

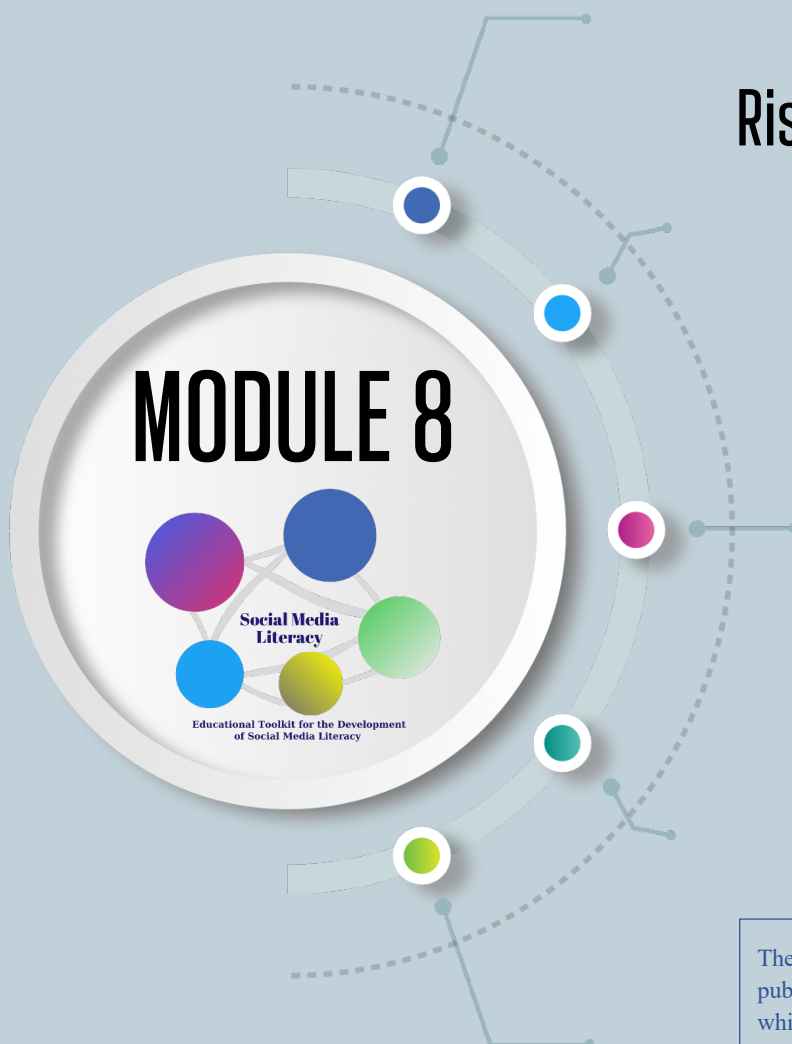
# Course Support for the Development of Social Media Literacy in schools

Limits of the use of social media in education

Ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education

Negotiating the relationship with the parents

How to mitigate the risks of using social media in education



## Risks of using Social Media tools in education

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## Module aim

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As the number of educators that turn to social media as an educational tool grows, there's also an increasingly need to think, study and train schools for this reality. Whether it's for being up-to-date and connected with students, to bridge the limitations of the physical classroom and time schedules, or simply to use the potential of social networking apps, educators are also becoming more aware of the limitations of these technologies.

The potential of social media and digital technologies in education are undeniable and, therefore, the school must recognize these potentialities and incorporate it in learning activities in the school. However, we also must be alert to all the risks inherent with the use of such technologies. In this module, we are going to address some issues in using social media tools in education: limits of the use of social media, ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education (privacy, extra-scholar activities, teacher-pupil relation outside the classroom, “social friendship”), negotiating the relationship with the parents and how to mitigate the risks of using social media in education.

