policies are therefore essential in enabling the youth to have various media competencies which will allow them to advocate for a personal counterbalance to prevailing cultures through story sharing, creative engagements, and discussions, hence protecting pluralism, multilingualism, and cultural diversity.

The Youth Café's principles have been co-developed by young people who took part in this handbook design processes such as the needs assessments survey, Focus Group Discussion, Persona Creation exercises, and the validation sessions. From the authentic youth voices we have involved throughout the process, our understanding of the principles of digital media literacy encompasses the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable the youth to;

- Find and access relevant media and information.
- Understand the functions and role of media providers in various democratic societies.
- Understand the various environments and conditions in which the functions are fulfilled.
- Articulate the importance of media and information.
- Extract and present media content,
- Evaluate media, information, and information providers critically with respect to credibility, current aim, and authority.
- Synthesize the knowledge obtained from media content.
- Responsibly and ethically communicate the received information to various audiences in the correct medium and form.
- Apply the skills and expertise in ICT in processing information and producing content.
- Interact with media providers across the Internet for freedom of expression, self-expression, democratic participation, and intercultural dialogue.



THE YOUTH CAFÉ'S PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

1. Digital media literacy will offer empowerment opportunities and improve youth democratic participation through their involvement in media productions and equipping them with knowledge and skills essential in engagement with information providers. The youth empowerment program in media literacy will support open knowledge communities, including diversified media free from internal and external influences, and have freedom of expression and open development.
2. Digital youth media literacy promotes social inclusion and eliminates the participation gap between the media content creators and those without the ability to access or create media content. Gender equality is advanced by providing equal opportunities and participation for both genders, as well as those with disabilities.
3. Digital media literacy is meant to provide exceptional training and education to the youth to develop their information and media competencies and impact expertise in the broad information and media resource range.
4. Digital media literacy should identify economic benefits with media, information providers and memory institutions, and the Internet. The program will emphasize the expert-level skill development, knowledge, and attitudes associated with media and those that can create new opportunities for trade and commerce and the growth of new industries.
5. Digital media literacy programs should use the available cultural diversity across media and information platforms to facilitate intercultural dialogue among the youth across nations and cultures. In case of Africa it is also important to emphasize cultural plurality and diversity within the countries. This will enable the youth to pass on new technologies, innovations, and information quickly through diverse media content.
6. Digital media literacy programs should promote the benefits of memory institutions, media, and other information providers such as the Internet. The youth will be able also to access health programs, agriculture, financial, and science literacy.
7. A digital media literacy program is meant to identify the available sustainability opportunities for both information and media technologies and show how the youth can be educated on sustainable development and options for sustainable development activities.

2. BENEFITS OF PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

The integration of digital media literacy principles into society specifically for the youth has numerous benefits to the youth, government, and information and media quality. The youth have the opportunity to upgrade their roles as content producers besides being content consumers. The Youth Cafe is cognizant of the importance that exposure to digital media literacy offers to the youth, particularly in the uptaking of roles in the community and creating a more democratic society. Digital media literacy is the root of information access, freedom of expression, and quality education for the youth. Without media competence, the youth cannot acquire information easily and are not empowered to use it. This poses a challenge to the youth in participating actively in their societies to bring out good governance. Media literacy plays a significant role in youth making more informed decisions and in practical learning in the digital age. Digital media and information literacy also rejuvenate the benefit of metacognition, knowing how one knows and learning how to learn⁵.

Digital media literacy deepens young people's understanding of their freedoms of expression, opinion, and communication. Furthermore, it helps the youth balance their personal, ethical, organizational, and societal roles regarding communication, information, and media. These roles directly connect with the global citizenship concept, which requires citizens to design their actions and bring positive change into the world. Through media literacy, the youth can understand, tolerate and appreciate various cultures and engage in intercultural dialogues. This indicates that digital media literacy creates improved engagement across societies, resulting in civic cohesion and improved inclusiveness of different age groups. Digital media and information literacy influence a crucial understanding of the functions of media channels in democratic societies. A media and information literate society encourages independent, pluralistic and free information systems, elevating the quality of information and media provided.



3. REGULATIONS OF APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

The application and articulation of the adopted regional and national principles of The Youth Cafe regarding digital media literacy are guided by the development of theoretical frameworks that encompass different sets of interrelated approaches. The first is the convergence approach, which seeks governmental and organizational partnerships to harmonize and articulate broad-based multilateral and national developmental principles and strategies. Therefore, it is essential to propose a cross-cutting principle that adopts youth digital media literacy in various areas of the public government. This means that youth digital media literacy is present in the technology and communication field and the education, cultural, and other areas of public concern.¹⁴⁰ The second approach is the human rights approach. Youth digital media literacy should ensure that the rights and freedoms of those involved are upheld and consistent with the national policies of that state. This approach is meant to enable human rights principles and standards in directing the development of digital media literacy.¹⁴¹

The third is the empowerment approach concerned with the empowerment of the youth through media content through the equipment of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable them to interact effectively with a range of different forms of digital media. The training of youth by UNESCO in Media and Information Literacy is a perfect example of this.¹⁴² The youth who lack digital media competencies are more prone to the potential adverse effects of access to information and media and are less equipped to capitalize on opportunities that come their way.

The linguistic and cultural diversity approach presents a crucial discussion on the increasingly globalized world where people are free to move between nations. In The Youth Cafe, the central concern of cultural diversity, popularly known as multiplicity and plurality of various cultures, ensures a universal perspective of freedom of expression, human rights, and democratic participation. Therefore, linguistic and cultural diversity are essential resources for applying digital media literacy principles among the youth in terms of their articulation through communication, education, and language.¹⁴³ The last aspect being considered is the gender and development approach. The Youth Cafe carried out an Intersectional Rapid Gender Analysis report in Embakasi to inform how best we could meet the differing needs of men, boys, women, and girls.¹⁴⁴ The report recognizes that men and women have different information access, new technology, and media content regarding ownership, operation, and use. Nationally, applying these principles should ensure that male and female youth in disadvantaged societies have access to the same media competencies to change the imbalance. Both male and female youth have the right to equal participation in amending the set principles.



CASE STUDY 3: CIVIC SPACE INITIATIVE

A. Purpose, objectives, and activities of the Project.

The African Centre for Media and Information Literacy launched a media and information literacy project. Nigerian youth and their organizations were to be taught comprehension, analysis, evaluation, and production skills to help them appreciate information and media messages as well as how to use the media effectively and bring about the necessary change in their environment. Vocalize the voices of youth and their organizations, enrich their perspectives, promote their rights, and enhance their activities in different facets of youth engagement such as democratic participation in the environment or religion or sports.

