

MLI-Certified Training Panel August 2025

Core Concepts of Media Literacy

Dr Eileen Culloty

**MEDIA
LITERACY
IRELAND**



EDMO
Ireland

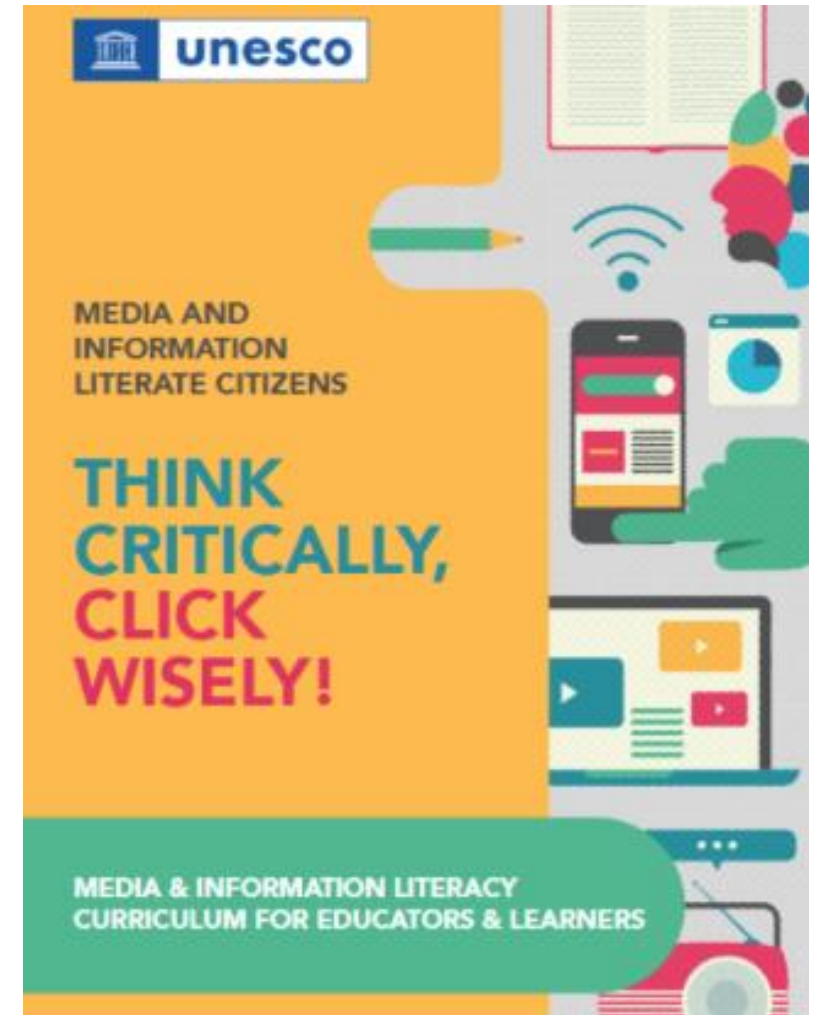


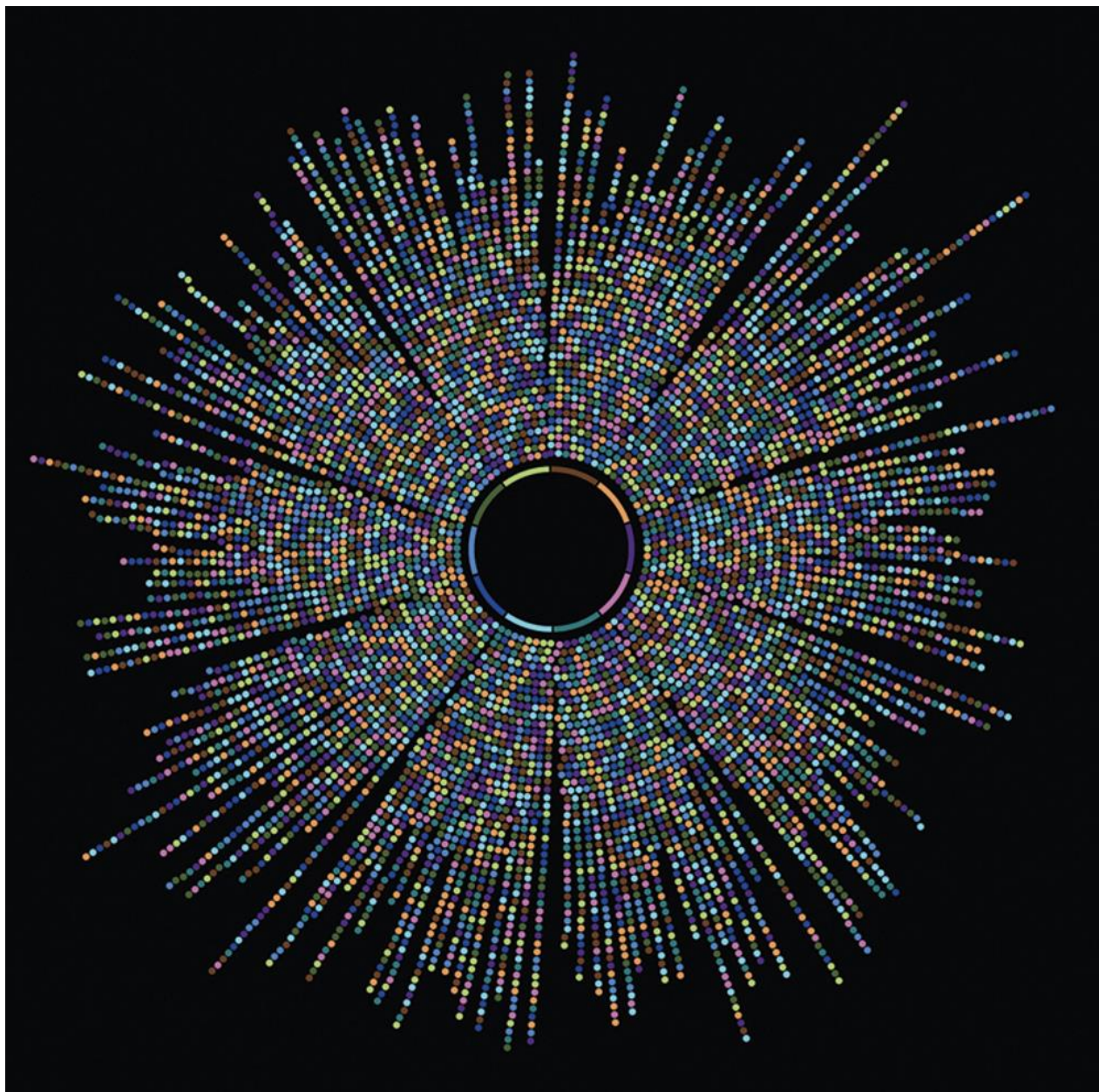
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Image by geralt.

Definitions vary: media literacy, information literacy, digital literacy (and sub areas like AI literacy, news literacy, algorithmic literacy) are used in different ways. These terms are often fuzzy and off-putting.

Broadly, media literacy is about knowledge and skills to critically and effectively engage with media including content; the institutions that produce and distribute it; and technologies (UNESCO, 2021)





There is no perfect set of media literacy knowledge and skills because the media are so complex and diverse.

We are all always learning something new.

Image by Christian Ilies Vasile, 2012.



Media representations are not neutral.

Media owners and funders have agendas.

All media operate in regulatory frameworks.

People experience the same media differently.

But there are core concepts that shape all kinds of media: films, games, platforms, influencers, news.

These concepts are guides to thinking critically about media, not instructions on what to believe.

Key Concept 1

Media representations are never neutral.
They involve choices: what's included,
what's left out, whose voices are heard.

