



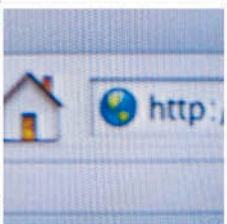
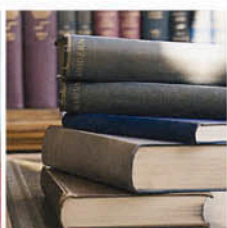
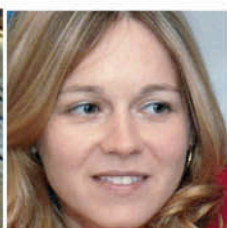
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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IFAP
Information for All
Programme



Government
of the Khanty-Mansiysk
Autonomous Okrug – Ugra



MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY FOR BUILDING CULTURE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra
Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO
UNESCO / UNESCO Information for All Programme
Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications
Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme
Interregional Library Cooperation Centre

Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government

Proceedings of the International Conference

(Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation, 7–10 June 2016)

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Compilers: Evgeny Kuzmin, Anastasia Parshakova, Tatiana Murovana, Albina
Borisenko

Translators: Tatiana Butkova, Ekaterina Komarova, Anastasia Parshakova

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The book includes papers by the participants of the international conference
on Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government
(Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation, 7–10 June 2016), which has heralded
a new important shift towards using media and information literacy to solve the
problems of building open governments and establishing feedback mechanisms
between governments and the society.

The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of facts and for the
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FOREWORD

On June 7 to 10, 2016 Khanty-Mansiysk successfully hosted an international conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government. The first-ever global meeting on the topic was held within the framework of the UNESCO Information for All Programme and the VIII International IT Forum.

It is the third major international event arranged in team with, and on the initiative of the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra, the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre. The present conference was preceded by two world expert meetings on the preservation of languages and promotion of linguistic diversity in cyberspace. Both were a great success. The first gathered on the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in 2014, and the second in Khanty-Mansiysk in 2015. Thirty nations were represented at each of the meetings.

The 2016 conference attracted attention of both major international experts and public authorities of many countries. More than half of 110 participants were nominated by their respective governments.

The conference gathered leading scientists, academia, politicians, diplomatic officials, government, civil society and private representatives from close on 50 countries – Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Finland, France, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe.

The conference's high topicality was based on the need to address two of the key contemporary problems.

The first is to develop public media and information competences comprehensively and keep them up at the relevant level so as to help people to live, make progress and cope efficiently with the challenges of the rapidly and cardinally changing information environment and breath-taking technological development. The whole world recognizes the importance of this goal today, and the work to promote media and information literacy is expanding worldwide.

The necessity of the greatest possible civic involvement in governance and the creation of the feedback machinery is also recognized everywhere and at

all levels – international, national, regional and municipal. This goal might be met as open government systems are formed in cyberspace. Such is the second essential challenge.

As conference organizers, we have formulated the four principal goals of this conference:

- The development and improvement of UNESCO policies to promote media and information literacy, particularly concerning open government building;
- The determination of conceptual frameworks of open government culture;
- The identification and promotion of international open government experience;
- Adapting educational programmes on media and information literacy to the goals of open government building.

As we see it, the two problems can and must be addressed at once so as to hit these four targets.

We think that the conference spells a new and essential shift of the media and information literacy theme toward open government building and the establishment of government-public feedback.

Media and information literacy is among UNESCO proprieties while open government is a new theme. The UNESCO Information for All Programme has always been future-oriented, and this conference is yet another breakthrough into the future.

A total of 30 reports were presented at the conference. At the closing plenary all participants noted the high organizational level of this content-rich event. And it is a good occasion to express gratitude to the conference sponsors – the Ugra Government, Russia's Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications, LUKoil petroleum company, UNESCO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Russian National Commission for UNESCO, under which our Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme is working and, personally, Russian diplomat Nikolai Khaustov, who is present here. He has done much for UNESCO and Russia.

Our UNESCO colleagues – Chafica Haddad, Chair of the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, and Indrajit Banerjee, Boyan Radoykov and Paul Hector of the UNESCO Secretariat – also done a lot for our conference's success.

My greatest thanks, however, are to the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra in the person of Governor Natalia Komarova, and Vice-Governors Alexei Zabozyayev and Fanuza Arslanova.

My special gratitude is to the Ugra Department for Public and External Relations and its Director Elena Shumakova, who proposed to regard media and information literacy issues at the conference not as isolated problems but as tied in with the formation of regional openness and open government. I also thank the department's Deputy Director Irina Beznosova, who has taken part with us in organizing three major UNESCO events now, and the entire department staff.

All these people let our conference become a central event of the VIII International IT Forum, held annually in Khanty-Mansiysk, and also Russia and Ugra's new contribution to the activities by UNESCO and to the implementation of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) – UNESCO's major intergovernmental programme in the field of communication and information.

Eogeny Kuzmin

Co-Chair, Conference Organizing Committee;

Vice-Chair, UNESCO IFAP Intergovernmental Council;

Chair, UNESCO IFAP Working Group on Multilingualism in Cyberspace;

Chair, Russian UNESCO IFAP Committee;

President, Interregional Library Cooperation Centre;

Member, Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO

GREETINGS TO CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANIZERS

Address by Mr Frank La Rue, UNESCO Deputy Director-General for Communication and Information

Dear Organizers,

- Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra,
- Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO,
- Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications,
- Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme,
- Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Russian Federation),

Dear Participants and Experts,

The theme for this conference is apt and timely. Open government should be considered in the context of open and inclusive development. An open government should lead to open and inclusive development that is based on the following pillars: 1) access to information and freedom of expression laws based on international standards, 2) a citizen-centric approach, and 3) a commitment to sustainable development based on human solidarity and peace at the national level as well as regional and global levels.

In the current context, the need for creating and strengthening institutional and human capacities takes on added significance. Realizing greater openness will demand strong political commitment at all levels of government, adequate allocation of public resources, coupled with effective enforcement and monitoring mechanisms.

If open government is to be effective, awareness about the right to access information should be more widely expanded among the population at large, and particularly those who are marginalized or vulnerable.

Thus, the media, Internet and ICTs, when they are free, independent and pluralistic, can greatly facilitate access to information. However, there remain substantive challenges related to furthering their reach and addressing media and information literacy needs among all citizens to stimulate effective participation in the democratic and governance processes. Having access to information is a necessity but the impact of this access is magnified exponentially when citizens have the competencies to critically and effectively engage with the media, Internet

and other information providers. UNESCO through various programmes, including the Information for All Programme (IFAP), and in close cooperation with our Member States, have been promoting media and information literacy competencies for all. Our comprehensive programme covers curricula and resource development, guidelines for policy and strategy articulation, capacity development including through Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs), monitoring and assessment, networking, research and youth engagement.

Furthermore, paramount among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recently adopted by the international development community are Goals 16 and 17 – promoting peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development and global partnership for sustainable development. The exchange of experiences and knowledge is at the heart of learning, creative and innovation processes. Events such as this conference, organized in the framework of IFAP, are crucial for global partnership.

The foregoing global shifts clearly challenge and call into question the relevance and adequacy of concepts such as “economic growth at all cost” and “trickle down effects”. These ideas are clearly being replaced with a shift to a more holistic understanding of development, in line with the values that UNESCO has been promoting. Governments need to redouble their commitment to socially equitable and environmentally sustainable outcomes. In addition to their actions to support open government they must also focus on enlarging the public domain and making widely available the information necessary for effective decision making and participation at all levels of society. Building the public domain must necessarily involve governments, media, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, education, research and training institutions, etc.

Enhanced flows of information can bring tangible improvements in terms of access to education, healthcare and the provision of basic public services in general and cooperation among nations. It is when we focus on the connection between open government, equitable access to information and knowledge that we fully grasp the extent of their relevance and the urgency to pursue the path to sustainable development.

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers, the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications, the Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Russian Federation), for the organization of this major event and for their continued remarkable efforts for fostering equitable, open and inclusive knowledge societies.

I wish you every success in the holding of this important international Conference and look forward with great interest to the outcome of your deliberations.

Address by Ms Natalia Komarova, Governor of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra

Ladies and gentlemen,

I greet you at the first international UNESCO conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government in Khanty-Mansiysk.

Ugra and UNESCO are linked together by many years' partnership, joint initiatives and effective international projects, many of which have won renown and support in dozens of countries – suffice to mention the “To Save and Preserve” international ecological action, the International IT forum, the UNESCO Associated School Conference “Ob-Irtysh Basin: The Youth Studies and Preserves Natural and Cultural Heritage in the Regions of the World's Great Rivers”, the international crafts festival of the indigenous peoples, and the formation of the Register of Intangible Heritage of the Ugra Peoples.

While implementing the communique signed in 2014 to summarize the Ugra Days at the UNESCO Headquarters, we have planned new fields of partnership topical both for experts and the public-at-large: the preservation of indigenous languages, development of diversity in cyberspace, and the use of the latest tactics and technologies to attain these goals. World expert meetings on those topics promoted new Ugra-based projects, such as the establishment of a depository in 2015 on the platform of the Ob-Ugra Institute of Applied Research and Development. It aims to bring folklore materials into system, regulate their storage, and provide online public access to the intangible cultural heritage of the Ugra indigenous peoples.

This year, our international conference is dedicated to Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government. A conference on this theme has never been convened yet. Last year, the 70th session of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which envisages 17 goals and 169 related targets. It promotes dynamic international demand for development-oriented information, and systematized academic, expert and humanitarian dialogue and knowledge exchanges. International meetings on “information for development” to attain these goals are now topical and popular as never before. Every government's work for sustainable development demands open governance, when the public-at-large, experts, public activists, the academic community and businesses are involved in decision-making and implementation. The search for the most efficient instruments of such public participation, exchange of the best practical patterns of forming the system of open regions and open government, public training to

acquire media and information literacy, and efficient handling of relevant data are among the top applied priorities of this conference.

Our region is addressing these problems. Ugra has established the Open Region Centre to form the culture of openness in state governance. Several educational projects are being implemented now on the basis of that centre, which also works to form pioneer approaches to information access, crowdsourcing development, and provision of dialogue venues for experts and the public-at-large. We work to put an end to digital inequality, train the population in the use of electronic services on the Electronic Citizen programme, and develop the websites of online libraries and museums and of Ugra civil society. There is a territorial geoinformation system and a media school. We are interested in international experts' knowledge and cooperation in every field of this work. I am confident that this conference will promote such contacts, and develop into a permanent and influential platform to elaborate new approaches to the formation of open government culture.

Welcome to Ugra! I wish you fruitful and successful work.

**Address by Mr Gennady Gatilov,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**

I am glad to greet the organizers and participants of the UNESCO-sponsored international conference, Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government.

The formation of public media and information literacy is a new field of activity, which is developing dynamically in the leading countries' politics and practice. The concept of media and information literacy crosses the limits of information and communication technologies and comprises the skills of critical thinking, and the comprehension and interpretation of information in diverse professional and educational spheres. Media and information literacy supposes the operation of all kinds of information resources – oral, written and multimedia.

The study of media and information literacy has certainly attained tangible positive results, to which many of you have contributed. Still, much more remains to be done.

The Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme is a unique contributor to the cause. When Russia was chairing the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, it convened in Moscow, in June 2012, an international expert forum on media and information literacy, crowned with the adoption of the Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy, from which UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations proceed in their activities.

I am confident that the conference will help to develop available success, enhance the public awareness of the problem, roadmap political and professional strategies to promote media and information literacy, spotlight priority problems, and emulate breakthrough achievements in that field.

Allow me to express heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra, the Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme, and to you all for your priceless contribution to the studies of media and information literacy in Russia and the world.

I wish you every success in your fruitful work, and I wish your daring plans to come true.

**Address by Mr Alexei Zabozyayev,
Deputy Governor of the Khanty-Mansi
Autonomous Area – Ugra**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me greet you here, on Ugra soil, on behalf of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomy's government.

I am pleased to note that events under the auspices of UNESCO are becoming a tradition at our International IT Forum. In 2015, we focused on issues related to multilingualism in cyberspace. And during this current, VIII forum, we are going to discuss, in conjunction with UNESCO, a subject just as topical: media awareness and its role in developing a culture of open governance. I believe it goes without saying that the matter is a highly relevant one in today's world. Across the globe now, there is a need arising for effective and efficient practices that would help us build a new kind of information culture, and an open governance culture as part of it. This is something we want at every level, including regional.

Here, in Ugra, we launch various IT projects making relevant information accessible to the population so as to promote social self-organization and social partnership between authorities, the business community and the public. Specifically, at this point we are introducing a system of open data for the Autonomy's authorities. By bringing government information into the public domain, we believe we can create useful tools and products that would facilitate citizens' navigation through modern-day life. We have set ourselves the task of creating several dozen theme applications on the basis of open-source data. Such as a catalogue of cultural sites with an arts event schedule, for example. Or a housing & utilities reference book, one that would contain information on condominium property management companies, on repairs planned, on new modes of settling utility bills, etc. Also, increasingly popular are public transport-related e-services. Including ones that, based on GLONASS data [the Global Satellite Navigation System, a Russian equivalent of the US Global Positioning System], inform their users in real time about a bus passing by so that they can arrive just in time to catch it, rather than stay out in the cold, waiting. Such open data are of great help as they really improve people's life quality.

Also, we are running a number of programmes to eliminate the digital gap in the region ultimately so that inhabitants of remote and out-of-the-way areas could benefit from Internet connectivity. Ours is the first Russian region to have

started an innovative E-Citizen programme aimed at teaching computer skills to some of the least advantaged population groups. More than 200 Internet points for the public have by now been set up on culture institutions' premises. And through the links website Libraries of Ugra, users can get online access to the depositories of the region's public libraries.

In late May, our regional government adopted an implementation plan for a Regional Computerisation Concept, which is about narrowing the digital gap between Ugra's residents and raising the efficiency of mechanisms employed in the e-Government's work.

In our region, there are lots of scientific, educational and cultural IT projects underway, as well. Thus, for example, we are keeping a list of indigenous cultural heritage sites and of native communities' folklore and we also run cultural, educational and touristic projects highlighting Ugra's traditions and history.

We would like our collaboration with UNESCO to carry on. Currently we are on the lookout for new models of regional development. And, aware as we are that modern society's future will be inseparable from IT, we are particularly curious to know about the latest in reputed international IT expertise, which we could apply here, in Ugra, for the benefit of its entire population. Hopefully, through joint effort and relying on some proven practices, we will be able to detect whatever problem areas there may be and to choose the most effective strategies for the region's further social and economic development.

In conclusion, let me thank you all once again for having accepted the invitation to come round to Ugra and also express my appreciation for assistance in organizing the conference to UNESCO, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, Russia's Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications, the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre.

I hope the gathering does a good job. For our part, we will try hard to provide comfortable working conditions at the conference as well as an exciting culture programme on its sidelines.

**Address by Ms Chafica Haddad,
Chair of the Intergovernmental Council
of the UNESCO Information for All Programme**

Universal access to information and knowledge including access to and usage of governmental information is fundamental to the development of inclusive Knowledge Societies. In the past, governmental information has too often been managed by a limited influential number of governmental officials, social, academic and economic groups and stakeholders. However, we believe everyone should have access to information and obtain competencies required to turn information into knowledge and knowledge into practical value to their lives and well-being.

The Moscow declaration, Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies – the final document of the UNESCO IFAP international conference of the same name, held in 2012 (the first-ever UNESCO conference on this theme) – was the first international document to provide a detailed practical definition of media and information literacy.

At this new UNESCO IFAP conference media and information literacy will be regarded mainly in the context of the problems and formative challenges of open governance. We have every reason to say that open government's efficiency under total penetration of ICT depends directly on the level of media and information literacy of the community and the government staff in charge of its openness.

The effective formation and functioning of open governance culture is possible solely through the teamwork of civil activists and the open government staff, with both sharing the same high level of media and information literacy and similarly understanding the information demands of broad social circles, and the problems, opportunities and limitations of quality information access provided by the government.

The conference will provide information exchanges between experts on the promotion of media and information literacy and on the formation of open governance. It will be also a platform for the detection and dissemination of theoretical breakthroughs and trailblazing practical knowhow in both fields and on the border between them.

The analysis of media and information literacy under the angle of building culture of open governments will be a stride toward implementing the IFAP mandate and developing one of its six priorities.

As a Chair of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), and on behalf of the 26 IFAP Council members, I would like to encourage all stakeholders, and namely the participants of the new UNESCO/IFAP international conference in Khanty-Mansiysk, to join hands and increase efforts for raising awareness about the importance of exploitation of technological and scientific progress for building culture of open government worldwide, and most importantly to identify practical ways of making outcomes and impact of the progress tangible and visible at community, national, regional and global levels.

The cross-cutting nature of evolving Knowledge Societies allows our goal of a multilingual cyberspace to be pursued through a wide variety of activities, including gathering working groups of experts, assisting national governments, developing national policy frameworks, advocating open approaches to ICT and information development, and promoting accessibility, preservation and literate use of information and technological resources through multi-stakeholder networks, community members and in general language users.

Furthermore, international exchanges like this facilitate the development of joint approaches, tools and resources, and the mobilization of resources for capacity building by raising awareness among policy-makers, academia, language users and other key stakeholders.

I am convinced that the international conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government, taking place in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation, between 6 and 10 June 2016, will expand positively on our work fostering diverse, equitable, open and inclusive knowledge societies.

Finally, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra (Russian Federation), the Russian National Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Russian Federation), the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications and UNESCO for making this event possible and for their continued efforts for safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity.

I wish all success in the organization and holding of this important international conference.

PLENARY MEETING REPORTS

Evgeny KUZMIN

Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Council
for the UNESCO Information for All Programme;
Chair, Russian Committee for the UNESCO Information for All Programme;
President, Interregional Library Cooperation Centre
(*Moscow, Russian Federation*)

Media and Information Literacy and Open Governments: How They Improve Our Life

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2012, the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (IFAP), the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, the UNESCO Secretariat and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) convened an international conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building Knowledge Societies – the first-ever international conference to bring together experts from two spheres: librarians, archivists, and professors of information, archive, library and document studies for information literacy, and journalists, media theoreticians and professors of journalism for media education.

The spheres of information literacy and media literacy had existed, so to say, in parallel worlds never to intercross prior to that conference.

Information literacy experts had to do with printed texts – books and periodicals, with manuscripts, sheet music and maps, with libraries, archives, scientific and technical information centres, catalogues, bibliography, databases and metadata. They knew, as they do now, that for lasting storage, information must be organized – that is, catalogued, classified and put into system. They know how to preserve information for this and future generations to find and use it easily.

As for media education experts, they had to do mainly with audio-visual information in the cinema, television, radio and the press. No one knew and understood better than they did who creates information, how and what for; how the media market is arranged, how users perceive information, how information helps to manipulate the public and control social processes, etc., etc.

The conference was a first-ever major international forum for the two expert communities to listen to each other for the first time and see that it wasn't worthwhile to contend for the championship and lead theoretical debates about the primacy of the media or of information. They realized that they were mutually complementary as the common digital environment pooled in the entire textual and audio-visual information and represented both equally, and that both were used by the same people.

The Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy, the final conference document, was the first international document to make a working definition of media and information literacy. Before that time, information literacy and media literacy and education were separated from each other.

Some people in this audience remember that it took enthusiastic efforts by representatives of close on 40 countries to elaborate the term "media and information literacy" and draft the Moscow Declaration. It was truly concerted effort that lasted a whole day. The achievements spoke for themselves, and many conference participants are proud to this day that they took part in the job.

In parallel, the IFLA Information Literacy Section drew IFLA recommendations to governments on the promotion of media and information literacy. Drawn on IFAP initiative, they were later discussed and approved by the UNESCO General Conference.

You have both documents in your portfolios.

There are three people among today's conference participants who were extremely active in this work. These are Mexico's Jesus Lau, who stood at the cradle of the IFLA Information Literacy Section; Norway's Maria Carme Torras Calvo, who relieved him in that office and is among the top IFLA functionaries now; and Albert Boekhorst of the Netherlands.

Dr Torras Calvo was extremely active in 2012 Moscow Conference organization, to which many participants of today's conference also contributed spectacularly: Susana Finquelievich of Argentina, Laszlo Karvalics of Hungary, Pyotr Lapo of Belarus, Alfredo Ronchi of Italy, Ramon Tuazon of the Philippines, and Russian experts Natalia Gendina, Irina Zhilavskaya, Alexander Sharikov, Tatyana Murovana, Svetlana Knyazeva and Sergei Bakeikin.

Finland's Tapio Varis took part in drawing many study curricula ordered by Svetlana Knyazeva of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, while Ramon Tuazon worked on the order of the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector.

I am telling all this to show the solid previous basis of this conference.

Other experts, who elaborate open government patterns and monitor and analyze their work, also take part in it.

Open governments are not born out of nothing. It takes a great many institutions and individual experts to establish them. The job involves major international organizations – suffice to name the United Nations and OECD.

The Portuguese-based UN E-Government University studies open government formation on a global scale.

Tomasz Janowski, head of e-government studies at the United Nations University in Portugal, made a brilliant report at the 9th session of the IFAP Intergovernmental Council on the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. He demonstrated convincingly that open government was the fruit of e-government evolution.

E-governments began to emerge worldwide in the late 20th century. At their initial stage, the work revolved round digitizing official documents, introducing e-signatures and authorizations, unifying official document drawing, and the introduction of electronic document management. Government functionaries produced information the whole of which they alone possessed from archives and their desks to arrange it in a specific way and offer for general access. International organizations helped national governments with lists of open data. As many other countries, Russia has been monitoring open data for several years without interruption, and the governments of its constituent entities offer them for universal access. The Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra is among the regional leaders in this field.

E-governments are evolving into open governments at the regional and municipal levels in many countries.

Our colleague Susana Finkelievich is working in close team with Tomasz Janowski at new recommendations on knowledge society-oriented policies.

Today's discussion concerns media and information literacy for building culture of open government. Let us think again what media and information literacy is, and who needs it. What is open government about? Who is to establish it, and how? What is the link between media and information literacy and open governments?

If we analyze social networks and other Internet resources, we see graphic signs of public dissatisfaction with government everywhere – not only because governments act the wrong way and ignore public needs and aspirations but also due to rapid and comprehensive changes of the socio-

cultural environment. The world is interconnected now closer than ever before, and is full of most diverse social and cultural events. They are commented on and interpreted in public in many ways and by people who represent the most diverse groups of interests, often mutually clashing and incompatible. Everyone wants his or her opinion be heard and demands met urgently. However, if these interests are to be balanced out, they should at least be expressed on one venue and in a language understood by all.

Open Government

Almost the entire world is working to make governance and government open, transparent and accountable for greater efficiency, closeness to the public, and disclosing information previously preserved in civil servants' desks and computers.

Such information is needed by civil society and by businesses to take stock of trends and dynamics and so improve decision-making.

The latest ICT makes this goal not only necessary but also attainable, and relevant job is done everywhere, to varying extents and with greater or lesser success, depending on every particular e-government's developmental stage, the government and public ideals and targets, and what they do to meet their goals.

Vast amounts of information, digitized and not, stored by civil servants are insufficiently arranged and structured. Things get worse as the stock of information is growing steadily, gets ever more sophisticated and is regularly updated. It takes huge, hard and uninterrupted efforts to collect, update, verify and structure all information – something not to be done in one fell swoop. Functionaries must learn how to do it: select relevant information, pick out its essence, and present information in cyberspace for users to find it easily to the benefit of the community and their own. The presentation of official information in a universally accessible form is a formidable challenge, and is especially hard with legal texts, with their specific language. Laws and bylaws baffle even professional lawyers occasionally, and so need explanation and popularization.

Another problem concerns information storage. Open government forms and opens for universal access a huge stock of diverse information which, when digitized, is easy to destroy and often lost irretrievably.

Librarians and archivists alone know how to arrange and preserve information. All the rest merely think they know how to do it. That's sheer delusion. Neither programmers nor engineers, journalists, publishers, nor civil servants know it.

It is also a challenge to select information for general access and classify other for security or ethical reasons. Here is a recent example. The open government of a northern country published the addresses of all refugee camps – a reasonable thing to do. But radicals put all camps to fire as soon as they got the information.

Government officers should learn not merely to disclose official information to the public but also to do it not to the detriment of public safety.

I reiterate that open government systems have never been established throughout history. We need national and international information exchanges to highlight the trailblazers, know their achievements, emulate them, learn from their errors, draw lessons from our own errors, and avoid big blunders.

Media and Information Literacy

Media and information literacy, in the latest sense, should not be mistaken for elementary computer literacy. It is far more sophisticated. Whoever works with information should retrieve, select and analyze it, critically appraise, process, curtail, supplement and pack it, present in various formats and on various platforms, broadcast through different channels, preserve for future generations, establish feedback, etc., etc.

That is what present-day science and politics mean by media and information literacy – a wide range of knowledge and skills.

Present-day life makes everyone need these skills – not only school and university students but also government officers who do not merely work with information but are responsible for government openness, for government-public feedback and the efficiency of its channels.

The entire population also should learn all this – at least, community activists. Those who will actively use official government information and are eager to contribute to government work and help the authorities to respond to socially essential problems and address them in the most effective way should become advanced information users and producers.

If we want the government and the public share the view of the essence of such problems, their causes, and priorities in tackling them, we should determine the standards from which the system of priorities will proceed. Who will establish and approve these standards and arrange the order of priority?

An effective open government demands that both sides – government officers responsible for openness, and community activists and social group leaders – be willing to meet each other halfway, be aware of either side's opportunities and

limitations, and possess an equal amount of media and information competence. Otherwise, they will never find common language. That is the only way to achieve a smooth partnership of the state, civil society and businesses. Effective open government depends on effective governance.

Government opened in cyberspace cannot be effective unless there is sincere desire to be open in cyberspace and reality alike, and unless government officials respect the public with its desires, aspirations, abilities and opportunity to contribute to:

- improving governance,
- decision-making,
- monitoring the implementation of decisions,
- discussion of decisions made, and
- appraising implemented decisions,

when there is an awareness that nothing but direct, open and effective government-public communication can take the edge off tensions that are visible in practically all countries now.

Open government is one of the aspects of e-democracy, which many nations are trying to develop.

Open government does not boil down to sets of open data. It is an intermediary between the government and the population; a permanent platform for the activities of government officials and civil society leaders.

Open government is a new environment that supposes new communications, new ethics, forms of conduct and self-awareness. It is a new culture, and everyone can contribute to this emergent culture. Government officials, community leaders, educators and researchers in media and information literacy are in duty bound to contribute actively to this new culture. True open government is a dream. Let us have vision and daring, and bring this dream closer!

I hope that our discussions at this conference will be as fruitful as at the previous ones, and that the final document we adopt tomorrow will be as helpful as our preceding documents, and will be appraised just as highly. We will circulate our draft of the final document before our last evening session today so that you have enough time to study it and make your improvements during discussion tomorrow afternoon.

Elena SHUMAKOVA,
Director, Department of Public and External Relations,
Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra,
(*Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation*)

Open Region Project: Fostering Open Governance and Civic Engagement in Ugra

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Issues on the agenda of this conference are ones that we have been trying to solve here, in Ugra, for quite a while now. The idea behind open governance is for those working in public administration to be mindful of the population's actual needs and concerns and to respond to them with concrete solutions. This can be achieved with the help of interactive online services, crowdsourcing platforms, and forum websites. On the other hand, there is an open data network to be built; along with greater media awareness and a higher profile of citizen as well as expert advisory boards, it will enable the community to be more precise in articulating their needs, enquiries and requests for the government. We regard these two complementary components as part of our Open Region project's multifaceted, vibrant ecosystem. In a bid to develop this ecosystem, we had an Open Region Centre set up in Ugra in late 2015 – that's sort of a resource hub to cultivate open governance in the public administration sector.

Let me now expand on some aspects of the new centre's activity and on specific programmes it seeks to carry out.

The Open Region Centre is aimed primarily at creating efficient information tools to provide the community with new opportunities for civic engagement. Here we apply innovative as well as traditional strategies. One of these latter has to do with computer literacy training for the economically least advantaged population groups, such as retirees, handicapped persons, and members of indigenous nomadic communities. More than 85,000 residents of the Ugra Autonomy have in recent years attended E-Citizen training courses, which, among other things, teach skills needed to use public services websites correctly. Members of non-profit organisations and of government and self-government agencies' citizen advisory boards, too, are offered similar training in public scrutiny of government policies and practices, including spending-related, and public engagement with regard to urban development projects. So far this year, about a thousand community activists have benefited from this education opportunity. Among our crowdsourcing projects, which form

another important category of media tools, perhaps the most mass-scale is the one entitled Cooperating for Quality Healthcare; it is aimed at raising health services' accessibility, affordability and quality, and has already led to the adoption of amendments to a government programme that will reduce the waiting time for physician appointments at government-run clinics, along with expanding the population's involvement in healthy lifestyle practices.

Another emblematic project launched by the Open Region Centre is about public engagement in drawing a Roadmap for Ugra's Socio-Economic Development through the year 2030. More than 30,000 residents have joined forces to build a network of expert communities who now monitor the plan's implementation across the region and monthly brief the Governor on progress in carrying out specific tasks that should ultimately result in higher living standards for the population. We team up with individual citizens as well as with public and expert advisory boards to collaboratively develop creative approaches. The Roadmap has now been expanded to include a section on civil society promotion in Ugra. This new section is going to focus, specifically, on strategies for raising media and information awareness, so ideas and proposals voiced at today's conference may come in very handy indeed.

Secondly, we seek to engage citizens in government decision-making and to ensure authorities' transparency and accountability. The selection of officials for top positions at departments administering public services is just one of the areas where community activists can make a difference. So we invite candidates to publicly defend their programmes in the course of TV debates and Web forums, and members of the public then assess each entrant through online voting. Stakeholders from the public are also encouraged to come out with proposals as to what needs to be changed in a relevant sector, from their perspective. All this makes a would-be civil servant more inclined to direct dialogue with the citizenry and more responsive to public feedback. For several years now, Ugra's regional government has been using the scheme to pick and choose heads of the education, health, culture, and sports ministries. Town councils are now about to follow suit, inviting the community to determine public advisory boards' line-up.

Thirdly, we work to introduce new tools of civic engagement and control. To make this happen, we build interactive services on issues that are relevant to the community. One specific example is our Utilities Inspection call-centre, where members of the public can phone to ask for some housing- or utilities-related problem to get fixed. A similar online service – known as “Green Hotline” – has been created especially to address issues concerning protection of the natural environment. We have been consistently promoting environmental vigilance in the region since the beginning of this year. And, thanks to public

engagement, we have by now been able to detect and eliminate about two dozen unauthorised garbage dumps, remove more than 200 animal traps, and nip dozens of wildfires in the bud.

Another move toward greater media awareness in Ugra has been the recent establishment – under the Information Technology Institute’s wing – of a computer competencies centre. The new organisation monitors the Web for sites involved with drug trafficking or extremism propaganda and assists in having them blocked. This year alone has seen the exposure of 115 websites related to drug trafficking and another 195, to extremism and terrorism. There is an obvious need for that kind of work these days, so it will be carried on with.

Concurrently, we make efforts to renovate our public-sector media outlets. The recent shift in public needs and interests has prompted an overhaul of the media market. Some of the region’s newspapers and magazines that have lost their relevance have had to go. Other periodicals, as well as television broadcasters, are now working to dramatically redesign their image. In that work, they apply sustainable production technology and invite the expertise of internationally reputed professionals. Sustainable technology is expected to help us develop a culture of ongoing improvements and establish a dialogue with members of the public who use this or that medium. This is precisely what we need in today’s strongly competitive, volatile market environment. Our recently launched Media School project is still another step we have taken to be more in tune with the modern world’s needs; it is intended to teach media workers how to use high-tech digital technology in their professional activities.

I mentioned earlier a number of tasks that traditional minds may deem too wide-ranging to let any coherent vision be translated into reality. But, as a matter of fact, multiplicity and diversity are inherent in the modern media and information landscape. It does not look like a highway running, say, from north to south. Nor does it resemble a crossroads. Rather, it consists of dozens or even hundreds of roads, big and small, spreading in all directions. That diversity also reflects the many various interests and life activities of those who make up the citizenry. State should play in tune with society, acknowledging society’s first-fiddle part.

Here is the key principle that we as regional authorities advocate: Get interested in what is of interest to the populace. By sticking to this, we will be able to find – each at his or her own position – many helpful and interesting niches that fit nicely into the big picture for open government. Here, in Ugra, we consciously work to make sure that in public administration, openness is part of convention.

Alfredo M. RONCHI

Secretary-General, EC MEDICI Framework;
Professor, Politechnico di Milano
(Milan, Italy)

Sewing the Snatch: “a”Citizens, eGovernment and Open Government

Abstract

The present paper provides a brief overview on the innovations in the sector of government that “analogue” citizens are actually facing. Governance – in the sense of a “set of principles, ways of procedures for the management and control of companies, institutions, or complex phenomena generating significant social consequences”, is evidently one of the keywords in e-Citizenry. Governance and e-Governance are in some way to be embedded in Internet applications devoted to Citizens. Till what extend do we need to know and adequately take into account relevant aspects tightly connected to eCitizenship such as Ethics, Privacy, Security and – why not – the digital gap? Is the implementation of eGovernance or eGovernment a step forward to citizens’ wellness or is there any drawback?

Government, Governance and e-Governance

At the time of ancient Greeks, who invented democracy (δημοκρατία (dēmokratía)), the idea to govern the “*res publica*” thanks to the direct contribution of citizens was the ultimate goal. The term democracy itself means “people” (δῆμος (dēmos)) and “power” (κράτος (cratos)), so the concept is to leave or give power to the citizens, rule of the people. This was the ruling system in the Greek city-states, like Athens, in the 5th century B.C.

Since that time the idea to let the people govern the state represented one of the potential ruling systems in antithesis with monarchy¹, aristocracy², oligarchy³ and many other ruling structures. Through the centuries, many centuries after the ancient Greeks, people studied many different forms of the implementation of democracy; among them two major forms arose – direct democracy and representative democracy. Of course, the ideal concept of a power structure ruled

¹ μονάρχης, monárkhēs – from “μόνος (monos)”, “one/singular,” and “ἄρχω (árkhō)”, “to rule”.

² ἀριστοκρατία – “rule of an elite”.

³ ὀλιγαρχία (oligarkhía); from ὀλίγος (olígos), meaning “a few”.

by citizens, direct democracy, is hard to be implemented even in the Internet era; the usual way to solve the problem is to elect a representative structure in order to mediate between citizens and the political power. This structure is usually termed “representative democracy”. The concept of representative democracy arose largely from ideas and institutions that developed during the European Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment, and later on was further developed during the French and American revolutions.

More countries than ever before are working to build democratic governance. Their challenge is to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens, including the poor, and that promote development.

Nowadays a large number of states are ruled by representative democracy structured in different manners on different layers of representative bodies directly or indirectly elected by citizens: town government, regional or county governments, etc.

Sometimes this “interface” between citizen’s wills and expectations and everyday life generates a bad feeling and sentiment about bureaucracy and government. Here comes the need to clarify what we mean by governance and government.

Governance – the way that a city, company, etc., is controlled by the people who run it (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

1) *Lawful control over the affairs of a political unit (as a nation) <after World War II, the four Allied nations shared the governance of the territory of postwar Germany under the Allied Control Council>.*

2) *The act or activity of looking after and making decisions about something <while a financial advisor can be helpful, the governance of your family finances ultimately rests with you>.*

Oxford Dictionaries:

1) *The action or manner of governing a state, organization, etc. <a more responsive system of governance will be required>.*

2) *Archaic rule; control <what, shall King Henry be a pupil still, under the surly Gloucester’s governance?>.*

In the following part of this paper we term “governance” the decision-making process that defines the guidelines of the government, we term “government” the implementation of the decisions and guidelines and the infrastructure of interaction with citizens.

eGovernance⁴

What is e-governance good for? The notion of e-governance has its roots in many countries attempts' to 'modernise' government in response to perceived citizen dissatisfaction or disengagement. The manner of this disengagement varies, but has been reflected in many countries in voter numbers falling, and, particularly in the 'Anglo Saxon' democracies, in a perception that public services are failing and of poor quality. This can result in 'opting out' on the part of the more affluent in favour of privately provided services including education and healthcare, with a consequent fracturing of the social consensus on the provision of these services.

Although information and communications technologies (ICTs) have been used in government for the last fifty years and technologies such as the Internet or the world-wide web were both the result of work in publicly-funded or government institutions, the notion of e-governance is more recent. In the UK, the idea was born out of work on 'Modernising Government', which was associated with the New Labour Administration⁵, elected in 1997. Since that time the conversion of traditional "analogue" citizens into eCitizens started thanks to new media literacy programmes narrowing the digital divide.

This notion of 'modernisation' was intimately connected with what was sometimes called 'joined up' or 'holistic' government. The benefits of this were felt to be twofold: it was an attempt to reconstruct government in the interests of citizens, rather than producers, moving away from 'departments', and 'silos' towards 'personalization' and 'life events'. The "departments" and "silos" approach is not only a characteristic of traditional interaction with institutions but it was and still is a typical obstacle, the idea to structure online services as a digital front-end of the internal structure of the institution forcing end users to know and understand that structure generated and still generates many times failures.

Secondly, there was a widespread agreement that many social problems, from crime to poor educational performance, were the result of multiple interactions and the only way to tackle these issues more effectively is to understand these interactions better. And this means "joining up" the information that we have – so that, for example, if we know that much petty crime is committed by children who play truant from school, we can identify truants at an earlier stage (or even the behaviour that leads to truancy) and hopefully prevent some crime.

⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/e/integrated_projects/democracy/02_activities/01_e-governance/... 26/01/2010.

⁵ Gordon Brown, Prime Minister (2007–2010), *New Labour: Because Britain deserves better: "New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern."* <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml>.

This means having an integrated view of the information that is held on citizens, a sort of social “knowledge management”, that was impossible before the advent of widespread ICTs.

Potentially ICTs can help public administrations and civil society engage more closely and establish open dialogue, promote better interaction and strengthen networks and networking to promote the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and the enhancement of “democratic” governance.

In a nutshell e-governance approach has three main objectives:

- To increase the efficiency, transparency and accountability of public institutions;
- To enhance information access and provision of basic services to the overall population, in particular the poor and most vulnerable;
- To promote citizen and stakeholder participation in decision- and policy-making processes, particularly among the poor and marginalized, women and youth.

Another driver for e-governance is the belief that the widespread adoption of digital technologies is vital to national competitiveness in the future. Although the evidence on this is surprisingly weak, all governments are concerned that if they cannot get citizens to use new technology effectively and to develop the skills increasingly required by employers, then living standards will be threatened. Here comes the relevance of media and information literacy as a significant contribution to bridge the technological gap, enabling citizens to fully take the advantages of eCitizenship.

Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recalls several times the basic principles ruling government and governance, among the others:

Article 21

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 26

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

The Council of Europe Vision

As stated by the Council of Europe, there are four primary reasons why e-governance is important and has captured the imagination of many in government.

1. It encourages the take up of digital technologies that are crucial to economic competitiveness.
2. It allows government to redefine its role and become more citizen-focused.
3. It enables us to ‘join-up’ information and hence govern more effectively.
4. It can reduce the cost while not compromising the quality of public services.

All of these drivers are important, but a valid criticism of e-governance so far is that it remains supply-side driven, understanding of public demand in this area is underdeveloped and there is a real danger that while many countries will meet their ‘targets’ for online public services, this will be greeted with mass indifference. If e-governance is to succeed in transforming the citizens’ experience of both public services and of decision-making, it needs to pay greater attention to demand rather than supply-side issues. Internet-based

innovation in this sector introduced the participation of stakeholders enlarging the platform of actors in decision-making.

Evidence for the impact of these changes is currently weak, partly because it is fairly early in the process and partly because many governmental systems are more adaptable to measuring internal processes than external effects.

