

MEDIA LITERACY IN TIMES OF MEDIA DIVIDES

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ABSTRACT *We live in a post-modern society, an information society, a society based around knowledge and participation, and above all in a media society. In a media culture where media holds a dominant position, we cannot overlook the emerging idea of a 'media divide' within the frame of media education, media literate individuals and the expansion of the traditional concept of media literacy. Firstly, we are in an era of technological revolution, and it is time to consider the meaning and function of media and how we experience it in our everyday life. Secondly, as a society we are subject to intense media invasion and we all need to learn how to use it to our benefit and apply a critical and autonomous perspective towards selecting media content. Otherwise the media divide between the media literate and illiterate will widen; but is there even a chance to overcome the supposed divide between those who are formally media educated and those who are not?*

KEY WORDS

MEDIA LITERACY, MEDIA EDUCATION, MEDIA DIVIDE

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PREFACE

Without media and communication, there is no such thing as modern society as the media with its messages connects and hold different societies together. We could say they are society's component and condition; without their dominant and participatory use, individuals can hardly imagine their daily life in which they live, work, learn, and are politically and culturally active. Media are everywhere and can sometimes act intrusively, especially to adolescents and children, who assert themselves in relation to media. Media are the scale for 'up to date' (Wakounig, 2009: 8), which enable them to master media content and the capability of creating an appearance of the world, which would be unknown to us without the media. As József Györkös states: "The transition to an information society, brings with it an extreme openness and free unsupervised access to information and communication" (1998: 81) and speaks of media contents as authorities, which co-design our norms, goals, values, attitude and behavior. On the other side, never in the past has information spread and was received in such quantities and speed, so media life is becoming "the possession of the world auditorium and not the privilege of the chosen ones" (Borčić, 1997: 50), which means, that everybody can not only access the media and use them, but also create them. It is paradoxical, that on one side, the media are capable of overseeing our knowledge, relationships and behavior – so we are 'drowned' in media, which are controlling us; but at the same time, as James Potter indicates, we have bigger potential than ever before, to control our media exposure and media influences (Potter, 2004).

Louis Althusser as a Marxist theoretic set a question, what is actually the role of the ideological apparatus of the state, and on what is their importance based on (Althusser, 1980). Although, at that time he was referring to the church, family and school, which he marks as the dominant ideological apparatus, nowadays we know that the media as an information apparatus, are also those who have ideological values. The cultural environment is almost fully altered with new media experiences, therefore the 'ostrich posture', as states Manca Košir, seems amusing. "It is time we face the media culture, which we created and consumed." (Hobbs, in Košir and Ranfl, 1996: 29)

This follows the need for media literacy – so that individuals can control the media in a sense of controlling their own lives, not the society – they have to be media literate. It is necessary to adjust to new conditions and exploitation of its preferences. How? For a start with a different and improved approach to media literacy and media education, expansion of the media literacy concept, and overcoming of media divides. Latter will be represented in this article. Namely fulfilment of media literacy from the side of most individuals; beside above mentioned benefits, bridge the gap or divide between literate and illiterate, between those who are a part of a formal media education and those who are not. Media divide is (just) an obstacle in the development of the media literate sphere. Is its bridging a utopian idea or potentially plausible?

FROM DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA PEDAGOGY

Little time has passed since the reduction hypothesis, which saw in media a negative influence on individuals as well as on their literacy, over to traditionalistic 'protectionist' approach of media education which protected individuals from media addiction and manipulation, to the importance of critical thinking and nowadays own active media creation. History of media pedagogy, education and media literacy is so rather short but branched – her enforcement at the end of 20th and beginning of 21st century yet a result of technical progress and media-pedagogical conflicts of interest and power. In an individual oriented concept of media literacy, which spread with education 'media awareness' among individuals; we consequently pass through the approach of 'protection and prevention' as a protectionist perspective in the sixties, 'critical content analysis' as demystification perspective in the eighties, and concept of 'do it yourself experience', 'reflecting on own context of life', and 'creative production' as participative perspective in the middle of the nineties (European Commission Media, 2007; Frau-Meigs, 2006).