B. Duration of the project

Two Days - Workshop.

C. Location of the project implementation.

Nigeria

D. Background History of the media and information literacy intervention.

Global media and information users have been given unprecedented opportunities by the rapid development of new communication technologies over the years. Globally, including in Nigeria, digital media has made it easier for people to access information, allowing them to not only consume news more quickly, but also produce news at the same pace. When it comes to media and information, Nigeria is a fascinating place to look at because of the current political climate and the evolution of the global media landscape. One of Nigeria's most notable characteristics is that it has the world's highest rate of mobile telephony penetration, and with more than half of its population under 30 years old, we're left with one main question: how do Nigerian youth consume and produce information and media in this highly mediated yet new environment?

E. Methods, techniques, and tools used during the project implementation.

The project entailed a two-day workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, for two representatives – with an eye on gender balance – of fifteen membership-based youth-led organizations. There was emphasis on the leadership participation of each organization. The workshop encouraged youth leaders to become critical, thoughtful, informed, engaged and empowered citizens. It provided a space for informal learning, innovation and creativity; stimulated networking, debate and discussion; bridged the gap between the media, information and young people; offered an arena for experiencing diversity and intercultural dialogue; and enhanced the ability of participants and their organisations to participate in the opinion-making and decision-making processes in their community by understanding the power of information and the media.

F. Influences, Impacts, Outcomes, and Effects that the project has had.

To help youth leaders become more aware of, respect, and committed to youth issues, youth leaders from both genders participated in a leadership workshop that focused on developing leadership skills, social communication skills and MIL skills. They were able to come up with strategies to apply MIL to their projects and daily activities, allowing them to promote their work in different fields and contribute to national development. Involvement of youth and their organizations from local communities in exchanging experiences and promoting advocacy and social mobilization could be a possibility. For this reason, youth and their organizations were trained in MIL skills so that they could teach their peers. The project was able to achieve its long-term goal of including MIL in the design and implementation of youth activities and programmes across the country as a way of institutionalising the understanding and appreciation of the impact of media and information on youth, as well as promoting youth voices.

G. What lessons have you learned so far?

Media and information are consumed by Nigerian youth on a daily basis, but there are few programs that will help them understand the impact of the media and information on their lives in the way that media and information literacy seek to do. According to their own experiences, youth are better able to express how their rights are being fulfilled or not, communicate this to other young people and adults and propose and demand solutions than any other age group.

4. DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR YOUTH

Are learning institutions, organizations, and governments making the effort to teach digital media skills to modern-day youth? Some scholars like Considine, Horton, and Moorman, might argue about the importance of making an effort in this field to equip the youth of today and prepare them to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and participants in social, environmental, and political causes.¹⁴⁵ Schmidt notes that there have been programs of media literacy education that have been developed depending on the subject area, theoretical perspective, or level of the educational system with which they are affiliated.¹⁴⁶ These are however practices that have been adopted in the Western World. The African continent as we know it may be lagging behind due to the digital divide. Some youths who are situated in urban areas have access to technological tools, and others who stay in rural areas do not have any access to software or hardware so that they may be included in the digital media movement.

Since the world has become more familiar with the use of digital media to communicate, share ideas and solutions as well as learn, more discussions are being had about the importance of creating platforms or opportunities for institutions of learning. Kim & Yang state that “The Internet and mobile media are not only continually feeding today’s youths with information but also enabling them to connect with one another and express and share their viewpoints and emotions.”¹⁴⁷ However, Scholar Schmidt mentions that educators at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels perceive that students possess limited media literacy competencies.”¹⁴⁸

Which indicates that digital media literacy is a practice that is commonly used at a higher education level. This proves to form part of the argument that institutions of higher learning are more open to the concept of teaching digital media skills than that of basic education schools.

Digital media has over the years developed as a result of the response to the growth of new media.¹⁴⁹ Rapid advances in technology not only afford youth the opportunity to stay on track with what is happening in the world around them but are also beginning to have a growing number of scholars who study these developments.⁵⁰ In doing so, there are hopes to create more platforms and opportunities for young people-especially those who fall under the primary school level, to develop their skills and understanding of digital media. It is also noted in some articles that the job market in the modern era is more often than ever requiring digital professions¹⁵¹ which means that youths have to be prepared in advance. In the context of African youth, there are still plenty of cases that show that digital education and skills development is lacking. In a study done on the Study of Media literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa, It was stated that “media literacy, even in the broadest sense, was barely taught in six out of the seven countries studied as of June 2020, and no form of misinformation literacy was taught at all except in one province in South Africa”.¹⁵²

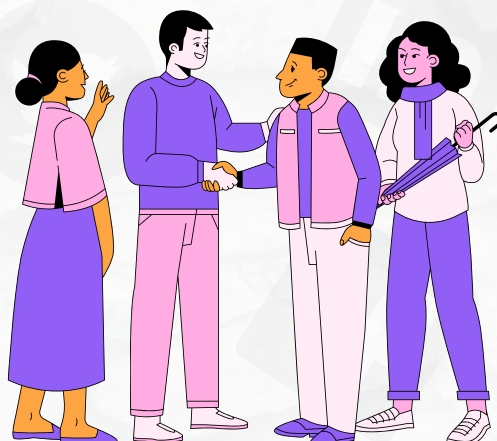
Such information displayed in reports like these shows that Africa has to work harder in making plans to implement the practice of teaching digital media literacy to youth. “The twenty-first century is a media-saturated, technologically dependent and globally connected world.”¹⁵³ Since the majority of society is making plans with youths to move into a digital age, Africa has the potential to move in the same direction as well. What will it take to have Africa move in this direction? It will not only take more research from scholars to discuss the practice, but also require governments, organizations, and even institutions of learning to partner up in helping prepare youths from a primary, secondary, and tertiary school level, digital medi

5. DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Youth organizations are known for creating platforms for young people to learn, create and become contributors to social, political, and environmental change. In this section of the chapter, we will explore whether or not there may be any significant strides that are being made by governments and non-profit organizations to help create platforms for youth to become engaged and informed citizens in their country. In other chapters, there are discussions about the role that digital media literacy plays in youth development and citizenship.

