What is Digital Media Literacy?

Digital technologies and media are firmly embedded into daily life and continue to bring new opportunities, benefits and challenges. Students have grown up in a digital world that has never been more connected and as digital technology becomes more complex, students need the skills to know and understand how to access digital media, analyse it and produce it.

"In a digital age in which many everyday actions generate data – whether given by digital actors, observable from digital traces, or inferred by others, whether human or algorithmic – the relation between privacy and data online is becoming highly complex. This in turn sets a significant media literacy challenge for children (and their parents and teachers) as they try to understand and engage critically with the digital environment."
Sonia Livingstone[1]

While there is no agreed definition of the term digital media literacy, it can often be referred to as a minimum level of knowledge or skills required for using technology or the internet. This programme looks at digital media literacy as a variant of media literacy.[2]

> *"Media Literacy ... provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy."*
> Center for Media Literacy[3]

Research into the impact of digital media on young people often documents the negative impacts. Digital media and technologies continue to provide a wealth of opportunities for young people and balancing empowerment and protection is crucial for parents and educators.

"...Developing digital and media literacies is one of the most viable intervention strategies to minimize media's negative consequences and maximize its positive influences on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. In short, interventions that equip youth to critically navigate their digital lives have positive impacts that mitigate potentially harmful effects of participation in digital spaces. These literacies are fundamental in helping youth to become critical consumers and creators in a digital world..."
Eisenstock, Kristine E. Pytash (2017)[4]

This programme offers an introduction to key topics within digital media and encourages students to explore each module using digital media. The programme promotes responsible digital citizenship by introducing students to emerging areas within digital technology and facilitates the development of key digital media literacy skills.

To be digital media literate, students must be able to navigate, assess and know the critical questions to ask so that they may participate in civic life as competent and ethical media consumers and creators.

> *"Becoming digital media literate means that students are learning to form clear and purposeful goals, becoming equipped with a sense of agency and purpose which can lead to improvement in quality of life, civic engagement, social connections and life satisfaction."*
> (OECD 2018).[5]

Becoming digital media literate provides students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that student's need to thrive and shape their worlds.