



# Media (Freedom) Literacy: Definitions, Examples, Takeaways and Tools

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# NORDIS

Nordic Observatory for Digital

Media and Information Disorders

INFORMATION  
LITERACY

MEDIA  
POLICIES

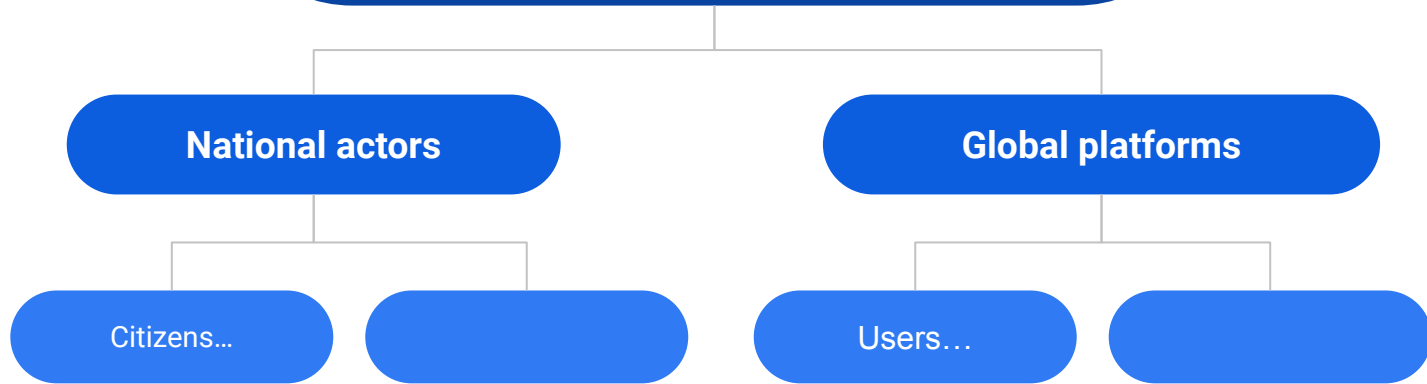
MEDIA  
ACCOUNTABILITY

# ToC

1. Definitions
2. An example (and why we should care)
3. Approaches
4. Tools

# Definitions

# Structures of the digital media ecosystem



**Media Freedom: A three-tiered view**

# From MIL to Digital Information Literacy, DIL:

“The ability to **think critically** and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use - whether or not materials under analysis are valid, accurate, acceptable, reliable, appropriate, useful and/or persuasive.

Digital information literacy allows us to **understand power and the need for accountability of numerous stakeholders** who create technologies, platforms, and content for us in the digital age.

It empowers us as **citizens** to reach and express informed views and to engage with society from an informed point of view.

With the tools of DIL, we can assess accountability of different actors in the field and demand better digital environment for us as citizens and consumers, **both from corporations and decision-makers.**”

