

Social media as a learning tool





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# 1. About the Subscribed project

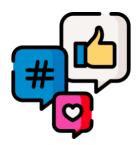
SubscribED is a project co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme. It gathers six partners from Europe: YuzuPulse (France), Arsakeio Gymnasium Patras (Greece), Euphoria Net Srl (Italy), LogoPsyCom (Belgium), Scoala Nicolae Iorga (Romania), and Narva Pähklimäe Gümnaasium (Estonia).

This project aims to develop content for teachers of secondary schools who want to use social media in their teaching practice to develop their students' critical skills and competencies. Social media can offer many advantages for teaching practices as it offers free and accessible content to all without significant investment or costly equipment. Teachers and educators can use their content in class to create catchy lessons, provide an additional tool for the transfer of knowledge and retention, and engage learners thanks to a form of media they are familiar with.

In addition to this guide, we will create:

- A dynamic library of social media content to use in class,
- A creator kit for teachers in the form of an e-learning module,
- A series of pedagogical sequences to provide practical classroom activity scenarios,
- 30 sheets of up-to-date online safety resources and practices,
- An implementation guide gathering the partners' good practices.

This project started in January 2022 and will last for two years.





# 2. Scope of the booklet

Even if social media can sometimes suffer from a negative image, we see great potential in them and want to highlight their applicability for pedagogical purposes. We know that they have a reputation as platforms for socialising and entertainment only, that they contain destructive behaviours and can be addictive or time-consuming. However, this is just one side of social media that we can avoid if we learn how they function and how we can use them.

That is the very goal of this booklet, "Social media as a learning tool". We intend to show that social media can also be a great and valuable tool in the teaching process in secondary education. For instance, social media can promote collaboration in the learning process by allowing users to share with others.

However, the pedagogical use of these platforms has largely gone unexplored beyond its uses for socialising and entertainment. We want to show that social media can be a place for innovative and active learning.

Therefore, this booklet will serve as a starting point for teachers and educators to understand how social media can be used as a complement to learning and not as an obstruction to it. It contains a definition of what social media are, an introduction to the use of social media as a tool for learning, the skills and knowledge that can be acquired and developed thanks to these tools, and how to use them as safely as you can. As a result, the booklet will include testimonials of current uses of social media at school to illustrate these theoretical explanations better.

Finally, with this booklet, our goal is for teachers to enhance their knowledge and perception of social media as a pedagogical tool, to spark their interest and increase their confidence in creating content to reach their students

## 3. Introduction to social media

### **History of social media**

In order to understand how the "media" turn into "social media", let us start with a definition of media. The term media includes any channel of communication. Printed or digital newspapers, cinema, advertising, radio, and television can be defined as media. Indeed, "'Media" comes from Latin 'medium', meaning 'means', therefore the word media can refer to all the tools used to reach and speak to the masses.

Over the years, there has been a shift in the way and direction of communication. Individuals have changed partly because of the invention of mass media. They have new needs, like communicating among themselves no matter the distance.

This switch has been defined as 'broadcast age VS interactive age' (Manning, J., 2014).

The broadcast age was dominated by media such as newspapers and the radio, and was characterised by mostly unidirectional communication. The channels' owners created and produced messages, and people consumed this information. As a result, the possibility of feedback was limited or delayed. The growing development of the Internet and the transition from Web 1.0 - limited to the creation and dissemination of information - to Web 2.0 has led to the multiplication of new online digital platforms (blogs, forums, chats, social networks, etc.). This phenomenon has radically changed how information and communication are perceived. Nowadays, it is possible to have high levels of interaction between websites and users, and vast networks of individual users can instantly create and distribute content online.

With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, the interactive age bloomed.

This era consists of the distribution of messages and information and the creation of content, the provision of immediate feedback by the final recipients, and the interaction on a large scale among individuals worldwide.

The exchange of information and communication has become low-cost and accessible.



Media have become social media, a community of people interacting and participating actively in creating content.

When did it first happen?

Many people may think of Facebook or MySpace, but the first social network ever created was SixDegrees. In 1996, Andrew Weinreich had the idea of a platform based on the "web of contacts" model. It lasted from 1997 to 2000, most likely because the conditions for social networks to develop did not exist yet.

In 2003, the revolution arrived with MySpace, the first social network globally recognised. It was a platform where people could share music. It was the most visited website in 2006.

Since then, many other social media platforms have been born, and some of them are still very popular nowadays: Facebook (2004), Linkedin (created in 2002 but launched massively in 2004), Youtube (2005), Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), Snapchat (2011), until the most recent TikTok (2016), and how many more are to come.

#### **Definition of social media**

According to Manning (2014), social media is a term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation.

As a result, being digital media is not enough to be a social media.

Social media requires at least some form of participation. They do not exist without the users' involvement. The spirit of social media is providing users with platforms for sharing, collaborating, interacting, exchanging and creating communities.

In 2007, Boyd and Ellison proposed another attractive and comprehensive definition of a social network site (SNS):

"We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to:

- (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
- (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
- (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system." (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p.211)."



In 2013, Ellison and Boyd subsequently updated the definition to emphasise the third point about the role of user-generated content: users must be able to consume, produce or interact with content created by their connections on the site.

This last point is crucial from an educational point of view. Let us suppose users play a significant role in creating and generating content. Then, teachers can play a double role: being content creators according to their expertise or educating students to behave correctly on social media and get the most from them.