The above perspectives occur and became dominant in approximate chronological order, it is mainly only about a descriptive concepts of pedagogical trends and not the overview of reality, because the latter is not completely determinable through strict and clear theoretical models (European Commission Media, 2007).

Development is happening so to say on its own, and we do not see it as a progression, because the shift of focus owes to gradual changes in ideological dominance, as also to progress in technical and pedagogical practice. Initial protectionist reasons of media education still follow practice, and it would be wrong to consider them as insufficient, because they indicate support to alternative ideological systems of belief and not wrong practice. Even more, the upcoming changes in media environment are likely to cause new pressures and demands in media education. What seems today as the best practice and completely legitimate approach, will perhaps not be appropriate for tomorrow's media education needs (Leaning, 2009). Why? Firstly, because of the above mentioned changes in the environment, consequently also because of evolving definitions of media literacy and its demands.

TO CHANGES OF MEDIA LITERACY PARADIGMS

Finding that for the functioning within the present media environment and society, which is the basis of academic discussions about media literacy, is necessarily complex and width model of literacy, is therefore on the spot.

Traditional literacy no longer suffices – it is necessary to develop new skills and abilities (in continue competence), which enable literacy in context of current time. Up until now we approached media literacy on the basis of theories and paradigms. Some definitions lean on the approach of cultural studies, feministic theories or epistemological, cognitive approach, sociological and political paradigms or they are approached without

any theoretical basis when media literacy is treated as a public policy issue, critical cultural matter, 'McLuhanesque speculation' or as subject of research from psychological or anthropological tradition. We can be focused also on a particular country or culture, particular media, contents and ideologies, audiences or we refer to studies of textual interpretations.

We go from the fact that the listed approaches and from them evolving definitions, are appointed complex and multifaceted – no matter of different perspectives or the standpoints, we speak about the validity of all conceptualizations, hence we just list them and not value them in this article. In all pedagogical concepts matching dimensions reappear, which swing between possible universal descriptions and specific centers. This is followed by the fact that we deal with media literacy: as a common 'adapting to the environment', defined as informed, active and critical understanding of the nature, purpose and influence of media environment and related competences. On a conceptual level we agree with the most used definition, which focuses on the individual, expressed from the side of 'National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy' in the beginning of the nineties, namely, that media literacy is "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide, 1992), which presents an all-embracing framework of competences. The above essential and basic definition is consistent with key theoretical definitions; it reflects the challenging competencies demanded of an individual. Because of a rather simple, but still wide definition, it could be a starting point for the definition of media environment, media divide and lastly of a media literate individual.

OBSTACLE BY THE DEVELOPMENT – SO CALLED 'MEDIA DIVIDE'

Today media literacy is not a luxury but a necessity and we cannot overlook the fact that the level of media literacy of an individual can also change, and that he is going through a dynamic and long term process of learning, but never fully mastering the skill, especially taking into consideration that general literacy is also a "lasting developing capability of individuals" (Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, 2005: 6). So to say, media literacy is not a perfected state, as it is a process, which never ends and is constantly changing – it is "continuum and not a category" (Potter, 2013: 25). It is expected from us, that we are media literate, which needs to continually develop, actualize and widen, especially because the field of media technology is evolving at a fast pace. We assume that for many it is difficult to keep up with the changes, although we all have a certain level of media literacy and we cannot say that somebody is completely media literate, as well as, that somebody is completely illiterate (Christ and Potter, 1998). Even so, 'black and white' division on media literate and illiterate is present.

In principle it goes about the so called idea of 'media binomial', which we derive from political binomial after Machiavelli, meaning that there exist 'active minorities and passive majority or the ruling and those who are ruled' - figuratively media literate and those who are not. Polarization between "the media 'haves' and 'have nots'" (Buckingham, 2005:

33), or those who are aware and on the other side those who are ignorant (Wakounig, 2000). Researchers of public opinion distinguish between attentive and inattentive public, which (do not) show interest for public matters, as we can also with media literacy. There are differences between those individuals who can comprehend, critically analyze and evaluate the value of media contents and on the base of qualitative information participate in society, and those, who do not have all this or are not able to (Masterman, in Erjavec, 1999: 55).

