

The LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project)

Our Mission



The LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project) is a non-profit organization based in Brooklyn and founded in September 2007. With a commitment to address the lack of basic media literacy education in New York City schools and communities, The LAMP offers free workshops and public events designed to help young people, parents and teachers make sense of the media barrage they encounter in their daily lives. LAMP workshops not only demystify the content and technologies of media, but they also help bridge the digital divide that often alienates youth from adults, while providing the workforce development skills needed to compete in a modern job market. By creating and editing their own blogs, videos, newspapers and more, students are further encouraged to explore the use of media as a positive outlet for creative expression.

Media literacy is an urgent need...perhaps now more than ever.

There can be no doubt we are living in a world which increasingly depends upon new media and technology. Yet people who are living in areas that are high-risk but resource deficient may be left behind. Without the basic skills required to thrive in a digital world, members of these communities struggle to use the limitless resources available online for finding a job, furthering their education, getting healthcare information, managing finances, connecting with others and more. Many adults, especially those with little or no formal education, are too intimidated by technology to log on in the first place. Beyond missing the opportunities and resources available online, this digital divide can also estrange offline adults from their multimedia-inclined children, whose interests and activities online are unknown and unchecked.

Although access to equipment may play a role in keeping communities offline, it is the lack of basic media education which truly holds them back. **Even when computers are available in a school's computer lab or at a local library, students are rarely taught how to locate, use and process the information and resources they need.** From the moment they log on to the Internet, users are confronted with messages promising them low-rate mortgages, ads for the latest diet fad, email spam and scams, adult content and a barrage of other messages they may not understand. Media like the Internet, magazines and newspapers are often littered with aggressive advertisements; in fact, much evidence suggests that our current financial crisis was enabled by predatory mortgage lenders working in a largely media illiterate society. Blogs and social networks can be incredibly useful tools, but can also prove very destructive if not used responsibly. Information abounds online, but much of it may be false or misleading. With no education in the way media are used, it is as though people are given the keys to a car, but not given driving lessons. When this happens, access to computers can do very little towards helping at-risk communities connect with resources and opportunities.

Media literacy education changes the way people understand new media like the Internet. When parents are taught about what their kids do online, why they do it, and how they can get involved, media become a tool that can bring families closer together rather than drive them further apart. When people learn how to ask questions about the ads they see, the videos they watch and the games they play online, they grow into critical thinkers who learn not to take messages at face value. When users post photos, videos, comments and blogs with the knowledge that online content can exist indefinitely, they make informed choices that keep them in control. Armed with basic media literacy skills, people can stay focused on what they need and want from new media, and become empowered citizens rather than waiting victims of a digital world.

Media Usage: Facts and Figures

Media Habits:

- Gen Y workers spend an average of 10.6 hours per day on social networking sites, news web sites, forums and multimedia sharing websites, according to a [2008 survey by WorldOne Research](#).
- The average kid today spends 45 hours per week with media, compared with 30 hours in school and 17 per week with parents ([Media + Child and Adolescent Health: A Systematic Review](#)).
- On a typical day [as of 2006](#), 61% of infants between the ages of 0 and 1 year old use screen media (including televisions and computers).

Media and Consumerism:

- In a [2008 MRI study](#) of American children aged 6 - 11 years old, 46% reported accessing the web because advertising drove them there.
- 85% of American fifth-graders receive sexual education sponsored by Proctor & Gamble, featuring P&G products such as Always maxipads and Old Spice deodorant (as reported in 2009 by [Marketplace](#) on American Public Media).
- Adults spend more than \$670 billion per year as influenced by their children. Additionally, in 2004, over \$15 billion was spent on advertising to children, according to a [2006 article](#) by Juliet B. Schor.

Media and Health:

- [86% of health and media studies](#) conducted since 1980 found that an increase in media exposure correlates to an increase in childhood obesity.
- Youth who watch R-rated movies are more likely to smoke, according to a [four-year study](#) of over 1,200 Massachusetts middle-school aged students published in 2009.
- Greater exposure to alcohol advertising contributes to an increase in underage drinking, [as reported](#) by a national study in 2006.
- A [2008 study](#) by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine suggested that media literate teens may be less likely to smoke.

Media and Sexual Content

- Teens exposed to high levels of sex in the media are twice as likely to experience a pregnancy within the next three years, according to a [2008 Rand study](#).
- In a [2005 survey](#) of over 1,100 television shows from a variety of genres, 70% included sexual content, up from 56% in 1998 and 64% in 2002.

Cyber Wellness (a.k.a. Internet Safety)

- During a [2007 study by Cox Communications](#) with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 48% of 16- to 17-year-olds said their parents or guardians know "very little" or "nothing" about their online activities.
- From the [Crimes Against Children Research Center](#): "The nature of crimes in which online predators used the Internet to meet and victimize youth changed little between 2000 and 2006, despite the advent of social networking sites. Victims were adolescents, not younger children. Most offenders were open about their sexual motives in their online communications with youth. Few crimes (5 percent) involved violence."
- In April 2008, [Virginia became the first state](#) to mandate that public schools integrate Internet safety into their regular teaching instruction.

