

Dutch policy on media literacy and digital skills Brief outline for EURODIG

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Introduction

In the Netherlands, we do have two programmes dealing with the new media developments. On one hand we have a medialiteracy ('mediawijsheid') program, mainly dealing with the social aspects of new media, on the other hand we have a digital skills program ('digivaardig- digibewust'), dealing with the use of ICT in society. In this paper you'll find a brief review of both programs.

Media literacy (mediawijsheid)

In April, 2008, an official center has been created (mediawijsheid expertisecentrum = medialiteracy expertisecentre www.mediawijzer.net) by the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science with the aim to encourage media literacy in Dutch society.

This center is a network organization existing of different partners with their own expertise on the subject of media education. Governing partners are ECP-EPN (founders of the below mentioned Digivaardig- Digibewust program), the VOB (Union of Dutch public libraries), the public broadcaster, Kennisnet (public IT support organization for primary, secondary and vocational education) and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision (Beeld en Geluid). The network exists of over 160 partners, all with activities which have a relation to media literacy: ranging from education, media, libraries, NGO's, youth organisations to universities and printed press.

Background

In the Netherlands media literacy was placed on the agenda by the government in 2006 as an important subject for society after consultation of the Council for Culture, the advisory body of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. It redefined media literacy as "the knowledge, skills and mentality with which citizens consciously, critically and actively engage in a complex, changing and fundamentally medialised world." They introduced the word 'mediawijsheid' ('media wisdom'). Network partners have the possibility to present themselves on one platform, to exchange views and to find new partners and to present them to the public.

The idea is that media education will become a part of a life long learning process. The centre offers knowledge about participation in the information society with the aim to create a more critical, active, and safer attitude towards the use of media and internet. This definition implies that as much as both civic institutions and media (publishers and distributors) hold responsibility for the content they create and the ways in which they distribute it; citizens themselves are equally responsible for the choices they make in consuming and (re)producing information.

Mission and targets

The mission of the Center is to promote "the knowledge, skills and mentality with which citizens consciously, critically and actively engage in a complex, changing and fundamentally medialised world."

A 'medialiterated' citizen is capable to participate in society using new media. An important focus is especially the protection of young people against negative influences of media content and learn them the potential of modern media applications in daily life. Another target is to support children, youngsters, their parents and schools in their activities in the information society.

Network approach

In the Netherlands many initiatives (in educational programs, by research organisations, by broadcasting companies and others) exist which show that the subject media literacy gains broad attention. The program especially focuses on promoting cohesion between existing initiatives and promoting collaboration. The vision behind this is that enhancing the cohesion between different

projects will lead to greater transparency, visibility and accessibility for end users. The 160 network partners present themselves currently on the site of the medialiteracy expertisecenter. The target is to gain regular attention for media literacy in society.

Targets and users of the medialiteracy expertisecenter

The objective of the medialiteracy expertisecenter is to enhance the media literacy skills of citizens, public and private companies to make them participate consciously, critically and active in a complex, changing and fundamentally medialised world. To reach this goal, changes in attitude are needed and collaboration fostered.

The medialiteracy expertisecenter concentrates itself on the general public, existing of all citizens and media related organisations. The following groups are identified:

- Children (2-12 jaar)
- Adolescents (12-18 jaar)
- Parents and grandparents
- Teachers
- Caretakers (healthcare)
- Senior citizens
- Citizen initiatives ("civil society")
- Mediaprofessionals

The development of the network via the medialiteracy expertisecenter (2008-2010)

To reach the aim of the medialiteracy expertisecenter, the program focuses in 2008-2010 on a set of goals:

- The creation of a medialiteracy expertisecenter and the set up of a network.
- Promote the visibility of the subject 'medialiteracy' for the large audience.
- To promote visibility of initiatives in the working field of medialiteracy, not only the activities of the five founding partners, but promote the services of the 160 network partners to the target groups.
- To carry through collaboration between network partners.
- To foster research aspects of media literacy, like social demands, priorities or policy approaches, the analyse of practices in other countries, international developments and good practices.
- Organise activities which will lead to a good level of services of the network, based on research and demand of the identified target groups.
- To promote cohesion in approaches and activities in the field of media literacy. Seek connection with national and international initiatives.

