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# Contents

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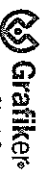
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# Why is the Techno-Social Policy of New Media Literacy Needed for All?

F. Mutlu Binark

## Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that new media environments have become an inseparable part of our daily life flow. We are now living in a new social ecosystem. In this new social ecosystem, there is no distinction between online and offline lives, new media applications deeply influence offline relationships and experiences, modes of socialization have changed, and social relations between acquaintances started to flow continuously via interfaces. In the words of danah boyd, we are experiencing life in a "networked public" constituted by new media environments (2014: 8-9). By following boyd, we can describe characteristics of the networked public as follows: First, a space is created by networked technologies. This space allows people to come together, spend time together, and take common action. Practices of socialization enabled by this space include the familiar scenes of people in cafes, lounges or parks using their smartphones or tablets to chat or spend time with their acquaintances on networks, share a moment they have experienced via the interfaces, express their intention to participate in an event, and like or retweet a certain post. Second, an imagined community is constructed at the intersection of people, technologies and practices. This imagined community creates loose or firm ties between individuals, not only in the online world but also in the offline world. As Bruce Hood emphasizes in his eye-opening study, social networks play an important role in the construction of an individual "self" (2014). Therefore, the practice of being present and creating profiles on social networks can be viewed as reflections of the social and psychological need to be seen, liked and approved. Individuals today have to meet their need to have a presence in new social media environments and do this in a planned and controlled way, as is the case when meeting their basic human needs.

The fact that new media environments are an integral component of our daily life practices and flow is evident in our need for constant connectivity and the desire to be networking, even when on the move (Hinton & Hjörth, 2013). In this new social

ecosystem, existence is experienced as follows: creating content in a continuous flow; being seen by/visible for potential viewers/users; sharing/re-sharing the content we produce or receive and searching for new content... In this new social ecosystem, individualized use is both encouraged and enabled industrially, and users increasingly become content producers themselves. In the words of Manuel Castells, "self mass-communication" takes place as content moves from individual to individual and from the individual to the masses (2013). These phenomena give rise to a number of debates and concepts concerning the content produced by users, from "participatory culture" (Behmann & Lomborg 2012; Jenkins & Couldry, 2014) to "citizen journalism", from trolling to hate speech (Binark & Bayraktutan 2013), from the role of the users as non-physical labour in informational capitalism (Fuchs, 2014) to the phenomenon of fluid surveillance (Ball et al., 2012, 2014), and from the emergence of data twins (Altıntaş and Binark, 2016) and to data mining and big data. It is important to utilize different and diverse conceptual and theoretical tools/sets when thinking about and analysing our existence and experiences in the new social ecosystem via new media environments. Otherwise, as is frequently the case with political actors and mainstream traditional media, either lofty techno-determinist policies are produced, or moral panic ensues via a discourse that demonizes new media environments. What is more, this discourse of demonization makes it impossible to have a rational debate about the need for multi-stakeholder education on the basis of the principle of life-long learning to make better use of new media environments.

### **Moral Panic or New Media Literacy?**

In recent years, a moral panic is being created in Turkey, concerning the protection of children and the young from various risks on the internet and in other new media environments (e.g. in online gaming environments and tablets). A similar moral panic had in fact been created with the beginning of television broadcasts, and in particular, private television channels in Turkey, both by public actors and the print media. Now, the medium of this moral panic has changed, or rather has been updated, and new media environments are identified as scapegoats (Binark and Bayraktutan, 2014). So, what is a moral panic? In Stanley Cohen's definition, "moral panic" exists when "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media" (1980:9, cited by Bremmer 1997: 2). Moral panic is in fact a social construct, it reproduces and reinforces society's existing fears. On the other hand, the real problems of new media environments, about which a moral panic has been created, are not sufficiently discussed by the public. These problems and their social, political and economic roots/connections are not even perceived. In Turkey, problems in new media environments include users' lack of information and skills concerning qualified and competent use, the

digital divide and inequalities between the lack of new media literacy, the current policy of censoring *Kids Online* report, published in C a mean score of 2.6 on a scale<sup>1</sup> m shows, children in Turkey have few of fear and anxiety concerning teaching digital knowledge and :

Looking at TÜİK's 2004-2014 Ir rate of people using computers ar for discourses such as "Turkey is ev tablet for each child", etc. However divide" between different gender concerning the use and ownership and digital skills, and there is an internet users in Istanbul and Mar Anatolian region, on the other. G of information and communication that there is a 20% difference between the internet, in favour of men. A : These inequalities show that nev all members of the society.