By teaching digital media literacy to youths, there stands a chance that young children will have the ability to become more aware of what is happening around them. According to authors Hobbs and C. Moore, teaching young children about these between the age of six and seven can make a significant difference.¹⁵⁴ However, researchers Kahne, Lee, and Feezell note that there have not been any qualitative data or assessments to date to show that there are any efforts being made in educating youths on digital media literacy and civic engagement.¹⁵⁵ They go on to further state that “youths need not be passive consumers in relation to issues about which they care.”¹⁵⁶ It is therefore important that efforts are constantly made in an ever digitally progressive world, to teach future generations about digital media. Therefore, when exploring this topic, it would assist to investigate how some organizations tackle this kind of challenge.

It is not easy for one to immediately identify organizations or projects being run that teach digital media literacy. Although the higher education sector has moved towards the teaching of digital media and technology,¹⁵⁷ Degerstedt & Womack argue that digital media literacy has in fact been slow as compared to the rapid advances taking place in technology. Ondari-Okemwa states, “In the case of the higher education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, the slow pace of the development of information and digital literacy may be attributed to several factors, including a shortage of skilled instructors of digital literacy, poor equipment for teaching digital literacy, and technological challenges.”¹⁵⁸ These are just some of the challenges that organisations in the continent face when the issue of digital media literacy is brought up. “Despite the growing recognition of media literacy education as a field of study, few researchers have focused on its implementation.”¹⁵⁹ The key to having these practices implemented is of importance to scholars. Therefore, looking to see if youth organisations are doing whatever they can to fill in this gap is what is to be determined in this regard.



It is interesting to note that some academics like Rosenfeld- Halverson, et.al, state “that there is a growing body of research documenting how organizations work with youth to produce artistic, digital media.”¹⁶⁰ Such organisations present youths with the opportunity to develop personally and engage in development. Therefore, if such is the case of youth organisations, there are some indications that efforts are being made, where governments and formal institutions of learning are not.

While some academics argue that youth organisations are making an effort to create platforms for youth to develop their digital media skills, others argue that little is being done by these organisations to bridge the gap that the government has not closed. However, when one looks at the actual research in identifying where these organisations are based and what they do, much information about these youth organisations can be found in Western countries that are situated in Europe and the Americas. Despite this noted difference, African organisations are gaining ground in bridging the gap. Organisations such as Digify Africa, who work to create learning experiences that are relevant to digital skills that are in high demand in the 21st century. “We are working towards upskilling a generation of youth on the African continent to make use of the growing digital economy to launch and sustain their own livelihoods.” The organisation makes an impact through a youth-led network of digital professionals, entrepreneurs and trainers.

Also in Africa, there is an organisation based in Nigeria known as the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL). They focus on media, information, research advocacy and training. In making a difference, this organisation aims to promote information literacy as a component in advancing democracy and good governance. They aim to be a resource centre for children, youths, teachers, researchers, parents and even media professionals that assist media literacy initiatives. They hope to produce young, active and conscious citizens who are able to ask questions and process information as well as become critically aware of the role that media and information play. Through organisations such as this one, it is clear to see that African youth organisations are making an effort to create platforms for youths to develop in the digital media space.

Additional organisations like The Youth Café, also make an effort to close this gap, and ensure the inclusion of youths in projects that initiate change. The Youth Cafe will make use of its platform to equip youth with key media literacy skills, critical fact-checking, online security safety, verifying social media and assessing information through the use of this handbook.

Although some scholars make the claims that not much is being done, while others see the silver lining on the horizon, what can be noted is that African youth organisations are doing whatever they can to address the challenges and bridge the gap in digital media literacy. As a closing argument for this topic, rather than only focusing on other non-African countries who have youth organisations that teach digital media literacy and skills, there should be more acknowledgement of the effort that African based organisations are making to help youth media literacy development and skills. In doing so, there is potential that more African youths will follow suit to create opportunities to develop the digital skills of members of other youth-led initiatives in the near future.

6. DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY: GENDER LENS

We can describe gender as the socially defined differences between women and men, girls and boys, and gender diverse adults and children. These differences may include roles, responsibilities, rights, entitlements, characteristics, obligations, and power dynamics in different areas (economic, social, and political) associated with sex and sexuality. The social definitions of what it means to belong to a certain gender may vary among cultures and change over time.

Digital media literacy and civic engagement go hand in hand in exposing the youth to civic issues at a young age and is an important step in the development of future citizens who will be engaged in civic matters. Over the years men still participate more in the political and economic spheres in Kenya due to the unequal gender norms, which are embedded in the political, social and economic institutions.¹⁶¹ This is a limitation of the penetration of digital media literacy among women and girls. They continue to face gender-based barriers that prevent them from accessing and utilizing technology and digital tools at the same level as boys and men.¹⁶²

Social and cultural barriers play an important role in explaining the digital gender divide gap. In Kenya, women are discouraged from taking part in social and economic issues because of generational stereotypes of “a woman’s place is in the household” and the fear that the Internet may make them “devil worshippers” due to the availability of “evil” information online.¹⁶³ Therefore the lack of awareness of the benefits that digital media brings to their lives, women and girls become illiterate on ways to access online services.

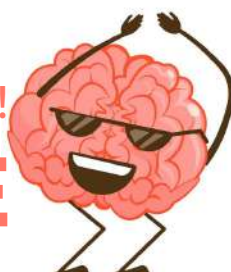
To live a life free of violence and discrimination, the rights of women and girls can be strengthened by supporting community networks that help deal with the social factors such as FGM, early childhood marriages and cultural stereotypes. Adopting community focus groups discussions that blend local and non-local knowledge to dismantle pervasive and harmful gender norms will show young women and girls how digital media can empower their lives.¹⁶⁴

Support existing community networks and creation of online community networks that deal with changing social norms in family planning, antenatal care, assisted delivery, GBV, early marriage, and FGM at the household and community levels. Creation of such networks brings women together as a community and helps them create awareness and tackle such issues affecting them.



REFRESH YOUR MIND!

QUIZ TIME



THE KENYA DATA PROTECTION BILL WAS PASSED AS A LAW IN....

- A. 1963 (independence)
- B. 2019

WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONS USE TO PROTECT INFORMATION

- A. Hash tagging
- B. Encryption

EQUAL ENJOYMENT BY WOMEN AND MEN OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES AND REWARDS FALLS UNDER.....

- A. Women empowerment
- B. Gender equality

THE YOUTH CAFE'S DIGITAL MEDIA PRINCIPLE ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY MEANS THAT.....