We will look briefly at the notion of ‘e-governance’, which we see as a part of broader efforts to modernise government. We can consider e-governance to be constituted by three core components:

- e-administration: public investment in ICTs to foster transparency and accountability within both national and local public institutions, to improve their functioning and effectiveness;
- e-service delivery: public investment in ICTs to foster the delivery of public services to all;
- e-participation: public investment in ICTs to foster interaction between public institutions and citizens to promote better policies, services and public operations. This has three levels: information provision to citizens, consultation with citizens, and dialogue between government and citizens. This component is usually linked to voice and accountability, civil society strengthening, and parliamentary development.

We use the term ‘e-governance,’ rather than ‘e-government’ to capture the notion of changed institutional relationships and the involvement of partners, both from civil society and business, in e-governance.

E-government refers more narrowly to the processes of national, local or regional government. Three ‘models’ of e-governance are currently operating – however we accept that national e-governance efforts may combine elements of two or more models. We will then look at the examples of public service delivery and at how e-governance is changing, or has the potential to change, the democratic landscape. In conclusion, we will look at the weaknesses in the current approach and at how it may change in future.

Models of e-Governance

Just as ‘governance’ varies from place to place, so does e-governance and we are mistaken if we view the technology as ‘neutral’ or take too deterministic a view of e-governance.

E-governance will be different in Australia, Italy or France or Malaysia, just as it will be different at the local level – in Inner London or rural Scotland for example. The technological processes may be similar, but the norms, assumptions, and political drivers will vary hugely.

Trying to “cluster” the main approaches to e-governance we can say that there are at least three main models currently operating:

The ‘new economy’ model – this stresses the similarities between e-government and e-business, is focused on delivering high quality public services and on moving to a more ‘self-service’ citizenship, which over time will shrink the size of the state.

E-governance is seen both as a response to the demands of businesses and of citizens used to dealing with e-businesses, and hence stresses convenience, 24-hour access and so on. It is also seen as a regional and local tool for economic development – the development of e-governance will help attract high technology businesses to an area, perceived as technology friendly. In this model, the development of the infrastructure tends to follow the market, with a consequent ‘digital divide’. The US is the best example of this model, but other countries such as New Zealand or the UK have adopted some of its elements.

The ‘e-community model’ – more favoured in continental European societies, particularly such as the Netherlands or Scandinavians which have a strong tradition of civil society and freedom of information, high levels of education and technology penetration and a relatively even distribution of wealth. Civic networks and public access have always been important in this model and where digital divide exists, there is often local level public intervention to mitigate the worst aspects. This model stresses potential social innovations resulting from a widespread access and the role of citizens as co-producers of services.

The planned economy model – used in countries such as Singapore or Malaysia, which traditionally use interventionist public sector tools to drive and shape private sector activity and investment. As in the ‘new economy’ model, economic development is very much a driver, but the development of the infrastructure and the skills to use it is seen as a government responsibility, with heavy subsidies for the construction of (particularly broadband) networks.

As commented earlier, national models do not fall precisely into these categories and the UK, for example, contains elements of all three models. The early rhetoric was very much about the ‘new economy’ model, but the dot.com bust and subsequent scepticism about the new technology hype has led to a redressing of this rhetoric. A good example of this can be seen in the 2005 targets, initiated by Prime Minister Tony Blair. These have been widely criticised for measuring availability, rather than take-up or benefits and later on, attempts have been made to switch the focus of these targets to those services, which will have a measurable social or economic benefit. In addition, while broadband deployment had been left largely to the market, concerns about slow take-up and uneven economic development have prompted moves for public intervention in broadband deployment.

Although the models vary widely, all the three can perhaps be criticised for sometimes being too ‘top down’ or supplier-driven. The first model responds to the needs of businesses, but not those of less affluent citizens. The third one is paternalistic – ‘you will have access to technology, because it’s good for you!’ And even the second one, which develops from a stronger ‘community’ model, privileges some types of communities (those that want to get involved) over others (those that want to be left alone).

Impact analysis is vital if e-governance is to make real differences to people and succeed in being anything more than just a collection of government websites and portals. Despite the plethora of e-governance systems, at both local and national level across the world, many of the results available so far point to improved administrative processes rather than to the impacts on the citizens or places. In other words, it is easy to find examples of how social services in a particular area have moved to using a handful of forms, rather than 200, to process a claim but much harder to find out the impact of this on the clients of the social services department.

In the next paragraph we will introduce the concept of Open Government, a further step in trying to enhance the level of performance of governments.

Transparency and Open Government

On 21 January 2009, President Barak Obama issued the Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Transparency and Open Government; the document starts with: *“My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.”*

The memorandum contains the three main principles of Open Government⁶:

- Transparency – *“Put information about their operations and decisions online and readily available to the public.”*
- Participation – *“Offer Americans increased opportunities to participate in policymaking.”*
- Collaboration – *“Use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate... across all levels of Government and with non-profit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector.”*

Being more explicit the principles outline the following concepts.

⁶ The following paragraphs between “” in italics are quoting the memorandum. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-12.pdf.

Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about what the Government is doing. **Participation** allows members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that their government can make policies with the benefit of information that is widely dispersed in society. **Collaboration** improves the effectiveness of Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions.

Open Government in Europe

Open government is now gaining recognition and acceptance in many countries worldwide. Open government “logically” embodies the concept of democracy and promotes efficiency in governance, and is driven by information and communication technology (ICT), which provides the tools and mechanisms for two-way interaction among different governance stakeholders – government, diverse citizens and civil society institutions, businesses, industry, and academia, among others.

Interaction among stakeholders requires related competencies such as: ethics, privacy, security, reliable information access and retrieval; information assessment and utilization; information and knowledge creation, preservation, and exchange; and information sharing and exchange using various formats and platforms. These composite competencies form part of a new literacy ecosystem, media and information literacy (MIL). There are some aspects to be pointed out in the implementation of open government:

- Open government data community in the world has been re-using released government data on an assumption that once data is in the public domain, it is good for re-use and further publishing;
- Open data movement has been pushing governments to release large amounts of information often assuming that any type of data controlled by government agencies is data that “belongs to us”, and rightly so;
- All governments have limitations in releasing data publicly. Most common limitations are protection of **privacy, commercial or state secrecy**. Governments owe a duty to their citizens to protect their privacy and secrets, as prescribed by laws.

Being familiar with the key risks associated with government data re-use, organizations and individuals have usually been putting a burden of mitigating these risks on governments’ shoulders and pressuring them to release data that already carries no potential privacy or security dangers. Sharing a moral responsibility to protect rights of others can effectively make governments

trust re-users. In turn, the process of data release has often been slower as government data release structures had to be built – from policy development to actual finger work to release datasets.

Summarising the main aim and benefits due to the Open Gov as they are usually intended in a more detailed way we can point out:

- Enhancing the transparency and accountability of state governance and public satisfaction with its quality;
- Increasing the opportunities of direct participation of civil society in the elaboration and expertise of the authorities' decisions;
- Ensuring the trustworthiness of governmental information;
- Qualitative change of the level of authorities' information openness;
- Development of the mechanisms of civil monitoring of governmental decisions and activities and ensuring their contribution to citizens' long-term well-being.

Legal Implications

Interaction among stakeholders requires related competencies such as reliable information access and retrieval; information assessment and utilization; information and knowledge creation and preservation; and information sharing and exchange using various channels, formats and platforms. To be effective and fruitful, such interaction should be based on trustworthiness of governmental information; mutual respect and compliance with standards of ethics; and privacy and security. Though these essential competences are brought together by the concept of media and information literacy, no agenda has hitherto spotlighted the duty of using available R&D achievements to make open government more effective.

EU Data Protection Directive and Personal Data Re-Use

The new regulation will apply if the data controller or processor (organisation) or the data subject (person) is based in the EU. Furthermore (and unlike the current Directive) the Regulation will also apply to organisations based outside the European Union if they process personal data of EU residents.

According to the European Commission, “personal data is any information relating to an individual, whether it relates to his or her private, professional or public life. It can be anything from a name, a photo, an email address, bank details, “posts” on social networking websites, medical information, or a computer’s IP address.”

What laws and legal implications may occur to an organisation re-using open data?

This question pertains the problem we can summarise as “Transparency & Openness vs. Privacy, Security & Ownership”.

Taking into account a governmental organisation we can refer to ethics and integrity within the organisation. High ethical standards, respect to dignity and organizational integrity are few of the key employee motivators.

Data re-users' main concern is rights and dignity of others. The majority of open data re-users are NGOs who often declare missions that are directly linked to the rights of certain social groups. Having responsible data policies sends a clear signal to all stakeholders that this organisation does in fact care about its affected groups, especially those vulnerable.

Taking into account both governmental bodies and data re-users, an additional aspect concerns the reputation in the eyes of donors, partners, customers. Having data re-use policies in place does send a clear signal to donors, partners, customers and other stakeholders that the organisation treats its activities with care and high ethical standards.

My Data Belongs to Me

In 2014 the World Summit Award (WSA) launched an initiative “My data belongs to me” through its global multi-stakeholder network to push forward personal data ownership and big data issues at the UN discussions. On the occasion of open discussions, such as the one held in regard to the WSIS Forum in Geneva, the WSA invited participants to share views on issues connected with the current system of data use, the need for permission-based access, and steps for further action. This initiative underlines consciousness about the ownership of personal information too many times shared among social platforms and business services.

Responsibilities in Data Re-Use

Data re-using organisations have the duty to ensure people's rights to: consent, privacy, security and ownership during the processes of: collection, analysis, storage, presentation and re-use. Consent is a relevant “keyword”, it means to explicitly provide the consent to use and manage private information provided in order to access a specific service. The request for “consent” must incorporate a clear and complete description of the use and aim of such data collection. Such a request may incorporate the description of future re-use of such datasets. If the potential use and re-use of data is articulated in different aims and steps the consent must be requested in the so called “granular” way that means that the platform will request a sequence of different consents that should be provided or not care of the citizen, in the field of APPs this is usually known as the Warsaw Declaration on the “appification of society” (September, 2013).

At the same time they must respect the values of transparency and openness.

The contraposition of such duties, transparency & openness versus privacy, security & ownership finds its solution in the ethical and responsible re-use approach.

- Principles:
 - ✓ Transparency & Openness;
 - ✓ Do no harm!
- Concepts:
 - ✓ Consent;
 - ✓ Privacy, Security & Ownership;
- Data Stages:
 - ✓ Collection and Storage;
 - ✓ Analysis & Presentation.

Transparency vs. Do No Harm!

The concepts of privacy, security, commercial or state secrecy can be secured following the “Do not harm!” principle. Data re-users must do all within their powers not to cause any harm to any of the stakeholders that can rise as a direct or indirect result of open data re-use.

To schematize the main aspects characterising the problem the right to privacy is for those without “power”, while transparency is for those with “power”.

Right to Consent

Informed consent is the mechanism through which people agree to provide information for research or data collection projects.

Informed consent finds its basis on three components:

1. Disclosure of research objectives and any risks or negative consequences of the participating capacity of individuals to understand the implications of voluntariness of their participation.
2. Informed consent includes plain language, easy-to-understand explanations of the types of data to be collected.
3. The purposes of collecting data, the intended and potential unintended uses of that data, the persons who have access to and control over the data, risks of data leakage to third parties, and any benefits to the participation in data collection.

Once data is collected and utilised for the specific purposes stated by the request for consent it might happen that the same data will be useful for different purposes. How can we manage this? Re-use of data collected for a different scope basically requires a new request for consent specifying the new purposes.

Privacy

Responsible and ethical data re-use is around the concept of privacy, legal requirements, risks and mitigations associated. Privacy is concerned with the control over information, with the persons who can access it, and with how it is used.

Privacy has many dimensions, from concerns about intrusive information collection to risks of exposure, increased insecurity or interference in their decisions that individuals or communities are subjected to when their 'private' information is widely known. Privacy is generally linked to individuals, families or community groups, and is a concept that is often used to demarcate a line between the 'private' and 'public' spheres.

Article 12 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights states: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation."

Let us take into account more closely privacy risks and their mitigation. Key risks related to privacy are the following:

- Disrespect to privacy can cause humiliation, embarrassment or anxiety for the individual, for example from a release of health data, it might be concluded that an individual accessed treatment for a sensitive sexual health condition;
- It can have an impact on the employment or relationships of individuals;
- It can affect decisions made about an individual or their ability to access services, such as their ability to obtain insurance; can result in financial loss or detriment; can pose a risk to safety, such as identifying a victim of violence or a witness to a crime.

Basic privacy risk assessment:

- Determining any specific unique identifying variables, such as name;
- Cross-tabulation of other variables to determine unique combinations that may enable a person to be identified, such as a combination of age, income, postcode;
- Acquiring knowledge of other publicly available datasets and information that could be used for list matching. The level of privacy

risk will be dependent on the likelihood that identification could occur from the release of the data and the consequences of such a release.

Mitigation is many times linked to de-identification.

Security

Security is somewhat linked to privacy, adapt security protocols and tactics to encompass:

- 1) Digital information security;
- 2) Physical and operational security;
- 3) Psychosocial well-being required for good security implementation.

Nowadays the key concept is “holistic security”, a “global” approach to security integrating all the different aspects and problems. A specific interest is devoted to digital security. Digital security is:

- More than a focus on software or tools;
- Integrating emotional well-being, personal and organisational security.

Good implementation of digital security tools and tactics requires attending to the practitioners’ psychosocial capacities to recognize and respond dynamically to different threats to themselves and to participants related to project data collection and communications (intimidation, social engineering.)

Risk Assessment: Mapping

We all know that security and privacy are subject to risk as already stated thus it is important to identify and mitigate risks associated with privacy and security concerns:

1. Identify the persons at risk in case of exposure (not restricted to the data owner or collector).
2. Identify knowledge assets that can be extracted from the data collected (discrete data points, meta analysis of data points, mash up of the collected data and external data sources).
3. Evaluate the importance of each knowledge asset to the campaign (little or no relevance, significant relevance, crucial).
4. For each type of harm: probability of harm (49% or less, 50% or more), severity of harm (little to no harm, moderate to severe harm, no go catastrophic harm).

Conclusions: The Aim ...

Any attempt to better “connect” citizens and “government” be they “analogue” citizens or already eCitizens must be finalised to improve their everyday life and wellness. Open questionnaires, referendums, pollings and surveys require informed citizenship, well aware about possible opportunities and drawbacks If we consider direct democracy as the final goal of such evolution, the way to make a utopia a reality we must carefully consider pros and contras: who is in charge for mid- and long-term scenarios, who will set the general framework within single decisions or options to be chosen, how should political level decisions and free choices be managed.

In the “direct democracy” model there is no mediation between citizens’ issues and government. The idea is based on the use of social networks and direct participation in order to easily identify the feelings or will of the majority of the citizens. Ideally this seems to be an improved implementation of democratic principles, a direct expression of citizens’ wills. Unfortunately this is not true actually due to different problems. We can subdivide them in two main branches: technical problems and socio-political ones.

On the technical side, we can consider among others the different level of access to similar tools due to citizens’ profiles, gender, geographical location, the availability and quality of network access, digital literacy and even the will to use similar tools. These problems will provide a biased feedback of democratic participation. Again on the technical side there is not a well-defined and accountable “interaction” system ensuring “quality” of the service comparable with the traditional voting system. Cyber identity, double voting, security of digital records, anonymity and more pertain only to very well organised activities, not to usual online ballots and blogs.

On the socio-political side an additional problem already well known on the occasion of referendum is the need to have an in-depth knowledge of each specific problem to be solved, this duty is usually in charge to delegates that must be aware about the problems they deal with. Such a concern is tightly connected with the independence and accountability of media and the press which are quite often the only source of information.

The potential transfer of the decision-making process from government to citizens should not be considered a “democratic” opportunity to transfer to them the whole liability about the outcomes; this means a clear separation between “political decisions” and “available choices”.

Mainly due to these reasons the risk of abuse or misuse of similar “democratic” tools is still very high.

László Z. KARVALICS

Professor, University of Szeged;
Chair, Hungarian UNESCO IFAP Committee
(Szeged, Hungary)

Open Government: Information History Considerations and Contexts

*Access to information and use of information may create
valuable opportunities for wealth creation...*

Patrick Birkinshaw⁷

Approaching Open Government issues from the Information Literacy perspective seems to be peculiarly topical.

From the 18th century origins the openness of governance is a highlighted narrative in political theory and political philosophy. In the second part of the 20th century it was successfully transformed into a far-flung legal practice, as a part of the desperate information empowerment process. Nowadays the first violin in the discourse orchestra is the technology [Fountain 2001]: the Big Data revolution, the cloud architecture, the horizons of artificial intelligence, revaluation of the mobile platform and the new generation online alchemy of sharing public data.

Information Literacy (more precisely: the review of multiple information literacies) provides a unique possibility to find alternative contexts coping with the current Open Government challenges and upgrading the theoretical debate.

1. Open Government and Information Literacies: Three Floors of Discourse-Building

Essential questions in the collection and use of information are: how reliable is it? How is it used? What does the information itself reveal about the process of government and the identification of the public interest? Is the information well tried and tested or is it tendentious?

Patrick Birkinshaw

Using the third generation information literacy forms as keywords [Z. Karvalics 2014] we can identify three different “vocabularies”, which represent three

⁷ The source of Patrick Birkinshaw citations is one of his emblematic monographs [Birkinshaw 2003: 258]. His main ideas on Open government issues were described earlier [Birkinshaw 1990]. I am very grateful to Júlia Sziklay for her help to apply Birkinshaw’s text as bon mot’s.

interconnected, but easily separable fields of practice and theory, indicating three scientific and political discourses. We call them *utilitarian, human/information rights-centered and social macroevolutionary* aspects.

Utilitarian aspect

... reliable information is a prerequisite to establish effective and efficient government. The governments use the best information available, make the best use of resources or provide the best form of public services? Making information available helps improve government performance.

Patrick Birkinshaw

Government performance. Efficiency. Optimization. They can be really business and ethical issues, too, and the mission of data-related skills and abilities, the data-related literacies as prerequisites is to support the most sufficient operation. The context comes from Information and Knowledge Management, data is an asset in this approach, and the development is equal to innovation (which can be, but not by necessity, *open* innovation).

In the vocabulary of information literacy literature it is *data literacy*, “the ability to obtain and manipulate data” [Schield 2004: 7] or to “store, describe, organize, track, preserve, and interoperate data” [Carson 2011: 631]. Its predecessors (*statistical literacy* and *numeracy*) are highlighting the numeric side, but thanks to the data visualization revolution, later it was combined with *visual literacy* (visuacy), *graphicacy*, and – the last time – *infographicacy*. Recently we have to face the challenges of Big Data Literacy [D’Ignazio and Bhargava 2015]. The context is always organisational, literacies are manifested through the workflow, the ‘carriers’ are employees/public servants [Lathrop and Ruma 2010].

Human/information rights-centered aspect

... access to government-held information is a necessary right of citizenship. Access shows a Community’s trust in the people ... secrecy is a cloak for arbitrariness, inefficiency, corruption and other vices of power.

Patrick Birkinshaw

If we define data literacy as “*the desire and ability to constructively engage in society through and about data*”, as Bhargava [2015] does, constructively

engage in the society” suggests an active purpose driving the desire and ability”, and through or about data “offers the possibility for individuals to engage as data literate individuals without being able to conduct advanced analytics”. Similarly, Yu and Robinson [2012] separate “the politics of open government from the technologies of open data. Technology can make public information more adaptable, empowering third parties to contribute in exciting new ways across many aspects of civic life. But technological enhancements will not resolve debates about the best priorities for civic life, and enhancements to government services are no substitute for public accountability”.

What we can see in this aspect? Open Government, as a new chapter in the long history of information games between governments and citizens, revolving around information rights, from the Freedom of Information to Right to Know. The data literacy in this context is a citizen’s ability to control the public domain and government itself. That’s why a number of thinkers talk about *participative literacy* (participacy), which “involves learning the social skills needed to take part in online communities,”⁸ including the (national and local) political communities and various civic entities [Giger 2006].

Critical information literacy [Elmborg 2006, Elmborg 2012] refers to the defensive capacity against every kind of Freirean ‘oppression’: the interpretational autonomy of individuals in online environments, generated by (government) institutions. A higher level of critical information literacy provides better positions in the democracy/information games [Noveck 2009]. This is the point, where we can make a step ahead, querying the justification of the whole control structure of the contemporary social sphere.

Social macroevolutionary aspect

... information is power and its exclusive possession especially so ...

information is a necessity for accountability – accountability is predicated by reliable information. If we or our representatives do not know what government is doing, how meaningful is accountability?

Patrick Birkinshaw

The available information landscape and the practice of openness follow the ruling control mechanism. An oiled information management system or a well-performed open data platform supports these given control structures – even if it

⁸ Definition from an online dictionary: <http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/participation-literacy/21919>.

has more and more dysfunctional features, and is running into a deep crisis. From a social macroevolutionary perspective the challenge is to come closer to the next system condition and outline the new control mechanism(s) – reimagining government [Nath 2011] from one side, and finding “alternative theoretical understandings of information literacy” from the other side [Limberg 2012].

The concept of *radical information literacy* [Whitworth 2014] “challenges the nature of authority in the ownership of information and in the adoption of information literacy” [Inskip 2014], reflecting to a normative, new control environment of every information-related activity/literacy. Simultaneously, it needs a brand new sensibility to encounter possible futures [Miller 2015]. The mission of *futures literacy* (as Riel Miller used to say) is “the capacity to embrace complexity.”

Since this is the most underdiscussed field, we would like to provide a detailed historical analysis of it in the second part of this paper. Nevertheless, before this submersion, it seems to be useful to summarize the correspondences revealed, flavoring the patterns found with the subtle typology of goods by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Table 1. Aspects, literacy forms, nature of goods

Aspects	Literacy forms	The nature of good by Thomas Aquinas ⁹
utilitarian	(big) data literacy, statistical literacy, numeracy, visuacy, infographicacy	<i>bonum utile</i> usefulness – to be effective
human rights	data literacy, critical information literacy, participacy	<i>bonum delectabile</i> pleasant – to feel good
social macroevolution	radical information literacy, futures literacy	<i>bonum honestum</i> morally/genuine good – ultimate goal

2. Control Crisis, Control Revolution: Conceptual and Historical Shortcut to Social Macroevolution

It has been known since the epochal monograph of James Beniger [1986] that the development of information society started at its ‘core’, in the United States enhanced by the controlling – organizing paradigm shift called the bureaucratic control revolution in the late 19th century. The bureaucratic control is the means to balance the disturbing effect of the overturned parameters of space, time and

⁹ This division goes back to Aristotle [Elders 1993: 123].

speed in the new world of railway, telegraph and products of mass consumption, opposed to its unsuitable and old-fashioned predecessor, by using innovations of information and knowledge technology which have been given a central role. However, it leads to a growth in information and knowledge sector both in size and variety, reshaping even the structure of employment by the mid 1930s and switching the innovation machinery of information technology to a much higher speed, running into the early Information Society development in the 1960s.

The control revolution was the labour room of Modernity, shaping Industrial Age top institutions: the Government, the Factory, the Hospital, the Laboratory, the School, the Public Library. Bureaucratic control was extremely effective and productive, overstepping the shortcomings of pre-bureaucratic (aristocratic) control. Nowadays, we feel in every segment of everyday life the loss of revolutionary potential of bureaucratic control, and a growing inadequacy of industrial age institutions, logic and rules in the information society. Putting it the other way round, we are facing ahead a new control crisis, which can be postponed again and again, thanks to the information technology. Now, data and open data is used to support the moribund control mechanism, not to destroy it. It is more than timely to start the quest for the patterns of post-bureaucratic control mechanisms, and evaluate every improvement (technology, business and social innovations) from this point of view.

A change of the ruling control system is always an extremely remarkable and significant shift in human history. Behind the tension and pressure to alter the existing mechanisms we can identify evolutionary schemes, where the key factor is the size and the interconnectedness of the society, adapting to the changes and challenges of the environment. So, we have to jump back to the inceptive moment, reconstructing the first shift in the control mechanism, schematically.

3. Information Anthropology Meets Information History: The Origins of Information Power and Monopoly

The primeval hunter-gatherer human groups were homogenous information communities [King 1994]. Every individual information (with and without) reflected relevance was tucked away into the community pool, accumulating a common information asset, which could serve as a survival tool, reproduced and refreshed culturally. The control of behavior and information behavior was *isocratic*, based on the equivalency of community members.

Contractual information asymmetries did not change the isocratic foundation of cooperation. On the contrary: contractuality provided a possibility to enlarge the representation and information power of the community without generating inequalities.

The crisis of the isocratic control structure was a consequence of the civilizational change, regularly featured by agricultural revolution and permanent settlements, and the growing size of communities. The birth of information monopolies and information power was connected to the distributional challenges, when information asymmetries became a source of political power. Aristocratic control was born – and information monopoly suddenly, but not without social conflicts, became one of the main resources of political power.

Aristocratic control was a very successful control mechanism, and a fundamental basis of all-time governance practice. It was the World which has changed again in the second part of the 19th century (in terms of industrial revolution, rapid urbanization and demographic explosion), making aristocratic control obsolete. However, the birth of the new, bureaucratic control did not change the nature of information monopolies, while augmenting the operative effectiveness using info-communication technology and institutionalization (compartmentalization) of administrative work.

Today, the disfunctionalities of information monopoly-based political power are combined with the growing inadequacy of bureaucratic control. Is it time for a next paradigm shift?

4. Reverse Engineering – a Normative Scenario for the Future

It is time to start a public discussion about the outlines of the *post-bureaucratic control*. If we use history lessons, we have to accept the fact, that the formation of a new control structure is not a cluster of cybernetic, top-down, coercive, purposeful acts. So, there is no roadmap for a new control revolution. Its formation will be an emergent, social macroevolutionary process. But we can mark out the main tendencies, directions as normative expectations. If social innovation efforts support these orientation points above, the sum of social action will be closer and closer to the post-bureaucratic stage:

- Break the information monopolies;
- Isolate the distribution power(s) from information asymmetries;
- Make new contractual information asymmetries;
- Rejuvenate and recreate horizontal information communities.

It is more than interesting to recognize, that the tendency is to approach, step by step, the isocratic control mechanism on a higher level. But isocratic control should not only characterize the global/supranational governance issues, but also the national/supralocal political coordination, the local and sublocal community decision-making practice. And if information technology was the main driver

of the bureaucratic control revolution, human technology will be the main feature of the age of isocratic control. However, information and knowledge technology have enormous potential to support human technology (the totality of technologies, devoted to augment, correct and nurture human intellect and development, health, quality of life, social space, etc.). Fighting isocratic control's battle in a bureaucratic control environment means consequent endeavor to change the information culture. Open Government and new information literacies are among the most powerful allied forces in this civic cage rage.

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Media Literacy and Innovation: From Open Governance to Happiness (Happiness and Forms)

What Is Innovation?

The *Merriam Webster* dictionary defines innovation in very few words: “a new idea, device, or method”.¹⁰ The core of this definition is the word “new”, thereby linking innovation and novelty. Such a general definition can be applicable to a wide array of fields and contexts. A narrower definition can be found in *The Business Dictionary* that defines innovation as “The process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value or for which customers will pay.”¹¹ While both definitions start with an idea, the latter adds two conditions to it: that the idea will be translated into something concrete; and that customers will value this result and may express their appreciation by a willingness to pay. In non-business contexts, like education or government, the second condition of payment is not necessary. On the contrary – if payment is required it might mean that something is morally wrong... Note that the second definition does not discuss novelty at all. Rather, it focuses on the benefits to the customers.

My definition of innovation will be a combination of the two definitions and will encompass the principles they express – novelty and benefit. Innovation, as I define it, would be the translation of an idea into an object or a process, under the condition that the idea, the translated object or the translated process is new, at least in a certain context or environment, and possibly everywhere and absolutely. Like in the *Merriam-Webster’s* definition, it can be applied in many contexts, governance included; like in the *Business Dictionary’s* definition, it requires the novelty that will be useful and beneficial to someone, somewhere and somehow.

From Innovation to Media Literacies

One of the main functions of the Internet is to serve as an enormous collection of information and knowledge. Information and knowledge fuel innovation: in

¹⁰ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/innovation>.

¹¹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/innovation.html>.

some cases they assist in invoking new ideas; in others, they help innovators translate an idea into a concrete solution, may it be an object or a process. Therefore, many forms of innovation require media and information literacies that involve searching capabilities, scanning masses of data, and understanding the data that was found. The latter is also known as turning information into knowledge. Thus, the Internet as such promotes innovation, and media and information literacies become a condition for innovation.

Today, as information overflows, it becomes more and more difficult for individuals to turn information into knowledge. It is also difficult to locate the relevant knowledge in the ocean of data. New tactics must be employed to search for relevant information and for the presentation of huge amounts of data. Hence, media and information literacies must include some sense of innovation so that new searching techniques bring up new ideas; and novel presentation schemes should be able to display complex processes. If users are equipped with the ability to innovatively search for information, they can find the non-trivial details, and identify the mass as well as the fringes. You may name this ability “being critical” and I would agree with you. Media and information literacies are critical by their nature; they are a permutation of the Enlightenment’s criticism. If users can innovatively present their findings, then a new perspective can be gained, which may lead to new solutions.

In this paper I refer to literacies in the plural, as there need to be different literacies in the personal and the professional contexts, possibly changing from country to country, and within a country they vary among different age groups. The grammatical plural form reflects the plurality of truths, knowledges (as Donna Haraway showed) or attentions (see Wellner 2014).

From Media and Information Literacies to Open Governance

Not only individuals need media and information literacies to search and present data. Governments also need to develop these literacies. Unlike individual’s literacies, those of governments need to be developed at both the individual and the institutional levels. Acquiring media literacies at the individual level is a matter of education and training. It should overcome predominant thinking patterns. At the institutional level, the acquisition of media literacies should overcome also operational paradigms. Let us focus on forms as the paradigmatic operational scheme of modern governmentality.

Modern governance has been operating via forms. Instead of personal requests which are subject to the discretion of clerks, forms are conceived as neutral and impartial. But the tyranny of bureaucrats has been replaced with the tyranny of forms: one is requested – or better, required – to fill full name, ID number,

address (and today also email address), telephone number – home, office and mobile, and frequently also bank account details, names of parents and the like. These details need to be filled in over and over again.

Open governance is frequently understood as providing easy access to forms. You download the form, print it, fill it in and then submit it, either physically or through a fax. It may surprise you but only in 2016 the Israeli government has decided to accept submission of forms also via emails and not only by fax and traditional mail. One of the major obstacles to full electronic submission was the signature. In many cases the applicants must sign the form, and many bureaucracies still consider the signature as an essential part of the “submission” procedure.

For example, at a university where I worked as a researcher, in order to obtain travel reimbursement I had to download a form from the university’s web site, print it and submit a paper-based form with the signatures of myself, my supervisor and the head of the department. In one case, the paper form got lost, so I had to collect all the signatures again. Then when my new form reached another “station” on the bureaucratic “via dolorosa”, it was argued that this was the wrong form. I had to fill another form, with identical details but organised differently and with another heading, and of course re-collect the signatures (for the third time). I felt as if I were in one of Kafka’s stories, approximately one hundred years after he wrote his novels. So little has changed, I thought.

A more advanced version of open governance would include explanations on each field in the form. Is it sufficient in the digital age? I’m not sure.

Then came another development of online forms in which forms can be completed on the screen; no need for paper copies; and the submission can be done electronically via a dedicated web site. One of the major benefits of online forms is their submission via the Internet and the environmental effect of saving paper and printing. However, the need to fill-in still exists, and this task remains repetitive, and – let’s admit it – boring. Indeed, some browser tools are designed to overcome the re-filling burden, but in many cases forms require a new detail or the field is not properly defined and hence impair the auto-fill functionality.

When governance moved to the Internet there was hope that all this will change. That bureaucracy will become friendlier, that forms will go away. Instead we got more and more forms.

Some of these forms are getting wilder, with more new details. Take for example the visa forms of one government which include questions like – have you ever been trading drugs? Did you perform a genocide? I don’t know persons

who committed these crimes, but I guess they are not likely to answer such questions honestly... On a second thought, I'm not sure what is considered by the bureaucrats a worse crime – being a drug dealer or writing a false answer in the form...

Form Theory

The French philosopher Michel Foucault is known for his writings on governmentality, power and knowledge. He is often cited for his conceptualization of the panopticon, a structure conceived by the 17th century thinker Jeremy Bentham for prison surveillance. Foucault extends the notion of panopticon to hyper modern societies and shows how this structure dominates the design of modern prisons, hospitals and schools. He generalizes the panopticon to be the structure through which modern governments refer to their citizens as subjects to constant surveillance. Forms can be analyzed within this framework as an apparatus that produces docile and obedient citizens.

In his late writings, Foucault shifts from governing structures to individuals. In his 1982 course “Technologies of the self,” he studies how subjectivity is enacted under various regimes. The underlying assumption is that power and knowledge are intertwined, and a subject cannot escape them. The formation of subjectivity is hence a dialogue with the structures of power and knowledge. As a philosopher of technology, I would add that subjectivity is also a product of a dialogue with a third entity – technology. Technology can be regarded as a meeting point of power and knowledge: the knowledge required to develop it; the power required to operate it.

The interesting question in this context of technologies of the self would be: how are citizens co-shaped under the regime of forms? And how can they be co-shaped under alternative regimes?

How Forms Impair Happiness?

I would further assert that questions of subjectivity are tightly linked to questions of happiness. The self-shaping of subjectivity is frequently performed with the guidance of happiness, so that people develop in directions they conceive as maximizing happiness, preferably long-term happiness. Crafting a subjectivity that orients itself to short-term happiness is unlikely to lead to long-term prosperity: alcohol and drugs are unfortunate yet wide-spread examples of short-term happiness that impairs the development of healthy subjects.

In psychology, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) models long-term happiness (i.e., well-being) as composed of three major building blocks: autonomy, competence and relatedness. These are our basic psychological needs, and when they are fulfilled, we are motivated, our performance is enhanced, and we even become more creative, according to the theory.

Autonomy/freedom is the experience of being able to choose among several options, that we are not obliged to one single path. Pre-fixed forms are a major limitation on our autonomy.

Competence is the experience of being able to perform, and perform well. Again, forms impair this psychological need. Apparently, there is never a right way to write in a form a name of a city that is not in the US. Take for example Tel Aviv: should it be written with or without a hyphen, with or without mentioning Jaffa, or should it be Yaffo as the local transcript?

Relatedness is the experience of being part of a group, feeling secure and stable, including the feeling of attachment. We know how to produce this feeling over social networks. Even a simple positive feedback can produce it, but forms rarely give this feeling, offline and online alike.

The happiness of citizens, I argue, is not less important than the efficiency of governments. Is there a way to promote happiness within contemporary governmentality? In the remaining part of this paper I will sketch a preliminary offer.

Media and Information Literacies as Open Governance

Open governance is sometimes conceived as free access to the government's raw data, from databases and excel sheets to ministers' schedules. Extracting this data and analyzing it surely require media and information literacies, often of a high level and specific expertise. In this paper I'd like to offer an implementation of open governance that focuses on sending data to the authorities, instead of reading the data stored by the authorities. Here is a proposition for an alternative to the form regime of modern governance. My aim is to show that governments can develop alternative modes of dialogues with their citizens, and that forms are just one option that was developed in the past, and might need some revision in the 21st century.

We have reached today a sufficient level of artificial intelligence (AI) that can understand free text. This technology can easily decipher when I write "I need a new passport because mine has expired. My ID number is XXX and my name is ABC". The AI engine may remind me to check if my address is updated. It may also urge me to add a payment while displaying the amount to be charged. The

free text option will not require me to search in the government's website for the passport section in order to download a form. Instead, the AI engine will automatically send my request to the relevant office and make sure my new passport is sent to me soon. This technological interface would eliminate the need for forms as a basic condition for interaction between governments and citizens. The required media literacies will not consist of finding the correct webpage from which the right form can be downloaded. It will not require tedious explanations for each field. The media literacies will require instead an understanding of which data is necessary for identification, definition of the needed action and additional information (such as payment and verifying the mailing address).

Such a new way of interaction opens more options and is not limited to just replacing the "form regime". It may allow citizens to express their opinions and suggest new solutions. In other words – generating innovation bottom-up. Think of an open government that offers an interface to raise new ideas for the collection of garbage and recycling. The AI engine will direct the ideas to the relevant officers and might even score the suggestions so that ideas which have large contribution and small budgetary consequences be presented first. Or suggestions for new educational programmes; or suggestions to combine alternative healing with conventional medicine. Forms cannot contain this richness of possibilities. On the contrary, they impair our innovative faculties and diminish creativeness. We need to harness digital technologies for the promotion and enhancement of human happiness.

Maria-Carme TORRAS CALVO

Library Director, University of Bergen;
Governing Board Member, IFLA
(Bergen, Norway)

Access to Information and Knowledge for Open Government: The Contribution of Libraries and IFLA

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present how libraries contribute to open government by providing and advocating for equitable access to information and knowledge. First, the paper addresses access to information and knowledge and media and information literacy as prerequisites for open government. Subsequently, some of the main barriers to a sustainable information environment are discussed. Finally, the role of libraries in promoting open government is illustrated through specific actions which academic libraries and IFLA are taking to increase equitable access for all.

2. Open Government, Access to Information and Media and Information Literacy

A comprehensive discussion of open government as a concept is beyond the scope of this paper. In general terms, however, open government can be characterised by the following (Open Government Declaration, 2011¹²):

- Transparency of actions;
- Accountability for policy and service delivery performance;
- Accessibility of services and information;
- Responsiveness of government to new ideas and needs;
- Public engagement.

Access to government produced or commissioned data, information and knowledge is a prerequisite for open government. Only when data, information and knowledge can be freely used, reused and redistributed, can transparency be ensured, as well as participatory governance. Through access to information

¹² <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-government-declaration>.

and knowledge, citizens are both informed and better enabled to engage in decision-making processes.

Nevertheless, access to data and content, whether digital, in print or in another format, is not enough to build up open government. Intellectual access is equally necessary. In other words, citizens must have the necessary competencies – understood as knowledge, skills and attitudes – to be able to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate, create, as well as share information and media content, through the use of various tools, and in all formats. UNESCO¹³ proposes the composite term “media and information literacy” (MIL) to encompass this set of intrinsically related competencies. Critical thinking, inquiry and analysis lie at the heart of MIL. Implicit in these competencies is critical, ethical and effective use of media and information, as individuals participate and engage in personal, professional and social activities. MIL education has become a core library activity, as users have become both producers and consumers of content, which is no longer confined to library walls. Libraries, especially at educational institutions, are increasingly being recognised as educational partners.

Developing MIL is just as important at the workplace. A study conducted in Norway¹⁴, which aimed at exploring the need for access to published scholarship at the workplace, illustrates this. Professionals in the health sector, municipality and research institutes outside the university have insufficient access to published scholarship, as their institutions cannot afford the subscriptions. In this study, a sample of these professional groups was provided with time-limited access to relevant scientific journals and databases. The informants expressed a clear need to develop their MIL competences in order to be able to benefit maximally from the access they had been given. They further identified librarians as the experts who could provide them with the guidance and training they needed.

Summing up, open government is dependent on a sustainable information environment. Such an environment is characterised by media and information literate citizens who are given equitable access to information and knowledge.

3. Barriers to Access

One of the core activities of libraries is to provide access to information and knowledge. Libraries are in this way key stakeholders in building up

¹³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/media-literacy/mil-as-composite-concept/>.

¹⁴ *The report of the study På tvers. Regional tilgang til forskningsressurser, is available in Norwegian only from: <https://bora.hib.no/nb/item/624>.*

open government. This library core task, and thus citizens' engagement and participation in key social processes, are being seriously hindered by a number of barriers to access. One of them is the rising costs of access to digital scholarly resources, such as journals and databases. They are placing great pressure on library budgets in a time of growing global austerity. Further, restrictive license terms limit what can be done with resources that can be acquired. Where alternative delivery mechanisms exist, such as through Open Access, they are being co-opted by large academic publishers who undermine the benefits of these new systems through embargos and double-dipping. In the commercial sector, large technology and media companies direct the eBook market in such a way that prevents libraries from buying eBooks, and users from owning titles they have paid for.