**Table I.** TÜİK, Survey on ICT Usage b

<b>ICT Usage by Households</b>	
	<b>Computer Use (T</b>
	<b>Internet Use (T</b>

<sup>1</sup> This project looks at the following di from; finding information on how to settings on a social networking pr deleting the record of what sites y changing filter preferences.

digital divide and inequalities between different genders, ages, classes and localities, the lack of new media literacy, the lack of public policies to develop such literacy, and the current policy of censorship. For example, one of the findings of the *EU Kids Online* report, published in October 2011, was that children in Turkey received a mean score of 2.6 on a scale<sup>1</sup> measuring digital skills using 8 criteria. As this report shows, children in Turkey have few digital skills, and creating and spreading a culture of fear and anxiety concerning the internet environment does not help when teaching digital knowledge and skills.

Looking at TÜİK's 2004-2014 Information Society Statistics, it is easy to see that the rate of people using computers and the internet is on the increase, providing evidence for discourses such as "Turkey is evolving into an information and network society" or "a tablet for each child", etc. However, the same statistics also show that there is a "digital divide" between different genders, socioeconomic strata, localities and ethnicities, concerning the use and ownership of information and communication technologies and digital skills, and there is an almost 20% difference between the percentage of internet users in Istanbul and Marmara region on the one hand, and in the Southeastern Anatolian region, on the other. Gender inequality in Turkey is also reflected in the use of information and communication technologies. For example, Table 1 clearly shows that there is a 20% difference between the percentages of men and women who use the internet, in favour of men. A similar digital divide also exists between generations. These inequalities show that new media literacy is a skill that needs to be acquired by all members of the society.

**Table 1.** TÜİK, Survey on ICT Usage by Households (2014)

	%
	<b>2014</b>
<b>ICT Usage by Households</b>	
<b>Computer Use (Total)</b>	53.5
<b>Male</b>	<b>62.7</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>Internet Use (Total)</b>	53.8
<b>Male</b>	<b>63.5</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>44.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> This project looks at the following digital skills: blocking messages from someone you don't want to hear from; finding information on how to use the internet safely; bookmarking a website; changing privacy settings on a social networking profile; comparing different websites to decide if information is true; deleting the record of what sites you have visited; blocking unwanted adverts or junk mail/spam; and changing filter preferences.

As the table shows, the digital divide has not disappeared; to the contrary, as long as there are unequal economic, political and cultural relationships in the society, inequalities in the use of information and communication technologies will persist. Therefore, having access to or ownership of new media environments does not, by itself, eliminate the digital divide. As Eszter Hargittai underlines, there are deep inequalities between people in terms of digital skills (2010). Therefore, Hargittai recommends discontinuing the use of the term "digital natives", which masks and conceals digital inequalities among children and young people. Similarly, boyd argues that children and teens are "digital naives", not "digital natives" (2014:196-198).

Mine Gencil Bek and Esin Aygün's study examines the perception of digital inequalities by adolescents and young people (2015). Mehmet Türkcan's study exposes inequalities in the use of new media among working class children of Şaşmaz, an industrial zone in Ankara where car mechanics are concentrated (2015). Digital inequalities in terms of access and skills exist between age groups, genders, classes and geographical regions. Therefore, boyd recommends that basic skills training for new media applications be provided with a life-long learning approach. Given the above-mentioned phenomenon of digital divide between different genders, regions and age groups in Turkey, there is an urgent need to develop a techno-social policy to improve the new media literacy skills of the elderly and the women to prevent the exclusion of these groups from the new social ecosystem.

