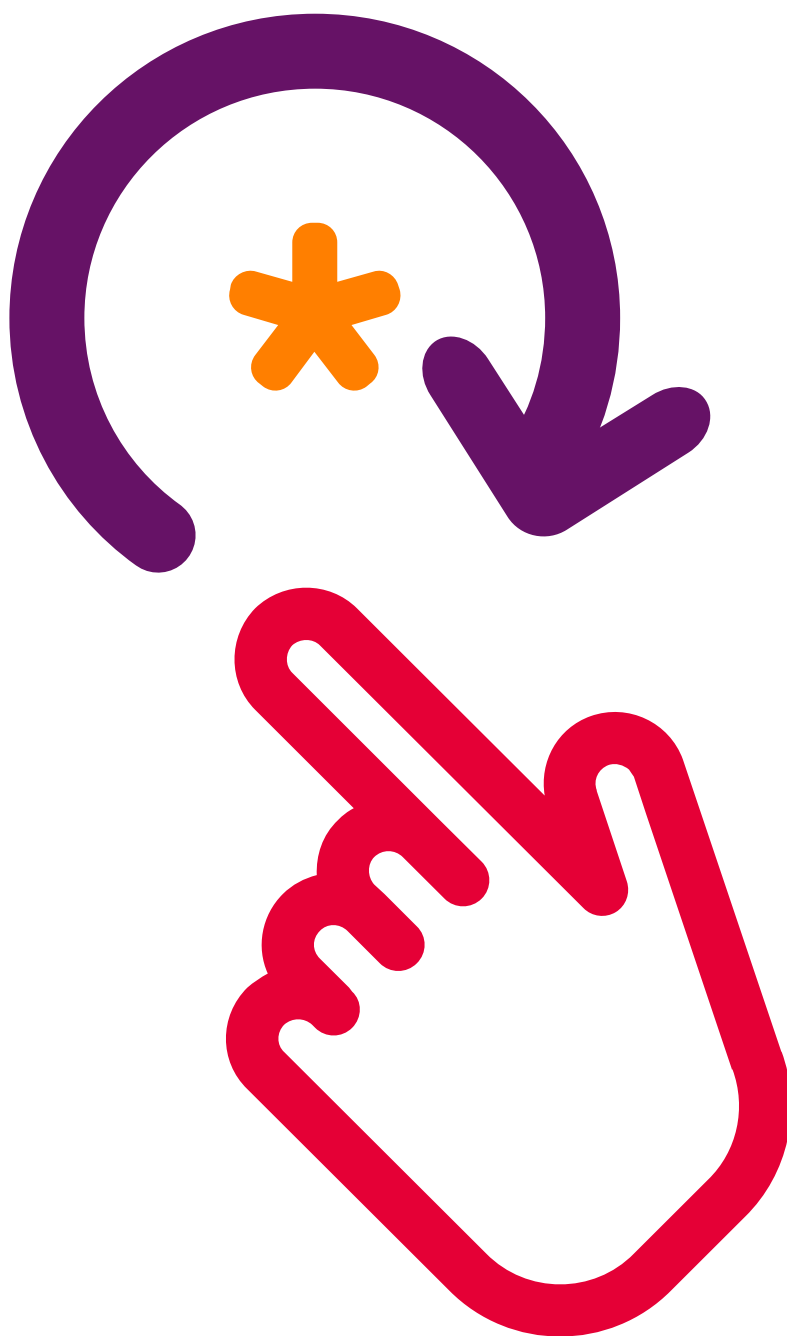


# Ofcom Media Literacy Bulletin

Issue 7  
September 2006



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# Introduction

Welcome to the seventh edition of Ofcom's quarterly media literacy bulletin.

It has been a busy summer for media literacy and we have news of all the latest developments, including a range of publications from Ofcom that touch on different aspects of media literacy and reports from a number of key initiatives delivering media literacy to the population.