- A. They will focus on visible and invisible human traits.
- B. They will focus on gender and race.

THE DATA PROTECTION ACT IMPACTS MANY AREAS OF AN ORGANISATION, MAINLY: LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND DATA.

- A. True
- B. False

MANY YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS COME TOGETHER ON INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY ON...

- A. 8th September
- B. 7th September



ASSIGNMENT

1. Briefly explain The Youth Cafe’s principles and policies of Digital Media Literacy. According to your understanding, where do you think you can apply these principles?

2. Put yourself in the following position.

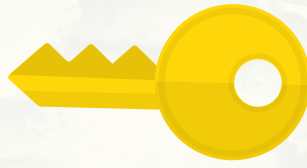
As you're using your phone, your father grabs your phone and says “Women belong in the kitchen.” You then tell your father that you were searching for positions in your school’s political board as you would like to be involved in making an impact in your school. He then says that women should not take part in the social, political and economic sphere.

From this you have just experienced a “Digital Gender Divide Gap.” Explain this term. You are also not the first woman to go through this, therefore what can you do to strengthen the rights of other women and girls?

USING INFORMATION ONLINE

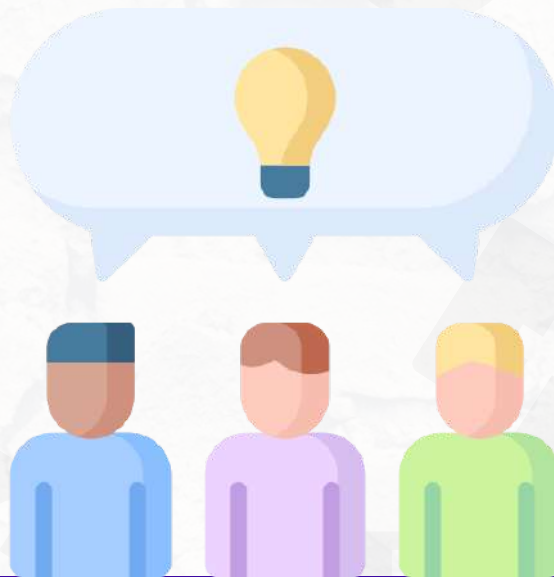
CHAPTER

04



KEY CONCEPTS IN CHAPTER FOUR

1. How to Use Non-conventional Information Sources
2. Impacts of Algorithms in Disseminating Information
3. How to Use Open Data Responsibly
4. Legal Framework Surrounding Digital Media Content Creation
5. Tips for Using Social Media Responsibly
6. Steps to Promote Responsible Digital Creation
7. How to Analyze Information Sources
8. Fact-Finding



1. Think about the times you post or read information online: Do you think you create or consume the information responsibly?
2. If yes, how do you do it?
3. If not, what could you do better?
4. Do you think the availability of open data has been useful to youth in enhancing media literacy and civic engagement?
5. Is it possible to collaborate and empower the youth through media literacy and civic engagement?

REFLECTION FOUR

1. HOW TO USE NON-CONVENTIONAL INFORMATION SOURCES

Information: Cambridge Dictionary defines Information as ‘Facts about a situation, person or event’¹⁶⁵ Collins English Dictionary, on the other hand, describes it as

- i) knowledge acquired through experience or study,
- ii) Knowledge of specific, timely events or situations - such as news,
- iii) the act of informing or condition of being informed - by an office or an agency.¹⁶⁶

It is evident by the definitions above that the term “information” has several meanings, and it all depends on the context that one uses.

Information sources: Information source can be defined as a system, which contains and produces messages intended for transmission.¹⁶⁷ The form of representation distinguishes these messages.

Non-Conventional Information: S. R. Ranganathan, a mathematician, who is considered the father of library science in India, classified documentary sources of information into two categories. Firstly, by the volume of thought content and secondly by recording media, known as ‘physical characteristics’ of documents.¹⁶⁸ Non-conventional information is micro reproduction of conventional documents prepared with new techniques and non-conventional size, shape, and media. Examples of these are audio-visual documents, micro prints, microfilms and fax.¹⁶⁹

Non-Conventional Information Sources used in advance of Digital Media Literacy and Civic Engagement

The use of audio-video materials in training, programs, and classroom setups, has proven to increase student retention when learning new concepts of knowledge.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, the use of media such as videos increases engagement between teacher and student; therefore, there is an increase in emotional engagement. The use of such tools and mediums to educate the youth on a matter such as politics, which some would consider ‘boring’, will be a great asset in the literacy programs and training because it will create an interest in the information being transmitted to them.

Microfilms can significantly benefit the digital media literacy program because they will act as a history lesson on how media such as newspapers and editorials have been collected for storage and transmission purposes. Educating the youth on how digital media has enabled certain media like newspapers to exist in the digital world is an example of how it has been used to spread and keep information alive. The Making of a Nation documentary by Hillary Ng’weno is a classic example of how microfilms can act as a history lesson for how information has been collected for transmission purposes

Format

Sources such as excerpts from TV programs, radio, YouTube videos and podcasts can be used by participants to teach how to recognize bias. They can look at the contexts, angles, and tones to identify their own biases as well.

IMPACTS OF ALGORITHMS IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

The seemingly endless supply of false information on the internet, particularly regarding crucial political and current events, has become an increasingly significant concern for democratic governance around the world, particularly in the arena of social media.¹⁷¹

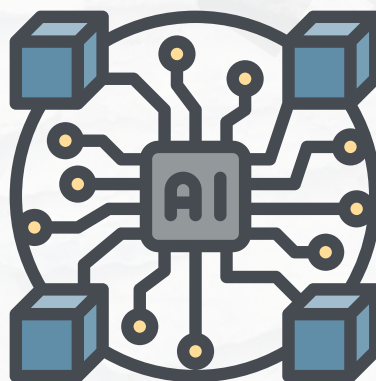
Online misinformation increasingly has substantial real-world consequences, and libraries are the best-positioned social institution to assist all users in identifying disinformation and navigating the online environments in which it thrives.

