


# Chapter 7

## Critical Thinking, Media, and Smart Technologies: Edu–Communication the New Frontier of Digital Literacy

**Daniele Battista**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8418-8374>

*University of Salerno, Italy*

**Francesca Cubeddu**

*IRPPS-CNR of Rome, Italy*

**Lucia Picarella**

*University of Foggia, Mercato San Severino, Italy*

### ABSTRACT

*Contemporary societies are increasingly shaped by participative and interconnected logics, with digital platforms playing a key role in reshaping social, cultural, and economic interactions. These platforms are spaces for exchange and the redefinition of data flows, where two-way interaction between consumption and production is central. Digital platforms have gained importance in education, especially through media literacy programs. This article explores the diffusion of edu-communication in Latin America, based on liberative education, popular communication, and cultural studies. It analyzes edu-communication as a tool to enhance intersubjectivity, focusing on the individual and media interactions, and reframing socio-cultural practices with political implications. The article is divided into three parts: challenges of digital media in education, the need for new media education, and the Latin American perspective on edu-communication.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms and technologies have acquired strategic value in reshaping the ways in which social, cultural and economic interaction takes place in modern societies, where participation and interconnectedness are increasingly prevalent. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have revolutionised many universal perspectives (Castells, 1996). The online ecosystem has established itself as a global interconnected network in which the elements and content of many types are generated, disseminated and reproduced seamlessly (Salzano et al. 2023). The digital revolution and the resulting transformations undoubtedly raise numerous questions and issues relating to the crossroads between communication processes and new frontiers such as intelligent systems, the significant socio-cultural impact, and the reconstruction of traditional paradigms of authority and power. With specific reference to the subject of this study, there is the ability to outline the centre of future trajectories in education.

In this context, the internet has established itself as the new organisational model of our society. The democratisation of access to technology has fostered the promotion of individual and collective empowerment, creating the possibility for everyone to be an active part of the information society. Digital ecosystems and the virtual sphere have replaced offline social spaces for public relations. They have allowed individuals to interact on an equal footing that transcends any space-time barriers. Furthermore, cutting-edge devices and technologies not only facilitate the use of content but also allow users to participate actively, enabling them to play the dual role of both producers and consumers of information. The two-way interaction between consumption and production is one of the most significant features supporting the development of a real collective digital culture. Digital platforms and ecosystems have become both places where social reality can be discussed, redefined and re-signified, as well as catalysts in the field of education and training.

Boccia Artieri's (2012) observation regarding the redefinition of the dynamics of the production, distribution and consumption of symbolic forms of society through blogs, social networks, and wiki-style cooperative production provides an important basis when analysing the educational potential of digital applications. Numerous studies, particularly those which use the social learning and connectivism approach, such as Siemens (2005), have highlighted the advantages that such platforms can bring to learning and teaching. They emphasise how beneficial it is to work together in learning environments designed with specific educational objectives and environments created for recreational and social purposes. Digital media and smart technologies diversify and amplify the ways in which learning objectives are achieved. They offer a wide range of spaces and support that facilitate the creation of personalised pathways that are extremely well suited to specific needs. Furthermore, they are

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