

EDUCATIONAL  
RESOURCES  
A TEACHERS'  
GUIDE

# EDUCATION AND NEW MEDIA

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
LEADING TO A DIGITAL  
CITIZENSHIP



Co-financed by the  
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**Save the Children**  
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Music  
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Setting  
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MENU

# INTRODUCTION



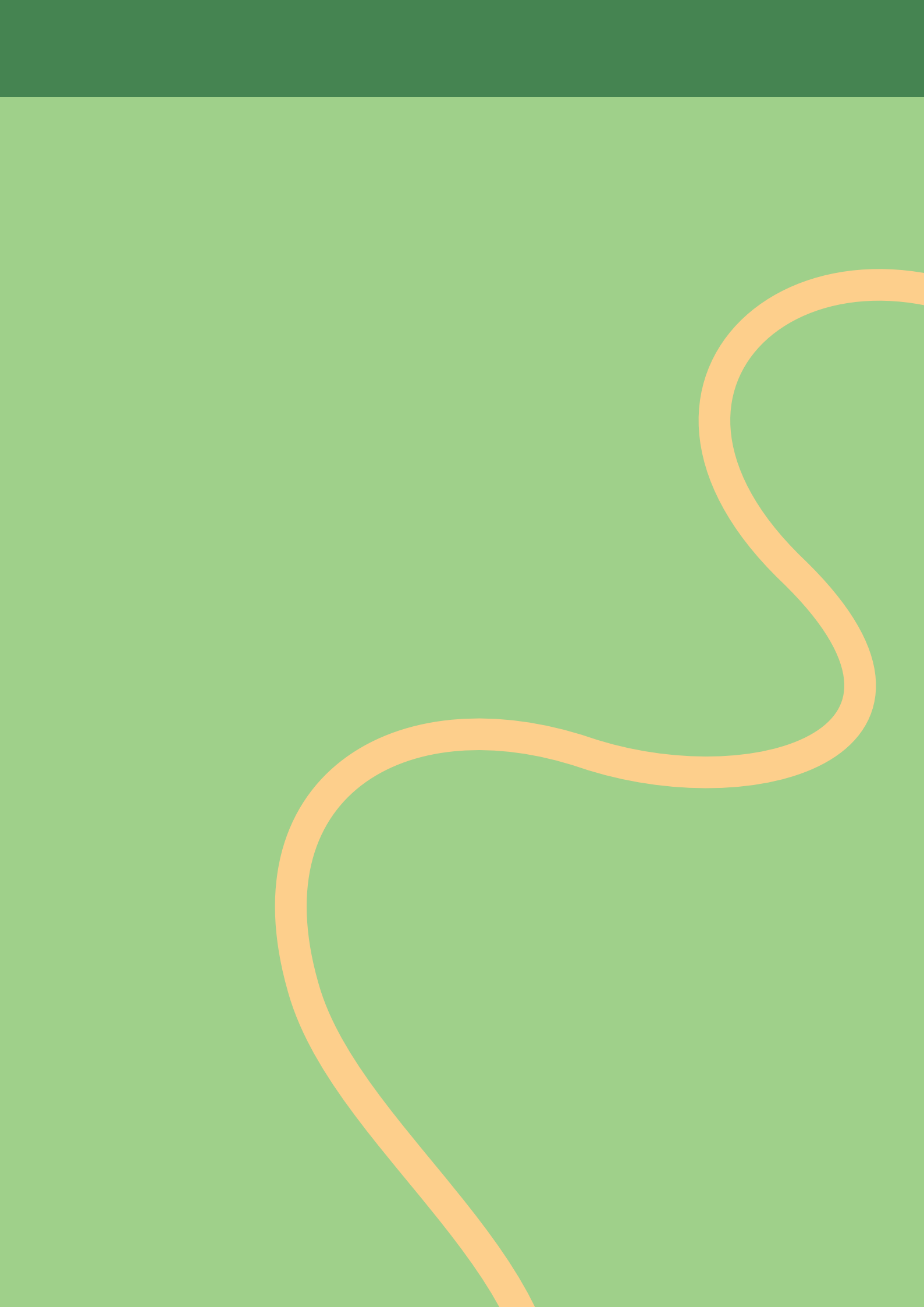
This Manual attempts to offer teachers didactic tools with which they can embark, with their students – whether children or adolescents – on a journey towards an awareness of their online rights when it comes to using the latest technologies. It focuses particularly on Internet and mobile phone use, and follows in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The scheme is aimed mainly at secondary school students, namely children aged 10 to 14, as this represents the age group believed to be most susceptible to the aspects of New Media use-related risk prevention. All the same, teachers can feel free to adapt the course and activities outlined below to suit students of other ages.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL IS THAT OF PROMOTING A FULLY CONSCIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF NEW MEDIA AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION WITH CONCRETE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION. THE MANUAL'S CONTENTS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

1. the first part puts forward an appraisal of the relationship between today's youngsters and New Media and discusses the theme of responsibility and safety;
2. the second part sets out a proposal addressing schools from the perspective of New Media Education: this chapter illustrates Save the Children's motives for its involvement in Media, and its methodological approach as based on the rights and tools brought into play;
3. the final section has been devised as a veritable functional-didactic Manual, comprising a series of activity assignments or tasks to be carried out with groups of students.

THE APPENDIX CONTAINS:

- The complete text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- A viable online charter of rights of the child



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# PREFACE

by Pier Cesare Rivoltella

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Over a number of decades – beginning initially in other parts of Europe and then in our country as well – Media Education has become the tool through which educators have been able to safeguard the rights of our youngsters. This has been accomplished in a number of diverse ways. At first, the prevailing intervention models were largely marked by the concept of protection: the child thereby became conceptualized as a ‘minor’, as a weak subject incapable of defending him or herself from the perils of the media, which, in turn, were perceived mainly on the basis of their having ‘powerful effects’. Essentially, the media’s power and children’s vulnerability warranted protective measures. The situation called for a preventive concept that could be applied to educational work, and in which Media Education could actually try to act as a vaccine that would immunize its subjects against risk of the contagion spread by media-produced messages.

Over time, this stance was discarded in favour of an outlook that is more directed at finding ways of empowering children. As a child’s true abilities become recognized, one begins to think of him/her as someone who is capable of interacting with media messages and postings, and this form of interaction with the youngest members of the public is in turn re-evaluated. From a model based on the media’s powerful, or *serious*, effects (one that questioned what the media was doing to children), we moved on to another that was based on limited effects. The latter model began to ask what children are actually doing with the media, taking into consideration the interaction between the two from the perspective of a usage system through which forms of satisfaction can be sought. The concept shaping the educational task involved clearly had to also adapt to the shift. Media Education therefore becomes a means of empowering its subjects, encouraging greater awareness and a more critical approach. Rather than thinking in terms of protecting the child, the aim becomes that of creating the conditions within which he/she can better protect himself/herself.

It is this stance that continues to characterize the most popular approach in media education to date, and represents the correct approach to take. Not only because the child should be viewed as capable and appreciated for all his or her individual traits – and not perceived like some kind of imperfectly formed adult, but also because education is not synonymous with protection, it is about how to best encourage the growth of a child’s independence. The real problem, however, lies elsewhere. In fact, this type of approach continues to view the relationship between media and their targets in terms of transmissions.

On the one hand, we have the media apparatus that retains production and transmits the messages; on the other, there is the public, at the receiving end of these messages. The issue, from this point of view, consists in educating the audience, in creating the conditions within which the public will be able to take a critical approach to the messages it receives. Although it presents a totally functional viewpoint, forming part of the logic behind ‘main-stream’ media, it can fall short of encompassing the reality of the advent of the digital world. Aside from simply sanctioning the advent of new media such as the Internet and the mobile phone, this digital reality is also modifying, from within, traditional media forms which, like television, had hitherto functioned in a diffusive fashion.

In a final synthesis, one can identify at least three relevant pedagogical characteristics with regard to this digital turning point that empowers all of the media’s carriers. The first of these is portability. The miniaturization of information applications and the growing convergence of different technologies have brought about a new generation of mobile devices that function as veritable multi-media units. Today, a smart

phone is a telephone, a television, a means of accessing the Internet, a camera, a video camera, and a MP3 file reproducer all in one. Any child who has one will undoubtedly always have it with him or her. From this point of view, it would be completely unrealistic, if not 'Utopian', for parents or teachers to believe they could be possibly monitor or share the instances in which such a device were 'consumed' or used.

The second characteristic is interactivity. The flow of communication is no longer one-directional, it no longer takes the shape of programme schedules set out by broadcasters or networks to which users can have no access or input. It has now become multi-directional, allowing users to question the media according to their own needs, and, above all, to build up systems of social relations with other users. Social Networking, seen from this point of view, becomes a communications enterprise in which the authors and the users are one and the same. As a logical result of this system, *YouTube* has become the new model for 'television'.

The third characteristic is a generative quality. An implicit consequence of interactivity, and made possible by the transformation of media into multi-media stations, the generative potential of new media alludes to the possibility that they too can guarantee users the ability to be not just spectators, but authors as well. It is now very easy to take a photograph, or record a short video, and then publish it on the Net. What this means is that it is no longer possible to refer to production as something separate from the public: the public is the source of production.

As can clearly be seen, with all the new opportunities now available (greater creativity, more freedom to conduct research, more space for individual expression and opportunity for communication), the educational risks are also increasing. If the pitfalls of the 'old' media trend were standardization and the consciousness-raising industry (and hence the need to build

up critical thought), today the problem is allurements or cyber-bullying. That is, young people are no longer at risk of becoming the victims of behavioural or consumer models proposed by *the media*, but of adults (in the case of online child abuse images) or of other minors (as in the case of cyber-bullying) *through the media*.

