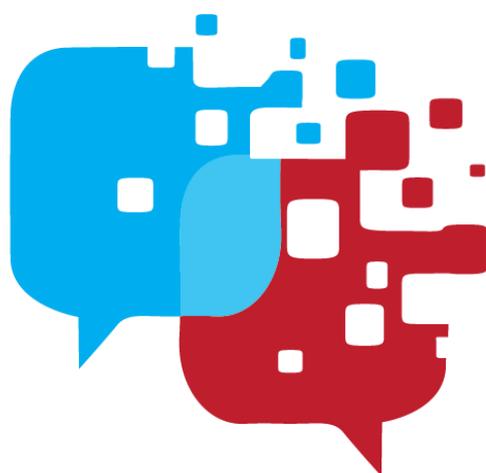


**Me and the Media**  
**Fostering Social Media Literacy Competences through**  
**Interactive Learning Sets for Adults with Disabilities**

n. 2019-1-LT01-KA204-060697

**Intellectual Output 4**

**“Learning programme for educators supporting adults  
with disabilities”**



**MEME**

**Me and the Media**

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## Glossary

**Accessible communication** - Accessible communication benefits all audiences by making information clear, direct and easy to understand. It takes into consideration the various barriers to accessing information, and provides opportunities for feedback.

**Accessible information** - is understood as information provided in formats that allow every user and learner to access content on an equal basis with others. Accessible information is ideally information that allows all users and learners to easily orientate themselves within the content and can be effectively perceived and understood by different perception channels, such as using eyes and/or ears and/or fingers.

**GDPR** - General Data Protection Regulation is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy in the European Union and the European Economic Area. The GDPR is an important component of EU privacy law and of human rights law, in particular Article 8(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The GDPR's primary aim is to enhance individuals' control and rights over their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment for international business

**Grooming** - when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with someone so they can manipulate, exploit and or abuse them or gain sexual favors.

**Persons with disabilities** - Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**Phishing** - Phishing is a cybercrime in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.

**Sexting** - Sexting is sending and receiving sexual messages through technology such as a phone, app, email or webcam. For some people, sexting is a way to explore sexuality, trust, boundaries and intimacy. However, in some cases, sexting is used to bully, blackmail and exploit.

**Special needs** - The special educational requirements of those with learning difficulties, emotional or behavioral problems, or physical disabilities. However, disability rights experts oppose this term arguing that people with disabilities have no special needs but individual needs that has to be addressed. Experts encourage that the needs of people with disabilities would be assessed through the perspective of reasonable accommodation, which means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**UN CRPD** - United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights convention which sets out the fundamental human rights of people with disability.

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## Introduction

The use of online media has grown rapidly and new services and communication tools, such as blogs, video streams and social media have emerged. Persons with disabilities can have new opportunities to communicate and participate in the civil society life by using technologies, internet and social media, nonetheless there are a lot of risks related to their use.

Persons with disabilities need to get engaged with a positive usage of the social media and the new digital instruments available nowadays and grasp the opportunities that these instruments offer, and in the meanwhile they need to be aware of the possible risks related to their use.

The MeMe project aims to enhance digital media skills of adults with disabilities using interactive learning settings to actively and constructively contribute to a fairer and more pluralistic representation of disability in social media and to fill the gaps in the professional adult educators preparation to better support young adults with disabilities in their engagement with digital (social) media.

MeMe has worked with groups of young adults with disabilities in Italy, Portugal and Austria and used expertise from professionals within the disability field and within media education to develop tools and methodologies that are accessible and inclusive. This Guide – Learning programme comes from the direct experience done during the two years of MeMe project of the project partners.

## Barriers and gaps

People with disabilities for a long time had limited opportunities to express their views, so their worldview perspectives have been underrepresented in traditional media, but the Internet and especially social media are significantly changing the group's involvement in public life. Social media provides more opportunities to communicate, which is especially important for people with disabilities, who are more likely than other groups in society to experience isolation. Opportunities on the Internet, especially social media, blogs, video-sharing programs have also become a great platform to express opinions about processes from the perspective of people with disabilities – to comment on current issues, to be involved in important discussions, to inform about rights violations or enjoy achievements. Social media has transformed the engagement of people with disabilities beyond recognition, but due to inaccessibility of the digital environment and part of its information, only a limited number of people with disabilities have access to it.

We all are very well aware of obstacles that people with disabilities face in physical environment, the Internet has the potential to overcome those limitations and become an area free from discrimination. However, this is not the case, as there are barriers in both the physical and digital environments that prevent people with disabilities from accessing the information or services provided there. People with visual, hearing and, in particular, intellectual disabilities face the greatest difficulties online.

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The most important international agreement on the rights of persons with disabilities - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention) – considers access to information to be an important part of universal accessibility. Article 9 of the UN Convention enshrines accessibility, including information, as an essential element of independent living and integration, which countries must guarantee to absolutely every citizen. It is therefore natural that accessibility is also mentioned in the UN Convention as a precondition for the implementation of other provisions of this international document, such as integration into the community, education, freedom of expression, the right to information, participation in political life. In response to the emerging phenomenon of discrimination in the digital environment, the European Union institutions initiated and adopted so-called Internet Accessibility Directive, which obliges Member States to ensure the accessibility of public websites and mobile applications. Another important document that is already binding the private sector bodies is the European Accessibility Act adopted in 2019, which obliges companies to make IT products such as computers, smartphones, e-books accessible to people with different abilities. In 2020, the EU adopted the European Disability Strategy 2020-2030, which sets out long-term goals, with a particular focus on online accessibility. The accelerating digitalization and the Covid 19 pandemic have shown that this type of environment needs to be adapted to the diversity of consumer opportunities so that no one is left behind.

The challenge with social media is that its accessibility is not required under any EU law. Unfortunately most social media platforms are not fully accessible, but although we cannot change social media platforms, we still are able to improve the accessibility of the content that we are posting and we also have the possibility to use the accessible features built directly into social platforms.

Accessible and inclusive content is beneficial not only for people with disabilities, but to everyone. Social media indeed provides people with disabilities with the possibility to step out of the shade, to self-advocate and to educate a wider audience about what living with a disability is, to develop a more realistic picture of disability and to deconstruct stereotypes of disability often created by traditional media discourse<sup>1</sup>.

There are many barriers other than accessibility that needs to be overcome to assure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. In the white paper produced by the ENTELIS project consortium, a list of barriers and opportunities at the use of ITC were identified<sup>2</sup>. Among others, the lack of competences of both supporters (professionals, as teachers and educators, and parents) and persons with disabilities.

Nowadays mostly all people use a smartphone or a pc, but other is to have the needed digital literacy and knowledge of the specific instrument to support other persons to a safe and responsible use of the technologies and the social media. Especially when dealing with persons with intellectual disabilities, appropriate learning pathways should be implemented that take into consideration the abilities and the right to autonomy of the individual and in the meanwhile the emerging risks.

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<sup>1</sup> Digital Inclusion. A white paper. Entelis Consortium, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.entelis.net/white-paper-with-roadmaps-entelis-deliverable-5-6/>

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# The Learning Programme

Nowadays, the Internet is a huge part of people's lives. It's fun, useful, and informative, but can also be dangerous, no matter how safe you feel while browsing. By getting into the habit of using good Internet safety practices, you can protect your information and your identity.

Providing information and support helps people become safe and savvy social media users and develop an understanding of the unique boundaries and opportunities that come with use of the internet. Boundaries that determine what belongs to 'me' and what's okay to share on any form of social media. Opportunities for presenting the 'me' that I determine best represents who I am.<sup>3</sup>

The same benefits of connecting with friends and family, looking at funny photos and videos, exchanging comments, culinary creations and posting pictures of amazing places when you are on holiday apply to the people with disabilities that we support. It would be irresponsible not to warn people about the risks that you can encounter participating in the digital world, such as bullying, exploitation, and privacy violation. However, the solution doesn't consist in restricting people's access to social media, rather we need to teach people ways to minimise and manage the risks while still enjoying the benefits of social media.

Many adult educators, PwD workers and parents feel the need to have more knowledge about the social media their students/persons the support/children are using and the short and long term risks and opportunities related to it; as well the need to have competences to better support disabled young people in making appropriate use of social media.

**This learning programme has been put together as a practical tool for educators to support people with disabilities in the correct use of internet and social media, so that they can grasp the opportunities of the digital media and avoid risks.** It is hoped that through gaining an understanding of the functioning of these instruments and how they can be used in a responsible way, young persons with disabilities will also gain the awareness of their right to participate in the digital community<sup>4</sup> so to be represented in a fair way, overcome the stereotypes and promote responsible behaviours in using digital media.

**The modules of this guide serve to share effective methods in working with young adult with disabilities, in addressing the risks, opportunities, and implications of digitalization.** It does not pretend to be an exhaustive guide containing all the knowledge about the world of internet and the media as such, but it would be an useful resource where to find successful experiences, useful resources and methodologies hints to support persons with disabilities to explore the internet world and use it in a correct and participatory way. Depending on the characteristics, the needs and the capacity of the group (or the single person), the proposed activities should be adapted and shaped accordingly.

Based on the analysis of the gaps and the learning needs of professionals and educators on this topic and the experiences gained from the other activities of the MeMe project, we draw this learning programme.

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<sup>3</sup> Keeping the ME in Media: Thoughts, Ideas and Tips for Supporting People with Intellectual Disabilities to Use Social Media, Donna Lee, The direct support Worker newsletter, Volume 2, issue 4

<sup>4</sup> "Are we Heroes? - The Full Study - MeMe Project

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The learning programme is divided into 5 modules. Each module gives an overview of the topic addressed, gives suggestions to facilitate the structure of workshops/activities/learning programmes. Each module also includes a self-assessment questionnaire that could be used to test whether there is a competences and knowledge gap and thus, on a learning-as-needed basis, deepen only where the gaps are evidenced. At the end of the learning programme you can find a list of useful resources addressing the topics of this Guidelines.

