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*This file contains the extended abstract for this presentation, which is also available on the conference website:*

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# Maddie is online: embedding creative audio-visual resources to the teaching of information literacy in an elementary school in Greece

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## Extended Abstract

There is a growing need to design creative teaching methods for early in the school curriculum to empower children with information literacy (IL) skills. This will prepare them for battling mis/disinformation, so that they can be safe, understand the value of critical engagement with online information, and express their perspectives while opening dialogue about their experiences. Previous research in the UK has found that children lack the critical IL skills for identifying fake information and that, of the people in their life with whom they might speak about fake news, they are least likely to speak to their teachers (National Literacy Trust, 2018, p. 4). Connecting online happens at an increasingly younger age, with UK research estimating that up to half of children 8-12 years have set up their own online profile, while a third include a false date of birth (Ofcom, 2022). After surveying 25,101 children, the EU Kids Online project identified a significant increase in screen time, which had almost doubled in some EU countries (Smahel et al., 2020).

In this presentation, we discuss a project that empowered young people with IL skills by means of opening dialogue around the phenomenon of mis/disinformation and the ethics of online connectivity. We followed the principles of the United Nations Convention of the "Rights of the Child" that extend to the online environment, where digital technologies should "adopt the principles of privacy, resilience and harm reduction" (Scottish Government, 2022) and where programmes should incorporate children's "rights to seek, receive and impart information" (OHCHR, 2021, p. 3). The project took the form of a collaboration between the educational project, "Maddie is Online", and the Modiano Elementary Library of Anatolia College (a private non-for-profit organisation in Greece). "Maddie is Online" is an innovative community-led project, funded by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC). It uses creative storytelling, with an emphasis on opening dialogue around experiences of online connectivity, using video animated stories with children's voice-overs, digital lesson plans and reflective exercises.

We incorporated "Maddie is Online" resources into the library IL program, aimed at Year 5 students (10 years old), with a total of 90 pupils from 3 classes. The lessons were delivered by the Elementary Librarian in

collaboration with teachers. We collected qualitative data from pupils who - after watching the video stories and completing the toolkit exercises - engaged in discussion in small groups, reflecting on their own experiences and exploring how they would address the challenges that Maddie encountered. This allowed opportunities for dialogue and exploring skills for information searching, evaluation, and critical judgement. Pupils submitted anonymous data via question-and-answer home quizzes that tested their comprehension. We explored the learning experiences of pupils and their perceptions of misinformation through an online survey, while we collected qualitative feedback on experiences around delivering the sessions from staff.

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