Digital skills that need to be acquired for new media literacy include having knowledge and strategic skills on issues such as production, authorship and participation practices, personal account safety and privacy, and ethical behaviour (Binark and Bayraktutan, 2014). For example, *Final Recommendations For Policy* by EU Kids Online reports that European kids tend to make passive use of online opportunities, as consumers, mostly to play games and consume entertainment content (EU Kids Online Final Recommendations for Policy, September 2014). Another problem related to the production of quality content is that people tend to consume one type of media content in new media environments. This insight also applies to the new media consumption practices of children and adolescents in Turkey. For example, children and adolescents mainly think of Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and Vine when they hear the phrase new media environments. Exclusive consumption of a single type of content indicates a lack of sufficient new media literacy. For example, limiting our information search to "Googling" indicates lack of awareness of the fact that Google's algorithms list "the most relevant results" that fit our individual profile every time we conduct a search and the company creates value out of our immaterial labour<sup>2</sup> or that Wikipedia is basically a

<sup>2</sup> In *The Googlization of Everything*, Sina Vaidhyathan observes that, "we are not Google's customers: we are its product" (2011:3), rightfully calling attention to the fact that corporations that provide free services, such as Google and Facebook, depend on their users to create value.

crowd-sourcing project which feeds back into the habit of

At the conference, *The* Sonia Livingstone, director the risks children face in or She also warned researche can create about the risk: researchers should pay pa more dangerous than rea parents in particular, can when they are told about being bombarded with or

One way to deal wit and normal part of socia trolling is done to prevent environment, sabotage d among users, and enga enough awareness not to this point, it would be use with the phenomenon of distinguish between free hate speech on the othe This is because this skill ei et al. 2007:20)." (Binark, Ka

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The same report also literacy in terms of skill values (106-107). Follow

crowd-sourcing project where content is created by users like us. This lack of information feeds back into the habit of consuming one type of media content.

At the conference, *The Future of E-Youth*, held on 27 May 2010 in Antwerp, Prof. Sonia Livingstone, director of the EU Kids Online project, called for empirical studies on the risks children face in online environments, and on-going updates to these studies. She also warned researchers about the moral panic that public agencies and the media can create about the risks children face on the internet. According to Livingstone, researchers should pay particular attention to the following question: "Are online risks more dangerous than real world risks?" In addition, Livingstone argues that society, parents in particular, can acquire quality information about the use of the internet when they are told about online risks and opportunities in a balanced way, rather than being bombarded with one-sided messages about online risks.

One way to deal with the phenomenon of trolling, which became a routine and normal part of social media environments, is to acquire new media literacy. If trolling is done to prevent communication between participants in a communication environment, sabotage discussions, spread manipulative information, provoke fights among users, and engage in social and political hate speech, users should have enough awareness not to contribute to the circulation of this discursive practice. At this point, it would be useful to have a look at how media literacy helps when dealing with the phenomenon of political and manipulative trolling: "New media literacy helps distinguish between freedom of expression on the one hand, and discrimination and hate speech on the other. In the words of Jenkins, new media literacy is a social skill. This is because this skill enables one to communicate with a large community (Jenkins et al. 2007:20)." (Binark, Karataş, Çomu, Koca, 2016: 149).

The Turkey section of the "Final Recommendations for Policy, Methodology and Research" by EU Kids Online, published in October 2011, makes the following observations:

Turkish children and their families need educational initiatives to improve internet safety skills as well as digital literacy skills. These initiatives should be provided not only by the government but also by NGOs, the media and all educational institutions, including universities... As stated in several EU reports and meetings, government intervention in restricting/censoring the internet is definitely not an appropriate way of providing a safer internet for the citizens. Turkey must develop more democratic solutions to provide a safer online environment for its citizens" (www.eukidsonline.net, 2011:47).

The same report also observes that, "Internet literacy is different from conventional literacy in terms of skills, experiences, texts, institutions and internet-related cultural values (106-107). Following this theme, we can see why there is a need, particularly



in Turkey, for developing and supporting a social, political and cultural policy of new media literacy. Of course, these inequalities in information and communication technologies are based on neoliberal economic policies that permeate every area of social life - from work to education, health, cultural and political participation, and regulation of private life - and public administration practices of conservative politics, and cannot be discussed or solved without a critique of these policies and practices.

### Components of New Media Literacy

In her article, *Internet Literacy, Young Peoples Negotiation of New Online Opportunities*, Sonia Livingstone argues that new media literacy has three components: *The first component* is that literacy is a form of knowledge; *the second component* is that literacy is a situated form of knowing that connects individual skills and social practices; *the third component* is that literacy is a set of culturally regulated competences encompassing both what is normatively valued and what is disapproved (2008: 106). New media literacy allows individuals to make the most effective use of online opportunities at the same time as avoiding online risks (2008: 112). Diagram 1 provides a list of online risks and opportunities.

