

Special Issue

Media Literacy in Latin America in the Age of AI:

Regional Challenges, Emerging Frameworks, and Critical Perspectives

Media and information literacy has been at the cornerstone not only of development policies since the end of World War II but also in regards to resistance and contestation movements in Latin America (Almandoz, 2014; Beltran S, 1978; Pasquali, 1977). Indeed, there is a robust body of scholarship that have underlined the importance of media literacy and has highlighted the complex nature of the challenges that society faces today (Mason et al., 2018).

Moreover, Media Literacy has been linked to the notion of “popular communication”, a concept that underscores the need for democratization, accessibility and engagement with grassroots movements (Bisbal, 2001; Ford et al., 1985; Martín-Barbero, 2004, 2010). The ideal of media literacy is commonly associated with building competencies and capabilities in the local communities as to allow them to exercise power and agency while securing broader inclusion (Alfaro-Moreno, 1985; Beltrán & Reyes, 1993) and, therefore, a form of capacity building aligned to self-determination and contestation to hegemony.

However, the emergence of generative artificial intelligence as a mainstream communicative infrastructure represents one of the most consequential transformations in the history of media and comes to challenge these traditional notions described above. Particularly, because machine learning -also referred to as AI- represents a top-bottom system that is fundamentally extractive and exclusionary. To be sure, the set of technologies that enable AI are hierarchically disseminated and to a certain degree imposed while the content generated is extracted from the local community in what we can describe a way of intellectual mining that reproduces all forms of dependency.

Hence, in the case of Latin America, the increasing influence of artificial intelligence on how individuals locate, evaluate, and create content has significant implications for what it means to be information and become media literate. Automated content production and algorithmic

curation, plus the use of synthetic voices, deepfakes, and chatbot-mediated information access, are widening the gaps in society. In a region in which important digital gaps persist, it would be naïve to expect for these new technologies just to come and close them. Particularly, as past experiences have shown that techno-deterministic assumptions often fall short from the initial promises (Da Porta & Morabes, n.d.; Martín-Barbero, 2004). The same type of promises that once proclaim that television and radio would educate people or that the Internet would unleash an era of equality.

This dichotomy between the expectations of AI in relation to Media Literacy against what some are already contrasting on the ground is due to the fact that Latin America occupies a paradoxical position in this landscape. While the region combines among the highest rates of social media use in the world it nevertheless faces persistent structural inequalities in digital infrastructure, media ownership concentration, and limited educational access.

This in addition to greater political polarization and growing distrust of traditional institutions, all of which is severely undermining the democratic ethos that the region fought so hard to secure after many decades of dictatorships. Furthermore, misinformation ecosystems in the region are increasingly amplified —and sometimes generated— by algorithmic systems, which help introduce agendas and ideologies exogenous to the interests of the region. As AI reshapes how Latin America publics encounter, interpret, and engage with information at an unprecedented scale, so does the ability of those generating and controlling these technologies to reshape politics in the region.

Given that the region hosts vibrant traditions of community media, popular education, and critical communication theory (from Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed to the Latin American school of communication) we can expect the region to offer a unique intellectual contestation to this setting both in regard to theory and praxis. Therefore, helping scholars from around the world to rethink media literacy from the ground up.

However, despite its enormous contributions to communication and media theory, Latin American scholarship regarding media literacy remains still peripheral in major international academic circuits. This against the backdrop of decades of work that have contributed not only to historical milestones in academia but also in defining public policy (Carpentier et al., 2013; Esteinou Madrid, 2012; MacBride, 2004).

This special issue seeks to correct that asymmetry by creating a dedicated space for theoretically grounded, empirically rigorous research that is both situated in the region's realities and in dialogue with global debates. In so doing, we are opening a long due dialogue that will help examine, discuss and debate in particular the significance and meaning of media literacy in an age of predicted technological disruption. We expect that this special issue marks the beginning of a network of researchers that look at media literacy not only as a way of building capabilities but that also understands its political and societal dimensions in the contestation of power and delivering societal inclusion.

The special issue is part of the efforts deployed by the Open Education Movement for Latin America, that seeks to foster targeted efforts to use educational content and technology to empower society.

Consequently, the guest editors welcome original research articles of the highest standard that are theoretically grounded and make a substantial empirical or conceptual contribution to the field. The issue is open to all methodological approaches, including:

Theoretical & Conceptual Foundations: Critical reviews of UNESCO MIL (Media and Information Literacy), NAMLE (National Association for Media Literacy Education), ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries), and AI literacy frameworks; decolonial and Southern epistemologies applied to media literacy; Freirean and Latin American critical communication theory; alternative or hybrid conceptual models.

AI, Disinformation & Verification: Impact of generative AI on misinformation ecosystems in the region; deepfakes and synthetic media in electoral and health contexts; algorithmic fact-checking initiatives; citizen perception of AI-generated content; platform accountability.

Media Education — Formal & Informal: Media literacy curricula and programs in K-12 and higher education; teacher training and institutional capacity; civil society and NGO-led initiatives; intergenerational and community-based media education.

Journalism Education, Training & AI: Curriculum transformation in Latin American journalism schools; editorial and ethical challenges of AI adoption in newsrooms; professional competencies for algorithmic environments; student and faculty perspectives.

Policy, Regulation & Governance: National and regional AI and disinformation regulatory frameworks; comparative policy analysis across Latin American countries; role of international organizations (UNESCO, OAS, ECLAC) and technology platforms; public media mandates and media literacy.

Diversity, Inclusion & Digital Divides: Media literacy in indigenous, rural, and marginalized communities; gender dimensions of digital literacy; multilingualism and platform design; digital colonialism and data sovereignty; disability-inclusive media education.

Submissions details

- Articles should be 5.000 words in English
- For details about the journal style visit: <http://worldofmedia.ru/authors/>

Guest Editors:

Professor Maria Soledad Ramirez-Montoya, PhD, Chair UNESCO Open Educational Movement for Latin America-Mexico and The Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (RIHSS), University of Sharjah, UAE

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DEADLINES AND TIME FRAME

Task	Date
Issue Call of papers (CfP):	01/03/2026
Submission to the Guest Editors	15/09/2026

Initial enquiries and full papers should be sent initially to:

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