

Autumn/Winter 2021

ECHO



Youth Information Centre Newsletter

16-18 Port Road, Letterkenny

Tel: 074 91 29630



Time to Move event, Healthy
hacks, Staying safe online...
and much, much more

Welcome Back

This is the second year when, due to the pandemic, things are or at least seem to be different and more challenging. It can be a stressful time. That's why, here in Letterkenny Youth Information Centre, we are happy to welcome you every day! We are open to the public and no booking is necessary. Our professional and experienced team is here to support you, answer any of your questions and make sure you are getting all the information that you need.

“The most important thing now, is making sure we are here for the young people”, says Katarzyna Kurzeja, the Youth Information Officer. “As we have physically re-opened our doors to the public after so many months of very restricted access to the building, we are offering young people in

our community face-to-face contact in a safe, non- judgmental environment with a highly- skilled team. At the same time, we would like to ensure that all young people are aware of our online resources available to them- informative YouTube videos prepared by the YIC team, various booklets, our presence on social media (@YICLetterkenny) and we are also part of the YIC Chat online service”.

Here in YIC young people can find handy tips on their rights as tenants, about the art of budgeting and finances and their overall well- being. On our YouTube channel (YIC Letterkenny), there is a multitude of informative videos on a wide range of topics including a useful video on study plans.



**GET AN ANSWER
TO YOUR
QUESTION**

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THE YOUTH INFORMATION TEAM



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WHAT IS THE YICCHAT ONLINE SERVICE?

Have a question? Chat with a Youth Information Officer and we'll get you an answer.

Youth Information Chat is a free online chat service to connect you with a professional Youth Information Officer who can provide you with personalised information. The service is a great way to get more information, learn about opportunities, and talk through your own situation with someone who can help.

How does it work?

The chat service is available between 4pm and 8pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). The service is here to support 16 to 25 year olds, parents/guardians, and people who work with young people. If you want to chat to a Youth Information Worker during that time, start a conversation now. If you would like to leave a message outside of the hours of our chat service, we can come back to you by email the next time we're online.

What we can help with...

We can help you with any questions you have, from education, employment, your rights and entitlements, social protection benefits, college grants, accommodation, and more. We can give you information, answer your questions, and provide you with a second opinion.

The most important thing is your safety!

If you tell us that you are under 18 and are being harmed, are at risk of being harmed, or have been harmed in the past while under 18, we must report this information to Tusla – the Child and Family Agency – and possibly the Gardaí. To make these reports, we need your full name, your age and the county you live in. If you choose not to share this information with us, we will be unable to make a report.

Who will you be talking to?

Our chat service is staffed by Youth Information Officers from centres across Ireland. Youth Information Officers are trained in providing information that is impartial, accurate, relevant to your question, in a non-judgemental and easy to understand way. The Youth Information Officers staffing the system are from YMCA Ireland, Crosscare and Youth Work Ireland.

Are you in a crisis?

This is not a service for people experiencing a mental health crisis, but if you need mental health support right now, text YIC to 50808 to start an anonymous conversation with a trained volunteer – 24/7. Standard text message rates may apply.



The Media Group

is back

Video Editing

Movie Reviewing

Film Nights

Photoshop



Plus Much More

Tuesdays from 6pm to 8 pm

Donegal Youth Service (16-18 Port Road Letterkenny)

We will have:

Tutorials,

Discussions,

Fun projects,

Special guests,

Snacks & refreshments.

Open to 16 to 25 year olds.

Interested?

e-mail derek.callaghan@donegalyouthservice.ie

Or call 074 91 29630 for more info



THE AGE OF FAKE NEWS



In this modern age of computers in almost every household and everyone owning powerful mobile devices, our young have access to more information than any of the previous generations but there is a growing trend of false information being disseminated via news sites and social media which could result in our young developing distorted views on the world and society around them. As a result, it has become more important for people not to take things at face value and try to discern if something is true or false, so here are some tips on the best ways to spot fake news.

