Education & Developing Internet Literacy

Cathy Wing
An Introduction to Internet Literacy

In 1962, Canadian media guru Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase "global village", to describe how, through electric technology, we were becoming increasingly linked together across the globe. The past two decades have seen the advent of new electronic technologies – the Internet, satellite TV, mobile phones, digital cameras and wireless devices – that are making this notion a reality. While much of the developing world still remains "outside" the village, many people around the globe now watch the same TV shows and movies, listen to the same music and access the same sites on the Web.

In a world that now suffers from information overload, a central message of McLuhan's – the importance of the active study of media – remains truer than ever. The challenge for educators in the twenty-first century is to respond to multiple literacies, and more specifically, to media literacy – an essential skill in this age of electronic information, entertainment and communications.

Media literacy has been practised around the world for more than 40 years, and in many countries, such as Canada, Australia and the UK, it has a strong presence. Canadians have always felt the need to take an analytical and reflective approach to media, given the pervasiveness of popular culture from our close neighbours, the United States. Despite this, implementing media literacy in Canadian schools has been a fairly recent phenomenon. As recently as the 1980s, critics considered media literacy a "frill". Fortunately in today's

multilayered, interactive information society, attitudes have changed. Media literacy outcomes now form a substantial part of every Canadian province's Language Arts curriculum. Increasingly school boards are understanding that if young people are to be truly literate they're going to have to develop rigorous critical thinking skills to sift through and make sense of what they see, hear and read – in school and in the wider community.

This article will explore media literacy; what it is, approaches for implementation; and best practices for promotion and integration into schools, homes and communities.

Defining Media Education and Media Literacy. UK media educator David Buckingham defines media education as the "process of teaching and learning about the media; media literacy is the *outcome* – the knowledge and skills learners acquire."

Media education has been called the perfect curriculum because it incorporates the latest thinking in pedagogical practice; it's interdisciplinary; it develops critical thinking; and it is student-centred, putting the emphasis on analysis, enquiry and self-directed learning.

Media education encourages an approach to media that is always probing: Who is this message intended for? Who wants to reach this audience, and why? From whose perspective is this story told? Whose voices are being heard, and what voices are absent? What strategies are being used to engage my attention? Because media education is not about having the right answers but asking the right questions, the result is lifelong empowerment of the learner and the citizen.

The end result of media education is a media literate individual who has the ability to *read* the messages that are

informing, entertaining, and selling to him or her daily. It's the ability to bring critical thinking and life skills and pertinent questions to all media productions and texts – from music videos to Web environments, to product placement in films and virtual advertising on football fields. It's about analysing what's there, and noticing what's not, and questioning what lies behind media productions – the motives, the money, the values and ownership – and how these factors influence the content.

The field of media is broad and amorphous, extending not just from information and entertainment mediums such as newspapers, magazines, television, film and the Internet, but encompassing many areas of popular culture such as fashion, toys, the nature of celebrity, etc. Anyone attempting to make sense of this area needs a clear conceptual framework that will allow for discussion of a variety of complex and interrelated factors. The following is a framework that is used by many Canadian educators for the analysis of media messages[1]:

1. All media messages are constructed
2. The media construct reality
3. Audiences negotiate meaning in the media
4. Media have commercial implications
5. Media contain ideological and value messages
6. Media have social and political implications
7. Form and content are closely related in the media
8. Each medium has a unique aesthetic form

A non-protectionist approach key to engaging students in media literacy in a meaningful way. Young people don't need to be protected, but invited to participate in a dialogue about media. David Buckingham argues that young people shouldn't

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1   J.S.J. Pungente and B. Duncan, *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, Ontario Ministry of Education (Toronto, 1989).

be viewed as victims who need to be rescued from the excesses and evils of their culture – which is simply the intersection of high technology, mass media and consumer capitalism – rather we should focus on their emotional engagement with media and the genuine pleasures they receive, promoting real questioning and analysis.[2]

Successful Integration of Media Literacy. In 1990, participants at the UNESCO-sponsored New Directions in Media Literacy conference at the University of Toulouse, including the British Film Institute and the Council of Europe, identified four steps that are required for the successful development of media literacy in a country's education system:

1. The establishment of curriculum guidelines (nationally or regionally) by appropriate educational authorities.

2. Teacher training programmes at university level. These are degree programmes in education with a specific specialization or major in media studies.