Legislative frameworks which in many states used to support libraries' public interest functions as providers and preservers of information for all members of society are less and less effective. For example, out of date provisions governing copyright cannot facilitate preservation activities in the digital age, nor can they take advantage of the Internet's global nature by sharing information across borders. Where new legislation is being crafted, library users are often negatively impacted, as laws designed to prevent terrorism increase surveillance of information seeking and undermine individuals' freedom of expression online, while open government remains more a goal than a reality. Needless to say, many countries still lack basic library laws.

We live in an unsustainable information environment. Access to published scholarship is a good example of this. Access to scholarly publications is being cut down on at libraries because of increasingly expensive subscriptions and budget cuts. This is against a background of an ever growing body of published research, and of researchers being responsible for a considerable part of the publishing process without any profit (conducting the research, documenting it and peer-reviewing other researchers' work). Further, as a consequence of restrictive license terms, the general public cannot be given access to scholarly publications. Students and researchers lose access as soon as they leave their research and education institutions. Lack of access is particularly challenging for many professionals, such as in the health sector. They are required to work evidence-based but their institutions cannot afford the necessary journal subscriptions.

A shift to a more sustainable information environment calls for an immediate transition to open models of access to published scholarship. As crucial facilitators of access, libraries worldwide are advocating for and engaging in this transition. In what follows, the contribution of libraries is discussed through specific examples.

4. Sustainable Access to Information: The Contribution of Libraries

In Europe, national policies¹⁵ and the European research programme *Horizon 2020* require that results from research publicly funded must be available to the public. Access to this research is all-important to well functioning open government, as discussed above. Academic libraries foster open science through a variety of activities. They contribute to the elaboration of university policies for open science (e.g. open access publication and open research data policies). They develop and manage infrastructure for open access such as institutional repositories, publishing platforms for journals and books as well as systems for digital data curation. In a relatively small country like Norway, academic libraries are currently providing digital infrastructure to run approximately 40 open access-born scientific journals. Further, libraries administer university funds that foster open access publishing.

As part of the MIL education they offer researchers, libraries raise open science awareness. They provide guidance in issues like copyright, publishing channels and open research data management. In Norway, libraries are engaging in national and international processes to move away from subscription-based publishing models to open access models. As in other European countries, libraries are negotiating open access content with publishers for national consortia licenses as a short-term measure to open up content. Alongside, libraries are currently advising their university management and other important stakeholders in the development of national guidelines for open access publishing and in the follow-up of the *Berlin 12 conference*¹⁶ and *Open Access 2020*¹⁷. *Open Access 2020* is an international initiative that aims to induce the swift, smooth and scholarly-oriented transformation of today's scholarly journals from subscription to open access publishing. Through all these activities, libraries are increasing their expertise and legitimacy as partners in open science, and actively contributing to open government through open access to information and knowledge.

Another way in which libraries can facilitate a sustainable and open information environment is by opening up local unique content and making it globally available. This is a particularly important task when the availability of this unique content can have a positive social impact, like promoting tolerance

¹⁵ For example, in Norway this requirement is expressed in two government white papers: *Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2008-2009): Klima for forskning* (<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-30-2008-2009-/id556563/>) and *Stortingsmelding nr. 18 (2012-2013): Lange linjer – kunnskap gir muligheter* (<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld-st-18-20122013/id716040/>).

¹⁶ <http://www.berlin12.org/conference/>.

¹⁷ <http://oa2020.org>.

and inclusion. An example of this is the Norwegian National LGBT Archive (*Skeivt Arkiv*)¹⁸ at the University of Bergen Libraries. This archive is funded by the Norwegian government and has as its key mission to collect, document, digitise and communicate Norwegian and Scandinavian LGBT history. In this work, the library partners with NGOs and other organisations that represent the interests of the LGBT communities in Norway. The collections consist of personal and organisational archives as well as books and journals. Personal histories are also being collected through interviews.

To conclude, open government is characterised by a sustainable and open information environment. Yet this is not an easily attainable goal, despite many good initiatives, some of them led by libraries. International collaboration is essential in order to move forward the open access agenda. Developments in Europe at the time of writing might speed up the transition to open access publishing, although it is still too soon to predict the impact. The Competitiveness Council, a gathering of ministers of science, innovation, trade and industry, met to discuss open science amongst other issues on 26-27 May, 2016¹⁹. This meeting saw a set of Council conclusions towards a transition to an open science system adopted by all of Europe's 28 member states. This means that for the first time, Europe's governments jointly agreed to common ambitious political goals to make immediate access to scientific publications the default for 2020. One can wonder about how realistic these goals may be and how they may be actually operationalised. Nevertheless, the ministers commitment seems to be a step in the right direction.

5. IFLA's Advocacy for Equitable Access to Information and Knowledge

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession. It has 1500 Members in approximately 150 countries around the world. Access to information and knowledge is one of the core strategic directions of IFLA²⁰. For this reason, a large number of IFLA activities can be said to contribute to open government worldwide. In terms of advocacy, the UN 2030 Agenda and an equitable copyright framework have been two prioritised activity areas.

¹⁸ <http://skeivtarkiv.no/en>.

¹⁹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9526-2016-INIT/en/pdf>.

²⁰ See IFLA Strategic Plan 2016-2021, available from: <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/gb/strategic-plan/2016-2021.pdf>.

As one of the partners of a civil society coalition, IFLA advocated intensively for access to information as a key to supporting sustainable development in the *UN 2030 Agenda*²¹ process. The agenda is a framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a total of 169 Targets spanning economic, environmental and social development. They lay out a plan for all countries to actively engage in making our world better for its people and the planet. Two years of joint advocacy efforts at the United Nations were rewarded. The agenda includes universal literacy in its vision and it strongly mentions access to information in Target 16.10: “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”. IFLA’s advocacy and capacity building continue now to enable libraries worldwide to engage in national development plans to implement the SDGs.

As regards an equitable copyright framework, IFLA has been advocating for Member States to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty in order to facilitate access to published works for the blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print-disabled. Further, IFLA has been working closely with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and other partners since 2014 to achieve copyright exceptions and limitations for libraries and archives that would eliminate many current barriers to access.

6. Summary and Conclusions

Access to information and knowledge is a prerequisite for open government. Access does not only involve making content available for the public, but also ensuring that individuals are media and information literate. Libraries are key stakeholders for open government as they work and advocate for a sustainable and open information environment. Traditionally, they have been providers of information and knowledge. With the advent of the Internet and the ever growing amount of information and knowledge, their core mission and activities have been redefined with a stronger commitment to sustainable development and open government. With content being no longer limited to collections within library walls, the library educational role to develop the MIL competencies of its users is becoming more and more important. In the digital era, there are significant barriers to access to information and knowledge. Libraries open up content and, through their global voice, IFLA, they advocate for a sustainable and open information environment, which lies at the heart of open government.

²¹http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

Civilizations, Technology and Literacies

Abstract

Can we speak of global civilization? What is the role of the media in global education and in cultural diversity? The question of the world order and the trend towards global civilization has inspired scholars, communicators, educators and spiritual leaders to answer questions on how the world works. The traditional humanism is challenged by *transhumanism* that aims to transform the human condition by developing and creating widely available sophisticated technologies to enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities. Science and technology are becoming the credo of the new order and new 21st century literacies are needed. However, as observed by an East Asian Daisaku Ikeda and Westerner Arnold Toynbee in their dialogue already in 1976, “today people are compelled to serve intellectual knowledge and technological skill, which are in turn controlled by politics and economies.” Instead, education should emphasize the inherent dignity and independence of learning. Communication is needed for consciousness raising (Paulo Freire).

More attention should be given to the diversity of media cultures and the co-existence of different civilizations. Media literacy aims to develop both critical understanding of and active participation in the old and new media to create such communicative competences that would allow the use of modern technology. During the Renaissance the Europeans began to think of themselves into another culture and tradition. Now the civilizational challenges come from outside Europe. UNESCO is promoting the credo of New Humanism which is not only a theoretical but also a practical approach needed for building global education and media for the global civic society. A holistic vision of human communication and the future is needed for new literacies and communication competences.

Introduction

The nature of modern globalization is determined by the global corporations. Knowledge and the role of higher education for them are defined by the concept

of global networks of innovations, comprising of top-ranking universities and research centres around the world – the global brain of intelligence.

As the new working culture emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, corporations are beginning to provide workers with the means to customize and direct their own learning experiences. There are still several steps to be taken to improve employment opportunities for individuals and expand the innovative capabilities of companies. Everybody in working life and training is becoming more responsible for ensuring the development of the knowledge and skills acquired.

Centres of excellence which recognize "excellence with soul" give priority to cultural issues as evidenced by the recognized Brazilian expert Marco Antonio Dias in his study of the role of China in the globalization "Excellence with or without soul: the cultivating of mindful university graduates" (2007). In the Western world the debates on post-humanism and transhumanism have challenged the basic traditions of the Renaissance humanism.

The civilizational challenges of the 21st century are very well presented in the China Block Printing Museum at Yangzhou, Yangzhou Museum. There are three statues of the Great Minds of human history: Aristotle, Sakyamuni, and Confucius. They represent the contributions of different civilizations to the social, human, and technological progress of human history. The challenge of the 21st century is the dialogue among the civilizations.



*Figure 1. The Great Minds: Aristotle, Sakyamuni, and Confucius.
China Block Printing Museum at Yangzhou, Yangzhou Museum*

The 2011 World Universities Forum held in The Hong Kong Institute of Education featured the major focus: “Asia Rising and the Changing Architecture of Global Higher Education.” It is obvious that the growing economic powers of the East with their great civilisations of the past are also becoming aware of their role in developing and defining higher education in the 21st century global knowledge society. The Forum discussions revealed that when visiting China many western scholars are disappointed if the universities there – even being of high standard – only repeat the model of life and mind of the leading western societies.

As explained by Professor Xu Xiaozhou, Dean of the College of Education, Zhejiang University, global higher education is in a huge stage for human development and civilization where universities in different countries and districts play various roles. Many people admire the excellence from Europe and America: appraise their contributions to the global higher education and society in the past millennium [Xu 2011]. The ranking of world universities follows much the Western standards and is dominated by techno-scientific model of defining legitimate and productive knowledge. Xu concludes that Europe has experienced European civilisation together with the development of capitalism for a long time. American civilisation learned from European civilisation to a certain extent. Asia used to have an ancient civilization, which evolves throughout history. Comparing to western civilization, the concepts of science, democracy, humanity and harmony need to be improved in the Asian universities development. In the 21st century, the global higher education market would be shared, rather than monopolised. According to the overall economic and social strengths, the tendency of scientific and technological innovative capacity of universities, and the possible Asian culture renaissance, Xu argues that before the mid-21st century, the world of higher education would present a “tri-axis” pattern: America – Europe – Asia. In the *Mid- to long-term outline for national education reform and development in China* issued on 29th July 2010, the Chinese government clearly claims to establish “a modern university system with Chinese characters”.

As the first Rector of the University for Peace in Costa Rica (1986–1989) I learned from the writings of Abdus Salam, a Pakistani theoretical physicist and Nobel laureate in physics that science and technology are shared heritage of mankind and are cyclical in nature. He even believed in the joint endeavour in sciences becoming one of the unifying forces among the diverse peoples on this globe [Salam 1990]. Western dominance in science and technology emerges only after the 11th century A.D. In the great civilisations of Asia development in this respect is seen in the perspective of hundreds of years and the present globalisation is viewed as a return to normal. Even though technology is central, Chinese experts tell that China needs more teachers than engineers.

The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 2009 concluded, among other things, that “Higher education institutions, through their core functions (research, teaching and service to the community) carried out in the context of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, should increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote critical thinking and active citizenship.” Furthermore, “International cooperation in higher education should be based on solidarity and mutual respect and the promotion of humanistic values and intercultural dialogue.”

Educators have committed to these objectives clearly as observed by Elise Boulding already in 1988: “The objective is to create a peaceful, inter-dependent world which would be a good place for people to live. No society can impose a universal order acceptable to all other societies. The creation of species identity that will encompass cultural diversity is a major challenge” [Boulding 1988].

Is Global University Possible?

However, the technology-push global thinking is dominated by economic technocracy and does not reflect enough the nature of cultural diversities of the world. One way of approaching the problems of global university education is to construct a taxonomy or staircase of different tiers. Fig. 2 below is constructed from the analysis of Edward Guiliano, President and CEO, New York University of Technology (2009):

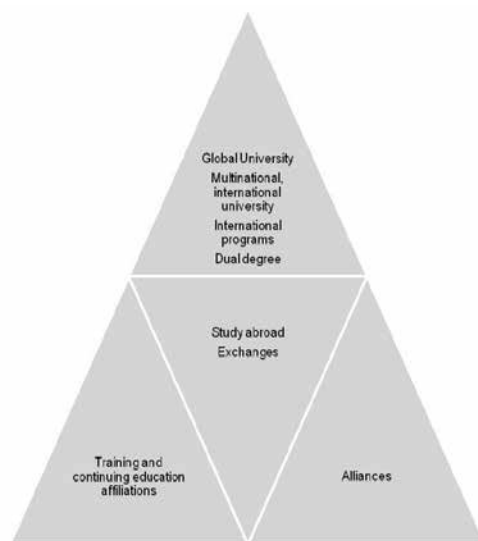


Figure 2. Towards a taxonomy of global academic programmes

In Guiliano's approach the lowest tier is composed of non-credit-bearing affiliations including conferences, training programmes, and extended education-type offerings. These are very close to friendship alliances which include co-operation agreements and memos of understanding for research and student as well as faculty exchanges.

The next levels would be composed of studies abroad and exchange programmes. These programmes mean studying or living abroad with another faculty of the same university in another country. In general, full degrees cannot be earned at these sites, but courses and study at them fulfill requirements for degrees at the home campus. Dual degree programmes leverage strengths of each university and campus. Students study both curricula and attend both locations. Another type of international programmes is a degree or credit-bearing certificate programmes for foreigners.

A multinational university or international university means degree-granting branch campuses, generally staffed by faculty not affiliated with the home campus, autonomous or semi-autonomous administration and governance extending to the curriculum. Degrees carry the name of home institution but usually with a separate designation.

The highest level in Guiliano's tiers is global university. For him this means one degree, one curriculum offered by a university at one or more global locations, characteristics include exchange of faculty and students, and virtual or distance-learning classrooms. This New York Institute of technology model includes "some degree of practical 'glocalisation', but a true outward-looking global university with one set of standards and outcomes worldwide, one administration, and where students, faculty and ideas freely flow without borders, evolving global understandings and new 'globalised' content over time" [Guiliano 2009].

Global University System (GUS)

Our own model of a Global University System (GUS) which we have developed in the UNESCO Chair in Global e-learning at the University of Tampere, Finland, does not impose one cultural or civilizational basis for global education. The Global University System (GUS) [Utsumi et al. 2003] is a free (volunteer-based, multi-sponsored) grass-roots initiative to widen access to higher education and vocational education and training, and to help participating institutions to meet local needs in ways that are locally-appropriate and globally-informed. GUS encourages the integration of untapped or poorly-deployed human and technical resources, particularly to facilitate the diffusion

worldwide of low-cost means of access to the communication and education resources that the privileged West takes for granted.



Figure 3. The mission of the Global University System (GUS)

Economic interdependence among nations and cultures is spawning a global economy. Such globalisation inevitably magnifies the negative consequences of the population growth, environmental degradation, and the unequal distribution of resources and wealth among nations. Globalization also promotes clashes of divergent cultures and belief systems, both political and religious.

GUS aims to provide global education in a broad context of wisdom, justice, and peace. It is not enough to educate people with knowledge and marketable skills if they live in a culture that is ill-suited to accommodate the hopes and dreams that such education inspires. Indeed, cultural disconnects with modern education may lead to frustration, despair, and perhaps ultimately to war or terrorism. GUS education will thus promote world prosperity, justice, and peace, based on moral principles rather than political or ideological doctrines.

Towards New Humanism

Mentioned above were some of the concerns for our work with professor Jose Manuel Perez Tornero, Autonomous University of Barcelona, for the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) on the publication “Media Literacy and New Humanism” (2010). In an intercultural world

communication necessarily mediates different values and cultural behaviors. Great civilisations and cultures have very different patterns of communication and use different senses in different ways. For the development of our own language it is necessary to rethink the whole education system, from primary to higher, and understand the links to multiliteracies, multimodality and multimediality.

The use of ICT and digital skills in performing art, craft, and other fields require for team work with special skills. The trend of digitalisation does not mean that everything traditional should be rejected. New communicative inventions have always also destroyed something valuable, and special attention should be given to the diversity of approaches in ICT applications. A blended approach is often adopted. Most essential in this new learning environment is the fact that the learner is constantly facing epistemic conflicts when a problem is presented that needs to be solved but lies outside the learner's current repertoire. Most of the problems of the information society will be of that kind. The learner needs to proceed with self-regulation by active engagement, which is the learner's response to the conflict. The idea is to adjust and reconstruct thinking to deal with the learning problem at hand.

The cultural dimension in the ICT applications also brings the dimension of feelings and the spirit of sharing and caring to the process. If a truly global information society is to be created, more attention should be given to the diversity of cultures and the co-existence of different civilizations and cultures.

Technology and Higher Humanity

In order to learn new technologies and become digitally literate, new forms of learning paths have to be developed utilising all forms of learning, especially at work and nonformal environments. At the same time, special attention should be given to teacher education in ICT skills and competencies. The period of transition in which we are now living differs from the periods of change of older dominant media. Traditional print and electronic media were introduced within a period of reasonable length, and when we moved to the active use of a new form of communication, we could also have a rough estimation of the economic and social impacts of this transition and train new professionals for the media and support people for institutions. Now different forms of communication and technologies integrate and converge with such a speed that hardly anyone has the time or ability to assess all of the consequences, real possibilities, or problems.

From our standpoint, today this *awareness* must be *media-related* and *humanistic*. On the one hand, as media-related, its main goal must be to monitor

the development of the media and be keenly aware of what it may represent for the humanity, for better or for worse. On the other hand, this awareness must drive the values of a new humanism, and it must do so in many senses:

1. In the sense that it must situate *the human person at the core of this media civilisation*, this new manmade, telecom world around us, just as in the Renaissance the humanists managed to place human beings at the centre of the world which had been organised by theology until then.
2. In the sense that this new awareness must drive *the primacy of the critical sense towards technology* and thus replace this *trusting* and rather unselective attitude that prevails today and forces us to unconditionally accept technological innovation. This echoes how the humanists defended a free, critical interpretation of the classical texts and ultimately the autonomy of the intellect and the human person. While the Renaissance humanism served as a critical filter of the values of its day by filtering mediaeval culture with classical culture, the new 21st century humanism mostly foster a critical sense which is an alert to the hypertechnologised environment and capable of discerning between what should be kept and what should be revamped.
3. In the sense that while Renaissance humanism helped to “discover” the sense of self and biography and fostered a new form of individual autonomy compared to the sometimes asphyxiating weight of traditionalist thinking, the new humanism must help to foster a sense of autonomy in a context in which global communication can engender dependence and very subtle forms of intellectual subjugation.
4. In the sense that while the Renaissance humanism was characterised by a “discovery” of new “worlds”, America first and foremost, but also Africa and Asia, giving rise to an “encounter” – often violent – between cultures and civilisations, the new humanism in the global communication society must prioritise a new sense of respect for multiplicity and cultural diversity and must support media development with the goal of consolidating the new culture of peace.
5. Finally, in the sense that, just like the Renaissance humanism, through the new media and humanistic awareness now is the time for us to be capable of reviving the classical idea of a cosmopolitan, universal citizen, with very clear rights and responsibilities, which entail a planet-wide commitment. We must foster a kind of citizenship that stimulates the idea that individuals view themselves as the bearers of universal rights, as well as responsibilities which are also universal.

While the Aristotelian approach is common for the Western mind, particularly in communication and search for truth, the mindsets of other civilizations are not only unknown in the global scholarly debate but may even have been forgotten. The need for higher humanity is obvious and we must broaden our educational approaches to create a new renaissance education which will comprise science, technology, art and spiritual values while respecting cultural diversities.

The believers of transhumanism declare that science and technology are now radically changing human beings and may also create future forms of advanced sapient and sentient life. Therefore they have established the “Transhumanist Bill of Rights” to help guide and enact sensible policies in the pursuit of life, liberty, security of person, and happiness. Some of the extreme posthumanists believe that humans will be replaced by artificial intelligence or speak of voluntary human extinction (“future without humans”).

It remains to be seen what will be the spirit of future universities and what will be the civilization supporting them. Technology may change many of the basic processes of research and learning as well as knowledge sharing but the fundamental civilizational issues of wisdom, spiritual realities and good life remain to be taught and learned again and again.

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Natalia GENDINA

Director, Research Institute of Information Technologies for Social Sphere;
Professor, Kemerovo State University for Culture and Arts
(*Kemerovo, Russian Federation*)

Media and Information Literacy and Information Culture as an Imperative of Open Government Development and e-Citizen Formation

Open Government in Russia: Essence, Principles and Legal Environment

The ever-growing sophistication of social and economic processes and the lightning speed of technological progress in the present-day world necessitate the search for methods of improving government. As experts see it, the traditional model of statehood based on the vertical division of society into rulers and their subordinates and into governmental and social agencies is outdated, and hierarchically arranged government no longer can process information in time, due to its snowballing amount, and is unable to make effective decisions [9]. The idea of open government came in response to the public demand for an effective mechanism of state-public interaction and for the best-possible and balanced government decisions. Open government supposes a state management system based on the transparency of state activities, free public access to the acts and documents of state (mainly executive) agencies in the interest of efficient public supervision. Open government materializes citizens' constitutional right to know. The models of open dialogue and public-state cooperation emerge within the frame of such government [8; 14].

The official website of the Russian Federation's open government stresses that "open government is no ruling body, nor a bureaucratic structure. It is a system of organisational principles of national administration based on the involvement of individuals, public organisations and businesses in the adoption and implementation of government decisions to improve them and balance out all interests." Access to information, lucidity, transparency, and the accountability and controllability of the authority, and involvement in civil society are the basic functional principles of open government (<http://open.gov.ru/event/5598187/>).

Thus, the implementation of the Open Government system means a search for ways to a more transparent, responsible, efficient and accountable state management. A special role belongs to the latest information and communication technologies, which make it possible to establish a unified digital information environment and e-citizens' interaction.

A number of approach papers and regulatory documents have been endorsed in Russia with the development of information society and the emergence of open government. The basic ones are enumerated in Table 1.

Table 1. The regulatory system of open government in Russia

Approach papers	Regulatory documents
Development Strategy of the Information Society in the Russian Federation, No Pr-212, approved by the President of the Russian Federation, as of February 7, 2008	Russian Presidential Decree No 150, of February 8, 2012, On the Working Group for the Drawing of Proposals to Form the Open Government System in the Russian Federation
The Concept of Long-term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation through 2020, approved by Government Resolution No 1662-R of November 17, 2008	Russian Presidential Decree No 601, of May 7, 2012, On the Guidelines for the Improvement of the National Administrative System
State programme of the Russian Federation, Information Society: 2011–2020, approved by Government Resolution No 1815-R, of October 20, 2010	Russian Presidential Decree No 636, of May 21, 2012, On the Structure of the Federal Executive Agencies
Information Technology Development Strategies for 2014–2020 and through 2025, approved by Government Resolution No 2036-R, of November 1, 2013	Russian Federation Government Decree No 773, of July 26, 2012, On the Governmental Commission for Open Government Coordination
The Openness Concept of Federal Executive Agencies, approved by Government Resolution No 93-R, of January 30, 2014	Russian Federation Government Executive Order No 2516-R, of December 25, 2013, On the Approval of the Developmental Concept of Online State and Municipal Services
The Openness Standard of Federal Executive Agencies: a comprehensive document comprising the Openness Concept of Federal Executive Agencies, Methodological Recommendations to Implement the Openness Principles of Federal Executive Agencies, and the Methods of Monitoring and Openness Assessment of Federal Executive Agencies, approved by Government Resolution No 93-R, of January 30, 2014	Federal Law No 8-FZ, of February 9, 2009, On Guaranteed Access to Information on the Activities of Government and Local Government Agencies Federal Law No 212-FZ, of July 21, 2014, On the Fundamentals of Public Control in the Russian Federation

The Scale and Complexity of Implementing the Idea of Open Government

The promotion of the ideas of open government and e-citizenship is extremely complicated because their implementation demands the solution of at least four closely interconnected problems:

1. The quality of ICT and relevant infrastructure. It is no use to talk about open government and e-citizen without personal computers with adequate software, and without mobile telephony and telecommunications. The provision of relevant ICT infrastructure demands addressing a cluster of financial, organisational and intellectual problems.
2. The quality of digital resource content. Information resources in the open government system must be not only technically available but also authentic, topical, well-structured and understandable to the public at large. The quality of electronic content depends on the problems of training information analysts, web writers, SEO copywriters, web designers and other experts able to create texts oriented on the web environment with an account for the demands of browsers, and duly adapt texts to the psychological characteristics of digital information perception.
3. Officials: readiness to create quality digital products and online services and cooperate with the public. First of all, public servants should enhance dramatically their computer and ICT competences and be able to create explicit, transparent and accessible digital resources. They should change their mentality in conformity with the civil society and open government standards, and be ready not only to issue orders to the public but also to engage in dialogue and be subject to online public control [11].
4. Public: readiness to use electronic products and services and engage in constructive social dialogue. The idea of open government will never be implemented unless the public undergoes relevant mass [10]. As Sergei Bondarenko justly remarks, “many available e-government services stay unused. This discourse stems from the ideology of technological determinism, which places technology in the foreground and regards users as social objects of managerial activity.” [1]

I see the crux of the matter in the simplistic idea that ICTs are able to cope with any problem and it suffices to teach the public the ABC of computer literacy for preparation to life in the information society and cooperation with open government. This idea is firmly rooted in the minds of the public and officials alike. The basic idea of this communication is: media and information

literacy and personal information culture must replace computer literacy in the formation of e-citizen. Let us regard the problem of e-citizen before we prove that premise.

The Dualism of the e-Citizen Concept

In characterizing the category of e-citizen, it is customary to emphasize two semantic dominants – the civic spirit and belonging to the IT. First, the e-citizen is a citizen of a particular country. Second, the category exists in the worldwide web; e-citizens act via the web, using their PCs. The dual nature of e-citizens complicates their training. According to Yuri Irkhin, “to become the real e-citizen, not a mere user of random services, and to be at home with issues of state administration is no simpler than to be a conscious political activist” [11]. The “electronic” quality of e-citizenship can be achieved through computer literacy, while the civic spirit demands civil literacy.

Civil literacy has come of late under close attention of IFLA conferences that analyse its place in information society, and libraries’ role in its development. Dedicated to it were the IFLA satellite conference Information for Civil Literacy (Riga, 2012); the roundtable Information and the Population’s Civil Literacy at the IFLA forum (the Crimea 2013 international conference in Sudak) and School Libraries and Information for Civil Literacy – a meeting of the IFLA section of school libraries and civil literacy (Singapore, 2013).

As we learned from our research and communication with foreign colleagues [3], different nations interpret the category of civil literacy differently, depending on the interpretation of the categories of citizen and civil society.

In Russia, for one, the word “citizen” has two meanings – the national of a particular country and a person who poses public benefit and community interests above personal ones.

The Russian interpretation of civil literacy includes four semantic components: 1) legal (knowledge of the Constitution and the principal laws, and the comprehension of civic duty and citizens’ duties); 2) political (awareness of the democratic pillars of civil society and the knowledge of human rights and freedoms); 3) patriotic (love of the Motherland, feeling part of its history, responsibility for it, and readiness to protect and defend it); 4) ethical (dedication to the common good, humanism, justice, honour, truth, conscience, dignity, tolerance, charity, etc.). As I see it, neither a traditional nor an electronic citizen can exist outside this context.

This list of components of civil literacy is certainly disputable, and my example is subjective. I mean to demonstrate that civil literacy can be interpreted in

mutually contrasting ways due to differences of ideological, religious, cultural, ethnic and political views and preferences. Accordingly, the e-citizen cannot be formed without an account for every nation's cultural, historical, socio-economic and political context, so his/her education cannot be reduced to computer literacy.

The Education of e-Citizens: The International and the Russian Formats

E-citizen's training is a global challenge faced by almost all countries of the world. The extremely important E-Citizen international programme was drawn in 1995 under the auspices of the European Computer Driving Licence Foundation. ECDL is an international organization that provides independent certification of OC competences and sets European and US standards for computer literacy. The programme aims to organise computer literacy training for socially disabled persons, such as pensioners, the unemployed, home-based workers, residents of outlying localities, immigrants and disabled persons. According to the ECDL website, 150 countries took part in the programme implementation. It was translated into 41 languages, and over 14 million people in every part of the world were certified (<http://www.ecdl.org> ECDL Россия <http://www.ecdlrussia.org/about>). Russia launched the programme in 20 regions in 2006, and more than 2.5 million people have been certified (http://www.ecdl.su/pages/e_citizen_create).

The E-Citizen programme divides in three blocks: 1) Basic Skills, aiming at computer literacy; 2) Information Search and Processing, which includes information security skills; and 3) Information Society, envisaging the skills of online service use. The benefits of the international programme are evident, as are its noble goals: to overcome digital inequality, provide the opportunity of using information resources and online communication; help as many people as possible to join the information society; ease contacts with government agencies, etc.

At the same time, the programme has its limitations, which become evident when we compare its content with the goals of open government and its components. It is clear that the technological and social components are equally important to implement the idea of open government. They are indissolubly linked. The E-Citizen programme, however, lays the stress on mere computer literacy training, which belongs to the technological component. Imbalance thus appears in the treatment of e-citizen solely as an electronic one. Such treatment narrows the open government concept to replace it with e-government, though the two are not synonymic. Involvement in civil society, one of the key principles of open government, is not fully implemented.

It is hard to become a true e-citizen, rather than a mere online service user. It cannot be done only through the acquisition of computer literacy. It takes a synthesis of various latter-day competences to make an e-citizen. That is why it is so interesting to analyze new integral categories that accumulate a total of segmented information about sophisticated things. Media and information literacy and personal information culture belong to such integral categories.

Media and Information Literacy as an Integrated Category and a Field of UNESCO and IFLA Activities

IFLA and UNESCO are leading international agencies that initiate the study and discussion of preparation for life in the information society. The two agencies worked independently of each other for many years: IFLA concentrated on the promotion of information literacy while UNESCO on media literacy.

The work of UNESCO and IFLA gave precise definition to the categories of media and information literacy, and made them household words. They were reflected in essential international documents – the Grunwald Declaration on Media Education (1982) and the Beacons of the Information Society – Alexandria Statement on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (2005). Information literacy includes the human ability to express information demands, search for, assess and store information, and use it effectively and ethically, while media literacy accentuates the comprehension of the role and functions of the media, and critical assessment and analysis of the media content.

UNESCO and IFLA have lately advanced the new idea of integrating media and information literacy into one category because contemporary man lives in a unified syncretic information environment and uses diverse kinds of information and various ITs – hence the need for the new generalized concept of media and information literacy. Several major international documents reflect this integration: the Fez Declaration on Media and Information Literacy (2011); the IFLA Media and Information Literacy Recommendations (2011); the Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy (2012), and the Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration, Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government (2016).

The Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (prepared by UNESCO) was published in English in 2011 [19] and in Russian in 2012 [15]. Now it has been translated into 11 languages. The document regards media and information literacy as one of the basic human rights that promotes the social involvement of all nations.

The curriculum uses the metaphorical phrase “umbrella term” to demonstrate the essence of media and information literacy. As shown by our analysis, though the term “civil literacy” does not occur in its text and title, the content and goal of the curriculum are indissolubly tied with civil society and literacy. Thus, terms pertaining to civil literacy, such as democracy, state administration, civic responsibility, civil participation, human rights, freedom of information, etc. make up a major part of the curriculum glossary. Their active use demonstrates the interconnection of media, information and civil literacies. The latter is represented by such competences as the realisation of the role and functions of the media in democratic society, cooperation with the media for self-expression and democratic participation, etc. So the umbrella term comprises three competence groups that together reflect the triad of media, information and civil literacies.

The UNESCO Curriculum possesses major accomplishments:

- Is comprehensive and multifaceted, provides integral and systemic knowledge in training work with diverse information and IT;
- Integrates media and information with civil literacy, demonstrates convincingly how the training in information and media competences serve to guarantee civil rights and freedom and active participation in public dialogue and democratic processes, including the global information network;
- Envisages further adaptation and development; offers ample opportunities for use in particular countries and regions with due consideration for ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and other specifics, as demonstrated by the study book written at the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audio-Visual Media on the basis of the UNESCO Curriculum [17] and its Russian use for the enrichment of the curriculum in the ABC of personal information culture.

Personal Information Culture as a Field of Research and Academic Discipline in Russia

The terms “media literacy” and “information literacy” are widely used in Russia alongside analogous terms “information culture” and “personal information culture”, which owe their popularity to psycholinguistic and historical factors. First, the Russian word *грамотность*, “literacy” pertains only to the primary ability to read and write, and thus gives the shade of elementary and primitive to the sophisticated man-information correlation. Second, the history of Russian

education is indissolubly tied with culture. The methodological basis of the contemporary Russian pedagogical science is provided by the culturological approach [2], which regards culture as the backbone of understanding and interpretation of the human mind and activity.

Russian researchers regard the terms “information culture” and “personal information culture” as the most exhaustive and generalized categories characterizing the man-information interaction. These categories are treated as integrated and reflecting present-day human demand for diverse kinds of information and comprehensive use of a wide range of ICT [12].

Information culture is ever more often treated as a unique phenomenon of information society [16]. Information culture supposes concentration not only on technology but, equally, on the humanitarian aspects of computerisation connected, above all, with the social character of information circulation oriented on human development and free access to information as common heritage of humankind and a prerequisite of adaptation to the rapidly changing information society environment [13]. With respect to the study object, we regard the information culture of society and of specific categories of information users – children, teenagers, young people; professionals (doctors, teachers, lawyers, etc.) – and personal information culture.

Personal information culture is an essential part of general human culture, a total of information philosophy and the system of knowledge and skills that guarantee independent purposeful activity for complete satisfaction of individual information demands through the use of traditional and the latest information technologies. It is a crucial factor of professional and non-professional success and social protection of the individual in the information society [6, p. 58].

The concept of personal information culture reflects the inclusion of man-information interaction in the world of culture. It counters the confrontation of the two contrasting cultures – technocratic and humanitarian – in the information society. The main goal of personal information culture is to preserve the succession and harmonious combination of two cultures: the traditional culture of librarianship and bookmanship, and the new digital culture. Globalization makes personal information culture take into account the specifics of national culture and traditions of the national educational network in the information training of children and adults.

The integration of information culture into culture as a whole is of great theoretical purport. First, it allows regard the formation of personal information

culture as a way to counteract technocracy, as the latter impoverishes the human moral and emotional sphere. Second, it allows integrate random knowledge in information training borrowed from diverse disciplines into a whole created by anthropocentric and culturological studies. As we know, systemic knowledge is always superior to random pieces of information.

As the result of research that lasted longer than 20 years, we have coined a formative concept of personal information culture reflected in academic works [6; 7; 8]. A curriculum on the fundamentals of personal information culture was elaborated on its basis with four sections: information resources, the algorithms of information search, analytico-synthetic information processing, and the techniques of information product preparation. The curriculum consists of a permanent, invariant part, with the above four sections, and the variable part. The four basic sections rest unchanged for all user categories though differing in content, while the variable part allows diversify the curriculum with an account for users' age, profession, social group, etc. The curricula comprising the whole are unified in structure and diversified according to students' age and profession: children in the 7-10 and 11-14 age groups, adolescents of 15-17, university under- and postgraduate students, teachers, librarians, etc.

Alongside curricula, we have elaborated a set of study books on the fundamentals of personal information culture – study guides, manuals, tests and reference materials [4; 5]. The work at this literature convinced us deeply of the necessity to proceed from the systems approach as it allows transform random information, however useful it might be, into an integrated curriculum promoting consistent and comprehensive formation of personal information culture. This conviction became even firmer when we determined to complement our curriculum with the ideas of media and information literacy and open government.

Enrichment of the Curriculum on the Fundamentals of Personal Information Culture with the Ideas of Media and Information Literacy and Open Government

The study of opportunities opened by the UNESCO Curriculum for media and information literacy and open government ideas allowed spectacularly enrich our curriculum in the fundamentals of personal information culture, to which purpose every section was consistently and purposefully updated and enlarged with the latest information. You can see the results in Table 2.

**Table 2. The conceptual enrichment of the curriculum,
Fundamentals of Personal Information Culture**

Section I. Social Information Resources and Information Culture	
Media information and media resources	Open government electronic resources
The concepts of mass media, media information, media agencies; media types and canals; media categories according to form of information presentation: printed matter (books and the press); audio-visual (cinema, radio, TV and video); electronic (Internet radio, television and publications)	Official (federal and regional) websites of governing institutions – legislatures, executives and judiciary. Internet websites/portals promoting civil initiative and e-democracy: Russian Public Initiative, Democator, Active Citizen, Unified E-Democracy Portal of the Russian Federation, State Services portal. Socially oriented websites: Rospil.info, Russiabezdurakov.ru (“The Russia of No Fools”), Rosyama.ru, Gulagu.net
Section II. Basic Types of Information Retrieval Problems and the Algorithms of Their Solution	
Media information retrieval algorithm	Open government e-resource retrieval algorithm
Internet media text retrieval algorithm; picture, music and video retrieval; information retrieval security; media information retrieval in the social networking websites; behavioral safety in the social networking websites	Retrieval algorithm on the official (federal and regional) websites of governing institutions – legislatures, executives and judiciary. Specifics of information retrieval on websites promoting civil initiative and e-democracy, and socially oriented websites
Section III. Analytico-Synthetic Processing of Information Sources	
Media information analysis; media text critical analysis	Analysis of information on the official websites of governing institutions and other socially oriented Internet resources
Media text: essence and characteristics. Media texts in the website and web page structure. Media texts in the social networking websites. Media language and expressive means. The categories of implication, context, fact, opinion, and interpretation. Media representation. Analyzing media text. The algorithm of media information decoding. The concepts of manipulation, critical analysis, and critical thinking. The methods of media text critical analysis. Advertising as a kind of media text. Critical analysis of ads	Information analysis on the official websites of governing institutions. Critical analysis of information on websites promoting civil initiative and e-democracy, and socially oriented websites. Evaluation as tool of civil influence and control of governing institutions: online discussions and control

Section IV. Information Product Preparation Techniques

Media products	Electronic products and open government services
Media techniques and techniques of media product creation. Information visualising skills. Textual information processing into visual form. Creation of video ads, cards, clips, and multimedia presentation. Role of audio information, choice of music for media products	Reception of online state and municipal services (filling in forms, questionnaires and applications). Everyday use of the Internet for purchases, services, information retrieval on education, healthcare, business, communication, etc. Internet contacts with governing institutions through complaint and application. Expression of public will: e-voting, e-petitioning, referendums, questionnaires, idea contests, etc. Socially oriented communication on chats and forums

As we see in Table 2, the original curriculum in the fundamentals of personal information culture was enlarged purposefully, first, by adding new themes pertaining to the specifics of media work and information. Second, we provided an interconnection of all curriculum sections with the fundamental principles of open government. For instance, the principle of general access to information cannot be implemented with users unable of independent information retrieval. Involvement in civil society, the ability to assess the lucidity and transparency of information circulated by open government and the extent to which the public can control the administration – all this is possible only with users able to analyse and synthesize information, and possessing the skills of critical analysis and information product preparation techniques.