- Faktabaari, the Finnish fact-checking and literacy organization

# Example: Contradictions

Efforts to understand  
young adults



x

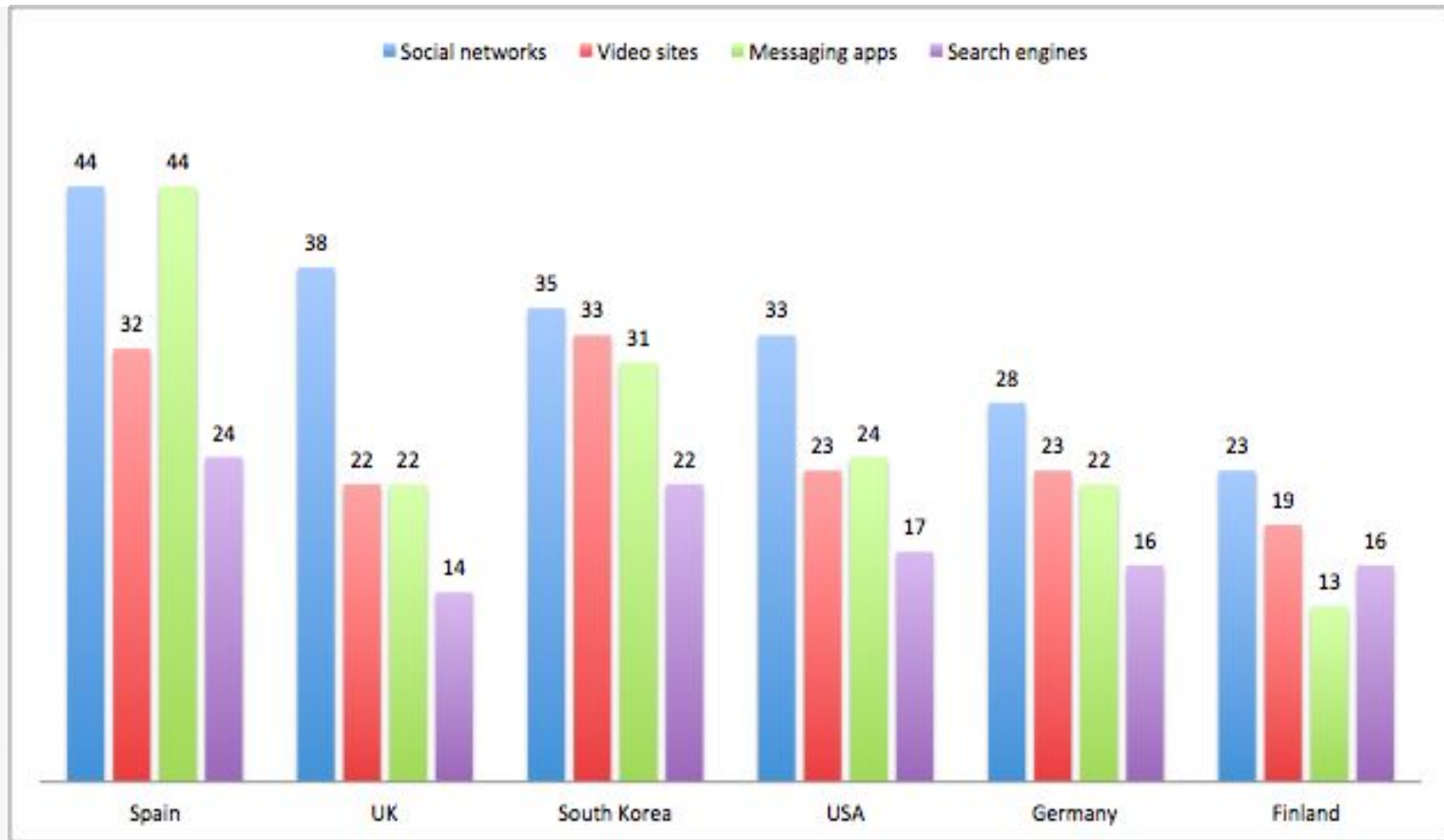
(Aust, Fin, UK, Brazil, USA: Eddy 2022, Russman & Hess 2020; Husu et al. forthcoming)

# “Young adults”: A contradictory category

- Often discussed as one group (18-29-year olds) but a diverse group with varied life situations.
- Avid social media users but not always recognized as legacy media audiences.
- Digital natives but not automatically DIL-skilled.

→ **Decision-makers of the future BUT not often considered in literacy efforts.**





# Insights

# Contradictions

- Trust in legacy media, **in theory**; low trust in social media **in general**; high awareness of “living in a social media bubble”

vs.

- High level of trust in peers, personal experiences, “authenticity” vs. critical of top-down, legacy media, fact-checking and literacy efforts; critical of polarizing approaches, lack of diverse voices

# Contradictions

- Awareness of commercial imperatives of legacy media

vs.

- Hardly any criticism of commercial imperatives of global platforms

# Contradictions

- Social media seen as the source of **diversity** of views and news

vs.

- News avoidance (negativity, politicized; esp. Corona virus)

## Contradictions

- Awareness of importance of freedom of expression, media freedom, literacy **and** high regard of one's own literacy skills

VS.

