CONNECT!ONS Med!aLit moments

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In This Issue…

Truth in Consequence: Citizenship in a Digital Age

Part I: Election Low-Down and Let-Down, 2016

The election of 2016 is still on people's minds, and it will continue to pervade our lives for months and years to come. But from our corner of the world, what does this mean for media literacy? What role did media literacy play in the classroom?

As we like to say at CML, we don't have the answers – but we have the questions, more importantly, the Key Questions and Core Concepts of media literacy.

The 2016 presidential election in the U.S. prompted us at CML to re-examine issues around Digital Citizenship. The National Association of Media Literacy Education supported the launch of National Media Literacy Week with a Digital Citizenship Summit on Oct. 28 at Twitter headquarters in San Francisco, and part of the Summit addressed the relationship between Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy through a panel moderated by Lynette Owens of TrendMicro, a sponsor of the Summit.

During Global MIL Week, CML launched "Commit2MediaLit!," a campaign that featured interviews with leading media literacy thinkers and practitioners, as well as U.S. college students who expressed a diversity of ideas around why media literacy is essential in today's media-driven culture.

As we interviewed leading thinkers about Digital Citizenship and media literacy for this issue, it became clear that first, we need to process some ideas about the election and how the election affected media literacy classroom practice. Our scope is limited, regarding the number of views that we can represent in *Connections* – and also, your tolerance for reading interviews – but we think you will find the conversation with Stephen Balkam, president of the Family Online Safety Institute in Washington, DC (and a sponsor of the Digital Citizenship Summit), and Tara O'Gorman, a classroom teacher at Casimir Pulaski School, now a media literacy magnet school in Yonkers, NY, illuminating.

This issue of *Connections* focuses on the 2016 presidential election, where technology is going and the challenges that we face in teaching about it, and media literacy as a way to process current events as well as to teach children. We will follow with more information on the current state of Digital Citizenship to welcome our new year, 2017, and to begin anew.

Interview Highlights

Interview with Stephen Balkam, Family Online Safety Institute

For the past 30 years, Stephen Balkam has had a wide range of leadership roles in the nonprofit sector in both the US and UK. He is currently the Founder and CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI), an international, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. FOSI's mission is to make the online world safer for kids and their families. FOSI convenes the top thinkers and practitioners in government, industry and the nonprofit sectors to collaborate and innovate and to create a "culture of responsibility" in the online world.

Tessa Jolls (TJ): When you started sending out information on the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) 2016 Annual Conference, the theme was: "Online Safety in Transition." I don't know whether this idea was stimulated in part by Trump-ism, but I think you were prescient.

Stephen Balkam (SB): I came up with the title back in the spring, and we were just looking ahead to the timing of the conference. The timing was deliberate. Because eight years ago, we held our second annual conference in early December, and we had members of the Obama transition team come to the conference and speak. So it occurred to me that we could use the opportunity of the change in administration for just the same purposes. Now, I, like pretty much the rest of the world, did not expect the result. We had obviously reached out to both teams, and we had three, maybe four members of the Clinton team lined up to speak. But we were never able to succeed with getting anyone from the other team, but we thought, "Well, what the heck?"

So of course, a bit of a scramble, the day after the election, and of the three people we identified, two were going to be out of the country, and the third declined to speak at all. So we're going to have to guess, I suppose. But also, there is a real sense of a transition from the traditional issues of cyber bullying, and sexting, and over-use, and over-sharing which still persist, but AI, virtual reality, augmented reality, the Internet of Things, Hello Barbie -- all of that is the new wave that we're going to have to come to terms with. Intriguingly, it's a screen-less, keyboard-less world, as well. If you think about the interactive toys that are connected via The Cloud, or if you think of Alexa, Amazon's Alexa, Google's Home -- and we've been trying all of these out -- what is particularly intriguing is simply speaking to devices and then, the devices are responding to you in real time, and with some seeming intelligence as well, albeit artificial intelligence. So that's a huge shift. It's as big a shift as when FOSI got started 10 years ago, when the iPhone was released. That was the shift from fixed computers on the desk, to these mobile devices that were more powerful than the computers NASA had in 1969.