3. Teacher support – in-service educational programmes, summer "refresher" courses, national organizations through which teachers grow and develop in their chosen specialization – and through which the specialization itself evolves and develops through feedback by grass-roots teachers.

4. Educational resources for teaching – writing, testing and publishing of the textbooks, lesson plans, activity sheets, videos or other audio-visual materials, posters, supplemental booklets, etc. needed for teaching – developed in collaboration with all of the above.[3]

Canadian media educator John Pungente, S.J., who has studied media literacy implementation in various countries, has

identified these additional factors as being crucial to success:

1. Media literacy, like other innovative programmes, must be a grass-roots movement. Teachers need to take the initiative in lobbying for its inclusion in the curriculum.
2. School districts need consultants who have expertise in media literacy, and who will establish communication networks.
3. There must be appropriate evaluation instruments suitable to the unique attributes of media studies.
4. Because media literacy involves such a diversity of skills and expertise, there must be collaboration between teachers, parents, researchers and media professionals.[4]

Integrating Internet Literacy into Media Education. The Internet has increased the importance of developing independent thinkers and informed media consumers. Because the Internet has no geographical boundaries, many regulatory and legislative standards that we take for granted – including advertising and broadcasting to young people – do not apply. The Internet has countless publishers and few gatekeepers, so the standards for authenticity and reliability of information are also absent. Third, media is no longer a matter of a passive transfer of content from producer and carrier to the receiver – it is interactive in nature. And finally; media consumers can now also be media *producers and distributors*. These last two points, specifically – interactivity and capacity for individuals

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2   R. Hobbs, "The seven great debates in the media literacy movement", *Journal of Communication*, 1998.

3   See *Four Steps to Success in Media Literacy,* 1991
    <http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article125.html>

4   See *Nine Factors that Make Media Literacy Flourish,* 2002 <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teaching_backgrounders/media_literacy/9_factors.cfm>

to produce and distribute media – have fundamentally changed the role that media play in our society, and particularly in the lives of young people. In this new environment, the need for media literacy is more critical than ever.

Educators play a crucial role in bridging traditional media education and Internet literacy, particularly as many societies move towards the convergence of all media platforms – the Internet, television, radio, videos, CD ROMs, DVDs, computer games, and the many forms of advertising – into one multi-faceted "small screen" experience.

In a 2003 study conducted by the Media Awareness Network into young Canadians' Internet habits, students expressed frustration with what they identified as adults' need to control their Internet use. Efforts to keep them from being exposed to inappropriate material are ineffective they felt, because there are too many access points and too many places where unsupervised exploration is possible. The Internet doesn't work on the principles of *censorship* or *control* they felt, but rather on the principle of *responsible decision-making.* Rather than spending time and money and energy to try the impossible – keeping children away from material that is not suitable to their maturity or nature – young people said that efforts should be made to develop opportunities, particularly for young children, to learn how to think about choices, and gain decision-making skills.

Teachers are becoming aware that, along with learning how to navigate the Internet, young people need to develop a critical consciousness when dealing with its enormous range of content. Most, however, lack the necessary training to implement Internet literacy into their day-to-day teaching. According to a 2003/04 Statistics Canada study looking at ICT infrastructure and reach in Canada's 15,500 elementary and

secondary schools, over 97 per cent of schools were connected to the Internet. Less than half of school principals, however, felt that the majority of their teachers were adequately prepared to engage their students effectively in the use of ICT to enhance learning.

