

## **A critical reading toolkit for the use of digital museums and museum websites as providers of knowledge in education**

Museum objects, entities and ideas are much more accessible today by diverse communities due to the increasing use of digital technologies. Among these communities students are a very important target group. The issue of the Provenance of Knowledge is also crucial to modern education. Museums can contribute in this direction since they can provide evidence not only to detect the origin of school knowledge but also to substantiate it. New technologies create, in addition, new conditions and challenges. Digital museums and museum websites for children bring museums into the classroom. At the same time, they create a new framework for knowledge and its documentation reinforcing experiential participation. This education though is neither neutral nor innocent. It is determined by specific ideological discourses about the present and the past. Moreover, it follows certain learning theories and pedagogical principles included in school curricula. In this context a tool for an effective “reading” of these digital environments is needed. This reading tool must be flexible to trace the creation, use, interpretation and dissemination of the relevant mediated information and knowledge. The present paper proposes the use of an analogous reading toolkit for digital museums and museum websites. This toolkit comprises ten criteria and takes into account the ways in which meaning can be derived from their content, the ideological and socio-cultural “purpose” they serve, their underlying pedagogical principles, and the added value obtained from the educational use of ICT.