OSINT and Literacies

Towards a Political and Technical Vision of Information and Media Literacies

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ECIL 2025

Introduction

- OSINT = collection and analysis of open-source data

- Strong visibility (e.g., Ukraine war)

- Central role in investigative journalism (Bellingcat, Forensic Architecture)

- Key issue: integrating OSINT into **information & media literacy education**

OSINT as a "Regime of Truth"

- Produces **evidence** from digital traces

- New modes of representation:

  - Satellite imagery

  - 3D reconstructions

  - Audiovisual investigations

- Civic & educational challenge: build trust in information

Required Competencies 🧰

- Information retrieval & verification 🔍
- Documentary analysis 📚
- Awareness of social & geopolitical contexts 🌍
- Ethical & legal dimensions ⚖️
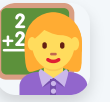- Integration with literacies: information, digital, algorithmic, AI 🤖

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OSINT and Media Literacy

- Investigative videos (*New York Times*, *Le Monde*)

- Complexity: images, audio, maps, hypotheses

- Traces → **evidence** (legal & perceptual)

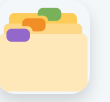- Narratives = rational analysis persuasive rhetoric

OSINT as Pedagogy

- Investigative journalism as **pedagogy of information**

- Goals:
  - Understand how journalism is produced

  - Develop critical thinking

- Value: countering infotainment & influencer-driven content

OSINT Literacy Framework

Key competencies:

- Information gathering

- Source evaluation & verification

- Analysis & synthesis

- Tools & techniques proficiency

- Ethics, legality & security (OPSEC)

- Critical thinking & reflexivity

Levels of Competence

1. **Foundational** – basic information literacy skills

2. **Advanced practices** – strategic tools & methods

3. **Critical capability** – expertise + reflective distance

Example of Learning Progression

- **Level 1**: basic search & verification

- **Level 2**: specialized tools (Maltego, Shodan, scraping)

- **Level 3**: full investigations, publishing results, reflexivity

Developing Advanced Skills

- **Search Engine Literacy**: beyond relevance → filtering mechanisms

- Awareness of algorithmic biases

- Hypothesis-driven investigations (forensic models)

- Training in structured argumentation & narratives

OSINT and Hyperdocumentation

- Otlet's vision: record & connect everything

- OSINT = modern **hyperdocumentation**

- Data-driven publications = documents as **the story itself**

- Examples:

  - Police brutality datasets

  - Ukraine / Gaza investigations
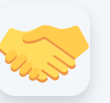
+ **Technical & Political Culture**

- OSINT = not just tools but:
  - ○ **Technical culture** (Simondon)
  - ○ **Political culture** (information & power)
- Beyond fact-checking → deeper **investigative culture**
- Civic role: documenting war crimes, discrimination, injustices

Collective Dimension 🤝

- OSINT as **collective intelligence** (Lévy) 🌍

- Collaboration: journalists, NGOs, citizens 👥

- Berkeley Protocol = legal framework 📄

- Risks: "dark OSINT" → surveillance, coercion (Foucault) 💥

Conclusion ✅

- OSINT literacy = intersection of traditional & emerging literacies 🚀🏛️

- Must be:

    - **Critical & ethical competence** 🧠

    - **Collective & civic practice** 🤝

- Goal: foster a **culture of investigation** for the digital age 🌐

Acknowledgements 🙏

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Slides available here oledeuff.github.com/conferences