Supporting AI Literacies for Young Adults Aged 14-19

Key Insights

This report outlines a value-based AI Literacies framework for young adults aged 14–19, tailored to public service media (PSM) organisations such as the BBC. Developed through collaboration between the Responsible Innovation Centre, BRAID Programme, and We Are Open Co-op, the framework addresses critical gaps in equipping youth with skills to navigate an AI-mediated world.

The research synthesises insights from over 40 AI Literacy frameworks, 35 expert interviews, as well as survey data. This reveals that existing resources prioritise technical skills over critical evaluation and lack alignment with PSM values like impartiality, accessibility, and public accountability. It identified systemic shortcomings around current AI Literacy provision in areas such as equity, critical skills, teacher support, sustainability, and responsible leadership.

This report is anchored in core values aligning directly with PSM principles: human agency and informed participation, equity and inclusion, creativity and lifelong learning, critical thinking, and human rights. These values shape a practical framework for AI literacies, designed to empower young adults navigating the AI landscape.

Core Framework Components

The framework integrates six competencies:

1. **Understanding AI Systems and Contexts:** Recognising AI in daily life and its societal/environmental impacts.
2. **Practical and Responsible Use of AI Tools:** Safely deploying tools while managing privacy and data.
3. **Creativity, Agency, and Participation:** Encouraging youth-led projects and co-design.
4. **Critical Evaluation of AI Outputs and Systems:** Identifying bias, misinformation, and algorithmic influence.
5. **Ethical, Societal, and Environmental Awareness:** Examining fairness, discrimination, and environmental costs.

6. **Building Confidence, Adaptability, and Lifelong Learning:** Nurturing resilience amid technological change.

The competencies should be understood as progressing through three overlapping stages:

- Foundational awareness (Understanding & Applying)
- Critical experimentation (Analysing & Evaluating)
- Advocacy/solution-building (Specialising & Synthesising).

The report introduces the acronym "PANDA" as an easy-to-remember way to follow 5 good evaluation and assessment practices (Participatory, Adaptive, Nuanced, Discussion-based, Active).

Recommendations for PSM Organisations

The report outlines 7 actionable strategies aligning with PSM values:

1. **Embed AI Literacies Across Learning Content and Platforms:** Integrate simulations into platforms like BBC Bitesize using real-world examples (e.g., climate modelling).
2. **Support Youth-Driven AI Content Creation:** Host competitions for teen-generated content and train diverse "AI ambassadors".
3. **Strengthen Teacher Resources:** Develop cross-curricular guides and micro-credentials via partnerships (e.g., Open University).
4. **Develop Interactive Critical Thinking Tools:** Design games to detect deepfakes and algorithmic bias.
5. **Address Ethical and Emotional Dimensions:** Produce documentaries on AI's mental health impacts with classroom guides.
6. **Lead Cross-Platform Public Engagement:** Launch "Generation AI" campaigns across TV/radio to engage families.
7. **Broaden Inclusion Through Targeted Partnerships:** Co-design resources with underserved communities, offering materials in Welsh, Urdu, and BSL.

Conclusion

PSM organisations such as the BBC are in a unique position to leverage public trust and universal access to bridge AI Literacy gaps through this framework. The recommendations prioritise youth-centred, rights-based strategies that tackle societal challenges like misinformation and inequality while upholding core PSM values. This positions PSM organisations as an impartial catalyst for empowering young citizens in an increasingly AI-mediated future.