“The world economy, due to the digitalization in the middle of an upheaval, is forcing millions of people into a new communication culture – those who cannot keep up are at risk of slipping into lower third of two-thirds of society” (Glutz, 2001: 17), while Alexander Fedorov continues: “I see media illiteracy main danger in the possibility of a person becoming an easy object for all sorts of manipulation on the part of the media or becoming a media addict, consuming all media products without discrimination” (Fedorov, 2008: 14). Peter Glutz talks in his article about media illiteracy as a way of disuse of contemporary media communication means, the second about the consequences of media illiteracy regardless of its origin.

Unfortunately, in the frame of media literacy (as in many other frames), we cannot talk about egalitarian society, which assumes full equality of individuals, since this is a merely a utopian notion. We never managed to create an egalitarian society, where all individuals would be equal – it is the same in the context of media literacy, and consequently we talk of “media divide”. It is an upgrade of the so called ‘digital divide’, because with media literacy we do not refer so much on the social frame, which includes the (in)access to media and technologies, and its (dis)use; but on the lack of cognitive resources that represent competencies that individuals need in the media world. We are talking about the segment of individual competencies and needed skills for their critical use, respectively about communication capabilities (Vehovar and Vukčević, 2001). This is followed by the barriers to media literacy, primarily conceptualized as (1) access barriers, followed by (2) the barriers of use, and (3) barriers of understanding. The latter is like critical media monitoring, knowledge and attitude, the ones most frequently acknowledged in media divide.

Similarly, Sonia Livingstone and Magdalena Bober write about divide based on “quality of use”, when individuals are divided on those to whom the media are increasingly important, rich, diverse, participative and encouraging, and to those, who look on media narrowly, as uninterested and useless (Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

Specific view, thought on digital divide has also Norton (in Vehovar and Vukčević, 2001), as to him it means predominantly difference in a state of society in the information era, according to the state of society in past times. If transferred on media divide – difference of society is nowadays substantial, considering that in the past, individuals were not media literate or not in that sense as today.

So we have (1) media divide between literate and illiterate individuals nowadays, (2) media divide between today and past societies, and (3) assumed divide or divergence

between those who are a part in formal media education and those who are not. Namely media literacy means for an individual an understanding of media and the ability to use it reflectively, critically, independent and judged on a situational basis. But to what extent media education actually adds to increased media literacy, to critical thinking and one's own media creation; and how are this knowledge's and skills consequence of other influences, such as a media society on its own, general intelligence and knowledgeableness, or one's own motivation in the sense of interest and engagement with media? That is why the questions whether media literacy is a result of education or it is a part of general knowledgeableness, mediatization of life, media interaction, perhaps even of media influences, are very well-placed. To this dilemma about clarity of source of an individual's knowledge, new media contribute most. Not only, that new media are informal educators, but in a flood of media contents and information, individuals do not know anymore, where they came across information, and there is an emerging question whether this is part of a direct experience or a media experience. Or as Michael Hoechsmann and Stuart Poyntz states: "[...] there is an increasingly fuzzy line that divides what one knows from where one has learned it, or what one has experienced from where it actually happened" (Hoechsmann and Poyntz, 2012: 17).

DIVIDE BETWEEN FORMAL MEDIA EDUCATION AND ...

Insight into of research on spreading of media knowledge, which concentrate either on a certain theme, level of individual's interaction or age shows some generally expected results – individuals, who are a part of the formal media education, are more media literate. Se-Hoon Jeong (Jeong et al., 2012) says that the assumptions are confirmed, such as: increased knowledge about the media, criticality and awareness of the media effect, harmful or inappropriate behavior, and self-confidence or self-efficiency of the individuals. Similarly also Mary-Lou Galician when she says, that individuals without media education, are poorly equipped for researching and evaluating mediatization: "We do not expect children or adults to be able to learn to read on their own, but most people naively expect that they should be able to read the varied and complicated texts of media – not only newspapers, magazines, and books but also popular songs, radio and television, movies, music videos, and the Internet – without any formal instruction" (Galician, 2004: 9).