### Types of social media

We have seen that all social media have some common denominators: they are digital, bring people together, and let them participate and interact with each other.

Different types of social media exist:

- Social networks are platforms where people, businesses, and other organisations can communicate and get in touch. Examples include Facebook, Linkedin, and Twitter.
- Social review sites are platforms where consumers can provide feedback on products, services and experiences. Examples include TripAdvisor and Yelp.
- Media sharing and hosting sites are platforms for uploading pictures and videos of different lengths and formats. Examples of websites dedicated to pictures are Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, and Snapchat (even if Instagram and Snapchat are in the middle as they allow uploading videos too). Youtube is one of the most famous hosting video sites, and another increasingly known is TikTok.
- Community blogs are platforms which host blogs created by the users. Examples include Medium and Tumblr.
- Discussion sites are platforms hosting forums and discussions. Debates and confrontations can also happen on other social networks like Facebook or Twitter, but such websites are fully dedicated to sparking conversation. Examples include Reddit, Quora and Digg.



#### Functions of social media

Since there are many types of social media, they can deploy different functions and scopes:

- Connect people: social media let people be in touch with each other and create communities that share information and content about common values and interests.
- Create spaces for communication: social media offers online spaces for debates, discussions and exchanges. Such spaces can be public or private. They can be great sources of information.
- **Go beyond geographic limitations**: social media make people in contact regardless of their location in the world. They make communication happen everywhere, with people that potentially would have never met.
- Work reasons: nowadays, companies and businesses use social media mainly to contact potential employees or clients and build their brand image.
- Educational purposes: last but not least, social media can play a role in education, from the point of view of providing informative content and space for communication to engage with and among the students.





### 4. Social media to use in the classroom

We believe that statistics on the demography of people using social media, together with academic studies and research, may lead us to select the most common social media to be used in the classroom.

According to the Digital 2022 Global Overview Report produced by We Are Social and Hootsuite, in January 2022, 4.62 billion people in the world used social media, representing 58.4% of the global population, spending on them an average daily time of 2 hours and 27 minutes.

Interestingly, 93.4% of total internet users are social media users.

Other significant released data are the following:

The world's **most used** social media platform (figures in millions)

f

2,910



2,562



2,000



1,478



1.263



1,000

**Time spent** with social media apps





23.7 hours/month



19.6 hours/month



19.6 hours/month



18.6 hours/month



11.2 hours/month



5.1 hours/month

Source: Digital 2022 Global Overview Report





It is interesting to analyse such data with the age distribution of the people using some of these platforms:

- Instagram and Tiktok's users are mainly 16-34 years old.
- Facebook is more common for people aged 25-54.

Many studies confirm a flow of teenagers who move away from Facebook to platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat.

Generally speaking, we can say that people aged 13-18 are keener to use TikTok, Snapchat and all the new tendencies, while adults prefer social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Suppose we combine these findings with research showing the advantages of using social media in the classroom and their educational scope. In that case, we see that the most advised social media at the time of writing would be Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Twitter.

In order to find an answer to what the "social media to be used in classrooms" are, we believe teachers should find a compromise between their personal preferences, their students' interests, and the new emerging educational micro-learning trends linked to new technologies. Recent studies confirmed that short content may increase information retention by 20% (Giurgiu, 2017), that is why platforms like TikTok, Instagram or Youtube can support the students' learning process.

Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Twitter have enormous potential in terms of teaching and learning, but the same can be said for TikTok, for example. As a result, many educational channels are developing on this social media, which is now used by many authors.

Moreover, it is crucial to differentiate between the use of social media in both personal and professional scope and their educational use in a classroom to engage with students. An example can be Linkedin: it is the most powerful social media for job seekers and networking related to developing professional careers. It can be a source of information, students must be aware it exists, but it might not be the easiest to use as an educational resource for the classroom.



According to an online 2019 survey carried out by the MDR Marketing Team, out of 732 teachers in the US, 80% said they find educational resources on social media. 57% of them do this to stay on top of trends and news, 54% to connect with other educators, 53% to find teacher discounts and deals, 38% to follow education companies and organisations and 33% to participate in an online community. Facebook and Twitter are very in line with these online activities.

As a result of all these considerations, we will focus on social media that are:

- relevant for both students and teachers;
- recognised by academic research to have great educational potential;
- hosting educational channels and authors;
- significant in terms of creating networks and educational communities.

Taking into account these data, in the current booklet, we will focus on the following social media:





# Brief history of the selected social media

# 2004

Created by Mark Zuckerberg and a group of Harvard University colleagues under the name of Facebook. It is now called Meta and allows its 2.80 billion registered users to get in contact, share different kinds of content and participate in groups and communities.



# 2006

Twitter was created by by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams. The microblogging social network, with its tweet of 280 characters only, has 396.5 million users.

# 2016



TikTok was created by the Chinese company ByteDance after the merge of different experiences (musical.ly 2014 and live.ly 2016). It allows its 1 billion users to upload videos of maximum 10 minutes. The videos on TikTok can become very viral.

# 2005

The online video platform was funded by Steve Chen, Jawed Karim and Chad Hurley, and bought in 2006 by Google.
Globally, it reaches 2 billion users.