TJ: It's mind blowing. Not quite as mind blowing as the election, but almost.

SB: We're living in a mind-blowing time, that's for sure.

TJ: Counter-terrorism and online Jihadism was also on your Conference agenda. That's also a

new development in terms of kind of relationships with media and how that plays out in peoples' lives. Tell me a little bit about your thinking…

SB: We particularly see Jihadism in Europe, much less so in the United States. But issues to do with extremist material, and then the radicalizations, particularly, of young people -- particularly, young males, but not just males, females too -- to go and fight with ISIS, have been very, very, troubling developments. We had an expert come over from the UK to address these issues at the Conference. We've done some work in May on this issue in the UK this year at a closed door round table, on online harassment and extremism in London. So, we want to bring that conversation to a wider North American audience.

This online propaganda is something we need to take seriously. Actually it's not just ISIS, if you think about the fake news, and if you think about the alt right, and if you think about the kind of madness that's being stirred up by the kind of messaging that's going on that certainly happened on the lead-up to the election and certainly had been encouraged by that election. There is a radicalization going on, I would say, of young white males in this country, which is very concerning. So, it's not just foreign entities that we have to concern ourselves with, but perhaps, homegrown militias.

TJ: Yes, and I wonder if it's similar to the cult activity in the U.S. in the '70s. Young people were recruited, typically in their very early 20s. They were in that vulnerable period of searching for identity, searching for answers, that feeling of belonging. And there was a lot of research around cults, and also de-programming people who had been recruited into cults. I see some parallels there. I think that the psychological phenomena definitely has a relationship to jihadism, because those who are de-radicalizing are using words like 'snapping,' saying that the person snapped. And that was language that was used in the early cult de-programming.

We're looking at youth trying to form relationships, whether it's a real relationship or not, whether it has all the aspects of relationship that we've long thought is healthy for a civilized person. It's huge in terms of topic, but we want to take the airplane view and certainly want to tie together your thinking with your priorities and with how you see that fitting into that context of media literacy and encouraging that healthy citizen.

SB: Right…it's interesting because the day after the election, I flew to the West Coast to participate in a Techonomy Conference, the very one that Zuckerberg spoke at, saying that fake news swaying the result of the election is a crazy idea. And I spoke the day after him, on a panel called, "What Hello Barbie said to Alexa and Siri", and I brought on stage, Dino the dinosaur, that not only talks but listens and he is connected to IBM's Watson.

You can ask Dino how far away the moon is and in an "authentic" dinosaur voice, he will tell you how many hundreds of thousands of miles it is. You can ask him what 2+2 is, and he'll tell you four, but then he'll say, "But you can ask me much harder questions than that." So, "What is 1,234 x 67?" and immediately he responds, and you can see kids' faces light up when they realize what

they have in their hands, as one boy said, "It's homework... " A light went on in the boy's head: Everything he ever needed to know for homework is right in his hands.

And he doesn't have to type anything and he doesn't have to look at anything. And Dino will tell a joke in between, because he tells jokes, too.

Do you know Sherry Turkle and her work? She used to describe Hello Barbie as Toxic. And when I asked her about that (we did a book talk here in town with her), her biggest concern about Hello Barbie was that children would imbue consciousness on this toy. And what happens when Barbie gets decommissioned or runs out of battery life or whatever, what impact would that have on a child? There's a counter argument: Well, I imbued consciousness on my pet rabbit when I was seven. I "knew" he was a rabbit.

But then I answered my own question on stage by saying, "The difference is data." There was no data exchange between me and my rabbit, where as there is with Barbie and me. And that data is stored in the cloud. And in fact, transcripts of your conversation with Barbie can be emailed to your parents at the end of the week. So, that's a considerably different world to literally imbue an inanimate object with, or what would we think of as an inanimate object. So, AI, virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, these are all pushing our concepts of what we think of as human, what we think of as consciousness. Even though since Aristotle and Plato, we still haven't quite figured out what we mean by consciousness. Films like *Ex Machina* and *Her* are showing us a little glimpse of the future, a not that distant future, where machines have already passed the Turing test. The question is, "Are they conscious like us?"