1. Consider the source

There are “news sites” that provide alternative or fantasy news which is intended to be viewed as satire and clearly state this fact but unfortunately not all satirical sites do this. Some sites try to pass themselves off as reputable news sites which can lead to confusion about their authenticity. Sites like snopes.com maintain lists of known fake news websites which can help verify a sources reliability and there are plenty of fact checking organizations which can also help.

2. Read beyond the headline

If a website grabs your attention with a sensational headline, don't be too quick to forward it on to your friends and family. It is always good practice to read the entire article because headlines are intended to get you to click on the link but don't necessarily reflect the content of the article and by reading the article you will often find clues to its satirical nature or authenticity.

3. Check the author

Some quick and easy research on the author can often help you figure out an author's reliability. In the bios of these authors they can sometimes make bold claims of multiple prizes for journalism in an effort to bolster their credibility but a bit of due diligence can breakdown the façade. Sometimes these authors have no information about them at all because they simply do not exist.

4. Check their sources

These articles will cite official or official sounding sources to add weight to their claims but simply checking these sources can reveal that they in fact do not back up them up. They often rely on people being too lazy to look into the sources and just take the authors word for it.

5. Check the dates

Some fake news articles have been known to take true but old news stories, give them new sensational headlines and put new, current publication dates in an effort to support some dubious claims. Again, by reading the article and using the details in some research you will often find the original publication and see that it is irrelevant to the claim being made.

With these 5 tips you should be in a good position to be able to spot fake news and help stop the spread of this false information. This is just an example of the sort of topics to be covered in the Media group taking place on a Tuesday night at Donegal Youth Service. We will also be covering topics like photo and video editing, streaming, podcasts, online radio and various aspects of social media. If you would like more information on the media group, please contact Derek on 074 91 29630 or email derek.callaghan@donegalyouthservice.ie



TIME TO MOVE 2021 CAMPAIGN IN LETTERKENNY

There are many opportunities in Europe for young people from Ireland. Especially those with fewer opportunities, such as unemployed young people and early school leavers.

Working, studying, training or volunteering in Europe can be especially beneficial to young people struggling to find their place in society. Often this information doesn't reach the people who need it most. The Time to Move campaign from Eurodesk, the Europe-wide information network for young people, aims to put this right.

Every year, Time to Move provides a framework to a wide range of activities that always focus on bringing European opportunities closer to young people. Participants can choose from regular information sessions in schools, at fairs or during festivals, to more unique events such as mountain-hiking, tree planting, board game evenings or concerts. In 2021, young people could participate in a virtual game developed by Eurodesk. 'Time to Move: Adventures in Berlin' is a two-player point-and-click game inspired by escape rooms where players cooperate to solve riddles and challenges.

This year the Letterkenny Youth Information Centre promoted the EU opportunities during 3 different sessions:

1. "Youth'scape to Europe" was delivered in our centre to Youthscape project participants. It was a fantastic event prepared for disadvantaged group of young people who have never been traveling abroad or never heard about the EU opportunities. Participants played the Eurodesk card game in order to gain basic knowledge on the EU in a funny and entertaining way. Our Youth Information Officer Katarzyna Kurzeja presented various mobility opportunities available to young people across EU.

2. "The Adventures in Berlin" was challenging session using online game tool. Additionally, all participants had a chance to learn how to use Apple machines, explore cyber world and compete with others. The winning team received European Solidarity Corps hoodies and goody bags full of promo materials delivered by Leargas.

3. "Unlock your space!" was one of the outreach sessions delivered at Magheraroarty Youth Club. It was as a part of the life skills- focused programme. The members of the club were informed about studying, volunteering and internship placements abroad. They had a welcoming and safe space to talk about and plan their future projects.



ERKENNY YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE



This year's celebration of opportunities available in the European Union was a great chance to get back to our core work- to chat with young people, get to know them and their needs better, and build a meaningful professional relationship with youth in Donegal.

More about time to Move

The official website of the campaign is available in 19 languages and allows visitors to browse through events via an interactive map and to enter the contest with a few clicks. Visit the page at timetomove.info or find Eurodesk on Instagram to follow the campaign and stay updated on the latest developments.

