

# How to evaluate Media Education?

Weaknesses in the Information Society development indicators

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It is obvious that when dealing with media education, different models can be adapted and proposed for the object in question. If it is micro, it will be easier to develop a qualitative strategy for evaluation. It can become more complex when contemplating an environment, which is meso (education systems or a group of academic centers), and even more complicated when dealing with macro realities.

We want to focus our attention on the evaluation methods in macro realities, which are being applied today in part of the Media Education process, or as Digital Literacy.

Digital Literacy is a teaching and assimilation process of determined competences that are necessary for using and implementing ICTs in the knowledge society.

Most modern societies rely on the use and entrance of ICTs in their society for development and competition purposes.

In recent times, evaluation systems have been developed based on digital literacy progress, and generally speaking, extending to the information society. These kinds of evaluation systems have been conditioning, and continue to have a considerable impact on evaluating the processes in media education because of their diffusion and strategic importance.

## ***Principal indicators applied to the information society***

In order to evaluate digital literacy there are indicators and *benchmarking* systems that make up the basis for the diagnostic process and interpretation.

The following table presents the principal sources of the indicators that are most widely used:

INSTITUTION	PRINCIPAL INDICATORS
Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2003. The 2003 e-readiness rankings.	Connectivity Literacy and education level Internet literacy level Technical abilities in professional position
World Economic Forum	Readiness: Public spending on education Adult illiteracy rate Access radio/ television/ Internet Number of personal computers ISDN (Internet Service Digital Network) subscribers Cable TV subscribers
ITU (International Telecommunications Union)	Infrastructure Cost Adult literacy Signal quality Number of Internet users
Draft list of eEurope 2005 Benchmarking indicators	Citizen's access to and use of the Internet Enterprises' access to and use of ICTs Internet access costs Buying and selling on-line e-business readiness Secure information infrastructure Broadband

### ***An external and quantitative vision***

Almost every indicator highlighted coincides with the following characteristics:

- Analysis of objective elements
- Respond to quantitative criteria
- Refer to numbers of apparatuses and uses
- Do not incorporate type of uses or quality of use
- Partial vision of process
- Focus on contextual factors

In general, these indicators are capable of measuring consumption units generated in the realm of ICTs, but they do not evaluate the sociocultural impacts.

These indicators can pose serious risks when implementing evaluation processes in Media Education. They can lead to a lack of authentic contents in

evaluation process, and distort meaning, or focus on the importance of the instruments rather than on the use of them.

### ***A perspective change***

We need to move past the overall view that these indicators are offering us. We need to create devices that allow us to analyze and better understand the social reality. If we want to move towards authentic Media Education evaluation, our objectives have to be enriching, and our indicators and analysis systems sophisticated.

In conclusion, we put forward the essential tasks that we must achieve in order to reach our objectives.

- Qualitative methodologies
- Incorporation of subjectivity
- Critical and constructive dialogue
- Focus on project values
- Separation of media consumption
- Focus on critical skills, creativity, and participation in quantitative manner
- Bridge micro projects and meso and macroprojects

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