 So, that's what the world looks like from 35,000 feet.

TJ: Yes, those are really the existential questions that we're faced with that we haven't been faced with in the same way. One thought that I've had about all of this, Stephen, is that, when we look back at the 20th century, we see a lot of emphasis on the physical sciences: aeronautics, computer science, certainly physics, any of the hard sciences, and we had phenomenal breakthroughs in those sciences with Einstein, Edison, etc. etc. With data in this century, we have a really unique opportunity to hone in on the social sciences in a way that we've never been able to before because in the past, we didn't have access to the data. I think we have to recognize that, yes, the data is fluid, it's ever changing because people are ever changing. But nevertheless, we now have data for the social sciences, that can provide us with some insight into the human condition that was never available. Certainly, how that data gets used is problematic and challenging, and we don't know for what purposes. We have a lot of questions around all of that. But nevertheless, that data is a force to be reckoned with, unto itself, and it certainly does offer us some opportunities to delve in and look at some of those humanistic questions that we haven't had an opportunity to do.

So when it comes to Jihadism, or online recruiting, or new ways of expressing sexuality, or relationship, or growing up and parenting, and all of those kinds of questions, it looks like we're in

for a dramatic change. What can we do? What should we do? How can we use that data to really help people understand themselves and find ways to navigate it all?

SB: Absolutely, absolutely. And what a time to be a data scientist, or a researcher, a dana boyd, if you will. There's never been such rich data stats to look at. The problem, I think, for folks like them and maybe for folks like you and me is that there's just so much data. And how on earth do you make any sense of this tsunami of digital information?

Likewise, how do ordinary parents, or teenagers, or young people, or kids, make sense of all of this? We're making it up as we go along.

TJ: Facebook, Google, Twitter, all of the major technology companies, and even companies that we don't think of as technology companies -- car companies -- they are all gathering data on us. And do we have access to that data? Who owns that data? All of the questions that we might have as owners of data, generators of data, people who contribute to content and so on, do we own that? What are our property rights? If our data is being monetized, who is benefiting, and why? And what is our role in that whole thing? Really, really huge questions that as a society I don't think we've faced since the Magna Carta, in terms of certain property rights and how we interface as citizens in this new, data-driven and online world. What kinds of issues are you seeing emerge there? Because we're really talking about citizenship in the online world and about our understandings and our rights.

SB: There's definitely an argument which suggests that our data is ours, and it should be a basic human right that our data belongs to us. But we are running behind what's actually going on. Because, as you say, the commercial entities, they're using our data, have been using them with our permission for years, because we blindly accept the terms that they send us, so that we can get onto the platform as quickly as possible and as seamlessly as possible.

I think we're increasingly seeing online reputation as being the new privacy issue. That the digital footprint that you're leaving behind or, in some cases, parents are creating for their children, even before they are born, is creating an online reputation for that individual which follows them through their infancy, their childhood, their teenage years, and suddenly, they wake up, they are 18, about to apply for college and they realize that the very first poop they ever took was recorded and memorialized by their very clueless parents.

What were they thinking? In our research last year, we found 10% of parents have already been asked by their kids to take stuff down off of Facebook. And another 19% acknowledged that they probably put stuff up that would eventually embarrass their kids. And those are the ones that are owning up to, or are at least aware, that that might be the case.

So at what point does a child have some online right? Probably from zero to two, less than 5%, but somewhere at age 18 they have 100% rights. So where, on the scale... At 17 and 11 months you have no rights, and at 18 you have full rights? Or is there some gradation here? Can a 13

year old expect some rights that maybe a seven year old doesn't, but not as much as what a 17 year old would expect?