Algorithms are computer programs that extract data from people's internet behaviors, automatically select, and prioritize content for people to see are part of the system and have the capability to evolve and change rapidly based on the data available to them.¹⁷² For instance, in the business field, research reveals that 90% of world data is from after 2014, and its volume doubles every 1.2 years. In this context, algorithms create a strategic practice that is considered important by almost 80% of organizations that apply algorithms, according to Forbes.¹⁷³

In disseminating information, algorithms are a new paradigm of the Internet of Things, which is built to provide effective product control and information continuity across the product life cycle. As a result, archiving life cycle data and disseminating data in communication materials are critical concerns.¹⁷⁴

In general, algorithms record the specific information people look for in systems that in turn automatically select what they can view and even explore more information on it. In this case, it helps people manage information overload and can filter searches, hence enhancing a focus on the specific information needed. For example, every day, people all over the world view over 1 billion hours of YouTube videos. The YouTube algorithm is the recommendation engine that determines which videos are recommended to YouTube's 2 billion-plus users. With this, when one is searching for a video on a specific subject, it automatically brings similar videos to a certain desired queue to provide more information.¹⁷⁵

However, it is questionable how companies are using the data gathered through algorithms, whereby, algorithms are now so widespread, and so subtle, that some sociologists worry that they function as a form of social control.¹⁷⁶ To be honest, even the phrase algorithm, a throwback to high-school calculus that no one asked for, has the potential to frighten off the ordinary Web user. Nevertheless, in essence, an "algorithm" is a piece of computer code that makes a judgment or offers a recommendation.



2. HOW TO USE OPEN DATA RESPONSIBLY

Over the past decade, thousands of programs and projects around the world have worked to open data and use it to address a myriad of social and economic challenges with issues related to data rights and privacy moving to the centre of public and political discourse. Political parties use newspapers, radio and television to give information to the wananchi (the ordinary people) and encourage them to vote, thus encouraging them to exercise their right to vote and elect wise leaders of their choice.

The initiative: Kenya adopted a new constitution in 2010 which included requirements for access to information, calling for the government to publish and publicize any significant information affecting the country. Article 35, Access to Information, outlines citizens' rights to information. "35. (1) Every citizen has the right to access – (a) information kept by the State; and (b) information held by another person and essential for the exercise or protection of any right or basic freedom. (3) The State must disclose and publicize any important information affecting the nation."

Mzalendo, a civil society organization dedicated to increasing public participation in government, called for the publication of financial data in 2011 in order for citizens to scrutinize the government's use of public funds. President Mwai Kibaki announced the Kenya Open Data Initiative (KODI) in response to mounting public pressure, making key government data freely available to the public through a single web portal. The 2009 census, national and regional expenditure, and information on key public services were among the initial datasets made available through the program. Kenya was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to pursue such an endeavor, and the continent's second after Morocco ¹⁷⁷

The challenge: Since the turn of the century, Kenyan civil society and non-governmental organizations have been working to make data held by government ministries available to the general public. "Government entities in Kenya are tasked with gathering and storing data related to their mandates. Unfortunately, the majority of this data was kept in silos and was rarely shared, even with other government agencies. This culture of monopolizing access to information favored corrupt networks in public institutions, which utilized their position to advance their own interests, often at the expense of citizens. Any attempt to reveal data that would have held these corrupt networks accountable was met with fierce resistance."

The public impact: KODI assisted citizens in obtaining information on government employment openings, tenders, and other government procedures. At the time of debut, there were over 200 datasets (a collection of separate sets of information treated as a single unit by a computer) available. According to KODI, as of June 2016, the site had received 849 datasets attracting about 1.1 million unique visitors, and over 5,500 datasets were downloaded and incorporated into various websites and blogs.¹⁷⁸

The publication of Public Sector Information (comprising central government, local government, development partners and public corporations) as open data is gaining growing attention at all levels of government due to anticipated benefits such as youth participation and innovation.

The youth will be better able to participate with their governments if they have access to data. This will enable them to make better decisions and increase communication amongst them, allowing the youth to hold their governments accountable for not fulfilling stated goals and targets. According to the latest reports, Elgeyo Marakwet is Kenya's sole local government participating in the regional program of the Open Government Partnership. The county government is collaborating with domestic and international stakeholders to increase transparency, empower residents, combat corruption, and improve how the county government serves and engages with its inhabitants.¹⁷⁹

Even with a few datasets, models for how communities or the youth may use accessible data collectively to achieve social, political, environmental, or economic change at the local level are still uncommon.

Why open data?

The advantages of having access to open data are vast, and it has the potential to significantly enhance society. Data from the Internet (Google, Gmail, Google+), social media (Facebook, Twitter), private enterprises (Amazon, etc.) and big data are all examples of open data (Governments). Access to this massive database could have far-reaching consequences for both the youth and the government inclusive of;

Engage youth; The youth will feel more engaged as a result of having access to data since it will empower them. With a better-informed citizenry, they will be able to make better decisions. This also facilitates the connection between the government and the youth, resulting in a more cohesive community. Open data and the apps that go with it offer a way for young people to get more involved with their government. For example, the Commonwealth Connect app¹⁸⁰ makes it simple to report trash, graffiti, and faulty traffic lights, resulting in a cleaner and more efficient city.

Enhance daily life: data provides more knowledge and, as a result, more ideas. Based on the information derived from the data, open data is deemed helpful in terms of enhancing efficacy, producing new goods, services, and improving the quality of life and convenience.

Improve government services: A better-informed government and a more active youth citizenry will improve decision-making and problem-solving processes. Using a data-driven approach, the government's services will also be faster. Cross-sector data exchange is an example of this, which results in faster data availability and increased efficiency.¹⁸¹

How the youth can use open data responsibly:

1. To promote and support research: one important reason for having open data access is that it speeds up the rate of discovery. Young people can have more resources to fuel their research work on topics that are important to their well-being and development if they have better access to data. The more data one has, the easier it is to spot trends, and the more evidence there is to back up statements. Collaboration is also possible with open data. We all know that having two minds is better than having one, and being honest with your partners makes the study process go faster. As a result, youth-led and youth-serving organizations can work together on research related to issues such as media literacy and civic engagement participation.
2. Reduce data loss: The youth can improve the relevance of open data by using it on a regular basis for study on issues that concern them, thereby keeping the data alive and decreasing the risk of data loss. By allowing data access, the government helps to reduce dangers of data degradation. As a result, even if one data copy is compromised, other copies are still available. The data can also be maintained to some extent if people are still working and researching with it.
3. Advocate for government transparency: transparency is essential for data quality and sound scientific procedures, so sharing data allows for replicability and reproducibility. It also increases the number of opportunities for proper young reviews and suggestions on how to enhance government initiatives and policies affecting youth. This also allows the youth to hold the government accountable for their actions or failings, such as the misappropriation of funds intended to promote youth development in the country or the failure to offer employment as promised during political campaigns.¹⁸²