# 2010

Created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, it was then bought by Facebook/Meta. It allows 2 billion users to upload videos, pictures, stories and to chat.





# **Educational potential and scope**

## **FACEBOOK**

Space for people to collaborate, communicate, network and promote the Institution or a project



# **YOUTUBE**

Learning through videos, video making and editing, educational channels



# **TWITTER**

Engage with real life, up-to-date information, educational chats



## **INSTAGRAM**

Engage with students, spark their creativity, promote the Institution



## **TIKTOK**

Engage with students, educational channels and videos







# 5. Why to use social media for educational purposes

#### Introduction

Today, most children and young people have constant and daily access to the Internet and, consequently, to social networks.

In 2019, a survey led by Eurostat in Europe showed that the most common activity on the Internet for about 85% of students is the use of social media.

Eurostat also noted that, between 2019 and 2021, 34% of young people took an online course (which is 2.6 times more than a previous survey). This figure is relevant regarding the use of the Internet as a pedagogical tool.

Furthermore, in 2021, 71% of young Europeans are reported to have acquired basic digital skills.

As mentioned above and backed by a study conducted by educational technology researchers at the University of Minnesota, almost all 16 to 18-year-olds surveyed use the Internet and everything that comes with it, including social networking. When asked, "what is the main reason you use social networks?" most teenagers answered, "to acquire and develop the technical skills needed today". In a second time, they are also used a lot for creativity, openness to other cultures, thoughts and opinions.

The school environment can no longer deny this daily presence in the lives of young people and, according to Stephanie Tardif, a teacher in several Canadian schools, this reality brings with it two radically different ways of thinking amongst education experts:

- On the one hand, some education specialists see social networks as "a source of distraction that should be restricted or completely removed from the learning environment".
- On the other hand, others see them as "a progressive and inclusive tool that would allow teachers to take advantage of a potentially very effective educational tool".

Our booklet's approach focuses on this second way of thinking as it implies that these social networks, when used with guidance, can be very effective in learning.



#### Reasons to use social media in the classroom

# 1) The use of educational platforms or social media in the classroom allows for a higher engagement

The use of social networks within the school allows for better collaboration, promotes expression, speech and exchange and helps bridge the digital gap between different social backgrounds. In addition, in their article "The application of new media in the classroom", Elisa Deliyanni and Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou (teachers at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) also point out another benefit of their use in a school environment: "The technical and communicative features of social media and Web 2.0 tools offer students and teachers the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning processes".

The use of these tools in the classroom has shown three facts:

- 1. An increase in the students' motivation was widely reported.
- 2. They developed their ability to work in teams.
- As they did so, the students developed a sense of 'inclusion' and 'community', and this
  community aspect inexorably leads to greater buy-in and commitment through
  teamwork.

Their use in the classroom has also shown that when they ask students to use these social networks for creative purposes, they tend to be quite interested in their environment. For example, if they ask to create a video about their daily life, students will pay more attention to their neighbourhood, their neighbours, and all the "simple" things around them.

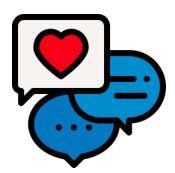
Moreover, another asset of social media, depending on the tool used, is that students can access the material at any place and at any time with an Internet connection, allowing them to progress in certain subjects at their own pace.

From a completely different perspective, using social networks as a pedagogical tool implies a higher engagement rate from students and parents. If teachers and students use them as a means of learning, communication and exchange, as a place for creativity, parents can use them as a means of communication and exchange.



On the other hand, parents can use these tools to get involved in their children's school life from afar. If they wish, they can follow what they are doing in class: the lessons taught or the topics covered, for example.

It is a quick, easy and convenient way to involve parents in their children's school life and, in this way, to allow them to engage with it from a distance.



# 2) Using social media, in general, allows the development of 21st-century digital and ICT (information and communications technology) skills

In addition to the educational and entertaining aspects of using social networks in the classroom, their use also helps develop other technological and non-technological skills required in everyday life for students and teachers.

Firstly, searching for information on these platforms allows teachers and educators to diversify, expand and enrich the content by broadening their spectrum of sources.

However, be mindful of digging deep into the various sites, platforms or applications, as the most "famous" ones often have a monopoly on the first page, while others, sometimes more relevant, are found on the following search pages.

Secondly, it helps to develop a critical and selective mind which aims to analyse relevant content according to several criteria and to define whether it is worth retaining or not, and whether the information it offers is correct, understandable, and usable. Of course, there are as many selection criteria as there are searches. If, for example, the search is for political information, it is clear that information found in a reliable newspaper will be more relevant than that found on Facebook or elsewhere if we do not have the source.

From a more social point of view, thanks to these "interactive" tools, students learn to communicate differently and, if necessary, to rephrase what they say to be understood. In



addition, such tools allow them to have rich exchanges and relevant feedback on their learning.

Learning a new language online is a concrete example of the acquisition of communication and, in this context, intercultural competencies. Indeed, online collaboration encourages learners who may come from all over the world (unlike face-to-face collaboration, which inevitably limits students' horizons) to act and interact together to achieve a common goal. It allows people who speak different languages to communicate in a way that allows everyone to understand each other appropriately. It also creates virtual communities and, therefore, a commitment to the people involved and the consistency of language learning. From a technological point of view, Professor Christine Greenhow (Associate Professor in the Educational Psychology and Educational Technology program in the College of Education at Michigan State University) had interesting results being the principal investigator of a survey on social media as educational tools carried out in Minnesota in 2008.