Diagram 1. Online risks and opportunities

Online opportunities	Online risks
Access to global information	Illegal content
Educational resources	Presence of paedophiles and strangers
Social networks for old and new friends	Excessive or sexual violence
Entertainment, games	Other harmful or offensive content
User generated content	Racism/ hate speech
Citizen participation/ political participation	Advertisement/ extreme commercial persuasion
Privacy/ anonymity	Partial/ inaccurate information (with regards to health and other advice)
Community ties/ activism	Abuse of personal data
Technology expertise and literacy	Cyberbullying, cyberstalking
Career development or employment	Gambling, financial crimes
Personal/ health/ sexual advice	Self harm (suicide, anorexia, etc.)
Expert groups and fan sites	Violation of privacy
Sharing experiences	Illegal activities (hacking, file uploads)

(Bojana et al., 2008, cited by Binark and Bayraktutan-Sütcü, 2008)

At a conference and workshop in Ankara, held in 21-22 November 2011, on Information and Communication Technologies in Turkey and the Use of ICT by Children and Youth, sponsored by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) and jointly organized by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and UNICEF, the positive

and negative effects of the internet in detail from different perspectives. A workshop produced two separate reports which were presented in the TGNA conference. The reports were part of UNICEF's digital literacy project. The following were identified as risks and opportunities of communication technologies:

- Use for educational purposes, distance education systems, groups,
- Use for social and cultural activities,
- Allowing self-expression
- Enabling cultural diversity
- Contributing to the development of countries
- Enabling more and faster access to information
- Facilitating easy access to knowledge,
- Improving equal opportunities
- Bringing individuals together
- Facilitating games.

The declaration also observed the risks of communication technologies. The following risks were identified:

- Being a "consumer" rather than a producer
- The lack of a system for controlling the use of games,
- The inability of parents and youth because they do not have the necessary skills
- The excessive use of the internet
- Physical, mental and cognitive health risks
- The abuse of personal data
- Threats posed by malicious users
- Excessive commercial advertising
- Harmful content and cyberbullying

and negative effects of the internet on children and young people were discussed in detail from different perspectives in various presentations and discussion groups. This workshop produced two separate final declarations (for adults and for children), which were presented in the TGNA on 23rd November 2011. This conference and workshop were part of UNICEF's digital citizenship project, which covers many countries. The following were identified as the main opportunities provided by information and communication technologies:

- Use for educational purposes; in particular, overcoming spatial constraints with distance education systems and providing education opportunities to all social groups,
- Use for social and cultural expression,
- Allowing self-expression by users,
- Enabling cultural diversity,
- Contributing to the development of linguistic skills, which is a result of globalization,
- Enabling more and faster communication,
- Facilitating easy access to diverse and up-to-date information and sources of knowledge,
- Improving equal opportunity in accessing and using information,
- Bringing individuals together for economic, social and cultural reasons, and
- Facilitating games.

The declaration also observes that, "Opportunities provided by information and communication technologies can turn into risks in the absence of proper use." The following risks were identified:

- Being a "consumer" rather than "producer",
- The lack of a system for classifying digital games and careless access to existing games,
- The inability of parents and educators to provide effective guidance to children and youth because they do not have sufficient digital literacy,
- The excessive use of the internet because of a lack of socialization environments available to children and young people,
- Physical, mental and cognitive problems due to excessive use,
- The abuse of personal data,
- Threats posed by malicious software,
- Excessive commercial content and misleading advertising,
- Harmful content and cyberbullying.

This Declaration makes the following recommendations:

- Policies to be implemented should be developed on the basis of freedom of expression and the right of access to information, with the participation of all stakeholders, and taking the needs of different audiences into account.
- The lack of digital literacy should be tackled in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, universities and other stakeholders.
- Efforts for the safe use of the internet in Turkey should be developed and coordinated with all relevant agencies and organizations, NGOs and private sector actors. These efforts should pay particular attention to the views of children and young people.
- Awareness should be raised among children, young people and parents about the proper use of information and communication technologies.
- Media should present the risks and balances involved in the use of information and communication technologies in a balanced way, and contribute to the creation of sound opinions in society.
- Curricula for Media Literacy and IT courses should be reviewed.
- National agencies and organizations should cooperate with international organizations and follow developments.
- Infrastructural obstacles to digital equality should be removed.
- Law no. 5651 and other relevant legislation should be revised on the basis of the risks and opportunities identified.