On the other hand, experts write that media literacy is being learned mostly unconsciously. José Manuel Perez Tornero and Tapio Varis (Perez Tornero and Varis, 2010) see the gaining of media literacy or 'media awareness' mainly as informal learning, without direct pedagogical discourse or influence. Therefore the unconscious acquisition of media competences within unprogrammed learning. In informal situations are so curriculum, including goals, program of activities and significant learning materials, secondary and in the background or are 'happening invisibly'. As they said "they are implicit in that no one seems to have established them explicitly." (Perez Tornero and Varis, 2010: 87) They are set by the habits and routines, and are not some 'hidden decisions' and that media use and their inclusion in the everyday life within social, technological and media context, encourage, if not even impose such 'indirect curriculum'. "We learn the current uses and

forget the past ones; we recognize the genres, kinds of messages, codes on which they are based; we distinguish between valid sources, the ones that can be motivators; and we ignore the discredited sources. And all of this happens spontaneously". Generally speaking - we learn without formal educational mediation. "That is, they learn without an explicit curriculum, in a practical, inductive way, by themselves, noting their own mistakes and perhaps using their peers as consultants or imitating others' behaviors. [...] Everything happens as a spontaneous, natural phenomenon and it is in that there is no explicit curriculum" (Perez Tornero and Varis, 2010: 87).

We stem from the idea that we do not become media literate just through education institutions, but also independently, as part of today's 'general' literacy where individuals have to be self-responsible for 'good' attitude to media; where "media literacy becomes part of a strategy of creating well-behaved, self-regulating citizen-consumers [...] it reflects a shift from public regulation to individual self-regulation [...] a move away from protectionism and towards empowerment [...] an individualizing move, based on a view of media literacy as a personal attribute, rather than as a social practice" (Buckingham in Verniers, 2009: 16). This supports the above paradigm, followed by presumption, (1) that even without 'intentional' education or learning, we can develop a certain level of media literacy, and (2), that it probably won't reach such high level as by formal learning, therefore the idea of so called the third stage media divide is well-placed. Namely for the formal influencing on individuals media knowledge and skills, it is not necessary to affect on possessing a higher level of media literacy - "acquiring knowledge or skills by itself will not indicate media literacy. The person must actively and mindfully use the information in those knowledge structures during exposures to media messages" (Potter, 2004: 61). Similarly Austin (in Martens, 2010: 13): "an increase in relevant knowledge, may not always predict changes in attitudes and behavior", and continues "the importance of media literacy programs is to include a motivational component so that young people not only understand the concepts of media literacy, but also have the motivation to apply this knowledge".

Jeong writes "the results indicate that media literacy interventions have differential effects on the two types of outcomes: media-relevant outcomes (e.g., knowledge and realism) and behavior-relevant outcomes (e.g., attitudes and behaviors)" (Jeong et al., 2012) The first effect is shown above through the idea of Potter and Austin, but the other is a greater mystery, because it is more difficult to verify if the relationship to the media, which is gained through media education, is used in daily media practice. It is easier to change the level or degree of media knowledge of individuals, rather than changing their attitude to the actual use of media. With this Potter points out, that the problem is more on the use of knowledge rather than knowledge itself - "The problem rests less with awareness and more with acting on those perspectives" (Potter, 2004a: 268). He looks on the media literacy or on the relationship between individuals and the media, from the cognitive point of view, and highlights: "Too often, scholars writing about media literacy have assumed that increasing a person's awareness about particular media messages or about the media industries in general will stimulate a higher level of media literacy. But there is much more to it than that. It is likely that people already know many of the things

that media literacy practitioners want to teach. People might not know all the details or examples, but they do know more than they are often given credit for, even children". And continues: "there is little evidence that changes in public policy or educational institutions will bring about significant and lasting improvement in the public's level of media literacy. Furthermore, there is little evidence thus far that individual interventions by parents or researchers produce lasting changes in a person's media literacy" (Potter, 2004a: 269).