For more information on the bulletin, including how you can contribute, see page 13 and please note that some of the items in this bulletin have been produced for us by stakeholders; whilst we want to keep you aware of relevant developments, the views or opinions are those of the authors and should not be attributed to Ofcom.

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# News

## Extreme and violent pornography – intention to legislate

Following a public consultation last year, the Government has announced that it intends bringing in legislation to make it an offence to possess pornographic images depicting scenes of extreme sexual violence and other obscene material. This will include, for example, the sort of material featuring violence that is, or appears to be, life threatening or is likely to result in serious and disabling injury. It is already illegal to publish or distribute such material in the UK, but it has become increasingly more accessible from abroad via the internet.

The new offence will apply to England and Wales, and plans are being made to extend it to Northern Ireland. The consultation last August was held jointly with the Scottish Executive which will announce its response in due course. The [Home Office](#)\* website has further information.

## Newsfilm online

Newsfilm Online is a project managed by the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC). Its aim is to provide Higher and Further Education providers in the UK with 3,000 hours of downloadable television news and cinema newsreels, taken from the ITN/Reuters archive from the 1910s to the present day.

The [demonstrator website](#) is making some fifty news clips (approximately one hour of material) freely available for downloading to all users. These clips are arranged by theme and decade; the full catalogue of 3,000 hours will be available in February 2007.<sup>†</sup>

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\* <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

† [www.bufvc.ac.uk/newsfilmonline/](http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/newsfilmonline/)

## Mediappro

The [Mediappro](#)<sup>\*</sup> project is a collaborative research programme exploring how young people (age 12-18) appropriate digital media such as the internet, mobile phone and computer games. The project report, published on 20 June, looks at 9 European countries covered in the research and also the Canadian province of Quebec. As well as quantitative data from the respective states the project report provides recommendations for parents, educators, industry and politicians on improving media literacy skills.

## Safer internet forum 2006

A plenary session of the EU's safer internet forum met in Luxembourg on 21 June. The session focussed on two topics, 'Children's use of new media' and 'Blocking access to illegal content: child sexual abuse images'.

Delegates noted that teachers and parents need to be aware of children's online cultures and how they can differ quite dramatically from their offline personas. Similarly, adults need to be aware that their patterns of use of the internet are in many ways much more limited than children's. Some speakers argued that the current emphasis on regulation and prohibition needs to be substituted by approaches aimed at increasing young peoples' critical literacy skills.

Copies of the presentations given and links to further resources are available on the Safer Internet [website](#)<sup>†</sup>.

## APMLG meeting update

The first business meeting of the Associate Parliamentary Media Literacy Group (APMLG) met at Westminster on 17 July.

The purpose of the meeting was to plan activity for the group for the next 12-18 months. Potential topics for forthcoming meetings include:

- Digital Switchover, inclusion and older people (Oct/Nov)
- Regulatory changes in communications (Nov/Dec)
- Annual key note event with Secretary of State (TBC) (Feb)
- Media literacy and formal education (Feb or June/July)
- News (Mar/April)
- Media literacy and informal education (May with Adult Learners' Week)

53 MPs and peers are now signed up to the group. Associate members include a range of industry content providers and operators, viewer groups, academics and cultural organisations. Further details including a note of the meeting are available on the APMLG [website](#)<sup>‡</sup>.

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<sup>\*</sup> [www.mediappro.org/](http://www.mediappro.org/)

<sup>†</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/activities/sip/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm)

<sup>‡</sup> [www.apmlg.org.uk](http://www.apmlg.org.uk)

## Internet made easy for Northern Ireland

During Adult Learners' Week in May every household in Northern Ireland received a CD-Rom called 'internet made easy'. The CD-Rom, also available in libraries across the province, provides simple step-by-step instructions for beginners to use the web; from setting up a PC to using email and instant messaging to communicate with friends and family, as well as applications such as online banking and job searching. Further information is available on the Educational Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA) [website](#)\*.