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# 1 - How to organise an effective training with people with disability

## ***Working with groups: homogeneous or heterogeneous***

Different contexts lead to the development of different learning practices. In order to guarantee an inclusive setting, when structuring a learning programme, it is important to take into account the characteristics of the components of the groups, both in terms of type of disability and knowledge and capabilities.

An inclusive approach should look for an involvement of all the components of the group and the maximum of the participation. When planning a learning path, the trainer/educator should define instruments and methodologies that allow all the participants to be actively involved according to his/her capabilities and interests. Learning contents, methods and activities should be adapted, customized and thus accessible and usable by all the components of the group.

## ***How to organise an effective training with people with disability in the classroom***

The UN CRPD (Convention) establishes the concept of reasonable accommodation defined as the modification and adjustments of the study/learning process and the environment, as well as other necessary facilities (such as additional assistance, including note-taking or other services). It is important to mention that disability is an evolving concept: disability, as it is defined in the Convention, considers that long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments in interaction with various barriers may hinder people with disabilities full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. From this view, since it is the environment that, in interaction with the personal impairment, may cause the disability, we must ensure to minimise the barriers of accessing the training.

Assessments and other aspects of the study/learning process should be adjusted depending on the individual needs. The following are some of the elements you need to take into consideration:

- Accessible font style and size;
- Use of various assistive technology and software for studying/learning;
- Improvement of physical accessibility;
- Additional time during trainings;
- Other individual adjustments.
- And etc.

In this framework the initial phase of the activities, when the group is starting to get to know each other, is a crucial moment where the educators/teachers have to identify the resources and difficulties to which particular attention should be paid.

Theoretical and practical meetings should be always alternated with discussion and interactive moments useful for getting to know the experience and emotions of the young people and for consolidating the group.

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Each new topic to be discussed could be introduced by a knowledge assessment phase (i.e. circle time) with a subsequent development phase. Further, especially when we are dealing with intellectual disabilities, theoretical and abstract topics should be addressed by relating them to real-life events: role playing, social stories and the production of videos, presentations designed and edited by the participants could be useful instruments for this purpose. Dividing macro-themes into micro-topics and spending several meetings working on the same topic is a good strategy to make them easily assimilated by the group participants. Also online materials such as videos, commercials, series, articles, games are engaging instruments to be used, but of course the key element for an effective training is definitely the educational relationship.

### ***Concepts and individual capacities: learning how to use technologies while learning how to properly use internet and social media***

Empowerment is a complex concept that is in strict relation with learning. There are different learning methods that could be used (i.e. active learning, cooperative learning, learning by doing, etc.) to empower the individual capabilities. Any learning method could be more or less appropriate according to the characteristics of the persons/group but the aim must always be the effective empowerment of the persons and not a mechanical learning of the contents proposed. Especially when you deal with people with cognitive disabilities, it is not a matter of “teaching/training ABOUT” but rather of “teaching/training WITH” and “teaching WHILE DOING OTHER THINGS”.

Further, when we talk about the internet and social media, we usually assume that all the people that use those instruments are able to properly use also the technology that permits access to them. This could not be taken for granted: nowadays indeed, most of the people have the knowledge of how to use a smartphone for accessing social media or doing some basic things like calls, downloading apps or taking pictures but if they need to do something different or use other technologies, they find themselves in trouble. Changing settings, understanding how to fruitfully use some apps, accessing the same social media through another device, etc. is often critical. In order to make sure that the concepts you would like to pass on are actually understood and interiorised, it is fundamental to make sure that the person/group has the correct basic knowledge of technology.

Learning and teaching how to properly use the internet and social networks shouldn't just mean teach/train about them; it is necessary to let the participants be active in using all the functionalities that the technology offers, and social media is just one aspect of them. For example, the creation of concrete things, such as blogs and/or video, is very useful to develop digital, narration and personal reworking skills, and settle the concepts learned.

### ***Accessibility***

If you already know that a person with disability has enrolled in a course or laboratory or a learning activity or you are organising activities with a group of people with disabilities, try to gather relevant information about his/her mobility, communication skills and previous learning experience as this may be important to ensure access to the study/learning process.

It is important to consider the need for course material adjustment, the frequency and length of breaks and the need for additional assistance. Remember that course participants with disabilities are first of all peers just like others. Friendly acceptance and individual attention are often particularly important for learners

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with disabilities. It will be much easier to ensure access to the teaching course or subject if you prepare in advance and adjust your course to different needs.

To make your information accessible, you should first take a close look at your target group. What barriers could arise? What do you have to consider if you want to make the information as accessible as possible?

It is important, however, to reconcile the aspect of personalisation with that of accessibility for all, ensuring that the results obtained by one person (in terms of learning) in a problematic situation can become beneficial for all<sup>5</sup>.

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The term accessibility does not only refer to the comprehensibility of information. Information can also have various barriers beyond that. These include, for example:

Visual barriers: The design of information contributes significantly to accessibility. For example, very small or squiggly fonts are not accessible. *Or can you read this text well?*

Auditory barriers: This includes, for example, videos or podcasts without subtitles or transcripts. They are not accessible for people who cannot hear well.

Haptic barriers: With analogue information products, physical barriers can occur. For example, a flyer may be bulky or certain thicknesses of paper may be difficult to turn over.<sup>6</sup>

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Below you can find some useful information that will help you to include people with different disabilities<sup>7</sup>.

*Remember that learners with disabilities are also willing to face challenges!*

## Learning and intellectual disabilities

Everyone with a learning or an intellectual disability is different and people with learning disabilities have different communication needs. But accessible information does not only support those people. It is also beneficial for all groups.

Learning difficulties are often referred to as invisible disabilities. Although they are invisible, they can significantly burden the students' study process. The usual recommendation is to give students with learning difficulties more time to complete activities, thus, they should be granted additional time as well as the opportunity to use software (e.g. reading software), and whenever possible writing, listening and reading activities should be replaced with oral tests or vice versa.

When we refer to people with learning and intellectual disabilities it is important to emphasise the most important aspects of the topic covered, separate tasks into clear stages and underline the overall objectives of the activity.

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<sup>5</sup> TIDE - guida per percorsi inclusivi di educazione alla mondialità

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.capito.eu/en/what-is-easy-to-understand-language/>

<sup>7</sup> Tips for accessibility were identified after consultation with the members of Lithuanian disability forum – the different disability organisation. Also after consultation with teachers and learners from Vilnius university.

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A special focus should be put on communication. It is necessary to elaborate a strategy on how to face complex topics such as privacy, cyberbullying or sexting. If needed also different way and languages should be used.

**AAC (Aumentative and Alternative Communication)** is a set of tools and strategies that an individual uses to solve everyday communicative challenges. AAC Communication can take many forms such as: speech, a shared glance, text, gestures, facial expressions, touch, sign language, symbols, pictures, speech-generating devices, etc. Everyone uses multiple forms of communication, based upon the context and our communication partner. Effective communication occurs when the intent and meaning of one individual is understood by another person. The form is less important than the successful understanding of the message<sup>8</sup>.

**Easy to read language is an accessible format** that uses simplified text paired with images to convey messages in a clear and easy to understand way. 'Easy to read' refers to the presentation of text in an accessible and easy to understand format. It is often useful for people with intellectual disabilities. Pictures can be understood by anyone, no matter what language they speak or how good they are at reading.

There are various different ways in which information can be transformed in an easy to read languages, but there is a general consensus that the following rules should be observed<sup>9</sup>:

- Text should be broken down into short sentences.
- Images should be selected to represent each sentence of text where possible.
- Language should be simplified wherever possible, and any necessary complicated words or terms should be explained.
- Text should be in a large font size, minimum 14pt.
- Text should be presented on A4 pages where possible, as A5 or smaller are not as accessible.
- Text should always be aligned on the right hand side of the page, and images should be aligned on the left hand side of the page.
- Avoid fancy fonts and italics.
- Design elements should be kept to a minimum to stop them detracting from the information.

### **Visual impairment: Blindness or partial sight**

Visual impairments vary. Before starting the learning activity or at your earliest convenience, identify the student's needs and possibilities. Take the time to talk and feel free to ask questions. If necessary, the educator should provide the person with information about the accessibility of the room: the entrance, stairs, certain facilities (such as special lighting).

A good presentation at the beginning of the training path is particularly important when there is a person with visual impairment in the group. The person will recognize voices and know where other persons/peers/educators are in the room. The other group's components should introduce their names at the beginning of the activity or each time before they speak. If possible, send the material of the upcoming meeting to the

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<sup>8</sup> <https://isaac-online.org/english/what-is-aac/>

<sup>9</sup> More information and tips: <https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/a-to-z/e/easy-read>

peer in advance and ask what form is the best for him/her. Blind people usually use a variety of text reading programmes, so it is important that the material provided can be scanned by text readers. There is no problem if you provide the information in Word format.

Do not change the way you speak! You can continue to use phrases such as "see you" or "take a look". Do not be afraid to invite the blind to speak and discuss in front of the group.

The following tips should be taken into consideration when developing adjusted educational information (texts, presentations, slides) for persons with visual impairment:

### 1) Appropriate contrast

**A great example of contrasting text is to use a dark background and light text whenever possible as this keeps eyes more relaxed.**

When there is no contrast the text is almost unreadable.

### 2) Font

Use fonts that are clearly letter case sensitive and the line of the letters is of the same thickness.

**Accessible fonts:** Verdana, Calibri, Arial

**Inaccessible fonts:** Times New Roman (the line of the letters is of unequal thickness), All manuscript type fonts

### 3) Font size

Suitable font sizes for printed text are Arial 14pt and Arial 16pt. Arial 9pt is too small

### 4) Font style

**Bold text is appropriate** for highlighting important information or titles

Do not use *italic text*, avoid underlining.