It is difficult to distinguish between competences and their actualization, because individuals may have a high degree of media literacy, but do not use it in everyday life. We could use the phrase – one is theory, the other is practice. An individual can gain a lot of media knowledge through media education, could think critically, but does not retrieve these skills in the media use. One's perception of what media literacy is, is complete and sufficient (or contrary), but one's use of media literacy, is not necessarily proportional to that.

Nevertheless, we originate from the fact, that inequalities in the level of media knowledge and power or media divide, which can be characterized as a new social inequality or even exclusion; can be overcome by media education, which at least on the discursive level, resolves differences within society. The assumption on which we rely, though ironically, on the other hand the very same media education is the one which creates differences between the media's double layered society. We can ask similar question for the media – do they reduce existing media-literate divisions in society, or do they deepen them? Namely there is a danger, that the expansion and development of media technologies deepens the media divide, although Vasja Vehovar and Katja Vukčević claim, that the divide should narrow on its own, when development of technology reaches a certain percentage (Vehovar and Vukčević, 2001: 4). Technically that might be true, but from literacy and learning perspective, the divide is growing or will not be reduced as media literate people learn faster than illiterate.

NEW MEDIA: DOES THE CONCEPT OF MEDIA DIVIDE CHANGES WITH THEIR USE

In a positivist view, now, in 21st century, when the most of the population is literate in a classical sense and when we are more and more aware of influences and the significance of modern technologies; we can no longer place the blame for media illiteracy on to media. New media, which are not purely oriented on the consumer market and enable the possibility of a two way communication, have revitalized the idea of active media participation of individuals, with the introduction of a 'participating media' concept. We have seen the evolution from one-way media to mass media and then further on from mass media we now have the emergence of active 'alternative' media, which are based on the "do it yourself" principle. But on the other hand, the development of media technology, convergence, emergence of new media, improvement in media access and use, and even changed influence and effect – narrowed the rise of media and changed social practices; contribute to the reduction of a critical attitude towards media. It does not necessarily mean that if youths have a familiar and expert relationship with the media,

that simultaneously their critical view of the media will also evolve. Maybe an individual can know how to upload a video, however he would be unable to read a news story with a critical mind. Or considering that media literacy can be viewed as an individual's own attitude with the media - for someone mass media or a specific media can be a rich, useful and interesting source of content, yet for others with a more uninterested attitude, the media can occasionally be useful and have no bigger meaning for an individual. As a result, we presume that one's media literacy depends on how much the media mean to one. As David Buckingham states (Buckingham, 2005: 31): "For example, some individuals may be highly literate on one medium - perhaps as a result of greater experience - but much less literate in others", he continues "Does a media-saturated society necessarily require individuals who are competent to a given level in all media? Indeed, should individuals be expected to develop particular forms of media literacy even if they have no need or wish to do so?" All in all, some individuals, based on their interests do not feel the 'need' for developing media literacy.

Consequently, some critics are raising the negative side of medialisation and talk of its negative consequences, and on the other side supporters talk of 'social-media positivism' or the so called positive media impact on society. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the media often better control people than people control media. But a return back to the world of non-media is impossible; the self-determination, competence, creativity, activity and social-responsible attitude to the media, are an essential part of effort to education and personal-social growth.

The purpose and goal of why it is essential that we are media literate is clear - to gain control over the exposure or access and to create our own critical view of media messages. If we monitor our media usage, we avoid the potential of media controlling us, or as Potter said: "It is worthwhile that we are media literate" (Potter, 2004: 62) and it is from here, that the relevance of the issue is increasingly important, so that individuals would use media selectively and in the frame of their own interest. People have though accepted the idea of media literacy as a way of improving the quality of life, however ironically media literacy and media education have not become an essential part of everyday life and discourse. Namely (media) literacy is neither an inborn pattern, nor the necessity of psychological development, but depends on the requirements of educational institutions, parents and the wider media society. It has to be learned and taught.

