

- 01 [About this glossary](#)
- 02 [Index](#)
- 03 [Glossary](#)



About this glossary

The glossary is designed to support teachers delivering Lyfta's Critical Digital & Media Literacy course for upper primary (KS2) and secondary (KS3 and KS4) students.

It includes a list of core concepts from the course, drawn from lesson plans, storyworlds, and pedagogical themes.

Suggest any missing key words by emailing us at info@Lyfta.com.

How to use the glossary

Each term includes:

- a general explanation for teacher planning and teaching;
- a KS2-friendly definition to help explain the term with younger students;
- a KS3+ extension for discussion, challenge or journal prompts.

Use the glossary to: support lessons 1-12 in class (or assemblies); develop a shared classroom language for discussing digital responsibility; and/or inform reflective journal writing.

By revisiting these terms, students can build a toolkit of critical questions and concepts they can carry with them beyond the course to support long-term digital resilience, empathy and active citizenship.

INDEX

A

[Addiction \(to devices or social media\)](#)
[Algorithm](#)
[Artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#)
[Artificial general intelligence \(AGI\)](#)
[Augmented reality \(AR\)](#)

D, E & I

[Deepfake](#)
[Digital footprint](#)
[Disconnection](#)
[Disinformation](#)
[Dopamine](#)
[Echo chamber](#)
[Image manipulation](#)

R

[Relational thinking](#)
[Representation](#)
[Responsibility \(digital/media\)](#)

B & C

[Bias](#)
[Collective responsibility](#)
[Confirmation bias](#)
[Critical thinking](#)

M & P

[Media literacy](#)
[Misinformation](#)
[Perspective](#)
[Power and control](#)
[Privacy](#)

S & T

[Selective exposure](#)
[Social influence](#)
[Social media](#)
[Stereotype](#)
[Surveillance technology](#)
[Truth](#)



Addiction (to devices or social media)

A pattern of behaviour where a person finds it hard to stop using their phone, apps, or games - even when it negatively affects them.

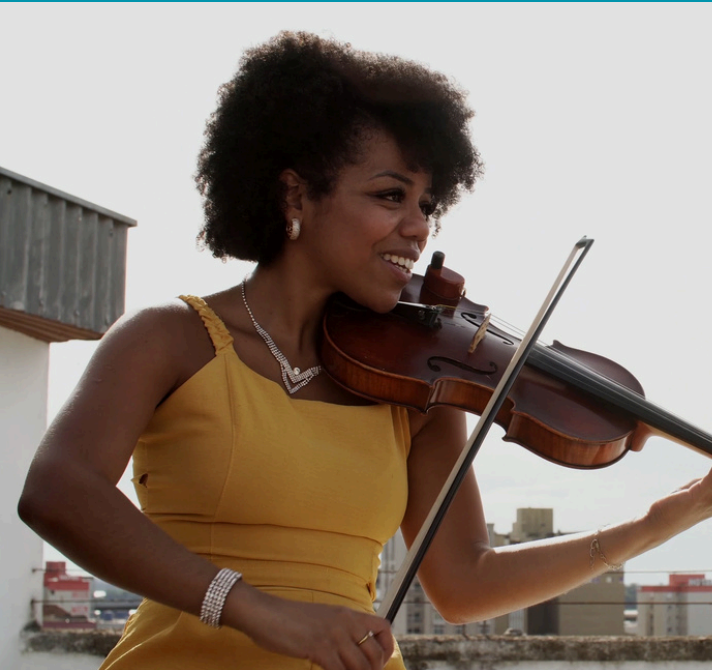
- KS2: When it's really hard to stop using your phone, games or apps, even when you want to.
- KS3: Apps and platforms are often designed to keep users hooked, so knowing this can help us stay in control.

Algorithm

A set of rules a computer follows to make decisions, especially about what content to show you online. Algorithms learn from patterns in your behaviour e.g. what you watch, click, or like, to predict what you'll enjoy next.

Their goal is usually to keep you engaged, not to give you a full or balanced view. This can lead to echo chambers, polarisation, or even manipulation, if users aren't aware that it's happening.

- KS2: A set of computer rules that pick what to show you based on what you've liked or watched before. It's like guessing what you'll want next.
- KS3: Algorithms try to keep you online by showing you things you'll enjoy or agree with. They learn from your patterns, but they can also limit your view of the world.



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Technology that enables machines to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence, such as recognising faces, translating languages, or recommending content.

AI works by identifying patterns in data and using those patterns to make decisions or predictions.

AI is often designed to be helpful and/or engaging, but not necessarily fair, truthful, or unbiased. AI systems often prioritise keeping users interested, which can influence what information people receive or how long they stay online.