Number of hours: 3h

## Learning Outcomes

- Creatively using digital technologies
- To use digital tools and technologies to create knowledge and to innovate processes and products
- To engage individually and collectively in cognitive processing to understand and resolve conceptual problems and problem situations in digital environments
- Identify the limits of the use of social media in education
- Identify and operate with the ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education (privacy, extra-scholar activities, teacher-pupil relation outside the classroom, „social friendship”: etc)
- Negotiating the relationship with the parents
- Mitigation of risks

## Training Material

### 01. Limits of the use of social media in education

As the number of educators that turn to social media as an educational tool grows, there's also an increasingly need to think, study and train schools for this reality. Whether it's for being up-to-date and connected with students, to bridge the limitations of the physical classroom and time schedules, or simply to use the potential of social networking apps, educators are also becoming more aware of the limitations of these technologies.

The most obvious limitation might still be the lack of access to computers or the internet, especially in some socio-economic backgrounds. On the other hand, there are also students that decline using social networking in their education, whatever the reason they may have, which might result in teachers unintentionally excluding them from some class activities. Educators have been

connecting with students through the students' personal network accounts, blurring the line between public and private space.

Social media was developed to bring people together in a peer-to-peer model. With a few exceptions of administrative privileges on the managing of groups and pages, the accounts have the same features and access privilege. This brings up a potentially problematic ethical position for educators when they take on the dual role of teacher and friend to a student.

Besides this, there has been some criticism of social media use in education for its excessive flow of information and the constant interruptions that interfere with students' attention, thus affecting the learning process by distracting them from their school work. In the same way, there are serious warnings about the overuse of this technology with focus on the physical and mental health issues. Parents and educators have been growingly concerned with the time spent in front of screens, long before the advent of the social media. The integration of this technologies in the educative process might come as a burden to the daily time spent online. There's enough evidence stating that excessive use of social media is associated with the development of depression, anxiety, and lack of self-esteem, alongside with the decrease of human-to-human interaction and physical activity.

Furthermore, there are also security issues to address. Teachers have the concern and the responsibility to make the school a safe environment, a place where students interact positively. This is not always an easy task, and the rise of social media has just made it more difficult. Children usually use different social networks than adults do and being digital natives, they often use them better than their parents and educators. But, at the same time, they are exposed to the online world and to unknown adults that might have superior technological skills and misleading purposes. There are all sorts of risks that take much expertise to be fully aware of their extension, such as fake accounts, theft of accounts or personal information, phishing, cyber bullying, photos with GPS features, deep fake, and so on.

## 02. Ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education

When we use social media in the process of teaching and learning we need to consider a set of ethical broad guidelines. Concerning on an ethical perspective, classrooms should be built under a culture of care the teacher brings to the classroom. Schools need guidance, codes of conduct, protection for the use of social media in education to grow, understanding will increase with engagement.

Some studies refer to four ethical dilemmas that need to be addressed by teachers who are using social media content or services with their students. In this context, “we define ethics as a moral choice, which means that teachers have to decide their own response to the dilemmas, according to their socio-cultural and professional contexts”. These have been organized according to well established ethical practice:

1. Consent
2. Traceability/confidentiality
3. Boundaries
4. Dealing with illicit activity

### Consent

Accordingly, to some studies, consent concerns to the respectful way to gain permission from people to engage with them in current or new practices and in gaining access to their data. Concerning to this, what constitutes private and public data? Some authors mention what is publicly available and what is really perceived as public by participants could be quite different. For example, if a student publishes a video, they will not expect the same video to be shown in the context of the classroom. Teachers need to ask for consent to access and use students’ social media resources in the classroom context, because students potentially did not want, expect or perceive them as something for public consumption.

Another issue about consent could involve the possible decontextualization of the social media resources (e.g. texts) in a classroom environment. As Henderson, Auld & Johnson refer, “*the narratives that teachers make about the use of social media in the class could be rather different to the comments that have surrounded the production of the texts in the original form produced in the social networking sites.*”

## Traceability/confidentiality

When we request students to tweet, blog, post, share, or co-construct their texts, we can't forget we are asking them to operate in a public or semi-public field. This is an ethical question about privacy, identity and online reputation of our students. How can we guarantee students that their digital footprint (online conversations, interactions, personal details) will be circumscribed to the classroom context? Social media has the potential for individuals to be permanently tagged with a digital trace. The way it records, tracks, connects and publishes gives us little or no control over the privacy/confidentiality of profiles.