There are many obstacles to preparing teachers to meet this demand, including a scarcity of professional development opportunities and resources to support classroom activity and the lack of pedagogical recognition by faculties of education. While we know that teaching young people to think critically about all the information available to them today is an essential skill, support within the education system is minimal or non-existent.

Internet Literacy and Anti-racism Education. Central to all media education is the concept of representation – how we see ourselves and how others see us. The way visible minorities are represented in mainstream media reinforces perceptions of minorities as outsiders, erodes the self-image of young people from these groups and undermines the social cohesion of society. In a multicultural democracy, media education curricula must reflect the concerns of diversity, identity and difference.

While representation, bias and stereotyping in traditional media have always been key areas of inquiry in media education, the Internet presents new challenges. The Web offers easily accessible messages of hate aimed at ethnic and racial minorities. A 2001 Media Awareness Network survey of nearly 6,000 Canadian students, ages 9 to 17, indicates that two in ten youths have come upon a site that was "really hateful" towards an individual or group of people.[5]

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5   See *Young Canadians In A Wired World: The Students' View,* 2001 <http://www.media awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/surveys/phase_one/students_survey.cfm>

In the early days of the Internet, hatemongers tried to spread their messages through interactive forums. The free speech environment of newsgroups, however, ensured that false claims were challenged by healthy and vigorous debate. As a result, hatemongers soon retreated into less interactive areas of cyberspace, such as the Web, allowing them to avoid interacting with those who disagree with their views. Websites also help groups identify potential recruits who can be brought into the hate community through private chat rooms and e-mail, well away from the public eye.

With fewer opportunities for Internet users to openly confront hatemongers and debate their messages, it has become increasingly important to educate young people to recognize online hate in its many forms and to understand the strategies used to target them. Hate on the Net is not always obvious: although hard-core sites are easy to detect, some hatemongers use more subtle tactics to attract new blood. They create fun-and-games sites for children and music sites for teens; infiltrate chat rooms and newsgroups frequented by kids; and even set up sites where children might go for homework assignments. The most effective long-range strategy for helping young people is to give them lots of information about online hate – as well as the critical thinking skills to decode messages of hate, and read between the lines.

Promoting Internet Literacy: A Canadian Response. In 1999, the CRTC, Canada's national broadcast regulator, issued its decision to not regulate the Internet. The decision pointed to the necessity for industry, government and non-governmental organizations to work together, to ensure a self-regulated environment and an education and awareness approach to ensure that the new media environment provided a positive and empowering experience for Canada's young people.

Since then, a broad spectrum of Canadians have worked to develop a partnership model involving public, profit and not-for-profit partners to deliver programmes that empower children and young people with critical thinking skills for their online activities and explorations.

Government of Canada's CyberWise Strategy. In February 2001, the Canadian Government unveiled its strategy for dealing with offensive and illegal Internet content. The CyberWise Strategy focused on educating and empowering Canadians so they can become "safe, wise and responsible" Internet users. Although Canada has strong laws that apply to cyberspace, the Government of Canada acknowledged in its strategy that legislation alone will not solve the problems of illegal and offensive content on the Internet and identified "awareness, education and knowledge" as the foundations of its approach.

Media Awareness Network (MNet), a not-for-profit organization that supports media education in Canadian homes, schools and communities, was recognized in the CyberWise Strategy as the leading public education organization working in this area.[6]

Research into Young Canadians' Internet Use. To maintain critical vigour and the ability to adapt to rapid changes in the new technologies, Internet literacy demands ongoing, in-depth research. In 2000 to 2001, the Media Awareness Network (MNet) conducted the most comprehensive and wide-ranging survey of its kind in Canada in order to gain a fuller and deeper understanding of issues, behaviours and attitudes related to Internet use by young people. Phase I of the *Young Canadians In A Wired World* (*YCWW*) research project, which

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6   Cyberwise Strategy: <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/surveys/phase_one/index.cfm>

was funded by the Federal Government, included both qualitative and quantitative findings and comprised:

- a telephone survey of 1,080 Canadian parents with a home computer;
- focus groups of parents and children (aged 9–17);
- a survey of 5,682 students in grades 4 to 11 across Canada.