- High level of distrust, incl. *Third Person Perception*: distrusting of other people and worried about older generations; **and** “even digital natives get overwhelmed”

# Media (Freedom) Literacy?

## A comprehensive Approach

# Media Freedom: Approaches

## 1. Promote holistic understanding of the ecosystem.

Global platform power <-> national power interests

**Malinformation:** deliberate weaponization of content produced by institutions; deliberate misrepresentation of content; deliberate leaking of sensitive content to cause harm

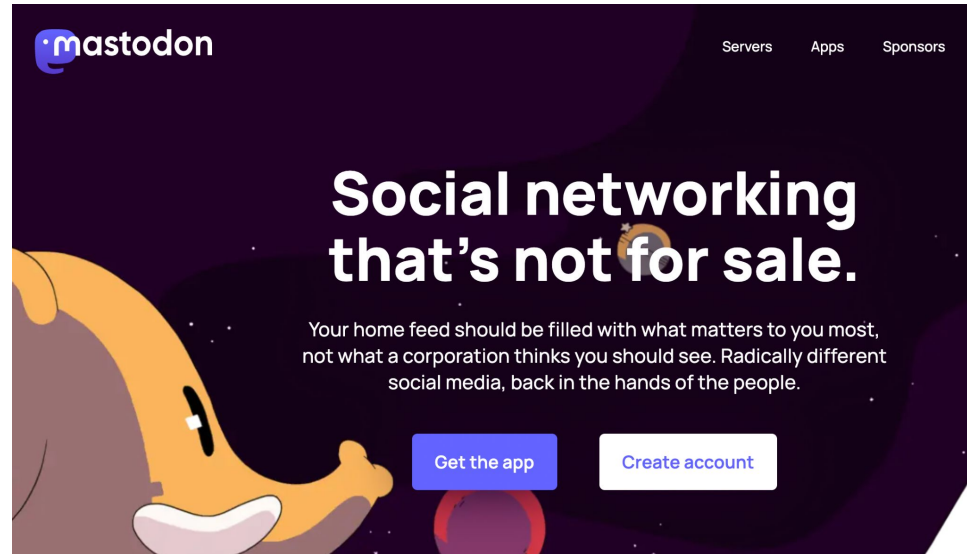
**Misinformation:** false information shared either without checking veracity or with firm belief that information helps

**Disinformation:** fabricated / deliberately manipulated content; conspiracies, rumours



# Possible approaches

## 2. Promote continuous learning!



# Possible approaches

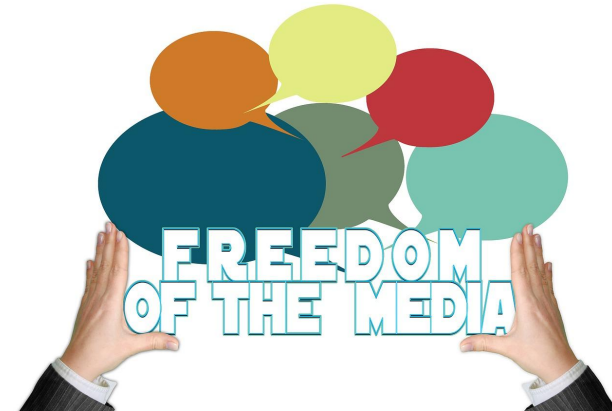
## 3. Involve trusted, quality legacy media; they need to involve young people!

The screenshot shows the news website news.ORF.at. The navigation bar at the top includes links for Fernsehen, TVthek, Sound, Topos, Debatte, Österreich, Wetter, Sport, News, and ORF.at im Überblick. The main header features the news.ORF.at logo, a location dropdown set to Bregenz with a weather icon and 4 °C, and a 50th anniversary logo for ORF with the text 'LICHT INS DUNKEL'. Below the header is an 'INFOPOINT CORONAVIRUS' section with a bell icon. The main content area displays several news articles in a grid:

- Ukraine:** A dark, grainy image showing people in a dimly lit environment.
- Ziele kaum erreicht: Schlechtes Zeugnis für Deutschförderklassen**: A photo of a classroom with a student raising their hand.
- W: Naschmarkt-Umbau mit Bäumen statt Halle**: A photo of a city street with buildings and parked cars.
- Gemüseproduktion:** A close-up photo of fresh tomatoes on a vine.
- UNHCR befürchtet mehr Binnenvertriebene**: A dark, grainy image showing people in a dimly lit environment.
- Erstaunliches Comeback von Ortlieb**: A photo of a woman wearing a cowboy hat and sunglasses.
- StVO-Novelle: „Extremen Rasern“ wird Auto abgenommen**: A photo of a woman with glasses speaking.

