

The World Summit on Media for Children and Youth,
Karlstad, Sweden 2010

Dr Patricia Edgar AM Chair: World Summit on Media for Children Foundation

Since the first World Summit on Television for Children held in Melbourne, Australia in 1995, fifteen years ago, the world has undergone profound change. Technological advances have brought about a dramatic revolution in the children's media production industry altering the relationship between media and young people forever.

It is in this context we will meet in Karlstad, Sweden in June 2010. Those involved in the Summit Movement initially set out to raise the status of children's television programming and ensure its quality and accessibility in an increasingly globalised world. One year later in 1996 Google began and heralded the transformation of communication systems.

The media revolution has confronted producers, distributors, educators, researchers and policy makers with significant dilemmas: the financing of programs has become highly competitive and programs have been very commercialized. Iconic public broadcasters have struggled to compete and remain true to their public service ideals as the audience has fragmented. Ethical, social, educational and health issues have emerged from the commercialization of the child and youth market.

As we meet in Karlstad Sweden in June 2010 this new media environment presents us as producers of programs, games, platforms for social networks and virtual worlds, as distributors, educators and researchers, with exciting new opportunities to work together creating innovative approaches to learning and entertainment for children and young people. Accessible technology means youth are participating in media production and transforming the nature of their own education from the 20th century model of teaching to a 21st century model of learning.

Innovative use of media in learning is of fundamental importance for children in the developing world where 75 million boys and girls are not in school. Globalization has brought cultures together economically and media can contribute to breaking down educational, social and cultural barriers. We need to devise ways to work together and live together with greater understanding and media are central to this process

It is both desirable and practical for children and youth to play a major role in the change process. Each Media Summit, from Melbourne to London, Thessalonica, Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg, has widened the participation of children in the event. Karlstad will continue this enterprise hosting a Global Youth Council with participants from five continents taking an active role in challenging mainstream media, both to provide diverse programming and give more balanced reporting of young people.

This Summit will be about the future of our industry, about a new global vision for children and media and education centred around digital technology. Do join us in Karlstad June 2010.