DO NOT WRITE LONG TEXTS IN CAPITAL LETTERS AS THIS MAKES READING DIFFICULT

## Hearing Impairment: Deafness or weak hearing

A lot of deaf and people with hearing impairment, consider sign language as their mother tongue, although there are also people that may use devices for hearing compensation (hearing aids, cochlear implants and FM communication system) and prefer alternative ways of communication.

In all cases, it is recommended that you communicate with the person with hearing impairment/deaf and his/her sign language interpreter prior to the start of the activity so that you can discuss the pace of speaking, clarify the terminology used, etc.

People with hearing impairments usually read information from their lips, so it is very important that you speak without covering your mouth, facing the audience. It is best if you choose a single place for standing or sitting.

During your meetings, try to speak clearly and not too fast, it is best to speak in sentences with a clear beginning and end. This will make the reading from the mouth and the sign interpreter's work easier and prevent incorrect information. If possible, make short breaks. This will facilitate the work for the participants with hearing impairment and the sign language interpreter.

In open discussions be sure that there is just one person speaking at a time. It is best that you submit the material in advance of the lecture. If you are using video material during the activities, try to have it subtitled.

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## **Limited Mobility**

If you know that the group you are teaching will be attended by a student/learner who has difficulties with regard to mobility, try to organise your work in the most accessible room. If you decide to change your room unexpectedly, be sure to inform persons with disabilities as they plan their time well in advance, so it is important that they learn about any changes in a timely manner.

Limited mobility may vary in severity as different levels of muscle or nerve damage may restrict the person's motion differently.

Before you rush to help a student with limited mobility, make sure if the person actually needs assistance. When handled not properly the wheelchair can be easily damaged. Person in a wheelchair can tell you how to assist them. Do not be afraid to invite persons with limited mobility to speak in front of the group. If the stand is too high, the student can speak next to it. Do not change the way you speak! You can continue to use words like "go" or "come".

Limited mobility could also refer to limited use of the upper limbs. When structuring and proposing activities with the use of technological instruments it is important to take into consideration the capabilities of each participant in dealing and using instruments such as mouse, touch screens, pens, etc... If there is the possibility, it could be useful to ask for advice from an assistive technology centre.

## ***Communications and relationships***

Inclusion means that every person is considered as capable to have a thought and give his/her voice in all the life domains. Reflecting on communication aspects means to give voice to all the persons with disabilities, not resigning in the face of obstacles. Some aspect that you have to take into consideration are the following:

- Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish.
- If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, or a nod of the head.
- Never pretend to understand; instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- Try alternative forms of communication, if needed
- Treat adults as adults.

Another aspect to be considered when structuring activities is the definition of a group with strong internal relationships. It is important that the group is characterised as an identity to which the participants feel they belong, in which enthusiasm, acceptance and a sense of collective production are generated. A solid group encourages the participation of each member, each according to his or her abilities and skills, and contributes to a collective form.



## ***How to structure a learning programme***

When you want to develop a learning path or a laboratory addressing the topic of internet and the social media, you have to take into consideration various aspects among which: who is the facilitator (educator, professor, parent, etc), the time, the learning primary and secondary objectives, the learning contents and methods, the activities to carry out, the available resources and how to assess the acquisition of the concepts. In the table below we've made some examples.

### **Target**

Which kind of disability?  
Which are the initial skills?  
How many learners?

### **Facilitator and context**

Who is the facilitator? (school teacher, educator, parent)  
In which context are you operating? (school, family, other contexts)

### **Number of meetings**

How many meetings do you plan to organise?

### **Timing**

How long the meetings will last?

### **Primary objective**

Which is the primary aim of the meetings?

### **Secondary objective**

Is there a correlated aim?

### **Learning contents**

What is the content of each meeting/the series of meetings?

### **Learning methods**

How you want to work? which methods do you want to use? (collaborative, top-down or bottom up approach, case studies, role play)

### **Learning Activities**

Which kind of activities would you like to carry out? (Group activities, quizzes, creation of tools, etc)

### **Learning resources**

Which are your resources of information? Are there some available tools that you would like to use with your learners?

### **Assessment**

How do you assess the acquisition of the competences? (questionnaires, trainers observations, ad-hoc tools)  
Are there some scientific schema or grid you can use?

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## 2 - How to involve directly PwD in using the technologies

Making websites accessible is much easier than the construction of barrier-free buildings. Integrated operating aids of digital devices make accessibility much easier for people with disabilities. The use of digital devices enables support without stigmatisation, as smartphones and tablets are part of everyone's and everyday's life, no matter what the needs are.

Using digital media brings independence to learners with disabilities. But using digital media also needs getting empowered to be fit for the digital world. Digital media opens new doors for people with disabilities. Networking succeeds better due to the reach and participation in society is facilitated. Therefore it is essential to learn how to use digital media in order to be able to move independently in the digital world. If people with disabilities are supported and accompanied in leading a self-determined life, digital competences should not be forgotten. Adequate training that enables people with disabilities to act confidently with digital media leads to them being competitive players in the labour market, they can increase their self-esteem and improve their opportunities to live autonomously.

*In today's today's knowledge society, access to appropriate new technologies must be seen as a human rights issue. In various policy arenas - the European Union, WSIS and the United Nations Organisation - new technologies are recognised as integral to many aspects of citizens' lives and their importance as a tool to promote broader social inclusion should be emphasised.*

*European Agency for Developmental Development of Disability Education (2013)*

### **What is digital competence? What is media literacy?**

Digital competence means the confident and critical use of electronic media for work, leisure, and communication. These competencies are related to logical and critical thinking, high-level information management skills, and well-developed communication skills.

The term media literacy describes the set of knowledge, strategies and skills that allows an individual to efficiently face the media environment of today. It is composed of four sub-areas:

- information and knowledge
- communication and cooperation
- search for identity and orientation
- digital realities and productive action

To be able to move safely in the digital world, you need the following skills:

- **Media Criticism:** This means the critical handling of media and media content. Media criticism has three sub-dimensions: first it is a problematic social processes, such as media concentration or the data protection problem. These problems should be able to be grasped (analytical media criticism): Next it describes the analytical knowledge. One has to be able to critically reflect on his/her own media behaviour. (reflexive media criticism). And finally, in this context, we talk about the social consequences of media development and the effects on our own actions (ethical media criticism).

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- **Media Studies:** Media studies means the knowledge about the media and media systems. Media studies has two sub-dimensions: informative media studies means the classical knowledge about the media; instrumental-qualificational media studies means the ability to operate new media.
- **Media Use:** This describes the ability to use media, being able to use media receptively and the ability to use interactive offers.
- **Media Design** is the ability to design, innovatively change, develop or creatively aesthetically use media.

Media literacy develops through action and active participation. Competences only develop through one's own active use of media, critical faculties, reflexive and critical use. Those who are given the opportunity to deal with media themselves, do not only learn about the media, but also about themselves. This makes self-determined and autonomous action possible. Media literacy is the empowerment of learners to be self-active, self-determined and safe on the internet.

### ***Fields of media participation***

**Participation in digital media:** In order to be able to perceive the diversity of society well, it is important that all social groups are represented in the media. Through their own media production (e.g. in social networks), people with special needs can actively counter the stereotypical, clichéd and stigmatising representations in society.

**Participation with digital media:** Accessibility enables participation. It requires good technical usability, perceptibility with different senses or multimodality as well as easy-to-understand language and simple user guidance.

**Participation through digital media:** This means working, learning, communication and participation in public discussion with the help of digital media. In combination with assistive technologies, new opportunities for participation open up that were previously difficult or impossible.

**Access to digital media:** An important precondition for equal participation in information and communication with digital media is access to media devices and the internet. According to recent studies, a large number of people with learning difficulties and disabilities still do not have access to digital and internet-enabled devices as a matter of course. Therefore, it is a prerequisite that access to digital media and the internet is ensured first.

### ***How to enable PwLD in using technologies***

As stated in the report "Are we heroes?", often new media technologies are far from supporting the different types of disabilities, but able to establish new ones through the creation of impracticable programs of action. Most of the static websites are not completely accessible. Especially for people with intellectual disabilities, using technologies and understanding how to navigate in the internet world prior to understanding opportunities and risks, is often very difficult. Understanding where to click, how a web page is structured, how to scroll through the results, how to search, how to navigate the pages and understand the content (as well as the easy-to-read) is most of the time a barrier in participation.

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Working with digital education is not easy and requires a lot of time and preparation. Learning processes should indeed include both technological and knowledge competences and should be supported by educators and teachers by structuring multiple, transversal and interactive activities.

First element to consider is that the use of the internet and social networks requires knowledge of specific terms. To this end, it is important to address these terms and to ensure that both the term itself and its meaning remain in the minds of the participants. As far as the meaning of the terms is clear, active and critical engagement with the content can take place.

Participants/Students can enrich their technical vocabulary through the continuous repetition, pinning and writing down of new terms and keywords that will allow them to better approach the main topics covered.

The acquisition of social media skills is going along with the acquisition of digital skills. Depending on the specific characteristics and differences of the participants of the group, customised methodologies should be used during the activities. Continuous physical prompts, clear repetition of each step, imitation of what was done by the activity leader, and simple voice guidance are some examples. Learning how to use internet browsers for doing research, mails, maps, instruments for writing, making presentations or video, how to upload and download pictures, should go along with the learning of how to properly use and what are the risks of Facebook, instagram or other social networks.



### 3- To have a basic knowledge of the internet world, what are the risks and the available resources

Technologies are increasingly present in everyday life for each of us. For some people they can take a role truly determined in the process of school inclusion and social, allowing them to carry out activities that otherwise would be precluded.

