Digital information literacy:
Challenges and opportunities for 21st century education

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The advent of the information society entails new opportunities but also serious challenges for educational systems. Whether for personal, professional or civic purposes, an increasing number of everyday activities require the use of electronic information devices such as desktop computers, tablets or smartphones. Contrary to a popular belief, the mere access and exposure to these devices is far from enough to shape a generation of "digital natives". Instead, there is mounting evidence that in order to effectively participate in digital communities, people must acquire a range of advanced literacy skills. These new demands and new skills question traditional views of reading and reading education. In this presentation, I will introduce a theoretical framework that describes the core skills involved in accessing, evaluating and integrating digital information. I will present a series of recent observational and intervention studies that point out some of the difficulties faced by children and teenagers when purposefully using online information systems. I will suggest some possible strategies for education systems to implement effective digital literacy training programs at the level of primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

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