The Practical Implementation of Open Government Ideas: Teachers and Librarians as Stakeholders of Media and Information Literacy and Personal Information Culture

The promotion of open government ideas is provided by a wide range of social institutions – administrative bodies, research and educational institutions, libraries, professional associations, public organizations and the mass media. Educational establishments and libraries and, consequently, teachers and librarians have a special place here.

The teacher enters classroom every day to help students digest information into personal knowledge and skills. The librarian deals with huge amounts of traditional and electronic information resources every day, is an expert

at information retrieval, and can recommend the most valuable and reliable sources. A unique role belongs to school librarians, who are the closest to teaching. Children can address them every day.

Teachers and librarians can come up as stakeholders, i.e., groups whose contribution is decisive in successful promotion of open government ideas and the formation of e-citizen. Educating e-citizens is like growing a viable plant out of a tiny seed, with all similar development stages. Consistent and systemic education alone can produce the real e-citizen who feels at home in the present-day global information environment and is linked through the roots with native history and culture. Comprehensive impact on students and the teacher's competence and credibility are his/her advantage in this cause, while librarians' advantage lies in competent information retrieval, analysis and arrangement.

As we see it, classes in media and information literacy and the ABC of information culture should be introduced at every educational level from preschool to postgraduate, using the opportunities of educational institutions and libraries. At the same time, we do not in the least counterpoise our curriculum to the well-tested E-Citizen programme of the ECDL Foundation. As said above, it aims at mass instruction of adults to ease social adaptation of particular social groups – pensioners, limited abilities persons, unemployed people, migrants, etc. Regrettably, the programme is not on a regular footing. So, if we proceed from long-term national interests and the principles of systems approach and complementarity, I should say that another way is the most rational. That is the addition of systematic targeted instruction of children and the youth to the ad hoc E-Citizen programme via the network of Russian educational establishments and libraries. In other words, mass instruction of specific target groups should be complemented through the potential of the national educational network (schools, colleges and universities) and the network of public libraries, which traditionally engage in the education of all social groups.

This approach necessarily poses the question of special continuing professional training of teachers and librarians in media and information literacy, personal informant culture, open government and e-citizenship.

Media and Information Literacy, Personal Information Culture and Implementing the Open Government Ideas: Research Prospects and Obstacles

I should name the following obstacles to the promotion of open government and e-citizen ideas in Russia:

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- 1) The domination of technological determinist ideology, which places technology in the foreground and so advances computer literacy to the detriment of media and information literacy and personal information culture;
 - 2) The absence of a social humanitarian component, which limits the open government idea and violates the principle of involvement in civil society.

It takes administrative decisions at the federal level to implement open government effectively, and replace computer literacy by media and information literacy and personal information culture in educating e-citizen. First of all, as said above, it is necessary to include media and information literacy and fundamentals of personal information culture in the curricula at every educational level. Such a decision, in its turn, demands formidable academic support including research on the integration of random knowledge in information, civil and media education for e-citizen formation; and the establishment of science-based national standards of media and information literacy and personal information culture.

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Ramon Guillermo R. TUAZON

President, Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication;
Secretary General, Asian Media Information and Communication Centre
(*Manila, Philippines*)

Core Competencies of Public (Government) Information Officers in the 21st Century: Retooling for Open Government

Public Information Officers (PIOs) are at the forefront of communicating news and information about government programmes and projects and, inevitably, government officials. PIOs therefore play a key role in promoting and pursuing transparent, accountable, and citizen-oriented governance, which is consistent with open government data (OGD) principles.

PIOs, however, face challenges in the advocacy and practice of open government. Traditional values, mindsets, and customs in the working environment – specifically, the prevailing governance culture – can pose hindrances to enabling PIOs to become “apostles” of an open government.

Some experts refer to public information as “government information” or “public administrative communication,” among others. According to Garnett [1997a, as cited in Garnett 2011], public administrative communication may include administrative agency reporting, interagency or intergovernmental interaction, and efforts to gauge agency stakeholder opinions. While the core of PIOs can be found in the Ministry of Information (MoI) of most governments worldwide, there are also PIOs in other government ministries (departments) assigned to do public information work for their respective agencies.

PIOs commonly serve as agency spokespersons, moderators during press conferences or briefings, and press release writers and distributors. PIOs are regarded as the government counterparts of public relations (PR) practitioners or corporate communicators in the business world. In some unfortunate cases, they are even labeled as government propagandists.

Public Communication in the 21st Century

The emergence of “knowledge society” is redefining the philosophy and principles of public information of the 21st century. Communication models, strategies, and approaches are being reengineered to suit the new communication setting. Simply put, old public information strategies no

longer work. If public information offices continue to create programmes and projects identical to those implemented a decade or even five years ago, these offices are likely to fail.

Today’s knowledge society is driven by several factors that have significant impact on public information work, three of which are as follows: (1) the advent of information and communication technology (ICT); (2) the emergence of critical and engaged public; and (3) the movement towards open government. To what extent have public information offices realigned their structures, programmes, and strategies to meet the challenges brought about by these factors?

The concept of open government has an enduring impact on public information work in governments worldwide as it sets new political and ethical standards. The Open Government Partnership was introduced in 2011 to provide “a platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens.” From the original eight countries (the Philippines included), the OGP now has 69 participating countries [Open Government Partnership, n.d.].

Joshua Tauberer [2014] identified 14 Principles of Open Government Data (see Table 1). Philippino ICT expert Emmanuel C. Lallana [2014] notes that OGD principles are akin to competencies.

Table 1. Tauberer’s Open Government Data Principles

Online and Free, Primary, Timely, and Accessible (Principles 1 to 4)
Analyzable Data in Open Formats (Principles 5 and 7)
No Discrimination and License-Free (Principles 6 and 8)
Publishing Data with Permanence, Trust, and Provenance (Principles 9 to 11)
Public Input, Public Review, and Coordination (Principles 12 to 14)

Some of these principles are discussed in more detail below.

Rewiring Public Information Offices

As we all know, ICT has changed the communication process – from a one way, top-down approach to an interactive, multi-directional process. The diffusionist model, best encapsulated in the so-called “information dissemination” campaigns by many government information agencies, represents the traditional mindset of PIOs that needs to be changed. ICT has

also multiplied the channels and tools for communication. The new tools and channels do not conform to the diffusionist model but facilitate interactive and participatory communication processes.

We no longer have the classical “passive audiences” of government news and information; rather, we have engaged individuals who can even produce and share their own content. ICT has also changed content development. Young people, usually comprising more than half of several countries’ populations, have been producing their own media content using social media and mobile technology.

Today’s PIOs “communicate” and do not merely “disseminate” information. Today, their purpose is to go beyond informing and educating the public; more importantly, they aim to empower the people to access, analyze, process, and organize information so that they can be repackaged into knowledge products that address information needs and requirements. From a “disseminator” of information, the new PIO takes on new roles as “enabler” and “facilitator” of positive development. Meanwhile, people engagement and empowerment require media and information literacy (MIL) skills.

Thus, we can raise here the following questions: How many government information offices have turned to social media and mobile technology as mechanisms for communication and people engagement? Have they also set up a unit dedicated to new media?

Critical and Engaged Public

Given the emergence of critical and engaged public, PIOs must also be innovative, creative, and equally engaged. Three recent manifestations of engaged public are the interrelated concepts of citizen journalism, user-generated content, and crowdsourcing.

Addressing the needs of the critical and engaged public

It remains difficult, if not impossible, to have critical and engaged public if they do not have free access to accurate and updated government data and information. Data and information shared enable the public to make informed choices and decisions and meaningfully participate in the discussion of governance issues. PIOs are called upon to work with chief information officers (CIOs) or specialists in charge of ICT and management information systems in order to make information available to the public in various open formats and platforms including the use of open data portals. These

requirements are consistent with the Open Government Data Principles by Tauberer [2014].

Another responsibility for PIOs is to help “popularise” government data and information so that they become user-friendly to different audiences. Indeed, data or information visualization has become one of the core competencies of a PIO in the 21st century.

Supporting citizen journalism, user-generated content, and crowdsourcing

Citizen journalism makes individuals less dependent on public information offices for government news and information as citizens themselves are able to report on accomplishments and even on current or emerging issues and concerns. Citizen journalism exacts accountability from government offices.

By providing citizens with adequate data and information (and with the availability of user-friendly media technologies), community members have been capacitated to create and share **user-generated content**. Therefore, another challenge for PIOs is to engage in **crowdsourcing**, which involves mapping and harvesting (and eventually sharing) relevant content produced by the community. PIOs no longer have the monopoly in producing public information; they should recognize the public right to content development and acknowledge the capability of the public to complement or even enhance content from public offices.

Crowdsourcing also provides an opportunity for the public to express their views and opinions or give feedback on the quality of government programmes and the performance of government authorities.

Core Competencies of Public Information Officers in an Open Government Setting

Today’s knowledge society has redefined the roles of PIOs. New roles demand new competencies which will enable them to function effectively in an open government setting.

Competencies refer to knowledge, complex skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable an individual to perform a specific task or role. Table 2 summarizes the proposed new competencies for the 21st century PIO based on the competencies of the 20th century PIO. The table also integrates open government data principles.

Let us examine some of the variables in this competency matrix.

**Table 2. Competencies for Public Information Officers:
Moving from the 20th Century to the 21st Century**

20th Century PIO Competency	21st Century PIO Competency
Output-oriented	Output- and outcome-oriented
Customer-blind (general public)	Audience- or participant-specific
Source-oriented	Audience- or participant-driven (needs and demands-based)
Able to work in a centralized and controlled information environment	Able to work in an open government culture (with focus on transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement)
Able to disseminate information to passive audiences	Able to communicate/exchange information with critical, engaged and interactive “participants” (information producers and consumers)
Able to disseminate government-driven data/information	Able to share free, primary, timely, accessible, analyzable data/information (in open formats)
Able to engage in top-down and one-way communication	Able to engage in multidirectional communication
Expert-dependent in crafting strategies and messages (relies on subject specialization)	Collaborative in crafting strategies and messages (explores multidisciplinary (e.g., social sciences) perspectives)
Able to use traditional mass media	Able to use multimedia channels
Able to work within the print culture	Able to work within the visual culture
Able to use creative strategies	Able to use evidence-based creative planning and management (data/media analytics as new core skills)
Has newswriting as a core competency	Has newswriting, news aggregation, and news curation as core competencies

The culture of open government demands reengineering public information principles and work processes as well as developing appropriate competencies and mindsets, as there is still resistance to easy access to public information in many governments.

Such resistance is present in authoritarian regimes that detest open access to information (open government) as this would empower citizens who can become threats to the ruling administration. Open access is also difficult in

highly centralized systems wherein decisions on which information can be made accessible are made by the few top officials. Meanwhile, the tedious bureaucratic system renders the information dissemination (exchange) process circuitous and time-consuming, making government data or information outdated by the time they are retrieved and shared.

PIOs are expected to champion access to information in their respective agencies. PIOs are also expected to be proactive (rather than reactive) in releasing government data in open formats and through open data portals. Public information should aim for transparency and participation in governance. They should become open data champions.

Open Government/Open Government Data (OG/OGD) Principles 1 to 4 call for online and free, primary, timely, and accessible data and information. Open government advocates for the full disclosure policy, which mandates national and local government offices to be transparent in their operations especially in terms of budget and financial transactions. PIOs can take the lead in making relevant official documents available and accessible via official websites and portals. In the Philippines, the Open Data Portal (data.gov.ph) launched in January 2014, now holds over 2000 data sets in addition to 13 dashboards and 87 data visualizations.

Open government is supported in the Finlandia Declaration titled “Access to Information and Fundamental Freedoms – This is Your Right!” adopted during the World Press Freedom Day celebration on 03 May, 2016. It reiterates that the right to information is an integral component of freedom of expression, and is fundamental to democracy and to other rights and freedoms. The Declaration also notes that Sustainable Development Goal 16 includes points relevant to the freedom of the press, access to information, safety of journalists, and the rule of law. Specifically, Target 16.10 states the aim to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.”

Among others, the Declaration calls upon each UNESCO Member State “to put in place strong systems for proactive disclosure of information, taking full advantage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and promoting, as far as possible, universal access to the Internet, and respect for open data principles” and to “direct the necessary attention and political will to ensuring full implementation of the right to information, including addressing the culture of secrecy within government institutions.”

PIOs must therefore facilitate community participation in community development planning and budgeting to ensure that local plans are community-centered or driven. The role of PIOs is not limited to sharing data/information

for decision-making; they are also responsible for providing the channels or platforms for feedback and dialogue.

The existence of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law is not an assurance that it is recognized in practice. PIOs should commit to open access to public information. The exemptions should be consistent with international standards. Among the permissible exemptions are: privacy; national security, public health and safety; and prevention, investigation, and prosecution of legal wrongs.

The traditional (20th century) public information office operates in a setup wherein the organizational structure defines its institutional programmes and projects with predetermined strategies and results. The modern (21st century) public information office, on the other hand, begins by envisioning concrete outcomes and outputs before developing the strategies necessary to achieve the outcomes and outputs. Examples of outcomes are **a community that is critically aware and knowledgeable about current and emerging development issues** and **a community that is actively engaged in addressing such development issues**. These two outcomes are a result of open government/open government data.

Many public information and communication programmes fail because of their “one size fits all” approach, where “audiences” are broadly defined and perceived as “passive,” and objectives, strategies, and messages are not audience- or participant-specific. Message “dissemination” often follows the “shotgun” approach, targeting as many individuals as possible within the range, but with minimum or no effect, or effects that are difficult or impossible to measure.

The absence of well-defined audiences is described by Osborne and Gaebler [1992] as “customer-blindness.” For Garnett [2011], communication aimed at the general public makes little sense, as neglecting to specify and study one’s intended audiences are tantamount to delivering a programme without first conducting a needs assessment to discover whether there exist a need for such a programme.

In addition, open government/open government data become more meaningful if the information needs of marginalized sectors are prioritized. In many cases, marginalized individuals and groups are unable to articulate their information needs and cannot access digital data and information because of digital illiteracy and lack of access to technology.

PIOs should therefore prioritize reaching the marginalized citizens. As Kovach and Rosenstiel [2014] note, the primary purpose of PIOs is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. But from mere recipients of information “downloaded” by government offices, citizens have transformed into critical, engaged, and active participants of the public information process. This is consistent with OG/OGD Principles 12 to 14 – Public Input, Public Review, and Coordination.

As citizens are now co-creators of content, they define their information needs and requirements and participate in the production and exchange of content using various channels and formats. The role of the PIO in a “citizens as content co-creator setting” includes facilitating, capacitating, and providing platforms for active engagement.

It must be noted that supply orientation is a weakness in some open data platforms. Government agencies provide information on how to access datasets and tools, such as infographics, to make the information easy to understand. Some platforms encourage the public to request for the data they need and send feedback, but there is a need for more proactive mechanisms that would allow citizens to be co-creators or co-administrators of these platforms.

The concept of public space in open government highlights the importance of virtual space, as it allows immediate access to unlimited information. Three major concerns are involved here: first, the extent by which Internet freedom is recognized and practiced; second, the issue of digital divide wherein marginalized individuals/groups (in terms of gender, ethnic class, economic group, etc.) are denied access and participation in the virtual world; and third, retooling of public information officers, specifically in digital/computer literacy.

According to the *Freedom of the Net 2015* report, Internet freedom around the world has declined for the fifth consecutive year as more governments are engaged in “*censorship of information of public interest while also expanding surveillance and cracking down on privacy tools.*” *The topics commonly censored online are directly related to the practice of open government: mobilization for public causes, criticism of authorities, corruption, conflict, and social commentary.*

Related to Internet Freedom is reliability of (government) data/information provided. OG/OGD Principles 9 to 11 provide for Publishing Data with Permanence, Trust, and Provenance.

Some Challenges in Pursuing the 21st Century Public Information Paradigm

Recognition of the new role of public information in good governance

There should be recognition and acceptance among traditional PIOs that changes are inevitable and must be reflected in all dimensions of competencies – knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviors. More of the same thinking and practices no longer suffice. Traditional roles have to give way to new game-changing ones.

Investment in public information

There seems to be underinvestment in public information work compared to expenses in public infrastructure. This is partly due to the lack of recognition by political leaders of the contributions of public information to development. Investment in public information work includes reengineering of organizational structures, retooling of officials and personnel, and new tools, equipment, and facilities.

Seamless integration and collaboration

Public information should not be perceived as a separate element of governance. Transparency, accountability, and citizen participation should be second nature to all government transactions and programmes.

All public officials must also acknowledge that public information work is inherent in their duties and responsibilities (although PIOs play a lead role). Every public servant must engage in the 21st century public information work as described in this paper. Pursuing open government/open government data is a collective responsibility of all government functionaries.

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Maryam NAZARI

Consultant, Iranian Research Institute
for Information Science and Technology (IranDoc),
(Tehran, Iran)

Understanding Media & Information Literacy Requirements Needed for Successful Implementation of Open Government: Proposal of a Contextual-Participatory Approach

There is a wealthy body of literature on the “why” and “how” of media and information literacy (MIL) explaining why MIL is an inseparable component of knowledge societies and why it is a requirement for building a culture of Open Government (OG)²². However, this literature mainly reflects the outsiders’ perspectives. These include information literacy experts, media experts and advocates of the Information for All Programme.

Need for the “Players” Input

Although the outsiders’ views highlight some aspects of MIL, they do not address the “wants”, “wishes” and “worries” of those who are actually part of the OG formation process. These include **people, government and the media** who participate in, and contribute to, the creation and communication of information in the context of OG.

As a result, there is a gap between the outsiders’ definitions of MIL, and what MIL would actually mean in the actual contexts of OG, as perceived and experienced by those who play a part in it.

Conceptualizations with Players, by Players, as Playing

To fill the gap, this article proposes a contextual-participatory approach as it gives room to those whose lived experiences and concerns are the key source of insight for understanding situations and phenomena as suggested by Bergold and Thomas [2012]:

“Participatory research methods are geared towards planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life-world and

²² *Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies. Proceedings of the International Conference (Moscow, 2012). Moscow: Interregional Library Cooperation Centre.*
Internet and Socio-Cultural Transformations in Information Society. Proceedings of the International Conference (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, 2013). Moscow: Interregional Library Cooperation Centre.

meaningful actions are under study [...]. The participatory research process enables co-researchers to step back cognitively from familiar routines, forms of interaction, and power relationships in order to fundamentally question and rethink established interpretations of situations and strategies.”

Drawing on Nazari’s [2011, 2016] contextual study of information literacy, this approach suggests that to understand MIL requirements needed for successful implementation of OG we need to conceptualize MIL in the context of actual concepts and practices of OG as experienced or reported by the key players. In so doing, we need to get the players engaged in the conceptualization and implementation process of OG in real-life contexts, and throughout the process get them reflect on the MIL concept and components.

MIL and OG

MIL has been identified as a prerequisite for successful implementation of open government (OG), simply because MIL plays a crucial role in equipping the OG players with attitudes and competencies they need to build OG in a sustainable manner.

MIL refers to “essential competencies and skills to equip citizens in the 21st century with the abilities to engage with media and information systems effectively and develop critical thinking and life-long learning skills to socialize and become active citizens” [UNESCO 2014].

OG as a key element of democratic societies has been identified with three characteristics [Heller 2012]:

- “Information transparency: that the public understands the workings of their government;
- Public engagement: that the public can influence the workings of their government by engaging in governmental policy processes and service delivery programmes; and
- Accountability: that the public can hold the government to account for its policy and service delivery performance.”

Need for Contextual Conceptualization of MIL and OG Constructed by “Players”

Both OG and MIL are context-dependent concepts whose meanings may differ in various countries and in different sectors [De Blasio and Selva 2016]. This implies that to successfully implement OG, we first need to understand

how OG is perceived by those who contribute to its construction and its sustainability. This includes government, public, and media. Each plays a part:

- **Government** builds open government by considering three key characteristics: information transparency, public engagement and accountability.
- **Public** participates in the construction and maintenance of OG by sharing authentic information with the government and making ethical and effective use of information published by the government.
- **Media** contributes to the communication and sustainability of OG by engaging “mainstream news organizations with the principles of open government, and with civil society and the public over government information” [Media Council 2013].

The question arising here is: what MIL competencies does each of these players require to be able to construct and sustain OG in different contexts?

To answer this question, we need to explore the following issues:

- How is OG perceived by various players in different contexts?
- What does data or big data mean and in what areas can it be open, considering public policy in different countries?
- What are OG policies in terms of transparency, public participation and collaboration as well as the use of digital technology, in different countries?
- Within such contextual conceptions of OG, what constitutes MIL? What competencies does each group of players require to be able to perform effectively to build and sustain OG?

Need for Full Participation of “Players”

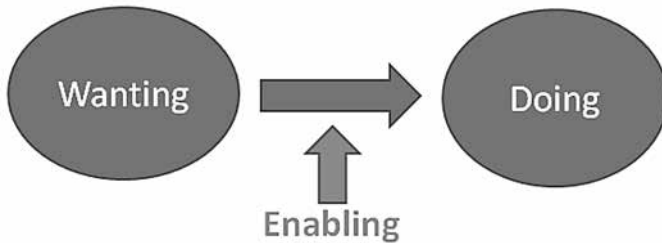
At the heart of the participatory approach there is a strong principle that promises results:

To make something happen in a sustainable manner, make consumers/users part of it.

Consumers/users are those who are going to benefit from the ultimate results. The more they get engaged in the building process, the higher are the chances that they use what they have made; simply because they see themselves part of it and have a sense of belonging to it.

Building a Culture of OG: Transforming “Wanting” into “Doing”

The journey begins with creating the sense of “wanting”, but unless we transform “wanting” into “doing” we may fail to achieve sustainable results.



“Wanting” comes from the awareness of the “Aha!” type, and “doing” is the result of empowerment, of “I can do it” type (Figure 1). To build OG as a culture, we should develop players who are informed and empowered. It is by then that they are able to become active participants of OG initiatives.



Figure 1. Informed and enabled players: a key requirement for building a culture of open government

Using a contextual-participatory approach, it will be possible to:

- Make players part of the process and output;
- Uncover the actual “wants”, “worries” and “wishes” of the government and other players;
- Co-create solutions, with a great sense of commitment to action;
- Touch the actual OG context of MIL;
- Understand the actual information process and MIL needed for the construction and implementation of OG.

Successful Open Government Initiatives: Ingredients

As mentioned above, to build a culture of OG, first we need players who are informed and inspired, that is, have a desire for OG. They should be informed about the advantages of OG in a way that they reach the point of “wanting” OG. Then they should to be empowered with proper resources, tools and trust. They also need to be enabled with appropriate competencies.

To make this transformation happen in a sustainable manner, players should become part of the “culture building” process, as suggested by the participatory research [Bergold and Thomas 2012]. The more and deeper they are engaged in the process of conceptualization of the OG and MIL concepts in real contexts, the more dedicated they become in the actualization process where these concepts are going to be implemented in the corresponding contexts.

Need for Constructive Conversations

As the final model of MIL will be constructed on the players’ perceptions and experiences of OG and their reflection on the various aspects of MIL, it is crucial that the participants get engaged in informative conversations. Conversations that would dig into their lived experiences about the phenomenon under study.

As presented in Figure 2, such informative conversations require two conceptual models, each of which should be built upon systematic reviews of relevant literature:

- one model should cover various aspects of MIL and corresponding concepts such as “knowledge society” and “information for all” practices;
- another model should cover the OG concept, advantages and challenges.

Provided that we select right people and employ right method(s) for data gathering, these two conceptual models can heavily facilitate the emergence of the patterns that we need to understand MIL in target context (OG).

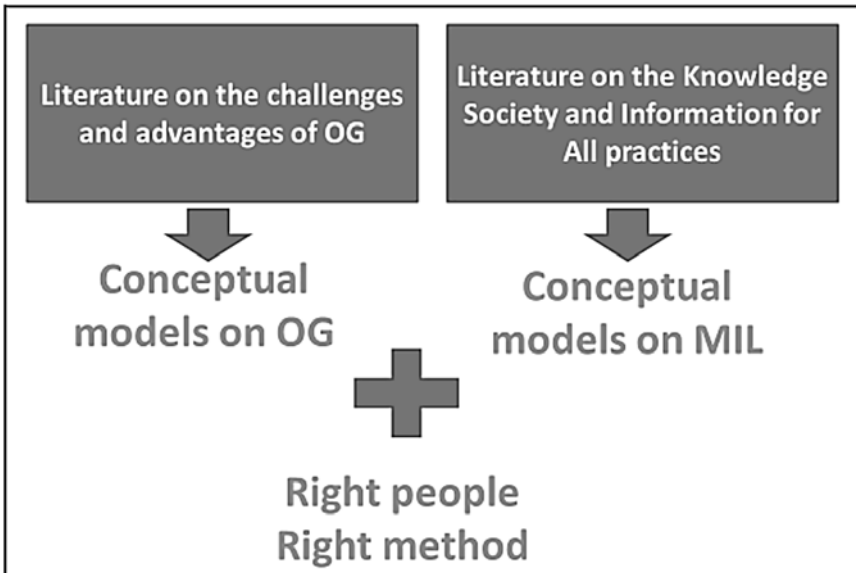


Figure 2. Ingredients needed for a constructive conversation in a participatory study

Right people are those who have the deepest knowledge, experience, contribution, and concerns on the phenomenon under study. Right method(s) are those that get the study participants dig into their lived experiences and relevant knowledge on the fieldwork questions.

Result-Oriented Fieldwork Design

When people become part of the OG process and open government becomes an inseparable part of a society, it signals a positive sign: OG has been implemented in a sustainable manner. To achieve such results, we need players who are informed about OG and are inspired by its benefits. The conceptual model of OG (the first ingredient) will play this part. This model, as mentioned earlier, will provide the study participants with some underpinnings on the characteristics, advantages, and challenges of OG. Depending on the context and selected participants for study (i.e. public, government, or media practitioners), each piece of the conceptual model will inform and inspire them in some way. For instance, advantages of OG can make the participants think and talk about the positive social impact of OG, economic development, and

public service improvements in society [Clarke and Margetts 2014; Taylor et al. 2014]. Challenges of OG can make the participants think and talk about challenges of citizen participation needed for the establishment of OG [Evans and Campos 2012].

Sustainable OG also requires players who are enabled and empowered by “appropriate” competencies, tools, and trust. To identify “appropriate” MIL competencies and other requirements, we need to listen to the experiences of those who participate in the OG conceptualization and implementation process, who have experiences and concerns on OG. These are our study participants. To help them think and talk holistically about the MIL requirements needed for OG, the second ingredient is needed: the conceptual model of MIL. By exposing participants to the conceptual model of MIL, while they are situated in some actual OG tasks, we enable them to share experiences and insights on MIL as needed for a successful implementation of OG.

It is through such informative and constructive conversations that we are able to deepen our understanding of the actual meaning of MIL as experienced in real-life OG practices. Such in-depth understanding will take us beyond the typical meanings of MIL offered by “outsiders”. They will get us closer to the actual meaning of MIL as reported by “players”.

Fieldwork in Action

To explore the “actuality” of MIL in the context of OG from the perspectives of different players we need to pause on the following questions:

- What does OG mean in different **countries** (or in a specific country)?
- What are the many faces of OG in different **sectors**?
- What does it take to make **government accept and commit** openness (in a specific context)?
- What does it take to make **public respect OG and behave** as civil societies?
- What does it take to make **the media report and interpret** information honestly?
- What does it take to build **trust** among the players?
- What MIL competencies does each player need to **act** effectively?

As shown in Figure 3, the fieldwork begins with situating the participants in a particular context and a specified role, it follows by engaging them in specific

tasks and ends by getting them reflect on the phenomenon while interacting with the context, role and task. And to guide the conversation constructively we use the two conceptual models.

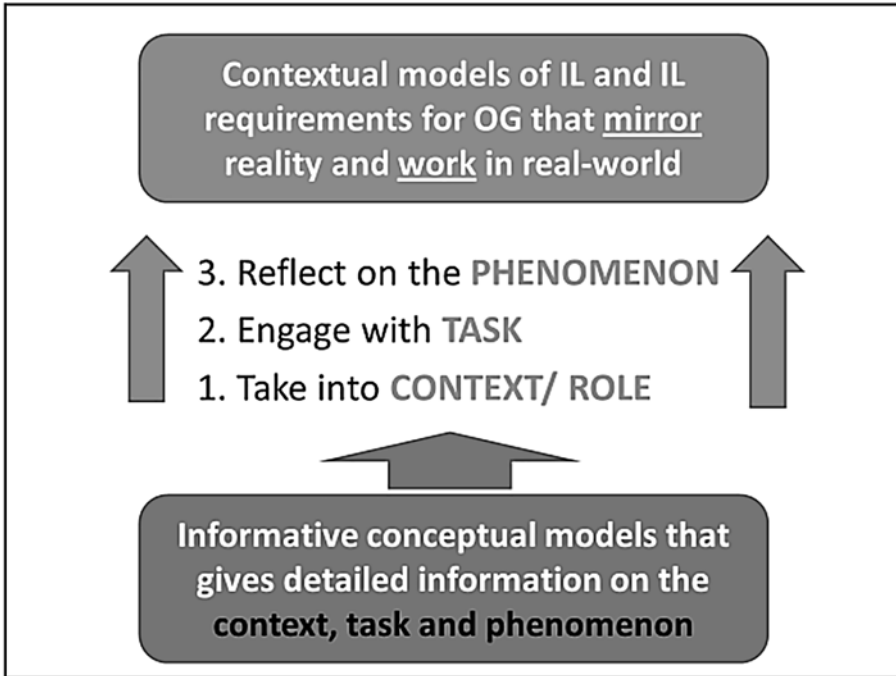


Figure 3. Contextual fieldwork using a situational approach

As shown in Figure 4, fieldwork questions should be addressed in specified contexts and in a situational manner.

Having selected a country, we should first focus on a particular sector, e.g. banking, health, transportation, education, as OG may mean different in different sectors.

Having identified the target sector for OG, we should focus on a particular role, considering the role of the players, whether they are government, public or media practitioners, as each group plays a different part in the formation and transformation of OG, hence they may have different perceptions and experiences of OG. The more specified selection we make, the deeper and detailed insights we may get on the actuality of OG. And the more detailed patterns on the actuality OG we get, the richer context we can develop to situate our study participants, that is, we can get our participants focused on the OG concept and process when exploring their perceptions and experiences of MIL.

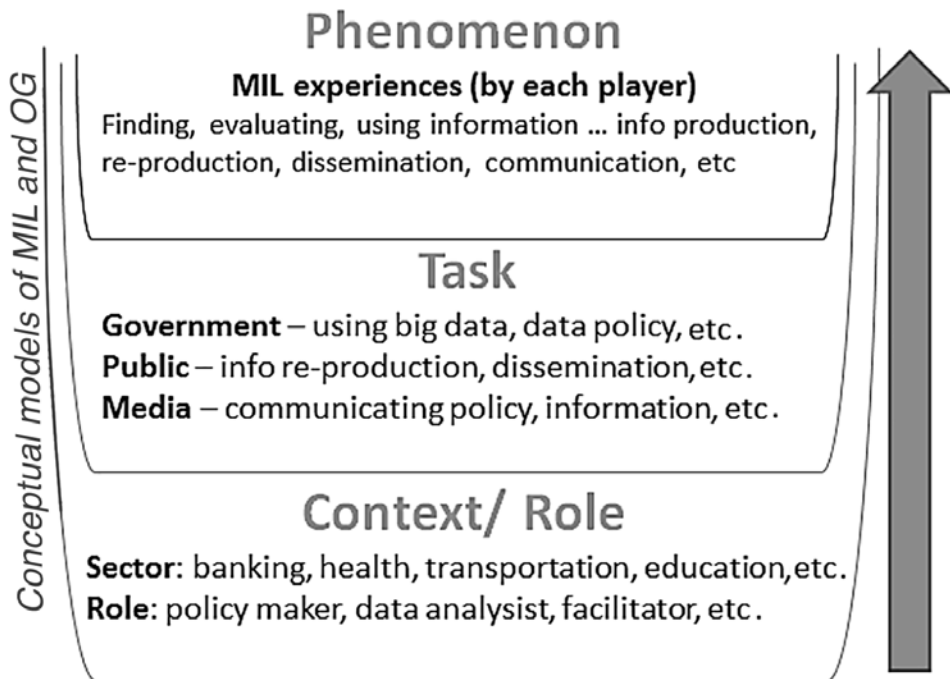


Figure 4. Fieldwork process in the contextual-participatory approach

With these considerations, it is very unlikely that the participants recall any irrelevant or generic MIL experiences. Whatever they say and share about MIL would mirror some actual aspects of OG as they see themselves in some actual OG-related tasks. In sum, by following the fieldwork process described above we are able to:

- dig into the unsaid and unthought of OG and MIL;
- capture the actual OG tasks and information processes within those tasks;
- identify actual problems, suggest feasible solutions or requirements needed for building a culture of OG.

As a result, the emergent MIL patterns generated by this approach will mirror reality, therefore they are applicable in real situations too, that is, they will inform stakeholders about the MIL requirements needed for successful implementation of OG in the specified context.

Expected Results

If employed properly, the results of contextual-participatory studies of MIL can help stakeholders overcome the communication challenge among the players.

Governments will accept openness and commit to it. This will create trust between people and governments.

Public will effectively and actively participate in OG initiatives as they see themselves as part of these initiatives. Empowered by proper MIL competencies, they are able to contribute to the establishment and growth of OG.

The media will report and interpret government policies and information honestly and will actively participate in the dissemination of OG.

Where Shall We Begin?

Due to the context-dependent nature of MIL and OG, every country should make their own MIL research agenda considering the following areas:

- the “what” and “how” of OG in their country;
- the “what” and “how” of OG in the selected sector;
- the “what” and “how” of OG for the selected role (i.e. government, citizens, and media practitioners and expected tasks in OG initiatives);
- the practice of OG by each player;
- media & information behavior of each player in the context of OG.

Contextual-participatory approach, as suggested in this article, if conducted properly in different countries and different sectors, can generate “best practical patterns of forming the system of open regions and open government”²³.

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²³ *Welcome greetings to the organizers and participants of the International Conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government (Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation, 6-10 June, 2016). Greeting by Ms Natalia Komarova, Governor of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra.*

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Árpád RAB

Chief Research Fellow, Obuda University;
Moderator, UNESCO Online Observatory for Information Society
(*Ocha, Hungary*)

Digital Culture, e-Democracy and Open Government. The Reengineering of the Human Mind by Digital Culture

In the first part of this article an overview of the cultural characteristics of digital culture will be given, which will then be applied to my theoretical model I henceforth will refer to as the dual circle of digital culture. The second half of the study will look at the trend of global urbanization, while seeking to explain the function digital culture has in the cultural history of mankind.

Accelerating Changes

The culture is the survival strategy of humankind. It is working: for example, the decreasing of physical violence in society, or the increasing length of our lives, etc. This speedily biological changing of a race is unique on the Earth. There are a lot of crises: economy, energy, population, pollution, societal, natural resources, etc. There were always crises, but now they are global. In the information society, ICT has its role in solving these challenges.

New technologies are spreading at an ever increasing pace. Looking at how many years it takes in 80% of the world's countries for a given technology to spread (a functional system to be built up), we can see it took the railway 125 years to become used globally, while the same process only took 100 years in the case of the telephone, and less than 75 years in the case of the radio. Assuming an ever accelerating rate of penetration, the use of personal computers spread over a period of about 25 years, while for the use of mobile phones it is approximately 20 years [Datta 2011]. The spread of the mobile Internet is anticipated to take place even faster, but only preliminary estimates are available at this point.²⁴

The ever higher speed of the market saturation achieved by technologies is shown in an analysis by Michael DeGusta [DeGusta 2012]. Using four source groups (ITU, Pew, United States Statistical Office, and the Wall

²⁴ See for example the report by GSMA: http://www.gsamobileeconomy.com/GSMA_ME_Report_2014_R2_WEB.pdf.

Street Journal), DeGusta studied the spread of various technologies in the past few decades.²⁵ His most important finding is that three phases of a technology's spread can be distinguished: one from the launch to 10% saturation, another between 10 to 40% saturation, and the last one from 40 to 75%. The spread of landline phones and electricity took off at a very slow pace (10% market saturation was achieved in 25 and 30 years, respectively), while mobiles moved much faster, producing the same saturation in just two and a half years. Of course the cost and time of building up a technology's infrastructure, as well as the size of the investment are the key factors; however, these categories do not apply to tablets. It is interesting to note that television achieved 10% saturation over about 11 years, while this only took smart phones eight years. When considering the second phase (10–40%), a rearrangement can be observed among technologies. The spread of electricity showed acceleration in this phase, as it reached 30% saturation within the scope of only 15 years. Acceleration can be seen in the case of TV and smart phones too: both achieved this rate of increase within two to three years. TV achieved 75% penetration from 40% in five years. As the penetration of smart phones and tablets have not yet achieved this level, no comparison can be made with these. The speeding up of the TV spread is spectacular; the same rate of acceleration cannot be said for personal computers, although there is some acceleration here too (PCs achieved 10% in nine years, 40% in 14 years and 75% in 13 years). Based on currently available data tablets and smart phones seem to be following an accelerating path, but this can only be stated with certainty in ten years' time.

I wish to highlight an important aspect of the ever increasing spread of technologies: this spread is faster than what would correspond to the previously measured rate of knowledge transfer from one biological generation to the next. Parents have neither the knowledge, nor the practical experience to enable them to pass a model on to their children.

Digital culture has undergone large scale quality and quantity change in the last fifteen years. Instead of a “computer by-product”, a living, thriving and expanding social phenomenon (one in interaction with traditional culture) evolved [Rab 2004], primarily as a result of the penetrating changes of the information society. Although this process began almost fifty years ago, a development boom in digital culture was triggered by and has been continuously fuelled by the fast pace spread of the broadband Internet and digital imaging tools.

²⁵ *In the United States.*

Today's digital world has numerous new attributes. None of these are technologically-driven, but rather are the result of a cultural change. The digital world is defined by a two-way interaction: technological changes are primarily induced by cultural changes, which then also exert an impact on culture. The characteristics to be listed on the following pages are more in-depth changes, independent of concrete technological devices; however, specific technological equipment (or a group of them) becoming popular and increasingly widespread might alter the rate of the changes discussed below; examples for this are the most important changes nowadays, i.e. the breakthrough of smart phones and the revolution of wireless 'omnipresent' Internet access. These changes are not isolated from one another, but interact with each other time and again, influence one another, enhance and curb one another. Most typically they exist simultaneously, amplifying each other's influences; here we can highlight, for example, the close relationship that interactivity and interconnectivity have with multitasking, but the phenomenon of the crisis of identity can also be linked with an increase in uncertainty.

The appearance of digital culture was not the first communication revolution in the history of mankind. When Johannes Gutenberg printed the Bible in 1454, he also launched a communication revolution [Harnad 1991]. In contrast to the changeable nature of oral communication, the printed text reproduced unchanged introduced a rational and reliable communication channel that was easy to follow. Communication through printed texts allowed people to see the world in a more analytical, rational and organised way. The dominance of the printed word was first dented in the 1950s, when television started to spread. And now the spread of digital culture, and within that the spread of digital media in particular, have put a definite end to the 450-year hegemony of the printed word: digital literacy and digital culture in general require new skills and approaches and a different way of comprehension. Kovarik talks about more communication revolutions: first the revolution of printing, then the visual revolution (triggered by photography), the electronic revolution (radio and then television playing the key role), and finally the digital revolution (computers and networks) [Kovarik 2011]. In my opinion the revolution of knowledge acquisition and sharing is about to begin, with its driving force being smart phones and the mobile Internet.

Characteristics of Digital Culture

In the past fifteen years I have been studying the different characteristics of digital culture. As they do not form an integral part of my article's main line of reasoning, below I will only provide a short description of these characteristics.