TJ: So there's really a renegotiation of all of these understandings about the rights and responsibilities, how it works, how it's used. And so we're at the beginning of the beginning. I think the notions that we've put forth about digital citizenship are, frankly, very shallow and don't even begin to address the real deal in terms of what's going on out there. But of course, I also understand the ideas have to be boiled down and presented and packaged and distributed in ways that people can wrap their minds around. So, what do you think about this digital citizenship effort? Do you feel like we're on the right track or not, or if we're doing enough or not, what's going there?

SB: All right, you're finding me in two minds here. I find that the term, "Digital Citizenship," has been a very useful vehicle for a number of years because it has brought a general spin for groups of people in the advocacy world, in the academic, and in the teaching world industry and even government, around the notion of rights and responsibility. I find though, and I'm not exactly sure why, but I find I don't use the terms as often as I used to. One of our earlier conferences was all about the words "Digital Citizenship." It's become, I suppose it's become so wide and so all-encompassing that it... It's not that it's meaningless, I don't want to dismiss it in that regard. But I don't know if there is enough there there, to build a program around, or how I would write about it anymore.

And I suppose, and I don't want to get too demoralized, but given the election and what just happened, if we are going to continue to use the term, I think there needs to be a radical rethink and a honing down and a clear, defining, something that can just quickly and easily be graspable by ordinary folks across the country and around the world. I'm struggling to...I'll leave it at that, I'm struggling.

TJ: I appreciate your honesty about that because we're struggling too, in coming to grips with this. And I think that's a very fair statement to say that there's been dramatic change. The technology is certainly driving some of it. So I totally hear you on that. And I think, also, we're seeing that digital citizenship is a really vague term in a lot of ways. Also, it depends so much on the context. You could say that China will have a very different take on what it means to be a "Good digital citizen," than maybe Colombia, or Mexico, or France, or the US. So I think we really have to acknowledge that it's a very amorphous term, to say the least. And so that leads me to say, "Okay, well then what is fundamental? What can be grasped?" And forgive my bias but honestly, I think that media literacy is foundational, that the core concepts of media literacy, the key questions of media literacy, the methodology are something that can be boiled down and that can be evidence-based and can be scaled.

I think we have to strip away all of the vagaries the context can bring, and we have to get down to what is fundamental and akin to the laws of physics. Sorry, I'm making a speech in the midst of our interview, but this is where I am, thinking-wise, and I know you're a good head to talk to. So

we are at the very beginning of recognizing this tectonic shift, and media literacy, to me, is one of the fundamentals that are unchanging.

SB: Yes, I would agree with you. And going back to the digital citizenship term itself, I think we should be, rather than abandoning it, maybe we should be talking about, "What is citizenship in the digital age?" I distinctly remember taking citizenship classes when I was in the fifth grade. You and I, we grew up in the analog era. I don't know about you, but I was 39 when I saw my first website, which, when I talked to a bunch of fourth graders the other day, they looked at me, in some disbelief. And one boy said, "How did you get in touch with your friends?" [laughter] And I said, "Well, we had these things called bicycles, in our day. And we'd ride over, and we would ring a doorbell. You kids don't even use doorbells anymore. You just text, and say, 'I'm here.'"

So it's citizenship. And I think, and again, given what just happened in the election, in Britain, too, for that matter, and in other parts of Europe, we need to ask, "what is citizenship these days? What on earth do we mean by that?" And then, let's try and answer the question, "What is citizenship in a digital world?" And turn it around that way, rather than seeing digital citizenship as if it's some kind of form of citizenship, some kind of subset of citizenship. I just think it's citizenship, but it's in a new world. I took citizenship classes in a, not asynchronous, but in a pre-digital world, in an analog world. But we didn't call it analog citizenship.