LAMP Tracks

Each module within a track will be tailored to the age group for which it will be presented. All modules can also be tailored for parent/educator workshops.

Commercials and Advertising Track

Ages: 5 yrs through high school

Make a Commercial/Break a Commercial

You see hundreds of advertisements every day—now you can make your own! As you write, edit and shoot your own original commercial, you'll learn how different persuasive techniques are used in advertising. You'll also analyze how people, products and ideas are represented, learning how to distinguish fact from fiction in commercials, and especially what's left out.

News and Reporting Track

Ages: 7 yrs through high school

What's in the News?

There are exciting things happening all around you, and now it's your chance to decide what is newsworthy and what is not. Publish your very own newspaper to discover how and why news becomes news.

News on TV/Video

Get behind the scenes and learn more about television and video news as you create your very own video news stories. You choose what to report and how to report it when you learn about how news choices are made.

Reporting and Podcasting

Reporting the news changes when it is heard and not seen! Find out how when you produce your own news podcast.

Exploring Images and Video Track

Ages: 6 yrs through high school

Video Poem

Explore how different editing techniques are used for sounds and images when you make a video poem. Use your original artwork, movement and writing to learn how different elements come together to make a piece of multimedia art.

Exploring Images and Video Track (cont'd)

Making Pictures, Telling Stories

Learn the basics of storytelling, editing and photography when you take photographs that tell a visual story. You know what order the pictures should be in—but when others look at them, what story do they see?

Documentary and Non-Fiction Video

Using a subject of your choice, produce your own documentary video. Explore the different ways that documentaries can be used, along with some basic video production and editing techniques.

Family Video Workshop

The whole family comes together to make a video memory. Choose how you'd like to represent your family when you write, shoot and edit a video of parents and children interviewing each other, sharing favorite memories and stories, and creating a lasting record to be enjoyed now and forever.

Digital Media Track

Ages: 10 yrs through high school

Put Yourself on the Web

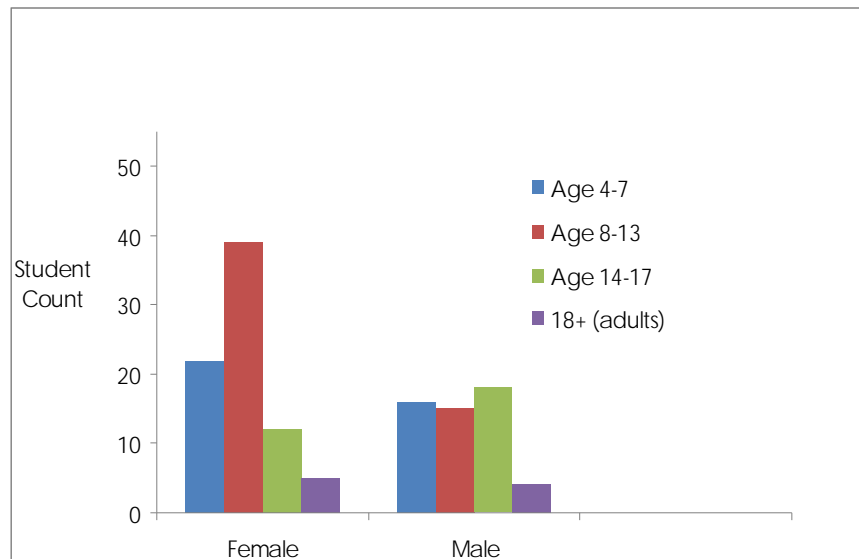
Explore the many ways you can present yourself on the Internet through social networking websites and blogs. Learn what to include (and what not to include) in an online profile, and how to build your own blog.

Living Digital

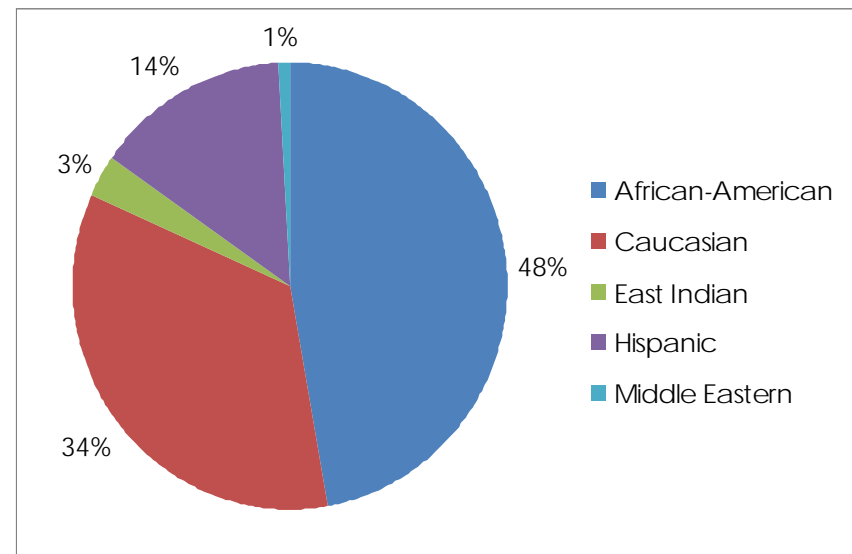
Learn how to make smart choices on the Internet when we discuss issues such as privacy and security, Internet etiquette, games on the Web, learning on the Web, viral videos and more.