- KS2: A smart computer that learns from what it sees or hears, and uses that to help you, but it's mostly guessing based on patterns.
- KS3: AI doesn't 'think' like humans. It learns from huge amounts of data to spot patterns and make guesses. Most AI is designed to please us - keeping us watching, scrolling, or clicking - but that doesn't mean it's always right or fair.

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

A theoretical form of AI that would have the ability to understand, learn and solve problems across a wide range of tasks, similar to the general intelligence of a human being.

Unlike current AI, which is designed for specific jobs (e.g. facial recognition or translation), AGI would be flexible, adaptable, and capable of independent thought, reasoning, and creativity.

AGI raises important questions about ethics, control, safety, and human identity.



While scientists are still debating if/when AGI will be created, it is a common topic in AI research and science fiction.

- KS2: A super-smart robot brain that could do many different things like a person, e.g. learning, solving problems, and making choices.
- KS3: AGI would be a powerful kind of AI that can think, plan and learn across many topics. Some are excited about it, others are worried about what it might mean for jobs, safety and control.

Augmented Reality (AR)

Augmented Reality (AR) is technology that adds digital images, sounds or information to the real world, often using a phone, tablet or headset.

Unlike virtual reality (which creates a fully digital world), AR blends real life with virtual elements like filters on social media, interactive museum displays, or apps that place objects or creatures into your environment. AR can enhance storytelling, education and play, but also raises questions about reality, manipulation and attention.



- KS2: A way to see extra things on a screen, like pictures, sounds or animations, on top of the real world around you.
- KS3: AR mixes the real and the digital. It can be used for games, education or advertising. It can also shape how we see reality and what we focus on.

Bias

A preference or prejudice that affects how information is shown or understood, often without us realising it.

- KS2: When someone shows only one side of a story.
- KS3: Media bias can influence public opinion, often working subtly.

Collective responsibility

The idea that everyone shares responsibility for creating a safe, respectful, and truthful online world.

- KS2: We all help make the internet better by being kind and fair.
- KS3: Speaking up, fact-checking, and standing against harm are all ways to act responsibly online.



Confirmation bias

The tendency to look for and believe information that supports what we already think and possibly ignore anything that doesn't.

- KS2: When you believe things just because they agree with what you already think.
- KS3: Confirmation bias limits learning and encourages polarisation, especially online.

Critical thinking

The ability to think clearly, carefully and independently about information, especially before accepting it as true or acting on it.

Critical thinking involves asking good questions, checking sources, spotting bias, recognising assumptions, and understanding different perspectives.

It helps students make thoughtful decisions, resist manipulation, and evaluate the impact of what they see, hear, and share. In the digital world, it's one of the most important tools for navigating truth, trust, and influence.



- KS2: Thinking carefully, asking ‘Is this true?’, ‘Who made this?’, and ‘Why did they share it?’, before you believe or share something.
- KS3: Critical thinking helps you question what you see online, check the facts, and notice when someone’s trying to influence or persuade you.

It’s about thinking for yourself and seeing the bigger picture, not just accepting what you’re told.

Deepfake

A video, image or sound clip altered using AI to look or sound real when it’s not, often used to mislead.

- KS2: A fake video or photo made by a computer that looks real.
- KS3: Deepfakes can be harmless fun or serious tools of deception - media literacy helps you tell the difference.

Digital footprint

The trace of everything someone does online (for example, what they search, post, click, or share).

- KS2: Like online footprints, everything you do leaves a mark.
- KS3: Your footprint can affect your privacy, safety, and even job opportunities later in life.

Disconnection

Feeling emotionally or socially distant - can be caused by too much screen time or isolation through digital habits.

- KS2: Feeling left out or far from people.
- KS3: Disconnection can reduce empathy and affect mental health. Balance is key.



Disinformation

False or misleading information shared on purpose to trick, confuse, or manipulate others.

- KS2: Made-up information that someone shares to trick people.
- KS3: Disinformation is often used to spread hate, fear or fake news, especially in politics and the media.

Dopamine

A chemical in the brain that makes us feel good, triggered by likes, shares, or notifications online.

- KS2: A brain spark that makes you feel good, like when you move to the next gaming level, or when someone likes what you write.
- KS3: Many digital platforms are designed to trigger dopamine, making them addictive or hard to stop using.



Echo chamber

An online space where people only hear opinions that match their own and therefore limiting exposure to other views.

- KS2: When you're only shown things online that agree with what you already think.
- KS3: Echo chambers can increase division, polarisation, and a false sense of certainty.

Image manipulation

Editing or changing photos to make them look different from reality. This can affect how people feel about themselves or others.

- KS2: Changing a photo to make it look better or different.
- KS3: Image manipulation can shape unrealistic beauty standards or spread misinformation.

Media literacy

The ability to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate media in all its forms. It's more than spotting fake news. It involves learning to ask questions about who made a message, what they want us to feel or believe, and how media affects our ideas, emotions, and society.