The survey results reinforce the fact that Canadian youth are highly engaged participants in the online world. However, the data also presents findings which show that, in this age of connectivity, there is a substantial discrepancy between how parents see their children using the Internet, and what their children are actually doing online.

The research findings from *YCWW* Phase I attracted the attention of numerous communities of interest and served as a call to action to address the risks and challenges of new media use by young people. The benefits that Canada derived from the research have been extensive. Data collected from *YCWW* contributed to:

- Internet policies in Canadian schools and public libraries;
- government policy-setting (including the Government of Canada's policy statement on *Illegal and Offensive Content on the Internet*);
- an extensive Internet education programme to educate teachers, parents, librarians and students how young people can get the most out of new technologies while being safe and responsible Internet users.[7]

In autumn 2003, Media Awareness Network embarked on Phase II of *YCWW* with a series of national focus groups with young people and parents. This qualitative research, funded by Industry Canada, showed a media landscape that has evolved significantly since 2001. In 2005 MNet will return to the classrooms

from *YCWW* Phase I and survey another 6,000 students in order to revisit the benchmark measures from the original data and assess how patterns of use and attitudes have changed.[8]

Web Awareness Canada. In 1999, the Media Awareness Network (MNet) launched an Internet public awareness programme, *Web Awareness Canada.* The objective of this initiative was to ensure that public librarians and educators were informed about the challenges and opportunities that young people face when they go online and to ensure that adults are more informed and confident in supporting young people's use of Internet and ICT. The focus of the programme was to build partnerships in schools and libraries – the first public sectors to be completely connected to the Internet – by training teachers and librarians, and building the capacity in those sectors for decentralized local and regional delivery of the programme.

Web Awareness Canada has received awards and international recognition for promoting and fostering the positive use of ICT in the education and community sectors. Perhaps most importantly, provincial governments have purchased licences for these workshops, allowing thousands of teachers, librarians, parents, community leaders and health workers across Canada to use the *Web Awareness* workshops as part of their professional development and self-directed learning programmes.

Canadian Library Association (CLA) Initiatives. Canada's libraries are well connected – 98 per cent are linked to the Internet, and over 90 per cent provide public access to their

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7   Canada's Children In A Wired World: The Parents' View:
    <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/surveys/phase_one/
    parents_survey.cfm>
    Young Canadians In A Wired World: The Students' View:
    <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/surveys/phase_one/
    students_survey.cfm>

8   Young Canadians In A Wired World – Phase II, Focus Groups:
    <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/surveys/phase_two/
    upload/yccww_phase_two_report.pdf>

patrons. In recent years, the Canadian Library Association (CLA), a national English library association, has taken a leadership role on the issues related to Internet access in public libraries. In Canada, many public libraries have come under fire for offering unfiltered Internet access and have subsequently found their relationships of trust within their communities undermined. Librarians now find their traditional role as protectors of the free flow of information measured against the protection of their patrons, and in particular children, from offensive and potentially illegal online content.

The CLA Statement on Internet Access, encourages libraries to "offer Internet access with the fewest possible restrictions" and to "assume active leadership in community awareness of, and dialogue on, the issues inherent in the *informed* use of this essential, yet non-selective and unregulated medium in libraries."[9]

The CLA developed an initiative, centred on the *Web Awareness* workshop series, in co-operation with MNet, to deliver Internet education in public libraries across Canada. The programme provides professional development for library staff, who in turn raise awareness of Internet issues among those accessing the Internet from public libraries. In response to demand from libraries, MNet produced a *Parenting the Net Generation* workshop to present to the public.