She explains that through these community networks, teenagers develop several technological and digital skills they should acquire in the 21st century: uploading, editing, and modifying content.

"Now that we know the skills that students are acquiring on the Internet, we need to encourage and help them develop them," Professor Greenhow said. Indeed, students are not always aware that social media support the development of these skills, which can be valuable at school, in the professional world, and working life.

In other words, the integration of content creation via social networks as part of a course allows the teacher and students to develop creative and technological skills via those web tools.



# 3) The use of educational platforms or social media in classroom favours inclusion

Beyond the benefits they bring to individuals, social networks are also very beneficial at the educational level, even if their use in classrooms is not yet unanimously accepted. For the most sceptical, there is nevertheless a flagrant example of their educational added value: foreign language learning applications.

Those platforms are social networks as they contain the creation of a profile, the opportunity to chat, ask questions, and create connections with other users.

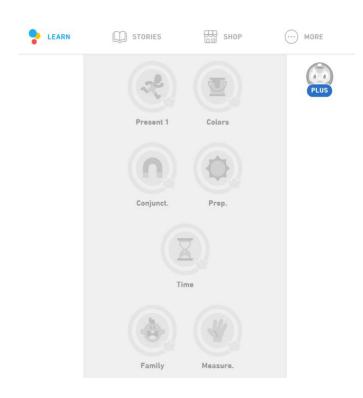
For example, among others, Duolingo (a well-known app intended for language learning) is a social learning app that can be used pedagogically in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the use of social networks in schools has many other advantages. One of them, and not the least one, according to Michel Arnaud in its article "Apprendre par les reseaux sociaux, qu'est-ce qui change?" ("Learning through social media, what changes?"), is the reduction of the digital gap between different social backgrounds. Giving all youngsters access to these tools at school gives them free and equal access to digital information and educational tools. In other words, giving access to social media and digital tools to learners with different backgrounds provides equal opportunities.

In terms of inclusiveness, this teaching method is also significant. Indeed, the fact that most of the materials are presented in video format, speaking in terms of learning disorders, is a significant sign of inclusion as, most of the time, reading and writing are tiring tasks to achieve.



For the reasons mentioned in the previous chapter, social media, such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, can be efficient educational tools to teach learners with those difficulties the school subject in a clearer and more visual way. On the other hand, thanks to the simplicity of the layout, some of these applications have. A concrete example would be the layout of the Duolingo application: white background, black and classical writing, simple sentences, and the possibility of listening. So many features make the application as inclusive as possible for most learners.



# Which one of these is "the boy"?



SKIP

## Write this in English



As a teacher, creating inclusive pedagogical videos may sound challenging.

However, there are several rules that can help to succeed the task.

Firstly, it is important to consider inclusivity from the start by writing a script that goes straight to the point. Adding visual support to it can be relevant.

Secondly, to create a better visual support, think about favouring a white or dark background and using the back camera for a good resolution video.

Thirdly, the best way to make the video accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing is by generating captions (and an audio description).









## The importance to familiarise teachers and students with social media

Social networks have at least three interesting dimensions from an educational point of view:

- A technological dimension: acquisition of new skills required in everyday life.
- A documentary dimension: acquisition of new knowledge and "relevant" sorting of the information presented.
- A social dimension: acquiring communication skills and adapting discourse to the environment.



It is essential to be aware of the positive impact of social networks in the school environment because, whether we like it or not, these tools have become an integral part of young people's daily lives. This is why using them as pedagogical tools is becoming almost necessary. Otherwise, there is a risk of creating a gap between the teacher and the student, who will become more technologically competent than the latter.

Some teachers have already been using social networks as a pedagogical tool for a shorter or longer time. For these teachers, it is crucial to remember that many students are already ahead of them. In the future, they may accept to be initiated by their students.

Other teachers, on the other hand, do not use social networking in their classrooms at all. This method of learning is not yet part of everyone's routine. Such teachers should receive training on these tools before using them in class. Otherwise, teachers could find their use complicated, especially when they do not have a daily use or a complete understanding of the applications.

When teachers start deepening their knowledge on social media, they should be aware that the more they develop their skills, the more difficult it becomes to ignore the mass of information they encounter. However, at the same time, it becomes easier to have only a superficial knowledge of the tools studied.

Indeed, it will be more effective to train one hundred percent in one or two social networks rather than learning to use a dozen "on the surface". "Perfect" knowledge of a single tool will allow using all its facets much more efficiently.

Once teachers acquire a good understanding of the different applications, some organisational questions arise:

- What are the best uses of social networks as learning tools?
- How best to adapt the digital environment of a classroom to include social networking as part of a course lesson?
- How can learners differentiate between good and bad information to use and share it appropriately?



In terms of benefits for teachers, social networking also allows teachers to diversify their methods of content delivery and assessment. It is also a great way to connect with other teachers worldwide and, therefore, to call on peers online to get more feedback, comments, opinions, advice, and role models.

In terms of benefits for students, using social networks allows them to develop communication and essential life skills using simple and accessible tools. It is also an opportunity for them to learn to monitor information and develop collaborative information intelligence.