Attention to the needs of each amplifies the use of these instruments, which becomes increasingly an integral part of everyone's life, not only from the work point of view, but also from the social one, as they provide opportunities for information, documentation and socialisation also through the use of social networks.

The Internet ecosystem is made of many organisations and communities that help it to work and evolve. This broad range of Internet technologies is continuously advancing and many applications and programmes were developed in the last decades. Attention to the needs of people with disability is also increased, thanks both to the disabled community lobbying on the right of participation of the people with disabilities and the International regulations that focuses on accessibility issues and the design for all principles.

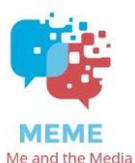
COVID pandemic has further highlighted and accelerated the processes of integrating technologies into our lives, but it has however emphasised the inequalities due to the digital divide, the lack of infrastructures and the lack of adequate available assistive technologies. This is especially true when it comes to people with disabilities that were not used to use internet and technologies in general.

It is necessary to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to acquire a new “digital” grammar, necessary to understand, participate and act, to build their own future and that of the community.

In order to give people with disabilities the possibility to participate, it is important to give them the right devices and supporting technologies, the knowledge about the basic functionalities, tools and applications available and information about the main opportunities and risks in using such instruments.

#### **Where to start?**

Most people, including people with disabilities, commonly use digital tools such as smartphones and tablets, but often take certain features for granted. Reiterating what devices allow us to go online and be connected with the digital community is a good starting point that helps to have a general framework to what we do, to the methodologies and purposes with which a device can be used rather than another.



In the MeMe Educational Platform you can find some examples of how to introduce the topic.

<https://elearning.imotec.it/>

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## **WWW Word**

To know what the Internet is, how it works and why it was developed helps the people to better understand the current common use and the opportunities given by the digital and connected world. Persons with disabilities should be given the possibility to participate in the digital community and it is important to give them basic knowledge of this virtual world in order for them to understand the rules and be responsible users. For this purpose, it is necessary that they are aware about which are the main features, useful applications and opportunities but also how the data are moving, the “safety rules” for a “safe” navigation, how the social environment works and which are the risks that could be taken and which ones cannot.

To do so, educators, families and friends should support persons with disabilities and provide them with clear, accessible and easy to use materials and information.

## **Risks and Opportunities**

*“A digital community displays the same shape of an assembly where heterogeneous entries gather with an equal opportunity to have a say. The heterogeneity guarantees the wealth of the community and, at the same time, its limit and danger, [.....]. In turn, this kind of enunciation is not free from stereotypes or false representations. Instead, stereotypes about disability are the cultural leftovers that make every new discourse and representation about Persons with Disabilities possible.” [MeMe Project IO1-Are we Heroes?].*

Thanks to the Internet, people with disabilities could be more independent in their studies, work, communication, access to public services and culture. However, it should also be borne in mind that there are pitfalls in the virtual world that could be even more potentially damaging for people with disabilities because, in many cases, there is no investment in their cognitive abilities, nor is there any encouragement to share their moods and feelings.

Supporting people with intellectual disabilities in the safe use of the Web can have a huge impact on their level of independence, their well-being and their sense of belonging to society. Persons with disabilities are often passive users of the internet, they do not recognise themselves the right to have a voice on the digital debate, nor to have the right to be present.



## 4- How to prevent risk

Preventing risks by making responsible use of social networks and technologies also implies the ability to manage relationships with a certain degree of clarity, and to recognise and manage one's own emotions. Awareness of the allure of meeting someone online, of feeling offended by the online behaviour of a friend, of the disturbance produced by the viewing of certain images are possible scenarios that young people, especially those with disabilities, must contemplate and know how to manage.

The activities with the peer groups of the meme project showed that it is common for people with disabilities, more than others, to suffer unpleasant situations online. Most of the people had already experienced cyberbullying in their personal lives; either they had observed it in whatsapp-groups or in comments under youtube videos, or, as most participants admitted, they had been victims of hatred comments in social media use by themselves. Situations of unauthorised sharing of personal data and pictures as well as risky relationships via social networks were also reported.

### **Cyberbullying**

***Bullying is not a joke: the severe forms of bullying can have the characteristics of hate crimes***

Cyberbullying is the online manifestation of bullying, made using telematic tools (sms, mms, photos, videos, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, phone calls). Cyberbullying means form of pressure, aggression, harassment, blackmail, insult, denigration, defamation, identity theft, acquisition, illicit acquisition, unlawful processing of personal data to the detriment of minors, carried out electronically, as well as the dissemination of online content relating to one or more members of the minor's family whose intentional and predominant purpose is to isolate a minor or a group of minors by carrying out a serious abuse, a harmful attack, or their ridicule".

Most common practices of cyberbullying are:

- *Messages*: It may also include "sexting" when the messages are of sexual nature.
- *Whatsapp/Telegram or other instant messaging apps*: provocative and intimidatory messaging to contacts.
- *Photos and videos*: Sending humiliating, compromising, or degrading photographs or videos
- *Social Network*: Publication of posts, images or fake profiles of victims on social networks (e.g. on YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr, AskFM).
- *Email*: Sending multiple emails can be used to humiliate someone in particular, while individual emails typically contain intimidating messages. Although traceable, it is not obvious that the sender coincides with the person who sent them.
- *Websites*: The creation of websites can become a pretext to defame or humiliate someone, or to disseminate private information, post modified photographs, or images that depict a person in a compromising or erotic attitude.
- *Online Chat Rooms*: Chat rooms give people the ability to hide their identity, and to humiliate or insult other users.

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Research highlights that **persons with disabilities are particularly at risk of bullying and cyberbullying due to their fragility**. Cyberbullying, due to its nature, is the most pervasive form at the moment, because it follows the victim everywhere through the computer or the smartphone. This can lead to a load duration of 24 hours a day.

Furthermore, the two phenomena - traditional bullying and cyber - are increasingly coexisting.

As educators, teachers and parents, it is therefore important, on the one hand, to prevent risky situations giving adequate instruments to the persons with disabilities, and on the other hand to recognize explicit or implicit signals that can indicate the presence of cyberbullying episodes.

Recognition of cyberbullying is not easy. Because of the type of violence they suffer, the confusion they feel, the sense of guilt and helplessness, the victims often withdraw into themselves and think they can, or rather, have to get out of it alone. The disability is a further element of fragility that could make it increasingly difficult to escape.

Some tips that help the recognition of cyberbullying episodes:

- *Change of the behavior with friends, at school, or in other places where they socialize.*
- *Aversion to attending places or events that involve other people.*
- *Abandoning the use of computers, mobile phones and other technologies to communicate with others.*
- *Particular stress every time you receive a message or notification.*
- *Low self-esteem, depression, eating or sleeping disorders.*

Prevention of cyberbullying is thus a fundamental action.

Some tips that help preventions of cyberbullying episodes:

- *Education at respectful behaviours and at the comprehension of the boundaries*
- *Awareness about personal rights*
- *Working on the privacy issues (especially on what concern the sharing of pictures, videos, informations about themselves and the others)*
- *Awareness about the possibility to talk about their experience.*

Also, these 3 steps can help to know easy reaction steps in case of cyberbullying in social networks:

1. **STOP:** don't answer aggressive comments!
2. **BLOCK:** try to block the person who speaks in an aggressive way.
3. **TELL:** speak about it with close people/educational staff. Don't be ashamed - cyberbullying can happen to anyone!

### ***Privacy and Personal Data Treatment***

Data security is a very important topic always underestimated and not considered by most web users.

Personal data is information that relates to living persons. This can be, for example, the following:

- Names
- Date of birth
- Address

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- email address
- Bank details
- ID card numbers
- Location data (e.g. for WhatsApp)
- IP addresses
- Advertising cookies
- Health data

Since May 2018, there are specific rules for handling this data in Europe. The so-called General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has since been specified and more strictly regulated, which data may be collected and further processed<sup>10</sup>.

Knowing how to manage one's privacy and knowing the risks of communicating personal data on websites is the first step to surfing the Internet consciously. It concerns one's own safety online (avoiding risk of phishing and/or identity theft) , but also one's 'reputation' and knowing how to set the right boundaries between oneself and others.

Especially when dealing with persons with intellectual disabilities, it is important to share considerations and reflect about the boundaries of privacy, about the difference between what is personal and what is public and the fact that a topic could be considered private by one person but public and shareable by another person, about the risks we can expose ourselves to by giving away too much information online. Thus, particular attention should be paid to the issues of sharing private material online.

It is important to stress the fact that every data shared online will remain there for a long time and can be seen by many people.

An effective strategy to make the people aware and not run into this kind of risk can be to create an easy quote that they can write down, memorise and repeat often when doing other activities online.

Examples: *"first think and then post"* [Italian group]

*"The internet never forget"* [Austrian group]

Once you have discussed the dangers of sharing private material and data online, it is important to provide information about possible solutions to this problem:

- Referring to an adult
- Request deletion of their data and to be excluded from receiving unsolicited communications
- Change passwords
- If needed, ask the relevant authorities for help (i.e. in Italy, the appointed body is the postal police)
- Etc.

### ***Personal Relationships***

Nowadays, social networks constitute a big opportunity for socialisation and a very fertile environment for the establishment of significant relationships. They allow us to easily find new friends and keep in touch with the "real life" friends. Young people with disabilities are often at risk of isolation, especially if they are

<sup>10</sup> Click here to go directly to the DSGVO in all common languages: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>

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out of school and the opportunity to meet peers are less, and social networks represent a great instrument for facing isolation, finding support and raising personal self esteem. However, there are many risks and problems that could arise, especially when dealing with people with intellectual disabilities that are often more vulnerable. The difficulty of applying the concept of "friendship" in a virtual context in which many contacts do not know each other in person, makes these subjects even more vulnerable and victims of exploitation, cyberbullying phenomena, sexting and even sexual harassment.