Oral literacy: digital literacy is far closer to oral communication that preceded the revolution of printing than it is to the written communication that emerged after the appearance of printing. In a digital environment the boundary between the written and the spoken word is blurred [Ong 2010; Szécsi 1998].

Distancing from the source: digital forms can become independent from their traditional (prime) source, which is why digital information gaining ground creates fear and doubt in many people, and indeed, there are new opportunities of abuse in a digital world: the authenticity of a text, an image and a film extract cannot be ascertained at first.

Permanence: everything we do in our digital environment leaves a trace. The time and date of opening a file is stored just like the love poems we type in; when viewing an average website the amount of information that leaves our computers is virtually the same as that arriving on it. In the information society it is not retaining information but deletion and the right to forget that constitute the real challenge.

Copiability: digital information is easy to copy, and once joined into a network the opportunities for this are infinite. This phenomenon has generated new ways of distribution and spreading, turning the contents industry upside down.

Instantaneousness: in a digital world we can share our experiences, send and read our emails instantly. IM and chat culture creates the impression of non-stop contact, news about events taking place in other corners of the world can be instantly accessed, and through several communication channels, etc.

Interactivity and interconnectivity: these are two key terms when we talk about the digital world (and digital society). Everything is interactive in a digital environment, even television use, and it is natural to us that any cultural object can be altered. Interconnectivity (a gift to humanity by the electronic devices of the information society) creates an opportunity for constant access and contact, which has an impact on many traditional cultural patterns, from our personal space to our work culture.

Perception and experience: the mentality of the users of digital culture has undergone vast changes in the last ten years: they have learnt that perception can be manipulated digitally. It is now generally known that the world we

perceive can be digitally generated. Moreover, for the first time in human culture it is suggested that our perception of virtual and non-virtual reality might be essentially the same. This lack of distinction is strengthened by the trend that technologies originally used in the entertainment industry are also used in other industries, and also by projecting a virtual environment onto the real world (augmented reality, LBS technologies).²⁶ Thanks to the virtual worlds of the future the real world that surrounds us will blend together with our digital environment.

Identity: in every culture individuals play many roles during their lifetime, assuming many identities. The number of these roles and the speed at which they replace one another depend not only on the individuals but also on their cultural disposition and the influence of their environment. In the information society a new factor has emerged: a set of human identities largely impacted by technological circumstances, i.e. network identity. Due to computers, visualisation technologies and mainly digital identification, we can be somewhere without physically being present; others can assume our identity without looking like us, without even having the same sex, and – what is even more alarming – in the meantime these people retain their own personality. Our virtual identity is faced with a dual burden: it is crucially important, yet it can be separated from its rightful owner.

Insecurity: the issue of information society being a risk society has often been emphasised. However, it is a misleading approach since people in medieval times were exposed to the same – or perhaps much greater – degree of risk due to the changeable social structure, healthcare and natural environment they lived in, which they could not control or have any influence over. In the case of natural peoples this lack of control reached such a level that magic and religious rites were used as a means of trying to control and influence their environment.

Speed and virtuality: every new technology serves the purpose of increasing speed. The very first trend was to increase the speed of changing one's physical location, but nowadays the ultimate objective is to increase the speed of information exchange. This acceleration can be felt in our everyday lives. The speed of modern technologies exceeds the natural speed of the human, biological organisms, which is difficult to grasp and creates tension that needs

²⁶ *Augmented reality refers to an extended reality, in which a virtual 'layer' – usually providing additional information – can be visualised with the help of technological devices (e.g. special glasses, mobile phones, etc.). LBS stands for location-based technology and constitutes technologies aimed at providing relevant information and services of interest to users at a given time and place based on identifying their location.*

to be dealt with; it must be addressed both by individuals and communities. In a digital environment there is a distance between users and the sources of information and objects. Hence, we feel distanced from palpable reality, and the role of trust and reliability has assumed greater importance. Perhaps the biggest cultural switchover is taking place in people's appreciation for 'real' and virtual cultural objects. In other words, are virtual cultural objects regarded as valuable by people living in a given culture? The seemingly non-palpable nature of digital cultural objects and patterns might easily lead to weightlessness. Nevertheless, in the coming decades people will most likely accept that digital actions, digital words and digital objects are real acts, real words and real objects in every respect.

Multitasking: in practice multitasking means that several tasks are (can be) managed simultaneously. Typical examples for this are media consumption and entertainment [Székely 2014]. Intertwining, simultaneous activities divide our attention, thus certain elements can be easily pushed to the background. The opportunity of continuous online presence enables us to manage several interactions in parallel communication spaces, as a result of which the 'blending together' of personal, group and mass communication is bound to happen. Similarly to background media consumption, we can talk about the appearance of background communication too, which makes it possible for users to be simultaneously present in different communication spaces, thanks to broadband connection. There are two sides to how multitasking is viewed. On the one hand, it is doubtlessly a strongly present and indelible phenomenon which is used to different extents and at different levels of success by any individuals, communities and, for example, businesses. On the other hand, multitasking definitely disperses attention, frequently producing quasi-entertainment, quasi-work processes, quasi-recreation and quasi-connections.

Using microtime: this characteristic of digital culture has been assuming increasing importance since the widespread of smart phones (and tablets). This technology enables instant availability (it was mostly necessary so that incoming calls would not destroy running processes, such as reading and gaming, for example). One of the important attributes of mobile games is that there is virtually no load time, or if it is interrupted, the process resumes in 1-2 seconds. Besides gaming, online chats play a crucial role, in my view, spending microtime. Smart phones display incoming messages, so users do not have to constantly watch and wait. It can be seen if someone writes us a message, so we can quickly reply while walking or while the traffic light is red. In another time-fragment we can glance at the screen again, check

and reply, etc. The use of microtime increasingly reduces the chance of being bored, while also teaching users how to focus their attention in short time spans (too). Thus, we have the great ‘rival’ of multitasking: when spending microtime we do not manage simultaneous activities, but quickly interrupted consecutive and alternating processes. This trend can potentially lead to the weakening of long-term concentration.

The Dual Circle of Digital Culture

In the last decade I have been researching various phenomena linked to digital culture. In the previous section I provided a brief description of each one of the main characteristics of digital culture, and over the years I found that these 14 characteristics can be arranged in a complex system comprising dynamic dichotomies that reinforce each other. Situations that arise in the context of digital culture result from the mutual interaction and attributes of these elements.

In order to visually represent this system I first established axes between the above mentioned characteristics and created two circles. One circle contains the characteristics of one of the axes, while the other one those of the other axis. Since the dichotomies contained in the two circles complement and provide an explanation for each other, I drew a dual circle, in which the position of each element is carefully designed in relation to its pair in the dichotomy, as well as to the other elements.

I have named this model the dual circle of digital culture.

The characteristics arranged in dichotomies:

- Interactivity – Interconnectivity;
- Multitasking – Using microtime;
- Orality literacy – Distancing from the source;
- Identity – Insecurity;
- Perception – Experience;
- Copiability – Virtuality;
- Permanance – Instantaneousness.

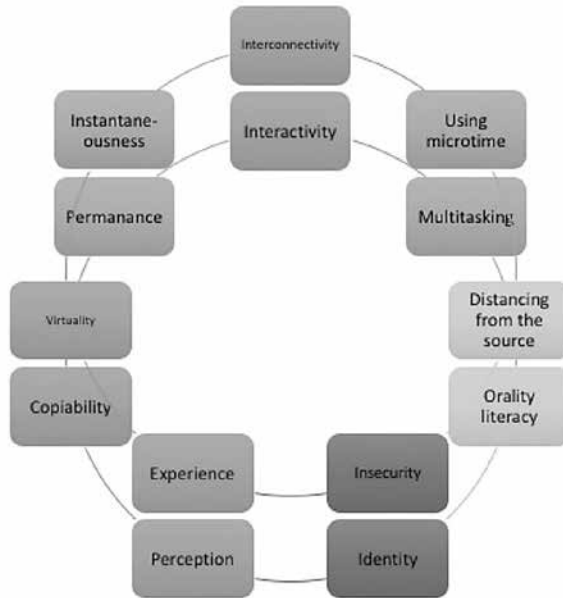


Figure 1. The dual circle of digital culture

The different colors are used to facilitate a better understanding of my model. Oral literacy and distancing from the source form a dichotomy intended to occupy a position on the other side of the circle, relative to instantaneousness and permanence. In a 3D representation the two circles would not run side by side but above each other; however, in a 2D representation, such an arrangement could not be read.

The categories of multitasking and using microtime have a similar effect but their *modi operandi* are each other's opposite, while the fragmentation of time affects perception and virtuality.

The dual circle of digital culture is a system of interpretation. Its primary objective is to represent the multi-layered and complex nature of the operation of digital culture, but it is suitable to be used for future framework system analyses.

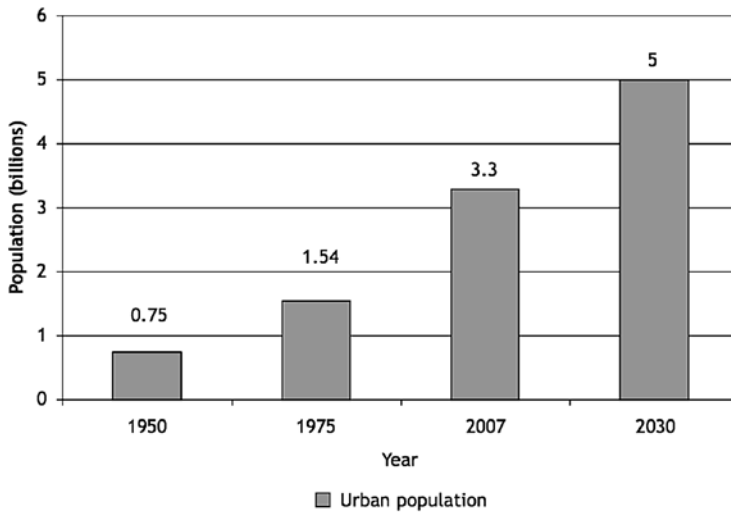
It is possible (and worth doing) to further explore the elements of the dual circle of digital culture. It is not only the elements of the dual circle that form complementary pairs (dichotomies), but some of the notions themselves are ambiguous. One such notion is speed, since one of the highly important and typical characteristics of today's digital culture is slowing down and slowness, as well as its extreme endpoint: breaking out of the information society.

The Trend of Urbanisation

Besides the penetration of ICT and digital culture, several other megatrends impact our present, of which one of the most important is urbanisation. For the first time in human history, half of the world's population lives in towns and cities (3.7 billion people), and by 2050 this number will double.

The tables below illustrate the massive growth in urbanisation.

World's population living in urban areas, 1950–2030²⁷



Growth of rural vs urban population (billion)²⁸

	1950	1975	2007	2030
Rural	1.77	2.52	3.3	3.29
Urban	0.75	1.54	3.3	5

It is expected that by 2030 there will be 41 cities with a population exceeding 10 million. These cities are basically 21st-century city states, and can be

²⁷ Source: Abdullah Baqui (2009). *Global Urbanization: Trends, Patterns, Determinants, and Impacts*, http://ocw.jhsph.edu/courses/urbanhealth/PDFs/Urban-sec2_Baqui.pdf, page 6.

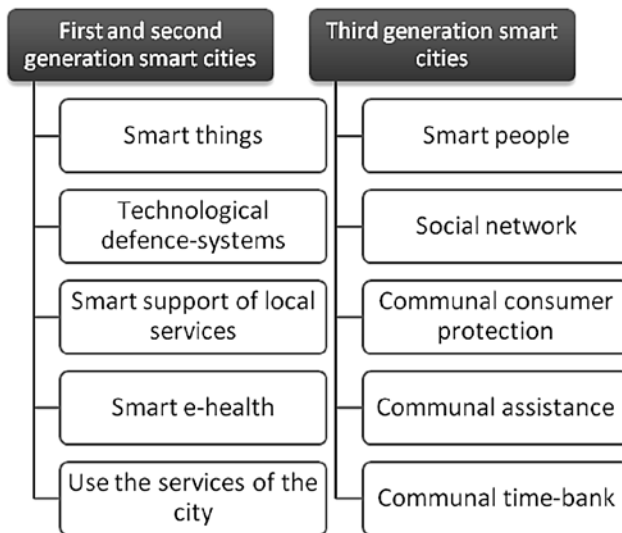
²⁸ *Ibid*, page 7.

regarded as countries not only because of their large numbers of inhabitants but also their cultural, intellectual and economic capacities.

A clear trend can be seen: the world's population migrates into towns and cities more and more quickly; therefore, the future communities of mankind will be extremely dense, and will live in urban infrastructures in close proximity with one another. Achieving and maintaining a quality of life in such densely populated communities poses technological and social challenges that might reach unprecedented levels in the modern era.

The Function of Digital Culture

A popular trend (umbrella term) in urban development is smart city developments. The objective of these is to make cities more sustainable, liveable and viable. Without intention to provide an in-depth analysis of this trend, only the generations of smart cities will be focused upon:



In the first and second generation smart cities the emphasis is on technological developments, including the energetic modernisation of buildings, the installation of smart meters and a growing number of increasingly smart sensors, as well as automation and innovations mainly in the areas of energetics and transportation technology. While such developments are undoubtedly impressive and significant, I believe that the future of smart cities is determined by their inhabitants. Technological developments are too costly, and besides their primary solutions they basically increase the energy resource needs and

technological dependence of systems. The really spectacular and inexpensive solution (moreover, the only one in developing countries) is connecting people. Providing automated support for cooperation between people, also involving strangers/people who do not know each other personally is only possible in a digital culture, and can take place for the first time in human history. The main function of digital culture is to turn us into co-operative machines.

This function is fulfilled properly, since looking at the business models and information society communities-based projects of recent years clearly shows that such cooperation has been established. Staying at other people's places alone or with our families, and sharing rides with others are not new phenomena, but for the same things to happen between strangers who use automated support by merely authenticating a mobile application is unprecedented, especially at the mass scale that can be observed today. These solutions do not only exist in the areas of travelling and accommodation but also extend to the health services, security solutions and entertainment, as well as to the exchange of cultural objects and communal cooperation (ranging from nurseries to communal irrigation). Digital culture has introduced and utilises this kind of cohesive force built upon automation, a highly efficient use of energy sources and connecting people, turning digital culture into a survival strategy for people living in cities.

Open Government, Open Data, Open Connections

Digital culture turning people into cooperating machines is a trend also manifest in e-government, and within that – open government. The open use of data, its undistorted sharing, and its usability by citizens constitute a key area of open government. Indeed, the collection of data, its sharing and transparency are undoubtedly extremely important aspects of open government. However, in my view, the role of open connections is even more important: the most important task of (self-)governments in the future will be to connect citizens in order to increase their quality of life. I think the implementation of sharing protected and at the same time public, up-to-date and authentic government databases accessible to all citizens is not feasible, as it is obstructed by legal, technological and information literacy problems. The solution is for governments to act as data owners and satisfy data retrieval requests submitted by citizens, thus sharing not databases but information. For example, they could provide data such as the number of people with school-age children living in the same street, or the number of pensioners who worked as teachers, etc. Cooperations that can create the smart cities of the future can be started and strengthened based on such information. Hence, the goal is not data sharing but authentic data

provision and increasing connectedness between people. At the same time, for citizens to be able to learn the culture of asking questions, and for them to be able to make a success of digital cooperation already launched, they need to have a high level of media and information literacy (MIL). Increasing MIL constitutes will gain importance in education and civil organisations both in the developing and developed countries of the globe.

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Alexander SHARIKOV

Professor, National Research University –
Higher School of Economics
(Moscow, Russian Federation)

Media and Information Literacy and the Culture of Open Government: A Common Genesis

The aim of this contribution is to demonstrate the deep genetic interconnection between the categories of media and information literacy and the culture of open government and, consequently, the necessity to regard them as two parts of the same dynamic social process.

Essential Concepts

The concept of media and information literacy emerged throughout many years and resulted from the synthesis of many concepts that reflect the developmental level of the media sphere in a particular historical period. A new socio-cultural situation appeared in the world starting with the late 19th century – the time of gradual evolvement of the cinema and radio. Its key specificity lay in the dissemination of the latest (at that time) modes of information organization and circulation, and the beginning of transition from the dominant written and printing culture, which Marshall McLuhan termed “the Gutenberg Galaxy”²⁹, to a more diversified and complicated state of the socio-cultural universe. The development of these technologies led to attempts to re-assess the problems of social information circulation at a new stage.

The increasing number of means of knowledge transfer posed the question of generalized assessment of such means, as reflected in the term “media”, which appeared in the Western academic idiom in the first quarter of the 20th century. It derives from the Latin *media* – *means*, plural from *medium* – *means, go-between*. The terms “mass communication” and “audience” appeared together with it in respect to objects presently known as mass media. Previously, the word “audience” referred only to groups listening to oral communications without whatever technical means, while the phrase “reading audience” sounded oxymoronic. Really, the word derives from the Latin *audio*, “listen”, while newspaper reading concerns visual not aural perception. The word “communication”, in its turn, designated “companionship” or “message”. This

²⁹ Маклюэн М. *Галактика Гутенберга: Становление человека печатающего*. – М.: Академический Проект: Фонд «Мир», 2005.

range of concepts was introduced in the Soviet academic usage as late as the late 1950s and early 60s.

The generalized concept of the media was, however, more of a speculative theoretical construction, disintegrating at the practical level into particular technical means of social communication – books, newspapers, magazines, photographs, sound recordings, the cinema, radio broadcasting, etc., or their combinations. As far as public mastery of these media was concerned, another trend emerged in the socio-pedagogical sphere, which demanded the introduction of a new kind of literacy, generalized as “partial literacy”. Initially, the concept of literacy implicated reading and writing, whose mastery allowed the use of written sources and printed matter. The appearance of new technical means of information storage and dissemination demanded relevant kinds of literacy. Let us regard as an example the appearance of the concept of cinema literacy as a typical socio-pedagogical trend connected with the assimilation, in the 1920s, of the cinema as a new means of mass communication. This analysis will help us realize that similar movements emerged every time scientific and technological progress created new means of social communication.

The cinema appeared at the end of the 19th century as sheer entertainment. It became amazingly popular in no time. The theatres were packed to see films of many rapidly developing genres – documentaries and features. The cinema was widely used in education. Its artistic idiom became more and more sophisticated with a wide range of devices – foreshortening, zoom, distant and close shot, montage, etc. It was necessary to develop an understanding of this new and sophisticated idiom. First references to cinema literacy were heard even at the beginning of the 20th century, and cinema pedagogics appeared as a special branch of research. This is what Soviet cinema educationalist Boris Kandyrin wrote in the *Art at School* magazine in 1929:

“In compliance with the resolutions of the Moscow conference of the Moscow gubernia commission’s school and children’s section,³⁰ the Society of Soviet Cinema’s Friends launched regular classroom film shows and morning feature film shows all over Moscow ... Morning shows are conducted by cinema educationalists who contact children in the foyer and auditorium ... They usually discuss films and acting with children, disclose the secrets of stunts, and so on. Children take tremendous interest in everything pertaining to the cinema, and discussions are very lively. Posters and drawings displayed in the foyer prepare the young audience to the

³⁰ At that time, the USSR territorial administrative unit was the gubernia (province) – the tsarist period legacy. In 1929 provinces were abolished and replaced by new administrative units – krajs, regions, republics, etc.

*film. Educational work in the cinema theatre should be closely connected with the film on show and help to understand it.*³¹

As the quotation shows, to teach the understanding of the cinematic idiom is among the principal goals of forming cinema literacy or, broader, of cinema education. Here is another quotation, from Anatoly Lunacharsky, prominent Soviet educationalist and cultural activist, whose treatment of cinema literacy was even more comprehensive. He wrote in his 1928 essay *The Cinema at School*:

*“The cinema at school will be not only a passive projecting instrument based on the school or central stock library: a more or less decent school should shoot its own films and make collections of films made during students’ exploratory hikes.”*³²

The author means that, apart from the formation of proper perception of films, education should develop filmmaking creativity.

We limit this contribution to cinema literacy proper. Indicatively, the process was launched every time after the mass-scale appearance of yet another technical means of information storage and circulation. A new socio-pedagogical trend in partial literacy appeared together with such means. That was how the concepts of visual, audiovisual, etc. literacy were formed. Massive dissemination of television in the late 1950s and early 60s gave final and generalized shape to the concept of the media in social sciences. There were no more references to television literacy as specific partial literacy. References to media literacy appeared instead, meaning the necessity of forming habits of dealing with all mass media combining the mastery of media languages (of the press, photography, cinema, radio and television) and the various creative and communicative competences related to the media. That was how the concept of media literacy³³ and, broader, media education,³⁴ related to the concept of media culture, appeared by the start of the 1970s. The progress of media culture created the necessity of media education.

The concept of information literacy was formed similarly and is closer connected with librarianship and computing science focusing on the habits of information search, processing, storage and use. This concept emerged in the 1970s and was interlinked with many other partial literacies that appeared at the same time or slightly later – computer, Internet, digital and other literacies. The number of

³¹ Кандырин Б. Н. *Детское и учебное кино // Искусство в школе. 1929 №2–3. – С. 57–58.*

³² Луначарский А. В. *Кино в школе // О воспитании и образовании: Избранные статьи / Под ред. А. М. Арсеньева и др. – М.: Педагогика, 1976. – С. 484–485.*

³³ Houk A. S., Bogart C. L. *Media literacy: thinking about. – Dayton, Ohio: Pfalaum/Standard, 1974.*

³⁴ *Media education / ed. by Z. Morsy. – Paris: UNESCO, 1984.*

partial literacies had snowballed by the start of the 21st century and necessarily led to the need of synthesizing these diverse trends as mutually very close: competence in work with various kinds of information and in communicative processes involving the media is created within the frame of such literacies. Consequently, these two trends should merge under one umbrella name. That was how the integral concept of media-information literacy appeared. Many researchers' efforts with active participation of the UNESCO Information for All Programme resulted in the adoption of the Moscow Declaration, the final document of the major international conference, Media and Information Literacy in Knowledge Societies, which gathered under the UNESCO auspices in Moscow on June 24-28, 2012³⁵. It was the first to define media and information literacy:

*“Media and information literacy is a total of knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits allowing to gain access to information and knowledge, analyze, assess, use, create and circulate them to the greatest possible effect and in compliance with legal and ethical norms and human rights.”*³⁶

The concept of the culture of open government. The concept of open government emerged in the 1960s-70s with the public need for comprehensive sustainable development. This posing of the question at the theoretical and methodological level was promoted by the elaboration of the systems approach³⁷ and ideologically close cybernetics³⁸: it was proved in their frame that full-blooded all-round development is possible only in open systems, with unlimited circulation of information and negative feedback within the system as key conditions of systemic openness. The closure of a system and attempts to harshly limit information and stop feedback bring disaster to the entire system. Closed systems prove to be inviable.

As shown in a number of works³⁹, the human community evolved on a historical scale from social isolation (primitive forms, subsistence economy, etc.) to ever greater

³⁵ *Медиа- и информационная грамотность в обществах знания. Сост. Е. И. Кузьмин и А. В. Паршакова. – М.: МЦБС, 2013.*

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 376.

³⁷ *Берталанфи Л. фон. Общая теория систем: критический обзор // Исследования по общей теории систем. Сборник переводов / Общая редакция и вступительная статья В. Н. Садовского и Э. Г. Юдина. – М.: Изд-во «Прогресс», 1969, 23–82.*

³⁸ *Винер Н. Кибернетика и общество. – М.: Тайдекс Ко, 2002; Винер Н. Кибернетика, или управление и связь в животном и машине. – М.: Наука, 1983; Винер Н. Моё отношение к кибернетике. Её прошлое и будущее. – М.: Изд-во «Советское радио», 1969.*

³⁹ *See, for example: Афанасьева О. В. Закрытое государство и тупики цивилизации. Институциональный исторический анализ. Общественные науки и современность. 2012 № 6, 51–61; Афанасьева О. В. Открытое государство как институт устойчивого развития. Общественные науки и современность. 2013 № 2, 60–71, etc.*

openness. More than that, it is acknowledged directly that “the development state is an open state”⁴⁰, that development is impossible without openness, and a country is doomed to stagnation and next degradation without openness.

So, openness as a principle guarantees the viability of society and state in the respect of the outer social environment. This principle also works in the respect of social subsystems because the postulates of the systems theory are equally applicable to whole systems and their subsystems. Thus, the authority with all its structural components, including the government as a state subsystem should also correspond to the conditions of openness, information exchange with society, and the availability of negative feedback.

These theoretical premises acquire various forms in social practice. It is known, for instance, that corruption is one of the consequences of insufficient openness of official information to the public. Every country takes certain anti-corruption measures. They have no effect, however, unless information about officials' incomes is generally accessible. Secrecy of information prepares grounds for the extension of corruption which, in its extreme forms, is an obstacle to social development and threatens the community with degradation.

It is considered that the question of the openness of government information to the public was first posed in several European countries as early as the 17th and 18th centuries. This idea was first implemented in practice in the United States of America with the First Amendment to its Constitution⁴¹, which stipulates citizens' right to obtain information. This amendment was most often tied in with the media's access to official information and the availability of basic (not all) official documents in public libraries. The question of general access to such information was posed as late as the middle of the 20th century. The phrase “open government” was coined in discussions on this topic. Notable among the early documents whose titles include it were “Open Government: To What Degree?” – a brochure by Australian authors Cameron and Butler⁴², and American lawyer Kugler's “New Jersey's Right to Know: A Report on Open Government”⁴³. They were preceded by the Freedom of Information Act, passed by the US Congress in 1966⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ Афанасьева О. В. *Открытое государство как институт устойчивого развития // Общественные науки и современность. 2013 № 2, 69.*

⁴¹ *The First Amendment to the United States Constitution considered by the US Congress in 1789 and ratified in 1791.*

⁴² Cameron, C., Butler, D. (1972). *Open government: to what degree?* Melbourne: Victorian Fabian Society.

⁴³ Kugler, G. F. (1974). *New Jersey's right to know: a report on open government.* Trenton, New Jersey: Attorney General's Committee on the Right to Know.

⁴⁴ *Freedom of Information Act (1966).* Washington, DC.

The phrase “open government” was not used extensively in Russia till 2011, when the Administrative Department of the President announced a contest for the Open Government portal development⁴⁵. The term “e-government” was in use since 2000. It was used frequently since the launch of the Electronic Russia federal targeted programme in 2002. Completed in 2010,⁴⁶ the programme aimed to “improve the quality of state-public relations through greater public access to information about the government authority, enhanced efficiency of state and municipal services, and unified standards of public services”.⁴⁷ An ambitious infrastructure was created for the public to obtain information and interact with government agencies online.

The establishment of such infrastructure was in itself necessary but not sufficient as government initiatives clashed with the passivity of the public, which was reluctant to adopt high tech breakthroughs. It became clear that the culture of adopting the latest technologies should be formed parallel to technological progress and the creation of the information system. All this was reflected in the premise termed “open government culture”, which eventually acquired a conceptual status. Academic works have been appearing of late which regard open government culture as an instrumental research category in the context of the cultural development of civil society.⁴⁸

The Interconnection of the Concepts of Media and Information Literacy and Open Government

Let us note the temporal closeness of the appearance of the concepts of open government and media literacy. Both appeared in publication titles in the early 1970s – most probably not by chance or coincidence but due to the two categories’ shared origin. To prove this assumption, let us turn to the theoretical model of renowned Norwegian researcher Johan Galtung, known as the Galtung Triangle⁴⁹ (Fig. 1).

⁴⁵ *Otkrytoye pravitel'stvo (Open Government) web-site: <http://open.gov.ru/> (Accessed 15 January 2017).*

⁴⁶ *Federal targeted programme “e-Russia” (2002–2010) of the Russian Ministry of Communications and Mass Media: <http://minsvyaz.ru/ru/activity/programs/6/> (Accessed 15 January 2017).*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *See: Черкасов К. В., Захаревич Д. А. Культура открытости власти как инструмент совершенствования государственного управления в современной России. Правовая культура. 2015 № 3 (22), 21–29; Петрова А. С. Система «Открытое правительство» как фактор формирования гражданской культуры современного российского общества // Управленческое консультирование. 2014. № 6 (66), 154–160, etc.*

⁴⁹ *Galtung, J. (1999). State, Capital, and the Civil Society: The Problem of Communication. In: Vincent, R., Nordenstreng, K., Traber, M. (Eds.). (1999). Towards Equity in Global Communication: MacBride Update. Cresskill, pp. 3–21.*

The essence of the model is that the media function as a binding agent of a social system which provides interaction between the three macro-social subjects: state/power, capital/market and civil society. The development of each of them is impossible without the development of the other two. The development of the media sphere must be congruent to the development of market structures, government institutions and civil society.

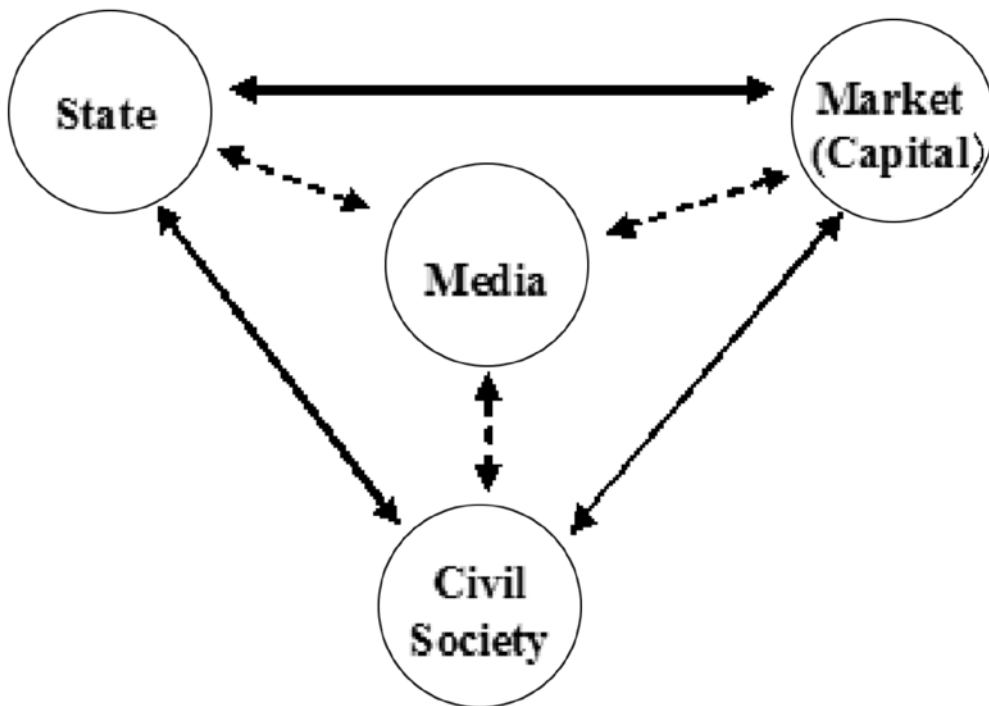


Figure 1. The Galtung Triangle. The Media are within a conventional triangle which has social macro-subjects for sides: the State, Market or Capital and Civil Society

When we analyze the history of humankind, we should spotlight among its principal developmental lines the trend toward ever greater social openness, as manifest in the increasing openness of its components. The primitive community was a closed social environment based on closed subsistence economy. Communities emerging with historical development interacted through barter to enhance their openness. The present condition of society causes the formation of a global economy which rules out isolated communities. Wherever they survive, their potential is drastically reduced.

Proceeding from the Galtung model, we can conclude that the general trend to openness must be expressed in the drive for ever greater openness of the state, the market, civil society and the media.

The formation of media education is one of the manifestations of the trend toward greater media openness. This process can be outlined as follows. The development of a social sphere – the media, in this case – is possible only through its extension, which demands extended personnel. On the one hand, this leads to the education of ever new media experts while on the other hand, it demands extensive public education to form the population’s idea of the media sphere and the patterns of its work within the social system – which evokes the desire for greater openness.

The integration of media systems with digital information systems leads necessarily to the appearance of integration processes in education, and creates prerequisites for media and information literacy. The social demand for open information traditionally associated with government agencies also creates the necessity for media and information literacy to include legal information competence. If we return to the definition of media and information literacy given by the Moscow Declaration, we should stress the following among other elements: first, access to information about the activities of the government and other ruling agencies, including legal and law enforcement ones; second, the analysis, assessment and use of such information and, third, the ability to produce new information on this basis and circulate it.

Natalia Gendina proposed in her communication to merge the concept of media and information literacy with the concept of civil literacy to coin a new umbrella term, “media, information and civil literacy”. I cannot but speak up on the matter.

Though I insist that the concepts of media literacy and open government have a common origin, I object to further erosion of the concept of media and information literacy, which emerged quite recently, because a shared origin does not imply either the equivalence of these concepts or the necessity of their merger. It is worthwhile only to acknowledge their generic link and the necessity of mutual accountancy at the semantic operational level because when we refer to the varieties of media and information literacy, we mean that the problem concerns information communicative processes while civil literacy crosses the borders of such processes and demands training of real, so to say, materialized social action.

The field of media and information literacy is overloaded, as it is, quoting Albert Boekhorst, by all kinds of “friends of media literacy”⁵⁰, which go on multiplying.

⁵⁰ Букхорст А. Медиа- и информационная грамотность и ее «подруги» // Медиа- и информационная грамотность в обществах знания / Сост. Е. И. Кузьмин и А. В. Паршакова. Москва: МЦБС, 2013, 35–44.

It would be apt here to recall the famous philosophical premise known as “Occam’s razor”: «Nunquam ponenda est pluralitas sine necessitate», which might be translated as “Plurality is never to be posited without necessity.”⁵¹

The Russian Internet community is actively discussing the necessity of monitoring public digital literacy. In 2015, the Higher School of Economics National Research University and the Russian Centre of Internet Technologies organized the Digital Literacy Index joint project⁵². Its achievements included a comprehensive four-factor model of digital literacy⁵³, whose essence boils down to four factors produced by two semantic constructs – technical/technological vs. socio-humanitarian and opportunities vs. threats (see Fig. 2). The first construct emphasizes the importance of both semantic and instrumental acquisition of digital technologies while the second one bases on the idea of development that might be either promoted by opening opportunities or hampered or even stopped by threats. In that case we can single out, on the one hand, two fields of opportunities (contensive-communicative and technical/technological) and, on the other hand, two fields of threats (socio-psychological and technical/technological).



Figure 2. The four-factor model of digital literacy (A. V. Sharikov, 2016)

⁵¹ As in: Смирнов Г. А. Оккам // Новая философская энциклопедия. Т. 3. – Москва: Мысль, 2010, 142.

⁵² Голубовская Т., Гребенников С., Капустинский Я. и др. Индекс цифровой грамотности. – М.: РОЦИТ, 2015.

⁵³ Шариков А. В. О четырехкомпонентной модели цифровой грамотности // Журнал исследований социальной политики. 2016. Т. 14, № 1, 87–98. <https://www.hse.ru/mag/jsp/2016-14-1.html>.

As I see it, however, digital literacy is a mere variety of media and information literacy, one of its friends. So the four-factor model is also applicable in the general situation, coming up as an all-purpose theoretical model of media and information literacy.

If we get back to discussing the interconnection of media and information literacy and open government culture, whatever pertains to the latter will belong to the field of contensive-communicative opportunities.

Let us summarize the above. We have demonstrated that the concepts of media and information literacy and open government culture have common origin conditioned by close interconnection of four social macro-subjects: the mass media in the Galtung triangle formed by the state, capital and civil society. The formation of open government culture reflects one of the sides of the triangle: the link between the state and civil society. However, due to the mode of social development, none of the four macro-subjects can develop without the development of the others. The development of the media sphere conditions the development of media and information literacy congruent to the development of the other components – which means that there is a close connection between the formation of open government culture and the development of media and information literacy, as indicated by the simultaneous appearance in the academic literature of the late 1960s and early 70s of the terms “open government” and “media literacy”.

At the same time, the common origin of the concepts of media and information literacy and open government culture does not imply their identity and the necessity of bringing them together under the umbrella term of “media, information and civil literacy”. The categories of media and information, and media and information literacy as their derivative have a common information-communicative nature while the concept of civil literacy crosses by far the borders of information-communicative processes to approach practical social action.

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Mohamed EL-GUINDY

TV Presenter & ICT Expert
Al Kahera Walnas TV Channel
(Cairo, Egypt)

Middle East Media & Information Literacy in the Digital Age: A Perspective from Egypt

Information is the currency of democracy.

Thomas Jefferson

Any Democratic and Healthy Society requires information literate citizens. But the meaning of the phrase “information literacy” changed drastically since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1974, Paul Zurkowski, president of the Information Industry Association, introduced the term “information literacy”⁵⁴.

According to Zurkowski’s concept, “People trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skilled for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in modeling information-solutions to their problems”⁵⁵.

During the 1980s, it was obvious that computers and related technologies were becoming powerful tools for information processing and retrieval. Due to the advancement in computing power, new concepts of media and information literacy were introduced.

Media Literacy in Egypt

The history of media literacy within Egyptian schools started in the 19th century. In April 1870, the Department of Education launched the first school newspaper called “Rawdat Al Madaress Al Masriya”⁵⁶. The newspaper was one of the pioneering works of Ali Pasha Mubarak, who was the education minister and the most influential and talented Egyptian reformer in the 19th century. “Rawdat Al Madaress” was distributed to all schools in order to spread science, knowledge and art. At that time, school broadcast activity was a tool for students to express their opinion and thoughts in schools, this activity was independent media that helped students prepare, create and present information.

⁵⁴ Zurkowski, Paul. *National Forum on Information Literacy*, <http://infolit.org/> (Accessed 18 May 2016).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Desouky, S. (2010). *Media literacy in the elementary education in the globalization age. 1. Alexandria: Dar elgamaa elgadida. Print. (Arabic) Translated by the researcher.*

Although media literacy started in Egypt long time ago, no media literacy courses are taught in schools in formal way. The subject is even unclear within university courses. Lack of media and information literacy awareness created volatile situations that are always exploited. Illiterate citizens are vulnerable to all types of deception and may pose threats to their society. The failure of the so called “Arab Spring” and the rise of terrorism in the region are obvious examples on how dangerous media and information illiteracy could be.

Egypt in the Digital Age

While Petroleum shaped the 20th century, there is no doubt that science, technology, and information will shape the 21st century. This century will rely on information and data scientists. Data has been called the new oil⁵⁷; this is particularly true when we discuss the Internet and our digitally connected world. Like oil in machines, data is the fuel when it comes to the Information Age. For example, Facebook without data is just an empty platform; Google without data would not be the largest search engine in the world with multibillion dollar revenue.

The ability of collecting, analyzing, and diving into multidisciplinary “Big Data” will be changing our world in the 21st century and will affect humanity as well. With these immeasurable amounts of information being created online, a sense of empowerment for citizens is also emerging.

When it comes to Egypt, the number of citizens going online is rapidly increasing each year. The number of mobile subscriptions increased from 94.1 million users in January to 94.6 million users in February, according to a report issued by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in May 2016⁵⁸. On the other hand, the report has shown a significant increase in the number of Internet users, from 26.2 million users in January to 33.2 million users in February. The number of mobile phone Internet users increased also from 19.7 million in January to 25.7 million in February 2016 with a growth rate of 30%⁵⁹. This indication proves that mobile technology is the key player in increasing the number of online users in Egypt. In addition, mobile devices increased the number of users on social networking services due to an increase in usage of mobile applications.

⁵⁷ *Forbes*, April 2, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/perryrotella/2012/04/02/is-data-the-new-oil/#8cfd7c777a9a> (Accessed 19 March 2016).