## Boundaries

What are the boundaries between private and public, personal and professional/student, and even leisure and school/work? *Teachers need to have in mind the implications for co-inhabiting spaces that are designed to connect people and share information. The most obvious ethical concerns of social media co-habitation are:*

- a) *teachers sharing their private identities and practices in their profiles with their students that might not be congruent with the expectations placed on them as professionals*
- b) *students actively seeking contact with teachers on the networks and, in doing so, building a profile of the teachers that may be incongruent with expectations, or even place the teacher in a compromising position.*

*Social networking applications expose teachers' out-of-school identities and their networks to a greater degree of scrutiny by their students, colleagues, and school communities. An obvious answer to this problem is for teachers to choose to only engage with social networking applications that offer a higher degree of privacy and control. Another strategy is for teachers to create a social networking profile specifically for their professional work as a pseudonym. This still requires considerable thought and maintenance on how to balance professional identities and authentic identities whilst online.*

## Deal to illicit activity

These days, copyrights issues play an important role in education, particularly when we use and post on social media. How to deal and recognize student's illicit behaviour when they use images, videos

or texts protected by copyrights in their works? Students will learn and incorporate their understandings about the law and morality from the real actions of their teachers.

### 03. Negotiating the relationship with the parents

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Children nowadays have a way of connecting and interacting continuously with friends. They use various electronic gadgets, play games with people from other countries, have live face-to-face conversations via Skype, etc. It's hard to even imagine a childhood without the internet and social media.

Today's teachers are increasingly turning to a variety of digital technologies to make communication with parents easier and more current. Social-media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, are helping teachers keep parents and other community members informed. Teachers are encouraged to go where the parents are; more parents are apt to be on Facebook or Twitter every day, whereas they might check the class webpage only once in a while or when reminded.

#### 1. Blogs:

Blogs are powerful communication tools. When done well, they are opportunities for teachers to read, think, and reflect, connecting their students' learning to their classroom practice.

A blog attracts parents' attention. Having a blog that talks about teaching and learning, with the aim of sharing knowledge with parents, is a great way for teachers to help parents deal with issues that affect their children and to support them by helping them support their children's learning. Blogs can be general in nature, focusing on your teaching and your students' learning; or they can be devoted to a specific topic such as math, science, english, physical education, etc.

#### 2. Facebook:

Many parents are already on Facebook, so it makes sense to communicate with them on a platform with which they are already familiar.

Facebook allows teachers to share class news and information with the parents of their students. Teachers can create a private parents' group for his/her class and share information only

with the parents of their students. Types of information teachers might share: details of upcoming field trips, special events or parties, pictures of student projects, students' published writing, etc.

### 3. Twitter:

Twitter is another platform with which many parents already use or about which they are eager to learn how to use it. Twitter is a communication tool in which information is communicated in short posts of up to 140 characters (called Tweets). It is also possible to post links, photos, and videos.

Just as with Facebook, it is possible to set up the teacher's Twitter account so that only approved followers can view his/her Tweets. Tweets are most often sent using a smartphone so teachers and students can use it anytime and everywhere. It can be used to: share news of the day; post reminders about events; share photographs and information about and from school activities.

## 04. How to mitigate the risks of using social media in education

Social networks are virtual platforms that involve millions of individuals from all ages and can be used as formal or informal learning environments. Security of social networks is also as important as the security of schools as traditional educational settings. Considering security problems are likely to occur in social networks, it is important that individuals know the possible threats they may face in social networks, what precautions they should take against them, and what they need to do when they encounter threat to create safe learning and teaching environments.

Some of the of the key issues reported by teachers and students when using social media in school are integrity of student submissions, concerns about privacy, separate course and personal accounts, grading and assessment, lack of integration with Learning Management System (LMS) and lack of support.