This development calls for an adaptation of current educational measures. Discussions have begun to focus on a New Media Education. This will probably need to take on two principal tasks. The first will have to come up with educational strategies and methods aimed specifically at new media (New Media – Education). This manual finds its place within this same reasoning by trying to come up with tools teachers can productively employ in classroom situations. The second involves the creation of a new paradigm for Media Education (New – Media Education). It seems clear that this new paradigm will have to undergo two corrections that represent clear breaks with the past.

The centring moves away from critical thought to a sense of responsibility: it is no longer sufficient to educate a spectator to be careful and critical, one must teach one's subject a sense of responsibility, whether while surfing the Net or producing his or her own online contents.

The other shift involves moving the focal point from the media to citizenship. Nowadays, media-related behaviour no longer focuses only on the moment of consumption or use, but punctuates our personal and social lives. The Net and the mobile phone have found their way into our lives; they have become a part of us, a part of our identity as citizens. As such, we need to take them seriously and resist the temptation to have them deposited at the entrances of school buildings (with the poorly veiled hope of keeping out, along with them, the real problem) and confer to Media Education the status of civic education for the New Millennium.



# PART I

## YOUNGSTERS AND NEW MEDIA<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 THE PHENOMENON

In today's world, the Internet and mobile phones represent an important existential part of young people's lives. Today's youngsters are born and grow up with the Internet and mobile phones, and New Media form a part of their everyday lives. They begin and end sentimental relations via *sms* text messaging or online *chat*, they search the Internet for information or friendships, affection and sex; they lose track of time and only remember to stop to eat because the game on the screen reminds them every so often; and parallel lives are created through virtual reality games such as *Second Life*. The Internet and mobile phones represent a form of communication with others; they open up a whole world of relationships, emotions, and exchanges of information and learning that offer, to youngsters in particular, unprecedented growth opportunities.

Moreover, by placing different opportunities to create relationships and to communicate at youngsters' disposal, New Media is activating new strategies and means of identifying one's self, of representing one's self and one's reality within its framework, and contributing to the construction of symbolic values and categories, through which reality and one's self can then be interpreted.

New Media, and the Internet in particular, therefore represent a reality in which one can acquire tools and knowledge that favour the development of real processes of integration, participation and relations with the surrounding world, but, at the same time, provide a 'scope', for comparisons and growth in which youngsters can practise and achieve totally new dimensions of social participation and personal enrichment.

<sup>1</sup> New Media are means of mass communications that developed following the birth of IT and in correlation with it. Since the term 'medium' (singular of media) as referring to means of mass communications is no longer in usage, such tools have been defined as 'new media' due to their use as means of mass communications (one-to-many) or, in any event, on a large scale. [see [www.it.wikipedia.org](http://www.it.wikipedia.org)]



## THE NET, FOR FUN AND SOCIAL NETWORKING: THE INTERNET'S DISTINCTIVENESS

The Internet is a communication channel with extraordinary characteristics. What are the factors determining its wide diffusion among younger generations? There are a few specific qualities that justify, at least in part, its very speedy dissemination and the role it has taken on in the lives of so many, and in those of young people in particular.

- **Interactivity**

The Internet implies interaction, especially following the advent of web 2.0; the user is no longer a passive beneficiary of the Net, but an active and reactive producer of contents in his or her own right. Meanwhile, the possibility of being 'connected whenever and wherever' is guaranteed by the mobile phone that allows one to 'surf', receive web contents and ensure one's own constant availability.

- **The absence of spatial-temporal boundaries**

Thanks precisely to its rapidity, the Internet can eliminate distances, and thanks to the anonymity it offers, one can experiment with a virtual position of omnipotence by surmounting normal spatial-temporal limitations. Above all, the situation provides

new opportunities to explore different aspects of one's own personality.

- **Strong emotional dimension**

The fact that users do not see or hear each other directly, and do not have visual contact, can help diminish shyness and inhibitions. In this way, online communications can often reach high levels of openness and intimacy and, at times, seductiveness, precisely because the other user can be a complete stranger and as such one who can be easily invented and idealized. Today, more than ever before, internet use presupposes a sentimental, emotional, and relational dimension.

- **Participation and identity**

The Internet offers youngsters the possibility of experimenting with forms of participation and freedom of expression that are rarely guaranteed in their real, everyday lives in the adult world. The option of freely circulating online contents produced by mobile phones and cameras makes the Internet and New Media all the more appealing in the eyes of children and adolescents. A phenomenon – one that is the subject of psychological and sociological considerations – can be seen in youngsters who seem to possess an inherent need to achieve notoriety through concrete actions which are perceived as the only means by

which they can take on a concrete significance in the world or society.

- **The generation gap**

Internet, and especially mobile phone, use very effectively highlights the profound generational gap that exists between childhood, adolescence and adulthood. While computer literacy among youngsters is now quite widespread, the same cannot be said for adults; such a gap magnifies the 'physiological' distance young people place between themselves and the adult world during what is such a delicate phase in their growing up, including those adults who play an educational role or serve as reference points for children and adolescents, such as parents and teachers.

- **A fine line between the virtual and the real**

There is a very faint boundary between the ideal and the virtual, and between virtual and real. The world of youngsters, as projected by the media, is perceived as having an ideal, desirable, but above all 'real', or at least credible, nature. This mediated perception of reality also affects the digital dimension, in the sense that young people experience typically virtual relations as though they were very concrete and often consider them to as actually being more privileged and preferable.

## 1.2 NEW MEDIA: SAFETY AND PREVENTION

**N**owadays, New Media, especially in reference to its use by youngsters, is often associated with safety-related problems. In fact, if on the one hand it offers wide opportunities for communication, exchange of ideas and learning, it is also true that we are facing a complex reality without any apparent rules, in which there is plenty of room for potentially harmful contents and ways of behaving that could be detrimental to children's developmental growth.

Boys and girls, while being often technically competent, are also often unaware of the implications of their conduct, and this phenomenon only increases proportionally in strength with that of a young person's **emotional involvement** with New Media. This often creates a fertile foundation upon which certain potential risks can become real. Those principal risks, whether of a behavioural nature or of technical origins, include:

- possible general exposure to violent and inappropriate contents that are not age-appropriate.
- possible contact with adults who want to get to know and become closer to children or adolescents (grooming);
- morally harmful video games;
- misleading advertising;
- inaccurate information about scholastic studies, diets, etc.;
- downloading music or films covered by copyright laws;
- computer viruses capable of infecting both PCs and mobile phones;
- risk of molestation or maltreatment by peers (bullying);
- excessive use of the Internet/mobile phones (addiction).

In our opinion, the safety problems associated with youngsters' use of New Media cannot be exclusively ascribed to the existence of risks – that are serious and/or insidious to varying degrees – per se, but also to the potentially detrimental social effects of such use. During the course of a child's or adolescent's day, there is the possibility that use of these technological tools could begin to dominate their time and lives, at the expense of possible opportunities to join in on concrete gatherings, social, recreational or sports activities. This danger becomes apparent above all when youngsters begin to satisfy their deepest needs through these tools rather than through real-life experiences (such as when, for example, one prefers to flirt online rather than with real persons of their own age), when they actually use them as substitute, rather than supplementary, tools (as substitutes for, rather than enhancements of, or additions to, their actual lives). In such cases, the role of New Media becomes both quantitatively and

qualitatively excessive, in that the development of significant relations with others – that is, in person – form a necessary and fundamental part of growing up. It is important to form emotional ties, to have concrete learning experiences and try out new things within real social contexts<sup>2</sup>.

From this point of view, it becomes vital to take into consideration the relationship youngsters form with these tools. There is an interesting aspect that emerges from this: on the one hand, problems regarding online safety are perceived yet tend to be underestimated, while on the other hand, the degree of emotionality that comes into play is often powerful and intense, eventually becoming a physiological element once it enters the realm of relationship systems. The emotional aspect represents a particularly sensitive and sought after area when it comes to minors using New Media. This is why, from the viewpoint of prevention, it is important to intervene in the relationships children and adolescents form with these devices and, why it is also timely for those adults who act as reference points to help young people increase their awareness of the emotions that come into play within the digital dimension, and help them deal with them.

### 1.3 RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR WHILE USING NEW MEDIA

If the objective is to direct children and adolescents towards a more responsible use of New Media, one must try to understand what determines the types of usage they make of them. In outline form, here follow certain motivational mechanisms worth highlighting that determine usage of such devices and characterize the ways in which they are used or enjoyed:

- emotional and relationship dynamics (emotions, motivations, sociability, needs);
- cognitive dynamics (technical understanding of and competence in using the tools);
- value- and civic-based dynamics (values and moral or ethical principles that guide individuals, including the capacity to take on social responsibilities as the result of a person's overall maturity and the development of a sense of citizenship).

In other words, the ways in which the Internet and mobile phones are used will depend on different types of needs and various other elements – from the types of needs (including needs to socialize, to communicate, or need for knowledge, etc.), to the level of youngsters' technical abilities and the instrument's functionality<sup>3</sup>, and the moral principles and values that shape an individual's behaviour in all spheres of life.

For example, the ability to treat one's personal data with care and therefore be in a position to determine when it is appropriate or not to supply them, can depend on one or more technical factors (i.e., an understanding of the procedures one can use to communicate or omit the data; or an understanding how relevant laws might apply). Another influential factor can take the shape of a developed sensibility with regard to the value of and respect for one's own personal privacy and that of others (this ethical/moral aspect can come into play when data, information or images of other persons are circulated). However, in the case of issues of an emotional nature, there is no guarantee that the young person will be able to successfully deal with the emotion that accompanies a decision made in a particular moment (i.e., if the youngster becomes emotionally involved in an online chat, he or she can easily 'forget' any advice about safeguarding his or her own privacy, and decide instead to reveal his or her real identity and open the way to a meeting).