⁵⁸ *ICT Indicators in Brief, Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology* <http://www.mcit.gov.eg/Indicators/indicators.aspx> (Accessed 20 May 2016).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

According to the MIDEAST MEDIA study in 2015⁶⁰, Facebook is the most used messaging app on smart devices in Egypt followed by WhatsApp messenger. The mass media and newspapers are no longer the only sources people could seek information from. Therefore, the Internet is significant because it has altered communication and distribution of knowledge. In addition, the Internet has created new channels for human connection and social change. One of the most fascinating examples is social networking websites, especially Facebook. Since its inception in 2004, Facebook has changed how people communicate and interact, how marketers sell products, how governments reach out to citizens, and has even played a role in protests and revolutions. Although there is criticism to the concept of “Facebook Revolution”, social media are still considered a tool that helped in the so-called “Arab Spring”.

The Rise of Citizen Journalism and Media Literacy

The political and economic realities in the Middle East region prove that youth under thirty years of age represents about 50–65% of the total population⁶¹. The Arab states have among the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. In 2016, Egypt has about 12.70% unemployment amongst labor force⁶² and 27.3% unemployment amongst youth (15–29 years old)⁶³. Regardless of political issues in most Middle East countries, younger citizens have, to a large degree, been locked out of the formal political establishment.

With both political and economic problems coupled with increase in the Internet penetration rate, Egyptian and Arab youth started to express their political views online.

In 2003, the war got underway in Iraq and blogs written by Iraqis describing the situation started to draw international attention, inspiring others to start blogs. But this blogosphere was primarily English and did not yet extend to Egypt. Wired youth in Egypt have been using the Internet to express their political views or as a “weapon of opposition” since 2005. At this stage, bloggers in Egypt were the beginning of online citizen journalists.

⁶⁰ 2015 MIDEAST Media survey by Northwestern University, Qatar: <http://www.mideastmedia.org/survey/2015/chapter/social-media.html> (Accessed 30 May 2016).

⁶¹ Fuller, G. E. (2013). *The Youth Factor: The New Demographics of the Middle East and the Implications for U.S. Policy*: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2003/06/middleeast-fuller> (Accessed 20 March 2016).

⁶² Trading Economics: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/egypt/unemployment-rate> (Accessed 20 May 2016).

⁶³ Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: <http://www.capmas.gov.eg> (Accessed 1 June 2016).

According to a study conducted by the Berkman Centre⁶⁴, Egyptian bloggers were the most frequent to publish about politics. Furthermore, newspapers and traditional media started to publish their views and posts. Most blog posts were linked to YouTube video clips and Wikipedia links⁶⁵. Most video clips found on blogs were shot by mobile phone cameras. From 2006 to 2008, Egyptian youth were using mobile phones for capturing photos and videos on streets and then sending them to bloggers to publish them either on YouTube or on their blogs. Spreading news from blogs and YouTube to traditional media amplified the effect and shed the light on new tools for new media and new journalism.

In 2008, an Egyptian blogger called “Wael Abbas”⁶⁶ published a YouTube video entitled “Bent El Pasha”⁶⁷, The Pasha’s Daughter is Terrifying People on the Street. The video was virally spread by bloggers and Internet users and reached the traditional media and newspapers. It was shot by mobile camera and sent to the blogger who then published it on his blog and on YouTube. This was a very important shift in the media which changed journalism in Egypt. Anyone with a mobile camera and Internet access could send his or her message to the mainstream media.

At this stage, people started to be the news and the creators of the news at the same time. With today’s technology a citizen journalist has found new life as an average person can capture news and distribute it globally. In this regard, Yochai Benkler stated: “Any person who has information can connect with any other person who wants it, and anyone who wants to make it mean something in some context, can do so. The high capital costs that were a prerequisite to gathering, working, and communicating information, knowledge, and culture, have now been widely distributed in the society”⁶⁸.

Subsequently, traditional media faced with a new phenomenon that interrupted their normal programming. Satellite channels started to include in their programmes a new section for bloggers. Qatar-based news station Al Jazeera was the one that framed Egyptian bloggers and introduced them to most ordinary people. In 2005, Al-Jazeera broadcasted a documentary about Egyptian bloggers called “Bloggers, Opposition and a New Voice”⁶⁹, followed

⁶⁴ Berkman Centre For Internet & Society, *Mapping the Arabic Blogosphere: Politics, Culture and Dissent* https://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications/2009/Mapping_the_Arabic_Blogosphere (Accessed 20 March 2016).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Wael Abbas’s old blog: <http://misrdigital.blogspot.com/> (Accessed 25 May 2016).

⁶⁷ The original video since 2008: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-E4-E63ok0> (Accessed 25 May 2016).

⁶⁸ Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks, How Social Product Transforms Markets and Freedom*.

⁶⁹ *Bloggers, 2006. Al Jazeera Documentary, Press Release about the documentary: http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/infocus/2006/5/28/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF* (Accessed 25 May 2016).

by another documentary in 2008⁷⁰, which dramatically increased awareness among the general public about blogging and its political impact.

The problem with citizen journalists is that they have no formal journalistic training, nor do they typically have training in the essential roles independent media play in ensuring accountable and transparent government. Lack of training doesn't only affect citizen journalists, but also leaves the society vulnerable to deception and manipulation. To address this issue, UNESCO has collaborated with the Thomson Foundation and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association on a handbook that not only tells citizen journalists "where and how to get the information one needs, but also how to evaluate and verify the information gathered"⁷¹. In addition, the International Centre for Journalists⁷² (ICFJ) has created an online blogger's guide that focuses on helping citizen journalists improve the quality of the information they're putting online. To this date, there are no efforts in Egypt to enhance the quality of citizen journalism and even increase public awareness on media literacy.

Rumors, Misinformation & New Media

Conflicts and crises in the Middle East are among the reasons behind rumors, misinformation, and propaganda on social media. People are trying to understand what's happening but lack information to do it. Rumors emerge to help fill in the gaps of knowledge and information in less transparent governments and during the crisis. In this regard, sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani⁷³, stated: "...situations characterized by social unrest. Those who undergo strain over a long period of time – victims of sustained bombings, survivors of a long epidemic, a conquered populace coping with an army of occupators, civilians grown weary of a long war, prisoners in a concentration camp, residents of neighborhoods marked by ethnic tension...".

Unfortunately, many journalists, by nature, love rumors and unverified stories. In Egypt due to a decline in newspaper circulation, many newspapers started to build their online presence. They are looking for alternative sources of income using Google AdSense and other online advertising opportunities.

Subsequently, editors and journalists tend to use unverified information on their websites to generate traffic and get attention via social media and other

⁷⁰ *Al Jazeera Bloggers Documentary, 2008: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfEgQyOGT7A> (Accessed 25 May 2016).*

⁷¹ *The Net for Journalists: A practical guide to the Internet for journalists in developing countries, 24 January 2006. UNESCO, Paris.*

⁷² *Online Free guides from ICFJ: <http://www.icfj.org/resources> (Accessed 25 May 2016).*

⁷³ *Shibutani, T. (1966). *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*. Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, USA.*

online sources. Rumors and unverified information often lack context or key information, such as their original source. In addition, journalists often use words such as “unnamed source”, “highly respected source”, “government official who wants his name not to be revealed” and so on.



One of the examples related to spreading rumors and unverified stories by social media users and media outlets is the EgyptAir flight MS804. On Thursday, May 19, the flight took off at 11:09 p.m. from Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris and was scheduled to land at 3:55 a.m. in Cairo. However, it dropped off the radar screens of Greek and Egyptian flight controllers at 2:45 a.m. and crashed into the Mediterranean about 10 miles inside Egypt’s territorial waters⁷⁴. At the time of writing, there are no evidences on how and why the plane crashed. This was an event that captured global attention. This set off a never-ending news cycle in which journalists sought out any piece of information or expert opinion, no matter verified or not, to aid in the process of making sense of the situation.

Above is a screenshot for the video published by many Egyptian newspaper websites that claimed that a Greek witness had shot it for the crashed EgyptAir flight and aired in Greek media. In a misleading title, the news article on the newspapers stated: “Watch...Crash of the Egyptian plane in the Mediterranean”⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ BBC, 19 May 2016, *EgyptAir flight MS804 from Paris to Cairo crashed – Hollande*: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36309492> (Accessed 29 May 2016).

⁷⁵ *Elfagr Newspaper*, 19 May 2016: <http://www.elfagr.org/2143563> (Accessed 29 May 2016).



The screenshot below shows how the newspaper used Google AdSense to monetize traffic from the video regardless of its authenticity. The video on this newspaper website alone was watched 13968 times and got 222 shares on Facebook as of May 19⁷⁶.



The reality is that this video was not related to the EgyptAir flight MS804. It was posted on YouTube on December 22, 2015 with the title “Fireball Streak across Palm Desert Sky December 22nd 2015”⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ Elfagr Newspaper, 19 May 2016, <http://video.elfagr.org/jf26ozf6156p> (Accessed 29 May 2016).

⁷⁷ YouTube Video, Fireball Streak Across Palm Desert Sky December 22, 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wl4sDt1YqU> (Accessed 29 May 2016).

This example shows how traditional media are still able to spread rumors and unverified stories then shared easily on social media with thousands of users who can easily believe them.

The problem with rumors and unverified stories is that they are accepted by people with low level of critical thinking first, and as the number of believers grows, others with higher level will conclude that so many people cannot be wrong. Rumors and misinformation on social media is a big challenge that was even discussed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2014⁷⁸. The WEF invited its council members to identify top trends facing the world and decide what should be done about them. Top three issues for 2014 concern rising tensions and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. What is worth mentioning is that misinformation on social media comes number 10 on the list of trends.

False information spreads just like true and verified information. In some cases, misinformation is more viral and spreads with greater frequency than correct information. One reason for this is that false and unverified information is designed to meet the emotional needs of recipients.

In a paper entitled “Feeling is Believing? The Influence of Emotions on Citizens’ False Political Beliefs”, Brian E. Weeks stated: “Information supporting one’s prior attitude is more likely to be deemed credible and strong, while attitude-discrepant information is often viewed as weak and ultimately dismissed”⁷⁹. This formula poses significant challenge for anyone trying to debunk unverified claims, rumors or disinformation. The best method is to educate people. Nevertheless, it is not education per se but the quality of education that matters. Although literacy rate in Egypt reaches about 74%⁸⁰, the quality of education is of concern as it scored 141 from 144 in the Global Competitiveness Report⁸¹. Most formal curricula in our education system lack logical evaluation in the essence of scientific methods. Subsequently, the education system in Egypt should include critical thinking activities and strategies. People need to learn how to use their own automatic crap detection machines. As Ernest Hemingway once said⁸², “Every man should have a built-in automatic crap detector operating inside him. It also should have a manual drill and a crank handle in case the machine breaks down”.

⁷⁸ World Economic Forum, Top 10 trends of 2014: <http://reports.weforum.org/outlook-14/view/top-trends-category-page/10-the-rapid-spread-of-misinformation-online/> (Accessed 29 May 2016).

⁷⁹ Weeks, B. E. (2013). *Feeling is Believing? The Influence of Emotions on Citizens’ False Political Beliefs*, Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 29-September 1.

⁸⁰ Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

⁸¹ Global Competitiveness Report, 2015-2016, WEF: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/> (Accessed 1 June 2016).

⁸² Manning, R. (1965). *Hemingway in Cuba*. The Atlantic Online, August: <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/65aug/6508manning.htm> (Accessed 29 May 2016).

Conclusion

We live in a convergence era where traditional media meet new media. The line between traditional and new media has become blurred and digital technologies have become central in our everyday life. On a daily basis, we are surrounded by messages pushed from several mediums that shape our opinion and knowledge about public affairs and the world we live in. Therefore, it is important to stress that media literacy involves all media. In addition, media and information literacy should not ignore TV, as it still occupies a significant place in the lives of many Egyptians.

On the other hand, an increase in using technology and digital media among Egyptians doesn't mean citizens have digital literacy. Proficiency in using digital technologies in Egypt is primarily focused on news, entertainment and connections with peers. Therefore, it is essential that stakeholders work together to introduce national policies and initiatives to develop Media and Information Literacy education and ensure that citizens have the right tools to actively participate in digital society.

Within the next ten years, Egypt will witness rapid growth in the number of people using the Internet, in addition to youngsters who are by far "digital natives". While those users are used to access media whenever and wherever they want, they remain amateur users of information and communications technology. This situation will raise concerns about new generation of youth who are diving deeply in cyberspace without being digitally literate. It is normally agreed that competencies for digital literacy and media literacy are closely related to each other in the 21st century. Therefore, MIL curricula should include digital literacy as well.

In addition to education, government leaders need to understand that the Internet and new media influence democracy. Broadband improvement and mobile technology will allow more and more citizens to express their thoughts online. Social media sites are attracting large numbers of new users. Consequently, technology is moving faster than laws and regulations. Digital communications and the Internet will not make government more accessible, efficient and accountable by default. Openness and transparency of government are the key pillars of democracy that originated even before the Internet. But in the digital age, there is a strong need for Open Government strategies to cope with the ever-changing world of information.

Irina ZHILAVSKAYA

Associate Professor and Deputy Head,
UNESCO Chair for Media & Information Literacy and Media Awareness,
Moscow State University of Education
(*Moscow, Russian Federation*)

Media Awareness as a Strategy for Raising Open Governance Efficiency

Today, as we are facing the need to have our social structure views updated, the key concept to come to the fore is that of openness. This concept draws on the assumption that isolation is no longer possible in the new media age, with information technology easily transcending the boundaries that used to structure pre-digital societies. And then again, all isolated systems are known to eventually break up. So the question arises: What is the opposite, open type like? And can such systems really exist as viable entities while remaining open to the outside world? Do they possess any rigid internal structure – along with cohesion, the quality that would make them distinguishable externally?

Any societal system ensures its own functionality through a whole number of laws and traditions, which help it keep constituent parts bound together – organizationally and ideologically, as well as in terms of outlook. But being, as they are, all-pervasive communication channels of the modern-day world, news media spread the word across boundaries. And no binding can possibly prevent them from doing so – neither parliamentary motions, nor dogmas (religious, scientific or otherwise), nor traditional education.

The issue has aroused much polemic recently while also triggering a quest for ways to bring public administration systems and institutions up to date. At a more concrete – organizational – level, the aim is to impart openness into the management of human and economic resources, introducing orderly, feasible activities that would let a community's human potential fulfill itself more fully.

In implementing various government programmes and strategies, though, a conflict will inevitably arise between, on the one hand, social development needs, based on notions such as expansion, affordability, accessibility and transparency, and, on the other, the need to preserve value systems, savings and stocks – one that can be met only through restrictions and constraints.

The problem is a rather challenging one, and solutions to it should be looked for by professionals whose expertise is relevant in the era of transition from

industrial to post-industrial society and – further on – to so-called knowledge society, where the mainstays of economic strength are all information-related.

In the 21st century, media and information literacy should become a comprehensive phenomenon. Its integrative nature allows, first of all, to comprehend processes that require maximum openness of social institutions, while also making it possible for us to employ transparency tools with full awareness and to use finished products for the benefit of society and its sustainable development.

At the present time, the idea of resource management transparency is being realized across the world through what is known as open governance. This term denotes a set of mechanisms and techniques to provide effective cooperation between authorities and civil society, with the ultimate goal being to raise the population's life quality and to form a new culture of governments' interactions with the public, one built on the search for compromises and mutually beneficial solutions.

Russia embarked on the process of joining an international initiative for greater government transparency back in April 2012. By now it has become a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a world organization founded on 20 September, 2011, with a view to translating ideals of the open state into reality and making public administration more competent and open to civic control. The alliance's founding members include the United States, Great Britain, Brazil, Norway, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, and South Africa; as of January 2016, it brings together 69 member nations. [1]

In this country, the open government currently operates based on a Federal Executive Bodies Transparency Concept, adopted in 2014. According to this document, federal government agencies shall manifest consistent compliance with the following principles:

- information transparency (i.e., ensuring timely provision of information concerning the activities of federal executive agencies; that kind of information should be open, credible and publicly accessible, with no restrictions from either federal legislation or any presidential and governmental decrees, and it should be furnished in a format convenient in terms of search, processing and further use, including in the form of open data);
- comprehensibility (presenting federal executive bodies' aims, objectives, plans and performance results in a form easily comprehensible to the general public);
- civil engagement (offering opportunities for individual citizens, public organizations and members of the business community to contribute to the development and implementation of managerial decisions so as

to make sure civil society's opinions and preferences are taken into account and that it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with authorities and kept up-to-date on all matters of public concern);

- accountability (revealing information about federal executive bodies' activity in line with public enquiries and priorities; providing individual citizens, public organizations and business community members with the opportunity to check up on the results of that activity). [2]

In the digital era, open governments are supposed to make extensive use of open-source data, that is, of universally accessible information posted by its copyright holder online, in a format that allows further computer processing. So a question arises as to whether all of Russia's societal strata and population groups are ready yet to work with open data and to use these in their professional activities, education and entertainment, as well as in dealing with problems related to their living conditions.

Of vital importance here are skills, competencies and knowledge that form the conceptual basis underlying media and information literacy. Which is why media education, traditionally targeting teenagers, now needs to extend its outreach to adult audiences so that it could ultimately transform into kind of a massive awareness-raising campaign.

The task is a concrete one, and needs to be addressed as a priority of our increasingly complex world order, where the hierarchical mode of governance is, despite its tenacious resistance, being now pushed aside by an alternative model, that of network governance.

Vertical, top-down management that has until recently dominated education, mass media, economic management and public administration is now rapidly becoming a thing of the past. This model no longer seems workable these days, with the economy, public education, mass media, and civic institutions all currently experiencing systemic crises. And these aren't local, isolated cases, but rather signs of global processes pointing to some deep and wide-ranging transformations underway. It would therefore be wise of national governments to admit that at this point, they are no more capable of coping with all the problems within their scope singlehandedly and to then relinquish their habitual role of the populace's boss in favour of that of a collaborator.

The customer-oriented approach, quite popular in business, does not appear as efficient when applied in a public administration context. Many government officials have by now learned to deal with members of the public as if to them, these latter were customers or clients. In the digital age, however, this PR model is hardly workable. Open government is not an e-platform that can be

treated as a vending machine. Rather, this is a tool for maintaining dialogue; and since it happens in cyberspace, that dialogue cannot be really effective unless everyone involved has a high enough level of media and information literacy.

But the fact of the matter is that Russian society still has some way to go before it becomes ready for information transparency. And this holds true not just of the government officialdom, with their mindsets deeply rooted in the “authorised-personnel-only” affirmation.

Most of this country’s scholarly and profession-specific journals and magazines, too, remain closed to the public, with no readily available access to full-text versions of the articles they carry. Part of the reason here is the vagueness of the copyright concept.

One of the latest initiatives in the academic quarters has been a proposal from the Russian Academy of Sciences’ government regulator that it should be entitled to classify as secret some of the developments by member institutes. The Federal Agency for Research Organizations, as the academy’s regulator is known, is pushing for its head to be personally vested with that right by presidential decree, alongside some other selected executives. [3]

One of Russia’s most reticent media systems is that of mass media; these are still reluctant to disclose any information related to their circulation, financial flows, stakeholders and so forth. Media outlets also tend to keep secret their app user metrics, partners’ details, and economic performance results.

The country’s mainstream school system, too, appears quite secretive. Educational establishments are now obligated to post online their top executives’ annual reports, teaching staff lists, curricula, and other data required to be disclosed by Article 29 of the Federal Education Law. [4]

Admittedly, though, this has not really changed their ways.

Libraries, museums and archives also find it hard to overcome their habit of withholding information from the public.

Sadly, those on the receiving end do not seem ready for openness, either; first of all, many citizens do not fully realize their right of access to information and, secondly, lack techniques for retrieving data they need and then analyzing and assessing it critically. Also, they are yet to develop the skills needed to effectively use whatever data they may get their hands on. These competencies are all part of the media and information literacy toolkit, something vitally important for a modern-day person to acquire.

Having said that, the nation already has some experience in establishing effective and mutually beneficial collaboration between authorities, mass media, the business community, and civil society, for greater media and information literacy. The practices that exist in this area show that quite a few members of the public are strongly motivated to learn their way around in cyberspace and to use e-systems of social resource management.

In central Russia's Yaroslavl Region, for example, a project based on public-private partnership has been launched to provide training and counselling on e-services for the local elderly population. The project, organized by the companies Microsoft and Alan as well as the International Academy of Business and New Technology (known by its Russian acronym, MUBiNT), has received support both from the regional government and Town Hall of Yaroslavl, the province's capital. More than 20,000 senior citizens attended training courses as part of the effort in 2015, in three city areas and 14 municipalities.

This project has been well organized in terms of logistics: there are more than 40 computer classrooms currently available for training, including four mobile ones, which can service remote rural communities. The following four study programmes are on offer: Computer Literacy Basics; Introduction to Information Security; Government E-Services; Computer PRO for Advanced Users. Those who complete the course can then benefit from further counselling, along with tips in social media interest groups and teaching aids, to be checked out at the project's website, www.social-it.ru. [5]

Similar work is now being done in St Petersburg, where a group of community activists has teamed up with Rostelecom and Intel Inc., regional authorities and bodies of local self-government to launch a programme for teaching computer skills to senior residents.

In the Moscow Region, old-age retirees took part in a nationwide computer literacy competition in 2016, with awards distributed across four categories: The Gosuslugi.ru Government E-Services Website: A Simple Solution to a Challenging Problem; The Internet as a Helping Friend; Online Communication; The Most Pro-Active Region.

Members of the older generation now go digital elsewhere in Russia, too, including regions as distant as Archangel, Kazan, Barnaul, Kursk and Irkutsk, to name but a few.

And there are media organizations out there that are willing to get involved in the effort. Just one example is a small-town newspaper, Bereznikovskiy Rabochii, running in the Perm Region's Berezniki community. The BR editorial board has set up a training centre to raise media awareness among the public.

More than 3,000 people aged 27 to 85 have by now completed here a course in computer literacy and basic journalistic skills. The paper currently provides as many as 20 training programmes. And this activity brings in a monthly income of 200,000 roubles (a little over \$3,400, on current rates) or more.

Now that media and computers have become part of our daily life in almost every sphere, an ongoing dialogue is needed between the government, the business community and civil society, to be maintained through free mass media on the basis of transparency, openness and mutual trust. The public has the right to know why authorities have made this or that decision, what kind of criteria it is based upon, what short- and mid-term strategies are going to be used to implement it, and so on. Society needs reference points to align itself to, with the primary one being human resources – a treasure that can be put to good use only in an innovative public administration environment, created based on an economy of knowledge, intelligence, and of open and effective communications.

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Susana FINQUELIEVICH

Professor, University of Buenos Aires;
Principal Researcher, National Council for Scientific and Technical Research
(*Buenos Aires, Argentina*)

Driving a Culture of Open Government in Latin America

1. Don Quixote's Mistake

Submerged in his cavalry's novels, Don Quixote mistook metaphors and fantasies for truths. His blind confidence in his readings, his lack of analysis and interpretation, led him to confuse fantasies with realities. In the 16th century chivalric romances were best sellers, a media success. And all this happened four centuries before Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) were starting to be used. Nowadays, would Media and Information Literacy (MIL) have helped the naïve but heroic Don Quixote?

Are we postmodern Don Quixotes easily lost in media's seduction? The volume of information available in Knowledge Societies is overwhelming. Our everyday challenge is finding a way to make sense of the massive amount of information we receive in many ways, from diverse providers, to be able to identify credible sources, to assess the reliability and validity of what we read, to interrogate the authenticity and accuracy of information, to connect this new knowledge with prior learning, and to reinterpret it.

This paper is based on the theoretical framework of two ongoing research projects: the CONICET funded research for 2014–2016 “Innovation and Cities in Information Society: Processes, Actors and Outcomes in Three Cities in the Province of Buenos Aires”, and the project “Local Development and Productive Innovation in Three Cities” (2015–2018) funded by the National Agency for Research Promotion. The paper's main hypothesis is that in Latin America Don Quixote would have to fight against a double set of windmills: the concentration, regulation and sustainability issues, which are the biggest challenges for media in Latin America [Mioli 2016], and the insufficiency of interest in LA governments for the disclosure of key information through Open Government [Finquelievich 2016]. Consequently, citizens and communities are not aware of the information they can use or the advantages they could get by using Open Government services and by demanding to their governments to disclose the information they need.

The main questions addressed in this work are: Which are citizens demands regarding Open Government (OG)? How can they benefit from Open Government? How can media and information literacy (MIL) contribute to the creation of a culture of OG, particularly in the case of Latin America?

Most of the available literature concerning Open Government is addressed to governments. We have found that there is a scarcity of literature addressed to citizens on this issue. Responding to the scarcity of works regarding citizens' participation in Open Government, this paper is dedicated to contribute to create a culture of OG in Latin America, so that citizens, individually or as community organizations, be better prepared to participate in OG and to drive benefits from it.

Media and information literacy competencies provide citizens⁸³ in the 21st century with the abilities to participate rationally and effectively with media and information and develop critical thinking and lifelong learning skills to socialize and become active citizens.

2. The Power of MIL

According to UNESCO [2013], Media and Information Literacy (MIL) intends to build a new literacy paradigm that helps empower people, communities and nations to participate in and contribute to local and global knowledge societies. The recognition of such an approach should be observed in the light of the greater accessibility, convergence and distribution of information and media content, from diverse sources, in various formats and by means of different digital tools. MIL helps to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and interpretation of information, besides increasing citizens and communities' collaboration and participation. According to IFLA [2014], *“Media and Information Literacy consists of the knowledge, the attitudes, and the sum of the skills needed to know when and what information is needed; where and how to obtain that information; how to evaluate it critically and organise it once it is found; and how to use it in an ethical way. The concept extends beyond communication and information technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking, and interpretative skills across and beyond professional and educational boundaries. Media and Information Literacy includes all types of information resources: oral, print, and digital.”*

Consequently, UNESCO and IFLA advocate that countries need to invest in the creation of a facilitating environment for MIL and that citizens need to be equipped with the necessary tools and resources to attain individual, professional and societal goals that are based on MIL-related competencies. According to

⁸³ Our use of the word “citizen” in this paper is to be understood in its broadest possible sense, including all inhabitants of a country or locality.

UNESCO, a media and information literate person must not only be a consumer of information and media content, but also and primary a conscientious information seeker, knowledge creator and innovator, who is able to benefit of a diverse range of information and communication tools and media.

2.1. MIL challenges in Latin America

The first and most important challenge for media and information literacy in Latin America, according to international experts, is *concentration, regulation and sustainability*. The Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) has recently released a report “Media in Latin America: A Path Forward”⁸⁴. According to this report the first major problem identified concerns concentration of media control by both the government and the private sector. Latin American countries need laws and policies to reverse the already existing media concentration. Experts also called for fair and transparent regulation “to preserve diversity, pluralism and a level playing field for new investors, particularly in broadcast media,” according to the report. There’s a need for regulation to be independent of political and economic interests, since media concentration has a negative effect on democracy. The final challenge comprises finding ways for independent media to be sustainable. “Ensuring sustainability not only means the economic health and viability of new media properties, but also new investment in digital and mobile delivery of news and information and maintaining an open and competitive marketplace that allows new entrants to gain a foothold,” the report said.

Another relevant challenge is that in Latin America MIL is often confused with digital literacy. In fact, most Latin American public policies for education are based mainly on facilitating access to ICT and training teachers and students to use computers and electronic devices in education. Governments face a series of urgent needs concerning the inclusion of teachers and students to Knowledge Societies, understood as physical and cultural access to computers and connectivity. There is an urgent need to train teachers for the effective use of ICT in schools, and to qualify human resources to have access to the new labour market. In most countries, the responsible agent for meeting these needs is the State, both as the technology provider and as a generator of educational strategies to use ICT [Finquelievich, Feldman and Fischaller 2012].

A decade ago Latin American countries have realized that they needed to create public policies for digital inclusion of their citizens. As recalled by

⁸⁴ See more at: <https://knightcenter.utexas.edu/blog/00-16601-concentration-regulation-and-sustainability-are-biggest-challenges-media-latin-america>.

Silvera [2005], among the guiding principles adopted by the signatories of the “Bávaro Declaration”, a result of the regional ministerial conference held in January 2003, are: “(...) Emphasize the education of key users of information technology and communication (...)”, and “The social and economic progress of countries and the welfare of people and communities should play a central place in activities to build information society. The use and benefits of ICT are essential to meet the needs of individuals, communities and society in general. UNESCO’s “Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean” (PRELAC) is based on similar criteria; it is targeted to stimulate significant changes in public policy to enforce the proposed “Education for All”, in order to meet the demands of human development in the region in the XXI century. This document discusses the results of the efforts made by UNESCO in this area over the past 20 years and states that according to the latest information, there is a significant body of outstanding issues or deficiencies that affect education in the region” [Silvera 2005].

While the main objective of digital literacy programmes is the inclusion of the most neglected people, not all programmes prioritize the same needs. For example, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay intended to reduce the digital gap within their territories and in relation to developed countries, but their policies do not distinguish between rural schools and urban schools, in order to decide the field of action to a specified socioeconomic programme. In the case of Peru and Mexico ICT-based education policies, grounded on the need to solve the high levels of inequality and the huge digital gap, coupled with a low Internet penetration, the programmes’ priority is to include the most vulnerable social sectors in Knowledge Societies (in the case of Peru), and to reduce analogue illiteracy (in the case of Mexico).

Regarding the countries’ technological capacities, Argentina and Uruguay already have a relatively high University education level, and they need to advance towards coordinating their policies regarding both education and productive development, in order to increase their economies’ competitiveness in the global market. Brazil is oriented towards strengthening the technological capacity of its productive structure. Meanwhile, smaller countries, such as Colombia and Chile, are hit by an intensive brain drain process, and need to attract qualified human capital.

In countries like Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, and Chile, the goal of digital literacy programmes is not only digital inclusion in terms of reducing the digital gap, but as a first step towards training human resources, to increase and update the quality of education, and to link education with Science, Technology and innovation, and with the productive sector. The cases of Peru and Mexico reveal an earlier stage, where the main priority is to care for those sectors of

the population that are marginalized, not only due to the lack of connectivity but also due to the lack of analogue literacy, rurality, and extreme poverty. The socioeconomic context is a determining factor in setting priorities, approaches, and goals to be followed by each of the programmes [Finquelievich, Feldman and Fischnaller 2012].

In general, as stated, literacy programmes or training in ICT, are parts of larger public policies. Not all countries have equally developed such agendas, but in some cases, like in Colombia, they have explicit objectives that involve all sectors of society: the community, the productive sector and the state. The goal of promoting the adoption and appropriation of ICTs in all spheres of society is in line with the three pillars on which knowledge society is based: family and everyday life, new economy and labour, and knowledge societies policies [Finquelievich, Feldman and Fischnaller 2012].

Latin American librarians have worked for many years now on MIL. Nevertheless, the specific MIL subject has not been an object of explicit regional public policies. During the years 2015 and 2016 UNESCO has organized meetings in the region to enhance interest on MIL, as well as to plan a study to be implemented in six LA countries during early 2016. An initial meeting to plan a pilot study which assesses MIL among teachers was conducted in Antigua, Guatemala, on September 24 and 25, 2015. Also, the Latin American and Caribbean Media and Information Literacy Forum was held on December 2015 in Mexico City. This conference brought together stakeholders interested in fostering media and information literacy among Latin American and the Caribbean countries. The fruits of such efforts are yet to be seen.

One of Latin American countries' difficulties is that public policies are always starting from ground zero, disregarding previous policies and experiences. The dismantlement by the present government of the Conectar Igualdad Plan, aimed at distributing laptops and training teachers and students for Knowledge Society in Argentina, is a regrettable example. The Plan had drawbacks, but they could have been solved. As it is, it has not been replaced by any similar e-inclusive plan.

It is necessary to generate and implement long-term public policies that transcend government, that go beyond an administration period. A multistakeholder approach in public policies legitimates policies and helps avoid the arbitrary and short-sighted criteria of the government in power. In order to achieve continuity it is necessary to integrate the participation of the diverse social agents that partake in the educational community (governmental officials, educational institutions at all levels, professors, parents, students, etc.) in order to implement bottom-up policies.

3. Open Government Goes Beyond E-Government

The term Open Government is diffuse and ambiguous. It's usually confounded with e-government, digital governance or smart government. Many governments confuse the part with the whole, the tools with the goals. They use the concept to refer only to open data, which is only an aspect of open government. This is not casual, because *open government involves a transfer of power for government to people*. For Alujas and Dassen [2012] open government refers to three main values: a) improving the transparency levels and open data access, b) encouraging citizen participation in the design and implementation of public policies, c) stimulating the generation of collaborative spaces between diverse stakeholders. The development of the Internet, Digital Culture and Knowledge Society change the open government's first idea. Digital environment establishes a basic infrastructure that promotes fluid access to information. Digital culture facilitates new open, transparent, participatory and collaborative social practices. OECD (2005) uses the 'open government' term as referred to: "(...) *the transparency of government actions, accessibility to public services and information, and the government's responsiveness to new ideas, demands, and needs (...)*". In 2010, OECD mentioned that open government should also include a platform to solve the problem of interaction between government and society in order to co-create public value.

Open Government involves the use of ICT in public management, but it's more than that. As Alujas and Dassen [2012] marked, "(...) *For advocates of open government, however, technology is a medium that favours the promotion and definition of changes, but its substantial meaning lies in the profound transformation of the historic relationship between the rulers and the governed, and calls for a paradigm shift that guarantees openness, transparency, participation, and collaboration (...)*".

4. Open Government in Latin America. Trends and Challenges

4.1. Trends

Growing citizen empowerment and participation in matters of public interest, impelled to a large extent by the advances in information and communications technology, have opened up significant channels for using transparency as a public policy tool to improve the quality and efficiency of public services [Dassen and Vieyra 2012]. These authors remind us that in Latin American and Caribbean countries (LAC), targeted transparency policies do not always originate in the legislative branch or public sector agencies. Organized civil

society, predominantly the media, plays a central role in bringing targeted transparency policies onto the public agenda and, in turn, in raising awareness among citizens and private sector representatives that the use of public information can be valuable for decision-making.

Latin American countries are progressing, particularly in the last two decades. The current achievements in structural poverty reduction, education, and service coverage are well acknowledged around the world. However, the region still confronts significant challenges in its efforts to reach the goals of sustainable growth, social equity and poverty reduction. One of these defies is developing more integrated, transparent, and responsive governments capable of satisfying citizens' demands for better public goods and services progressing [IDB, in: Dassen and Vieyra 2012].

Dassen and Vieyra [2012] also note that, given the importance of subsidies in LAC economies, transparency is the key to guarantee that the criteria of efficiency and fairness are considered during allocation. Consequently, when the public entities responsible for disclosing information do not release it in a way that facilitates citizen participation, civil society must step up to generate and disseminate that information, which underlines the importance of using MIL in LAC countries. In a later work, Ramírez Aluja and Dassen [2014] state that the growth of the middle class in the region, ever-higher levels of education, access to ICTs, and a wider-spread digital literacy have led to the development of a new type of citizen. This newly empowered citizen is increasingly demanding of public management. This signifies a challenge for governments in Latin America to reduce the gap between the purposes established in their programmes and the services claimed and received by their respective citizens.

Launched on 20 September 2011, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary multilateral initiative that urges governments to make commitments to “promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance”. Governments of the countries that choose to join the partnership are expected to ratify the Open Government Declaration (OGD), which means that they have made a commitment to ‘foster a global culture of open government that empowers and delivers for citizens, and advances the ideals of open and participatory 21st century government’. Their participation in the OGP also means that they have committed to work with civil society to draw up a National Action Plan (NAP) that will provide the framework promoting open government in their countries, and that they will allow for independent reporting throughout the NAP implementation process through an Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM). At the time of its launch in 2011, the OGP consisted of eight founding countries. In 2015,

the OGP included a total of 69 countries, including 15 governments of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Barcena [2015] states that Latin America has already achieved remarkable progress in terms of public policy, state modernization strategies, strengthening transparency frameworks, and government openness. Some countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay, as well as large cities in Argentina and Brazil, among others, have taken a global lead in establishing strategic plans and functioning budgets for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and monitoring of SDGs, open government strategies, and statistic modernization initiatives to address the “data revolution,” including better use of digital technology and data openness.

4.2. Challenges

The main challenge to Open Government in Latin America is corruption. The leaders of major Latin American countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico – are entangled in scandals. The corrupt employ armies of lawyers, consultants, accountants and bankers to create foreign holding companies registered in places like Panama or the British Virgin Islands where no questions are asked about the origin of the wealth. Consequently, presently citizens share a sense of incredulity and distrust towards their governments. There has been a (comprehensible) loss of confidence and this has sown suspicion and doubt [Vogl 2015].

It is significant to remark that, given the governmental corruption scandals that have shaken some Latin American countries in 2015 and 2016 (Argentina and Brazil are the most outstanding cases), it is important for governments to gain trust from their citizens. Open government is a tool to achieve this confidence, which in turn can facilitate administrative performances. A question arises: is there a relationship between the degree of a region’s level of corruption and the implementation of Open Government, in which more corrupt governments will hinder the implementation of OG? I will leave this question here for future research.

Empirical studies show that although the Internet has great potential to improve government– citizen relations, many governments at all levels have not taken full advantage of this potential to improve Web site features to enhance Web-enabled governance through online citizen participation in the policy process. It is true that the commitments made by the governments of Latin America as OGP members cover an extensive range of initiatives and goals including reforming policies, broadening citizen engagement and increasing access to information and accountability. For Latin America’s civil society,

these commitments convey expectations of expanding citizen participation and government openness and responsiveness. Nonetheless a paper by the Inter-American Development Bank [IADB 2014] noted that the positions and future views on these expectations remain uncertain. On the one hand, some national action plans may lack ambition. On the other hand, the established channels and processes of participation are not firmly in place. Moreover, Latin American action plans face issues defining open government, establishing clear participation channels, evolving from a traditional e-government perspective and more generally reaching the public.

In this complex context, civil society has conveyed concerns on the subject of the extent to which the expectations of open government will be delivered and of its role in the design, implementation and evaluation of NAPs. In other words, the hypothetical initiative of a partnership between government and civil society remains an area for further development in Latin America, where some countries have made more advances than others.

5. Do Citizens Participate in Open Government?

5.1. Citizen engagement

People around the world increasingly indicate that they are no longer satisfied with being engaged to government through periodic elections. But do citizens really participate in national, regional, or local governments?

“*Citizen engagement is what open government is all about*”, states the Open Government Guide⁸⁵. The Open Government Partnership [2015] recognises this in its eligibility criteria, stating that: ‘Open Government requires openness to citizen participation and engagement in policymaking and governance, including basic protections for civil liberties’. In an increasingly complex world, citizens’ input and participation are key resources for policy-making. Effective decision-making requires the knowledge, experiences, views and values of the public, as well as citizens’ assessment of governmental policies and strategies. Implementing complex decisions, particularly if they are foreseen as potentially unpopular, such as economic cuts in public services, depends on citizens’ consent and support.

Unless citizens fully understand and are involved in the decisions themselves, trust is easily lost [OECD 2009]. Civil liberties provide the critical foundations

⁸⁵ *The Open Government Guide. Special Edition: Implementing The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*, <http://www.opengovguide.com/topics/citizen-engagement/>.

which enable people to participate without fear and to disagree peacefully with each other and with their government. The theory and practice of public administration is progressively concerned with placing the citizen at the centre of policymakers' considerations, not just as a target, but also as an agent. The purpose is to develop policies and plan services that respond individuals' needs and are relevant to their circumstances. Concepts such as 'co-creation' and 'co-production' have emerged to describe this systematic pursuit of sustained collaboration between government agencies, non-government organisations, communities and individual citizens [Parliament of Australia 2001].

One of the more positive characteristics of the Latin American society is its interest for public affairs. There is a relevant level of citizens' participation and mobilization in public issues. In times of crisis, Latin American societies have shown relevant solidarity with their affected members. This is why OG has a great potential to generate articulations between governments and civil societies.