Over time, these choices can have a
profound impact on how people
understand themselves and the world.

Young people are visiting surgeons asking for the 'Instagram Face'

It's a young face with poreless skin and an upturned, small nose. The eyes are "fox", the cheekbones are full and plump and so are the lips. It's the favoured look in many beautifying filters on Instagram, and social media users are taking the pictures straight to cosmetic surgeons.



Credit: @katiepower on Instagram

Dominant images on social media can define beauty ideals.



Dominant images of a doctor as a white man.



Language used in news headlines can diminish a crime

Key Concept 2

Media owners and funders have agendas. Every news outlet, social media platform, and streaming service has owners and funders with interests, priorities, and agendas.

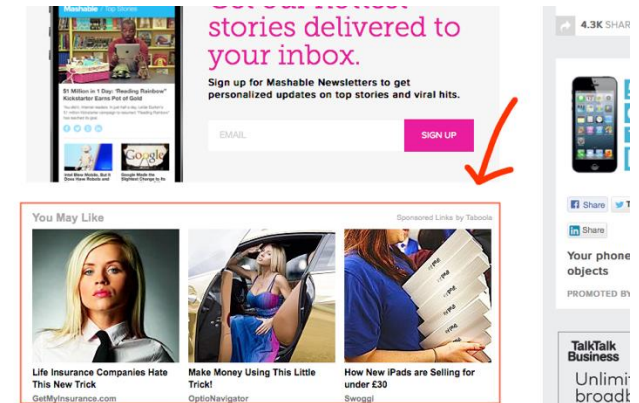
This does not mean people can't trust any media; but they should consider the potential influence of owners and funders.

Bezos announces restrictions on 'Washington Post' opinion coverage

Who's behind the local media land grab in Ireland?

Media owners can exercise influence on content. Most media is 'concentrated' among a small pool of owners.

Advertising funded media often promote 'advertorials': ads that look or sound like normal content



Growing skincare use by children is dangerous, say dermatologists

27 January 2024

Annabel Rackham
Health reporter

Share Save

Child influencers make money by promoting products, resulting in harmful increase in child skincare routines



Key Concept 3

All media operate in regulatory frameworks. Regulatory frameworks determine what is and isn't allowed for news organisations, social media platforms, or entertainment companies,

But regulation varies by sector and country meaning that some media are more regulated than others.



**The Advertising
Standards Authority
for Ireland**

Setting Standards for 35 years

Newspapers (including online news) and advertising are self-regulated by industry bodies



In contrast, other media fall under statutory bodies



Coimisiún um
Iomparacht agus
Cosaint Tomhaltóirí

**Competition and
Consumer Protection
Commission**

Key Concept 4

People experience the same media differently. Meaning is contextual. People often experience and interpret the same media differently.

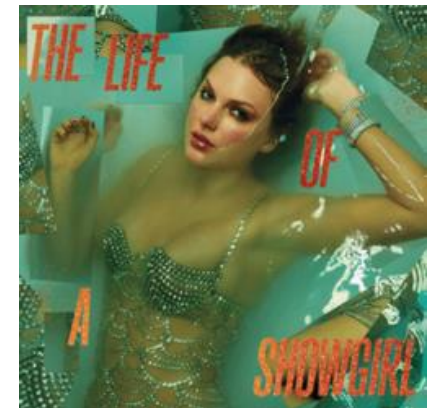
Recognising that meaning is contextual doesn't necessarily mean all interpretations are equal.



People have different reasons for following Andrew Tate and Joe Rogan; we shouldn't make assumptions.

**Wolfe Tones Electric Picnic review:
Republican rebel songs in the afternoon was
gig of the weekend at festival**

Art and culture is an area where people have different views about what's 'good' and people's responses are heavily context dependent.





Media representations are not neutral.

Media owners and funders have agendas.

All media operate in regulatory frameworks.

People experience the same media differently.

Core concepts that shape all kinds of media.

Guides to thinking critically