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Theme

Digital communication and crisis management in social media environments

Duration

60 mins

Level

Intermediate

Computational Thinking Steps Used

- ☑ Decomposition
- ☑ Pattern recognition
- ☑ Abstraction
- ☑ Algorithmic thinking

LEARNING BOX OF UNPLUGGED ACTIVITIES

The social media crisis

In this unplugged activity, participants take on the role of a communication team managing a reputational crisis for a fictional organization on social media. They must analyze a stream of incoming public messages, comments, and reactions, and decide what information to communicate, when to respond, and through which channels (e.g., official statement, social media post, internal update).

Target Group

- ☑ Low-skilled adults with low digital competences
- ☐ Low-skilled adults with limited formal education or qualifications
- ☐ Low-skilled adults with low participation in lifelong learning / training opportunities

Learning Objectives

Analyze a complex dynamic situation by identifying key elements, messages, and channels of interaction

Recognize patterns in feedback or input data to understand how it evolves over time

Apply abstraction to filter relevant information from large volumes of noisy or unstructured data

Use decomposition to break down a complex communication problem into manageable decisions

Develop logical, step-by-step strategies to respond to dynamic and evolving situations

Make justified decisions about what information to communicate, when, and through which channels

Methodological Approach

- ☐ Gamification
- ☑ Challenge-Based Learning
- ☐ Collaborative learning
- ☐ Experiential learning

Competence Areas

a) Innovation Competences

- ☑ Creativity
- ☑ Critical thinking
- ☑ Problem solving
- ☑ Communication
- ☐ Collaboration

b) Information Literacy Competences

- ☑ Ability to access, understand and critically analyse information
- ☑ Interpretation of digital and visual content
- ☑ Awareness of media influence and biases

c) Life and Career Competences

- ☑ Flexibility and adaptability
- ☑ Initiative and autonomy
- ☑ Sociability and intercultural competence
- ☐ Productivity
- ☐ Leadership and responsibility

Learning Outcomes

Identify key issues and relevant actors within a complex information environment

Interpret patterns in feedback and shifting signals over time

Filter relevant information from large volumes of unstructured or noisy data

Design a clear, step-by-step strategy to respond to a complex and dynamic situation

Make appropriate decisions about what information to communicate, when, and through which channels

Apply computational thinking to manage complex, fast-changing information systems

Notes

Provide a structured but evolving stream of “social media posts” so participants can see how the situation changes over time.

Include a mix of signal and noise: emotional reactions, irrelevant comments, rumors, and useful information.

Ensure that there is no single “correct” solution—different communication strategies can be valid if they are well-justified.

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The social media crisis

Step 1: Understand the crisis situation

Participants are introduced to a fictional organization facing a reputational crisis on social media (e.g., a product issue, service failure, or controversial event). They receive an initial set of information, including the context of the crisis and a sample of early public reactions.

They begin by identifying the key elements of the situation: what happened, who is affected, and which stakeholders are involved (customers, media, employees, etc.). They organize the information to clarify the core problem before responding.

Computational thinking focus: Decomposition, breaking down a complex crisis into its essential components.

Step 2: Analyze feedback and evolving information

Participants receive a stream of social media updates showing how the situation develops over time (new comments, rumors, complaints, and official responses). They must analyze this information to detect patterns in public sentiment and distinguish relevant signals from noise.

They decide which information is trustworthy, which issues are becoming more critical, and how the crisis is evolving.

Computational thinking focus: Pattern recognition and abstraction, identifying trends in feedback and filtering relevant information from irrelevant or misleading content.

Step 3: Design and execute a communication strategy

Based on their analysis, participants design a communication plan that includes what to say, when to respond, and through which channels (e.g., official statement, social media post, press release, internal message). They may need to adjust their strategy as new information appears.

	Finally, they justify their decisions by explaining the reasoning behind their communication choices and how they aim to manage the crisis effectively. *Computational thinking focus:* Algorithmic thinking, creating a structured, step-by-step strategy to manage a dynamic and evolving problem.