

ME AND THE MEDIA

Fostering Skills of digital literacy through learning Interactive for people with intellectual disabilities

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MEME European Project

Compared to only a decade ago the way people access, assimilate and elaborate information has totally changed, with new media emerging, such as online journals, websites and social media.

The use of online media has grown rapidly and new services and communication tools, such as blogs, video stream and social media have emerged. Young people, including young adults with disabilities, are more involved: overall in Europe 97% of young people (including young adults between 18 and 30) use internet at least one a week [Eurostat, 2017].

Young adults generally possess a wider range of ICT skills, but not so much is known about the way how these new media can represent diversity, in particular disability,

The existing studies provides a quite common overview: the main image of people with disabilities (PWD) is formed by journalists and the media, while the potential to represent themselves is not revealed. Digital media skills have direct relation to PWD better social inclusion and capacity to tackle discrimination, segregation and cyberbullying while representing themselves on media.

Objectives:

- To enhance digital media skills of PWD using interactive learning settings to actively and constructively contribute to a fairer and more pluralistic representation of disability in social media.
- To fill the gaps in the front line professionals to better support PWD in their engagement with digital (social) media.
- Carry out a study that will deeply focus on stereotypes, investigating how they are created and the way they are evolving due to the democratisation of digital media.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND

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With this knowledge the consortium will involve PWD in the co-design and implementation of Social Media Training Labs; a places where peers with disabilities meet and discuss their social media participation. Through the deconstruction of information found in the media and the development of alternative and more authentic representations, the groups will actively engage with social media. This will contribute to a more pluralistic representation of disability in digital media.

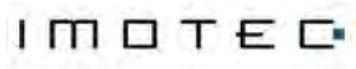
The PWD will also be involved in a cocreating process of the MeMe Guidelines and Toolbox with apps, assistive software and other solutions to facilitate access and presence in social media.

The project will also produce a Learning programme for front line professionals and will created a Serious Mobile game engaging targeted PWD in interactive learning.



Who are we? - Partnership

VŠĮ Švietimo ir kultūros mobiliųjų technologijų institutas
www.imotec.lt



Dedicated to various learning groups, including the PWD. Brings to the projects its specific expertise on Serious Game and mobile app development.

LNOF Lietuvos negalios organizacijų forumas
www.lnf.lt

Umbrella organization of Disability Organisations. The biggest platform of organizations in Lithuania representing PWD and their families. It has 15 national member organisations representing about 300 000 Lithuanian PWD and their families. It provides access to PWD to participate in forming social policy and improving their situation and realizing equal rights of Lithuanian disabled people.



AIAS Bologna onlus
www.aiasbo.it



NGO with a long history in supporting PWD of all ages, in particular in making PWD benefit from available technologies. It operates Assistive Technology services on behalf of the Local Health Trust in Bologna. The team is multidisciplinary and includes educators, occupational therapists, ICT experts, biomedical engineers, psychologists and social workers.





Bolonijos universitetas
www.unibo.it

University of Bologna (UNIBO) is one of the most important institutions of higher education across Europe. The Department of Philosophy and Communication Studies of the University has a long tradition of research on media and new media, with expertise on stereotypes and representations of disabilities and inequalities, especially connected to social skill impairments, cognitive abilities, mental health and gender studies.



Umbrella organisation that represent more than 25.000 people with intellectual and multiple disabilities and their families. Has has a lot of experience on trying to close the digital gap for PWD, namely due to specific projects that was involved. Its are also deeply committed with self-advocacy and empowerment of PWD, and gives direct support to the National Platform of self-advocates NPSA..



CERCIMARANTE
www.cercimarante.pt

Social solidarity cooperative, Fenacerci member. Works with PWD providing them and their families a wide range of services. Has a large experience working with PWD promoting their capacities and empowering them to be fully participate citizens. Also build up a self-advocacy group and it's a member of the NPSA. On the last years had made a huge effort on social media in order to change the general perception about disability.



atempo Betriebsgesellschaft mbH.
www.atempo.at



Private non-profit organisation owned by the non-profit atempo association. atempo offers various training and learning facilities for PWD and several services for assisting members of this target group to get jobs on the first labour market. Besides works to remove barriers hindering PWD to take part in society as equal citizens. Has an extended expertise in working in VET with PWD, including the use of mobile platforms and relevant apps.