LAMP Workshop demographics: 2007-2008

Participation by age & gender



Participation by ethnicity



What people are saying about The LAMP

"LAMP's approach to media literacy is both innovative and imaginative. By unlocking the messages in media imagery, LAMP helped my students to develop critical thinking skills and a vocabulary to express themselves."

--Amanda Daly, Education Director;
Center for the Urban Environment

"My daughter was really struck by how much work was involved in creating a ten second-long video poem. I know for her, seeing the final product was very worthwhile."

--Parent of student, *Video Poem*

"I came away on Sunday feeling a great sense of encouragement that it isn't too late for me to join in on the Web 2.0 experience. When one reaches a certain age in the world today, it is sometimes difficult not to feel overwhelmed by how quickly and relentlessly technology evolve. Your help has made it quite a bit easier to grasp."

--Joe Santangelo, student; *On the Web*

"When I see a commercial now, I notice the words, music and styles it uses to try to catch my eye...Learning all about the persuasive techniques marketers use really helped that."

--Student, *Making a Commercial*

"I find myself criticizing a commercial or turning the channel when I don't like it. I did not do this before [the LAMP workshop]. To me, learning what people exclude from commercials to influence people really helped me realize that not all commercials are honest."

--Student, *Making an Un-Commercial*

"The LAMP has done great work in getting students, families, and educators involved and experienced with varying forms of media and technology. In the long term, its programs will be key to preparing our city's children and ensuring that they are ready and able to participate and contribute to an increasingly digital and media-driven society."

--Bill de Blasio, New York City Council Member

"My daughter said this to me the other day: 'Hey Mom, isn't it funny how this newspaper puts all the bad stuff about this event in really small print to make it hard to read?' She never said that before she took the workshop."

--Parent of student, *What's in the News*

"When I see a newspaper now, I can't help but think about how they're made, what goes into reporting, and what they're trying to tell me. I thought that was so cool!"

--Student, *What's in the News*

Staff

D.C. Vito (co-founder and Executive Director) is the chair of the Youth Services and Education committee of Brooklyn's 6th Community Board. He has served as chair of the committee for two years, and has been on the board a total of four years on the Board. He has been an active community organizer for more than a decade, managing and working on over 20 political and issue-oriented campaigns ranging from the local city council to national presidential races. He also served on the 6th Neighborhood Advisory Board of New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development. For the past eight years, he has worked professionally as a cartographer, running the mapping department of Con Edison Communications.

Katherine G. Fry, Ph.D. (co-founder and Education Director) is an associate professor of media studies, deputy chair for graduate studies in the Department of Television and Radio, and director of the Communication B.A. Program at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. She earned her Ph.D. in mass media and communication from Temple University in 1994, and brings to The LAMP more than 15 years experience teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in media history, criticism, theory, research methods, law and regulation, and media ethics. She has an extensive background in curriculum development. In addition to her teaching, Dr. Fry's publications include the following books: "Constructing the Heartland: Television News and Natural Disaster" (2003, Hampton Press); and "Identities in Context: Media, Myth, Religion in Space and Time" (2008, Hampton Press). She has also published articles and contributed to books about communication technology and psychological well-being, television news, advertising and popular culture, radio, and German television. Her current research is in the history of news and in the future of news from the audience perspective. Dr. Fry is a member of the Board of Directors of the New York State Communication Association and holds memberships with, and regularly presents on panels for, the International Communication Association, the Media Ecology Association and the Eastern Communication Association.

Emily Long (Communications Director) earned her Masters of Fine Arts in dramaturgy and script development from Columbia University in 2006. While at Columbia, she edited and catalogued hundreds of interviews and transcripts for the Oral History Research Office, focusing primarily on its 9/11 Project. The LAMP is pleased to have Ms. Long on board as Communications Director, offering her extensive experience with numerous media through her work with Columbia's Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Atlantic Theater Company, Sesame Workshop, Electric Pear Productions and Cine Mosaic to name a few.

Ellen Uzonwanne (Program & Operations Manager) works closely with The LAMP's leadership team and supports the process for executing the organization's strategic agenda. Prior to joining The LAMP, Ellen was a volunteer for Councilmember Bill de Blasio (Democrat: Brooklyn). Ellen is a 2007 Business Management graduate of Brooklyn College and has professional work experience as both a senior paralegal and in government relations.