On the one hand, the ability to use an instrument safely and responsibly presupposes a technical understanding of its workings; that is, a familiarity with all its potential and implications. But this, in and of itself, is not enough. If the Internet and mobile phones can be considered more than basic tools, in that they can give us access to networks of relationships and a kind of 'marketplace', their responsible use implies an ability to view relationships produced within this setting with a certain degree of lucidity, and to successfully recognise and handle one's own emotions.

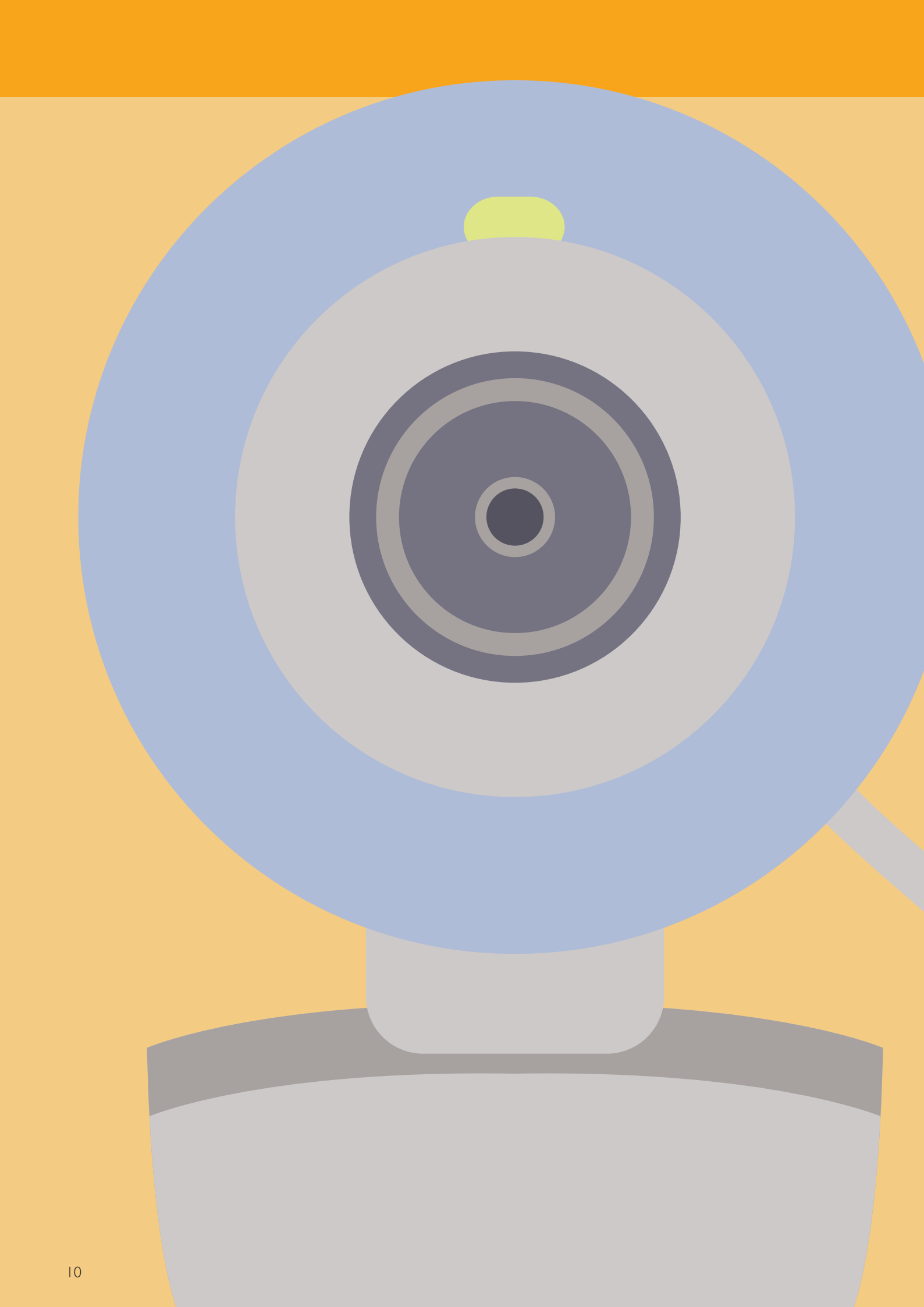
You would need to be aware of many of your deepest feelings. For example, that you are falling for the charm of someone you've met online, or if you are feeling hurt by the online behaviour of a friend, or feel uneasy after viewing certain images, or unsure about the influence certain pieces of information might have on you. This is precisely why adults' role as contacts is so crucial for youngsters. For the same reason, this text addresses teachers who are facing, together with parents, the complex task of educating, from a rather advantaged viewpoint, those with whom they talk directly on a daily basis.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Oliverio Ferraris, *TV per un figlio*, Editori Laterza.

<sup>3</sup> Most often children and adolescents are rather competent in this area, or at least tend generally to learn far more quickly than adults.

#### A SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE USER IS:

- able to use the instrument from a technical standpoint
- someone who recognises and can deal with the emotions resulting from the use of New Media
- prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of his/her own decisions
- aware of the respect that is rightfully due to all users, including him/herself
- aware of and involved in his/her own rights



## THEORETICAL REFERENCES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 2.1

#### THE FRAMEWORK: MEDIA EDUCATION AND THE PEDAGOGY OF RIGHTS

The learning activity reports presented herein take their place within the field of 'Media Education' and are based on a methodological approach dictated by what is referred to as a Pedagogy of Rights.

A component of the educational and scholastic discipline, the Pedagogy of Rights consists of an approach that focuses on acknowledging the student as a *right holder*, and on the student's potential capacity, through the learning activities planned out by his or her teacher, to acquire knowledge of his or her own rights and consequently exercise them fully.

In our particular case, the Pedagogy of Rights approach is developed within a specific educational-didactic field, represented by the Media Education.

## MEDIA EDUCATION: TEACHING SPECIFICATIONS

Edited by CREMIT – Centro di Ricerca sull'Educazione ai Media, all'Informazione e alla Tecnologia – dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano (Research Centre for Media Education, Information and Technology, Sacred Heart Catholic University of Milan).

Schools can play a strategic role in helping young people develop positive and responsible behavioural patterns when using media (both old and new), through the perspective offered by a discipline known, in fact, as Media Education. More specifically, Media Education has a particular teaching perspective, one devoted to reflection on media as objects, tools and areas within the educational process, incorporating relevant contributions from the fields of Education Studies and Media Studies.

### *Birth and evolution of the discipline*

From the point of view of historical recognition, the birth and growth of an approach in response to the media and communications takes place in unison with technological developments in the field of media itself, considering how practical advances – work with and on the media – has in fact sped up our reflection on the value and conceptual framework of Media Education.

To reconstruct its evolution, we can list the four principal media-educational approaches – marked by varying degrees of sensitivity and different value systems – highlighted by the key classifications provided by J. D. Halloran and M. Jones:

- **the defensive approach:** defined as a defensive perspective that is rooted in a deep sense of distrust of the media, leading the person involved to seek

educational answers to these mechanisms that can result in two basic reactions: choosing to either ignore the media or refuse to go along with alluring or tempting messages and mechanisms. Ultimately, a training (education) against the media traversed by the fundamental cautionary thread of defence of culture as primary objective;

- **the critical approach:** this approach marks the development of a new sensitivity toward the media, which are seen as contents that can benefit from deconstruction and analysis, orienting youngsters to think of their approach to the media as a means of better preparing themselves. It presents a stance that envisages within Media Education the potential for students to express themselves effectively through the media, becoming more aware of the production processes involved in various means of communication;
- **inversion of production mechanisms:** this approach deals with the problems affecting one's sense of responsibility when computer literacy becomes equated with a potential means of acquiring political literacy. This originates with the acquisition of a new point of view with regard to the media, beginning with the experiences of educators and communicators who draw attention to the possibilities of overturning media production mechanisms and, thereby, the power mechanisms that the IT productive system fuels;
- **images and awareness:** in this case, the approach expresses a predisposition for analysis in the context of receiving and decoding media messages, a predisposition that is based on theories and models of a socio-cultural nature focused on the role

played by the production and receiver arrangement. This transition highlights a new awareness of how to place content – starting off first from an ideological positioning – and of the role of the media, as objects that need to undergo a degree of demystification.

### *Media Education's themes and objectives*

Returning briefly to the reflections contained in the preface by Pier Cesare Rivoltella, Media Education has as its objective all that has to do with the reality of communications as a resource and an opportunity for learning, through an instrumental (education making use of the media) lens, and thematic (educating the media) lens that complement each other to produce a balanced vision, rather than ineffective, contrasting forms.

Here below are two of the discipline's fundamental areas of concern:

- **first concern:** from one point of view, it is clear that there is a desire to allow space for reflection on the educational role and significance of the media, to enable a person to acquire a critical understanding that will become a mental habit, and to transform this awareness into an active form of independence that fits in effectively within everyday scholastic and extracurricular activities, public and private and group and individual life;
- **second concern:** from another point of view, Media Education implies a process of learning to become more responsible – critically and instrumentally – as the end result of experimentation with and inside the milieu, taking its initiative from novelty in order to reach a historical totality within these processes, and perceiving interaction with the media as an essential means of reflection.