Our first meeting

We finally meet on 28-29th, October 2019, in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The main goals of this meeting was to create a common understanding of the project objectives and to provide the partners with all necessary information to start the project activities.

Therefore we discussed the basic project idea, main objectives, project activities, project schedule, expected results, resource plan, funds allocation, qualitative and quantitative requirements for the entire project in order to achieve results and create intelligent products. We also planned IO1 activity, that foreseen the collaboration of every partner in the final research.

At the end we invest time in the preliminary organisation and coordination of all the partners for the IO2 activities: recruitment of participants, meetings, selection of platforms to use.

Every minute spent it was worth it!! See you all soon :)



It's not about getting out from representations, but shaping new ones more acceptable and respectful.

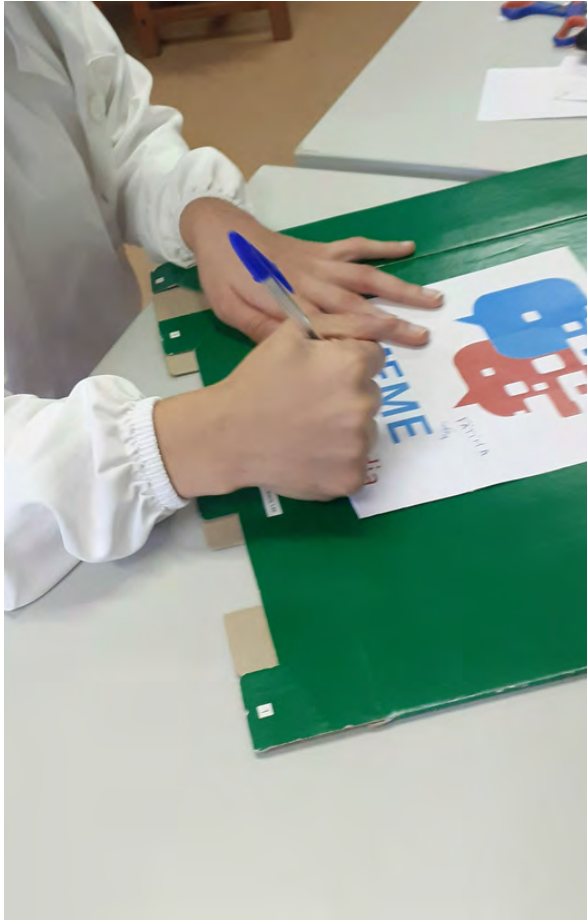
Are we heroes?

Are we heroes? is a study on how disability in general and disabled young people in particular are represented in social media. The European research involved a wide collection of narratives and representations spread by digital platforms in 4 countries: Lithuania, Italy, Portugal and Austria.

Analysing and comparing data, common advertising and communication strategies came up testifying a prevailing turn of paradigm in Europe concerning the representation of disability. As the inquiry will later demonstrate, what is at work is a clockwork between readers' expectations - built upon past representations of disability - and the most recent depiction of PWD where the lack or the variation of classic features develops and carries on a new kind of argumentation on disability.

The evolution of stereotypes and narratives represents the main core of the study and it has been developed through the following procedure:

1. First we analysed how social media and the participatory culture turn affected the research field of disability studies. Through the participatory turn we witnessed the transition from a use of the media in order to enjoy cultural products before the advent of social networks, to the production of popular culture with the media in the practices of sharing and reuse after the emergence of social networks. The most important result of this transition is the possibility for PWD to contribute to the narrative of disability by performing a collective enunciation model.



- Classic stereotypes on disability did not vanish into thin air but they have been adapting to the new cultural practices. Indeed over the second paragraph we reviewed the classic models of disability, used in public, social and political communication as well as in advertising communication from the 70s onwards: the social model, the medical model, the charity model, the individual embodied tragedy model. The analysis of the partnership contributions demonstrated that these classic stereotypes of disability have changed shape through the advent of new cultural practices.
- Later semiotics' theoretical tools have been exploited to describe the spread and the value that PWD's stereotypes assume in the participatory culture of new media. On the one hand the advent of social media led to the development of new forms of engagement and activism while on the other hand it's been fostering the resurgence of old cultural stereotypes, a further confirmation of the idea that social media cannot be interpreted with a positive/negative approach. They simply open up new possibilities able to re-setting practices and utterances keen on inhabiting them.