This Declaration, prepared on the initiative of UNICEF, calls attention to lack of digital literacy in Turkey, and provides a detailed list of online risks and opportunities. The only way to utilize online opportunities while avoiding risks is to have new media literacy. Individuals with new media literacy would be better able to express their opinions, individually and collectively, in public, civic and political spaces; use information in such a way as to avoid being exclusively positioned as a consumer in a market oriented economy and access high quality sources of information, and comply with ethical principles in new media environments. In other words, individuals with new media literacy can be expected to have awareness concerning various low-quality and/or undesirable content that could pose risks, avoid accessing such content, and recognize the mediation role played by different tools and media in the communication process. Brian O'Neill of the Dublin Institute of Technology, who participated in the conference and workshop on Information and Communication Technologies in Turkey and the Use of ICT by Children and Youth, recommends developing responsible behaviour and digital citizenship, rather than restricting the use of new media:

To ensure the safe and proper use of the internet, first, legislation should be made to prevent the violation of privacy and protect personal data, new

media environments that supported against excess awareness should be raised against offensive content and had pedagogic policy/solutions.

Douglas Kellner, a leading scholar on this issue: "You are what you see and individuals should be encouraged to select healthier, more nutritional products. In this point, it is important to develop one's critical thinking skills that the media culture has to offer. In the internet environment, knowledge should be developed. For Kellner, literacy means being able to read and interpret texts, and having the ability to use various forms of communication and representation. Literacy is conceptualized as a set of skills concerning the use of new media in an economic context, and defined on the basis of usage/consumption.

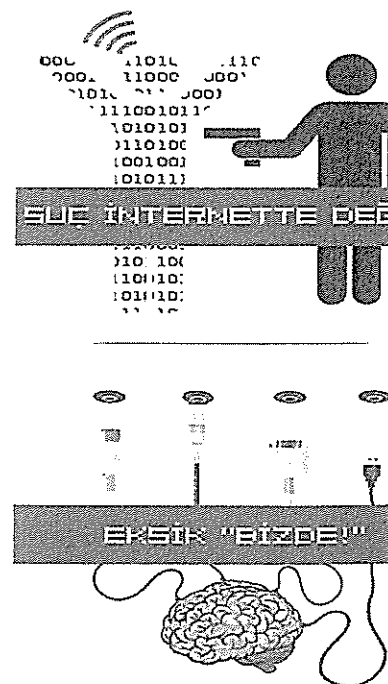


Figure 1. A Lack of New Media Literacy (

media environments that feature quality sources of information should be supported against excessive commercialization and junk information, and awareness should be raised among citizens of all ages against all kinds of offensive content and hate speech. This, in turn, can be achieved via the pedagogic policy/solution of new media literacy.

Douglas Kellner, a leading scholar in critical theory, uses the following metaphor on this issue: "You are what you see and hear every bit as much as what you eat." Therefore, individuals should be encouraged to make better choices to avoid "junk food" and select healthier, more nutritional products (Binark and Gencel-Bek, 2007, 2010). At this point, it is important to develop one's palate, so as to be able to pick the better products that the media culture has to offer. It is obvious that to improve usage practices in the internet environment, knowledge and skills concerning internet use should be developed. For Kellner, literacy means acquiring the skills and the knowledge to read and interpret texts, and having the ability to make effective use of socially constructed forms of communication and representation (2002: 91). In this approach, new media literacy is conceptualized as a subfield of critical media literacy, and knowledge and skills concerning the use of new media are placed in a social, political, cultural and economic context, and defined on the basis of production rather than exclusively on the basis of usage/consumption.

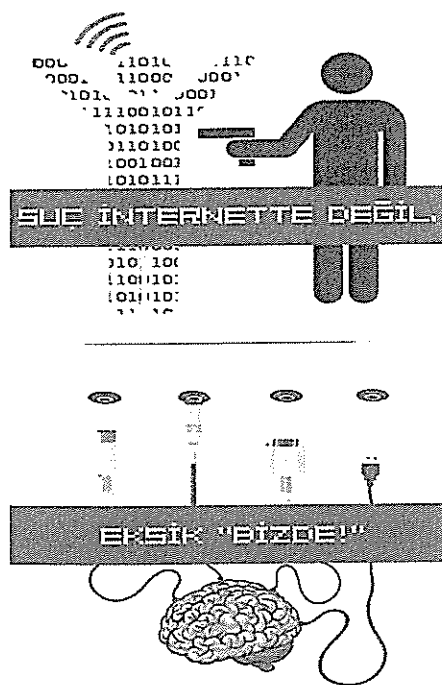


Figure 1. A Lack of New Media Literacy (Design: Kemal Akay)