TJ: Right. We didn't. Thank you. And so, in that sense, what I'm hearing you say is that we need to listen. We need to question what is citizenship today? Because we have this entire digital universe available to us that, young people don't distinguish between the digital universe and the analog. They're really, I think, seeing it as kind of seamless, which is in my opinion, probably a good thing. But whether it's, "good or bad", it is. And I think, too, what we're examining, here, and what's coming up for me is that the idea being proposed out there about digital citizenship is that it's a very directive thing. This is what you need to do to be a good digital citizen. It takes the old content dumping approach: "We know what's best and we will tell you what's best, you will listen to us, and you will then perform accordingly." And so, what I'm hearing you say is that we should be in serious questioning mode at this point. That we really do need to have this national conversation, and learn to listen to each other, and come out of it with a different understanding of where we are, and where we need to go, as fellow citizens, so I think that's powerful, Stephen.

How do you see the pathway for us going ahead?

SB: Well, as we said at the beginning of this conversation, I think that the extraordinary level of attention all of a sudden being paid on fake news is a wake-up call to us all, to say discern what you're reading, question what you're hearing, do not accept everything that you see on the Internet or television or video or in the newspapers. Be a skeptical discerning person. Forget citizenship for the moment. Is this really a trusted source? Can we possibly return to a notion of objective facts? And not making subjective opinions as if all you need to do is to say it loud enough and often enough for it to be true. Simply stating that global warming is a hoax often enough does not make that true. So, there needs to be a new agreement, a new accord about

what ~~is~~ baseline reality in our world is, in order for us to be able to communicate with each other and to develop rules and policies and laws and ways to bring up our kids that we may disagree with the details, but fundamentally are based upon common understanding.

I feel like I'm the little boy with the finger in the dike. These are grand words and grand aspirations, and it feels fairly... What's the word? Naïve almost, but there has to be a return, or the alternative is that we simply turn our backs and just say, "No. I accept fragmentation. I accept unreality. I accept the fact that half the country is not going to make sense to the other half." But I don't. I don't accept that. It's a much harder and much tougher line to draw, but I would prefer to be working towards, at least, some effort to find common ground.

Before the election, there was a wonderful video being sent around. Admittedly, it was by a dog food manufacturer, but did you see the video where a dog supposedly is lost and a woman in a Clinton t-shirt shows up at a Trump rally, or the line to get into a Trump rally, with this lost dog and is trying to find who the owner is… The dog is this beautiful labrador, and everyone goes, "Oh, what a beautiful dog." And the dog's wagging his tail and everyone's petting it. And then, they realize she has a Clinton t-shirt on and they go, "Oh -- do you realize where you are? But hey, at least we can all agree we all love dogs." And then, the so-called owner comes running up, "Oh there he is," and everyone hugs. And then they do the same experiment at a Clinton rally, and this time the woman wears a Trump t-shirt, and she has the same sort of interactions.

TJ: Yes, after the election, I found myself humming that song from South Pacific, A Cockeyed Optimist.

SB: Yes, sometimes it feels overwhelming and it feels like the tide is going against us. All the more reason to stand our ground while also finding a way to share that ground with others who are utterly opposed, or fervently persuaded, that the whole thing is rigged…

We have to pay attention to what's going on, both politically and societally. But also, we have to, not just speak to our children, but listen to our children and our teenagers and our young people. Talk with them rather than at them. I think we have to dig deep and be good role models to our kids and young people. I think they are desperately looking for something to hold on to and some kind of reassurance that the world hasn't gone crazy, hasn't gone mad. That yes, there is such a thing as objective truth. And yes, there are real issues like global warming that will impact them far greater than it'll impact us because we'll be long gone. I think we have a responsibility, a generational responsibility, to leave things better than when we found them, and we're not doing that right now. But at the same time, I think we have to really dig deep into our democratic, with a small d, democratic ideals. Then say, "Look, we may not have liked the results of the election, but we cannot protest the fact that someone got elected and someone didn't." But what we do protest are policies that we desperately disagree with. And we do that in a constructive non-violent way while preparing our own positive policies and ideas for four years, eight years' time. And we don't despair, and we don't lose hope, and that we remember to trust each other and ourselves. But above all, we just keep talking with each other. It's the number one thing at our *Seven Steps*

to Good Digital Parenting: Talk with your kids, which is so obvious, but sometimes is the last thing that actually happens. And number seven, the most important for me is the last one which is: Be a good digital role model, yourself. There's everything in between, but... The world is really challenging us to go back to fundamentals and basics here. What do we believe in? What do we believe in in ourselves? What do we believe in within our families, in our communities? What does our country stand for and therefore, how do we then relate to the rest of the world? Because it all starts with us.