## Possible approaches

**4. Stress the idea of communication rights and citizenship: media freedom is a fundamental right and responsibility.**



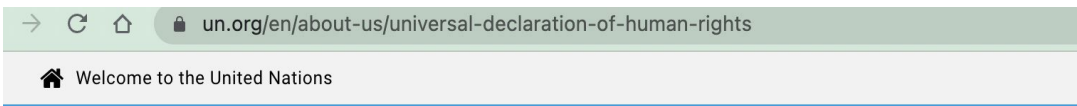
**Media (Freedom) Literacy?**

**Some tools (for us all?)**

# Some tools

HR declarations, regulation, policies:

**Increase literacy** – what do they mean for citizens?



## Article 19

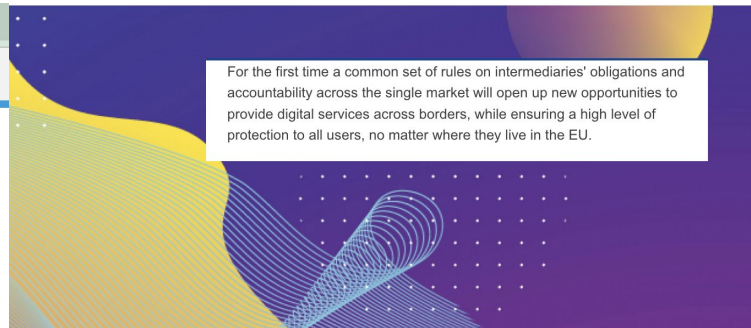
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**What are the key goals of the Digital Services Act?**

**Which providers are covered?**

**New obligations**

**What is the impact of new obligations?**



## What are the key goals of the Digital Services Act?

The new rules are proportionate, foster innovation, growth and competitiveness, and facilitate the scaling up of smaller platforms, SMEs and start-ups. The responsibilities of users, platforms, and public authorities are rebalanced according to European values, placing citizens at the centre. The rules

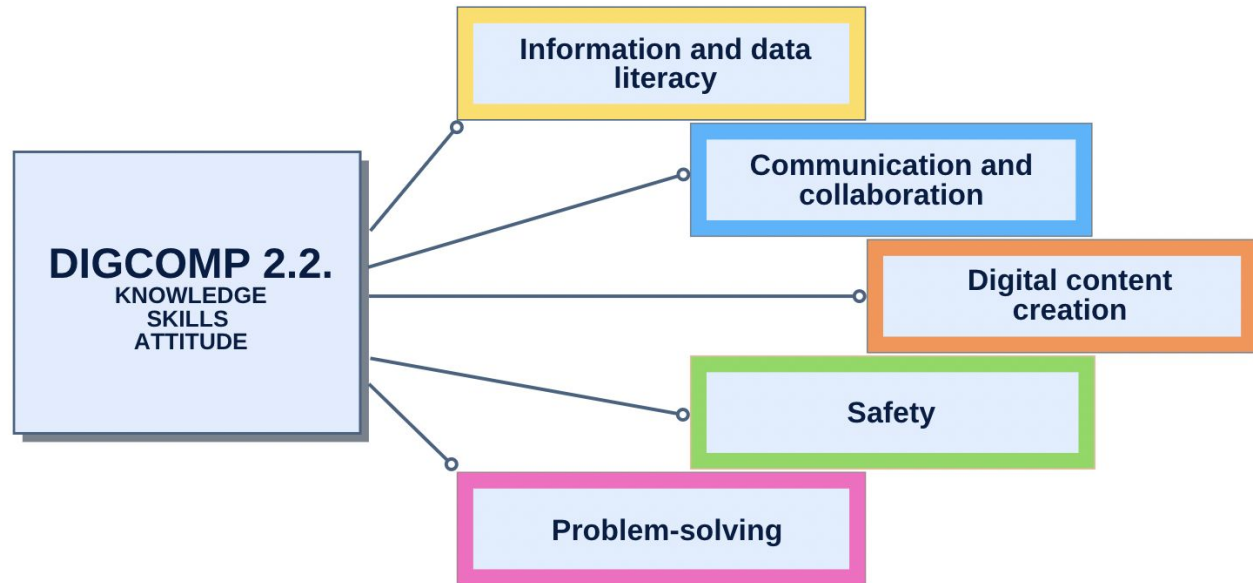
- Better protect consumers and their fundamental rights online
- Establish a powerful transparency and a clear accountability framework for online platforms
- Foster innovation, growth and competitiveness within the single market