It is very important thus that educators and families are prepared to support their assisted and/or children in the use of social media as a way to get in touch with other people. Prevention doesn't mean ban from use but awareness of what are the risks and how to deal with virtual relationships.

Watching educational video, talking and reflecting with the participants about personal experiences is a valuable strategy also for reflecting on the topic of consensus and affectivity in general and avoiding damaging practices like sexting, grooming and sexual abuse.



## 5- Dealing with social media channels

### *What are social media channels?*

#### **Social media: definition**

Social media is a collective term for all media that support users in communicating and exchanging information via digital channels. These media are mostly internet-based media offerings. Communication and the exchange of user-generated content are of particular importance. Therefore social media can also be divided into two essential elements. There is social media whose primary goal is communication and those that are used as a means of communication but whose focus is on the content that users generate, edit and exchange.

Social media can be used to exchange information in private and individual settings as well as between employees. People communicate, collaborate and create together using text, images and sound.

#### **Social Media Platforms**

Social networks, weblogs, microblogs, wikis and photo and video platforms are considered typical representatives of social media. Social media are of great importance for e-learning, blended learning and knowledge management. They are used for e-collaboration, brainstorming or in the sense of learning diaries and generally serve informal learning. Often they are integrated into learning platforms and knowledge management solutions. Social media functions play a role on sharing economy platforms.

Based on the theories of media and social research, social media can be divided into different groups, for example, on the basis of their social dimension and media diversity as well as the degree of self-expression or disclosure. Accordingly, there are so-called community projects, blogs, content communities, social networks, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds.

With regard to the social presence and media diversity, blogs and community projects are rated lowest, as they are mostly purely text-based and therefore only suitable for the simple exchange of information. Social networks and content communities are considered to have a higher degree of social presence and media diversity, as they allow for the sharing of photos and videos in addition to text-based communication.

Virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds attempt to recreate all dimensions of personal interaction in a virtual environment. For this reason, these two types of social media are rated highest in terms of social presence and media diversity.

In terms of the degree of self-expression or self-disclosure, blogs as well as social networks and the content communities are generally rated somewhat higher than community projects. They are often limited to specific content areas. Since the virtual game worlds are subject to certain rules of the game that lead the players to behave in a certain way, the possibility of self-expression or disclosure is rated lower in this social media group than in the virtual social worlds, in which the participants can usually act as they want to.

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## Social media guidelines

Social media often work with digital communication channels and applications, Therefore they have to be distinguished from traditional mass media (e.g. television, radio and newspapers). Social media are also characterised by relatively low entry barriers. Similar to other mass media, social media can reach both large and small groups of recipients. Communication here is not linear, but has a high real-time factor and thus a high degree of actuality. Furthermore, social media differ from mass media in their multimedia nature what means that any combination of text, sound and videos is possible. So the principle of multimodality is perfectly implemented here, making content easily accessible to all people.

Furthermore, they are accessible to everyone free of charge or at low cost. They are very user-friendly, as no or hardly any specific knowledge is required to use social media.

In particular, the use of social media in and out of the company and on behalf of the company requires regulation. So-called social media guidelines are a mixture of suggestions and rules for respectful and practicable interaction (as in netiquette) and for morally correct behaviour (as in netiquette and codes), as well as relevant laws and regulations or conclusions from case law. In the best case, they are derived from the social media strategy and are aligned with the communication guidelines. Typical topics are personal responsibility, transparency, honesty, authenticity and the separation of private and official matters.

## *Bridging the digital divide*

Social networks have undoubtedly changed people's lives but to fully grasp the opportunities that they give to people with disabilities, the existence of a digital divide that hinders access to digital environments should be recognized and appropriate actions should be taken to overcome it. Barriers are due to a non-inclusive design of digital environments, lack of appropriate assistive technologies and lack of educational opportunities to develop digital skills both from trainers and learners' side.

As remarked also in the ENTELIS project report "Present barriers, emergent and future needs in digital society", persons with disabilities highlight a lack in the usability of new technologies and digital services<sup>11</sup>. Device accessibility, web access, navigation through the sections and complete view of the contents are some of the technological barriers encountered.

Further, while keeping in touch with friends, finding information online or looking for a job using the internet or mobile phone applications has benefited people with disabilities in many aspects of their lives, it has unfortunately put them at greater risk than the rest of the population, especially when referring to people with intellectual disabilities. Due to factors such as difficulties in obtaining legal consent from people with intellectual disabilities, understanding how to make an appeal, or the simple fact that, for example, access to information through language that is easy to read and understand can easily lead to the detection that the user of a particular programme is a person with an intellectual disability, this segment of the population is more vulnerable and at greater risk of abuse<sup>12</sup>.

A positive signal show how over time there has been a growing commitment on the part of the biggest companies such as Instagram, Facebook and Google, to facilitate access to the various platforms for people with disabilities

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.entelis.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/publications\\_present\\_barriers\\_emergent\\_and\\_future\\_needs\\_in\\_digital\\_society.pdf](https://www.entelis.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/publications_present_barriers_emergent_and_future_needs_in_digital_society.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.anffas.net/it/progetti-e-campagne/safe-surfing/>



with new ideas, investments and tools that can really change people's lives, especially after the boom in remote working and distance learning due to COVID19.

The Entelis Manifesto<sup>13</sup> gives useful recommendations in order to take action and try to make the digital revolution an opportunity for all and for our inclusive societies. Among others:

- Awareness on the rights to have access to accessible digital technologies, ***specific training and support should be provided to people with disabilities*** so that they could be included in the modern digital community.
- ***Peer to peer training and alternative approaches should be considered*** for this purpose.
- ***Involvement of people with disabilities and other minority groups in the process of combating digital exclusion*** is indeed essential to ensure real inclusion rather than the removal of some barriers and their replacement by others.

## 6- Experiences from MeMe groups

### ***Italy***

In the framework of the MeMe Project, from March 2020, a team of educators and trainers of AIAS Bologna onlus, organised regular weekly meetings to work with a group of people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The group works on topics related to social media (including whatsapp and youtube), internet safety, data protection, cyberbullying. In the meanwhile, the group was stimulated to improve their knowledge of the digital instruments (how to produce an online blog, how to perform a web research, how to download and use apps, etc).

The first part of the meetings (March-July 2020), due to the COVID pandemic restrictions, was conducted online. The aim of the first part of the lab was to get to know each other and have an introduction of Internet Safety topics. After the first meeting where the participant introduced themselves and were invited to share their experience with the technology and the web, we proposed a webserie produced by the Minister of Education called "The super errors" (<https://www.generazioniconnesse.it/site/it/super-errori/>).

During each meeting, after an initial welcome, the group was invited to watch one of the episodes of the "SuperErrors" webserie, to answer questions based on the episode and reflect on the behaviors described. Questions were proposed in form of team play, through sites such as myQuiz (<https://myquiz.org>) or Google Form

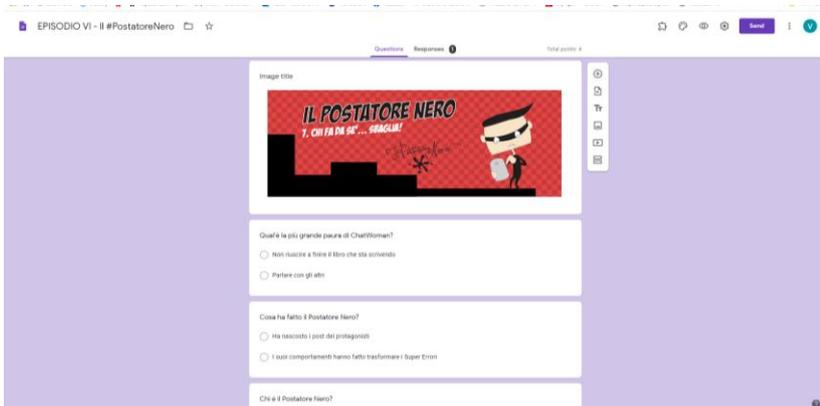
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<sup>13</sup> [https://entelisplus.entelis.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/entelis\\_manifesto\\_en.pdf](https://entelisplus.entelis.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/entelis_manifesto_en.pdf)



(<https://www.google.it/intl/it/forms/about/>), in order to make the meetings more interactive and maintain a playful component.

During the last meeting, held in a park, a billboard inspired by the activities carried out remotely during the months of lockdown was created together. Participants were invited to further reflect on all the themes and concepts that had been addressed through the web series and to try to reconnect the errors with the right behaviors.

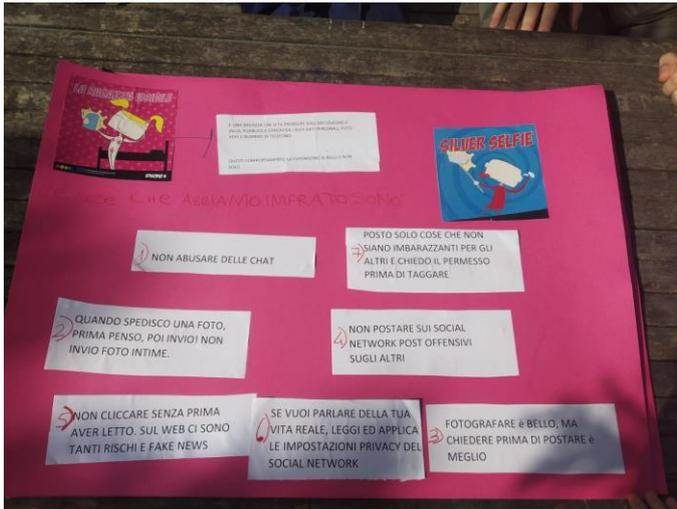


During the meetings the participants increased their awareness on the topics addressed. In particular on social media use and how to avoid certain common errors in using the main social instruments.