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Interview with Tara O'Gorman, Teacher, Casimir Pulaski School, New York

Tara O'Gorman is a passionate media literacy advocate and experienced upper elementary school teacher at a magnet school that has media literacy as its primary theme: Casimir Pulaski School, in Yonkers New York.

Tara O'Gorman (TOG): Media literacy is so needed now — right now! It is so important and so needed. The children are exposed to so much and they just can't really filter a lot of it appropriately. So it's up to us as the educators and the adults in their lives to help them make informed decisions and lead them, educate them about what's appropriate, what's inappropriate, and empower them. My fifth graders just shocked me with the election that just happened. The amount of information that they had prior to the election, during the election and now after the election was mind blowing. They're 10 and 11-years-old, and what they knew was really impressive. And then when you ask them, "How do you know all this?" it goes right down to social media, and the impact that social media has had on our kids and on everything that's going on in the world.

I had to step back, but we did an in-class election the Monday before election day. There were some heated discussions and I had to stop them. And I said, "Okay, you're going to cast your vote now," and then I heard some unkind words being muttered about, and I thought to myself, "I really need to monitor how this comes out in the classroom, because they're passionate about this." So my plan was to tell the 60 fifth graders, "Oh, it was a tie," but do you know what? I didn't have to fib, it was a tie. They were split, just like everybody else in the country was at that point. So it was amazing to me. Amazing. But yes, I was impressed with what they knew.

TJ: Do you feel that the foundational media literacy work that you've been doing with your class contributed to being able to have more of a civil conversation, maybe more of a pathway to discussion?

TOG: Definitely. we speak about everything that is timely, and I'm lucky enough that not only do I teach ELA and Social Studies — those are my formal classes — but I incorporate media literacy and also visual literacy into all of my lessons. Because of this, the children in my classes do have a background in making informed decisions yet participating, feeling free enough to interject their own feelings into discussions. So I think with giving them that freedom and giving them that

validation that, "Yes, you are entitled to an opinion and please tell us what it is. Voice your opinion comfortably." Yet giving them the tools and the support to say to themselves, "Okay, I need to make sure that I articulate this in a way where I'm not hurting anybody, where I'm not causing any distress or any hard feelings."

And when you're 10 and 11, that's tough to do. I tell the children, "You know what? Don't just find the information that you're looking for or accept the information that's being thrown at you from someone else's source. Seek out other sources and then look inside yourself and form your own opinion. Don't let anybody, media or otherwise, tell you the way you're supposed to be feeling or thinking," because that's basically what's happening, especially with social media. They feel inferior, sometimes. They see all these things on Facebook, they're big on Instagram and Snapchat, and I tell them, "Please take that with a grain of salt. Seek other places to find your information, really research it and then think about how you feel and think about it. And you don't have to agree with everything that you're seeing or hearing." I learn a lot from the students, but I tell them to be careful of how they are expressing themselves and how they are interpreting what other people are saying, and to just really be careful.

TJ: Is it difficult to teach media literacy?

TOG: Media literacy is not a formal subject or a formal class in my school. We were an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. The funding was no longer available through the district, so they did away with IB, and my administrators came to me in 2015 and said, "That media literacy you were talking about, and rallying everybody about?" I said, "Yes." And they said, "We'd like that to be our new magnet." So we changed magnets. We went through the process with the Board of Education, and with New York State, and lo and behold, we are now a media and digital literacy school. But, there's nothing formal in terms of lessons, so it's frustrating to me. The Center for Media Literacy is my "go to" when I can incorporate anything, even if it's five minutes, I try to integrate it. There are plenty of things there on the site that are helpful. I print out many things and I share them unofficially with my colleagues, and put it in their mailboxes. I wish I knew whether or not they are pursuing it, I hope they are, since it's our new magnet, but the administration has not imposed or expected a lot of media literacy work. I am the unofficial media literacy coordinator, and I share what I can.