Beyond the educational aspect of social networks as pedagogical tools, they also allow for building an almost privileged relationship between teachers and their students because of the proximity they can offer. Using social networks to discuss with a student reduces the strictness of the school structure and allows the teacher to take on an additional role to that of a learner: a role of helper.

An example of how social media are used for educational purposes, according to a survey "analysing the personal and professional uses reported by young teachers reported by young teachers" conducted in France in 2018 at the University of Bordeaux, is as follows:

- The use of digital media as a training tool for students is deficient.
- A mastered use of digital social networks allows generating a different interest in them in the sense that they can become more than platforms on which students' scroll'. They can become platforms through which to browse for interesting and relevant content.
- The distrust, insecurity and risks reflected in digital social networks are a real brake on their use in educational settings.
- Conversely, the playful and entertaining aspects of social networks contrast with the seriousness of the school environment.



### **Ideas for implementation**

In the next chapters we will discover practical examples of how to use social media in the classroom.

More generally, you can have in mind the main 8 reasons and benefits of using social networks as a teaching tool in the classroom:

- Increase students' motivation while in classroom
- Ability to work in team
- Have a wider range of resources
- Development of basic 21st century technological skills
- · Development of a sense of creativity
- Development of a critical and selective mind
- Development of digital communication skills
- Development of a sense of community





## 6. How to use social media in the classroom

This section will describe how **Facebook, Youtube**, **Instagram**, **Twitter** and **Tiktok** can be integrated during lessons or used to develop students' tasks and activities.

When reading this section, please bear in mind that:

- The selection of the social media to be used in your classroom depends on different factors (type of lesson, subject, age of students, educational aim, available devices etc..);
- We are not going to create detailed tutorials on the use of the selected social media
  as there is plenty of material on the web, but we will highlight the main
  functionalities that can be useful in the classrooms;
- It is possible that in the coming weeks, months, and years more social media will appear, and new educational scopes may be relevant. You may always take inspiration from the following examples and transfer the knowledge to new social media.

We are going to describe a list of all the main potential educational roles of the selected social media, and explore from a pedagogical point of view educational experiences that were previously unfeasible. Each social media can provide a different learning experience, but there are some preliminary steps in common for most social media;

- You and your students will need to create an account. In some cases, the
  registration requires an email. This means that your students should have one. The
  exception is Youtube where you can search for videos without an account you will
  need it to use its additional services:
- Registration to most social media are open to people aged 13 years old and above,
   but some jurisdictions may have different age limits;
- You must set up your privacy and personalise your profile, providing the information you intend to make public;
- You usually start creating your network, becoming friends or following people or organisations.



#### **FACEBOOK**

The main activities to carry out on Facebook are:

- Post: users can share only texts or texts combined with videos and pictures on their account (according to the privacy settings, such posts can be visible only to friends or to the general public as well) or into groups;
- React and comment to posts:
  users can share their feedback on
  posts by adding an emoticon (a
  picture representing a feeling like a
  smile, an heart, a face crying etc.)
  or by leaving a comment;



- Create or join groups: groups are communities composed of various members who are not necessarily friends on Facebook and may decide to interact in the group only. Groups can be private, secret or public according to the privacy settings. Members of the groups can share posts and leave comments. Usually, the administrator(s) are also moderator(s) and manage how to behave in the group;
- Create or follow pages: pages are like showcases of organisations, companies
  and public figures. Users can follow pages and interact with them through reactions
  and comments without the need to become friends with anyone. Pages are digital
  places to show activities and goods, but not places to build communities as in
  groups;
- Exchange messages: Facebook Messenger is the private chat provided by Facebook where single persons or groups of people can interact and write private messages. It is also possible to make video calls;
- Upload stories: people can upload temporary videos or pictures for up to 15 seconds. They last 24 hours before disappearing, and are called "stories";
- Live stream: you can live stream to your Page, group, profile or event via the
   Facebook app on your mobile device or by using a camera and streaming software.



#### **Educational use of Facebook**

- Create a group for your class: groups can be an online communication environment for you and your students. There are at least a couple of advantages related to the groups. First, you do not need to be friends on Facebook with members of the same group. Second, you can turn the group privacy settings to private to prevent your content from being publicly visible. You may also make it "secret" if you do not want to let others know who the members are. Groups can be used to spark conversation and debates, to assign homework, to share pictures of class activities, to share information and messages with your class. You can also create posts with polls or share materials and resources through links or videos. You cannot share documents like PDF in groups. Facebook groups are also used to share content and promote activities in the case of flipped classrooms (Su Y-S and Lai C-F, 2021).
- Create messenger groups: in case you need to share PDF documents, this is possible in the chats created with Messenger.
- Create a page for your school, your class or your projects: in case you want to publicly report the activity of your class, of your school or of any project, national or international, you may create a page. The page is public, so its scope is very different from the group. The page aims to show your local community and parents, for example, the several activities you are carrying out. Students can help you by creating content and posts.
- Make international connections: on the one side, many groups dedicated to Erasmus groups or international exchange exist and you can join them for networking purposes.
   On the other side, you can also create groups composed of students coming from different classes and countries, to allow them to exchange and interact.
- Invite your students to follow pages and/or become members of relevant groups: students can join educational groups on relevant topics.
- Create online and in-person events: you can promote your events, both online and on site, by creating events on Facebook. You can invite your students, families and other colleagues to attend.