## In focus

### Community radio helps to raise awareness of media literacy

By Paul Steele, Community Media Association<sup>†</sup>

In recent months the Community Media Association (CMA) has been piloting a new media literacy project using community radio as a tool for raising awareness of media literacy issues. The pilot project consisted of enlisting two community radio stations (one urban and one rural) to perform various media literacy activities and then test their effectiveness. The activities involved each pilot station hosting a media literacy workshop aimed at staff and volunteers, producing five media literacy Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and one dedicated media literacy programme (minimum of 20 minutes duration).

The two community radio stations identified to pilot these activities were Desi Radio in Southall and Forest of Dean Radio in Gloucestershire. Both pilots had very different approaches to tackling the pilot activities. Forest of Dean focussed on 'editorial' issues and misrepresentation in the media; looking at how media literacy should inform people and raise awareness of how the media is put together and how editorial decisions influence how the media is presented and understood. Desi, on the other hand, focussed on the more practical issues surrounding media literacy such as raising awareness of technological issues and digital services.

The first stage of the pilot was to deliver a media literacy workshop at each of the pilot community radio stations. The aim of the workshop was to present staff and volunteers at the radio station with a definition of media literacy and brainstorm programming ideas to raise awareness of media literacy issues within their target communities. The workshops were coordinated by the CMA with input from Ofcom. Station staff and volunteers felt the workshop were a success, making them more confident about media literacy. Amarjit Khera, Station Manager at Desi Radio, said: *"It was an informative and enjoyable experience for all of us. The facilitators were*



[www.desiradio.org.uk/](http://www.desiradio.org.uk/)

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\* <http://www.egsa.org.uk/>

<sup>†</sup> Please note that opinions expressed in items written by third parties are those of the authors and should not be attributed to Ofcom.

*clear and good at explaining media literacy. We feel everyone ought to know and use media literacy more."*

Following on from these workshops the two stations developed their five media literacy PSA's for broadcast and one piece each of dedicated media literacy programming. The PSA's focussed on raising awareness of 'Generic, TV, Radio, Internet and Mobile' issues. All of the materials produced by the pilots are being added to a new media literacy sub-site on the CMA website. The new CMA media literacy site is intended to be used as a dynamic resource for community media organisations. The site contains information about Media Literacy including definitions, publications and articles, and information on the pilot projects. The site also includes all of the PSA's and programmes available for community radio stations to download and re-broadcast. This opens up this project (and the resources developed by the stations as a result of the project) to the widest possible audience enabling over 300 community radio stations to re-broadcast the media literacy programmes.

The CMA is currently in the process of evaluating the media literacy pilot project and the evaluation will be available to download on the [website](#)<sup>\*</sup>. Following on from this the CMA plans to submit a future proposal for rolling out this scheme nationally and on a larger scale.

The CMA is the sector body for community media and serves over 600 community media practitioners. Media literacy lies at the heart of what these practitioners do. Community media organisations engage with disadvantaged groups and offer media access and training initiatives. The community media sector is at the forefront of media literacy practice enabling members of the public to directly engage with, produce and understand the media.

Further information about community media and the work of the CMA can be found on [www.commedia.org.uk](http://www.commedia.org.uk).

## **Silver Surfer Week - 17,000 Older people attend computer taster sessions**

By Nancy Johnston<sup>†</sup>, Technology & Communications Development Manager  
Age Concern England

Computer technology is no longer just an interest for the younger population. Results from the recent Silver Surfer Week event reveal that older people do want to learn about computer technology. The Week was well subscribed by over 17,000 older people (age 50+) wanting to have a go on the computer, with over half being 'first time users' to computer technology.

The event was organised by Age Concern and Digital Unite and supported by BT, Microsoft, and Intel as well as AOL, Ofcom and learndirect Advice. The event was strategically organised to coincide with NIACE's (National



Photo courtesy of  
Testway Housing Ltd

<sup>\*</sup> [www.commedia.org.uk/learning-and-skills/media-literacy/](http://www.commedia.org.uk/learning-and-skills/media-literacy/)

<sup>†</sup> Please note that opinions expressed in items written by third parties are those of the authors and should not be attributed to Ofcom.