### 2.1.1

## AN INTEGRATED VISION INCORPORATING VARIOUS MEDIA EDUCATION MODELS

The aims of Media Education can be met by either making use of the new multi-media tools (internet and mobile phone) within the teaching framework<sup>4</sup>, or by thinking about them, or by doing both at the same time. The Media Education model proposed here therefore combines the discipline's two most commonly used approaches:

- **education through the media**, which makes use of the media as a part of the teaching process, and therefore as tools (class work can be completed using PCs, philosophy or history subject matter can be found in newspapers, geographical information from cinema, etc.). All this has the shared goals of getting closer to youngsters, bringing them and the media closer, and making the school learning experience one that is more useful and closer to the students' world. Internet use, for example, on the one hand allows one to gain a greater understanding of the medium's potential, while on the other, it supplies also relevant contributions for the planning and reorganization of educational activities in class, thereby affecting teaching and learning processes;
- **teaching media literacy**, which regards technologies as a subject to be covered by teachers, and insists on promoting a critical awareness, on the formation of an active media consumer, autonomous and creative when relating to them, capable of deciphering the messages being conveyed and able to process them on the basis of a personal vision and sense of usefulness. That is, to impart through teaching a critical, thoughtful approach to consumption, and a desire for an active relationship towards citizenship and others.

<sup>4</sup> As we do not provide a description of the various multi-media tools utilised by youngsters here, please see [www.easy4.it](http://www.easy4.it) for in-depth information on this subject, as well as for downloadable mini-guides produced by the Easy project team.

*Useful notes for those initiating Media Education within a scholastic context*

Schools seem to be the most fitting places to socialise on the Net, and to think about this tool's characteristics and how it can be used. Nonetheless, one should keep in mind a few general premises and methodological concerns:

- a) all teachers, regardless of their subject, are capable of dealing with a course in Media Education; it is not a purely technical matter, nor is it simply aimed at transmitting purely technical abilities and expertise. In fact, the availability of infrastructures and IT tools per se hardly ever provide any guarantee of a basic technical literacy, nor of an in-depth theoretical analysis of the systems and mechanisms that explain how the Internet works. Such a capacity to probe deeper goes well beyond the technological sphere of the discipline. The latter basically involves instruments that allow one to communicate and acquire knowledge and, therefore, the capabilities required by an appropriate use of such technologies encompass all spheres of interest and all disciplines;
- b) aside from promoting a technical understanding of the instruments or tools, Media Education can also take on the useful function of teaching new languages, and offers diverse and richer opportunities for taking action and discovering a wide range of means of expression, by opening up fact-finding pathways that integrate real and digital experiences in everyday life;
- c) teachers and students are called upon to take an active role: teachers, on the one hand, are stimulated to experiment with new methods and techniques to involve students in the learning process, urge cooperation and collaboration between youngsters, above and beyond their individual respect, expectations and needs; the students, on the other hand, come to learn a new way to be in class, becoming more open to dialogue, discussion and exchanging ideas, even from a distance, whether between teachers or between classmates. Through this didactic approach the youngsters' world can fit in and find an outlet in the classroom, for the way in which they represent and utilise New Media, their interests, thoughts, feelings, everything, in short, that guides their behaviour while using such tools. By helping them to reflect on these dimensions, school (as an institution) can help a young person become more aware and responsible when it comes specifically to using both old and New Media, to exercise his/her own rights and duties in a wider sense, to behave in a more responsible, and therefore safer, way with regard to both him/herself and others.

## 2.1.2 THE PEDAGOGY OF RIGHTS

**T**he pedagogical approach is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), approved by the United Nations in 1989. It obviously does not have to do with a codified pedagogical paradigm, but rather an educational and character-forming dimension in which human rights, and in our case the rights of children and adolescents, represent a pedagogical frame of reference.

*Principal features of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*

The CRC is founded on a series of basic principles, expressed unequivocally in all of its 54 articles<sup>5</sup>. Perceived as an organic and indivisible whole, the Convention's articles represent in totality the needs and individual rights of a person while growing up and these can be contextualised or find their particular context in different geographical and temporal realities.

In fact, the Convention safeguards and promotes the rights of all persons aged 18 and under wherever in the world they may live, and whatever social and economic situation they find themselves in. It establishes that children and adolescents, on both an individual and a collective level, are rights holders and that adults, starting from family members right through to those making up the international community, must take action to protect and promote these rights. The promulgation of the Convention, in 1989, marks an historic date in terms of a concept of childhood and adolescence on a global level: the evolution of the concept of need – always alongside the evolution marking childhood – into right, provides us with a concept of childhood and adolescence based on an entitlement to rights in all fields (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights). It therefore has to do with a new vision; a vision capable of influencing and profoundly changing intergenerational relations which, up until then and even now, have largely been based on the passivity and vulnerability of children and adolescents, the needs of whom adults could satisfy as they so pleased. An approach based on rights presupposes that all people, and therefore all children and adolescents, are, before all, entitled to human rights and that the

<sup>5</sup> See the Appendix for the complete text of the CRC, in two – child-friendly and complete – versions.

promotion, the respect and the safeguarding of these rights are not actions to be taken according to will or as an option, but as an individual and collective duty.

The Convention – like all treaties dealing with human rights, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 – places the individual as a *right holder* at its core with respect to relations with whoever has the duty to respect and promote those rights (the *duty bearer*).

*Duty bearers* (governments, institutions, families and individuals), for their part, are duty bound to respect, protect and promote human rights. *Right holders* have the right to protest violations of their rights to the *duty bearers*, but they must also respect the rights of others. In fact, being a right holder entails a sense of responsibility first to one's self and consequently towards others (see diagram below)<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> The original version of the reworked diagram is from Save the Children Sweden, *Child Rights Programming. A Handbook for International Save the Children Alliance Members*, Second Edition, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> In our opinion, this didactic method has the Constructivist paradigm as its principle pedagogical reference model. In this pedagogical paradigm a great deal of attention is given to the learning context; to the subject who is learning; to the social construction of knowledge through an interpersonal assessment of meanings; to the diversity/multiplicity of strategies, processes and cognitive approaches. When taking this approach, the teacher ceases to be a source of prefabricated knowledge, but rather the one who plans and sets up a work setting that is most suited to an exchange of ideas and a clash of minds. A setting that entrusts a teacher with tasks related to the handling of groups, with controlling processes that have been set in motion, with the observation-evaluation of emerging dynamics. In this way, concepts such as that known as “learning by doing” can begin to penetrate the teaching field. This teaching concept or approach tends to experiment with reality through simulation, and to systematize theoretical notions by referring back to everyday life, as well as establishing connections between written, visual and audio codes. For an in-depth analysis of the subject see A. Carletti; A. Varani, *Didattica costruttivista. Dalla teoria alla pratica in classe*, Edizioni Erikson, Trento 2005, and *Verso una pedagogia dei diritti. Guida per insegnanti*, Save the Children, Roma 2007.

An approach based on human rights aims to strengthen *the responsibilities* of *duty bearers* with respect to human rights through changes produced at political, economic and legislative levels as well as at the levels of attitudes, consciousness, practices, models and values. Within this approach, adults, families, schools, and continuing all the way up to those in the top national and international institutions, should always remain fully aware of the utmost importance of children's best interests and their right to make choices affecting them, and the *duty bearers* should bear responsibilities for these at all times.

Regarding the theme of adult responsibility, we would like to point out that, according to article 42 of the Convention, Member States are bound to inform citizens of the Convention's contents and adults, for their part, have the duty to let children and adolescents know about these rights. It is a matter of activating a series, or chain reaction, of responsible actions so that the rights of children can take effect, be experienced in a concrete way and be participated in by all children.

Whenever an institution (the state, region, province, local authority, school, etc.) or an adult (a parent or teacher) fails to take on this particular responsibility, the chain is broken and with it vanishes the prospect of these rights becoming truly concrete in the everyday lives of millions of children and adolescents.

### *The Convention on the Rights of the Child as a working tool in schools*

The CRC is not only a legal corpus to which one turns to report violations, but also represents, in its cultural dimension, an important pedagogical and educational tool in the context of family life and, above all, at school. After all, “teaching” a child his or her rights entails, in the first place, stimulating an empathy and respect towards others, as well as self-esteem and self-respect, all of which helps form

the basis for a more effective and balanced system of living together.

In terms of being seen as a process, and not only for its content, drawing inspiration from the CRC in a scholastic context, means that a teacher can enable his or her students to execute their own rights, starting with the essential principle which is that of knowing they are entitled to them. This takes place through a didactic approach that 'listens' to their opinions, feelings, interests and motivations, giving children and adolescents an opportunity to express themselves and to participate<sup>7</sup>.

### *Student participation in the Pedagogy of Rights*

Teachers interested in advocating a Pedagogy of Rights will need to pay particular attention not only to content, but above all to the teaching techniques which, if correctly thought out within an inter-cultural framework of rights, can also – like contents – transmit values and change attitudes. More specifically, by establishing this sort of participation at school (based on the principle of Participation; art.12 of the CRC), the Pedagogy of Rights recognises each student's right to actively participate in scholastic life, having access to information, expressing his or her individual points of view, and contributing to decision-making processes. It is precisely thanks to this sort of involvement that students will be able to become not only more secure and competent as individuals, but also more active and socially skilled.

## PARTICIPATION

1989 marked a turning-point in the concept childhood and adolescence with the approval of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the first time, the participation of persons under 18 in decision making that concerns them was recognised as a fundamental human right.

### What is participation?

Participation is:

- a fundamental human right the respect of which entails recognition of children and adolescents as subjects in their own right and not merely as beneficiaries of protection by adults;
- a tool through which children and young people can learn to exercise their individual rights and become active citizens;
- a process, a gradually progressive path, or journey made up by a number of stages that allow children and young people to learn to freely express their opinions in correspondence to their age and degree of maturity (art. 12, 13, 14, 15 & 17).

### Why is participation so important?

Efficient participation allows for:

- appreciation of each boy's or girl's personality, promoting his/her recognition and self-awareness;
- giving a core position to the child's active role in his/her growth process, and thereby contributing to the formation of an autonomous and critical individual;
- children to become aware of their rights and of the responsibilities they entail;
- recognition of and respect for a child's point of view when it differs from that of his or her interlocutors, encouraging

socialization and a capacity to defend and/or modify one's ideas;

- making shared decisions and, therefore, more effective ones, and encouraging children to become responsible for maintaining their self-respect;
- stimulating personal and active involvement of the child, and thereby justifying an interest in his or her developmental progress.