In February 2003 and 2004, the CLA, in partnership with the Media Awareness Network (MNet) and Bell Canada (one of Canada's largest Internet service providers) proclaimed a national *Web Awareness Day.* The purpose of the event was to build public awareness of Internet literacy and of the role being played by Canada's public libraries. To celebrate *Web Awareness Day* libraries around the country promoted Internet literacy through open houses, workshops on safe Internet use and other special events, as well as handing out information pamphlets and other

materials for parents. Public libraries used *Web Awareness Day* as a positive opportunity to deliver the message that they are ready to support parents and communities in teaching young Canadians literacy skills for the twenty-first century.

Be Web Aware Campaign. Much work needs to be done in empowering adults to address Internet issues in homes, schools and communities. This is especially true for parents, who are frustrated with what they see as the negative aspects of the technology and with their inability to control what their children are accessing and doing online. If parents are to be effective Internet gatekeepers for their children, they're going to need tremendous advice, guidance and support from the education system, government and industry.

In 2004, Media Awareness Network with Microsoft Canada and Bell Canada, and a coalition of leading Canadian organizations, launched *Be Web Aware* – a national, public education campaign on Internet safety.[10] The goal of the *Be Web Aware* initiative is to raise awareness amongst parents that there are safety issues when their children go online and that they need to get involved. The *Be Web Aware* initiative includes public service announcements (PSAs) on television, radio, print and outdoor media that direct parents to a comprehensive *Be Web Aware* website. The site, developed by Media Awareness Network, is full of information and tools to help parents teach their children to handle the potential risks associated with going online.

Every day, each of us assimilates, evaluates, and controls immense amounts of data and diverse messages in a complex information and entertainment culture. Given this climate, it

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9   Canadian Library Association, Internet Service in Public Libraries – A Matter of Trust. Net Safe/Net Smart: Managing and Communicating about the Internet in the Library, 2001. Available at: <http://www.cla.ca/netsafe/index.htm>

10 Be Web Aware: <http://www.bewebaware.ca>

makes sense that we expand the notion of what it is to be literate beyond the limits of the traditional areas of reading, writing and numeracy, to include information, visual, and media literacy.

Young people today use technology for entertainment, to learn, to research, to buy and to communicate. Governments, industry, education and library sectors realize that the thinking must change regarding the importance of traditional literacies – not to upstage them – but rather to encompass all the lifelong learning skills that young people require for the management and understanding of information and messages that they receive, create and repurpose.

Christian Möller and Arnaud Amouroux (eds.)
Good Practices for Media Education: Examples from the Canadian Media Awareness Network*

Most experts during the different conferences organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media agreed that labelling, filtering and blocking are not suitable means to protect the young from potentially harmful or allegedly unsuitable material on the Internet. Instead, the consensus was that media education in general and the development of Internet literacy is the best way to enable children to deal with whatever content they find online. Or, as Prof. Frederick M. Lawrence put it during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw 2004: The educated mind is the best filter imaginable.

The goal of media education is to create a media literate individual. It is now widely accepted in education circles that in order to be literate today, children and young people must be able to read, understand and bring critical thinking skills to information in many different forms. Media literacy involves analysis, evaluation, production and critical reflection. These skills are at the heart of a healthy, informed society, and they are increasingly important as young people turn to the Internet as their main source of information.

Today's children are growing up in a rapidly evolving global media environment. A 2001 UNESCO report concluded

that a new media landscape and new media order are emerging. Media cultures are changing; information is flowing more freely and the volume of information is expanding; national media markets are being integrated into a global power structure; people from around the globe can now view media from many different places; and the distinction between computers, television, radio, press, books and telephones is dissolving.

In this borderless media world of VCRs, DVDs, satellite TV, and the Internet, children and young people have increasing access to media products from around the globe. Rating and classification systems, legislation and industry codes and guidelines are no longer enough to protect children – particularly as more young people use wireless devices to access the Internet, play video games, watch movies and listen to music. Digital media are forcing a shift in responsibility from statutory regulators toward the individual household.

Nevertheless a strategy on illegal and offensive Internet content should be developed that can include legislation and self-regulation. However, the difficulty of controlling content in a global medium means that awareness, education and knowledge should form the foundations of any approach. The work in Internet literacy should be focused on developing education resources; influencing public policy; and conducting research on young people's Internet use.

