Tapio Varis
Professor of Media Education and Unesco Chair in Global e-learning
University of Tampere, Finland
www.uta.fi/~titava

"E-LEARNING GOES SOCIAL - POLICY BECOMES E-INCLUSIVE"

One of the conclusions of the EU eLearning Conference in May 2005 was that digital literacy is a fundamental element of the knowledge society. It also stated that ensuring that everyone has the necessary skills, competences, experiences and attitudes to make effective use of ICT is probably the biggest challenge of all. There is a common understanding that the skills agenda may have been too dominant and emphasises economic growth to the neglect of citizenship skills. The new web services like blogs and wiki are promoting new social media with new practical skills and literacies. This is also reflected in the community by converging e-learning and media literacy traditions and promoting an "e-inclusive" approach. New concepts like multiliteracies or multimediality are being introduced.

The globalisation of society and the rise of a knowledge-based economy have combined in the past decade to impose drastically raised expectations upon higher education institutions and related services to the society, especially in relation to the these new literacies. Governments and corporations look at educational institutions for innovative uses of new information technologies in teaching and administration, while also expecting that educational institutions will make their students sufficiently technology-literate to participate in a global economy and civil society. This vision of education emphasises more than before the role of market forces and active citizenship in shaping the institutions. However, the vast majority of educational institutions as well as the public and private organizations are unprepared to reorganize themselves to address these new demands. Digital competence is required to be employable and learnable in the knowledge society (Varis – Utsumi – Klemm 2003).

The concept of digital literacy in a broad sense is a way of thinking but it can also be understood as complementary to the concept of media literacy. Digital literacy as media literacy aims to develop both critical understanding of and active participation in the media, work and society. Digital and media literacy is about developing people's critical and creative abilities.

Digital literacy is not just a simple operative and technical consciousness that is made up of nothing more than technical knowledge. It is the complex acquisition process of an individual of humanity combined with their abilities and intellectual competencies (perceptive, cognitive, emotive) and practical competencies (physiological and motor). To reduce digital literacy exclusively to the skills of using a computer is a crude simplification and a loss in meaning. Using a computer requires diverse and complex previous knowledge. It also introduces the individual and humanity to new contexts, which demands mental, intellectual, profound and complex changes. In essence, digital literacy is a complicated process that consists of acquiring a new tekne. In order to achieve this we need **new renaissance education**: a holistic approach combining technology with art, science, humanities and moral cultural values of good life.

Media literacy has been defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms. Media literacy is a concept whose broad definition and range of applications lead to diverse approaches, creating some intriguing conflicts and tensions. Educators and scholars with disciplinary backgrounds in media studies, the fine and performing

arts, history, psychology and sociology, education, and literary analysis each may vigorously defend one's own understanding of what it means to access, analyze, evaluate, or create media texts without a full awareness of the extent of complexity, depth or integrity of various other approaches (Hobbs 1998). Information literacy becomes essential in the age of electronic libraries and wikipedia (Varis – Saari 2003).

The concept of *digital literacy* in a broad sense is a way of thinking but it can also be understood as complementary to the concept of media education and even synonymous with media literacy. Digital literacy as media literacy aims to develop both critical understanding of and active participation in the media. In the discussions in UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, for example, digital literacy is understood to enable people to interpret and make informed judgements as users of information supports and sources and it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right. Digital and media literacy is about developing people's critical and creative abilities.

According to José Manuel Pérez Tornero (2004) digital literacy is not just a simple operative and technical consciousness that is made up of nothing more than technical knowledge. Digital literacy is the complex acquisition process of an individual of humanity combined with their abilities and intellectual competencies (perceptive, cognitive, emotive) and practical competencies (physiological and motor). These correspond to the technological transformation of the last decades in the twentieth century – the technological change of the Information Society.

To reduce digital literacy exclusively to the skills of using a computer is a crude simplification and a loss in meaning. Using a computer requires diverse and complex previous knowledge. It also introduces the individual and humanity to new contexts, which demands mental, intellectual, profound and complex changes. In essence, digital literacy is a complicated process that consists of acquiring a new *tekne*. This Greek term means the ability of art or craft by an individual or humanity. According to Pérez we are facing the transformation of the most profound tekne that humanity has ever experienced.

The ongoing process of digital thinking and awareness is bringing back the social dimension of e-learning. Communication is always social and as such educative and we need policies that recognize these human values and needs.

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