#### YOUTUBE

The first way to use Youtube is to go to the main website and start **searching for videos.** 

Many authors and video makers organise their videos in **thematic channels**, and you can freely navigate among them.



It is widely accepted that videos are becoming increasingly common in learning. Students are using educational videos as a tool to learn about everything. Many topics are more accessible and understandable thanks to educational videos. Moreover, studies have shown that short videos allow for more efficient processing and memory recall. If you wish to upload your videos, you will have to create a **Youtube channel**. Each Youtube channel has its own **Youtube studio** where you can make video editing and add subtitles.





#### **Educational use of Youtube**

- Create your own Youtube channel: with your google account and channel, you can upload and edit videos in the Youtube Studio. Videos are compelling as a tool for learning, can be assigned as homework, as instructions, as lessons to be prepared for flipped classrooms. Videos can be shared as a link, embedded in a blog or a website, or other social media. You can also create many Youtube channels according to different topics.
- Take advantage of the numerous existing youtube channels: you can also identify
  many good educational resources already existing, available in many languages, with
  subtitles, and discussing many different subjects.
- Combine Youtube with other software: Youtube has many integrations with other
  websites. One example could be Edpuzzle: this website allows users to use Youtube
  videos and take quizzes on them or create interactive actions.
- Develop video making, editing and the digital skills of your students: you can add your students as contributors to your Youtube channel. You can allocate them different types of rights and power through your Youtube studio. They could support you in editing videos, adding subtitles, or uploading new resources.

#### **INSTAGRAM**

The main activities to carry out on Instagram are:

- Post: users can share videos and pictures combined with text. Instagram is a very visual social network. It is highly recommended to use hashtags: a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media to identify digital content on a specific topic. This will allow your post to appear in searches;
- **Comment and react to posts**: users can share their feelings, appreciations and thoughts on posts by adding a "like", visualised as a heart, or leaving a comment.
- **Exchange messages**: Instagram provides users with a private chat, where people or groups of people can interact. It is also possible to make video calls.
- Upload stories: as for Facebook, people can upload temporary videos or pictures
  lasting 24 hours for up 15 seconds and then disappear. On Instagram, they are very
  widespread and represent a great way to engage followers;
- Live stream: you can start a live broadcast to connect with your followers in realtime.





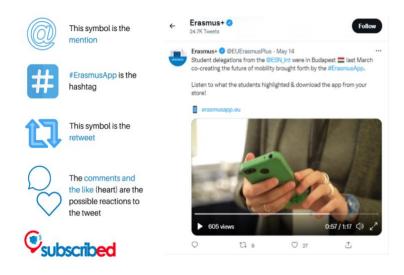
#### **Educational use of Instagram**

- **Follow educational accounts**: many accounts deliver mini-lessons and content, which are usually very engaging and entertaining. Many teachers, for example, find fun ways to convey messages and tips to learn foreign languages;
- Storytelling with Instagram: you can let your students create fake accounts representing artists, writers or historical characters. This will allow them to foster their creativity and critical thinking through storytelling, uploading pictures and videos;
- Create an account for your class or your school: Instagram can be a space to show your school's activity and/or your classroom. Students can participate in the creation of posts, pictures and videos;
- Create campaigns and challenges (Stojanović, Danijela and Bogdanović, Zorica and Despotović-Zrakić, Marijana and Naumović, Tamara and Radenković, Miloš, 2019): through your personal account or with the account of the school/class, you can launch campaigns and challenges for your students using some hashtags. This way, you can engage with them and make them contribute by using the appropriate hashtag.

#### **TWITTER**

The main activities to carry out on Twitter are:

Post: you can write
posts/tweets of maximum 280
characters combined with
pictures or videos. Do not
forget to include hashtags in
your text for your post to be
visible in the relevant
conversation. Even if the
hashtag, as described above, is
used in almost all social media,
it is extremely important on



Twitter. Users must use them and identify the most relevant ones to intervene in conversations or be updated on the latest news. Twitter has an "Explore #" section in the "trending topics" that displays the most used hashtags;

- **Retweet**: if you want to endorse a tweet, or if you want to promote it and make it more visible, you can retweet a post written by another account. This way, the tweet will appear on your account and be visible to your followers too.
- **Mention**: when writing a Tweet, you can mention another account to tag it and involve it in your conversation.
- **React and comment to tweets**: users can share their feelings, appreciation and thoughts on posts by adding a "like", visualised as a heart, or leaving a comment.
- **Exchange messages**: Twitter provides users with a private chat, where people or groups of people can interact;
- **Create live videos**: you can go live on Twitter, and the video will appear as a tweet.

#### **Educational use of Twitter**

- Being continuously updated and connected with the world: Twitter provides realtime updates coming from all over the world. It can be a great source of information,
  especially if you want your students to be aware of what is happening in society. If you
  go to the "trending" hashtags section, you will find the most discussed topics of the day
  in your country;
- Identify and join educational chats: educational chats on Twitter can help create a professional learning network. Under a specific hashtag, you will find people who meet online from all over the world at a given time and day to comment and talk about a specific topic. Click on this link to find a list of educational chats with their time: The 50 Best Education Twitter Hashtags--With Meeting Times! (teachthought.com). Please bear in mind the different time zones and the fact that such hours could change over time;
- Teach digital citizenship: using a social media service such as Twitter with students
  can also provide an opportunity to model valuable skills and dispositions regarding
  digital citizenship and social media literacies (Rheingold, 2010). Using Twitter with your
  students can represent an occasion to teach them how they should behave online and
  how to build a digital identity;
- Engage students: another article (Nickolas A. Jordan, 2013) shows that Twitter can be
  used to engage groups of students to follow the lectures. For example, you can ask
  them to participate in a debate using a hashtag or to react to some tweets to have
  immediate feedback.