- In the fourth paragraph we investigated the relationship between PWD's stereotypes and photographic images. One of the fundamental characteristics of the statements and cultural products living and circulating in social networks is the fact that they are images for the most part and they play a fundamental role in the processes of signification underpinning the construction of stereotypes.

We proposed later on a synoptic table of classic models and stereotype images of disability in order to account the way in which they merged, iterated and entered into variation in the participatory culture of social networks and the practices of sharing. Therefore we proposed an unedited classification of these narrations, which emerged through the analysis of numerous cases that the partnership reported over the data collection task.

From one side the emphasis of disability - meaning representations shedding light on disability and stressing the PWD's condition - develops narratives where PWD can emerge as heroes, victims, an obstacle to social practices (antagonist) or profiteers who want to take advantage of their condition. On the other side the aim of narcotisation is to hide, deny or set the disability on the background in order to ease the message of the communication. Further combination among these categories can rise as testified by the texts analysed.

For sure, what we can take into account after long travelling, is that escaping from stereotypes is not in our reach. It's not about getting out from representations, but shaping new ones more acceptable and respectful.

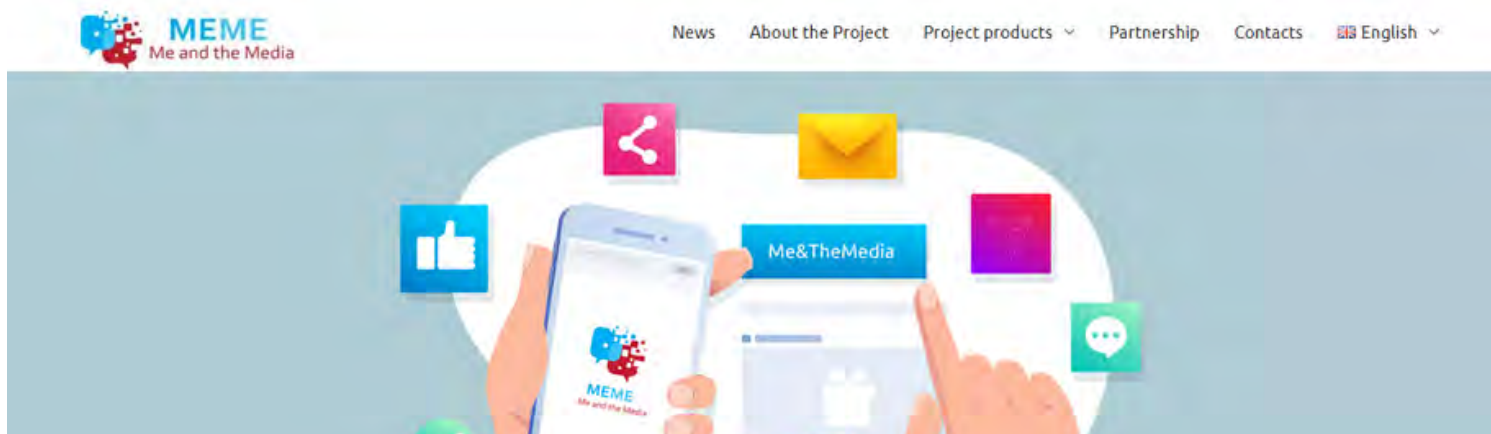
Website

<https://www.memedia-project.eu/>

We developed a project website, in all partners languages, that is the main information vehicle and repository project developments (particularly its activities and results).

You can find information about our study upon how disabilities in general and disabled young people in particular are represented in social media, our european experience developing peer to peer learnings spaces, our proposal for a learning programme for educators, a link for our mobile game and also for our toolbox!

The website is also linked to the partners websites.



Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/MeAndTheMedia/>

We have created a page on facebook so that you can follow our activities.

We share the main results of our project, but above all we want you to follow the actions we develop in each partner country with the different working groups!

Follow our learning and sharing adventure on our website!

Post comments, share and like!

Let's live this adventure all together!