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Do not abuse of the chats  
 Do not post offensive post on others on social networks  
 Do not click without first reading. There are many risks and fake news on the web  
 Photographing is beautiful, but asking before posting is better.  
 I share only things that are not embarrassing for others and I ask for permission before tagging  
 When you want to share a picture, first think, then send! Do not send intimate photos.  
 If you want to talk about real life, read and apply the privacy settings of the social network.

From september 2020, there were face to face meetings. The AIAS peer group consisted of 5 trainees at the meetings (maximum number respecting COVID pandemic regulation).

Having established the needs and interests of the participants, trainers have built a training path identifying different focuses including:

- Social Media and Netiquette
- Privacy
- Sensitive data and digital identity
- Cyberbullying
- Emoji and personal relationship on a virtual environment

The training path followed a learning-by-doing structure in order to facilitate the acquisition of the concepts and digital skills.

Through the use of materials available online, designed by the trainers or by the other MeMe project partners, participants were actively involved through the use of narrative stories, role-playing, conception and realization of

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a small video and of an online game. The correct and responsible use of the chat, the correct sharing of pictures and videos, how to avoid cyberbullying, how to well represent yourself or your thoughts on social media, etc, were some of the topics covered.

The participants also were invited to create a blog on Google Site where they reported the activities done during the meetings so, while narrating the activities carried out together, they had the possibility to improve their computer and collaborative skills. They were also involved in the testing phase of the MeMe Game developed by the partner IMOTEC: they were invited to play with the game and find eventual bugs or possible interface's improvements.

In all the topics covered there was a continuous reference to the privacy issues and the processing of data and images, as the basis for a responsible use of the media.

As regards social network, the participants were stimulated to reflect on their personal use of the social media in relation with the notions acquired. Particular attention was given to the figure of the influencer and the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social media, so as to provide the trainees with functional skills for the profitable use of the tools available online and the information conveyed by the main social networks.

Between November 2021 and March 2022, peer training sessions were organised. The "expert" group trained and shared their knowledge to other groups of people with disabilities and educators. A total of 5 meetings were organised. A peer training with young people without disabilities was organised as well.

## **Austria**

In November 2020, two trainers at atempo organised the first meeting as a kick-off for the MEME peer group sessions. The trainers wanted to work together with people with learning difficulties (atempo trainees) and two peer assistants on the "Me and the Media Erasmus+ project". Since then, topics around social media, internet safety, data protection and cyberbullying have been dealt with in two-week peer group meetings.

The aim of the peer group meetings was to encourage the atempo trainees to participate in the "Me and the Media Project" and to gradually train them as experts of their own safe use of social media. The specialisations were topics chosen by the trainees themselves, related to their own preferences in everyday life. All topics were related to online media. The atempo peer group consisted of about 21 trainees. In order to involve as many trainees as possible in the topics, new trainees were always added to the existing group. In total, more than 20 other trainees took part. The group of 21 trainees consisted of 10 women and 11 men aged between 18 and 38. The trainees in the peer group all come from Styria in Austria. Most of them live directly in Graz.

There were several reasons mentioned for working on this topic in a peer group setting. Overall, great interest in this topic and the need to talk about it in a peer group was noticed. Participating in the MEME peer group training gives them the opportunity to try out something new in a protected setting and to explore and learn new things. The content was fitted specifically to the needs of the target group of young learners with SEN. Participating in an educational project creates high interest in the target group.

The main reason for participation in social media for our trainees is their own wish to be present in the social media society. They use social media to make new contacts, they also use it as a source to be at the pulse of time and to have a say. Especially our young learners want to learn how to use social media properly with the focus on how to handle data, data privacy and their own passwords with the claim of participating safely on the Internet.

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There was high interest in how their personal data are tracked on different websites. Another central topic is to become sensitive to personal internet behaviour.

Some of the trainees had already experienced bullying on social media. This exchange of experiences and the joint reflection on how best to behave in this case, but also on how to protect oneself from attacks in social media, was a central element of the work in the peer group settings.

During the peer group meetings we realized that most of the trainees already had a great knowledge about social media and had been using many offers already for a long time: In an informal opinion poll, the atempo trainees stated that they use YouTube the most, closely followed by WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. Here, reasons were also collected why these channels are so popular and why the trainees are interested in them.

Social Media	Reasons for usage
<b>YouTube</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● for listening to music and watching videos</li> <li>● for watching film scenes and trailers</li> <li>● for watching gameplay videos: A gameplay video is a clip of direct footage from a video game and is primarily used to show players how a game plays.</li> <li>● for watching cooking videos and trying my hand at cooking</li> <li>● I like and comment on videos</li> <li>● There are endlessly interesting videos</li> <li>● I can find practical tips for life on youtube</li> <li>● I can watch videos that are interesting to me and help me relax, e.g. music videos, nature videos, ...</li> <li>● for watching documentaries</li> <li>● Youtube is the perfect way for me to pass the time, there is any serious, relaxed or funny topic. Besides, in the free version you get perfectly personalised advertising. I have nothing against that, I don't want to use it without advertising. The YouTube videos suggested to me are also perfectly personalised. It's a world I like to use a lot - who knows, maybe one day I'll even have my own Youtube channel.</li> </ul>
<b>Whatsapp</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● for writing and chatting with friends/family</li> <li>● for making phone calls and video calls</li> <li>● to use group chats</li> <li>● for communication in emergencies</li> <li>● for writing with supporters and carers</li> <li>● I find this messaging service very easy to use.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Because I can also make a voice recording.</li> </ul>
<b>Facebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● for posting and liking things</li> <li>● for reading comments and write some myself</li> <li>● for keeping in touch with friends around the world</li> <li>● I can keep in touch with my school friends</li> <li>● You can chat for free</li> <li>● I can find out what's new</li> </ul>
<b>Instagram</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● for posting and liking photos</li> <li>● I can look at a lot of things that are interesting to me</li> <li>● I can see what new videos or posts are out there.</li> </ul>

In addition, other platforms were mentioned at the peer group meetings that are used from time to time. Mentioned were: TikTok, Wire, Twitter, Telegram, Signal, Steam, Discord, Viber, SnapChat, as well as the online meeting platforms Zoom and MS Teams.

After a short break, we separated the group into 3 smaller groups. Each of the groups specialized on one topic and made a PP-Presentation with the content for the other trainees. As research material, the trainees summarized the booklet we found on [www.saferinternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at) 2 of the booklets are in easy-to-read-language.

This homepage also contains really good quizzes in easy-to-read language.



On the screenshot, you can see the extract of a quiz in easy-to-read about internet safety from the platform [www.saferinternet.at](http://www.saferinternet.at). There are different quizzes about social media platforms, emoticons, data safety and more social media related topics that our trainees loved to play in the modules. Those quizzes enable the trainees to learn some of the MeMe-issues in a very playful way.

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Working on data protection and privacy, one member of the peer group who calls herself an “Influencer” (inclusion & influence) showed her social media channels to the trainees and explained the difference between public and private use. She also showed her photos and postings and an example that conveyed why it is important as an influencer to have a “thick skin” when responding on her public page. She clarified that she plans her online appearances very consciously and differentiates between private and public. She also discussed paid advertising and how every Like on Facebook is important for supporting advertising.

You can see Melanie on an “influencer”-post on Facebook in the following picture:



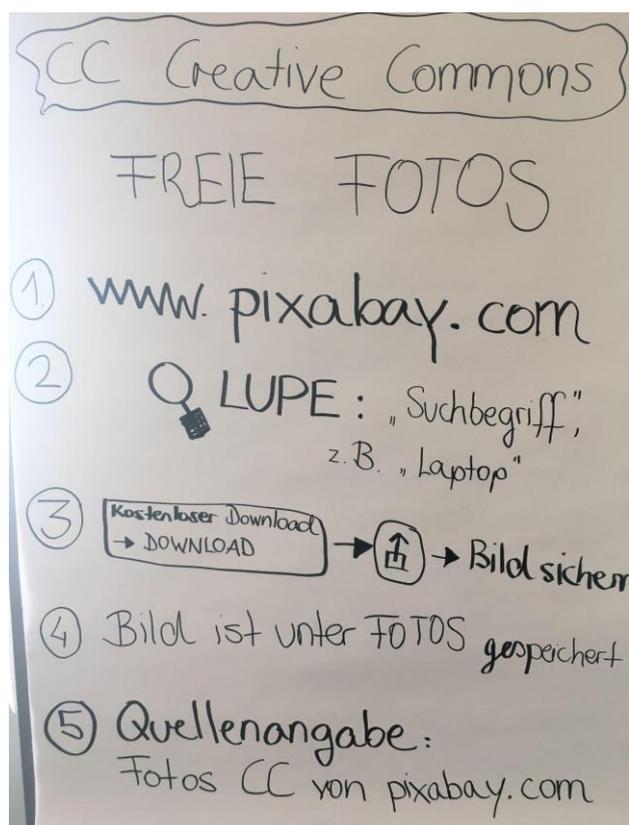
Using the ironic 2 minute Youtube documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szDjtXdH5ko> as an introduction on 5 relevant points on data security (#private photos, #bank details, #passwords, #customer information, #secrets on the net) , the trainees dived into the topic and worked there on several exercises like <https://peerbox.at/tag/privatsphaere/> and [https://peerbox.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/oeffentliche-privatedaten-karten\\_uebung3.pdf](https://peerbox.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/oeffentliche-privatedaten-karten_uebung3.pdf)

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Working on the usage of pictures from the net and creative commons, this flipchart was created:



Learning to write your own profile for social media was the next step.

Markus, another peer expert presented his personal access to social media and gave the peer learners some useful tips from his own experience:

#### Tips by Markus

**Tip number 1:** The internet never forgets. So be careful what photos and information you share!

**Tip number 2:** Language on social media can cause more misunderstandings than real person-to-person conversations. So, don't take other people's comments too seriously!