### Participation at school

Schools must become the principal location where the rights of children and adolescents are known and recognized.

To ensure effective participation the teacher needs to:

- promote not just a scholastic educational project, but also recognise and conceive of the child as a whole, learning and experiencing life at the school place;
- involve children in the processes that are set in motion right from the initial preparatory stage:
  - they need to understand the end purpose of what they are undertaking;
  - they need to be adequately well-informed in order to formulate and express their opinions;
  - children need to be able to assess the efficacy of the progress made together; without this phase, any work achieved could lose its significance in their views and de-motivate them;
- the work setting needs to be prepared and thought out in terms of its functionality as a place for democratic participation (i.e., enabling participants to sit in a circle);
- show a willingness to listen to children's priorities and to accept criticism;
- retain a purely supportive role within the process (refrain from being tempted to

make suggestions);

- keep in mind the fact that each child is different in terms of maturity, abilities, type (or gender), offering equal opportunities to participate to each and everyone.

### Participation and New Media

Most often one tends to be concerned about the relationship children have with the media in a negative way, worrying only about how best to protect them. The end-result is an attempt to provide information on the potential risks and on the correct use of New Media, information that children will be required to learn, but will be experienced in a superficial way and with minimal motivation. Through active participation boys and girls are called upon to generate the knowledge required. In this manner, one is able to (in consequential order):

- weaken the mechanism that spurs young people to provide adults with the answers they expect to hear;
- have as a starting point the youngsters' own foreknowledge and experiences;
- have a meaningful discussion about what youngsters do with New Media (conflicts generated by differences of opinion are often instrumental in the evolution of an individual's education);
- create situations and activities that stimulate the active involvement of young people (by referring back to the activities);
- increase awareness among young users;
- allow them to act upon their own distinctive rights.

In other words, developing a critical sense, awareness and a sense of responsibility among children and young people, actually creates a more effective way of protecting them.

## 2.2

### 'NEW MEDIA' EDUCATION: A PROPOSAL

#### 2.2.1

#### IMPLEMENTING THE CRC AS A DIDACTIC TOOL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA EDUCATION

\*There are many other articles that refer to New Media, including the right to play that nowadays often takes the form of video games, the right to associate and meet with persons of the same age that now takes the shape of social communities and networks, and, in an even wider sense, the right to parents who love, educate and look after their children, and to an education per se. It is for this reason that we encourage you to read through the CRC (see below, in the Appendix) from the particularly illuminating viewpoint of new media, and think about how they can help today's youngsters exercise and put into concrete use many of their rights.

In our opinion, any action taken to promote or safeguard human rights, and children's rights in particular, cannot fail to take into account – especially in developed countries – the need for some reflection on and inclusion of *the media's* role, in as much as it forms environmental components and agents of change that are constantly influencing society and the private lives of each and every one of us.

More specifically, given the CRC's concern about the indisputable needs of minors, not only in terms of their vulnerability and protective measures, but also in terms of **advancement** and **enhancement** of their individual capabilities as human beings, reference to children's rights can also be applied – whether directly or indirectly – to how young children and adolescents use the Internet and New Media.

In particular, the reference can be made in connection to certain specific articles of the CRC (see art. 12, 13, 17-19, and 34)<sup>8</sup>, which cover children's rights to participation, freedom of expression, of access to information, and to protection from forms of abuse and violence. Such references clearly highlight two salient aspects that are closely connected to the use of mass media by young people:

- these are tools that create opportunities that factor into young people's lives – lives in which they've already taken on a central role – and, associated with these opportunities, there is also potential for advancement;
- there are risks associated with the use of such tools: from the inadequacies of the contents to the ease with which contacts with potentially dangerous persons can be initiated. As a result, the media could be encouraged to take on a social function or role, one that respects the rights of young children and adolescents.

Furthermore (and still from the point of view of a general approach to the theme), aside from the Rights of the Child and of adolescents, the various problems affecting use and enjoyment of digital contents dealt with in this Manual can be placed within a framework that explicitly refers to a wider **concept of Citizenship**. In this way, young children and adolescents are given the chance to objectify many of the difficulties or problems they face, and to reflect not only on their online rights, but also what responsibilities they have as digital users (*digital rights and duties*), thereby taking on an ever-increasingly active and independent role when deciding how to best use and enjoy New Media.

#### DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

In this sense, Digital Citizenship can be described in relation to its principal aspects:

- **as a body or collection of rights:** that objectify the role of children and adolescents as fully entitled social actors, who carry their own baggage of interests, requests and needs which need to be satisfied and promoted while using New Media. A discussion of safe and positive use of New Media, in this sense, is an affirmation of a totality of rights that each user is entitled to when he or she accesses or uses certain tools, and this affirmation turns their use into a positive and safe experience;

- **as an entire collection of responsibilities:** use of New Media and belonging to a community, even if it's a virtual one made up by users, constantly calls into play grounds for respect and the promotion of one's own rights and those of others. In these situations it is in any case important to stress that the boy or girl always has the possibility of "backing off" from certain responsibilities, when these are perceived as having become too complex or difficult to deal with;
- **as an identity:** for boys and girls, and particularly pre-adolescents, this need to belong is especially strong and not just limited to one's own peer group. Children and adolescents have an ability to form ties and to identify with increasingly wider groups and

communities. Symbols, values and norms are important elements in this sense of belonging and identity-building, and there is no doubt that New Media offer channels, spaces and languages capable of facilitating and realizing this process;

- **as a means of participation:** in this sense New Media are connoted as tools that are capable of facilitating an increasingly greater form of participation by youngsters from local to global levels. The possibility of a real participation develops in relation to the ways in which young people are able to have an effect on the outside world while they also carefully consider in what way these surroundings may be influencing them.

## 2.3

### THE METHODOLOGY SUPPORTING OUR ACTIVITY ASSIGNMENTS

From a strictly methodological point of view, our proposal presupposes an **integrated model** that consists in thinking of the multi-media realm in terms of a work environment that lessens the chances of a confrontational lesson, and brings teachers closer to the world of youngsters through contents, language and relations. An approach which, by introducing New Media into lessons, creates a learning environment based on creativity, autonomy and on technical abilities and shapes the kind of relationship young people form with their schools. It focuses attention on forming a relationship and dialogue between equals, between teachers and students,

encouraging an exchange of ideas and collaboration.

Covering the media within educational contexts, with a pedagogical approach based on children's rights, means the teacher needs to be concerned with his or her students' ability to make the best possible use of these tools and monitoring their capacity to maintain a critical view. Old and New Media are increasingly carrying out a function tied both to the diffusion of information as well as the creation of values and behavioural models which, being largely physiological, young people are particularly susceptible to. Meanwhile, one should not forget that in a context in which multi-medial social communication is so intensively diffuse, anyone who is a competent user of New Media today is also a better-informed and a more active and participant citizen.

A teacher who, using an approach centred on rights, works in the classroom on his or her students' competency with media use, both old and new (as mentioned above on more than one occasion), he or she should work on trying to help the relationship they have with these tools emerge more clearly. This is recommended for a number of reasons, as set out below (see Box 6).

#### WHY WE NEED TO WORK ON NEW MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM?

- in order to understand how they are being used, which needs and motivations they satisfy;
- to put into action the principle of Participation, because it recognises the student as a person with his or her own world and a right holder who deserves to be heard;
- to be able to make contact in an empathetic way with students' world as an educator that satisfies relationship, emotional, social and knowledge needs;
- so that the teacher does not present him/herself as a censor or adult regulator, but rather as someone who encourages reflection, introspection, and sharing within the group;
- because, unlike other social actors, the teacher can more easily work on prevention, that is, on the development of active aptitude, rather than on protection, as active behaviour by young users is considered to be the best means of protection against risks;
- to make students aware of those CRC rights that are most relevant to New Media use, and through such awareness, help them to become participants in the building up of a Digital Citizenship.

#### 2.3.1

#### LEVELS OF INTERVENTION ACHIEVED BY THE ACTIVITY ASSIGNMENTS

<sup>9</sup> Here follows another reminder of the principal mechanisms influencing media use:

- emotional and relationship dynamics (emotions, motivations, sociability, needs)
- rational or cognitive dynamics (technical understanding of and competence in using the tools)
- value-based dynamics (values and moral or ethical principles that guide an individual)
- civically based dynamics (capacity to take on social responsibilities as a result of a person's overall maturity and the development of a sense of citizenship)

The didactic model used in the assignments tries to pay attention to the dynamics that, as underlined above in paragraph 1.3, can encourage 'responsible behaviour' during internet and mobile phone use by children and adolescents<sup>9</sup>. In this sense, as far as complex dynamics that regulate the use of such tools are concerned, the activity assignments concentrate on three specific aspects: the technological, emotional/relational, and civic levels of development.

#### • **Technical level**

Through a reciprocal literacy-raising process, teachers and students (with the latter often having more expertise than their teachers, at least in this area) familiarise themselves with the functionality of these tools and their implications.

#### • **Emotional level**

The objective here is to foster reflection on the role that New Media plays in the lives of young people, attempting to reveal and investigate more deeply the inner needs (for communication, social life, adult reference points, etc.) that these media are responding to.