If you are interested in any of the events, please contact Kasia on 0749129630 or Katarzyna.kurzeja@donegalyouthservice.ie

Social media handle @yicletterkenny

More about Eurodesk:

More than 1,200 youth professionals work with Eurodesk in Europe to raise awareness among young people about mobility opportunities and to encourage them to become active citizens. As a support organisation to the EU education and training programme Erasmus+, Eurodesk provides comprehensive and accessible information on learning mobility to those who work with young people. Eurodesk youth information workers always make sure that the information they channel is relevant and timely. Eurodesk is managed in Ireland by Léargas.



eurodesk

HEALTHY HACKS

WOULD YOU LIKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO:

ASK ABOUT GETTING FIT

LEARN ABOUT FITNESS AND HEALTH

SIT DOWN AND HAVE A CONVERSATION
WITH A PERSONAL TRAINER?

MEET NEW PEOPLE AND MAKE NEW
CONNECTIONS?

JOIN A GROUP THATS FOCUSED ON THE
NEEDS AND AMBITIONS OF ITS
MEMBERS?

**STARTS
END
OF
OCTOBER!**

**JOIN US
NOW!**



HEALTHY BODY,
HEALTHY ME!

INTERESTED?

PLEASE CONTACT

**JAMIE
AT
074 91 29630
OR**

jamie.kerr@donegalyouthservice.ie

Donegal
Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland



GET YOUR FITNESS FIX

This group is a focused, informal, venture into all aspects of fitness, from mental wellbeing to physical wellbeing.

topics could include:

- fitness definitions
- activities day to day
- what it means to lose weight
- what it means to gain weight
- definitions of diet
- what proper eating habits serve in living a healthy lifestyle
- how having a healthy body can contribute to a healthy mind
- the psychology of health and training for goals
- media misrepresentation of fitness and goals
- dangers of consistent sedentary behaviour
- different opportunities for getting fit
- different opportunities for careers in fitness

Come in, sit down, and have conversations about all these topics and more. Special guests are expected to be joining in too, Including local professionals in dieting, fitness and training. The idea is to stay away from the formal style of presentation, or “talks” and to embrace an informal conversation style of information, sit on the couches and enjoy. Food and beverages will be provided.

To be held in the drop in center at 16-18 Port Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.



STAYING WELL

HEALTHY MIND DURING WINTER

A key component in leading a healthy life is having a healthy mind. Mental health is often overlooked in this regard. Ignoring your mental health isn't a great way to stay healthy during rough periods of life, or even the year. Staying mentally healthy during any time of the year can be difficult, but during winter can be even harder. Many people will start to feel "off" or unmotivated during the long winter months. This can be due to many factors that in the winter season, such as the harsh weather, the lack of sunshine, and the spread of sickness.

Taking stock of your mental health may be difficult, but this winter stay mindful of your mental health.

Here are some useful tips:

- Get good sleep
- Make the most out of natural light
- Eat supportive foods
- Stay hydrated
- Exercise and keep warm
- Practice mindfulness techniques

Everyone seems to forget that the mind is something that could need extra care during the winter months also. Its important to remember to keep yourself regulated both physically and mentally during the dark and wet season.



THIS WINTER

HEALTHY BODY DURING WINTER

During the winter the body can take a dip when it comes to keeping well and healthy!

Its this time when you should take extra care of yourself and understand how the cold can effect your body.

Did you know during this time you are more susceptible to:

- Colds
- Flu
- Excessive tiredness
- Skin issues
- Kidney and bladders problems

Luckily, you can reduce the chances of experiencing difficulties during the cold using these useful tips:

- Keep warm

Winterize your clothes, and reduce the temperature drop.

- Stay hydrated

It's easy to forget about hydration when it's cold your more likely to wear more clothing, and when you're using excessive layers, you'll sweat more los-

ing water and electrolytes. You can also supplement with electrolytes.

- Get good sleep

Sleep function has been shown to have direct effects on immune functioning, adequate sleep is important, especially during the winter times.