# Some tools

Frameworks of literacy: checklists, tools, examples

## DigComp 2.2.

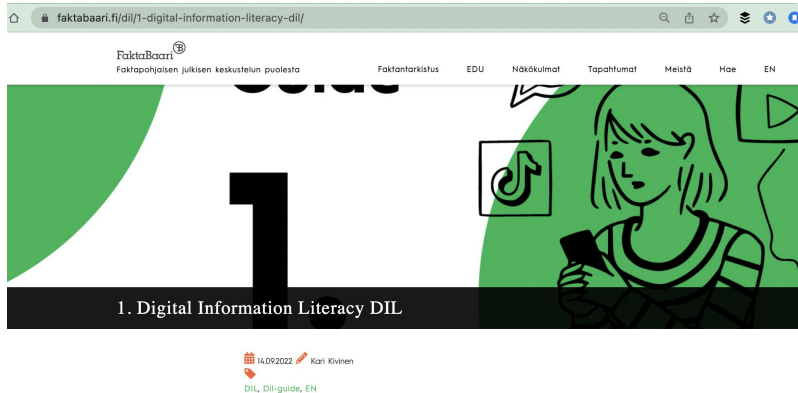
### EU's Digital Competence Framework (2022)



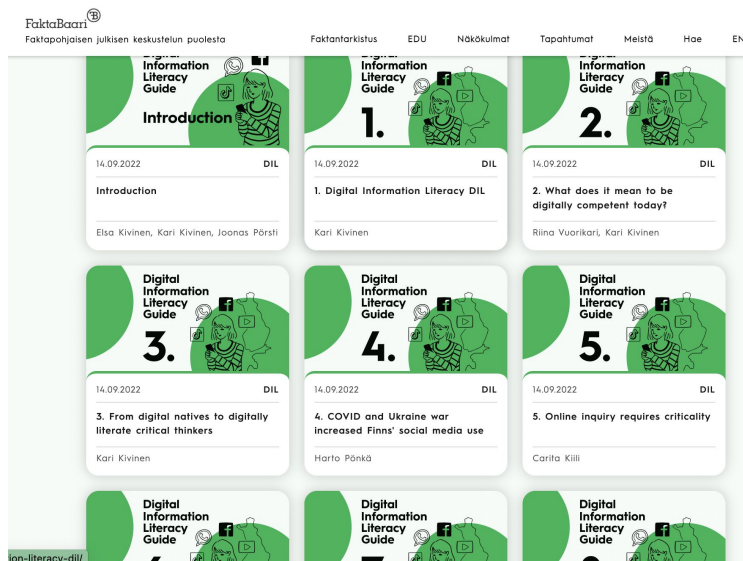
# Some tools

Frameworks of literacy: checklists, tools, examples

**NGOs** e.g., <https://faktabaari.fi/dil/digital-information-literacy-guide/>



*Access to information in all its forms is a basic human right and need.*



## Some tools

- Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration
  - ◆ Educators, fact-checkers, literacy experts, technologists, regulator, cross-borders...
  - ◆ **Peer-to-peer learning!**







**Thank you, kiitos!**