TJ: To my knowledge, your school is one of the very first theme schools for media literacy. Congratulations! And I have found that teachers with an IB background work very well with media literacy, because IB is oriented towards frameworks.

TOG: Yes, that's true. Because the teachers here are all trained, we're all level one and level two trained in IB, that's a great way to help them make a transition. Here, we're so constricted with New York State Standards, and everybody is worrying about the test, the exams and then with the teachers, our jobs are tied to the results of the test. I think the tests are headed towards more critical thinking, including inference. The problem we're seeing is that the tests are so difficult. For

example, last year I gave the fifth grade test and it was on an 11th grade reading level. Our kids, our 5th graders, they're not on an 11th grade reading level. So, it's almost as if the state is setting them up to fail, and we see kids crying and frustrated and getting sick, and it's not fair. With a large percentage of our students, their parents opted them out of the test. And the State holds that against us, because they say that we're pressuring students not to take the test, and it's so political, and it's such a mess that you just have to put blinders on and go in and teach and do what's best for the kids, and try to calm them down. If we're not having the students' best interests at heart, they're the future, and if we're not taking care of them, then we're in trouble.

This year, for media literacy week, I said, "Let's do an Instagram take over." I run the school Instagram account and I had each grade level submit photos for me and just give me a little write up so we had something, some contribution, for Media Literacy Week. Both parents and children absolutely love these assignments. Last year, and I will do it again this year as well, I developed a unit on digital footprints, and being a good digital citizen. And that was so important because there was so much nonsense going on with Instagram and with the kids in the school being very mean-spirited, and unkind. And so teaching them about their digital footprint and that it is there forever, is essential. It never goes away.

I said to them, "When you go for an interview of any kind, your potential employer or potential school, they're going to Google you and all of your stuff is going to be out there for the world to see, while you're thinking, 'I deleted it.' You may have deleted it off your device or off your laptop, but it's out there and it's your digital footprint that never goes away. It's in concrete." And the reaction from the kids and the parents — the parents thanked me for that. And the kids were able then to make informed choices as to what they're going to tweet and put out in the world. And so it's needed. I think parents basically are overwhelmed. So to have their teacher say, "Listen, I'll take this part and let's guide them and teach them what's happening in the world out there when they're using social media," it was very well received on both ends. The kids don't find it tedious. I think some lessons, even with ELA, and social studies, and math, and science, they find tedious. But when you say, "Okay, we're doing media literacy," or, "We're going to look at some images and let's analyze this," they get really excited about it. Even though they're looking at screens, which they shouldn't be doing, all day anyway.

Technology is awesome, but when I think back to the View-Master versus the iPhone, and the accessibility of information in their hands with the iPhones — they have access to everything and they have a global awareness of what's going on in the world. And just because they have access to everything and they're looking at everything, doesn't mean that they have the skills to interpret it, and that's where we step in and help them with that. There are 60 children in my classroom that I'm grateful to teach every day.

CML News

The Sixth Media and Information Literacy Intercultural Dialogue Conference and GAPMIL

The Sixth Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) Conference and the First General Assembly of the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) was hosted by University of São Paulo November 2-5. Tessa Jolls, CML's president, served on plenary and workshop panels. Divina Frau-Meigs and Thomas Rohlinger were awarded Global MIL awards for 2016; Tessa Jolls and Jan Malek won the inaugural awards in 2015.

Commit2MediaLit!

Commit2MediaLit! Campaign

The "Commit to MediaLit!" campaign coordinated by the Center for Media Literacy and conducted by media literacy advocates resulted in insightful, diverse comments from around the world. The videos are available on CML's YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/medialitkit

CML Conducts Media Literacy Seminar in Colombia

Universidad Icesi in Cali, Colombia, hosted a media literacy seminar Dec. 2-5 conducted by CML's Tessa Jolls. The seminar was attended by university faculty and teachers from throughout Colombia.