Program and activities

Three lines are defined in the program resulting in the following activities:

1. Mediaskills and -awareness

The program Mediaskills and -awareness deals with four aspects resulting in:

1. Technical skills: the ability to deal with, and gaining understanding of the production of media content. This part deals with ICT skills, knowledge of audio -and video production, but also skills in reading and writing.

2. Information literacy and communication skills: skills needed for understanding information in the media and on internet. This deals with general information skills (like seaching, selection, interpretation, processing, creation, communication) and the ability to use new media to strengthen someone's social position in a new media environment.

3. Medialiteracy: awareness of the role of media in modern society, with a focus on strengthening the position of consumers and citizens towards the media industry and the government. Also the acknowledgment of the bifacial position of the citizen, as consumer and producer of media-like content belongs to this sub theme.

4.

Responsible use and safety, directed at safe internet use. This activity deals with technical aspects (virus, spam, firewall) as well social and ethical aspects (digital bullying, how to deal with personal data / information).

2. Promoting participation.

This line of action wants to promote individual participation in a media environment and deals with three aspects:

5. Participation and production: the promotion of participation in a media environment. Target is how to learn to develop knowledge and skills to produce media yourself.

6. Empowerment: strengthening media skills of citizens in general, as well of specific groups in society (target groups) like senior citizens, social weak groups and social initiatives ('civil society').

7. Authors rights: Participation in media has often a conflict with authors rights. Demand for activities dealing with this subject is evolving. The target is to inform citizens how to deal with authors rights.

3. Innovation

This line of action promotes innovation and experiment in new media. The rapidly evolving medialandscape offers many opportunities for innovation. In this stage we face the rapid development of web 2.0 applications and the developing role as prosumer of citizens in a new media environment. To foster this, a budget line of 1.2. million euro is available in 2009 and 2010 for experimental initiatives.

Network activities

Those three lines of action are all directed to the end user. Next to this we have several activities promoting collaboration within the network group, aimed at coordination and organisation of the network. Those exist of:

- promoting visibility of the activities of the 160 network partners. Target: promotion of collaboration. This is done by networking markets and working groups. Examples: working group dealing with innovation researches the use of 'serious gaming' in education, integration of media heritage, new media artists,

Working group education: needs in education

Working group research: e.g. What are schools doing on media literacy

Working group safer internet with "digivaardig digibewust" programme

- Promoting research regarding the function of the medialiteracy expertisecenter: which results do the activities have? This is constantly being monitored by a Beeld en Geluid (Institute for Sound and Vision) who have a group of 1100 selected students being part of a permanent on line research group

Targets and ambitions in 2008-2009

Many existing initiatives and programs are focused on the development of media skills- and literacy among adolescents, children, parents and teachers.

This fits well with the focus of the current Dutch government, which wants to address those target groups and wants to promote the synergy among existing initiatives and if appropriate, develop new initiatives in the field.

In 2008-2009 will be exploited which needs do exist in society, and which activities should be developed. Next to this, the medialiteracy expertisecenter will be developed further.

Targets for the medialiteracy expertisecenter in 2008 and 2009 are:

To realise a working structure for the network.

- Clear visibility and positioning of the medialiteracy expertisecenter and the network with regard to end users and network partners. With a focus on consumers and several target groups: adolescents, children, parents and teachers.
- The development and maintenance of an interactive website for end users and network partners. (www.mediawijzer.net) (www.mediawijsheidkaart.nl) mediawijsheidexpertisecentrum.nl.
- The start of working groups promoting collaboration between existing initiatives in the field of media literacy, and the development of new initiatives if needed. Two examples: a financial arrangement for new initiatives (projects) in the field of Medialiteracy and the researching of 'blank spots' (what do we miss??)
- Researching the need for information points in the country, e.g. in public libraries or parental information centers. Result: many libraries are working on the subject: media coaches, and as part of their information function on a permanent basis.
- Researching (international and national) the current developments in media literacy. Recent research: the state of media literacy in primary and secondary education and currently starting research how public libraries deal with media literacy

People from the 160 network partners participate in working groups.

