Promoting media and information literacy among children and educators

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«Critical thinking» experiment in Latvia in 2012

• **Aim:**
  
  – to find out if young people believe everything they read and see on the internet, and
  
  – whether they verify the veracity and source of information before providing their contact information to unknown persons.

• In cooperation with our local SNS Draugiem.lv

• **Banner** for 24 hours in profiles of 10-20 years old youngsters
Unsafe, very unprofessional and pushy banner stating:

- Want to receive the new and stylish iPad?
- Do not be late! Only the first 500 to respond will receive iPads!
- Register before 7 February, 12:00 noon and receive it as a gift!

The banner was supplemented with information stating that the promotional campaign was organized by drossinternets.lv – the Latvian Safer Internet Centre - making it possible for anyone to check the veracity of the information.
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- the banner was clicked by 2281 children and youngsters
- more than half of whom (1,211) registered on the website and provided their phone number and/or email address
- unfortunately, there were also 26 children who specified their home address
After completing the registration, a campaign page opened with a text as follows:

«Congratulations! You have fallen for the trick too! Do you know that 45% of European young people do not check the veracity of the information available on the internet? Do not believe everything you see or read on the internet! Assess it critically!»

The aim was to make young people think about how easy it was to fool them and lure them into providing their personal information.

Conclusion - experiment confirmed the need to develop ability of young people to critically assess the veracity of information and analyze it.
Why educating is important?

- **Teachers**
  - lack media literacy **skills**
  - agree media literacy should be taught at school... but **not in their subject**
  - lack **materials** to use in class
  - media literacy seminars – highly requested

- **Youngsters**
  - able to **search** for information **very fast**, but don’t compare
  - tend to **read just the title** and first lines of article
  - tend to **believe anybody** and anything
  - sinning with respect for **copyrights**
Materials developed by Latvian SIC

- Textbook “Vaifijs School” for children aged 5 to 7
  - A boy «Vaifijs» lives in computers and mobile phones and teach children safe use of internet, online risks and safety rules
  - The book can be integrated in reading classes and is supplemented with methodological material for teachers
Mascot “Vaifijs” with educational programme for children

Materials developed by Latvian SIC
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- Teaching material for secondary school “World in a net”
  - All kind of information on the internet – how not to get lost?
  - Whom should I believe?
  - My activities on the internet – my virtual identity!
Looking into the future...

- **Text book** «Vaifijs school» for 8-10 year old children
- «Vaifijs school» for teachers – **video instructions and methodological materials for teachers**
- Material with **case studies** for 7-9 graders
- **Cartoon** for pre-school children
- **Computer game** for 6-7 graders

**Better Internet for Kids**

- [www.betterinternetforkids.eu](http://www.betterinternetforkids.eu) - website for Network of European SICs:
  - Trends and blogposts
  - Guide to online services
  - Resource repository (more than 600 resources in different languages)
THANK YOU!

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