Institute of Adult Continuing Education) Adult Learners' Week (22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> of May), where the promotion of adult media literacy was a key theme. The overall campaign was delivered locally throughout the UK, with over 572 registered event holders hosting 1,938 community events. The types of event venues were varied and comprised of community centres, libraries, UK Online Centres, local Age Concerns, sheltered housing accommodations, village halls, commercial training companies and many other types of facilities.

There were various reasons that motivated older people to attend a Silver Surfer Week event. 39% of participants wanted to improve their existing IT skills, 13% wanted to find out more about future training sessions, and 43% wanted to start learning from scratch, while the remaining 5% were motivated by specific reasons from wanting to learn about genealogy tools to strong encouragement from family members.

Silver Surfer Week participants' age and gender disband some stereotypes of older people wanting to learn about the computer. Nearly 80% of the participants were between 60 to 79 years old, with the oldest participant being 103 years of age. Generally, studies of IT usage in the older adult population have shown to be higher in the older male population. However, 65% of Silver Surfer Week participants were female, revealing that there may be a change in trend if an increasing number of older women learn to use technology.

*"It was great fun learning in an environment where everyone was around my age. I didn't feel at all threatened by my fears."* Participant at Age Concern St. Helens

The taster sessions offered during Silver Surfer Week helped to engage older people with computer technology in a positive way. Since attending an event, a promising 84% of participants wanted to continue their learning. The feedback from participants revealed that the preferred method of engagement with computers was through group lessons in a peer learning environment (44%), followed by one-to-one training (42%), both of which were offered during Silver Surfer Week. A significant number of older people preferred being self-taught by self-help guides (22%).

The majority of the events focused on providing tasters which covered generalised introductions to computers and the internet, while a range of various activities involved structured training on a range of media technology such as digital and video camera, editing/recording packages, mp3 players and so on.

For more information about Silver Surfer Week, visit [www.silversurfer.org.uk](http://www.silversurfer.org.uk).

## **CSV Action Desks widen horizons during Adult Learners' Week**

By Tristan Mulholland\*, CSV (community service volunteers)

This May saw the fifteenth Adult Learners' Week, a week long campaign designed to promote lifelong learning and learning communities.

As featured in the last Media Literacy bulletin, the campaign is co-ordinated by NIACE and features a range of partners, one of who was the UK's leading volunteering charity, CSV (community service volunteers).

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CSV works in partnership with the BBC to deliver social action campaigns, as well as outreach events, where CSV Producers go into the heart of local communities to engage with real people from all ages and backgrounds. Since 2001 there have been 36 CSV Action Desks across England, with another at BBC Radio 4 since 2003. In each instance the CSV Action Desk is run by a CSV Producer, who works alongside BBC colleagues to produce content for radio, TV and online. Over 316,000 people have contacted CSV as a result of broadcasts on BBC Local Radio in the last five years alone, with many more been made aware of the issues these broadcasts have raised.

As part of Adult Learners Week 2006, CSV promoted over 21 hours of radio as well as output for TV and online, engaging over 2,000 learners and promoting a range of adult learning opportunities to many more. In East Anglia listeners were able to learn Spanish and German through sessions broadcast on-air and also made available online, whilst activities in the North and Midlands had a particular focus on media literacy.

In Leicester the main workshop event was used to promote a week of digital photography sessions in the BBC learning centre and several events encouraged adults to make the most of the BBC's Local TV pilot in Shropshire. The underlying purpose of the sessions was to increase learners' confidence in using media such as digital TV, radio and the internet. This was done by giving them the opportunity to meet the people who design the websites, and explore common features on local BBC sites such as 'listen again' facilities, forums and picture galleries as well as watching demonstrations of pages being put together.

Learners were encouraged not only to use the internet more, but to contribute content to their local site as a user. Many participants were unaware of both the depth of content available, as well as the opportunities available to create and contribute. As a result, CSV offered practical and fun reasons to learn digital media skills that can be applied both at home and in the workplace.