In order to understand the meaning of media, we develop media competences and these are at various stages and are multi-dimensional, therefore media literacy differs especially between children or adolescents and adults. Namely young people live "with media and in the media", as Bernd Schorb says (Schorb, 1995), since they are not a stimulus, acting on them from the outside, but are part of their social world. It is not an exaggeration, if we claim that only those who think and behave media literally, could safely move and assert themselves in new media worlds; therefore, the perception of media literacy meaning must expand. According to Bergmanns definition (in Sprick, 2007: 73), media literacy is like "a building block to education", that must be provided, so that young individuals can develop self-esteem and values, discover and test something new, learn to

respect and also coping with uncertainties. This view is affirmed by many other authors, which could be summed up in thought of Zala Volčič, when she said, that “every individual should have media literacy skills and everybody should learn it” (Volčič, 2011).

This does not mean that the media divide will in the future no longer exist, because we distinguish the fact of his existence and the question of his increase. Certain divide exists in all societies regardless of whether we follow the normalization hypothesis, which says that the gap will eventually close or the stratification model, which assumes a further divide, or even the diffusion theory, which says, that the economic benefits of elites will even deepen (Norris in Vehovar and Vukčević, 2001: 20). Marshall McLuhan once said that every new technology requires a war. Perhaps we did not understand this for a long, but now we can see, that the transformed hypothesis of a “black sheep” on the media illiterate, the exclusion of individuals from the media and its content, as well as pointing the finger at the so called “media homeless”, i.e. those who do not use the media or those with a low level of media knowledge; can lead to a ‘war’ between the media-literate and illiterate. With this, the divide between those who know, can and have and those who do not know, cannot and do not have it, grows (Kovačič, 2006), as society is splitting on two uneven camps, leading to the question of the legitimacy of media-social differences.

THE PROGRESS OF MEDIA LITERACY

There is a similar divide between traditional concepts of media literacy and derivations of new epistemological alternatives or interpretations that are constantly evolving - firstly, technology is evolving and so are the media, because of the mediation of society, changes in our perception, evolving ways of communication and overall because we are in a process of “medialen wandel” (Groeben, 2002: 13). Due to evolving media and society the concept of media literacy is increasingly complex. Modern society has, as already mentioned, moved from an era of linguistic literacy to information and media literacy, where it is not enough to be able to read printed text, but also to be able to critically interpret images in the multimedia culture, and to express oneself through different media forms (Mikulič, 2008). We have grown in understanding how mass media work and how people accept media contents (Thoman, 1990), and consequently the definition of literacy has evolved from relative simple meaning of the ability to read and write to the capability for more in-depth understanding – to the taxonomically higher rank of ability, critical attitude enhanced with individual creativity.

Hence it was necessary to widen the term and meaning of media literacy and it will surely need further evolution as time passes, unless we replace it with a pallet of more exact interpretations (Rot Gabrovec, 2010). Namely we could assume that the media literacy represents a short-term actuality, which will demand from us even more, while the definition of it in the sense of competences that are required, fields and questions which are defining it it, will continually require additions and changes. All scientific disciplines are actually subject to continued change, because they respond to changes in their thematic area, likewise are changing the methods. In communication science this is shown

for instance as a change of self-understanding from newspaper science in the first half of the 20th century, to science of media culture and society today. Following, basic and key definition of media literacy, which, repeated, encompass “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms” (Aufderheide, 1992), will in the future therefore also be insufficient, to unspecific and inadequate.

Directly also media education needs to be oriented towards the future and capture today's assumptions and developments, which is challenging, as defining the needs of media literacy in the future is not straight forward due to the unpredictable changes. Latest is hard to define, because we do not know what kind of media literacy will be needed. This creates a challenge for media educational approach, which in this time of constant change, technological evolution and convergence, has to cope with the knowledge that the components of media literacy are not final. We need to focus on the question over the essential components and qualifications that are key for an individual to function media literate (Wakounig, 2000). As a result, the definition of media literacy is not only subject to technological change, but also the subject of current interests, social needs, values and cognitive abilities.