- Supplement

During the winter, there is less exposure to sunlight, which is also connected to immune functioning. Luckily you can always supplement with vitamin D.

- Eat well

A healthy diet contributes greatly to normal immune functioning, you don't have to completely change up your diet for this! Just introduce some fruit and veg into your diet to support a healthy immune system.

Bottom line

There are many factors that effect the immune system and unfortunately there are more of the negative than positive during the winter months. Its important to remember that the cold will not make you sick, but it can make you more susceptible to getting sick. Take care of yourself.



PLANNING TO STUDY?

Creating a study plan is important in order to define your learning goals and achieve them in a systematic way. A study plan is an effective way to help you navigate through your education, and hold you accountable for your own learning outcomes. It is important to understand that there is no right or wrong way to make a study plan. Remember that your study plan should be personalised based on your specific needs and learning style.

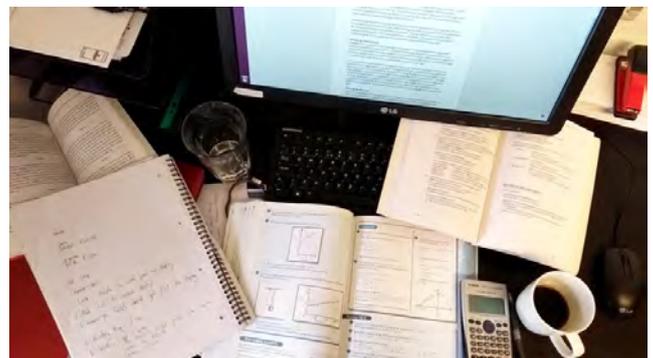


Here are some tips from YIC on creating a good study plan:

1. Analyse your current study habits- think about what works and what doesn't work for you
2. Use a calendar to block out all of your standing commitments, including classes, work etc
3. Plan regular breaks!
4. Remember that your study plan is all about helping you be more efficient and productive.



If you would like to find out more on how to manage your studying time, going abroad to work or volunteer, or simply have a friendly chat with one of the Letterkenny Youth Information Centre staff members, please visit YIC. The centre is open Monday to Thursday 12 to 6pm, and on Fridays 12 to 5 pm. YIC Letterkenny is based in Donegal Youth Service building, 16-18 Port Road, Letterkenny.





WHAT'S ON @ THE LOFT SEPT - DEC 2021

MONDAY:

LADS LAB 4.30PM-8PM / THE ART GROUP 5.30PM-7.30PM

TUESDAY:

GIRLS GROUP 4.30PM-6.30PM / WELLNESS GROUP 6.30-8PM
FIT FOR LIFE 5PM-6PM

WEDNESDAY: WORLD WIDE VOICES 6PM-8PM

FRIENDS IN IT TOGETHER 4.30PM-6PM

THURSDAY: TEA & TUNES 6PM-8PM

FRIDAY: DROP IN 5PM-9PM

SATURDAY: DROP IN 2PM-6PM /

YOUNG CARERS: 12PM-2PM

MONDAY - THURSDAY: DROP IN OPEN UNTIL 6PM

To find out more contact a member of Loft staff on :