3. RESPONSIBLE CREATION OF DIGITAL MEDIA CONTENT

Digital content creation is the subscription of information towards any digital media for an audience in specific contexts. Typical types of content creation entail article writing, photography, blogging, online commentary, updating and maintaining websites and videography. For example, the youth in Kenya are involved in different activities of digital content creation like creating videos on Youtube and commenting on various posts on Facebook.¹⁸³ Some studies have defined content creation as materials that are contributed to the online world by different people. When a question is entered into the search engine, those links that pop up on the search results are content. With or without knowing, the user consumes online content daily. That cooking recipe you followed through Google? Digital content. Those video tutorials on how to apply makeup! Digital content. News on various websites like Tuko News! Digital content.¹⁸⁴ Blog posts, memes, Facebook feeds, and Instagram feeds all are digital content. Thus, young people should focus on digital citizenship, which is the norms of behavior concerning technology use.¹⁸⁵ Digital citizenship, in this case, entails responsible use of technology, including digital devices and the internet, to engage with the online community. Digital media content plays a significant role in digital civic engagement among the youth. Digital civic engagement of youth pertains to civic activities, particularly by the youth requiring some type of digital media. In the contemporary world, civic engagement by the youth is quite inseparable from the scope of digital media.¹⁸⁶

When creating digital media content, it is essential to consider social media management and applicable laws as stipulated by social media companies, government departments, and communities. Social media management entails scanning, listening, and providing feedback to various users across different social media sites to cultivate leads for a business. Today, politicians have taken advantage of social media and use other platforms for campaigning and mobilizing voters. Social media managers should be mindful of all the legal issues that emanate from sharing digital media content on various social media platforms. These legal risks can be categorized as:



1. POTENTIAL LEGAL RISK RELATED TO HACKING ATTACKS



2. POTENTIAL LIABILITY DUE TO BREACHING PRIVATE INFORMATION



3. LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS OF DATA LEAKAGE TO THIRD PARTY OF CONFIDENTIAL DATA

Therefore, it is important that the youth be careful and responsible about the content they create online as each action has a consequence.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK SURROUNDING DIGITAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION

The country's current laws in Kenya, mainly the Information and Communications Act and the Penal Code, prohibit the distribution of fake news in various circumstances. For instance, in 2017, guidelines containing provisions on the responsibility of mobile network operators were given by the Communications Authority of Kenya to examine the political messages they relay. These guidelines also necessitate writers of political content to make sure that the content they create is accurate.¹⁸⁷ In May 2018, Kenya ratified the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act, which includes provisions that criminalize "false publication" and the "publication of false information."¹⁸⁸

The Penal Code

The Penal Code in countries like Kenya criminalizes what it identifies as "alarming publications."³ The most remarkable instance of alarming publication was the involvement of Cambridge Analytica's involvement in Kenya's 2017 and 2013 national elections. The company is said to have spread misinformation and rumors that were reportedly concocted. This United Kingdom-based political consultancy firm refuses to have created and published false information, its managing director, Mark Turnbull was recorded bragging about the company's impact on the country's national elections. He stated "[w]e have rebranded the entire Jubilee party twice, written their manifesto, done two rounds of 50,000 surveys... Then we'd write all the speeches and we'd stage the whole thing. So just about every element of [President Uhuru Kenyatta's campaign. The penal code maintains that "any person who publishes any false statement, rumor or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace is guilty of a misdemeanor."¹⁸⁹ An individual who commits this offense is convicted to a custodial sentence of not more than two years and pays a fine. The Penal Code also conditions that "it shall be a defense to a charge under [the "alarming publications" clause] if the accused proves that, before publication, he took such measures to verify the accuracy of the statement, rumor or report as to lead him reasonably to believe that it was true."¹⁹⁰

Kenya Information and Communications Act

In Kenya, Information and Communications Act interdicts the "improper use" of the digital media who, via a licensed telecommunication system,

(i) sends a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or

(ii) sends a message that he knows to be false for causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another person, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand shillings, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or to both.

Consequences of Irresponsible Digital Media Content Creation

WhatsApp (89%), Facebook (81.7%), and YouTube (51.6%) are possibly the top three most used social media platforms in the country.¹⁹¹ These platforms have been extensively used to share fabrications, opinions, and predictions before and after the elections. The spread of fake news has posed various problems in Kenya. Following the onset of the first Coronavirus case in the country, Kenyans took it to social media to share jokes about the issue, but this did not go too well for one of them.



For instance, Elijah Muthui Kitonyo was arrested by the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) for allegedly sharing fake news on social media.¹⁹² The DCI confirmed that Muthui had published alarming and misleading information about the virus through his Twitter account. This act of spreading fake news landed the young man into trouble as he was charged for publishing fake news.



CASE STUDY 4: AFRICA CHECK

A. Purpose, objectives, and activities of the Project.

Africa Check's UNDEF-funded project aims to strengthen media literacy and fact-checking skills. With support from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), Africa Check, the continent's leading independent fact-checking organization, will implement a four-year multi-pronged project to fight misinformation and strengthen democracy. The project, Media Literacy for Evidence-based Decision-making in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, aims to bolster media literacy and fact-checking skills. The project will deploy Africa Check's 360 degree approach to fighting misinformation, partnering with crucial role players, including journalists and the broader public.

B. Duration of the project

Four Years

C. Location of the project implementation.

Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa.

D. Background History of the media and information literacy intervention.

Africa Check, a South African website, launched by Peter Cunliffe-Jones after winning an International Press Institute news innovation award sponsored by Google was modelled after Factcheck.org and PolitiFact.com, focuses solely on fact checking. Founded in 2012, Africa Check is a non-profit fact checking organization set up to promote accuracy in public debate and the African media. Their goal is to raise the quality of information available to societies across the continent. Being a signatory to the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN), it abides by a code of principles created by Poynter to promote excellence in fact-checking.

E. Methods, techniques, and tools used during the project implementation.

Africa Check aims to use journalistic skills and crowd-sourced information to fact-check leading claims in public debate in Africa to reduce the spread and impact of misinformation and promote accurate, evidence-based understanding in the public, governments and media, to strengthen democracy, and foster engaged citizenship. Significantly, to reach new audiences and connect with them more deeply, the media literacy campaign will be created in different formats and local languages such as isiZulu (South Africa), Hausa (Nigeria) and Kiswahili (Kenya). The youth will be a key focus group. The intervention will also deploy 'infotainment' events at secondary schools across the three countries.