#### TIKTOK

TikTok is especially known as a platform where people share videos. The main activities to carry out on TikTok are:

- Uploading videos: only videos ranging from 15 seconds to 3 minutes can be published on TikTok. It has been recently announced that the maximum duration will be extended to 10 minutes. The videos are usually combined with some text and hashtags.
- Following accounts: you may follow the accounts you are most interested in. This way, your feed will be enriched by videos uploaded by people you find relevant.
- **Comments and like**: you can leave comments and "like" the videos by pressing the heart button.
- **Participate in challenges**: Tiktokers launch challenges, e.g. doing something and recording it via TikTok. These challenges originate from viral TikTok videos, and usually involve a song, dance move, movie quote, etc.
- **Exchange messages**: TikTok provides users with a private chat;
- **Create live videos**: you can go live on TikTok and stream in real-time.



#### **Educational use of TikTok**

The educational scope of TikTok requires a brief introduction. From a research/study point of view, TikTok is the less explored social media when it comes to its educational role. Nevertheless, it is already possible to foresee its potential in terms of teaching and learning. Moreover, it is the social media that teenagers currently love most. As a result, integrating it into the classroom can be a way to engage and motivate students.

- Follow educational accounts: many accounts deliver interesting content through attractive videos. You can also think of integrating such videos into your lessons or showing them to your students to reinforce their knowledge. You can also create your channel with videos and share them with your students: they will find your content on their favourite platform;
- Launch educational challenges: challenges are very famous and viral on TikTok, especially among teenagers, since they actively involve the users. How about creating a challenge with your students, like asking them to make a video in line with the objectives of your subject?
- Storytelling and creativity through TikTok: as said for Instagram, being a social media focusing on video, it can be interesting to let your students develop their abilities to create stories or foster their creativity in expressing themselves through videos.



#### TESTIMONIALS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCES IN CLASS

Michael Milton was teaching Enlightenment philosophers and made his students work in groups and create fake accounts on Twitter of Voltaire, Baron De Montesquieu, John Locke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jean Jacques Rousseau. Students had to comment on current historical facts by applying the enlightenment thoughts. The experiment was fascinating as it was not only about studying a historical era, but also developing critical thinking.



"The Enlightenment meets Twitter: using Social Media in the social studies classroom" subscribed (Krutka, Daniel, 2013)



If you are working on an Erasmus + project or any other kind of project, you can create several social media accounts to promote them. You may create a Youtube channel, or a Facebook page for example. All these tools will help you engage with your students and your stakeholders. Here you can see the example of a channel created within the Erasmus Plus Project "Boosting green education at school", with many interviews of students and video tutorials regarding environmental education.







In the context of a literature course, if you are studying a particular piece of work, you can ask your students to create an account for each of the characters of the book and make them interact with each other as they do in the work. For instance, Delphine, an English teacher in high school, did that experiment with her class after they studied Hamlet. Her students created Facebook pages of the characters (Ghost, Hamlet, Horatio) and made them interact together according to the scenario of the play (Lachise S, 2016).





The example of @GéoDéclic: it is a challenge that happened on Twitter between classes who share photos of their nearby environment. The photos are then analysed and commented on by other classes. This is related to the geographical skill of inhabiting a space and allows students to use and acquire new competencies during the challenge. The tweet exchange between classes leads to new axes of thinking and a quest for knowledge about their own nearby environment.

(CLEMI & Académie de Paris, 2021)





# 7. Safe use of social media and digital citizenship rights

This part introduces the notion of digital citizenship and what rights come along with this status. It also explains the potential pitfalls of social media and what we can do to avoid or tackle them.

# The rights of a digital citizen

# 1) Digital citizenship: a definition

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology. It includes anyone who uses computers, the Internet and any digital devices to engage with society on any level. It consists of "the norms of appropriate, responsible behaviour concerning technology use" (Ribble & Bailey, 2007).

Digital citizenship entails the following concepts: the respect of other users, knowledge of how the Internet and social media work, the understanding of user data, and a minimum level of digital literacy. In addition, digital citizens should understand how social media can support communication, creativity, and innovation. However, they should also be aware of their limitations and risks.

Social media users should take a critical approach to the flow of information and data available on these digital platforms and be aware of the legal and ethical principles of engaging with technologies.

All these skills that digital citizens should obtain have been called digital competencies. They are beneficial to developing a confident, critical and responsible use of social media. If you want further information on this subject, you can follow this link of the Council of Europe: <a href="https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education">https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education</a>

Teachers must understand and teach digital citizenship when they use digital tools with their students. In a sense, they are bringing their students into the digital world, which has its specific rules, rights and duties. In other words, if the school goes online, teachers and students must be aware of the rules of this new learning environment, just as one would follow the school regulations regarding rights, duties, and security.