Both physical and electronic environment security of schools and courses, which are traditional learning and teaching environments, are essential for quality and effective education. In addition to its many advantages and benefits, social networks also contain some potential dangers - it is important for social network users to know these risks and their scopes to take security precautions. Considering the fact that social networks are often used as learning and teaching platforms, providing the security of these platforms is one of the current issues that need to be addressed.



Some of possible threats that may be encountered in social networks are:

**Fake accounts** – holders of this type of accounts use credentials that do not actually exist normally demand for financial gain or gain access to information or start sexual harassment and cyber bullying.

**Theft of Accounts** - Account hijackers can share inappropriate or illegal content through the stolen account. They can also communicate with the people in the friends list and ask them for money, credits or some private information.

**Social Malware** - A link sent via a captured account can be used to infiltrate devices and access sensitive information.

**Phishing** – Consists on password catch by directing users to fraudulent sites by clicking on links containing interesting messages or suggestions.

**Cyber Bullying** - An individual or group tries to harm others, usually children and youngsters. by using information and communication technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones

**Photos with GPS data** - Many people take photos and videos with smartphones or digital cameras and the information stored can reveal information without the knowledge of the user.

**Mobile Applications** - Some applications often use some techniques such as "You won a big prize" When installing them, the user is asked to provide his Facebook or other account details, such as email address, phone number or passwords, which aim to steal personal information.

**Deepfake** - Its the process of changing a photograph and mount it into uncontextualized video. These videos are often of sexual or humiliating nature.

**Violation of Privacy** - A person's private life, information, photograph, video or document is shared with everyone in the social network without the permission of the person.

Whenever a student enrolls at a school their parents need to sign a consent form. One of the areas they need to give consent for is permission to access the internet. Students and parents also need to sign a code of conduct form that spells out everything they can and cannot do on the school's ICT devices.

Some practical examples of a correct use of social networks:

**Twitter** - One way is to create a single Twitter account for their class, and have the students manage the Twitter account. Students can tweet from this class account and play an active role in the social learning environment, but they can't tweet from their own, unique user profiles.

**Pinterest** - Everything you pin is seen by everybody, not just followers. And, once pictures and comments go online, there's no taking them back. Given this, the best approach is: Think before you pin. Don't post any pictures that you wouldn't feel comfortable showing to anyone — including your parents, kids, students, or co-workers. Don't add any comments that can be taken out of context. If you aren't sure, err on the side of caution.

**Youtube** - For students, watching YouTube is a part of their daily lives, with 95% of young people aged 13-20 using the platform. Using a third party software to broadcast Youtube videos can help mitigate some risks: Edpuzzle is an online platform that allows you to take advantage of the world's most powerful database of online knowledge and make YouTube work to your advantage. Introducing students to YouTube Creators can be a safe way to share content with your private class/school channel or with the rest of the online world. Other platforms/software to consider are SafeShare, Edutopia, YoutubeKids. Additionally, install an AdBlocker for YouTube; press full screen before unmuting or unfreezing; pause the video a few seconds before it ends.

**Facebook** - Facebook is an online social media platform that has over 2 billion users across the globe and was initially designed for university students and anyone over the age of 13 is able to join the platform. Users can add photos and videos, update their status, interact with others and catch up with the latest news. Despite requiring users to be over 13, there are no age verification measures and children can easily create an account. It's therefore important that parents familiarise themselves with the main features of the platform to ensure their young ones remain safe if and when they use it.

Facebook not only have Privacy guides as to how your information and data is used but also a Safety Centre. Whichever type of Facebook users you are – teacher, parent or teenager, there's a Facebook safety guide to help you and they regularly supply advice sheets on how to stay safe and how to control your privacy.

**School LMS** - In this approach, instructors let students use social content and toolsets within the environment of an LMS (for example, Microsoft Teams, Moodle) that incorporates social content

and tools. This private environment protects students from outside distractions and focuses the social content and tools exclusively on academic use.