5.2. Which are the hindering factors for citizens' participation in public policies and using open government?

Citizens manifest that they are certainly interested in getting involved with OG processes. But they are discouraged by several factors:

- The first obstacle is *lack or insufficiency of information regarding Open Government*. Empirical research has shown that most citizens in Latin America ignore that they can use public information through government portals. Even if national and local governments display their advances in OG in specialized events, they fail in communicating them to common citizens.
- *Officials' ethical misconduct undermines citizen trust and participation*, but there are also other obstacles that get in the way. One of them is the misuse of the Internet by governmental officials. Aikens and Dale [2010] state that although the Internet has great potential to improve government–citizen relations, many governments at all levels have not taken full advantage of this potential to improve Web site features to enhance Web-enabled governance through online citizen participation in the policy process.
- *Government fears to give power to the people*. However, governments are not monolithical entities. Some sectors within the national, regional or local governments may favour open government's measures. It

becomes necessary to enhance political leadership to introduce and implement OG and other changes within the State.

- *Market-based model of Open Government*: many critics claim that the development of public e-services has until now been primarily guided by supply-side factors and technological possibilities rather than user needs. Thus, studies of e-government indicate more interest in developing government Web sites that integrate a market-based model of Web-enabled governance as a vehicle for government to “service” its “customers” than in using Web sites to foster citizen participation. This is also translated in practice into lack of opportunity for citizens to express opinions in public forums at a time when input can make a difference. According to Aikens and Dale this market-based approach to Web-enabled governance overshadows concerns regarding democratic governance, with implications for citizen participation, deliberation, and public accountability.
- *Lack of transparency* is another obstacle. In spite of discourses about transparency, many governments do not display genuine information. According to Molina and Vieyra [2012], transparency and access to information are fundamental tools for preventing and controlling corruption. They help create channels for citizen participation and identify deficiencies in both the public and private sectors that might become entry points for corrupt practices. In addition to identifying shortcomings, transparency can also be useful in enhancing efficiency in the use and allocation of public resources in sectors, such as education, justice, cultural activities or extractive industries, and in functions, such as public budget formulation, execution and monitoring, and political campaign financing, among other sectors.
- *Citizens do not always find the information they need in Open Government portals*. Molina and Vieira’s concept of targeted transparency [2012] involves the disclosure of information to achieve the goals of a specific public policy, for example, to reduce the level of contamination found in a certain city or population’s water supply or to diminish violence and criminality among youth in a given age range. In this sense, targeted transparency policies attempt to translate the purpose of public policy into the realities of specific user groups, considering the target population’s needs, incentives, and capacity to understand the information, by using simple and efficient mechanisms that facilitate access to and use of the information. Therefore it is relevant for any targeted transparency initiative to understand who the information users are, what their motives and incentives are,

what uses they can make about the information they need, and what the dynamics of the sector in which they operate is, given that these characteristics determine the contents of the information and the tools used for disclosing it.

It is important that citizen engagement is well designed and properly resourced, and that it is born from a genuine desire to involve the public and take their input into account. Good citizen engagement can support the effective functioning of democracy, the legitimacy of government, the successful implementation of policy and the achievement of social outcomes. Bad engagement practice can lead to poor decisions and disengagement by citizens [Brodie et al. 2011].

Overcoming public disengagement, and effectively responding to citizens require a cultural change in how governments interact and cooperate with the public, as well as mechanisms for hearing and taking into account the voices of citizens institutionalized into the behaviour and culture of public institutions. Meanwhile, small political and economic elites and decision-makers have the real and perceived control of public decisions.

6. Use of MIL to Drive a Culture of Open Government

IFLA supports a text highlighting access to information as a tool to improve participation, transparency, governance, and freedom from corruption. IFLA believes that targets and goals relating to access to information can be set, including some relating to: the public's right to information and government data; increased transparency of public budgets; open access to scientific and research data; improved media and information literacy skills; increased public participation and citizen engagement; open government. A culture of Open Government for citizens may be built on the condition that it fulfils citizens' rights and needs. My team and my own empirical research, as well as the consulted literature, show that citizens need the following conditions, among others:

- Citizens should be informed about the existence of Open Government initiatives through the Internet as well as by traditional media.
- Governmental information portals need to be easy to navigate, using clear government communication that the public can understand and use. It is necessary to provide easy, user-friendly access to public information; synthetic and understandable, adapted to everyday language, and to multicultural environments.
- Credible information, linked to sources that document the veracity of the displayed data.

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- Description of public projects and their current state of implementation.
 - Information about e-procurement, the business-to-business or business-to-consumer or business-to-government purchase and sale of supplies, work, and services through the Internet as well as other information and networking systems, such as electronic data interchange.
 - Facilities to participate in Online Participative budgets processes.
 - Information about natural and built environment.
 - Information about public health, epidemics, health hazards, prevention and solutions provided by the governments.
 - Governmental information which is not released by the media, i.e. internal elections and debates.
 - Information about each official's duties and responsibilities.
 - Information about everyday matters that make citizens know that their governments are supporting them; i.e. anti-drug campaigns, due qualification of public urban equipment, etc.
 - Virtual spaces where citizens can express their claims and proposals.
 - Guaranteed exchange of information and opinions with governments (i.e. regulations about answers in 24 hours).
 - Open access to scientific and research data, particularly the scientific research financed with public funds.
 - Access to public information from mobile devices.
 - Regulation of / fight with the concentration of media, which is acute in Latin America.

How can MIL enable the construction of a culture for Open Government?

MIL is aimed at the development of knowledge and at the comprehension and practice of media users' rights. Therefore, it helps citizens to identify attacks to their rights, violence, discrimination, etc. Moreover, MIL helps the development of citizenship, but also enhances cognitive skills: information selection, search for credible sources, analysis of information, interpretation, and validation of information critical analysis.

MIL can help Latin American citizens to:

- Understand why and how governmental information, as well as the media and other information providers are important for the

construction of democratic societies and for social and economic development.

- Identify their own individual and community needs regarding governmental information.
- Locate, access, interpret, evaluate, and organize information from governments, the media, and other information providers.
- Share, stock, and co-create information.
- Contribute information to national, regional, and/or local governments.
- Interact with national, regional, and/or local governments, express themselves, upload content online, and claim for satisfaction of their needs.
- Claim for the regulation or elimination of media concentration.
- Claim for multilingual information.
- Participate with the governments in the co-construction of policies and initiatives.

7. Conclusions and Proposals

Let's go back to the main questions addressed in this paper: Which are citizens demands regarding Open Government (OG)? How can they benefit from Open Government? How can media and information literacy (MIL) contribute to create a culture of OG, particularly in the case of Latin America? Do Latin American citizens fully understand the potential, scopes, benefits and risks of electronic government, Open Data, Open Government?

Citizens' demands regarding OG in LA are not explicit. In many governmental and researcher meetings and seminars, a relevant question emerges: Which type of information do citizens want? The most spontaneous answer to that is: "Just ask them". However, as far as I know, surveys to explore citizens need regarding OG have not been made. The starting point for any targeted transparency initiative for Open Government is to understand who the information users are, understand their motives and incentives, and the dynamics of the sector in which they operate, given that these characteristics determine the contents of the information and the vehicles used for disclosing it.

Citizen engagement in Open Government is not an event (a town-hall meeting, a public forum, a debate on participative budget, or a public hearing or public-comment period); it is a process. As such, it requires constant and uninterrupted

efforts from citizen organizations, the academia, librarians, the educational sector, governments, and private enterprises, to construct an adequate culture of open information sharing and co-creation.

According to Barcena [2015] it remains crucial to continue consolidating the recent regional progress made in terms of citizen participation and innovation by strengthening the role of youth and other traditionally vulnerable sectors. Latin American citizenship is now relatively empowered, compared to the situation in the 20th century; its demands for transparency and accountability can no longer be postponed. Therefore, governments and multilateral institutions must continue to deepen the population's systematic participation in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and create mechanisms for ongoing information sharing and feedback. In order for citizens to participate, and to decide if they support governmental plans and decisions, they need information. Decisions cannot be taken without accurate information, without balancing the consequences on public administration and on society.

All the stakeholders like government, companies, universities, research centres, NGOs, and communities have to participate in the process of communication between public policies for Media and Information Literacy and innovation, as a multistakeholder process. It's not enough to ensure digital inclusion: it's important to weave knowledge networks so that the flow of knowledge and interaction between stakeholders allows the consolidation of the innovation system. The educational, S&T+I, and productive systems need to establish active networking between diverse stakeholders. The inclusion of scientists, students, companies, and NGOs in the planning development of the programmes could be a first step.

It's necessary for the region to improve the articulation and management of MIL programmes within each country, since diverse programmes in various territorial levels often overlap and suffer from lack of internal articulation. Moreover, some national policies related to Knowledge Societies are distributed among different ministries, and have become out of pace. It's necessary to improve the coordination and monitoring of public policies as well as to design national agencies responsible for Knowledge Societies policies. The private sector must become an ever more lasting partner of governments and the citizenship in the implementation of MIL policies and initiatives, promoting the dissemination of innovative practices and new technologies through the creation and improvement of new and more inclusive business models – for instance, through innovative public-private partnerships.

Digital literacy programmes need to widen their scopes, by creating articulation networks with other programmes, so as to go beyond the basic MIL. That

means that it should be thought long-term what the ultimate goals of MIL are – further than the democratization of knowledge – and think of the lines of action in that way.

As a region, Latin America could continue digital literacy to common goals, to articulate plans and programmes of each country and countries together, enriching their experiences. This would imply not only observing the results of bordering countries, but also thinking over and designing public policies together. Maybe this way Latin American citizens will be able to avoid Don Quixote’s mistake, without losing his greatness or his nobility.

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Ricardo PERLINGEIRO

Full Professor, Faculty of Law, Fluminense Federal University;
Federal Appellate Judge, Federal Regional Court of the 2nd Region
(*Rio de Janeiro, Brasil*)

Euphoria and Concerns about the Tendencies in the Right to Official Information in Latin America⁸⁶

Abstract

This text gives a critical analysis of the uncertainties related to the implementation of information access laws in Latin American countries, in light of the advanced principles of information access law enshrined by precedents of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. To ensure that such improvements will be more than just a flash in the pan, the author points out the need to create a society confident in its ability to obtain official information, based on three premises: a) upon establishing rights of information access, the State should also set aside sufficient funding to ensure the effective exercise of that right, because otherwise judicial protection of such positive rights is merely utopian; b) citizens must understand that the only form of supervision [of public authorities] by civil society through access to information is limited to the formation of public opinion, since the law does not allow them any means of direct supervision of the authorities in the name of society; c) effective protection of the right to information depends on the legal qualifications of civil servants and on independent and impartial decision-making bodies (judicial or non-judicial).

1. Introduction

First of all, I should explain that I will be using the term “Latin America” to mean all the Spanish- and Portuguese speaking countries of North, Central and South America, from Mexico to Argentina. The legal systems of these former Spanish and Portuguese colonies are generally quite similar, except for Cuba and Venezuela, which have not yet signed the American Convention on Human Rights and are therefore outside the scope of this analysis. This means that when I use the term “Latin American countries” I am only referring to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador,

⁸⁶ *The author is grateful to Gabriel Ribeiro Perlingeiro Mendes, Reili Sampaio and Vitor Gabriel Gonçalves of the Fluminense Federal University Law School for their help in preparing this paper.*

Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

The Inter-American Court, in its judgement on the case of *Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile* of 2006, acknowledged the existence of the right to access official information – i.e., to request and obtain government-held information – under Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, which regulates the freedom of thought and expression.⁸⁷ In 2008, the Inter-American Juridical Committee (IAJC) of the Organization of American States (OAS) declared certain principles concerning the right of access to information.⁸⁸ In 2010, the OAS General Assembly approved the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Public Information.⁸⁹

In fact, Latin America is experiencing a moment of euphoria with respect to the right of access to information. In most countries of the region, in harmony with the case law of the Inter-American Court, the Constitutions and constitutional courts have expressly laid down rules of information access. Almost all Latin American countries also have laws, in the form of a code, which seem to express the feeling that “sunlight” is the best disinfectant” (Louis Brandeis)⁹⁰, and public disclosure is a key factor in making governments steer clear of the bitter depths of corruption.

But are the Latin-American laws really effective and efficient or is the explosive development of the right to information access across the Continent only a flash in a pan?

Incidentally, in the international rankings, the top 10 information access laws are those of Serbia, Slovenia, India, Croatia, Liberia, El Salvador, Sierra Leona, South Sudan, Mexico and the Maldives. The bottom 10 include Austria, Germany, Italy and Belgium. Out of a total of 102 information access laws, French was ranked 88th and Japanese 84th.⁹¹

Why do the laws of underdeveloped countries like Liberia rub elbows with some of the most sophisticated laws while some of the top industrialized nations, such as France, Japan and Germany, rank among the most rudimentary?

⁸⁷ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile. (judgment of 19 September 2006).*

⁸⁸ *Inter-American Juridical Committee 2008, Principles on the right of access to information. See also [Mendel 2009: 13].*

⁸⁹ *Organization of American States 2010, Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information.*

⁹⁰ “Publicity is justly commended as a remedy for social and industrial diseases. Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light the most efficient policeman.” See: <http://www.brandeis.edu/legacyfund/bio.html>.

⁹¹ *Global right to information rating.*

This requires an analysis making a fundamental distinction between the quality of information access laws themselves, on the one hand, and the quality of their implementation, on the other: despite promising the best of all possible worlds, such laws are often applied and interpreted without sufficient regard for traditional legal concepts.

I will therefore take a critical look at the implementation in Latin America of the main declarations of rights of access to information formulated by the OAS Inter-American Juridical Committee and the case law of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which were consolidated in the OAS Model Inter-American Law.

After raising certain questions about each such declaration of principles, I will propose my own answers by presenting four general considerations in hopes of sparking a debate from a comparative perspective covering legal systems of other continents of both *common law* and *civil law origins*.

2. Provision of Information as a Positive Obligation of the State

According to the Inter-American Juridical Committee, information access is a fundamental human right, i.e., the right to seek and receive information from the State,⁹² in other words, in the case law of the Inter-American Court, the right to information is treated as a positive rather than a negative freedom.⁹³

But what is the scope of that State's duty to provide such services? What are the necessary public resources? Does the State have the political will-power to create both information access laws and an institution endowed with the indispensable public funding to implement those laws? Are the State's duties to provide information enforceable (subject to judicial review) even when there are no clear supporting laws or budget allocations to that purpose? If so, who would have the authority to exercise such power: an administrative authority, a judge or a constitutional court?⁹⁴

These are difficult issues, as shown by the example of what is now happening with social rights in light of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)⁹⁵ and the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural

⁹² *Principles on the right of access to information, resolution item 1.*

⁹³ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile (judgment of 19 September 2006), para 77.*

⁹⁴ *See in general: [Perlingeiro 2015c: 20-45].*

⁹⁵ *Art. 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966).*

Rights (“Protocol of San Salvador”)⁹⁶: national courts in Latin America are delivering polemical, sometimes even unfair judgements because they only benefit the claimants, in violation of the principle of equal treatment before the law which governs administrative law; at other times, their judgements are no better than empty promises, since the nearly bankrupt public healthcare authorities, for example, will be incapable of dispensing the medicines and providing the treatments ordered by the Judge.

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁹⁷ recommends that public policies be subject to constitutional judicial review to protect the guaranteed minimum fundamental welfare benefits. Such review would be performed by a special constitutional court with the authority to declare a situation unconstitutional on the grounds that the legislators have neglected their duties to protect fundamental rights.⁹⁸ In fact, however, it is natural to make public budget decisions in the legislature, not in courts.

In this context, since the right to access official information is the right to receive a service, a *sine qua non* for its effectiveness is that the State must 1) set aside a sufficient budget allocation to be able to cope with growing numbers of requests, 2) adopt laws, policies and practices enabling proper information storage and management,⁹⁹ and 3) incorporate a systematic policy of training and education for civil servants.

For that reason, as a logical corollary, it is also of fundamental importance that general laws of information access be accompanied by such public policies from the very outset, lest the right to information becomes a mere flash in the pan.

3. Information Access as a Tool of Democracy

The OAS General Assembly has adapted several resolutions according to which public information access is an indispensable prerequisite to allow democracy to run smoothly, with optimal transparency and proper public management, and to ensure that the population can exercise its constitutional rights in a

⁹⁶ Art. 10 of the Protocol of San Salvador of 1998: Additional protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁹⁷ See General comment 14: the right to the highest attainable standard of health (Art. 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (2000).

⁹⁸ *Perlingeiro 2015c: 20-45.*

⁹⁹ *International mechanisms to promote freedom of expression. Joint Declaration of the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations (UN) on the Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Representative for the Freedom of Means of Communication of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and of the Special Rapporteur of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the Freedom of Expression.*

representative and participative system with ample freedom of expression and free access to information.¹⁰⁰

The Inter-American Court considers that there is a close relationship between democracy and freedom of expression: “[...] freedom of expression is a cornerstone of the very existence of democratic society. It is indispensable for the formation of public opinion. It is also a *conditio sine qua non* to ensure that political parties, syndicates, scientific and cultural societies and, in general, whoever wishes to influence the collective body, can develop fully. Finally, it is a prerequisite to ensure that the community will be sufficiently well informed when it comes to making choices. A society that is not well informed may therefore be said not to be fully alive”.¹⁰¹

In fact, [in a representative and participatory democracy,] it is easy to see that full exercise of the right to vote is contingent on access to information and knowledge of facts relevant to the political process of direct decision-making [as in a popular referendum] or choice of parliamentary representatives.

According to the dicta of the Inter-American Court, the right to information has two dimensions (individual and collective),¹⁰² that can be used to assert its universal nature, so that every citizen is entitled to access state-held information, even without a specific interest in the relevant information: the concept of “social supervision of the State” suffices to justify such information access.¹⁰³

Indeed, “the supply of information to an individual allows such information to circulate in society and become known, accessed and evaluated”.¹⁰⁴

Yet, when relying on democracy as the basis of the universality of the right to information [about any official subject], it is necessary to bear in mind

¹⁰⁰ Resolution AG/RES. 1932 (XXXIII-O/03) held on June 10, 2003 on “Access to Public Information: Strengthening Democracy”; Resolution AG/RES. 2057 (XXXIV-O/04) held on June 8, 2004 on “Access to Public Information: Strengthening Democracy”; Resolution AG/RES. 2121 (XXXV-O/05) held on June 7, 2005 on “Access to Public Information: Strengthening Democracy”; and AG/RES. 2252 (XXXVI-O/06) held on June 6, 2006 on “Access to Public Information: Strengthening Democracy”.

¹⁰¹ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Case of Ricardo Canese v. Paraguay*, (judgment of 31 August 2004), para 82; *Case of Herrera Ulloa v. Costa Rica*, (judgment of 2 July 2004), para 112; Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Compulsory membership in an Association prescribed by law for the practice of journalism (Arts. 13 and 29 of the American Convention on Human Rights)*. Advisory Opinion OC-5/85 of 13 November 1985, Série A N° 5, para 70.

¹⁰² Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Case of Gomes Lund et al. (Guerrilha do Araguaia) v. Brazil* (judgment of 24 November 2010).

¹⁰³ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Case of Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile* (judgment of 19 September 2006), para 157.

¹⁰⁴ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Case of Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile* (judgment of 19 September 2006), para 77.

that the system cannot be changed directly through the mere circulation of information, which does no more than help shape public opinion and encourage the supervisory bodies to take action.¹⁰⁵

It would be unwise to raise false hopes among citizens that they have the authority to review the legality of administrative acts outside the sphere of their personal interests: the citizen, acting alone, cannot directly use the information thus acquired to change society, but can only report such information to the supervisory authorities so that they can take appropriate measures. Moreover, even in a case of political decision-making, the power that is supported in a participatory democracy is the power exercised by the people [not by an individual].

4. The Duty of the Judicial and Legislative Branches to Supply Information

The Inter-American Juridical Commission has pointed out that “the duty to supply information extends to all the public authorities at every level of government, including the authorities of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, the bodies created by constitutions or by other laws, government-owned or -controlled bodies, and organizations operating with public funding or performing public functions.”¹⁰⁶

When the Commission said that the Judicial and Legislative authorities were likewise subject to the duty to supply information, it was obviously not referring to court judgements and laws *per se*, which have always been fully disclosed to the public. Incidentally, the recognition that parliamentary debates and judicial hearings [concerning legal issues] should be held in public is based on the possibility that public opinion might help shape political decision-making [as a function inherent in participatory democracy].¹⁰⁷

Nor should it be considered indispensable for the principle of disclosure to cover ordinary [non-adjudicative and non-legislative] administrative acts of the Judiciary and Legislature, because that would require extending the duty of disclosure to every act of public administration performed by any public or private entity, whether created by the Executive, Judicial or Legislative branch.

¹⁰⁵ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Claude-Reyes et al. v. Chile (judgment of 19 September 2006), para 89.*

¹⁰⁶ *Principles on the right of access to information, resolution item 2. See also Art. 3 of the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information.*

¹⁰⁷ *Zippelius 2009: 179-180.*

5. Proactive Duty to Inform [Including about Public Policies in General]

In the opinion of the Inter-American Juridical Commission, public bodies should disseminate information about their functions and activities – including, but not limited to their policies which affect members of the public, their budget, and subsidies, benefits and contracts – on a routine and proactive basis, even in the absence of a specific request, and in a manner which ensures that the information is accessible and understandable.¹⁰⁸

In addition, according to the Inter-American Model Law, no one should be subject to any prejudice because of the application of a policy of which the public authorities have failed to make a copy available for inspection. This rule is intended to compensate for the relatively undemocratic nature of public policies decrees by the Executive.¹⁰⁹

It might even be argued that the legal certainty and legitimate expectations of the citizenry would be adequately protected if public policies could not enter into force before they had been disclosed to the interested parties.

6. Obligatory Statutory Definitions of Exceptions to the Right to Information

According to the Inter-American Court, in order to prevent the arbitrary exercise of power by the public authorities, all exceptions to the right to access information must be established in advance by statutory laws.¹¹⁰

The reality of the situation shows the opposite to be true, however: laws frequently have generic or vague clauses, such as those referring to “national security” and “the public interest”, which give the authorities *carte blanche* to keep any information secret at their freely exercised discretion.¹¹¹

7. Delimitation of the Right to Access Information

For the Inter-American Judicial Commission, the right to access information applies to all significant information, defined broadly to include everything which is held or recorded in any format or medium.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Principles on the right of access to information, resolution item 4.*

¹⁰⁹ *Art. 13 of the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information.*

¹¹⁰ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights, The Word “laws” of the American Convention on Human Rights. Advisory Opinion OC-6/86 of May 9, 1986, para 26-29.*

¹¹¹ *See in general: Perlingeiro 2015a: 119-128.*

¹¹² *Principles on the right of access to information, resolution item 3.*

The two techniques of protecting citizens against threats to their fundamental rights (interference through limitations and shaping through self-limitation)¹¹³ are equally conditional on the principle of obligatory statutory definitions of all exceptions to the right to information. However, in light of the above-mentioned precept of the Inter-American Juridical Commission, it may be inferred that it is an authority that has administrative competence to delimit access to information by giving a concrete definition to the vague concept of “significant information”.

8. “Limits on the Limits” on the Right to Information

According to the Inter-American Model Law, authorities cannot refuse to disclose information unless the harm to the interest protected by the relevant exception outweighs the general public interest in disclosure.¹¹⁴ It further states that the exceptions do not apply in cases of serious violations of human rights, in keeping with a consistent line of precedents of the Inter-American Court.¹¹⁵

In fact, there is a “limit on the limit” on the right to information access¹¹⁶: in general, exceptions to the right to access information may apply when justified by private or commercial interests (first limit), unless the harm caused to the interest in disclosure is greater than the harm to the interest in secrecy (limit on the first limit). This is a typical case of colliding interests that may be weighed according to the criterion of proportionality in the strict sense of the term.¹¹⁷ An assessment under constitutional law is also required to identify cases of “serious human right violations” justifying the disclosure of information that was initially considered secret.

Since an administrative authority is competent to decide on what should be disclosed in both such cases, however, it is necessary to ask what characteristics are expected from those who exercise such powers.

In the words of the Inter-American Court itself, “the lack of preparation of public office holders and officials to deal with the subject, especially by incorporating the criteria regarding the system of exceptions recommended by international conventions, indicates that they are neglecting their duties

¹¹³ [Pieroth & Schlink 2012: 56-57, 145]. *The delimitation of the sphere of protection must not be confused with intervention in the sphere of protection (regarding the inherent limits, see: [Silva 2011: 130]).*

¹¹⁴ Art. 44, Chapter IV of the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information.

¹¹⁵ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Case of Myrna Mack Chang v. Guatemala* (judgment of 25 November 2003), para 180-182.

¹¹⁶ [Pieroth & Schlink 2012: 66-67].

¹¹⁷ [Casal 2010: 254]. See also [Stern 1994: 836]. See also Art. 101, III, 104, II, and 149, III of the Mexican Law on Access to Information of 4 May 2015 (*Ley General de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública*).

to protect the right to information access; the States are therefore required to provide public institutions, agencies and authorities with proper legal training in a timely manner”.¹¹⁸

9. Extrajudicial Bodies to Supervise Information Access

The Model Inter-American Law stipulates that it is necessary to establish an autonomous and independent extrajudicial body, intended to promote information access and an (extrajudicial) dispute-resolution body to rule on challenges to denials of requests for information.¹¹⁹

In Latin America only a few countries (Chile¹²⁰, El Salvador¹²¹, Honduras¹²² and Mexico¹²³) have supervisory bodies for information access that are endowed with prerogatives to act independently. This is so because the Continental European legal culture that has taken root in Latin American administrative law is incompatible with the system of quasi-judicial administrative bodies or tribunals typical of administrative law in common-law countries.¹²⁴

In fact, it may be possible to find an effective information access system without necessarily opting for the model already established in Brazil, Latin America, in the USA or in Europe.

Administrative bodies might be just as effective as courts of law in reviewing the right to information access. The effectiveness of the process might also be ensured through preliminary review [typical of common law] or *a posteriori* review [typical of civil law] of the effects of the initial administrative decision.¹²⁵ What is of fundamental importance is to provide the interested parties with a fair trial which guarantees protection of the right to information access except when secrecy is necessary and justified according to international human rights criteria. To that purpose, however, it is indispensable that the courts or dispute-resolution bodies conducting the trial intended to supervise the right to information access be impartial, independent and endowed with technical expertise.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ *Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Claude Reyes et al. v. Chile (judgment of 19 September 2006), para 164 and 165.*

¹¹⁹ *Art. 54-63 of the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information. See: [Mendel 2007: 9; Snell 2007: 29].*

¹²⁰ *Art. 31-44 of the Chilean Law n° 20.285 of 11 July 2008 (Ley sobre acceso a la información pública).*

¹²¹ *Art. 51-60 of the Salvadoran Decree n° 534 of 3 March 2011 (Ley de Acceso a la Información Pública).*

¹²² *Art. 8-11 of the Honduran Legislative Decree n° 170 of 30 December 2006 (Ley de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública).*

¹²³ *Arts. 8, III and IV, 30, 37-42 of the Mexican Law on Access to Information.*

¹²⁴ *Perlingeiro 2016.*

¹²⁵ *Perlingeiro 2015b: 49.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

10. Judicial and Extrajudicial Proceedings to Protect the Right to Information

The Inter-American Model Law provides individuals with three different mechanisms to protect their right to information: a) an internal appeal or request for reconsideration addressed to the same authority that denied the request for information, as an optional measure prior to other mechanisms of challenging the decision; b) an external appeal addressed to a body other than authority that denied the request for information, as an obligatory measure prior to court review; c) court review.¹²⁷

In Latin America, if an external appeal to an extrajudicial body was established as an obligatory measure prior to court review, it might fully deprive citizens of their rights of information access. This is so because in Latin America, with its European traditions of civil law, as mentioned above, the extrajudicial bodies are not endowed with independence. Moreover, extrajudicial administrative proceedings are often no more than “an attempt to draw water from a dry well”, creating an unjustifiable delay in access to the court for protection of the right to information.

11. Closing Considerations

The recognition of the right to information as a fundamental right is well-established in the Latin-American legal systems and is an essential key factor in ensuring that legislators, authorities and judges implement the principles recommended by the OAS.

That key is not yet used to its full potential, however.

States have a duty to promote a culture of information access; to take measures to ensure proper implementation of information access, and to adapt their laws as necessary to protect the right to information.

In fact, information access laws cannot be effective without a well-established culture of information access, with respect to both the administrative authorities and the citizens. To make the members of society confident in their ability to obtain information from the authorities, the courts or administrative supervisory entities must place constant pressure on such authorities [to respect the rights of access].¹²⁸

In this context, four important procedural issues are raised concerning the right to information.

¹²⁷ Art. 46-52 of the *Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information*.

¹²⁸ *Snell 2007: 14*.

First of all, it is important to determine whether it is actually possible to protect the rights and enforce the duties established by law, given the relevant country's social, economic and political realities. If not, citizens will get the impression that false promises are being made, which generally discredits governmental institutions in their eyes: legislators seem to be enumerating the rights of individual and duties of the States to provide services without providing the corresponding budget allocations or alternatives for dispute resolution to enforce their claims.

The second issue requires reflection on the actual impact of an information access law which, as an instrument of societal supervision of the public authorities, can do no more than stimulate freedom of the press and public opinion: it is unrealistic to suppose that an individual citizen has the tools necessary to derive the full legal benefits from the information obtained on behalf of the entire population. It is important to be aware of this limitation in order to avoid frustrations and discouragement of the exercise of the right to information.

The third consideration involves the duty of the States to ensure proper implementation of information access by ensuring that the relevant civil servants have specialized legal training and offer guarantees of impartial action. It would come as no surprise if 100% of the citizens whose requests for information are denied protested and filed appeals, because civil servants who lack legal training have neither the cognitive abilities nor the credibility to handle such cases properly. To do so, civil servants would have to be capable of evaluating the degree of supremacy of fundamental rights and either supplementing the laws and regulations of information access where they are absent or acting contrary to them where they are unconstitutional.

The fourth and final observation concerns the prerogatives of independence of the extrajudicial administrative bodies responsible for appeals against decisions denying access to information. The human rights model proposed by the OAS is incompatible with the civil law traditions of Latin America and could not be imported without requiring major changes in the legal system. Adopting a typical common law system in a civil law culture would create a risk of combining the weaknesses, rather than the strengths, of both systems of administrative law. In other words, the disadvantages of the common law system, such as judges who lack specialized training in administrative law and the power to conduct closed judicial review of the decisions made by administrative authorities, to which they tend to show deference, would be combined with the deficits of the civil law system, namely the lack of independence [and impartiality] of the extrajudicial supervisory bodies.

Most of issues that I just raised are applicable to the BRICS countries in light of their economic, political and social realities, especially the need to establish a culture of open access to official information *concurrently* with the creation of information access laws. At any rate, I imagine that India and South Africa, with their common law origins, could assimilate a model of independent and specialized extrajudicial review better than Brazil and Russia.

I hope to stimulate debate in some way or other, not only in the BRICS but also in both common law and civil law systems of other countries, in a constant endeavor to promote a culture of information and laws that are increasingly sensitive to the specificities of information access.

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Catalin VRABIE

Lecturer, Faculty of Public Administration,
National School of Political Studies and Public Administration
(*Bucharest, Romania*)

Building a Culture of Open Government. What is Still Lacking to Eastern European Countries?

Abstract

Where information is cheap, attention becomes expensive. In today's society, information is increasingly at hand. Today, via the Internet, anyone has access to it. In the online environment, news channels are flooded with updates – most of them being takeovers of official Web sites of the institutions involved. Their huge numbers and increased dynamics demolish any attempt to build confidence in the government source. A few decades ago, the citizens had television as the main source of information. Soon after the number of TV channels has increased, a decrease was observed regarding the TV consumer's confidence in the information provided this way. Before that, the newspaper and the radio went through similar stages. Today the Internet is facing it.

This paper proposes the realization of a conceptual framework for online delivery of information from the public environment to the citizens, businesses and other government institutions – as part of a success model regarding the public administration's communication with the environment it addresses to.

Introduction

With approximately 1.5 billion Facebook accounts, 1.3 billion YouTube users, 700 million Twitter accounts, 200 million Instagram accounts and so on, we can say that citizens' participation in the world's events has never been easier than it is today. Moreover, 46.4% of the planet's population uses the services that the Internet offers to its users [Internet World Stats 2016]. Thanks to the explosion of technology, what we knew about the involvement of citizens in political and social life is changing. We have to rethink what this means, and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) can help us take a new look at this whole framework.

Nowadays we can speak of two parallel systems that work alike and whose importance is comparable. While there is a real-life framework of citizens' action against political and social events, there is also a virtual one where they engage in an equal measure. In this context, what should be done is to build a bridge between the real world and the digital one. MIL can help build this bridge.

Policies promoted by UNESCO specifically refer to the use of MIL to increase citizens' abilities to interact with the electronic world. According to the New London Group, "If it were possible to define generally the mission of education

[in all sciences, even though we refer here mostly on the IT&C education], it could be said that its fundamental purpose is to ensure that students [citizens] benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community and economic life” [New London Group 1996]. This is what MIL means – *a vision for an engaging civic education movement*.

Background

Investigating further the UNESCO’s concerns towards the development of Media and Information Literacy, we find that this model of curricular development is considering the extensive use of all the components that define the information society of today [Milunesco.org 2016]. In this article we refer in particular to: Media Literacy, Media Education, News Literacy, Digital Literacy, and Information Literacy. We see the concept of *literacy* repeating itself obsessively. What does it mean? In this context, being literate means having the ability to read and write digital content. If we are to push the definition further, we can say that a literate person is one who understands and can pass on information in digital formats.

Today, information literally floats around us in the form of radio waves transmitted by the multitude of wireless equipment placed in the most unusual places. More than a billion Web sites and approximately 3.3 billion users change a number of over 80 billion e-mails daily. 1.5 million new articles on various blogs are written daily [Internetlivestats.com 2016]. Google reports 1.7 billion daily searches and YouTube over 3.7 billion videos viewed daily. Globally, daily Internet traffic exceeds a EiB (1024⁶, exbibyte – one billion GB). Reducing these statistics at European level, we still run into very large numbers, Europe representing approximately 20% of the total figures expressed above. The multitude of this information induces a generalized confusion among users, which in turn, generates a lack of trust [Turcotte et al. 2015]. Increasingly more users reject the information that does not come from reliable sources, therefore not clicking on the respective links.

At the moment, in Romania there are 320 cities and, according to the study “E-Government in Romanian municipalities” [Vrabie 2016], no official Web site of a city hall resembles any other – starting with the URL and ending with the manner of displaying information. A closer look at the background statistics reveals a very wide range on which the results of the study mentioned are spread. Cities with a very good score in chapters such as “Transparency” have obtained low scores at “Electronic documents management” or “Generalities” – this last section helped analysing elements of layout and content. If we are to refer to the ten biggest cities in Romania by the number of inhabitants, we will see that the dispersion of scores (calculated by both Variation – VAR and Standard Deviation – SD (σ)) has different values for each class of analysis and also for each city analysed (Table 1).

Table 1. Scores obtained by the ten biggest cities in Romania in the study “E-Government in Romanian municipalities”

No crt	Locality	Position in top	Population	Final score	Transparency	E-Doc	Communication	Useful content	Generalities	VAR	SD (σ)
1	Bucharest	16	1883425	3.55	4.75	3.50	2.50	3.50	3.50	0.42	0.65
2	Cluj-Napoca	18	324576	3.50	5.00	2.50	2.50	3.50	4.00	0.75	0.87
3	Timisoara	3	319279	3.73	4.75	3.50	4.17	3.25	3.00	0.34	0.58
4	Iasi	24	290422	3.42	4.25	2.50	3.33	4.00	3.00	0.34	0.59
5	Constanta	105	283872	2.63	4.25	1.50	1.67	2.75	3.00	0.83	0.91
6	Craiova	45	269506	3.13	5.00	3.00	1.67	2.00	4.00	1.28	1.13
7	Brasov	19	253200	3.48	4.25	3.50	1.67	3.00	5.00	1.07	1.03
8	Galati	75	249432	2.80	3.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	3.00	0.13	0.37
9	Ploiesti	73	209945	2.83	3.75	2.00	1.67	3.25	3.50	0.58	0.76
10	Oradea	1	196367	4.33	4.25	4.50	4.17	3.75	5.00	0.14	0.38
	VAR			0.23	0.23	0.69	0.90	0.33	0.56		
	SD (σ)			1.00	1.28	1.02	1.02	0.98	1.15		

Source: “E-Government in Romanian municipalities 2016”

From our studies, no country in the region is any different. Harmonization of public administration's interests with those of citizens is for now only a topic of discussion. Each public institution wants its presence on the Web to be unique in all aspects, and this is natural given the very large differences between institutions; it is enough to think that a city is unlike any other (some are leaning towards tourism development, others have a large industrial component, etc.) and we can more easily understand the uniqueness character supported by them. This character, however, produces a generalized confusion among citizens. They get lost in the Internet's thickets when they have to find certain information and are thus tempted to return to the traditional manner of communication with the public administration's offices, such as telephone, or even worse, to physically go on the institution's headquarters. Thus actions might shake concepts such as e-government and/or open government.



Source: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

Figure 1. Open Government Partnership

The US President Barack Obama, at the opening of Open Government Partnership Meeting in New York, September 24, 2014, highlighted the role of OG in the citizen-state relationship. If in 2011 the Open Government partnership was signed by eight nations including the United States, in 2015 the number of signatories has increased, as shown in Figure 1, reaching 69 states [Open Government Partnership 2016]. This concept, relatively new, clearly relies on technology: "When citizens demand progress, governments need to be able to respond. And in a new millennium, flush with technology

that allows us to connect with a tweet or text, citizens rightly demand more responsiveness, more openness [...]” [The White House 2014]. Continuing his speech, President Obama talked about the fact that over 2000 commitments have been conducted which are designed to facilitate the interaction between governments and over two billion citizens to whom they are addressed.

Methodology

The methodological approach in achieving this article has considered both a documentary research and an empirical one. The first one is having as the analysis unit national action plans regarding Open Government through MIL, of the countries we have considered in this study, and the second one was focused on collecting views on developing the conceptual framework for delivery of online information presented by this research.

Thus, we have started our study by individually accessing the action plans for the period 2014–2016 of ten countries in Southeastern Europe (1 – Romania, 2 – Bulgaria, 3 – Republic of Moldova, 4 – Serbia, 5 – Greece, 6 – Croatia, 7 – Bosnia, 8 – Hungary, 9 – Slovenia and 10 – Slovakia – as on the map above) in order to study which are their interests in the area of Open Government’s development. Unfortunately, Slovenia and Bosnia do not have such documents, and for Serbia they are available only in the Serbian language [Open Government Partnership 2016]. Most of those action plans represent, as stated in the Romanian National Action Plan, a “product of the government’s collaboration with the civil society and re-affirming the commitments to the five OGP grand challenges: improving public services, increasing public integrity, more effectively managing public resources, creating safer communities and increasing corporate accountability” [Romanian National Action Plan 2014].

At the same period in which we studied the documents mentioned, a questionnaire was drafted, aimed to measure the level of Media and Information Literacy elements used in relation to Open Government. It was sent for filling in to National Commissions for UNESCO of all the ten countries mentioned above. The written request addressed to all the UNESCO Commissions was that these questionnaires should be directed also to the Ministry of Public Administration (or similar authority) in their countries, as well as to the Ministry of Technology and Communications and to a representative of the Civil Society.

The questionnaire was also published on the Internet to collect information from citizens on the same issue in order to have a perspective from both public services providers, and the population – consumer of those services. There were a total of 77 well completed and statistically accepted questionnaires.

We must add here that for all the respondents, both official representatives of the countries, and representatives of the population, the confidentiality of the answers given was ensured.

Preliminary Data

The importance given to the action plans developed before starting this study is due to the possibility to visualize and analyse national projects developed in order to increase the level of governments' openness.