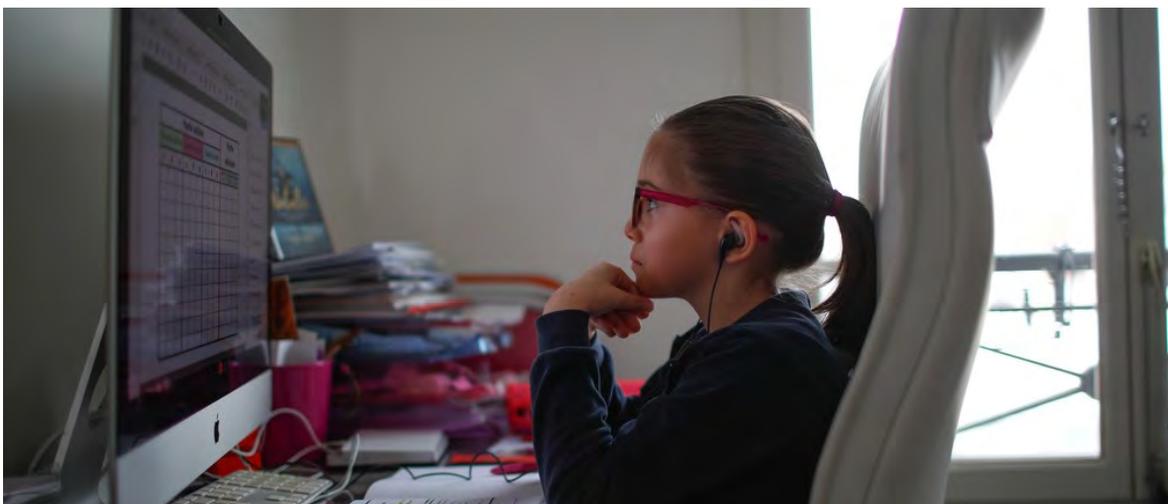
074 9129630

STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Staying safe online is crucial nowadays. Very often we spend a lot of time on various devices without knowing what is the safe way of using them. Unlimited and unrestricted access to the Internet might be challenging and problematic, especially in the context of children and young people. “In Donegal Youth Service we educate students and parents on how to stay safe online and how to deal with cyberbullying. Three of the Letterkenny Youth Information Centre staff members are present in most of the primary and secondary schools across Donegal county during the school year. We deliver high quality sessions covering topics such as internet safety, rights & responsibilities of online users, and consequences of online activities. We discuss media literacy skills, including the proper interactions with other Internet users”, says Katarzyna Kurzeja, Youth Information Officer.

Letterkenny YIC team have prepared the following tips for staying safe online:

1. Secure passwords: at least 12 digits, use upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols. Around 475,000,000,000,000,000,000 (four hundred and seventy-five sextillion) possible combinations could take up to 7.5 million years to crack on a modern computer.
2. Two factor authentication: Very important, can stop someone trying to get access to your account in their tracks. Most breaches of accounts are done by people who are not local to you. They may get your password but getting access to your phone is considerably more difficult.
3. Keep devices up to date: Hackers work hard on finding new ways of getting access to your devices. The best way to counteract this is to keep your computers software (especially Anti-virus and anti-malware software) up to date to reduce the number of potential exploits.



4. Use secure websites: When you go into a website, double click on the address to bring up the full address and check that it starts with "HTTPS://". The S stands for secure and you should never provide personal or financial information to a site that is not secure.

5. Avoid sharing too much information: Do not share identifying information like full name or address etc. You should also avoid using your real name in usernames or email addresses.

6. Avoid using public wifi: these free public wifi points are often very unsecure and could expose your device to snooping. If you have to use them, consider using a Virtual Private Network, like ExpressVPN, Cyberghost or Private Internet Access, to encrypt your data and protect you from snooping.

7. Be careful when viewing emails: When going through your emails, keep an eye out for spelling mistakes. Scammers often intentionally include these mistakes because people that might not notice spelling mistakes are more likely to fall for scams. If you are not expecting an email from an organisation or person and you suspect it may be a scam, there is a high likelihood that it is. If you receive an email from someone you know that has a link that doesn't seem right, check

with them that they actually sent it before attempting to open it.

8. Backup your devices regularly: Get in the habit of backing up your important information because if the worst happens and your device becomes infected with viruses or malware, you could potentially lose all data stored on it. With backups you can easily retrieve the lost information once your device has been cleaned and repaired.