Research of the Canadian Media Awareness Network (MNet) showed that young Canadians are heavy Internet users: almost 50 per cent go online for one to three hours each day and 50 per cent are alone most of the time. A significant number indicated they'd been exposed to hateful messages on the Internet. Eighteen per cent said they have come across a website that was really hateful towards someone. Twenty-one per cent of these sites targeted a group of people based on race, gender, religion, language or sexual orientation.

To help young people deal with such Internet experiences and to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills, it is also vital to invest in training teachers and librarians. Anti-racism programmes aimed at educating teachers and students about diversity representation in the media and online hate were funded by the Canadian Government. These programmes included professional development workshops for teachers, classroom teaching lessons and interactive games for students.

An effective media education strategy to address online hate starts with an examination of stereotypes and bias. Teachers and students are encouraged to examine their own cultural biases and preconceived notions. Next they need to understand how stereotypes function in society and popular culture and how negative stereotypes can influence our perceptions of entire groups of people.

An award-winning poster, issued by the Urban Alliance for Race Relations in Toronto, sets the tone for the *Exploring Media and Race* programme by emphasizing how easily false judgements and assumptions about people are made. The poster lists a series of crimes which we connect with the face. At the bottom of the list we discover that this is a photo of the arresting police officer, not the criminal.

To help educators better understand media representation, the key concepts that are at the heart of media education are introduced. The first concept is that audiences *negotiate* meaning. We all bring our own life experience, knowledge and attitudes to the media we encounter. The objective of media education is to help students to step back and ask critical questions about what they're seeing – rather than just absorbing media messages passively and unconsciously.

The next key concept is that all media are constructed. The process of representing people, places and events to viewers involves steps and decisions on who to leave in, and who

to leave out. Through representation of minorities, media have the power to grant or deny legitimacy to whole groups of people. The chronic under-representation makes those few minority faces, voices and realities that we *do* see, even more significant. When media depictions of a particular group in society reflect a full range of characters we are less likely to make generalizations about them. Many mainstream media portrayals rely on and reinforce racial stereotypes. Consider the kinds of messages about race and gender promoted in popular youth-oriented genres such as music videos and movies. Even well-intentioned portrayals can still perpetrate stereotypes while reinforcing the concept of "the other".

Another key concept of media education looks at the role of mass media as "big business". It examines how, for example, the demand from lucrative foreign markets for action films, preferably with white action heroes, affects film content and development in North America.

And finally, the key concept is introduced that ideological messages about values, power and authority underpin all media.

Following an examination of how stereotyping and bias in media culture may contribute to racist attitudes and beliefs, teachers and students learn the ways in which hate is expressed on the Net in MNet's second programme *Deconstructing Online Hate*. The educator workshop starts with a series of seemingly innocent Web resources that are in fact fronts for the white supremacist organization Stormfront. When examining hateful content it's difficult to isolate it from the culture of the Internet – in particular kids' online culture. The programme looks at the whole "spectrum" of hateful messages that kids are being exposed to – starting with the cruel satire and tasteless humour sites so popular with young people; mov-

ing on to online games that promote degradation and violence as entertainment; and finally, at the furthest extreme, examining websites designed by organized hate groups. The fine line between satire and humour, and intolerance and hurtfulness is addressed by asking participants to decide for themselves whether or not particular Internet sites would be considered as tasteless humour or hate.

Next, participants examine the ways hate groups use the Internet to target young people, through music, clubs, discussion forums and online games. They examine the ways that hatemongers exploit the multimedia capabilities of this powerful, interactive medium, and the clever use of deceptive keywords in meta-tags. They look at how propaganda is used to sway opinion by deconstructing actual hate sites on the basis of wordplay, name-calling, symbols and imagery, religious authority, pseudo-science, nationalism, fear mongering and revisionism.