CONSORTIUM for MEDIA LITERACY

Uniting for Development

About Us…

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

Media Literacy Resources

Media Literacy Resources *on "fake news":*

Stories about so-called "fake news" abound, and while the term is bandied about, it is little understood yet widely discussed. Is "fake news" about bias? About disagreements on fundamental principles or arguments? About verifiable falsehoods or perceptions about truths? About generating revenues through attention-seeking headlines and fabricated story lines? As we often say in media literacy, we have questions about the answers. But we can say with confidence that no one should "outsource" their brain for others to decide, nor do we wish to invite censorship or filtering. As power flows to individuals through social media, the traditional notions of journalism are upended and we are now all citizen journalists, with the collective and individual responsibility to be thoughtful and critical before circulating or consuming opinions or gossip or so-called "fact." Whom do we trust, about what, and why? Who decides? Who checks the checkers? Yes, we need media literacy!

How to combat fake news: http://www.attn.com/stories/13234/how-people-can-combat-fake-news

Fake news isn't just an internet problem, it's a classroom crisis
http://laschoolreport.com/fake-news-isnt-just-an-internet-problem-its-a-classroom-crisis-a-new-push-for-media-literacy/

Additional Resources:

CML's YouTube channel contains a variety of videos including *Commit2MediaLit!*

CML web site The Center for Media Literacy offers extensive research, teacher resources, and classroom activities.

GAPMIL -- Global Alliance for Partnerships in Media Information Literacy (UNESCO) creates partnerships around the world to improve media literacy education. The newly formed North American Chapter is co-chaired by Michael Hoechsmann, Lakehood University, Orillia, Canada and CML's Tessa Jolls.

NAMLE – National Association for Media Literacy Education is a national organization dedicated to media literacy as a basic life skill for the 21st century.

Med!aLit Moments

"Fake" News

All media should be questioned including the news because someone constructed the news, someone made it for a purpose, selected it, and edited it, put some information in and left some information out, and circulated and published it, whether through social media, through bots, or through more traditional distribution channels like television news or newsstands.

But how do we understand the bias? How do we check the facts? How do we make some judgments? Those are the questions – but not *all* the questions. In media literacy, we use questions to help each individual or group come to answers that they are personally comfortable with, with the hope that wiser choices will be possible.

AHA!: All news has bias.
Grade Level: High School students.
Key Question #1: Who created this message?
Core Concept #1: All media are constructed.
Key Question #4: What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in – or omitted from – this message?
Core Concept #4: Media have embedded values and points of view.

Materials: Lists from: Ron Paul's Liberty Report (Ron Paul was formerly U.S. Representative from Texas): http://www.ronpaullibertyreport.com/archives/revealed-the-real-fake-news-list
and Melissa Zimdars, Assistant Professor, Merrimack College, Andover, MA
https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eA5-mCZLSS4MQY5QGb5ewC3VAL6pLkT53V_81ZyitM/preview

Supplementary: CML comments on Fake News:
http://www.attn.com/stories/13234/how-people-can-combat-fake-news
http://laschoolreport.com/fake-news-isnt-just-an-internet-problem-its-a-classroom-crisis-a-new-push-for-media-literacy/

Activity: Let's examine some lists of "Fake News" sites from credible sources and decide for ourselves what is "fake" or not. Both of these lists claim to represent sites for "fake news." Melissa Zimdars, Assistant Professor at Merrimack College, provides one list; Ron Paul, formerly a U.S. Representative from Texas, provides another list.

Use KQ#1. What is different about these authors? What is similar?
Use KQ#4. How are the lists "framed?" What point of view is represented? What is left in? What is left out? Are there overlaps? Why or why not?

If you were to circulate this list to your friends on social media, what do you need to keep in mind? Should you "own" the bias yourself? Should you think about how your friends might interpret your circulating such a list? Might they agree with you – or not? Might they be offended – or not?

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, ©2002-2016, Center for Media Literacy, http://www.medialit.com