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# Considering the unthought materiality of digital media. Analyzing a corpus of educational resources on the environmental impact of digital technologies (Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Belgium)

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## Abstract

The untought materiality of digital media - in particular their environmental, social and economic implications - is raising as an issue in the fields of information and communication sciences as well as media education. In his book *Mediarchy*, Yves Citton takes advantage of the research carried out in the field of media archaeology to provide a more detailed understanding of the material aspects of digital devices, *a.o.* their persistence in the natural ecosystem (Hertz et Parikka 2012). He identifies courses of action for media education, which focus on the work of *attention* to be carried out by the user of digital media (Citton 2019). From another perspective, David Buckingham calls for *re-thinking media literacy* by considering it through a *bigger picture*. This shift in focus involves going beyond a list of "good digital practices" in favor of an informed understanding of the issues at stake with regard to social and political considerations. Among these is the rise of *digital capitalism* (Buckingham 2020) - which is obviously connected to the unlimited exploitation of material resources for profit.

This proposal considers the study of a corpus of Belgian educational resource devoted to the environmental impact of digital media and technology. Using the theoretical and methodological tools of discourse analysis (knowledge discourse, rhetorical strategies for adapting to the target audience, *etc.*) and information and communication sciences (semiotics of screen writing, knowledge mediation, *etc.*), I intend to evaluate how the above concerns are, or are not, taken into account. More specifically, my analysis aims to provide answers to the following question: how (*i.e.*, through which knowledge and competencies) do the educational resources on the environmental impact of digital technology proposed for French-speaking Belgian education aim to develop learners' digital media literacies?

Our corpus will be extracted from the *E-classe* digital platform (<https://www.e-classe.be/>). Launched in 2019 at the initiative of the "Service du Numérique Éducatif" of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, it provides French-speaking Belgian teachers with validated educational resources to help them develop their lessons. I'll be looking first at the way this platform puts resources into circulation, *i.e.* how it enables their *editorialization* understood as "enhancing the corpus by selecting texts, setting up collections, establishing thematic indexes, and regularly introducing editorial focuses based on audience type" (Moumier et Dacos 2010, 63)(1). I will also report on how the platform's features anticipate manipulation by the teacher, through tools for combining, remixing, sharing and linking texts of various formats

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and status.

Next, I will be focusing more specifically on analyzing the resources in the "environmental impact of digital technology" collection, comprising 25 items. I will identify the addressed issues, types of resources - *didactic/functional/semantic learning material* (Hansen et Gissel 2017, 125) -, validating authorities and anticipated audiences. I also will be interested in disciplinary knowledge to which the "digital" as a teaching object refers, as well as exercised competencies to acquire it. Our hypothesis, based on preliminary analyses, is that these resources are still often dependent on good, standardized uses of digital media to be implemented on an individual level, neglecting consideration of the *bigger picture* and the development of fine-tuned attention to the materialities of digital devices. In this sense, the development of digital literacy remains mainly focused on uses/skills and not on understanding materialities in a broader perspective (*e.g.* planned obsolescence from the design level, soil pollution, *etc.*).

## Bibliography

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(1) " On entend, par éditorialisation, la valorisation du corpus par la sélection de textes, par la mise en œuvre de collections, par l'établissement d'index thématiques, par la mise en place régulière de focus éditoriaux en fonction du type de public " (*original quote*).

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