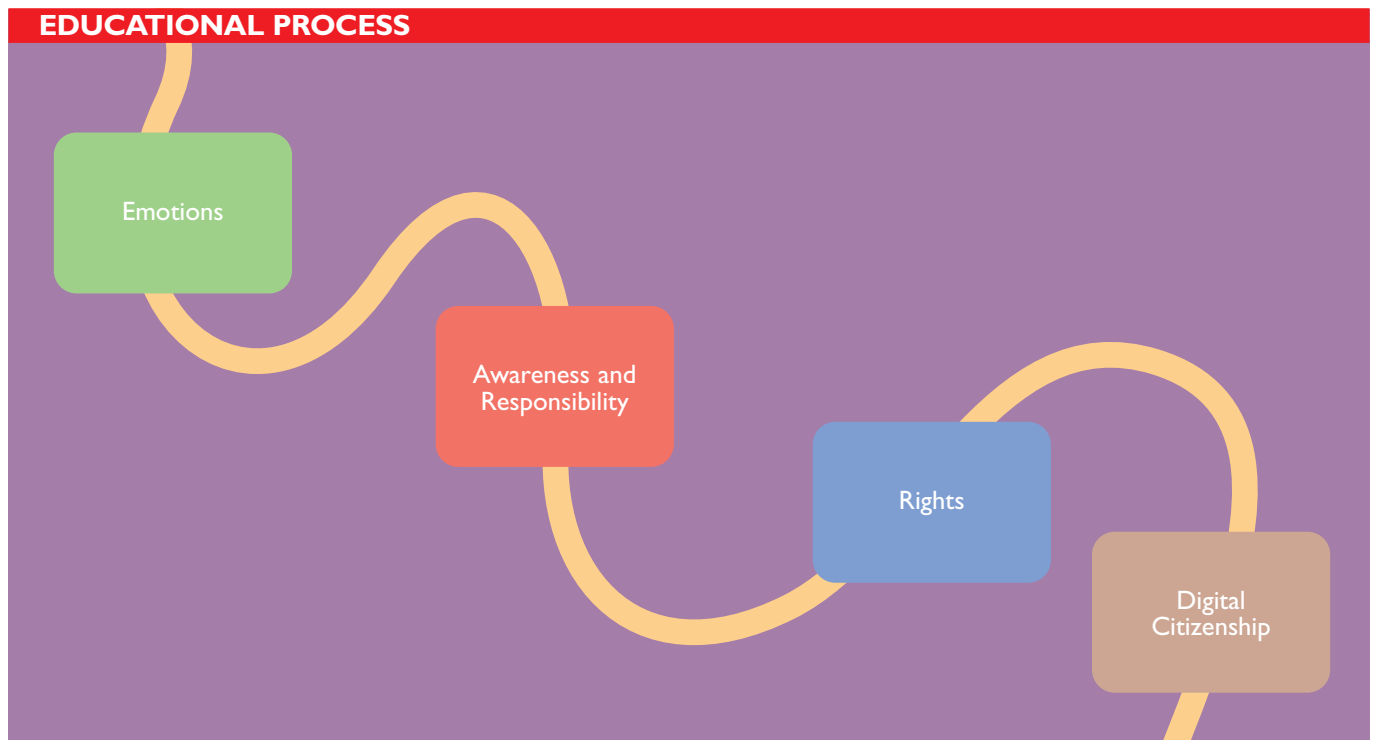
#### • **Civic level**

By reflecting on one's own behaviour and that of others, youngsters find the means that eventually enable them translate their own needs into rights, and to recognise that these should be satisfied and respected within a system in which we all live together on the basis of shared rules of conduct.

## 2.3.2

### THE COURSE SET BY THE MANUAL AND ITS ATTENTIVENESS TO EDUCATIONAL MATTERS

In reference to the abovementioned motivational dynamics, the proposed educational course, or path, winds along the lines of an ideal guiding principle, in the course of which, through a progressively increasing sense of responsibility, the young person comes to join a new and specific 'Digital Citizenship'. Moving along such a path, the teacher has the task of accompanying his or her students through an exploration of the emotions that come into play while using and relating to New Media, so that they may be able to develop an increased awareness of, and sense of responsibility towards, their personal modes of online behaviour, as well as exercise their rights within the digital world and experience a fully entitled, active and participatory Digital Citizenship.



#### KEY WORDS

**Emotions:** acquiring awareness of deep-seated emotions and motivations tinged by the use of New Media helps young users to become more alert to their existence, and able to deal with and prevent less responsible ways of behaviour. At the same time, the teacher working with students on their emotions can better satisfy students' inner needs, starting with the need to see the teacher as a point of reference, one who can both listen and also impart knowledge.

**Awareness and responsibility:** translating one's emotions and needs into rights helps every internet user to think about and be concerned about what he or she does online, of the possible consequences that could

affect him/her and others, and what his or her responsibilities are. Young people should approach new media at the pace and in ways that are best suited to their individual levels of psycho-physical development, and for this reason it is necessary to identify and implement online rules regarding sharing and living together (such rules will naturally become more complex in relation to how high the levels of online involvement are). To sum things up, within the online dimension, not 'everything' is necessarily suitable for 'everyone'. There are some levels of usage that require different levels of involvement and the application of rules of coexistence or sharing. In other words, an aware and responsible use of New Media should allow a minor to surf the Net in a way that is coherent with his or her particular level of psycho-physical development.

**Digital Citizenship:** the virtual world, like the real one, generates interaction between individuals and therefore a series of social behavioural patterns that need to be defined and checked. This process, which must take on an international dimension, and should lead to the recognition of a sort of 'constitution' for the online world, has just recently begun<sup>11</sup>. The fact that youngsters can not only recognise some of their fundamental rights, but also act and live those rights thanks, to some extent, to the use of new media can help them become more active and positive participants in that global world in which, by now, all internet users form a part. This participation can enable young people to make an important contribution to the definition of contents within a dimension of citizenship – a digital one.

<sup>11</sup> Such a course, taken on a worldwide level, is promoted and coordinated by the Internet Governance Forum <http://www.intgovforum.org/>.

*Not just media*

'New Media' Education, understood in this wider sense, carries out an indirect function with respect to individual disciplines and also offers, in a synergetic and transversal way, developmental assistance in other pedagogical contexts. We are referring specifically to two areas of concern that would require an ad hoc learning path, and which go beyond the proposal presented herein:

- **Socio-emotional education:**

Together with families, schools can help their students to feel that they are understood and accepted when it comes not only to their needs and sentiments, but also their more anti-social feelings (such as anger, envy, jealousy, etc.).

This course can be developed in part by a single teacher, within the scope of his or her functions as educator, and in part, if necessary, through an ad hoc course that calls for the intervention of a psychological consultant. The student will be able to understand and deal better with what he/she and others are going through, any contacts made with people they meet online; rather than fuelling possible attempts at allurements or bullying, for example, the student will drive them back.

- **Psycho-sexual education:**

Schools play a vital role in supplying students with appeals aimed at confronting sexuality in accordance with the pace and ways deemed best suited to their age, and in cultivating that sphere of development through their own relations, whether directly or virtually. This will provide tools against fuelling allurements or inappropriate relationships with adults (for example, by sending photos or discussing intimate matters) and to recognise as inappropriate and unseemly ambiguous requests originating on the Internet.

### 2.3.3 THE TOOLS

As mentioned above, the Manual's overall approach makes use of didactic techniques that favour the active participation of pupils in the learning process, involving them directly in the construction, analysis of, and reflection on materials.

In this sense it is fundamental that we not only present *something* as the educational subject, but also, and even more importantly, *how* we present it. With respect to passive and confrontational methods the intervention's objective changes radically; it is centred mainly on transmitting ideas, knowledge and awareness, but aims to encourage shared reflection on one's behaviour and create a new understanding based on one's own experience.

The principal work tools that are particularly useful in encouraging student participation and the starting up of the sort of dynamics we are interested in observing are:<sup>10</sup>