### Who are the Actors in New Media Literacy?

Making a list of some recent developments concerning new media literacy in Turkey can be a promising start to policy development. These positive developments include the following: The increasing amount of user generated content since the Gezi Park protests; the spread of alternative media practices in the form of citizen journalism initiatives, such as 140 Journos, Dokuz 8 Haber, Çapul TV, Ankara Eylem Vakti, and Seyri Sokak; citizens acquiring more sophisticated information about changing DNS settings and using services such as VPN, TOR and torrent, following Twitter and YouTube bans; the Workshop on Curriculum Development for New Media Literacy, organized by Alternatif Bilişim Derneği (Alternative Information Association) with the support of UNICEF Turkey and held in Ankara on 11 April 2014, which resulted in the formation of curriculum development groups for children, adolescents and adults; the Internet Ungovernance Forum, organized by the Alternative Information Association together with different civil society organizations from Turkey and other countries during IGF 2014, calling attention to issues of internet governance such as global freedom, net neutrality and digital surveillance, and The Second National Conference on New Media Studies, jointly organized by the Alternative Information Association and Kadir Has University's Faculty of Communication and held on 26th-28th February 2015, which focused on New Media Literacy as its main theme ([www.yenimedya.org.tr](http://www.yenimedya.org.tr)) and made the following declaration:

#### Final Declaration of the Second National Conference on New Media Studies

With the increasing prevalence and importance of the internet in political, social, cultural and economic fields, new media literacy became one of the key concepts. Another contemporary phenomenon that needs to be taken into account is that access to and having a presence in internet and new media environments has become a basic right of citizenship.

New media literacy involves acquiring knowledge and skills to use new media, having awareness of the opportunities and potential risks of new media, and developing attitudes and behaviours to make ethical use of new media, respecting other users' rights.

New media literacy is not a technical or purely pedagogic issue. It is more of a political stance that aims to establish an active and participatory citizenship, a democratic and pluralist social and political order, and a communication environment that is free from prejudice and hatred. In this sense, new media literacy is a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder process at the intersection of very different disciplines, concerns, individuals, institutions and organizations.

This concept requires active and participatory citizens, who are able to develop a critical relationship with media texts and create their own content and media, rather than passive consumers who "consume" media texts. People with new media literacy are active and productive media readers, who produce and circulate their own language and discourse. They have the ability to question the background of the codes and conventions offered to them.

This type of literacy involves an awareness of the privacy of individuals and the role of individuals against political and commercial interests. It has a role in the creation and sustenance of a public sphere unobstructed by mechanisms of control.

What is more, it questions the alienation of individuals from new communication technologies and encourages them with curiosity, creativity, productivity and critical thinking.

New media literacy can be implemented as a means to give voice to citizens in the making of their daily lives. It contains practices that promote communication and liberate individuals. Significantly, DIY and hacking culture are part of it. It advocates collective regulation and participation. It can be achieved with an approach that treats individuals as subjects rather than objects. In new media environments by young people, the advocacy of rights are possible.

This concept and the literature of it should be a part of general education policy and implemented in all groups and throughout the country.

The opportunities offered by new media should not be imposed by new media; that is to say, it should be used for language and against hate speech.

Given that technology does not belong to a field of hegemonic struggle for power, it should be used as a political instrument for fighting discrimination, political instrument to fight the oppression of identities, communities, classes, and groups.

New media literacy requires a political method to fight gender discrimination. Fighting the gender inequality is a political method to fight gender discrimination.

It is important to encourage all forms of media literacy, an active participation of relevant parties in the field. Academics have an important role to play in this field.

Source: <https://yenimedya.org.tr/ikinci-ulusal-kongresi-sonuc-bildirisi>

This type of literacy involves an attempt to develop awareness of the protection of the privacy of individuals and the data they voluntarily share in digital environments against political and commercial interests. At the same time, it plays a fundamental role in the creation and sustenance of a free communication environment, unobstructed by mechanisms of oppression, censorship, supervision or surveillance.

What is more, it questions the alienated relationship entered into with all technologies, new communication technologies in particular, and tries to replace this relationship with curiosity, creativity, productivity and criticism.