Schools are required to fulfill their responsibilities such as providing the necessary software and hardware in the context of security and providing training for students and teachers about the subject of security. Detailed information about the social network process should be found in the Help/Help Center links on the social networking homepage. In addition to complaints to social networks, applications must be made to the relevant government agencies and organizations. For this reason, one should be informed about the process of notice and legal complaints. This is because most of the threats that are encountered in social networks are defined as crime in law and subjected to penal sanctions, particularly in cyber bullying cases

## Resources

- Childnet International - <https://www.digizen.org/socialnetworking/sn.aspx>
- HandBook of Research on Education and Technology in a Changing Society - [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290602099\\_Social\\_media\\_and\\_use\\_of\\_technology\\_in\\_higher\\_education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290602099_Social_media_and_use_of_technology_in_higher_education) (2014).
- Social media in education: ethical concerns: <https://altc.alt.ac.uk/blog/2014/07/social-media-in-education-ethical-concerns/#gref>
- Social Networks as a Learning and Teaching Environment and Security in Social Networks: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329317151\\_Social\\_Networks\\_as\\_a\\_Learning\\_and\\_Teaching\\_Environment\\_and\\_Security\\_in\\_Social\\_Networks](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329317151_Social_Networks_as_a_Learning_and_Teaching_Environment_and_Security_in_Social_Networks)
- Social Networks as a Learning and Teaching Environment and Security in Social Networks <http://redfame.com/journal/index.php/jets/article/view/3817> (2018).
- Social Media in Education - <http://digitalresources.nz/article/8tq0bGF>
- Connect Safely: <https://www.connectsafely.org/eduguide/>
- <https://altc.alt.ac.uk/blog/2014/07/social-media-in-education-ethical-concerns/#gref>
- <https://www.asha.org/Practice/ethics/Ethical-Use-of-Social-Media/#Introduction>
- <https://www.bi.edu/research/business-review/articles/2020/07/ethical-dilemmas-of-social-media--and-how-to-navigate-them/>
- <https://home.edweb.net/webinar/pd20191105/>

## Learning Snacks

### 1. Limits of the use of social media in education

Alongside with the benefits of the use of social media in education we, as educators, must also consider its limits. There is a rising awareness of issues such as digital exclusion, the constant flow of information and interruptions that may affect the learning process, the excessive daily time spent online with the associated health problems and not forgetting the ethical dilemmas and online security risks.

### 2. Ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education

Teachers need to consider a set of ethical broad guidelines which concerns consent, confidentiality, boundaries and illicit activity when using social media in education.






### 3. Negotiating the relationship with the parents

Social media lets parents see that teachers are people. Parents appreciate getting to know their child's teacher as a person. It helps to build rapport and establish a closer relationship. But attention, there is a danger of being too personal, so as a teacher be sure to keep posts and photos related only to your professional life, you must maintain the same personal boundaries that teachers have with parents in the classroom setting.

## Infographics

### 1. Limits of the use of social media in education

The main limits of social media use in education are:

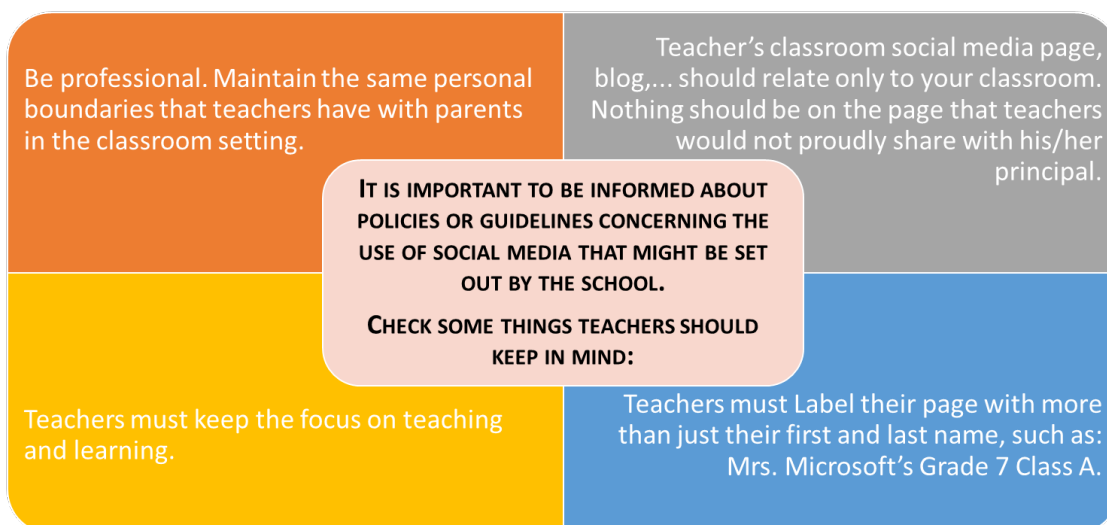
				
Digital exclusion as result of lack of access to hardware and Internet	Students refusing to use their social networks, thus being unintentionally put aside	Dual role of teacher and friend to a student	Excessive flow of information, interruptions and daily time spent online	Information security, data protection, cybercrime

### 2. Ethical dilemmas while using social media in education

Some ethical dilemmas to be considered on a social media education environment:

Consent:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gain permission to access and use students' data and resources in the classroom context</li> </ul>
Traceability/confidentiality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media has the potential for individuals to be tagged with a digital trace. How can teachers guarantee the confidentiality of a student's profile to be circumscribed to the classroom context?</li> </ul>
Boundaries:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish boundaries between private, public and professional social media profiles</li> </ul>
Illicit activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerning to copyrights, students will incorporate their understandings about the law and morality from the real actions of their teachers</li> </ul>

### 3. Negotiating the relationship with the parents



## Activity plans with students

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### 01. Activity 1: Our code of conduct

**DESCRIPTION:** Create a collaborative code of conduct addressing a set of rules to mitigate risks while using social media as a class group, which can be shared in the school's digital learning environment. It's also important to mention in the code of conduct, the benefits of using social media in classes as well as the inherent potential risks.

**WHY THIS ACTIVITY IS RELEVANT:** Creating their own ethical online rules students better understand and integrate them into their school and personal practices.

### 02. Activity 2: WebPaper competition

**DESCRIPTION:** Organise a webpaper competition between classes where students must complete a quiz competition (webpaper) with 15 or 20 questions concerning the benefits and risks of using social media in general. Students will be graded taking into account the score and the time used to complete it. At the end, diplomas will be distributed to students with better results and revealed to all the school community.

**WHY THIS ACTIVITY IS RELEVANT:** It's important to foster among students and school community that social media has a great potential in school and life in general, but also brings some risks that could make harm to our professional and personal lives. Being aware of the risks is critical in the 21st century!

## Activity assessment

### Limits of the use of social media in education

. Are these statements true or false?

	True	False
Social media has been developed for other purposes, but it is also perfectly suited for the use in educational context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Depression, anxiety, and lack of self-esteem can be harmful effects of the excessive use of computers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With the development of modern social media platforms with stronger protection layers, an online presence has negligible security risks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teachers and students being online friends, alongside the educational relation, brings up ethical issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Ethical dilemmas while using the social media in education

Match the phrases to the concepts of some ethical dilemmas:

(A) Permission to access and use students' data and resources	1. Consent
(B) The potential of social media for individuals to be tagged with a digital trace	2. Traceability
(C) establish boundaries between private, public and professional social media profiles	3. Boundaries
(D) How to deal and recognize student's illicit behaviour when they use images, videos or texts protected by copyrights in their works	4. Illicit Activity



## Negotiating the relationship with the parents

Are these statements true or false?

	True	False
Teacher's classroom Facebook page should relate only to his/her classroom. Nothing should be on the page that teachers would not proudly share with his/her principal.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Just as with Facebook, it is possible to set up the Twitter account so that only approved followers can view the teacher's Tweets.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>