Moreover, content produced as a result of the workshops was featured and discussed on air, as well as on the BBC's *Where I Live* sites, in order to motivate other learners to take action and follow the lead of their peers.

Sessions in Humberside and Lancashire were aimed at community and voluntary sector staff and volunteers and also introduced the basics of writing press releases, interview skills and web design. In Manchester and Middlesbrough workshops focused on video production, accessing the latest cameras and editing software, and in some cases participants were able to take away a completed short film at the end of the session.

One notable factor behind the wide range of output was the diversity of the groups engaged; an Islamic group in Derby, members of Gay Pride in Leicester, people with learning disabilities in Stoke and recovering drug addicts in Gloucester – all of whom will directly benefit from this insight into media resources and production.

CSV believes that volunteers will need to play a key role in supporting the building of Digital Britain to ensure both digital inclusion and also the smooth transition of Digital Switchover. In York the CSV Action Desk ran a 'Digital Futures' session with 20 volunteers from RSVP, CSV's senior and retired volunteer programme, providing an induction to digital TV and radio. The session not only introduced a group of people in their 50s (and above) to this media, but was also designed to give them the skills

and knowledge which would enable them to go into their local community in order to show their peers how to use digital services.

CSV's approach focussed on offering stimulating, hands-on experiential learning, encouraging learners to more fully engage with media which they access everyday. By tailoring media literacy sessions to the abilities and interests of participants, CSV was able to ensure that all learners benefited from each session and that the skills they learnt were directly relevant to them.

CSV hopes to work further with NIACE, the BBC and other partners on raising media literacy levels so that all members of society are able to fully benefit from the digital world.

For more information on the CSV Action Desks, visit [www.csc.org.uk/actiondesks](http://www.csc.org.uk/actiondesks) or email: [actiondesks@csv.org.uk](mailto:actiondesks@csv.org.uk)

## Publications

### Programme information research

On 6 September Ofcom published the results of [research](#)\* into consumer attitudes towards, and preferences for, information about potentially problematic audio visual content.

Ofcom commissioned this research in order to understand the extent to which viewers utilise the current provision of content information at the point of consumption, and whether these methods of informing viewers will remain viable in the future in their ability to protect people from potentially harmful or offensive material. The research was quantitative in nature with a multi-phased methodology that was designed to mirror the consideration process that takes place when viewers think about these issues.

Key findings from the research include:

- Viewers use a wide range of information sources to provide information on programme content.
- The majority of viewers feel that current programme information sources are adequate.
- However, half of UK adults express some level of concern regarding programme content.
- Programme information is considered helpful by many viewers in its ability to mitigate offence.
- There are stronger needs and concerns among parents on behalf of their children.
- Deliberation led to a greater desire for programme information across all channels - particularly for terrestrial viewers.
- When given a choice, viewers express a preference for on-screen text based programme information.

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\* [www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/pirinvestigation/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/pirinvestigation/)

Whilst this research does not provide overwhelming evidence of a need at the present time for more programme information, particularly for the main broadcasters, Ofcom believes that with increasingly novel sources of content (e.g. television provided over the internet or similar technologies and mobile television) and the expected rise in PVR ownership and availability of on demand content, people will need more support than is currently available to them when managing their own and their family's viewing.

Ofcom is inviting stakeholders to consider the creation of a common framework to be used across the audio visual content industries on a self regulatory, voluntary basis. The framework would address the information needs related to content featuring violence, bad language and sexual content, in the form of consistent text labels (related to the nature, frequency and intensity of materials likely to offend). This framework will then be made available to all interested parties - and Ofcom would encourage it to be used, although its use would be voluntary.

## Communications market 2006 report

In August Ofcom published the Communications market 2006 [report](#)<sup>\*</sup>, its annual review of consumer and industry developments.