F. Influences, Impacts, Outcomes, and Effects that the project has had.

Africa Check has so far been implemented in South Africa where the team debunked inflammatory statements about the number of foreign nationals in the country and revealed errors in the national crime statistics. Its Francophone office established in Senegal in 2015 led to an International Health Agency correcting information it shared about teen pregnancies. Offices in Nigeria set up in 2016 and Kenya in 2017 have straightened records on issues such as child prostitution and the scope of chronic depression. The team has collectively published more than 1300 fact-check reports, 180 fact sheets, 47 guides on contested issues, fact-checked over 1800 claims and trained over 4500 journalists on best verification practices.

Africa Check prioritizes serious policy claims about health, the economy, education and electoral politics as these directly affect people's lives. However, alone, they can't win the fight against false information. They need support from the public, civil society, the media and governments to improve the quality of information in Africa.

G. What lessons have you learned so far?

The project will increase access to accurate information on key issues such as health, finance, education and politics that the public and policymakers can use to participate in public debate and make evidence-based decisions. By strengthening the fact-checking abilities of current and future journalists, the project aims to foster a culture of fact-checking in newsrooms.

[Link: https://africacheck.org/get-involved/fact-checking-tips](https://africacheck.org/get-involved/fact-checking-tips)

5. TIPS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLY

- **Identify what is unhealthy and hit the unfollow button**

It is important to remember that you are in control of your content and feed. Social media can uplift your spirit, help you create content and also mean entertainment for you. On the contrary, social media can make you feel bad about yourself, especially if you are cyberbullied. As such, you should recognize negative content and manage your feeds and delete or unfollow accounts that are constantly bullying, fake news, and negative feeds.

- **Always fact check your sources**

To be on the safe side, it is always good to fact check the source of the content in this world of fake news. Social media is so overwhelmed by a lot of misinformation that people do not know what to believe. There are many sites that one can fact-check, such as Africa Check.

- **Never post criminal activities**

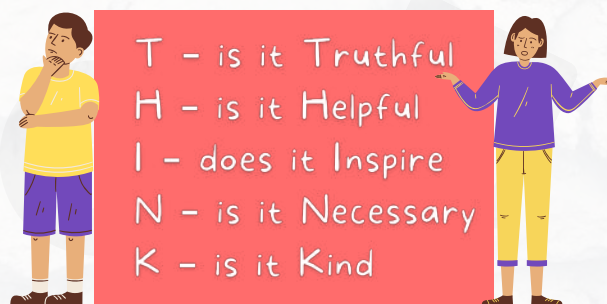
You should not post unlawful activities. Posts that incorporate hate speech considered defamatory or encourage violence, or include hate speech can land the youth into trouble. Posting criminal activities can be used as evidence in a court of law.

- **Think twice before posting on social media**

Before posting any content on social media, you should think carefully because something posted there will never completely disappear. Even if you delete or unshare the content, someone else might have seen it and shared it on a different social media platform because the internet spreads content very rapidly. Therefore, think twice before sharing any content and ask yourself if you are comfortable living with that decision.

- **THINK about what you are going to post**

The youth can use this simple acronym to help them create responsible digital content on social media platforms. THINK. Before creating any digital content, ask yourself the following simple questions:



Therefore, responsible digital content should be necessary, kind, inspire, help, and tell the truth.

THE DOS

The DOS

- Think about what you want your social media community to say about you
- Examine your objective for posting the content
- Untag yourself from posts that display your negative attributes
- Separate your professional and personal identities on social media
- Constantly check your privacy and security settings
- Regularly google yourself
- Inspire positive communication
- Select quality and not quantity
- Keep control of comments - be aware of impersonators
- Keep passwords strong
- Focus on digital respect and etiquette
- Give credit to the source

THE DON'TS

The DON'TS

- Forget to sign out of shared machines and the internet
- Connect with accounts or people who are not a purposeful connection
- Convey interests
- Share personal information or photos that may portray you badly
- Complain or vent frustrations on social media

7. HOW TO ANALYZE INFORMATION SOURCES

Young people in Kenya are the biggest consumers of news. Social media reach is greatest among younger voters, who have integrated online platforms more closely into their personal lives. They are attracted to new forms of communication for social interaction and personal gratification. Eye-catching political campaign content can attract their attention too. Due to their large numbers and tech savviness, they have subscribed to various social media platforms. A Reality of Fake News survey in Kenya was conducted by Portland and facilitated by Geopoll, who interviewed 2000 respondents between 15th to 29th May 2017. According to the survey, African countries such as South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, mis- and disinformation campaigns have influenced political agendas, and governments have responded with countermeasures. Furthermore, a recent survey found that 90% of Kenyans had encountered fake news regarding the 2017 elections. Social Media Lab Africa (2018) shows that with the aid of the proliferation of internet-enabled phones, youth in Kenya aged 21-35 years spend at least three hours daily on social media. This has led to the rapid development of social networking sites that have reconfigured how youths and groups use and access social media. Therefore, they tend to create, share, re-share, and spread information to the interconnected sphere. Some of this information is not verified, and the tendency of misinforming, dis-informing, and spreading fake news is always high.

Social media can provide "instant" news and can be a great wealth of information, but it is crucial to verify and determine the accuracy of this information. According to the John Hopkins Sheridan Libraries, here are some items to consider that can help determine authenticity.

- Location of the poster, i.e a person who publishes something online, typically on a blog or social media website or application. Are they in the place they are tweeting or posting about?
- Network - who is in their network, and who follows them? Do I know this account?
- Content - Can the information be corroborated from other sources?
- Contextual updates - Do they usually post or tweet on this topic? If so, what did past or updated posts say? Do they fill in more details?
- Age - What is the age of the account in question? Be wary of recently created accounts.
- Reliability - Is the source of information reliable?

Having a good grasp of the avenues and platforms to access verified news and reliable information is essential. The youths often fall prey to predator bloggers seeking various views within their page to account for advertisement revenue.

Any government cannot be a critical regulatory organ for such matters without involving the consumers, majority of whom are the youth. Engagement with youth-led organizations and alliances with youth lawmakers in parliament can see a detailed policy that protects youth users from misinformation and the spread of fake news.