**Tip number 3:** If you want to be successful on social media channels, you need to post things at least 3 times a week. The best posting-times are Tuesday till Thursday noon or at 7pm and generally on Sunday afternoons.

Cyberbullying was the next important topic. The peer group tried to find a good definition for the term and told about their personal experiences with cyberbullying. In the first lesson, different forms of cyberbullying were explained and discussed (flaming, harassment, denigration...etc.).

We realized that almost all trainees had already been in touch or at least seen cyberbullying in their own social media use.

Together we watched this documentary: [What to do about cyberbullying?](#)

Collected advices in case of cyberbullying were:

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4. STOP: don't answer aggressive comments!
5. BLOCK: try to block the person who speaks in an aggressive way.
6. TELL: speak about it with close people/educational staff. Don't be ashamed!

Punishable acts that happen during cyberbullying were discussed as well as public persons often becoming victims of unknown cyberbullies.

Together we went through some influencers posts and discussed and analysed the hatred comments posted below. It was reflected that especially with such public posts, it can quickly happen that one is cyberbullied oneself.

Also, the peer group found out in some free research which specialized counseling centers we do have in Austria in case of cyberbullying. We emphasized that it really is helpful to require professional help as soon as trainees or friends of trainees get in touch with hatred or bullying via social media. Cyberbullying is to be taken seriously and can happen to everyone: We found out that sometimes people do not seek help because they are ashamed of their own experience. We empowered ourselves to stay tuned in these concerns with each other, to talk about cyberbullying cases in our social environment and to show and live moral courage.

In an extra lesson, the atempo trainees largely reflected the terms of moral courage and social responsibility. We compared moral courage on the internet to moral courage in everyday life like in the bus or at other public places. We concluded that the difference between the two is the higher level of possible anonymity in the internet which can influence the behaviour of the participants to a more aggressive level. The trainees empowered each other to intervene in the internet despite this and to help each other in case of danger.

Finally, a feedback and reflection round was held on the topic of cyberbullying. The trainees were very happy that this topic was part of their MeMe-training. They emphasized that cyberbullying was a real problem in their everyday life.

Thomas, one trainee of the core group, made a big presentation about cyberbullying that he held several times to a larger audience of trainees.

You can see Thomas presenting his results on this foto:



In July 2021, there was a big Friday module where all the experts of the atempo peer group presented their individual topics in the form of PowerPoint presentations. These presentations were also broadcasted online where Vilma Ferrari (head of the MeMe project), Lisa Franz (head of digital education at atempo) and Melanie

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Wimmer (expert for accessibility and presentations) were present and gave feedback to the trainees. This module was a great success, very interesting for the audience and the trainees were very proud of their achievements.



We had quite a colorful programm with lots of important topics: Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Safety/Passwords and Cyberbullying were presented by one/two members of the expert groups of trainees.



After repeating and consolidating what we had already learned, the peer group set up an internal facebook research group. Groups always need rules for dealing with each other. so here you can find the rules defined at atempo:

Rules for the internal ME&Me research group
1. <b>Friendly tone:</b> We are friendly with each other in comments and postings. We respond

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thoughtfully and appreciatively.

2. **Respect for other opinions:** If someone has a different opinion, we still remain friendly. We reply factually and consciously try to avoid misunderstandings.
3. **Civil Courage:** Civil courage means that we are brave enough to support someone in a difficult situation - even if the person is a stranger. If it comes to arguments with insults in our group, we advocate that hate postings are deleted.
4. **Honesty:** We do not spread tall tales. We remain honest and factual.

## Portugal

In the framework of IO2, and due to the Corona Virus situation and the restrictions measures imposed for a long period in Portugal, the methodology adopted to develop this activity has to be slightly changed. Therefore, to achieve the goals pre-settled, the project team was forced to make part of the working sessions planned online using the new platforms, such as teams and zoom.

This chapter will demonstrate how this IO2 was developed – face to face meetings and online sessions with people with intellectual disabilities. All sessions were held from March 2020 to March 2022, on a total of 33 working sessions (between trainers, trainers and trainees, and trainees with peers/ partners and other professionals or services providers in the disability area). It was developed in a way to make sure that the participants could understand the concepts presented and the content, and that they were able to transfer the acquired knowledge to their life. At the end of each session, they would have to do some homework to be presented to the group at the following meeting.



### Session subject: The MEME Project

- On a face-to-face meeting, 5 PcDI, 4 professionals and 2 representatives of local media channels (radio, newspaper) gathered to developed the following activities:
- Icebreaker activity to get to know all participants involved
- Presentation of the European MEME Project: Title/ Duration/ Partnership/ Goals/ Planned activities/ Findings
- Free debate and discussion
- Welcome session and individual presentation of the participants involved in the activity
- Presentation of the European MEME Project
- Dissemination and sharing of specific support materials for media professionals carried out in another European project where the scope was also the representation of people with intellectual disabilities in the difference's media – Real Life Media Project

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### Session subject: Platforms for a peer-to-peer learning



On face-to-face meetings and online sessions, 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to develop the following activities:

- Platform Presentation:
- Goals/ Constitution of the group/ Ground rules/ Planned activities/ Findings
- Free debate and discussion
- Remember the MEME Project and its objectives
- Recall the main responsibilities of the Working plan
- Plan future actions
- Questionnaires/ Interviews/ Publications
- Working Group on diverse and current topics
- Preparation of online meetings with partners from Austria and Italy.
- Other topics presented by the Group during the development of the work scheduled

### Session subject: The media

On face-to-face meeting 5 PcDI, 2 professionals and 2 Representatives of local media channels (radio, newspaper) gathered to develop the following activities:

- The media:
  - Identification of different media
  - Identification of the most used nowadays
  - What they say about us
  - What we think they should say
  - What can we do to change what seems wrong to us
- Free debate and discussion:
  - Specific support materials for media professionals - Real Life Media Project
  - Representation of people with intellectual disabilities in the different media.
  - Participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the different media.
- Oriented discussion on:
  - Real Life Media Project Results: how people with disabilities are represented in the media; what people with disabilities think and want in this situation.
  - Results obtained by an empirical study - "Are we heroes?" - IO1

### Session subject: Social networks

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 3 professionals gathered to develop the following activities:

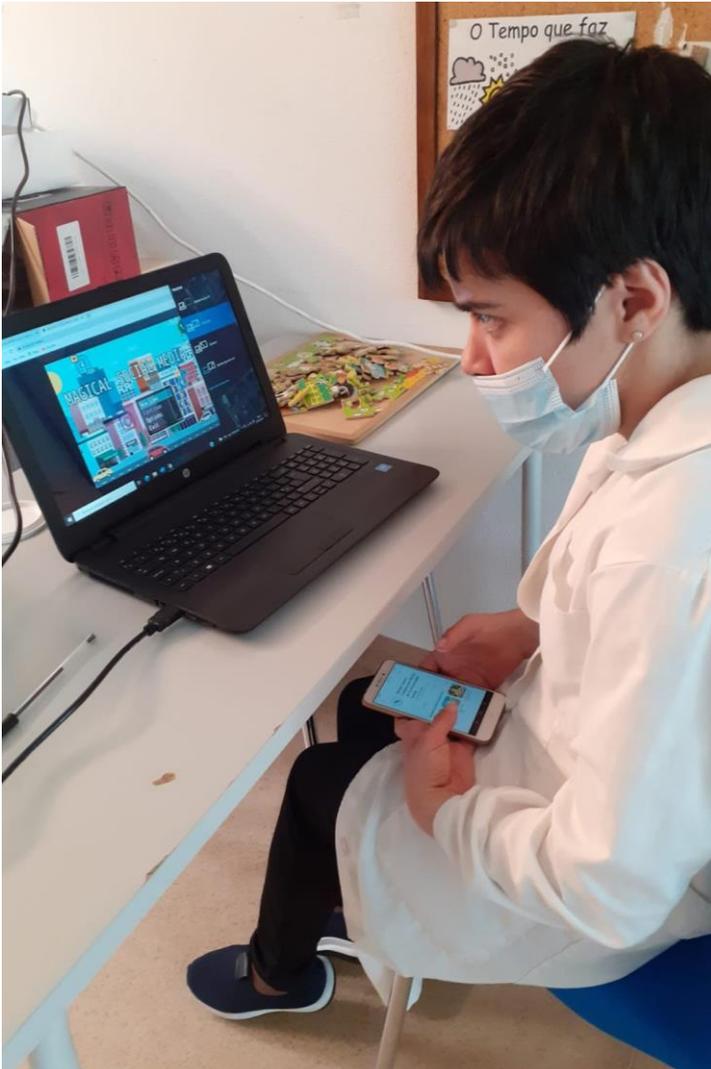
- Social networks:
  - Identification of different networks and the most used social networks nowadays
  - Sharing experiences - What's already been wrong, What went well
  - Opportunities
  - Safety rules

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- Free debate and discussion
- Plan future actions
- Questionnaire
  - General Information (who am I, how old I am..): Use of computer/mobile phone/tablet; Use of social networks; Ideas and further questions; Analyses - results of the questionnaires.
- Develop an article "We and social networks" to be published in the Newspaper "The Whistle" and on social networks



#### **Session subject: The GAME MEME - 1st phase - Browser**

- On face-to-face meetings, 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:
  - Evaluate the Online Game, created within the scope of the project in terms of:
    - Functionality: Adequate/ Accuracy/ Compliance with specifications
    - Usability: Understandable/ Learning capacity / Accessible/ Compliance with specifications
    - Using scale: Bad/ More or less/ Good / Very good/ I don't know

#### **Session subject: Time to review**

- On face-to-face meetings and online meetings, 5 PcDI, 20 clients from Cerci and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:
- Identification of the different media - review
  - Project review and Practical exercises
  - Questioner: How do we use social media? – results
  - Preparation of the article “Us and social networks”
  - Publication in Apito – local newspaper