Participants are led step-by-step through the deconstruction of this revisionist site that is hosted on a US university server. They learn how to authenticate the source of the information by comparing search results on the author, recognizing personal page notations in URLs, and doing a link search to see which organizations link to or talk about this particular website.

Students are encouraged to debate pertinent issues relating to online hate, such as the appropriateness of a university hosting web pages known to contain false and inflammatory information or where the line should be drawn between freedom of expression and indecent or illegal web content. And, of course, the programme helps them understand that at its core, online hate is nothing more than old-fashioned propaganda, wrapped in flashy new packaging.

One of the more ambitious teaching tools in this programme, which is currently in development is an interactive game – Allies and Aliens. In this game players are exposed to varying degrees of prejudice, misinformation and discrimination as they visit websites from other planets – first uncritically, and then with guidance and direction. This resource will allow students to explore the issues surrounding hate sites in an educational and non-threatening manner.

Teaching kids how to assess the credibility of online information is essential because studies have shown that children believe information on a computer screen before they believe something an adult has told them. Almost 40 per cent of teenagers in the MNet survey believe that they can trust *most* of the information they find online.

MNet's *Fact or Folly* programme teaches online authentication skills to teachers and students. MNet has also developed a series of games and learning modules to help students learn to discern fact from fiction in Internet content:

- *Reality Check* is a new classroom resource to teach kids strategies for authenticating online information and detecting bias and stereotyping in Internet content.

- *CyberSense and Nonsense*, is an interactive game on the MNet website where young children learn about authenticating online information in a humorous way. When three CyberPigs stumble across a "We Hate Wolves" website they experience first hand the difference between information on valid, authenticated sites, and sites which are nothing more than the outpouring of emotion and opinion.

- For pre-teens MNet has developed "Jo Cool, Jo Fool" in which students follow a brother and sister team as they surf the Net. Students must decide if the Jos are being cool

or fools as they make various decisions. When Joseph discovers a homework site while researching human rights he must decide whether to use the information he's found. Kids discover Jo's a fool for accepting the content on this site at face value – it turns out that the Homework Nook is actually a cleverly disguised hate site.

One of the cornerstones of media literacy initiatives – be they governmental or NGO – is to get the materials into communities where they are needed. One way of distributing is the Internet itself. For example, many resources, including teaching lessons on stereotyping, diversity, online hate, authenticating Internet information and many more media-related topics, are available free to download from the Media Awareness Network's website.

Another good practice is a partnership approach engaging not-for-profit, government and industry partners in bringing programmes to schools and the public. This ensures efficient delivery of resources and links to public policy.

National public awareness campaigns with the support of all stakeholders including the media industry, ISPs, government, NGOs, and schools should be initiated to raise awareness of Internet issues among parents, and to get them involved in their children's online activities.

Eventually, the increased profile the Internet offers hate groups may be their undoing. By bringing what used to be secretive and hidden out into the mainstream, the Internet is exposing racist propaganda for what it is – and also providing us with tremendous opportunities to counter this issue.

From taunting and bullying, to hate-related symbols, to hate literature and hate sites we must confront and challenge hate in all its forms and what better place to start this process than in the safe, caring – and respectful – environment of our schools.

Media Awareness Network Internet Literacy Resources. Since the mid-1990s, Media Awareness Network has pioneered the development of Internet literacy resources for use in schools, libraries and communities. The following is a sampling of productions, many of which are available free on the MNet website (http://wwww.media-awareness.ca):

i) **Race and Media**

Media Stereotyping: This online resource includes Portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in the Media, and Ethnic and Visible Minorities in Entertainment Media, which examine why, and how, stereotyping is used as a convention by media producers and writers.

Exploring Media and Race: A professional development workshop for teachers about diversity representation in the media.

Classroom teaching lessons: Perceptions of Race and Crime, The White Screen, Too White: Minority Representation in the Media, Diversity Audit, Bias in the News, and Ethnic and Visible Minorities in Entertainment Media.

ii) **Online Hate**

CyberSense and Nonsense: An interactive game for children, with an accompanying teachers' guide, in which surfing CyberPigs learn about prejudice, racism and hate on the Internet.