Without being subjective by any means, we found the project called "Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Published Open Data", developed by the *Chancellery of the Prime-Minister in Romania*, as being a first step and perhaps the most important of those studied by us in regard to bringing all information into a single portal. In October 2013, the national gateway data.gov.ro was launched ahead of the planned 2014 deadline. *The platform represents the central access point for open data collected from the public administration. The Chancellery of the Prime-Minister will intensify its efforts to promote the importance of open data publishing, particularly within public administration* [Romanian National Action Plan 2012].

Of the countries considered, Bulgaria also takes pride in enhancing good practices relating to access to information. Through this, it aims to *ensure the correct enforcement of the Access to Public Information Act by setting uniform parameters for the timely development and publication of information by the administration* [Bulgaria National Action Plan 2014].

Further on, by studying the action plans we found that all the above mentioned countries that have initiatives published on the Internet have developed policies in order to collect information in one place. Greece, through its portal opengov.gr, is trying to ensure *open-deliberation for participatory rule making* [Greek National Action Plan 2012]. In Croatia, *a pilot project of a system for personal user access to public administration was launched, in which it will be possible for every citizen to have access to their personal information via the Internet system, which will also be a part of the gov.hr system. Additionally, a pilot project was launched for releasing public sector information, aimed at improving the accessibility of public sector data in one place* [Croatia National Action Plan 2014]. In Slovakia, a Web portal was developed with the aim to collect all information about *structural Funds, EEA Financial Mechanism, Norwegian Financial Mechanism, Swiss Financial Mechanism and other Ministry grant mechanisms which constitute significant resources of public finances used by local government bodies, business persons, and non-governmental organizations* [Slovak National Republic Action Plan 2012]. After taking office in 2010, the Hungarian Government immediately started the preparation of launching *a new single governmental Website. The www.kormany.hu contains all data of public interest about all ministries, provides a forum to inspect and comment on draft legislations under preparation, and also gives information on major governmental measures* [Hungary National Action Plan 2013].

Table 2. Picture of actions taken for developing Open Government in the region's countries

Indicators	Romania	Bulgaria	Republic of Moldova	Serbia	Greece	Croatia	Bosnia	Hungary	Slovenia	Slovakia
Enhancing Transparency and Administrative Efficiency	Yes		Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes
Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Published Open Data	Yes		Yes	NA	Yes		NA		NA	Yes
Human Resource Training and Development	Yes			NA			NA		NA	
Effective Management of Public Resources		Yes		NA		Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes
Improving Corporate Responsibility and Accountability		Yes		NA			NA	Yes	NA	
Ensuring Transparency of Governance at the Local Level	Yes		Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes
Encouraging Participatory Decision-Making Through E-Communication Platforms			Yes	NA		Yes	NA		NA	Yes
Open E-Deliberation and Recruitment				NA	Yes	Yes	NA		NA	Yes

Source: National Action Plans (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>)

From the table above we can see the initiatives of the region's countries in terms of Open Government development. Clearly, as we have already learnt by studying the Romanian case, Open Government initiatives might be developed at the local level without being necessarily reported to a national entity, which means that the situation is actually much better. But for a greater visibility and also for increasing operability, these initiatives must be brought under the same light – only this way they can serve both citizens and administrations.

Further, by analysing the results of the questionnaire, we can see that 63 of the respondents (82%) choose online methods of obtaining information from the public environment – 35 (46%) accessing online newspapers and 28 (36%) directly from the Web sites of the public institutions, while only 14 (18%) choose traditional methods like watching the news on TV.

The question “What is your opinion related to the development of a unique channel for delivering information from the public authorities to citizens and to the business sector (for example a Web portal built to gather, via RSS, all the news released by the public authorities)?”, for which responses were situated on the Likert scale (with values between 1 – strongly disagree and 5 – strongly agree), received a total of 49 *strongly agree* responses (64% of the total), 7 *agree* (9%), 14 *neutral* (18%), 0 *disagree* and 7 (9%) *strongly disagree*. These answers alone are enough for us to say that the public is willing to have everything in one place.

Statement of Limitation

It must be mentioned here that this survey was completed only by Internet users. However this does not represent an obstacle for the analysis because the solution we proposed – namely *a unique channel for information transmission over the Internet* – is addressed only to its users. The 14 respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “Does TV represent the main channel of information for you?” probably use the Internet only for correspondence – such as e-mail, and less for obtaining information from public environment.

Explanations

Citizens' interest in accessing a unique portal – as it emerges from the answers given (almost three quarters of the respondents agreed with this), is explained by the multitude of information and a spreading number of channels that exist nowadays. We can take as an example the library of the British Museum, which is definitely valuable, useful and accessible. However, what chance does a book have to be known publicly only because it is there? If it is desired, it may be

requested; but to be desired, it should be known. No one can wander through the library. Today, the Internet is clearly a source of information infinitely richer than any library in the world (perhaps even richer than all the world's libraries). If we refer only to the English edition of Wikipedia, it has grown to 5.119.872 articles, equivalent to over 2000 print volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Including all language editions, Wikipedia has over 38 million articles, equivalent to over 15.000 print volumes [Wikipedia 2016]. This makes searching and, implicitly, retrieving relevant information about a subject much more difficult; too much information can, paradoxically, create an impression of vacuum.

Governments' interest, as it results from studying the action plans, is in bringing under the same umbrella all official information. This is our hypothesis in this study. Although the information discussed is filtered by interest – for projects already implemented at a national level, the question that arises is the following: “Why should not all information be placed in a single portal, divided, in its turn, into relevant categories, such as news, events, initiatives etc.?”

Today, ignoring social platforms is similar to ignoring the impact of mobile technologies 20 years ago or the Internet's value 25 years ago. Companies whose names need no advertising anymore (Microsoft, Oracle, Coca-Cola) are present on Facebook with official profiles because they have realized that consumers are to be found there. In commercials for McDonalds the official site of the company, namely www.mcdonalds.com, does not appear anymore, instead it's [f/mcdonalds](https://www.facebook.com/mcdonalds). This means that Facebook gathers under the same umbrella information from the ecosystem in which users live.

Romanian national initiatives developed for increasing transparency and reducing corruption, such as seap.ro, ecomunitate.ro, e-guvernare.ro and others alike, denote the same interest, namely data collection in one single Web portal (each of those mentioned share same interest for their users). Information and, perhaps most of all, easy access to it, represents today's capital. Why not to create just one single portal (similar to some extent to those mentioned) which can gather public information under a single Web address? If such an initiative is supported by law, public institutions should install RSS modules on their Web sites for delivering information to the public. The portal managing this data would play a role of a gateway both for citizens and businesses and perhaps even for other public institutions.

To Conclude

The period since 2010 has seen enormous changes both in technology and the way in which it is used.

Let's think about what a man can do with a pencil and a sheet of paper. Further on, let's imagine what a man can do with a typewriter, and then with a PC. Today, the PC I'm talking about is connected to the Internet. One of the first slogans of Bill Gates was that the Microsoft goal was to provide everyone IAYF – Information at Your Fingertips [Gates 1995]. Although Mr Gates was clearly a visionary, he probably did not foresee where the technology would get twenty years after his first book was published. Moreover, we do not believe that he foresaw the explosive growth of information available on the Internet today. According to a study of IBM [Dixon 2015], the total quantity of information produced by mankind so far is doubling itself every 30 hours. Obviously, not all of this information is published and/or available on the Internet, but this study can help us understand the proportions to which it has arrived.

In such an ocean, it is very difficult to navigate to the target set. Therefore we need clear routes. We believe it to be absolutely necessary to build a single channel to centralize all information produced by the public sector with the aim to inform citizens and the business environment. The advantages of such a channel, as identified by us after interviews and the questionnaire applied, were the following:

- it will raise the efficiency of the process of communication between the parties involved;
- it will give unbiased information to the population;
- it will reduce confusion and waste of time with searching for information both at local and at central levels;
- it will provide more transparency.

Of course, some disadvantages were identified as well:

- if it is not mandatory by law, some sources may not be included;
- being the only information channel, it might be used in such ways in which citizens might be manipulated.

Our study took into account, as we mentioned in the methodology section, only ten countries from the Southeastern Europe. This self-imposed limitation was given by the short time we had for the survey realisation. The intention for the future is to support a pilot project in Romania and then, through extending the study and through partnerships with organizations from countries in Western Europe (universities, research centres, NGOs), to propose as a solution a channel like this one for informing citizens.

This portal will be the gateway of the public administration at any level, and will be structured as follows:

1. *Section for citizens*

2. *Section for businesses*

3. *Section for state institutions*

1.1. *Information and news for local administrations,*

1.2. *Information and news for central administration,*

etc.

1.1.1. *Information and news about territorial school inspectorates,*

1.1.2. *Information and news about cities and communes,*

1.1.3. *Information and news about public order and citizens safety,*

1.1.4. *Information and news about medical units,*

etc.

For obvious reasons we do not develop here the entire map of the proposed portal. Thanks to the latest Web programming languages such as HTML5, ASP, PHP, etc., the graphical interface allows easy navigation even to the users less familiarized with digital technologies.



Figure 2. Proposed Web portal design

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Information Environment in Latvia: Opportunities and Limitations

Introduction

As we know, Information forms the basis of any administrative system. And in picking and choosing data to be placed into the public domain, authorities have the privilege to tap into whatever resources can potentially serve a desired result, with their “resources” ranging from technology to humans and other living beings to communities and even entire nations.

To ensure that public administration serves the good of all, there is a need for civic feedback, assessment, engagement and control. We should bear in mind, however, that governance and its analysis come from agencies whose interests do not just differ, but are – more often than not – conflicting and mutually exclusive.

Russia, which seeks to be treated as an equal player in global decision-making, has in recent years been trying to consolidate its sovereignty. On the other hand, there aren’t enough natural resources out there for the world to sustain its habitual consumption levels. So access to information is beginning to play a key role in the international community’s struggle for survival.

Latvia, for its part, exists at the junction of two realms, which is why information-related conflicts that arise here may be quite acute. There are new IT opportunities opening up in the country, yet their use is limited with comparable constraints – admittedly, without any major risks so far to the government system’s stability.

I am now going to expand on some of the key trends defining Latvia’s modern-day development and to outline similar processes in the outside world.

Restricting the Freedom of Opinion at the Legislative Level

On 11 May, 2016, Latvia’s Penal Code was expanded to include an article introducing punishment (imprisonment of up to five years, penal labour and/or a monetary fine) for collaboration with a foreign state in anti-Latvian activities. The lawmakers justified this decision by the various forms of hybrid warfare becoming a fact of modern life. And it is primarily to the Russian

Federation that the term “foreign state” refers in this context. So, ironically enough, my address to you here today may well be qualified as incriminating evidence against myself.

In addition, the country’s parliament (*Saeima*) is now considering draft amendments to the Non-Governmental Organisations Law that introduce restrictions for NGOs “that spend the funds they raise on activities targeting the existing system of government and calling for its overthrow, that advocate communist ideology, and so forth.” In reality, though, there are no organisations out there that get involved in seditious acts of any sort these days, otherwise they would be prosecuted in line with the regulations already in force. And yet, the architects of this draft claim in a justification that the new piece of legislation is necessitated by – surprise, surprise – the ongoing and potential hybrid wars, as well as by various NGO-sponsored cultural activities in Latvia, including Russian Culture Days (these are believed, apparently, to undermine the very foundations of the Latvian state!). If the motion gets through the Saeima, organisations suspected of sedition will face in-depth audits and shutdowns.

Now, in an effort to monitor the use of every penny by such disloyal groups – but not just them – a new, revised edition of the Money-Laundering and Terrorism Financing Law has been adopted. It actually legalises the screening of literally every socially active adult citizen in Latvia. Here is a questionnaire sample to give you some idea of what kind of forms Latvia’s commercial banks are henceforth obligated to offer to their customers to fill in.

- Where does your cash money come from?
- What are the average amounts of cash coming into your bank account monthly?
- What do you use that money for?
- What sources of income do you have?
- In case you are a salaried employee, please enter the name of your employer.
- If you are entitled to corporate dividends, please indicate the name of the company where you are a stockholder.
- If you have some real property that you are letting for rent, please indicate its address.
- If you earn your living as a self-employed worker or a freelancer, please identify the field of your professional occupation.

-
- Is your banking account used in transactions by other persons or legal entities?
 - Are you a politically important person (PIP)?

Answers to these questions will make it far easier for special services to track down any bank customer directly, as well as through contacts in and outside his or her inner circle.

You may wonder whom the term “PIP” applies to in Latvia. Well, first of all, to high-ranking civil servants (currently operating or retired), senior military personnel, members of the judiciary, politicians, officials sitting on public-sector companies’ boards, and so forth. These come under scrutiny alongside their spouses or life partners, as well as siblings, parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren. There is also a separate list for individuals who have easy-to-prove business or “some other type of close” relations with PIPs. According to Latvia’s bank watchdog, the Commission for Stock and Currency Markets, falling into this latter category are friends, acquaintances and romantic partners. By the Latvian Commercial Banks Association’s estimates, about one-fourth of the country’s population is officially classified as PIPs, overall.

Filtering Information and Limiting Its Flow in the Public Domain

Latvia’s mainstream periodicals, broadcasters and major news websites all receive information for their content from selected news agencies only, and only pre-filtered material gets through to them. The editing boards of these media are well aware of the limits that they have to respect in their news coverage. But in the outside world, there is a limitless number of independent sources, which Latvian authorities cannot possibly censor. So what they (authorities) do is try to narrow down the choice of publicly available content in the world’s No. 1 online search engine, Google, by setting parameters that would automatically filter out sources perceived as controversial. The most “malicious” of these get attacked with special computer codes and then declared harmful. Such websites end up on the search engine’s or a web browser’s blacklists, and there are rather complicated formalities to go through before a blacklisted site can be exonerated. Exoneration does not guarantee against a new ban, though. This way, the number and accessibility of *non-grata* websites are actually reduced – indeed, it takes a lot of expertise to overcome the blockage, and not every user has an experienced expert to turn to for assistance. And then there’s Facebook, which has its very own censorship mechanism at the ready for what this social medium regards as malevolent content. Occasionally, pressure comes from a regulating government agency, as has been the case with the now suspended Russian news outlet Sputnik (sputniknews.lv), for example. Also, regulators

have imposed a ban on broadcasts to Latvian audiences by Russia's two major television networks, Pervyi Kanal (national Channel One) and Rossiya.

Getting Dissenters out of the Way

Over the past year, the most significant political event in Latvia has been putting into custody Ugis Magonis, former chief executive of Latvian Railways Inc. (this is the Baltic nation's second largest public-sector company, and in its operations it is closely linked with the Russian Federation).

Magonis was arrested after he had been allegedly caught red-handed taking a 500,000-euro bribe from an Estonian entrepreneur, identified by his family name, Osinovsky. The operation was carried out in Estonia and by Estonian special services, who then handed the man over to Latvian law-enforcement authorities.

(This, by itself, is a violation of the Criminal Proceedings Code. Indeed, if a foreign national is suspected of having committed a crime in a neighbouring country, he or she shall not be extradited until after the investigation is over. And in case no crime has been perpetrated, persecution and detention are just unlawful.)

Launched back in August 2015, the probe against Magonis is still ongoing, with no details of his alleged deal with Osinovsky disclosed to the public. In the meantime, Edwin Berzins, appointed to take over as Latvian Railways CEO, has announced he is going to put his weight behind the Rail Baltic project – which seems to be the actual motive behind his predecessor's arrest.

Even advocates – let alone detractors – admit that the construction of the new Baltic railway does not make much sense economically, but is above all a political venture. Funded largely by the European Commission, this EU-imposed multibillion project is a loss-incurring one from the word “go”. And so it will, once completed, weigh heavily on local budgets. The Baltic states do not have that many commuters to ensure the future rail line's efficiency. And then, there are no freights whose transportation by the new road will be expedient. Magonis, while in office, did all he could to prevent the project from going ahead. Yet in the Latvian press, his eventual ouster was presented as an abscess-of-corruption-lanced kind of thing.

Previously, the most high-profile dismissal in Latvia was that which followed the theft of US\$10,000 from Parliament Speaker Indulis Emsis – the money got stolen along with the official's briefcase while he was dining in a cafeteria at the Cabinet of Ministers headquarters. Shortly after Mr Emsis reported the theft to police, they came up with a suspect – one of the cafeteria staffers. By

the time of his arrest, the guy had allegedly managed to spend one-third of the stolen sum. He was convicted, but got away with a suspended sentence and no obligation to pay back the missing amount. And then criminal charges were brought against the plaintiff. Emsis got charged with perjury and, in an effort to save face, had to modify the initial sum indicated in his police report (\$10,000), changing it for \$6,500. He also was made to give up his additional demands to the thief – along with his post.

It is hard to believe that the convict – an ordinary cafeteria worker – had enough serendipity and courage to show up in the dining hall right at the moment Mr Emsis was visiting and to get his hands on the PIP's briefcase without fearing consequences. That the parliament head would leave his valuables unattended does not seem a particularly plausible theory, either – unless there was some orchestrated event to deliberately distract his attention. Well, clearly, only an authority above the country's formal leadership was in a position to have the second highest-ranking government official face criminal proceedings for having carried around a cash amount twice his monthly salary. For Emsis, this must have been meant as the price to pay following his publicly expressed doubts over the feasibility of the Latvian armed forces' involvement in NATO-led foreign missions.

Latvia's mainstream media all reported Emsis' resignation in a concise, matter-of-fact manner. The picture they provided was by no means complete, and they called none of the official conclusions into question – as if the story were about firing yet another dishonest civil servant. And the Russian press used that occasion to bring up the issue of the former Latvian Speaker's alleged Russophobia.

Similar events are now happening in some Latin American countries. In Brazil, for example, the national legislature is about to take final steps on suspended president Dilma Rousseff's impeachment trial. Even a layman knows that a criminal investigation may be conducted over some specific charges only and that only based on these charges shall a subsequent court decision be handed down.

Addressing the Senate (parliament's upper house), Ms Rousseff's main defence lawyer, José Eduardo Cardozo, said the decision to put the impeachment motion to a vote had been made with procedural violations.

Indeed, the motion that got the impeachment process started was about President Rousseff allegedly having manipulated the government budget (this argument is, by itself, a rather vague and weak one). But a committee of the lower house of Congress then launched hearings on her suspected involvement

in the corruption scandal surrounding the national oil corporation Petrobras – a case that has nothing to do with the accusations laid originally.

Ms Rousseff is alleged to have diverted public-sector banks' money for what pro-Western media described as “filling budget holes” in times of crisis. Is the term “diversion” really relevant in this case, though? Isn't this a government's right to manage state-run institutions as it sees fit?

“Filling budget holes” is an emotionally charged expression, but in essence it just means fixing imbalances between revenue and expenditure. And then again, is not this supposed to be one of a national leader's key duties related to budgetary compilation and execution?

By presenting Ms Rousseff's budget-balancing measures as “diversion”, the media tried to put it across to philistines that borrowing money out of state-owned banks' coffers would, on a government's part, be an indecency – all the more so if that money is placed into treasury bonds.

All this makes the proceedings against President Rousseff look like something of a conspiracy to topple a legitimate head of state.

According to estimates by the human rights organisation Transparency Brazil, 60% of the current members of the National Congress, which has voted for President Rousseff's impeachment, are facing criminal charges of this or that kind. Ironically, she is one of the few officials in the country's upper echelons of power to have never been accused of embezzling to benefit herself and her family.”Dilma... remains untainted in our political realm, covered with shit from top to bottom,” says journalist Mario Sergio Conti, of the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper. “She hasn't stolen anything, yet is being tried by a gang of thieves.”

Former Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner is another top-ranking Latin American “shrew” to have found herself in the global limelight for all the wrong reasons. The woman is charged with having colluded during her tenure to have the Central Bank sell several billion dollars in futures contracts below the market. Prosecutors allege she manipulated the sales by arranging for the futures to be offered at a price lower than what an interested buyer was willing to pay. But it would have been nonsensical for the Central Bank to act that way. What it did, instead, was sell off at the “going”, or typical, rate of the time. So basically, Ms de Kirchner's fault consists in that she just dared raise capital (which the country's economy badly needed) through debentures not payable arbitrarily.

Conclusion

The above examples provide yet another testimony to the fact that the world is full of injustices and that much of the real-world news is either hushed up or reported in a distorted, lopsided and biased fashion. Honest public discussions on some controversial issues of public concern are something of a rarity in Latvia these days. The authorities realise only too well that they stand to lose from any such debate. There is a strong chance of public opinion siding with the opposition – a prospect unacceptable to those now in power, given that the ruling government’s very existence depends on how effective it is in cutting its opponents down to size.

I must confess that Governor Natalia Komarova’s report about the experience of introducing an open government in Khanty-Mansiysk has made me jealous – positively jealous, I mean. This is a success story telling of a project where “information has been put in the service of the public interest” and where feedback is more than a word – the community are really engaged in government decision-making and they even take part in translating decisions into reality. But that kind of public engagement will not be there unless authorities choose to work for the common good.

And I do agree with what has been said by Evgeny Kuzmin and Nikolai Khaustov. Admittedly, though, adequate understanding of news content and other publicly available information is impossible unless we, as consumers, apply critical thinking and analytical skills, along with media literacy. Also important to exploring the world are qualities that Natalia Gendina mentions in her speech, notably information culture, civic awareness, patriotism, and moral values. Citizens who possess all that are more likely, I think, to make responsible choices and be aware of consequences their decisions may bring about.

Alexander ZYKOV

Director, Ugra Research Institute of Information Technologies
(*Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation*)

Larisa TRUTNEVA

Chief Researcher, Ugra Research Institute of Information Technologies
(*Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation*)

The Formation of Open Government Culture in the Population of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area (Ugra)

The upgrading of public information education and culture is an inalienable part of the emergent open government culture and the culture of public-state interaction. To use e-government services to the greatest possible effect, the population should possess a set of relevant competences pertaining to media and information literacy.

If we see the Media and Information Literacy teacher training curriculum [4] as the starting point in the teaching of media and information literacy (MIL), we should regard the MIL ecosystem as a vast set of literacies (Fig. 1) – particularly, digital, computer, information and Internet literacies [1–3]. Considering evident links between these phenomena, we introduce the concept of ICT literacy, in which all these literacies merge.

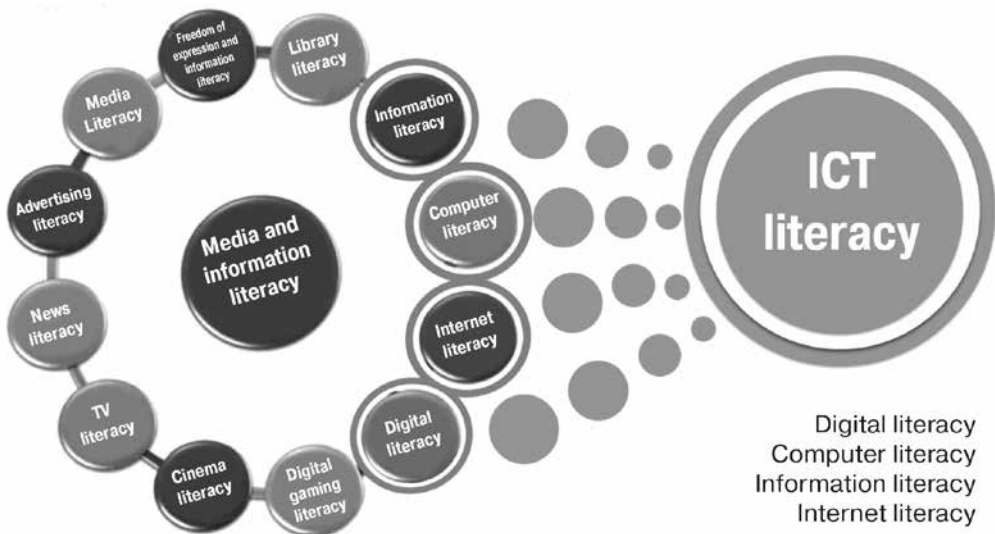


Figure 1. Information technological components of media and information literacy

Apart from basic knowledge of computer technology, ICT literacy comprises, in particular, the mastery of terms, information user's skills, the realization of the basic opportunities of a computer, etc. This knowledge should be used for professional and personal goals alike. That is how ICT literacy acquires social relevance to become an index of social advance and of the extent of public civilization.

The Ugra Research Institute of Information Technologies takes an active part in the mass ICT literacy promotion project. We concentrate on services to welfare beneficiaries. Classes base on public access centres in our entire autonomous area and take into due account the varying educational levels of our targeted audiences.

The ABC is taught on the ECDL Foundation's E-Citizen international programme, which is being implemented in Ugra since 2006 with the autonomous area government support. The curriculum is meant primarily for seniors utterly ignorant of computers. Studies over, students receive e-citizen's international certificate.

To study ICT potential for life in the information society, there is a curriculum on the effective use of e-government services, aimed for more active people with basic skills of computer work to teach them online access to e-government state and municipal services.

A special system allows a complete educational cycle with registered instructors and students, offline and online classes with regular tests, students' achievements recorded and duly analysed, a well-managed teaching aid library, and regular reports on the results of training.

Thus, population training in ICT use improves the public use of information, promotes open government activism, involves the public in decision making and expertise, and enhances public control.

Ugra is presently Russia's second-best for the number of registered Unified State Service Portal users (550,000 people, or 43.5% of the Ugra population).

The skill of using geoinformation is very topical today with the mass use of mobile apps to comprehend and present spatial information. Diverse reference and information analytical systems whose use demands the knowledge of geospace allow find a necessary spot in the map according to specified criteria, chart the best possible itinerary or locate one's friends. To use the functional intrinsic in the system, it is necessary to form geospatial literacy as the culture of handling geospatial data through cartographic services.

The latest information technology supposes the skills of operating geospatial data – maps, graphs and other topographic materials with the use of various paper and electronic media for event/statistics analyses in the geoinformation

environment. Let us regard separately geoinformation literacy, which can be assessed as part of ICT literacy.

The skills of creation and change of geospatial information forms, of decision-making based on geospatial information analysis, and of the practical use of information obtained in geoinformation systems are essential skills required of geoinformation literacy.

We can specify four basic levels of teaching geoinformation literacy. On the whole, they require lifelong education from the initial school level to specialist upgrading in conformity with professional standards presently being elaborated (Fig. 2).

The first, initial level involves schoolchildren trained in the ABC of work with IT, geospatial data and geoinformation systems. The next two levels involve university students trained in fields connected with the use of geoinformation systems and the upgrading of experts engaged in such use. The top level envisages a system of professional standards to form quality educational and vocational curricula.

The attainment of new quality of vocational training and professional education demands explicit standards of employees' professionalism. Since 2014, the Ugra Research Institute of Information Technology is taking part in the elaboration of such standard sets for the use of satellite services and geoinformation systems. All in all, we have taken part in the elaboration of four professional and vocational standards.

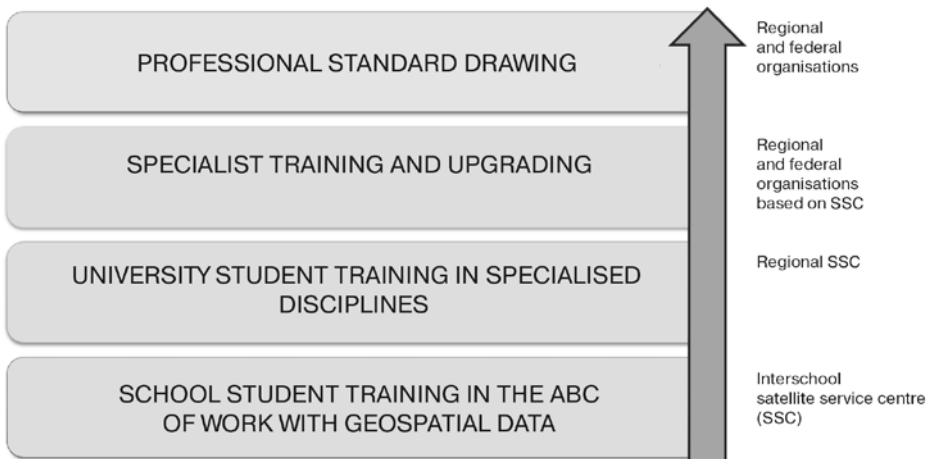


Figure 2. Levels of geoinformation literacy acquisition

Specialists of relevant agencies and offices are trained to work with geoinformation systems and so enhance their geoinformation literacy on the basis of the available regional satellite service centre.

A specialized department of the Ugra State University has been established on the basis of the Ugra Research Institute of Information Technologies to promote BA and MA acquisition of essential competences in geoinformation systems. Leading institute experts supervise undergraduate work at graduation essays on the use of geospatial data.

Teaching schoolchildren the ABC of work with geospatial data, including data obtained by the space effort, allows the use of the latest geoinformation technology at school. An interschool satellite service centre has been established for teaching children, as in many other Russian regions.

The centre provides major innovative opportunities in teaching specific disciplines (geography, history, area studies, biology and ecology) and guarantees in the teaching process:

- interactivity;
- vocational orientation;
- independent work with sophisticated software;
- implementation of a wide range of innovative school projects, including ones on the border between several academic fields and practical demands.

Acquired competences of ICT and geoinformation literacy allow effective use of new skills in work with the available and new open data geoportals. Fig. 3 gives an example of such information resources. The given geoportal can be regarded as part of the system of the Ugra Autonomous Area's open e-government.



Figure 3. Open data portal of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra

ICT literacy is taught throughout Ugra on a mass scale (Fig. 4). All told, over 40,000 people have undergone instruction since 2010, including 15,000 rural residents. It is hard to organise education in Ugra with its many remote villages, very hard of access. Even despite that, we have maintained a fairly steady numerical correlation between urban and rural students for many years.

Thus, the Ugra Research Institute of Information Technology is working steadily and purposefully to teach the population ICT literacy and promote public activism in open e-government.

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Liudmila BARBA

TV Projects Coordinator, Moldova-1 TV Channel,
TeleRadio-Moldova Public Broadcasting Company
(Chisinau, Republic of Moldova)

Open Information Society: Responsibility, Security, Informed Choices

Moldova has come a long way in its information technology advance in recent years. In 2015, it ranked 66th on the International Telecommunication Union's annual IT development index, with 167 economies assessed overall. The year's rankings were presented at the 13th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium, as part of this agency's Measuring the Information Society report.

The post-Soviet nation has found itself among today's global leaders in broadband cable Internet connectivity, with its bit rates now being among the world's lowest. Fibre-optic communications here account for 90%. The Internet penetration rate is 60%; mobile penetration twice as high, at 120% (according to the national Communications and Information Technology Ministry).

Since 2012, Moldovan authorities have been taking effective measures to promote the development of the IT sector. They have recently started a nationwide population register, aimed at collecting, storing and analysing data (including personal) on individual citizens; public administration agencies, members of the public, and legal entities can get access to this database if authorised.

A weak economy facing financial and political crises, Moldova has nonetheless managed to give its information society a huge impetus over the past six to eight years. There is an e-government already operating in the republic. The online services available to Moldovan nationals span a wide range of areas including banking, business, local administration, civil society and civic initiative, healthcare, press, and online education. Since early 2013 this country's economic operators have had the opportunity to file returns on their social security contributions online, using electronic signature. The introduction of Internet voting is another recent step in that direction, with the 2016 presidential ballot picked as testing grounds.

"He who holds the information holds the power", "The well-informed are well-armed" – these and other information-related catchphrases look particularly relevant in our IT age and are commonly used in Moldova. But as more and more people rely for their news updates on domestic mass media as well as on locally accessible foreign outlets, they wonder just how reliable the news brought to

them is, really. They also tend to ask themselves questions like: How adequate will be our decisions and actions if based on the news content we get from the mass media? What if it is meant to influence the opinion of one particular population group, of one particular community? And what happens to a state where news media spread content to deliberately misinform or manipulate the public?

But is there any valid reason to call into doubt the credibility, reliability and objectivity of the news content carried by the mass media? Moldova's experience goes to show that such doubts aren't unfounded. One of the most discussed issues as regards media democratisation in this country is the excessive concentration of news outlets in the hands of one individual or one group – affiliated with political forces that are currently in power or have been in power until recently.

According to a study by the Independent Journalism Centre, a leader of one of this country's ruling parties owns five TV channels (two of them being nationwide) while another politician, now in opposition, holds three networks. The situation seems to be exacerbated by the fact that, being, as it is, an emerging sovereign state, Moldova derives from the old Soviet regime where polity was omnipotent. The republic's opposition forces are still too weak to ensure the checks-and-balances mechanism works properly, so there is still the threat of its returning to totalitarianism.

Also, it is only recently that this country's state-run media have been sold into private hands. The first-generation proprietors (or co-proprietors) of television and radio broadcasters, print and online media tend to see their assets mainly as a source of income, while providing correct, unbiased and objective information is of little concern to them. Part of the reason is that experience in free, private media enterprise is still scarce. Secondly, operating in a weak economy, faced with a crisis and, often, political instability, the media struggle to survive as businesses, so the "all is fair" principle becomes king. They remain unaware of their responsibility to information consumers and of their dependency on them, but they do realize that they can profit from cooperation with political and financial groups whose interests they undertake to promote.

Last but not least, there is ongoing geopolitical confrontation, with media – or hybrid – wars being one of its distinctive features in the 21st century. The writing pen and, more habitually these days, the computer keyboard serve to produce words, and these have by now become more effective weapons than conventional weaponry. The dangerous thing about media wars is that casualties they inflict are hard to notice at the initial stage. There is no immediate physical damage done, yet the far-reaching implications may prove no less frightening than traditional warfare's. That one group or community is being set against another

can potentially provoke a civil war or an armed conflict between neighbours. And the trigger will be news – or fake news, to be more precise.

For open information society, news can be both an empowering factor and a weak point. With a low level of media literacy in society, the threat to the stability of a state, a region and the world grows exponentially. In Moldova, the issue was not brought into the public domain until just a year-and-a-half ago – and not yet in an assertive enough way. Several dozen schools have had related lectures held for their senior students. And just a couple of days ahead of this conference, the non-governmental organisation Arena Civica, which I represent, conducted the first media education training session for local journalists. Further along the project, it is media professionals who will be preparing content on media awareness for their audiences. Various projects on media literacy are now being developed by other NGOs, too, such as the Centre for Independent Journalism, the Independent Press Association, and the Electronic Media League.

Each of the aforementioned problems obviously requires separate attention and analysis. Attesting to this is the experience of Moldova, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states (and not just those), where new interior or exterior conflicts have arisen in recent years (or old, frozen ones have re-emerged). In every such case, we can witness the use of information as a destabilising tool, a weapon.

This is why today I would like to urge representatives of the participant countries to ensure that media and other information distributors are not employed as weapons in so-called hybrid wars, that media are not concentrated in the hands of narrow-interest political or financial groups. Let me also call on fellow journalists, media managers and owners to produce content for their audiences more responsibly. At the level of state institutions, the problem of balancing between national security and media freedom should be solved in favour of an open yet protected society.

If they truly care about the security of their citizens as well as of their respective nations, governments should, in my view, include media literacy in the university and secondary school curricula. Related knowledge should also be disseminated among the public to raise their awareness. Without media literacy, open information society remains in jeopardy. Attempts to control information streams or bring them to a halt will inevitably lead to totalitarianism. On the other hand, there is a need to identify ways of developing immunity in the public to fake news and to propaganda.

Access to information is a double-edged sword that can either empower people or make them more vulnerable. So every party involved – producers, distributors and consumers of news content – should assume their part of responsibility for sustaining the country's open information society. And this is something that will by all means make us stronger.

FINAL DOCUMENT

The Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration “Media and Information Literacy for Building a Culture of Open Government”

1. Open government is now gaining recognition and acceptance in many countries worldwide. It is based on the principles of greater transparency, accountability, and active citizen engagement in public governance. Open government embodies the concept of democracy and promotes efficiency in governance, and is driven by information and communication technologies (ICTs) which provide the tools and mechanisms for two-way interaction among the different governance stakeholders – government, diverse citizens and civil society institutions, business and industry, and academia, among others.
2. Interaction among stakeholders requires related competencies such as: reliable information access and retrieval; information assessment and utilization; information and knowledge creation and preservation; and information sharing and exchange using various channels, formats and platforms. To be effective and fruitful, such interaction should be based on trustworthiness of governmental information; mutual respect and compliance with standards of ethics; and privacy and security. It should aim to ensure the well-being of the community, as well as individual.
3. These composite competencies and attitudes form part of a literacy ecosystem – media and information literacy (MIL). The relationship between MIL and the efficiency of open government has not been clearly formulated in the international agenda.
4. The International Conference on Media and Information Literacy for Building a Culture of Open Government was convened in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation, on 6 to 10 June 2016. The objectives of this pioneering forum were as follows: (1) define the conceptual framework of open government/open government culture; (2) exchange innovative and creative experiences and best practices in open government; (3) discuss how MIL competencies of different governance stakeholders can foster (or facilitate) open government practice; (4) promote the adoption of MIL educational programmes as a requirement in open government adoption.
5. The International Conference was organized by the Government of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Ugra (Russian Federation), the Russian

Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (IFAP), and the International Library Cooperation Centre in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO IFAP, with support from the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, and LUKoil Petroleum Company. The conference gathered more than a hundred academics, politicians, diplomats, journalists, teachers, governmental officials, civil society activists and private entrepreneurs from 45 countries.

6. The conference proceeded from the definition of MIL adopted in the 2012 Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy, which states, “MIL is defined as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices required to access, analyze, evaluate, use, produce, and communicate information and knowledge in creative, legal, and ethical ways that respect human rights.”

7. The conference also proceeded from the understanding of open government as a mechanism for the following:

- enhancing the transparency and accountability of state governance and citizens’ satisfaction with its quality;
- increasing opportunities for citizens’ direct participation in government planning and decision-making;
- creating qualitative change in the level of openness among public authorities; and
- effective and efficient monitoring of public authorities by civil society.

8. The conference participants came to the following conclusions:

- a) MIL is an essential prerequisite to the establishment and sustainability of an open government;
- b) MIL facilitates the achievement of the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: 16.5, the substantial reduction of corruption and bribery in all their forms; 16.6, the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; 16.7, responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels; and 16.10, public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements;
- c) the acquisition of MIL competencies should be the concern of all sectors and groups as part of a lifelong education process;

-
- d) there is a need to give special attention to MIL competencies of government agencies and civil servants responsible for ensuring open government;
 - e) as a new element of democracy and a new phase of e-government, open government must be regarded in a broader context than a set of digital open data and governmental e-services, while lessons and experiences in e-government and e-citizenship should provide useful sources of insights and understanding of MIL in open government practice; and
 - f) MIL experts, scholars, researchers, and practitioners should be directly involved in the elaboration of open government practice.

9. Proceeding from the above, the conference participants urge national governments, UN agencies (particularly UNESCO), relevant intergovernmental and public organizations, professional associations, educational, research, cultural and social institutions, media networks, and commercial and industrial businesses to:

- a) recognize MIL as an essential element of open government and in building an open government culture;
- b) identify the development of MIL policy standards, assessment systems, and tools among national priorities in education, culture, information, and media;
- c) engage experts on MIL in the establishment of open governments; and
- d) allocate sufficient resources and promote institutions and networks for the development of MIL in the context of open government.

10. This document was drafted by representatives from Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Finland, France, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Paraguay, the Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, South African Republic, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

Media and Information Literacy for Building Culture of Open Government

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Compilers: *Evgeny Kuzmin, Anastasia Parshakova, Tatiana Murovana, Albina Borisenko*

Translators: *Tatiana Butkova, Ekaterina Komarova, Anastasia Parshakova*

Computer-aided makeup: *Igor Goryunov*

Executive: *Sergey Bakeikin*

Publisher:

Interregional Library Cooperation Centre
2A, bldg. 1, 1st Basmanny Lane, Moscow, 105066

Tel.: +7(499)2673334, Fax: +7(499)2632661

www.mcbs.ru