CONCLUSION

Above we pointed out the epistemological conflict of descriptive theories of media literacy. Why descriptive – because we cannot claim, that they are permanent, because they are changing and evolving in line with society and media technologies, demanding further developments. As the term requires constant evolution so as an individual's level of media literacy, however, that is never fully achieved as there is no such thing as complete and absolute media literacy – as there is no complete definition of the term itself. From this we can deduce that all the definitions of media literacy are in the transitional phase, which is necessary for the development of advanced theories. That the theories of media literacy are in an area of morphology is not a bad thing, it only means, that they are interconnecting, complementing and building themselves up. Absolute definition is almost impossible to achieve.

It is similar with the media divide and attempts to bridge it, either in the frame of formal media education or through everyday learning. The divide exist and will continue existing – more media, more contents, more options, bigger influence, bigger media society, bigger divide and a greater need for media literacy as well as contemporary media education.

It is impossible to reflect all media changes that are taking place in all areas of media literacy, as well as questioning why it is important to be media literate. It is only necessary to expand our skills, but not forget the old ones - so that we become active creators of media contents, images and products. As Henry Jenkins writes, an individual “[...] determines what, when, and how he watches media. He is a media consumer, perhaps even a media fan, but he is also a media producer, distributor, publicist, and critic” (Jenkins, 2006: 135). Recently media producer and media consumer are becoming one, as the user

is increasingly taking hold of the technology and is coming in contact with social processes of use, production and potential creation of media content. "For the first time in the history, people's minds are becoming a production force and not only a part of the production system" (Pivec, 2004: 27).

Media literacy if unused is incomplete and only active use of media leads to the evolution of a confident and autonomic relationship with the media and consequently to the critical distance towards media construction. Individual media experience and media production are essential for the understanding of the media work and the reflection on its products and messages. This is why a contemporary media literacy has to incorporate all past approaches and knowledge of media literacy coupled with an active participation and use of media. With the emergence of accessible and easy-to-use media production technology and increasing media literacy there is a big potential to try and bridge the media divide. But as we are increasingly closer to media creation itself, are we really able to create communication and media environment with no media divides? And we ask us again like in the introduction: Is this just a utopian idea or potentially plausible?

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MEDIJSKA PISMENOST U VRIJEME MEDIJSKOG JAZA

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SAŽETAK *Živimo u postmodernom društvu, društvu znanja i participacije, u informacijskom društvu, a ponajprije u medijskom društvu. U takvom društvu, u kojem mediji zauzimaju dominantan položaj, nužno je zahtijevati razvoj „tradicionalnog“ koncepta medijske pismenosti te ne ispuštati iz fokusa problem medijskog jaza (engl. media divide). Dva su razloga za to. Prvo, nalazimo se u dobu tehnološke revolucije i vrijeme je da razmislimo o značenju i funkcijama medija te o tome kako svakodnevno doživljavamo medije. Društvo se mora postaviti kao subjekt u odnosu s nametljivim medijima. Potrebno je naučiti kako se mediji mogu upotrijebiti za vlastitu korist i razvoj kreativnosti te ujedno biti kritičan i autonoman prema odabranom medijskom sadržaju. Drugo, kako je razvoj medija uvjetovan stalnim tehnološkim promjenama koje dovode do konvergencije, pojedinačno razumijevanje medija također se mora mijenjati tijekom vremena. U svrhu unapređenja individualnog shvaćanja medija pojedinac mora postati aktivan sudionik, a ne ostati pasivan potrošač medijskog sadržaja. Jedino na taj način možemo nadvladati medijsku podjelu između medijski pismenih i nepismenih pojedinaca te pretpostavljenu podjelu na one koji imaju formalno medijsko obrazovanje nasuprot onih koji ga nemaju.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

MEDIJSKA PISMENOST, MEDIJSKO OBRAZOVANJE, MEDIJSKI JAZ

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