- KS2: Learning how to question whether something is true or fake in things we watch or read.
- KS3: Media literacy builds resilience against manipulation, bias, and misinformation.



Misinformation

False or misleading information shared by accident, without intending to deceive.

- KS2: Wrong facts that people might believe are true.
- KS3: Misinformation spreads fast, and even well-meaning people can pass it on.

Perspective

The point of view from which a person, story or piece of media presents information.

Every message, whether in news, social media, films, or even photographs, is shaped by someone's perspective. Understanding perspective helps students ask questions like, 'whose voice is this?', 'what might be missing?', and 'how does this point of view affect the story?'.

Recognising different perspectives supports empathy, critical analysis, and respectful dialogue.

- KS2: A way of looking at things, for example everyone sees the world a bit differently. Stories, pictures or videos can show things from one person's point of view.
- KS3: Perspective shapes how information is told and what we think about it. Asking whose voice is being heard, and whose isn't, helps us see bias, build empathy, and understand others more deeply.

Power and control

In digital and media literacy, power and control refer to who has influence over information, technology, and people's attention, and who does not.

This includes those who control media platforms, write algorithms, own data, or shape online narratives.



It also applies to individual users. For example, students can have power through what they choose to click, share, question or ignore.

Exploring power and control helps learners understand how digital systems work, who benefits, and how to take responsibility for their own digital choices.

- KS2: Power and control mean deciding what happens. Some people and companies can control what we see or do online, but we also make choices too.
- KS3: Power and control are about who decides what content is shown, what's hidden, and how we're influenced online. By thinking carefully and asking questions, we can take back some control and use our digital voices more wisely.



Privacy

The right to control your personal information and decide who has access to it. In a digital world, privacy includes what you share, who can see it, and what's collected about you (often without your knowledge). From social media settings to targeted advertising, teaching students about digital privacy helps protect their identity, safety and freedom online.

- KS2: Keeping your personal information safe, choosing what you share and with who.
- KS3: Privacy means having control over your information online. Apps and websites often collect data about what you do, even if you don't notice. Knowing how to manage this helps you stay safe and in control.

Relational thinking

Relational thinking is the ability to see and understand connections between people, ideas, events, or systems.

In media and digital literacy, it helps students go beyond surface-level content and ask questions like: How are these ideas linked? Who is affected by this? What bigger system is this part of? Relational thinking supports empathy, systems thinking, and the ability to navigate complexity online and offline.



Representation

How people, cultures or ideas are shown in the media.

Fair representation promotes inclusion, but poor representation may create stereotypes.

- KS2: Seeing different kinds of people in stories, videos or news.
- KS3: When you see yourself represented fairly in the media or digital content, it can help you feel proud, included, and inspired. When people are left out or shown unfairly, it can affect how others treat them, and how they see themselves.

Responsibility (digital/media)

Being aware of the impact your digital choices have on others. For example, what you post, share, or ignore.

- KS2: Making good choices online and thinking about how they affect others.
- KS3: Responsibility means helping stop harm, spread truth, and support others in digital spaces.

Selective exposure

The tendency for people to seek out information that supports their existing beliefs and avoid information that challenges them.

- KS2: When people only choose to look at things that match what they already think.
- KS3: Selective exposure makes it harder to understand other people's views and can reinforce echo chambers.



Social influence

How people's behaviour or opinions can be shaped by others e.g. friends, influencers, celebrities, or even strangers online.

- KS2: When what others say or do online makes you want to act or think like them.
- KS3: Social influence can spread trends, ideas, or pressure (so knowing this helps you make independent choices).

Social media

Online platforms that allow people to create and share content or interact with others.

- KS2: Websites or apps where people share videos, pictures, and talk to each other.
- KS3: Social media shapes opinions, identity and community - but also comes with risks like misinformation and addiction.



Stereotype

An oversimplified and unfair belief about a group of people, sometimes repeated in the media.

- KS2: A wrong idea that all people in a group are the same.
- KS3: Stereotypes can limit what people believe about themselves and others.

Surveillance technology

Tools and systems used to monitor, track or collect information about people, often through cameras, facial recognition, online tracking, or data collection. Surveillance can be used for safety, law enforcement, or marketing, but it also raises concerns about privacy, consent and misuse.

- KS2: Technology that watches or keeps track of what people do, like CCTV cameras or websites that remember what you click.
- KS3: Surveillance can keep people safe, but it also means our actions and data can be watched, stored or shared (sometimes without us knowing).



Truth

Truth in the media and digital content is not just about facts, it's about how stories are told, who is telling them, and what is left out. Helping students explore different types of truth (e.g. emotional truth, journalistic truth, manipulated truth) gives them tools to ask not just 'is it true?' but also 'what kind of truth is this?'

- KS2: Something that's real and honest.
- KS3: Truth is not always simple in the media, it's shaped by who's telling the story and how.