Safeguarding Democracy with media and information literacy

Ilona Kish, Director, PL2030

Future of European Public Libraries

3 topics

- Digital
- Sustainibility
- Democracy

What we talk about when we talk about…

- Narrow the focus
- Identify current best practice
- Develop a common language
- Vision for 5-10 years
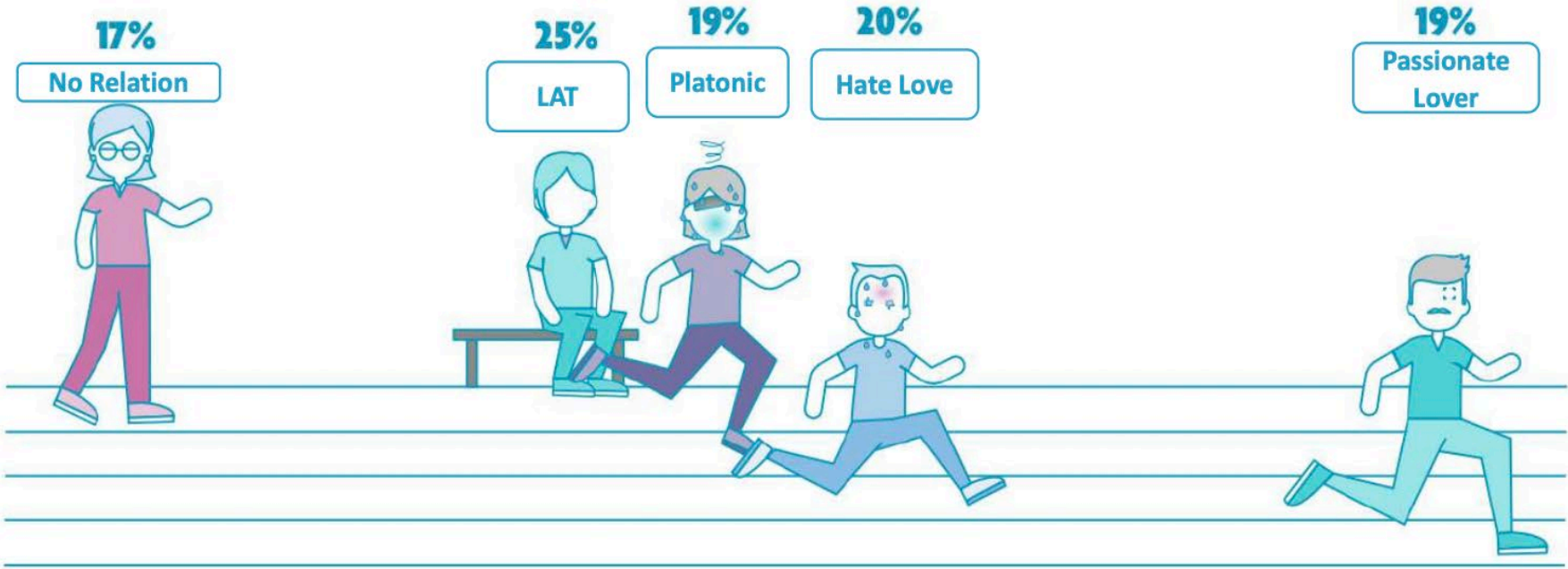- Recommendations and future action

Digital camp – Gent February 2023

- AI
- Digital innovation
- Digital citizenship
- Digital sustainibility and democracy

ON THE INTERSECTION OF PARADOXES
5 'DIGITAL READINESS' PROFILES

17%
No Relation

25%
LAT

19%
Platonic

20%
Hate Love

19%
Passionate Lover

Challenges – heard here

- Censorship of collections

- Societal fragmentation

- Supply vs demand

- Continuing functional and digital illiteracy

- Breakdown of trust in public institutions

- Increasing demand to address societal issues

- Capacity of library professionals to deliver on multiple demands

Shaping Europe's Digital Future

Digital solutions that put people first

These digital solutions will

- open up new opportunities for businesses

- encourage the development of trustworthy technology

- foster an open and democratic society

- enable a vibrant and sustainable economy

- help fight climate change and achieve the green transition

Shaping Europe's Digital Future

Three pillars to support our approach
The European approach will be based on three main pillars to ensure that Europe seizes the opportunity and gives its citizens, businesses and governments control over the digital transformation.

Technology that works for the people

The EU's digital strategy will

- invest in **digital skills** for all Europeans

- protect people from cyber threats (hacking, ransomware, identity theft)

- ensure **Artificial Intelligence** is developed in ways that respect people's rights and earn their trust

- accelerate the roll-out of ultra-fast broadband for homes, schools and hospitals throughout the EU

- expand Europe's super-computing capacity to develop innovative solutions for medicine, transport and the environment

A fair and competitive digital economy

The EU's digital strategy will

- enable a vibrant community of innovative and fast growing start-ups and small businesses to access finance and to expand

- strengthen the responsibility of online platforms by proposing a Digital Services Act and clarifying rules for online services

- make sure that EU rules are fit for the digital economy

- ensure fair competition of all companies in Europe

- increase access to high-quality data while ensuring that personal and sensitive data is safeguarded

An open, democratic and sustainable society

The EU's digital strategy will

- use technology to help Europe become climate-neutral by 2050

- reduce the digital sector's carbon emissions

- give citizens more control and protection of their data

- create a "European health data space" to foster targeted research, diagnosis and treatment

- fight disinformation online and foster diverse and reliable media content

Europe as a global leader

The European Union will

- aim to become a global role model for the digital economy

- support developing economies in going digital

- develop digital standards and promote them internationally

Benefits of the EU's digital strategy

- The EU's digital strategy will benefit European citizens, businesses and the environment.

And locally…

"The government makes innovation and digital transformation a spearhead of its policy. Flanders must become a trendsetter and pioneer in the field of applications in the new data economy, artificial intelligence …".

Unique qualities of libraries?

- Open access?

- Trust in institutions – eroded elsewhere

- Space for public discussion and debate?

- A place to counter discrimination?

- A place to combat misinformation?

Misinformation online

- Misinformation - "false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is intent to mislead."

- Disinformation - "deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda."

- Fake News - "purposefully crafted, sensational, emotionally charged, misleading or totally fabricated information that mimics the form of mainstream news"

Some impacts

Infodemics and misinformation negatively affect people's health behaviours, new WHO review finds

FN is increasingly affecting societal values, changing opinions on critical issues and topics as well as redefining facts, truths, and beliefs.

Half of young people encounter misleading content online on a daily basis'.

The wide availability of user-provided content in online social media facilitates the aggregation of people around common interests, worldviews, and narratives. (Polarisation)

"those who burn books will in the end burn people,"

Heinrich Heine

Ask ourselves

- Are libraries a primary source of information today?

- What space do libraries occupy in the online world? (Finand:'promote the development of virtual and interactive online services and their educational content' 1998)

- What role to play in combating misinformation online?