New media literacy can be implemented via macro and micro policies, and gives a voice to citizens in the making of political decisions, particularly those influencing their daily lives. It contains practices that create alternative forms and spaces of communication and liberate individuals by encouraging free software applications. Significantly, DIY and hacking cultures are also developed on this basis. Contextually, it advocates collective regulation against policies of supervision. Literacy should be achieved with an approach that avoids trying to discipline children with bans, and treats them as subjects rather than objects. It is important to defend the use of new media environments by youngsters, as a medium where free expression and advocacy of rights are possible.

This concept and the literature from which it spawned should be made an integral part of general education policy and be included at all levels of education, for all age groups and throughout the country.

The opportunities offered by new media should be used to deal with the threats posed by new media; that is to say, for a more humane, cooperative and participatory language and against hate speech and cyberbullying.

Given that technology does not have a political consciousness of its own, and is a field of hegemonic struggle for political interests, new media literacy is positioned as a political instrument for fighting any kind of information divide. It should be a political instrument to fight the digital divide between generations, regions, cultures, identities, communities, classes, and last but not least, genders.

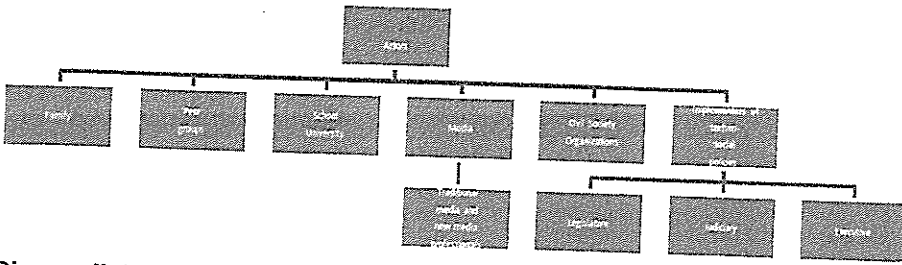
New media literacy requires a mental transformation that is sensitive to gender discrimination. Fighting the gender-based digital divide can also be used as a political method to fight gender discrimination.

It is important to encourage quantitative and qualitative studies to collect data on all forms of media literacy, and a science policy should be developed with the participation of relevant parties and stakeholders to increase research funding in this field. Academics have an important role to play in this matter, by producing knowledge.

Source: <https://yenimedya.wordpress.com/2015/03/02/yeni-medya-calismalari-ikinci-ulusal-kongresi-sonuc-bildirgesi/>

Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007) point out that new media literacy is closely related to the strengthening of the democratic culture. This is because citizens with digital skills, who produce and participate in new media environments and defend their rights, would also participate in political, cultural and economic fields as well, and defend their rights in all areas of daily life, not just in new media environments. Then, a techno-social policy of new media literacy, which would target young and adult citizens equally and take social status and gender inequalities into account, on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be developed as soon as possible and implemented to strengthen the culture of democracy with a multi-stakeholder approach encompassing all relevant actors from academic institutions and public agencies to civil society organizations.

As Diagram II below shows, actors in new social media include family, peers, education institutions at all levels, traditional and new media industries, civil society organizations, and actors who develop and implement techno-social policies. All of these actors should cooperate to improve, via education, new media literacy and knowledge and skills concerning the use of digital technologies. In this campaign for new media literacy, or for digital education, the emphasis should be on the development and support of production and creativity, rather than consumption. This, in turn, is possible to the extent that moral panic and the culture of fear/anxiety are eliminated at all stages and levels of education.



**Diagram II.** Actors in New Media Literacy

As Gencel-Bek and Aygün emphasize in the conclusion of their study, to remove digital inequalities, first and foremost, "Young people should be given political freedom and economic support" (2015:159) on the basis social justice. Other steps to be taken when developing a techno-social policy for improving new media literacy, include the following: The views/opinions of children and young people should be taken into account in the development of policies to improve new media literacy skills; interactive educational contents should be developed to allow citizens to make use of online opportunities and avoid online risks; transparency should be ensured for all actors who participate in policy making; a life-long learning policy should be developed for all

citizens to be included in the new studies should be conducted at the comparative perspective, to identify regions in Turkey.

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citizens to be included in the new social ecosystem, and more interdisciplinary field studies should be conducted at the micro and the macro levels, from a multi-country comparative perspective, to identify differences between generations, genders, and regions in Turkey.

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