Second program:

Digivaardig & Digibewust 2009-2013 **Skilled, safe and secure**

<http://www.mijndigitalewereld.nl>

In January 2009 the Dutch programme called Digivaardig & Digibewust has started. This programme is a partnership of government, business and social-sector organisations with the aim of encouraging the maximum number of people in the Netherlands to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT to society in a safe way so that they can play a full part in the information society. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and various private companies in the Netherlands have made € 2 million a year available for this objective in order to set up and support initiatives and activities in this field. The programme runs for five years from 2009-2013.

Background

Disadvantage groups:

Research shows that almost 10% of the Dutch population (around 1.6 miljoen people), have difficulties taking part in digital means like internet. People with low levels of digital skills are increasingly missing out on access to unique information and communication possibilities, and even access to employment opportunities. The disadvantage is greater because other individuals and agencies, such as the government and commercial sectors, are tending to assume more and more frequently that everyone is now online.

Security:

Increasing use of digital means by people with evil intentions. Examples include cyber crime, the spread of undesirable and illegal content on the internet, the sending of spam and viruses, types of identity fraud and violations of privacy online. Creating awareness of the possible risks and dangers that are involved is necessary, especially with regard to ways of combating these hazards.

NL ambition (ICT Agenda 2008-2011):

Dutch citizens must know how to use ICT and other digital means and take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT in a safe way so that they can play a full part in the information society.
this includes end-users in various capacities, such as citizens, patients, consumers,

business people, employees, employers and parents.

Towards one programme for digital skills and digital awareness:

Various public and private parties have already indicated their willingness to accept their social responsibility for promoting a digital skills and awareness programme. These parties have also played an important role over the last three years in the public-private programme Digibewust, which was concluded at the end of 2008 and was aimed at promoting the safe use of digital applications. This new programme will also concentrate specifically on the new theme of digital skills, bringing in new user groups and with this new social parties.

Skilled, safe and secure

The two aspects of the programme are closely related: you need to be digitally skilled if you want to use the internet and emails etc. safely, but you can only talk about being digitally skilled if you are aware of the risks attached to the use of digital resources, as well.

Objectives

The Digivaardig & Digibewust programme's goal is to enable as many Dutch people as possible in the future to be able to take advantage in a safe way of all the opportunities that ICT has to offer in society and so to participate fully in the information society

- Decrease number of people with insufficient digital skills

This is not just about having the ability to apply hard and software but it is also about understanding these in greater depth: being able to use ICT and, in this way, being able to benefit from the advantages it offers in a person's personal and work sphere. Being digitally skilled is more than just being able to push the buttons.

- Stimulate safe and responsible use of digital means

This programme aims at making Dutch society more digitally aware. Being digitally aware implies making the best use of the opportunities presented by digital resources such as the internet, email, chat rooms and online payment services whilst at the same time being aware of any possible risks and dangers and knowing how to prevent them.

Target groups

- people with insufficient digital skills
- senior citizens
- SME's
- children, parents, teachers
- government employees / civil servants

Programme is a catalyst of a network

Public-private collaboration- Government, market en social organizations are working together

The basis of the Digivaardig & Digibewust programme is founded in the collaboration between public and private parties, and the organisations that are actively involved with the various target groups.

Growing network, organizations can join at any time

Collaboration within the programme will be open and transparent, so that new partners can join at any time. Everyone who wants and is able to contribute something to the programme will be given the opportunity of applying and finding a place in the network of activity stakeholders.

The programme links up specifically with existing and new activities and initiatives in the network in order to underline them and to apply means and resources to enlarge existing knowledge. The main emphasis will be on retaining the identity, expertise and competences of the organisations that develop and offer activities.