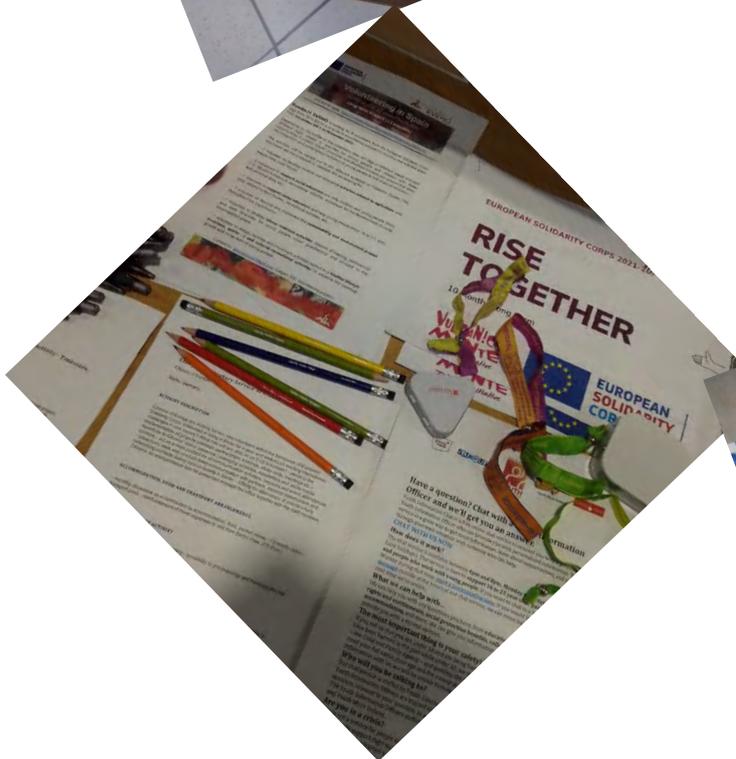
9. Be aware of who's watching: when entering passwords or sensitive information in public, take a moment to look at your surroundings and consider who may be able to see what you are entering. If possible, cover your keyboard to prevent someone looking over your shoulder.

10. Teach your family what you've learned about security: Keeping your home computers secure is a group effort. If someone in your house is not being secure online, it could easily undo all your hard work.

If you have any questions or are interested in the topic covered today, and would like to arrange the Internet Safety sessions for your school/ any other group, please contact us on 0749129630 or email gareth.gibson@donegalyouthservice.ie

LYIT VOLUNTEERING FAIR

Volunteering is providing skills for life and building a better future for young people, for Ireland and more. It is encouraging active citizenship, social entrepreneurship, volunteering and socialising.



We were here this year it was great! There were many queries about volunteering and European opportunities!

Big thanks to the LYIT for the invitation and everyone we seen on the ground.



LADS LAB

SOCIAL GROUP

ACTIVITIES, TRIPS, SOCIAL SKILLS, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & MORE!

MONDAYS
4.30PM - 6.30PM: AGES 12 - 15:
6.30PM - 8PM: AGES 16 - 18

To find out more contact us on 074-9129630



TEA & TUNES

THURSDAYS
6PM - 8PM

Tea, biscuits, tunes & craic guaranteed!

Everyone Welcome - No musical ability required!



LOFT GIRLS GROUP

Tuesdays - 4.30pm-6.30pm
Ages: 12+

Activities, Trips, Refreshments, Personal Development, Confidence Building, Team Building and more...

