Advantages and disadvantages of new media
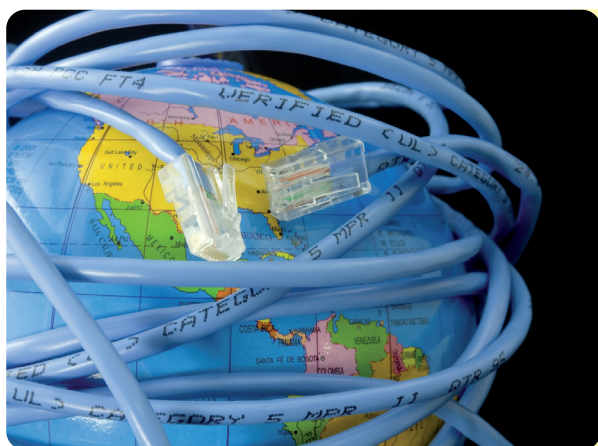
We live in a culture where young people – outfitted with iPhone and laptop and devoting hours every evening from age 10 onward to messaging of one kind and another – are ever less likely to develop the "silent fluency" that comes from face-to-face interaction. Users insert smiley-faces into emails, but they don't see each others' actual faces. They read comments on Facebook, but they don't "read" each others' posture, hand gestures, eye movements, shifts in personal space and other nonverbal – and expressive – behaviours. It is a skill that we all must learn, in actual social settings, from people (often older) who are adept in the idiom. As text-centered messaging increases, such occasions diminish. The digital natives improve their adroitness at the keyboard, but when it comes to their capacity to "read" the behaviour of others, they are all thumbs.

There are numerous advantages in using new media: in a while we can tweet and check our status updates on Facebook from our mobile. We no longer have to wait for the morning newspaper: we have the whole internet in our pocket. We can directly call people using Skype free calls over the Internet. Thanks to smartphones, we have more options of communication now and apps which allow us to talk and send texts for free. We can produce media ourselves with the Internet; w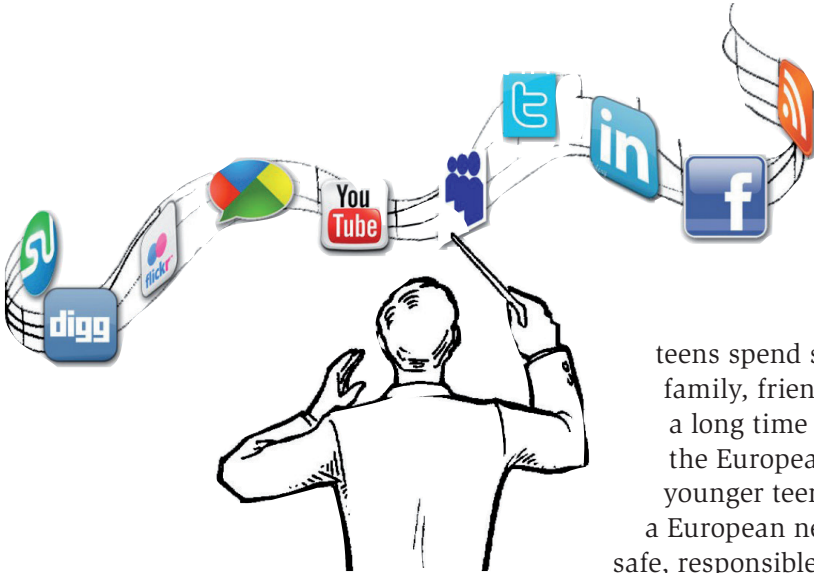e can create our own blogs and post our views of global events. I-cloud (a cloud storage and cloud computing service) allows us to work from our mobile devices to update and share our files on our computers. If we download music or take pictures, they will be on our home computer immediately. We can see that the "medium" of new media is the Internet and it has control over us because of the amount of hours we spend on it every day. Students live in a society characterised by an overwhelming presence of modern technological devices, allowing distance between people to diminish and leading to the existence of a second, online world. Teenagers and children grow up in this digitized environment and they become accustomed to and aware of its presence from a very young age.

At the same time, new media has a lot of disadvantages; we spend a lot of our time on social networking websites and we are sometimes no longer able to interact with our friends or work colleagues . News spreads on the Internet at an uncontrollable rate: once it is on the Internet, it's hard to get it off. Anybody can write a blog, which is often put on the internet without any editing; then, a person who wants to play mischief can always put something on the internet that may have adverse effects. Internet, chat rooms, instant messaging and online role-playing videogames can also be very dangerous places.

accustomed: *abituato*	**fluency:** *facilità di parola*
all thumbs: *goffo, sgraziato*	**to get off:** *eliminare*
addiction: *dipendenza*	**in a while:** *in breve tempo*
adroitness: *abilità*	**mischief:** *danno*
app: *applicazione*	**onward:** *in poi*
amount: *quantità*	**outfitted:** *attrezzato*
aware: *consapevole*	**overwhelming:** *opprimente*
challenge: *sfida*	**rate:** *velocità*
to check: *verificare*	**to spread:** *diffondere*
to deter: *scoraggiare*	**to tweet:** *cinguettare*
to devote: *dedicare*	**update:** *aggiornamento*
face-to-face: *faccia a faccia*	**wary:** *diffidente*
to face: *affrontare*	**to withdraw:** *allontanarsi*

For teenagers who spend too much time online, the Internet can really deter social and educational development. Internet addiction is a devastating problem facing many teens and their families. More and more parents are becoming wary of the excessive hours their teens spend surfing the web, withdrawing from family, friends and activities they used to enjoy. For a long time the European Commission has planned the European Framework for safer mobile use by younger teenagers and children, producing Insafe, a European network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices to young people.

Information and communication technology has great potential for knowledge dissemination, effective learning and the development of more efficient education services. Education must reflect the diversity of needs, expectations, interests and cultural contexts. The challenge is to define the best use of ICT for improving the quality of teaching and learning, sharing knowledge and information, introducing a higher degree of flexibility in response to societal needs, lowering the cost of education and improving internal and external efficiencies of the educational system.

1 **Match these verbs from the passage with their synonyms.**

a.	to develop	☐	**1.** to take someone to somewhere, or to a place
b.	to improve	☐	**2.** to make clear
c.	to allow	☐	**3.** to place a text on a web site
d.	to post	☐	**4.** to incorporate new or more accurate information
e.	to update	☐	**5.** to raise
f.	to share	☐	**6.** to participate in
g.	to download	☐	**7.** to grant
h.	to lead	☐	**8.** to copy or transfer a data or a program
i.	to reflect	☐	**9.** to evolve
j.	to define	☐	**10.** to give back, to show