#### WORK TOOLS

BRAINSTORMING

FEEDBACK

FOCUS GROUPS

META-PLAN

WORKING GROUPS

ROLE-PLAYING

SIMULATIONS

CASE STUDIES

CONCEPTUAL MAPS

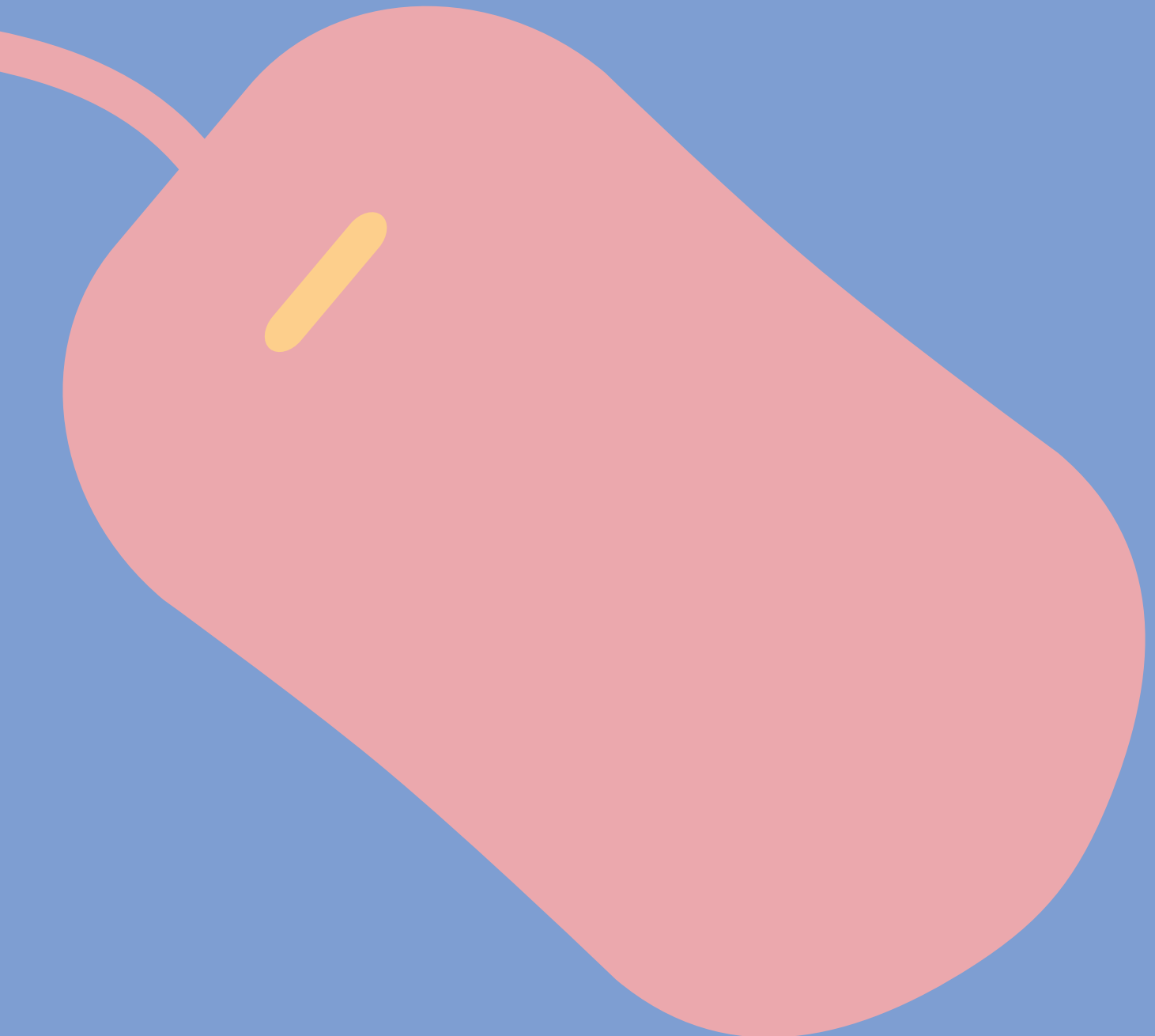
FACILITATION

<sup>10</sup>For further information, see: *Verso una Pedagogia dei diritti. Guida per insegnanti*, ibid.



# PART III

## ACTIVITY FORMS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE



### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

**T**his Manual proposes a number of activities on the theme of New Media that can be conducted in class in real terms by teachers, using as a general reference source the illustrated theoretical-technical model provided. These activities are sub-divided into three categories, according to the areas they principally work on:

- recognising one's feelings ( Emotional Level – Area **I feel emotionally involved**: forms 1-2): aimed at encouraging reflection on needs, motivations, portrayals, the meaning of certain kinds of behaviour, and also on the basis of common areas of reference (school, family, etc.).
- technical knowledge (Cognitive Level – Area **I find information**: forms 3-4): aimed at supplying concepts about the functionality of the tools, on characteristics of the Net, different media, etc.
- looking at values and the issue of rights (Civic Level – Area **I reflect on my rights**: forms 5 -14): aimed at encouraging reflection and debate on rights and responsibilities associated with needs, roles within society, the moral principles that guide individual and social behaviour, and on the characteristics defining Digital Citizenship.

A description of the proposed activities is presented below, sub-divided according to the above-stated criteria; a few, however, due to their crossover characteristics, can be included in two or all three areas contemporaneously.

There is also a fourth and final group of activities intended to provide support for an evaluation of the course by the students themselves (Area **I assess my course**) and it is therefore appropriate that these should be carried out during the final phase of the work.

It would be desirable, therefore, to start with the activities that focus on the emotional aspects, not only because they help motivate youngsters by heightening their involvement, but also because they work more deeply on the dynamics related to use of the tools in terms of needs, motivations and role playing. And then to continue with the activities that allow for acquisition of and reflection on more technical and rational information; ending with reflection on what constitutes a right, integrated within the widest possible overview of pedagogy of rights and digital citizenship, in order to translate needs into objectively safeguarded rights.

It is foreseeable that each teacher may well choose to accentuate a particular category and focus on this because of specific didactic needs or because he or she believes that – as the 'facilitator' of the processes involved – that category of activities may actually be more effective.

Obviously, at the end of the course, regardless of how it was put together by the teacher, an evaluation activity selected from those proposed will be carried out.

To help with the carrying out of the activities, we also propose a series of simple games, which can be useful in dividing the students in a class into sub-groups.



## Area

### I FEEL EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED

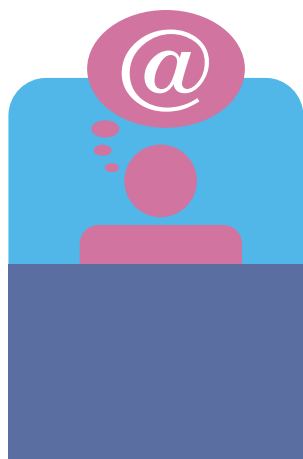
This area's activities have the objective of emotionally activating the students and play on the perception and portrayal that they have of New Media, and of the Internet and mobile phones in particular. The aim is that of bringing out and sharing the types of motivations and needs (to socialize, meet others, gain knowledge, to communicate, to connect with adults, etc.) that are concealed beneath the use of these tools, and thus revealing which conditions favour or hinder their responsible and safe use. Such activities are particularly useful in sounding out whether, and to what extent, children and adolescents perceive the problem posed by a lack of safety, and whether they believe it to be desirable and sensible to receive a proper education on this subject. Moreover, dealt with at the onset of the course, they serve as a good litmus paper test to understand if and in what ways the boys and girls are using them.



## Area

### I FIND INFORMATION

This section contains all the activities that expand boys' and girls' understanding of contents, functionality, risks and opportunities offered by New Media. The activities enable the teacher to bring up useful pieces of information but, above all, to allow the class to share ideas and concepts and effectively reflect in practical terms on the advised ways of behaviour that can lead to a responsible and safe use of technological tools.

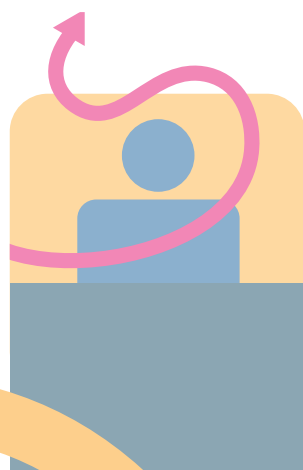


## Area

### I REFLECT ON MY RIGHTS

Such activities increase youngsters' understanding of online rights and above all help them translate their own needs – to socialize, find affection, meet people, etc. – into rights that protect them. Furthermore, they allow those that already exist to be identified, such as those sanctioned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as those that still need to be recognised (and added in). They also offer a useful exercise in general reflection on the relationship between *right holders* (the youngsters themselves) and the *duty bearers* (the persons meant to safeguard and promote these rights, adults and institutions in more general terms).

This area foresees activities that develop boys' and girls' more complex abilities and stimulate the diffusion, the acting upon and concrete proposal of courses and promotional initiatives with regard to children and young people's rights, including online ones.



## Area

### I ASSESS MY COURSE

This section contains activities that stimulate a restitution and evaluation by the boys and girls of the progress made both in terms of their emotional participation and their learning. It is obviously advisable to include these in the final phase of the course.



# APPENDIX



THE UN  
CONVENTION  
ON THE RIGHTS  
OF THE CHILD  
(1989)

## THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: SHORT VERSION

### ARTICLE 1.

**Definition of a Child.** A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.

### ARTICLE 2.

**Non-Discrimination.** All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

### ARTICLE 3.

**Best interests of the child.** All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

### ARTICLE 4.

**Implementation of rights.** The State must do all it can to implement the rights contained in the Convention.

### ARTICLE 5.

**Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities.** The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for which is appropriate to his or her evolving capacities.

### ARTICLE 6.

**Survival and development.** Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

### ARTICLE 7.

**Name and nationality.** The child has the right to a name at birth. The child also has the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, to know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

### ARTICLE 8.

**Preservation of identity.** The State has an obligation to protect, and if necessary, re-establish basic aspects of the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.

### ARTICLE 9.

**Separation from parents.** The child has a right to live with his or her parents unless this is deemed to be incompatible with the child's best interests. The child also has the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.

### ARTICLE 10.

**Family reunification.** Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion or the maintenance of the child-parent relationship.

### ARTICLE 11.

**Illicit transfer and non-return.** The State has an obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

### ARTICLE 12.

**The child's opinion.** The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

### ARTICLE 13.

**Freedom of expression.** The child has the right to express his or her views, obtain information, make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.

### ARTICLE 14.

**Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.** The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.

**ARTICLE 15.**


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**Freedom of association.** Children have a right to meet with others, and to join or form associations.

**ARTICLE 16.**


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**Protection of privacy.** Children have the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

**ARTICLE 17.**


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**Access to appropriate information.** The State shall ensure the accessibility to children of information and material from a diversity of sources, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information which is of social and cultural benefit to the child, and take steps to protect him or her from harmful materials.

**ARTICLE 18.**


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**Parental responsibilities.** Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide appropriate assistance to parents in child-raising.

**ARTICLE 19.**


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**Protection from abuse and neglect.** The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate programmes for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

**ARTICLE 20.**


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**Protection of a child without family.** The State is obliged to provide special protection for a child deprived of the family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is available in such cases. Efforts to meet this obligation shall pay due regard to the child's cultural background.

**ARTICLE 21.**


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**Adoption.** In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, and only with the authorization of competent authorities, and safeguards for the child.

**ARTICLE 22.**


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**Refugee children.** Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to co-operate with competent organizations which provide such protection and assistance.

**ARTICLE 23.**


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**Disabled children.** A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.

**ARTICLE 24.**


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**Health and health services.** The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality. They shall encourage international co-operation in this regard and strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health services.