Advisory committee

- Chair: Tineke Netelenbos, independent person with an authoritative reputation
- Delegates from all the various parties involved in achieving the objectives
- Advice on strategic course
- Monitoring the results
- Ambassadors Digivaardig & Digibewust

Active participation in working groups

The network members of the Digivaardig & Digibewust programme will be invited to take an active part in specially set-up working groups, which will constitute the core section of the programme.

Working group on inspiring senior citizens

The common theme linking any activities for senior citizens will be: inspiring senior citizens. This means that senior citizens with some internet experience will be invited to encourage others by sharing their experience so that a greater number of older people can also discover the digital world. In collaboration with various organisations and other bodies who want to get involved, this line of approach will be adopted as the basis for developing activities to help more senior citizens to go online and to acquire digital skills, and also to point out to them any agencies that could help them with this.

Working group on those without computer skills

In 2009, consultations will take place with various organisations and bodies who want to become involved and who have experience and/or have contacts with people without computer skills to see which informational activities and programmes can be initiated to help them become aware of the possibilities offered by digital applications and to develop their digital skills.

Working group on Entrepreneur 2.0

Traditional divisions of roles like customer, friend, employee, employer and manufacturer etc. are beginning to fade. Business people and employees no longer work within a department, company or sector only, but are also part of a much larger, possibly digital, network. What kind of approach does a business person have towards these networks? How can he access them and convert them into business capital? How can he use his networks to attract employees and acquire knowledge? How can he use networks to get the most out of customer relations, turnover and market share? The working group for business people 2.0 will examine all these questions, the answers to which will then form the basis for future activities to increase the digital skills of business people and those in the SME sector.

Working group on civil servants

In 2008 the Dutch Ministry of the Interior began an exploration of the current state of digital skills among civil servants, specifically on the use of internet and internet applications and not ICT in general. The results are expected in 2009; the working group will then incorporate these findings in its programme of activities to improve the digital skills of civil servants.

Working group on parents in cyberspace

This working group focuses on carers to become aware of the opportunities that possessing digital skills could give them, that they learn how to practise them and also that they accept responsibility for guiding their children in the use of digital applications.

Working group on pictograms for privacy policy

Practice has proved that very few internet users read the online service providers' privacy policy, usually because they contain far too much text and are often couched in difficult language. Providing the user with greater clarity on privacy policy would be good for the image of the service provider and increase the user's confidence in online services and digital applications. As part of the framework of the Digivaardig & Digibewust programme, a process will be initiated to study the feasibility of introducing privacy pictograms as a way of creating

greater clarity about privacy policy (in a similar way to Guidance labels and PEGI pictograms). These pictograms would show in an instant what happens to personal information. The Digivaardig & Digibewust programme can act as a spur to bring the appropriate parties to the discussion table and convert this idea into a product.

Founding partners

- Ministry of Economic Affairs - Microsoft - KPN - UPC - NVB - SIDN - IBM - NVPI - EU
- Feel Social responsible for issues within programme
- Give financial support: at least €50.000 a year
- Use their marketing and communications tools for the programme
- Are ambassador for the programme
- Participate in working groups
- Get visibility via the program (website: www.mijndigitalewereld.nl, and network)
- Have no influence on programme activities

Output of activities

Among the diverse activities and promising results, these are the most tangible:

- All elementary schools (more than 8000) received informing- educational material on safety of electronic communication. At least 2250 schools made use of it so far.
- Untill June 2009 the former website www.digibewust.nl had 97.000 visitors. From June 2009 onwards the new website www.mijndigitalewereld.nl is online expecting to have an increased interest.
- Research institutes CBS and TNO will estimate yearly the number of people with insufficient digital skills
- Reports on national youth broadcaster Jetix of the Digiraad, a youth counsel campaigning for digital awareness (www.digiraad.net), resulted in at least 120.000 viewers each item.
- 20.000 eSafe packages distributed to families
- 35.000 SME-entrepreneurs took part in online Digibarometer (<http://www.digibarometer.nl/>), to test their online safety.