The telecoms market in the UK is worth £46.6bn per annum. The bulk of this spending (£38.3bn) is in the retail sector (revenue from end-users), split between mobile voice and data (£13.1bn), fixed calls and access (£10.1bn), internet and broadband (£3.4bn), corporate data services (£2.6) and other retail revenue such as mobile handsets (£9.1bn).

The television industry's £10.5bn revenue is split between subscriptions (£3.9bn), advertising revenue (£3.5bn), that part of the licence fee allocated to TV (£2.4bn) and other sources (£0.7bn).

Overall broadcasting and telecoms retail revenue increased by 5% to £50.0bn in 2005, equating to 4.1% of the UK's GDP.

Radio industry revenue declined – for the first time since 2001 – to £1.15bn. BBC expenditure (funded by the licence fee) was around £626m, commercial radio revenues were split between national commercial (£269m), local commercial (£160m) and sponsorship (£90m).

Internet advertising has now overtaken business magazines to become the fourth largest display advertising medium in the UK after direct mail, TV and newspaper advertising. With a £1.1bn share (7.1%) of the £16bn market it was nearly three times larger than radio advertising and more than a third the size of television in 2005.

The Report reveals striking evidence that a new 'networked generation' is turning away from television, radio and newspapers in favour of online services, including downloadable content – used on multiple devices such as iPods and mobile phones – and participation in online communities.

The average monthly household spend on communications is £87.67 - this is 4.60% of the average household's total monthly expenditure.

<sup>\*</sup> <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/cm06/>

Television is of declining interest to many 16-24 year olds; on average they watch television for one hour less per day than the average television viewer. Instead, the internet plays a central role in daily life; more than 70% of 16-24 year old internet users use social networking websites (compared to 41% of all UK internet users) and 37% of 18-24 year olds have contributed to a blog or website message board (compared to 14% of all UK internet users).

Extensive use of the internet has also influenced 15-24 year olds' consumption of other media. Their radio listening is lower, by an average of 15 minutes a day compared to the wider population; additionally, 27% of those surveyed said they read newspapers less as a consequence of their online usage.

### **Online protection: a survey of consumer, industry and regulatory mechanisms and systems**

This [report](#)<sup>\*</sup> examines the broad range of processes used in the UK and other countries to address a number of consumer protection issues online, including illegal or harmful internet content.

### **Communications Market: special report - consumer engagement with digital communications services**

This [report](#)<sup>†</sup> highlights the different attitudes consumers have towards digital communications. To help understand these differences, Ofcom has developed a model of five consumer segments based on attitudes towards technology and digital services: enthusiasts; functionalists; economisers; abstainers; resisters. Each segment is described in detail in the report.

### **Digital switchover: an audit of viewers' priorities**

This [report](#)<sup>‡</sup> provides an audit of the benefits and costs of digital switchover from the viewer's perspective. Its purpose is to identify aspects of the switchover process that could affect viewers, set out how those issues are being addressed and identify areas where further work is needed by Ofcom, Digital UK, the Government and other stakeholders involved in this important and complex project.

It is aimed at those involved with and responsible for communicating with viewers about switchover, including consumer groups, broadcasters, manufacturers, retailers and the agencies involved in switchover.

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<sup>\*</sup> [www.ofcom.org.uk/research/technology/onlineprotection/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/technology/onlineprotection/)

<sup>†</sup> [www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/consumer\\_engagement/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/consumer_engagement/)

<sup>‡</sup> [www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/dsoind/vieweraudit/consumeraudit.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/dsoind/vieweraudit/consumeraudit.pdf)

## Watch Out For ...

### TimeBank Digimentor project

By Sarah Arnold\*, Innovation & Development Manager, TimeBank

TimeBank, the national volunteering charity, has developed a pilot project that will use volunteer mentors to help increase media literacy amongst older, isolated people.