Challenging Online Hate: An online resource that explores the motives and targets of online hate, and suggests ways to safeguard children and teens.

Deconstructing Online Hate: A professional development workshop for teachers that examines the spectrum of hateful messages on the Internet.

Classroom teaching lessons: Free Speech vs. the Internet, Challenging Hate Propaganda, Thinking about Hate,

Understanding Online Hate, Techniques on Hate Sites. Allies and Aliens: An interactive online student game, with an accompanying teachers' guide, to help teens understand and recognize the often subtle language and tactics of hatemongers.

iii) **Authentication of Information**

Fact or Folly: An online resource that teaches online authentication skills to teachers and students.

Reality Check: An interactive module to teach teens strategies for authenticating online information and detecting bias and stereotyping in Internet content.

Jo Cool or Jo Fool: An interactive online game, with an accompanying teachers' guide, where pre-teens learn to make informed online decisions in various Internet environments.

Classroom teaching lessons: Deconstructing Web Sites, A Tale of Two Cities, Hoax? Scholarly Research? Personal Opinion? You Decide!, ICYouSee: A Lesson in Critical Thinking.

iv) **Electronic Privacy and Marketing**

Privacy Playground: An interactive game for children, with an accompanying teachers' guide, in which CyberPigs learn about online marketing, and about protecting their privacy as they surf the Internet.

Kids for Sale: An online resource that examines marketing and privacy concerns on the Internet.

Classroom teaching lessons: Online Marketing to Kids: Protecting Your Privacy, Online Marketing to Kids: Strategies and Techniques, What Students Need to Know about Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy, Who Knows: Your Privacy in the Information Age.

Marcel van den Berg and Pascal Hetzscholdt

The National High Tech Crime Center in the Netherlands

Tackling high-tech crime is a vital concern for the Dutch Government

The Dutch ministries of Justice, Interior and Kingdom Relations, Economic Affairs and the Dutch National Police combined their expertise to co-ordinate (inter)national investigations regarding high-tech crime. This National High Tech Crime Center (NHTCC) is based at Schiphol Airport – Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

In co-operation with its national and international partners regarding high-tech crime, terrorism and critical infrastructure protection the main objectives of the NHTCC are to exchange and co-ordinate information and intelligence to combat serious ICT crime.

The partnership is designed to provide early warning of and a swift and effective response to serious crimes using or directed against ICT – collectively known as high-tech crime. One specific focus will be the consequences that high-tech crime can have for Dutch society in general and for vital information infrastructures in particular. These include the computer systems at Schiphol Airport and computer networks at major financial institutions or in the energy sector.

Tackling high-tech crime is an integral part of the Dutch Government's drive to put concrete effective measures in place to tackle ICT-related crime. This is a goal that calls for a proactive approach, and it can only be achieved by bringing together the experience, knowledge and expertise of the various organizations involved. This is why it is so important at both the

national and the international level for government and the private sector to collaborate.

The general manager of the National High Tech Crime Center (NHTCC), Nienke van den Berg stated: "Our society is now highly dependent on ICT. That is why it is imperative that we make sure criminals or terrorists cannot hack into our company networks or misuse government information. But if things should ever go wrong it will be essential to take swift action to limit the damage as far as possible, enable public and private bodies to get back to work, and round up the suspects. And that is precisely what the NHTCC has been created to do."

The multi-agency approach of the NHTCC is a new method in combating organized crime: governments, private companies and law enforcement are working closely together to prevent criminals and criminal organizations from ICT abuse. An announcement is expected in the near future about how members of the public can turn to the Government for advice on the potential for serious high-tech crime or to report criminal and/or terrorist ICT incidents. This is vital if the Government is to take swift action following such an incident or while it is still going on – and, in particular, to forestall major ICT problems in the future.