In March 2018, the United States Embassy in Kenya launched a one-year media literacy campaign to counter the spread of false information in Kenya. "Media and Information Literacy enables the consumer to interrogate news and other information content. In a situation where there's a free market of information, most of it sub-standard, MIL for journalists will help them set higher standards of the news they produce, thereby responding to public interest and ultimately restoring public trust in media."

Kenya maintains an information portal, Kenya Law, to disseminate accurate and authoritative legal information, including legislation, parliamentary debates, and case law.

8. FACT-FINDING

The dilemma is that there is so much misinformation out there that audiences are unsure of what to believe. While the term "fake news" is sometimes used to denigrate a negative story, it is also a real issue. In the past, principal sources of information in most African countries were the government, mainstream media, and civil society. These institutions acted as a deterrent to false news stories since they are responsible for the accuracy of the information they transmit. On the other hand, now anyone with an Internet connection may convey their tale, their version of events, and interact with audiences that may (dis)agree with them.

"Fake news has been a major issue for a long time, and many people see a message on Facebook and believe it to be true without finding an original or secondary source," says Varley Laura, a brand journalist at Vertical Leap and author of "Fact-Checking Guide for Content Marketers."

What happens when misinformation or fake information are reported as facts? Fact finding is therefore very essential in digital media literacy. A single misinformation could lead to the wrong interpretation of important information and negatively affect civic participation of youth, in our case.



You may read a story in the newspaper, see it on television, or hear it from a friend. To judge the reliability of the story, you should always consider the source.

Use the following **SMART TEST** to check your **sources**:

SMART TEST TO CHECK SOURCE RELIABILITY 1

SOURCE

• For you to evaluate a source, you have to know who and what the source is. Where does the story come from? Is the person reporting the story an eyewitness to the story/ Did the person get the story from others? From eyewitnesses? From officials. Trace the source down. If the source is unclear, be skeptical about the story.

MOTIVE

• Why did they do it? Sources often have a special or point of view that may cause them to slant information to suit their beliefs or causes. Biased can be accurate, but you need to check them carefully. Get all sides to a story.

AUTHORITY

• How good is the source? Eyewitnesses can be wrong. Was the witness in a good position? If the source isn't an eye witness, make sure it is a source you can trust e.g. an expert on the subject, a blog with good fact checking. Be wary of any source that is repeating hearsay and rumors.

REVIEW

• Go over the story carefully. Does it make sense? Is it logically consistent? Are there any notable errors in fact or conclusions? Make a list of questionable facts. Develop questions about the story.

TWO - SOURCE TEST

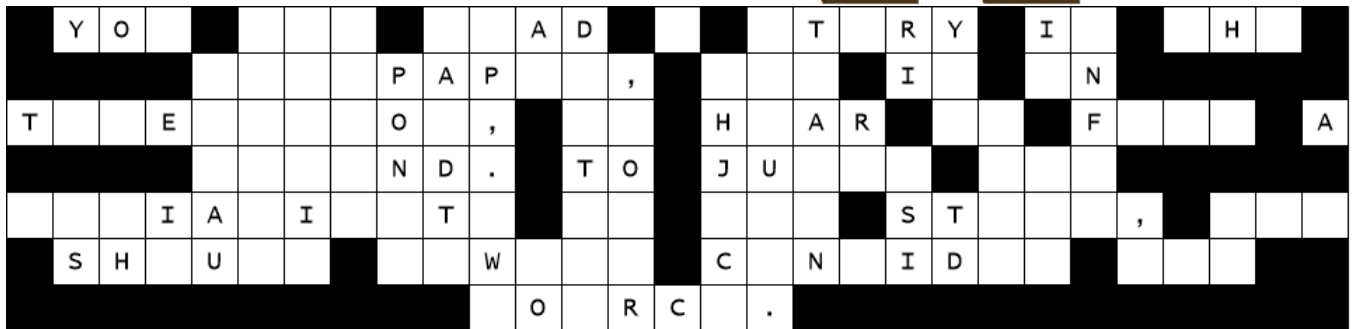
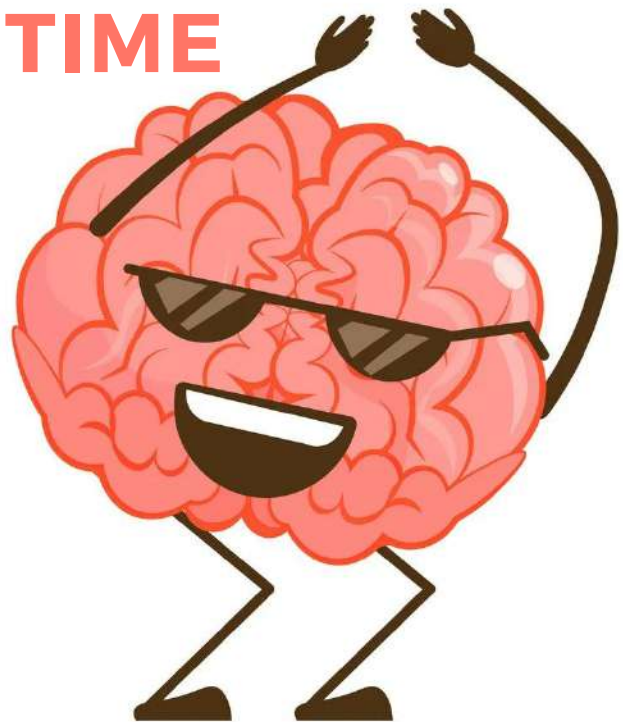
• Double - check everything, if possible. Talk to a second party or tune in to other newscasts to see if they are also reporting the same story. Research the subject in the library, interview others and search on the internet. Does your two - source test confirm or contradict the story?

REFRESH YOUR MIND!

QUIZ TIME

Instructions

1. Try to rebuild the message.
2. The letters from each cell are below the puzzle.
3. Try to rebuild the original message by choosing the letters for each cell.
4. Clue: The sentence is in this chapter, the sentence starts with "You may..."



M
 E I E O E
 R W Y U S O R
 V L S I R E O F E E D G T H N O M
 E L O N I A S A L S E R R S H E O I E O E R H E E
 R E L U F B D L I N Y A Y S A T O E S E T T R Y T T Y O U



ASSIGNMENT

1. What are Algorithms? Think and note down a situation in which algorithms have affected your data be it on YouTube, Instagram etc.
2. Your friend, who just joined Social Media recently, wishes to become a Digital Media Content Creator. What tips would you give them on responsible creation of digital media content as well as responsible use of social media.

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