**ARTICLE 25.**


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**Periodic review of placement.** A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

**ARTICLE 26.**


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**Social security.** The child has the right to benefit from social security including social insurance.

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**ARTICLE 27.**

**Standard of living.** Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has adequate standard of living. The State's duty is to ensure that this responsibility can be fulfilled, and is. State responsibility can include material assistance to parents and their children.

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**ARTICLE 28.**

**Education.** The child has a right to education, and the State's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity. School discipline shall be consistent with the child's right and dignity. The State shall engage in international co-operation to implement this right.

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**ARTICLE 29.**

**Aims of education.** Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.

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**ARTICLE 30.**

**Children of minorities or indigenous populations.** Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practise their own religion and language.

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**ARTICLE 31.**

**Leisure, recreation and cultural activities.** The child has the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

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**ARTICLE 32.**

**Child labour.** The child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.

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**ARTICLE 33.**

**Drug abuse.** Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.

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**ARTICLE 34.**

**Sexual exploitation.** The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

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**ARTICLE 35.**

**Sale, trafficking and abduction.** It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

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**ARTICLE 36.**

**Other forms of exploitation.** The child has the right to protection from all forms of exploitation to any aspects of the child's welfare not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

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**ARTICLE 37.**

**Torture and deprivation of liberty.** No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility of release are prohibited for offences committed by persons below 18 years. Any child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interests not to do so. A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with the family.

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**ARTICLE 38.**

**Armed conflicts.** States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children below 15 years of age have no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. States shall also ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict as described in relevant international law.

**ARTICLE 39.**

**Rehabilitative care.** The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflicts, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social re-integration.

**ARTICLE 40.**

**Administration of juvenile justice.** A child in conflict with the law has the right to treatment which promotes the child's sense of dignity and worth, takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her re-integration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defence. Judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be avoided wherever possible.

**ARTICLE 41.**

**Respect for existing standards.** Wherever standards set in applicable national and international law relevant to the rights of the child are higher than those in this Convention, the higher standard shall always apply.

**ARTICLE 42-54.**

**Implementation and entry into force.** The provisions of articles 42-54 notably foresee;

- the State's obligation to make the rights contained in this Convention widely known to both adults and children.
- the setting up of a Committee on the Rights of the child composed of ten experts, which will consider reports that States Parties to the Convention are to submit two years after ratification and every five years thereafter. The Convention enters into force - and the Committee would therefore be set up - once 20 countries have ratified it.
- States Parties are to make their reports widely available to the general public.
- the Committee may propose that special studies be undertaken on specific issues relating to the rights of the child, and may make its evaluations known to each State Party concerned as well as to the un General Assembly.
- in order to "foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international co-operation", the specialized agencies of the un (such as ILO, WHO and UNESCO) and UNICEF would be able to attend the meetings of the Committee. Together with any other body recognized as "competent", including NGOs in consultative status with the un and un organs such as UNHCR, they can submit pertinent information to the Committee and be asked to advise on the optimal implementation of the Convention.
- a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

## A VIABLE CHARTER OF ONLINE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**A**t the onset of the EASY\* campaign (2004), a series of focus groups were conducted with a group of students in a secondary school in Rome in order to highlight which rights these youngsters perceived as having a bearing on New Media use. Starting with a casual conversation, with the help of a facilitator, it soon became clear which specific rights students thought were relevant to their usage – both actual and desired – of such tools. The outline (EASY's online rights) presented below is the result of these discussions. We are proposing this list of rights to interested teachers as a general reference, but not to a class as a model to emanate or reach. In fact, the objective is for each group of classmates, having followed the entire course we've set out, to create and elaborate its own individual charter of online rights<sup>11</sup> and then, only at the end, should these be compared with EASY's charter of online rights, so as to spark off a valid debate

Each of the rights listed below is based on a CRC article; the CRC's text served as a reference source and starting point in the stimulation of the reflection processes that brought the students involved in the focus groups to state their online rights in this manner.

### EASY'S ONLINE RIGHTS

- 1 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY WHILE ONLINE
- 2 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHHOLD PERSONAL DETAILS IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHO IS AT THE OTHER END OR YOU FEEL UNSURE
- 3 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE, HAVE FUN AND SEARCH FOR ALL THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO YOUR AGE AND PERSONALITY
- 4 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS YOURSELF FREELY WHEN ONLINE, WHILE ALWAYS RESPECTING OTHERS
- 5 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD AND TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT
- 6 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAFEGUARD ANYTHING THAT YOU HAVE CREATED... ANYWHERE, EVEN ON THE WEB
- 7 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE CRITICAL AND TO DISPUTE OR DISCUSS ANYTHING YOU READ OR COME ACROSS WHILE ONLINE
- 8 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONALITY AND INCREASE YOUR CAPABILITIES
- 9 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM VIRUSES AND SPAM

<sup>11</sup> Such class work can be found with support on the EASY website, [www.easy4.it](http://www.easy4.it), where young people can express and publish their own online rights.

## EASY

**EASY is a campaign which specifically addresses pre-adolescents, parents and teachers**, and is aimed at raising public awareness about responsible and positive use of New Media. But the public awareness-raising campaign's task is actually much wider in scope, extending also to dealings with **institutions, the Media, the IT industry**, so that it comprises all the spheres that directly or indirectly impact young people's appropriate use of New Media, reminding each of them of their specific responsibilities in this area.

### THE EASY CAMPAIGN'S AREAS OF INTERVENTION:

**Awareness-raising weeks** a tour that travels to Italian schools and town squares thanks to the mobility provided by the EASYBus. The various stops in different Italian towns are accompanied by specifically organised local press conferences; informative seminars for youngsters, teachers, social workers and parents held in schools, as well as other, more playful, outdoor events in squares all linked to a positive and responsible use of New Media.

**Media education activities** carried out with young people at schools involved in the EASY Tour.

**Advocacy:** awareness-raising activities at institutions relevant to the promotion of intervention and prevention policies geared towards a safer use of the Internet and mobile phones, as well as at traditional Media centres and IT industries, so that they come to place the primary interests of young internet and mobile phone users at the very centre of their operations.

**Developing research:** to analyse, understand and monitor the phenomenon intensively and thereby make any necessary adjustments to the awareness-raising activities.

**www.easy4.it:** awareness-raising platform for the safe and positive use of New Media, which supplies useful information for youngsters, and teaching resources for teachers and parents.

**Production of awareness-raising materials** specifically aimed at parents, teachers, youngsters and institutions.

**Monthly newsletter** addressing youngsters, parents and teachers, and all other parties interested in or concerned about internet and New Media safety.

**Help desk** which is run on a national level, answering questions from the public and promoting similar campaigns on a local level.



## STOP-IT

**Stop-It** ([www.stop-it.org](http://www.stop-it.org)) has been, since 2002, a Save the Children Italy project dedicated to the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse of children on and via the Internet. In particular, it counteracts the phenomenon of online child abuse images, attempting to safeguard and promote the rights of children to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation, as sanctioned by art. 34 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The project addresses institutions, industries, parents' and teachers' associations, the judicial system, law enforcement, the media, and society in general, so that they may become aware of the phenomenon and become involved in the debate aimed at identifying good practices.

### STOP-IT'S FIELDS OF INTERVENTION:

**The Hotline: the website [www.stop-it.org](http://www.stop-it.org)** offers users the possibility to report the presence of online child abuse material. The reports are forwarded directly to the Postal and Communications branch of the Police, in accordance with privacy protection laws, thereby guaranteeing the anonymity of the person filing the report.

**Advocacy:** Stop-It calls institutions' attention to the importance of focusing on the identification of children who have been sexually abused for the production of child abuse images, and not just on the suppression of the adult abuser's behaviour, as is most often the case.

**Awareness-raising:** in synergy with the EASY project, and from the viewpoint of prevention, Stop-It organises seminars and educational events aimed at young people, and especially at parents and teachers. These are aimed at providing suitable tools through which parents and teachers can relate to such delicate themes as online child abuse images, the abuse of minors and the pubescent sexuality, so that they can better guide their own children and teenagers through their psycho-sexual growth, empowering them with a critical approach and independent decision-making abilities. These two elements are fundamental when it comes to averting online allurements.







## Save the Children

is the world's largest independent international organization for the protection and promotion of children's rights. It operates in over 100 countries, with a network of 27 national organizations and an international coordinating office: the International Save the Children Alliance. Save the Children Italy also operates on a national level, paying particular attention to the weakest and potentially most vulnerable groups of minors in Italy. In particular, it develops support operations for unaccompanied migrant minors, and victims of child labour and other forms of abuse. It also carries out wide-ranging activities pertaining to educational programmes aimed at advancement and the relationship between minors and new technologies.

**Adiconsum** is a consumer association with over 122,000 members, established in 1987 as a project by CISL. It operates as a consumer protection agency with complete autonomy from businesses, political parties, the government, and from the trade union that formed it. Its presence is evident in all of Italy's regions, with 283 information and advice booths in the country's principal cities. From the onset, Adiconsum has been devoted to promoting sustainable, socially responsible and judicious consumerism. Among its various areas of intervention, that of new technologies represents an increasingly important one. In fact, since 2001, Adiconsum has carried out projects aimed at educating and raising awareness among children, parents, and teachers about the Net and new technologies.



**Safe Internet Plus** is a **European Commission** programme that aims to promote safe use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly among young people (adolescents and children), and to fight against illegal online contents that are ultimately harmful to internet users. Easy and Stop-It are co-financed by the European Commission within the scope of this programme.



Co-financed by the  
European Commission

The production of this Manual forms a part of the proposed activities of EASY – Enhancing Awareness on Internet Safety for Young People, an awareness-raising campaign focused on the safe and responsible use of New Media by young people, conducted in partnership by Save the Children and Adiconsum.



**Save the Children**

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