#### **Session subject: The GAME MEME - 2nd stage - Playstore**

On face-to-face meetings, 5 PcDI and 1 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Evaluate the Online Game, created within the scope of the project in terms:
  - Functionality: Adequate/ Accuracy Compliance with specifications
  - Usability: Understandable/ Learning capacity Accessible / Compliance with specifications
  - Using scale: Bad/ More or less/ Good / Very good/ I don't know

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### Session subject: Time to reflect

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI 20 clients from Cerci and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Social networks most used by peers
- Game time – presentation, download and use by peers
- Group video - video of those PwID involved in the Meme Project
- Cinema Session: popcorn and film view “The Social Networking Dilemma”
- Creation of “Meme Garden” – in memory of one of our group member Aida (that passed away)

### Session subject: Social networks

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- The internet
  - Internet evolution
  - Know how the internet works
  - Understanding the impact of the internet on people's lives
- Free debate and discussion
- Social networks
  - Evolution and role of social networks
  - Social networks: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok
- Free debate and discussion
- Planning of the work to be developed



### Session subject: Surf the internet safely

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Surf the internet safely
  - Recognize potentially unsafe, dangerous online situations and behaviours
  - Identify rules to avoid unsafe, dangerous online situations and behaviours
  - Identify strategies/ resources when faced with potentially unsafe and/or dangerous online situations and behaviours
- Tips
- Free debate and discussion
- Planning the work to be developed

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### Session subject: Personal data

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Personal data
  - Understand and identify what personal data is
  - How to protect personal data
  - Know the consequences of sharing personal data
  - Resources and tips
- Free debate and discussion
- Planning the work to be developed



### Session subject: Cyber bullying

On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Cyber bullying
  - Understanding what bullying and cyberbullying is
  - Recognize cyber bullying behaviours and practices
  - Learn how cyber bullying is considered hate speech and how hate of any kind is wrong.
  - Victims and aggressors - impacts
  - When I'm a victim - procedures
- Free debate and discussion
- Planning the work to be developed

### Session subject: Time to review, prepare and act



On face-to-face meeting and online meetings 5 PcDI and 2 professionals gathered to developed the following activities:

- Review: Privacy, security, personal data, cyber bullying,
- Preparation of the transnational meeting – activities
- Preparation of the article “Meme Final Event”
- Publication in Apito – local newspaper
- Preparation of the final event - presentations

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## Self Assessment questions

### CHAPTER 1

1. **What could a text for visually impaired people look like? Tick the correct answers, multiple ticks are possible.**

CORRECT: Appropriate contrast

CORRECT: Examples for Accessible fonts: Verdana, Calibri, Arial

CORRECT: Font size minimum of 14pt

WRONG: Font style: Use of unequal thickness of letters is best

2. **Which of the following sentences is correct?**

CORRECT Learning contents, methods and activities should be adapted, customised and thus accessible and usable by all the components of the group.

WRONG Learning contents, methods and activities should be adapted, customised and thus accessible and usable by only the components of the group with disabilities

WRONG It is not important to verify if the learning contents, methods and activities are accessible and usable by all the components of the group

3. **Identify two key elements you need to consider in structure a learning programme related to the use of social media**

CORRECT Kind of activities to carry out

CORRECT Number of the meetings

WRONG Presence of a radio

WRONG The weather

4. **If there is a participant with a limited mobility you should:**

CORRECT: Ensure that the room you are doing the activity is accessible

WRONG: Change the room whenever you want

WRONG: Do not ask the persons to move within the room

CORRECT: Ask the person if need assistance and wait for his/her response

5. **A correct way to communicate with person with disabilities:**

WRONG: pretend to understand even if you don't

CORRECT: speak slowly and formulate short sentences

WRONG: ask the accompanying person if you do not understand

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WRONG: make long sentences explaining a lot of details

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## CHAPTER 2

### 1. True or False?

Participation in, with and through digital media are the common fields of media participation.

### 2. Media literacy:

CORRECT: develops through action and active participation

WRONG: could be learned by passive training

WRONG: is not important for people with disabilities

WRONG: does not include the reflection on the personal identity

### 3. Social Media learning processes:

WRONG: should include only the activities related to social network

WRONG: are easy for people with cognitive disabilities

CORRECT: should include the improvements of technological skills

WRONG: require the structuring of an unique methodology that could be applied for every person and every working group.

### 4. Working with digital education and disability:

WRONG: it is very easy

CORRECT: require a lot of preparation

WRONG: does not include technological competences

WRONG: it is a process that persons with disabilities can do by themselves

### 5. People with intellectual disabilities:

WRONG: can easily navigate on internet

WRONG: can find accessible content on most website

CORRECT: should be supported by educators or trainers in the digital learning process

WRONG: should learn opportunities and risks before learning how to use digital technologies



## CHAPTER 3

**1. Why should people with disabilities learn useful things about the internet, smartphones and tablets?  
Tick the correct answers, multiple ticks are possible.**

CORRECT: To take part in the internet world

CORRECT: To know the risks that could appear if you are online

WRONG: They should not be online at all

WRONG: Smartphone are not important for people with disabilities

**2. Inclusion of digital technologies in our lives:**

CORRECT: highlighted the inequalities caused by the digital divide

WRONG: is a process that was slowed down by the COVID19 pandemic

CORRECT: could give people with disabilities more opportunity of participation

WRONG: could prevent isolation and the contrast of stereotypes.

**3. True or false?**

It is not necessary that everyone know the “digital language”

**4. A safe use of the Web for people with intellectual disabilities:**

CORRECT: can have a huge impact on their level of independence

WRONG: it is not important due to the fact that they do not use Internet

CORRECT: can help them to become active users of the internet

CORRECT: can improve their wellbeing

**5. Persons with disabilities:**

CORRECT: should be given the possibility to participate in the digital community.

CORRECT: should be aware about the “safety rules” and the “safe navigation”

CORRECT: should be provided with accessible and easy to use materials and information.

WRONG: should be informed about the new features of the internet world as they for sure not are interested



## CHAPTER 4

1. **True or false?** Cyberbullying is a form of bullying using electronic means. Cyberbullying is when someone bullies or harasses others on the internet and other digital spaces, particularly on social media sites
2. **How can you prevent people with disabilities to be victim of virtual exploitation?**

WRONG: banning the use of social media

WRONG: controlling their messages and social media use

TRUE: make them aware from the risk

WRONG: letting them using the social media alone

3. **Which of those data are considered personal data?**

TRUE: Bank details

TRUE: E-Mail Address

TRUE: Health data

TRUE: Location Data

4. **Privacy and data treatment**

TRUE: concerns own's safety online

WRONG: does not influence one's reputation

TRUE: are also related to the sharing of pictures

TRUE: are regulated by European laws

5. **True or false?**

People with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities, have more difficulties of applying the concept of "friendship" in a virtual context.



## CHAPTER 5

1. **Do you know the most common social media platforms? Tick the correct answers, multiple ticks are possible.**

CORRECT: Facebook

CORRECT: YouTube

WRONG: Inseram

WRONG: Doodle

2. **What is a social messaging service you know? Tick the correct answer, ONLY one possible**

CORRECT: WhatsApp

WRONG: Tikkitokki

WRONG: Rundi

WRONG: Blizzard

3. **True or false?**

In the last years, the biggest Social Networks and Internet companies, has shown a growing commitment to facilitate access to the various platforms for people with disabilities

4. **Social media:**

CORRECT: is a term that indicate all media that support users in communicating and exchanging information via digital channels.

WRONG: Usuallu do not require internet connection

CORRECT: is used by people to communicate, collaborate and create together using text, images and sound

CORRECT: has a very low entry barriers

5. **Digital divide:**

WRONG: does not hinder access to digital environment

CORRECT: is due to a non-inclusive design of digital environments

CORRECT: requires the development of digital skills from trainers and learners.

CORRECT: should be recognized and appropriate actions should be taken to overcome it



## Useful resources

Language	Title	Link	Type of resource
English	Are we heroes?	<a href="https://www.memedia-project.eu/are-we-heroes/">https://www.memedia-project.eu/are-we-heroes/</a>	Study
	Entelis+ Training Materials	<a href="https://entelisplus.entelis.net/training-materials-in-english/">https://entelisplus.entelis.net/training-materials-in-english/</a>	Training Materials
	Guide for accessible meetings for all	<a href="https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-meetings/">https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-meetings/</a>	Guidelines
	Tips on Accessible Online Meetings	<a href="https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-online-meetings/">https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-online-meetings/</a>	Guidelines
	Tips for Accessible Social Media Toolkit	<a href="https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-social-media-toolkit/">https://www.edf-feph.org/publications/accessible-social-media-toolkit/</a>	Guidelines
Italian	Fermiamo il cyberbullismo	<a href="https://www.disabuse.eu/training">https://www.disabuse.eu/training</a>	Training Materials
	Disposizioni a tutela dei minori per il contrasto del fenomeno del cyberbullismo	<a href="#">Likey Video Tutorial Webinar 6 - Cyberbullismo 2</a>	Webinar
	I super errori del web	<a href="http://www.generazioniconnesse.it/site/it/super-errori/">www.generazioniconnesse.it/site/it/super-errori/</a>	Webseries
	TIDE - Guida per percorsi inclusivi di educazione alla mondialità, AIAS Bologna Onlus & COSPE Onlus, 2015	<a href="https://www.aiasbo.it/PDF/tide/guida-aias.pdf">https://www.aiasbo.it/PDF/tide/guida-aias.pdf</a>	Guidelines
German	Digital competences	<a href="https://wir-machen-kinderseiten.de/wiki/medienkompetenz-0">https://wir-machen-kinderseiten.de/wiki/medienkompetenz-0</a>	Wiki
	Documentary related to data protection	<a href="#">5 Tipps zum Datenschutz   Mynd.</a>	Documentary

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