TimeBank is aiming to pilot two projects in 2 regions, matching 100 volunteer mentors in each region. Mentors, who will be trained and Criminal Records Bureau checked, will provide each beneficiary with one-to-one support to understand, use and benefit from engaging with digital media. If it is a success in helping older people to achieve greater media literacy, the pilot will be rolled out to other areas of the country and could potentially be adapted to other audiences.

TimeBank's innovation unit has developed a number of mentoring projects over the last 5 years, including Time Together, a refugee mentoring project matching UK citizens with refugees to help them integrate. This project has been expanded rapidly to 24 locations across the UK, with funding from the Treasury and Home Office. TimeBank works in partnership with local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop and pilot its projects, ensuring local expertise and knowledge to ensure effective on the ground delivery.

The project proposal is supported by the Digital Inclusion Team at the Department for Communities and Local Government and by Ofcom. TimeBank is currently looking for funders and partners. For further information please contact:

[andrew@timebank.org.uk](mailto:andrew@timebank.org.uk) 020 7785 6370

[www.timebank.org.uk](http://www.timebank.org.uk)

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## Events

### Action planning events

Ofcom and national partners will be holding a series of media literacy action planning events in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The events will focus on the key issues identified by the media literacy audit for television, radio, mobile and the internet and will include working sessions where decision makers will emerge with a clear agenda for action.

**Date:** Belfast, 3 October; Manchester, 10 October; Cardiff, 11 October; Edinburgh 17 October and London, 19 October.

**Venues:** London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast

**Contact:** (England) NIACE 0116 204 7073; (Northern Ireland) EGSA 028 9024 4274; (Scotland) the Scottish Adult Learning Partnership 0131 220 5567; (Wales) NIACE Dysgu Cymru on 02920 370900.

### Pan-European Forum on Human Rights in the Information Society: Empowering children and young people

The Council of Europe is organising, in cooperation with the Armenian government, a Pan-European Forum on '*Human Rights in the Information Society: Empowering children and young people*'. The Forum will consider the ways and means to best inform and equip children and young people, and also their educators, with the skills needed to exercise their human rights as well as to responsibly deal with on-line content and behaviours carrying a risk of harm.

Interested representatives of states, industry (e.g. internet service providers, mobile phone operators, gaming industry, etc), civil society and the media, as well as other organisations, institutions and experts, are invited to take part in this Forum.

**Date:** 5-6 October

**Venue:** Yerevan, Armenia

**Contact:** [www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/media/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/media/)

### National Schools Film Week

National School's Film Week is the largest cinema-based event of its kind in Europe with free screenings that enable teachers to use film as a teaching tool working with the national curriculum as well as promoting a cine-literate audience. The programme is researched and selected by teachers and film & media educationalists to offer a wide selection of films and in many cases these films are followed by events.

**Date:** 16-20 October (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) 30 October - 3 November (Scotland)

**Venue:** Nationwide

**Contact:** [www.nsfw.org](http://www.nsfw.org)

# About the media literacy bulletin

## What is Ofcom?

Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services.

## What is media literacy?

We have defined media literacy as the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts. At its simplest level it is the ability to use a range of media and be able to understand the information received. At a more advanced level it moves from recognising and understanding the information to critical thinking skills such as questioning, analysing, appreciating and evaluating that information.

## What is Ofcom's role?

Ofcom has a duty under section 11 of the Communications Act 2003 to 'promote media literacy'. We work with stakeholders to help focus on the present and future media literacy needs of all members of society.

## Get involved

We want to keep our stakeholders informed about developments in media literacy. Do let us know if you are running an event, undertaking research or have published recently on any aspect of media literacy. We can put information up on our website ([www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/)) or in our bulletin. If you run or are aware of a media literacy initiative that could be covered in more depth in one of our 'In Focus' articles get in touch. Also let us know if you have colleagues who may be interested in receiving our bulletin.

If you have any other suggestions or feedback for this bulletin contact [media.literacy@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:media.literacy@ofcom.org.uk)

## Disclaimer

Please note that opinions expressed in items written by third parties are those of the authors and should not be attributed to Ofcom.

## Stop message

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