## 2) The rights of social media users

Before using social media, you should be acquainted with your rights as it can help you better understand their functionalities and be careful with the risks that it may imply. Today, several institutions and authorities work hard to improve our Internet and social media use and regulate what can happen or be published. However, we have rights that we have to consider and take into account. Indeed, laws forbid any online discrimination. The right to protection of personal data is a fundamental right enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (article 8). The European Parliament adopted the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2016 to ensure better legislation and protect personal data.

However, we also have duties as social media users. We need to respect others.

Anonymity does not mean doing and saying whatever we want without expecting consequences. Indeed, respect for human rights is the foundation of a responsible and constructive attitude.

Another right that is developing on the Internet nowadays is intellectual property. Many people can share their work on social media to advertise it and touch many people. However, they have rights over their works that allow them to control the use of their work by others.

## **Potential pitfalls**

#### 1) Fake News, disinformation, and conspiracy theories

It is essential to differentiate between fake news and misinformation. Fake news is a piece of voluntarily false information created to manipulate, while misinformation is low quality or unprecise information.

Since the digital revolution and the rise of social media, we have had access to a flood of information. Therefore, evaluating the reliability of every piece of information is an essential skill for digital citizens.

Another pitfall of social media that can result from fake news is conspiracy theories.

Rudy Reichstadt, host of the "Conspiracy Watch" website, defined conspiracy as "the attitude consisting of abusively questioning the commonly accepted explanation of certain social phenomena or significant events in favor of an alternative explanatory narrative that postulates the existence of a conspiracy and denounces the individuals or groups that



would have taken part in it." A conspiracy frees itself from the elementary rules of scientific reasoning and methodical doubt without any demonstration.



# 2) Cyberbullying, discrimination, and hate speech

According to UNICEF, "cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those targeted."

Cyberbullying can be insults, intimidation, teasing, online threats, rumours, hacking one's account, usurping a digital identity, or publishing photos or videos of someone else in a bad situation.

In addition to cyberbullying, hate speech is often used on social media. It can take many forms of expression that can lead to or promote hatred, violence, and discrimination against other digital users. That is why many public and private institutions, such as the media and the Internet industry, adopt codes of conduct to sanction or avoid these behaviours.

Cyberbullying, discrimination and hate speech are several aspects of uncivil online behaviour. Educators can find very interesting practical workshops online. To know more about practical activities you can conduct with teenagers about positive online behaviour, do not hesitate to consult the resources of project ICUD

(http://digitaldiscrimination.eu/pack/), which is available in English, Catalan, French, Italian, Spanish and Romanian.



## 3) Algorithms

Social media use algorithms that analyse what you watch and who you follow to suggest content that suits you better. As a result, we can be trapped in a single point of view according to what we are used to consuming on the Internet. This mechanism can therefore entrap you into a bubble of similar-minded people.

# 4) Nothing is really erased

Everything we publish is there forever. We leave tracks about what we do all time. That is why we must consider what we want to show others and keep our privacy.

#### 5) Violent content

We do not want to see content that appears against our will, whether by accident or on purpose. Social media can expose its users to violent, sexual, and hateful images without them having the tools to decipher, understand and protect themselves. It can shock them, remain engraved in their minds, and teach them false ideas (Council of Europe, 2022).



- Check your rights on a verified website (such as the EU Commission Website here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/dataprotection\_en).
- Think about your use of social media: how long are you using it, where and when you use it.
- Verify the sources to avoid fake news, and remember that if something is free, you are the product.
- Be careful who you send content to or who you talk to on a chat or a webcam.
- Be respectful when you say something, don't publish something that could hurt or shock people. Be mindful with content meant to be humorous that could be perceived as discriminatory or hateful!
- Ask for the consent of someone when you publish a
  photo that they took or where they are.
- Do not open links sent by unknown or suspicious people (computer viruses or phishing sites).
- Use a pseudonym to protect your identity and private life, and use a strong password.
- Check the privacy and security settings on your social media.
- In case of threat or cyberbullying, try to talk to a reliable person or contact your national helpline (CLEMI, 2017).





It is critical to remember that any person, as soon as they use social media, becomes a digital citizen with duties and rights. Regulations already exist to overcome all the risks social media could cause. Nevertheless, even with these regulations, you must be careful about what you publish and do on social media.





# 8. Conclusion

Now that you are familiar with the concept of social media, their history, and their function, you can start trying to integrate them into your class! You will be able to increase your students' engagement, motivation, inclusion, and ability to cooperate. In addition, your students will develop digital skills, whether they choose to consume or create content. It is vital to be aware of the positive impact of social media as it is a great learning opportunity. However, you also have to be conscious of the threats and learn how to avoid them. Remember, learning how to use one or two social media in depth is more relevant than superficially knowing all the platforms. Therefore, choose the social media that best fits your ideas and learning objectives.

This guide is only an introduction to social media and its use for educational purposes, but you will find more detailed content and tools that will help you go further and improve your knowledge.

You can find more resources on our website <a href="https://www.subscribed-project.eu/">https://www.subscribed-project.eu/</a>. We will develop other tools such as pedagogical sequences to provide you with more concrete materials; an e-learning platform allowing you to learn how to create your content on social media; an implementation guide to support you in setting up your goals in integrating social media in your classroom; and safety resources to help you better apprehend social media in terms of safety and data protection.

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