To sign up...just get in touch via FB/Instagram or phone us on 074-9129630



ART GROUP

Mondays
5:30pm-7:30pm
Starting 15th November

Let your creative side out with our weekly arts and craft group

To join, contact a member of staff/ our social media or call 074 9129630



WORLD WIDE VOICES

Wednesdays
From 6pm-8pm



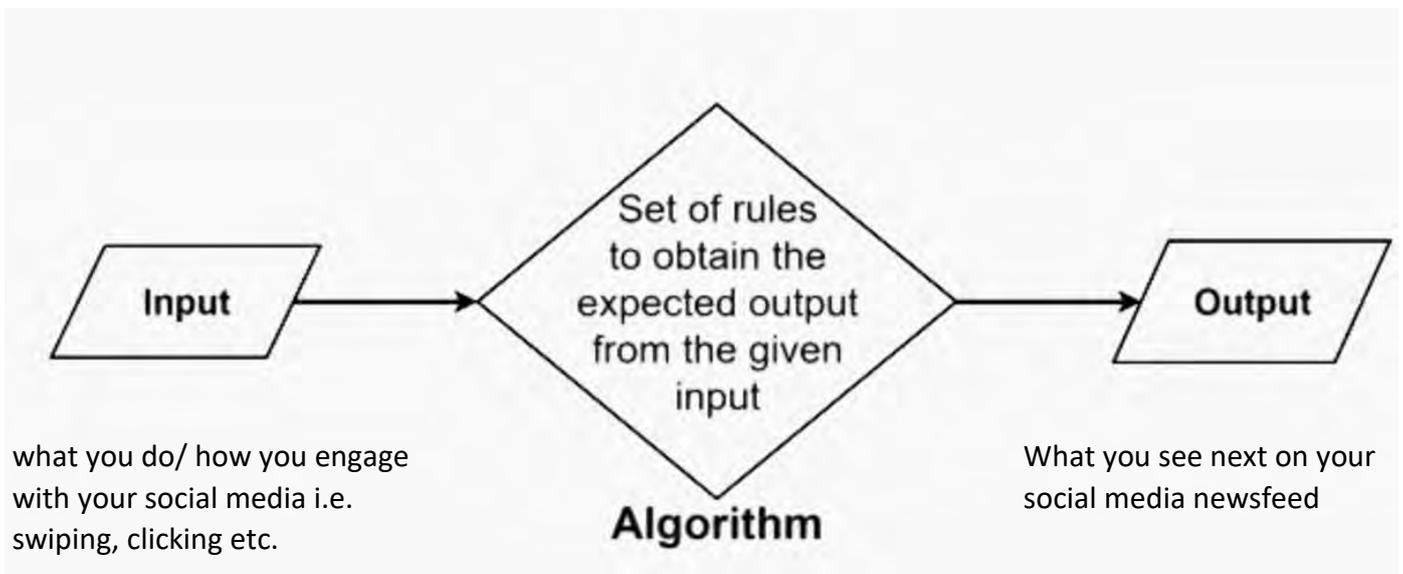
Tuesdays
From 5pm -6pm

or

Life



SOCIAL MEDIA ALGORITHMS



How the algorithm dictates what you see next

When considering social media, it's important to understand what the algorithm is, and how it works. This process is relevant for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.

The algorithm is the process by which what you see next is dictated by the system. When you are on social media (any of the above mentioned), you would usually have the option to scroll through your newsfeed, and when you stop scrolling to observe a post, photo or video that you are interested in, the algorithm will take note that you have stopped scrolling for this post, and have engaged in this content. The algorithm will then make sure that the type of content that you will see next while scrolling, will be similar to the ones that you previously stopped for!

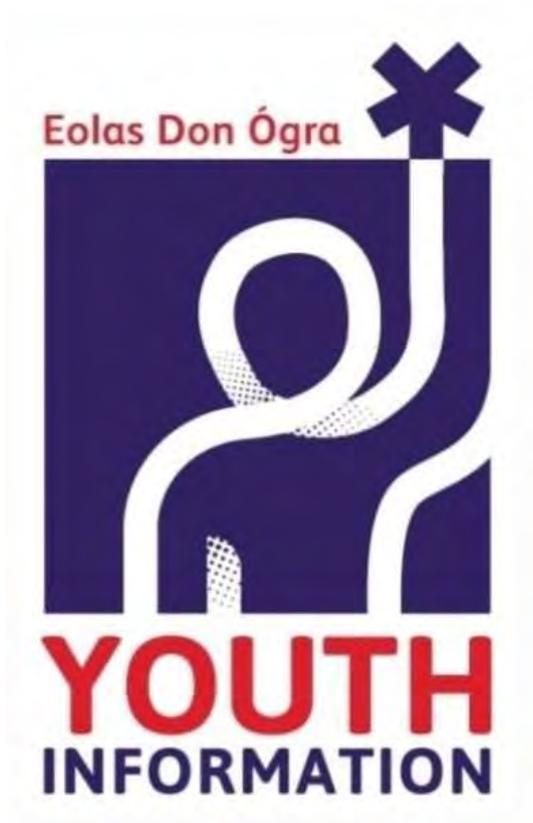
Hence, when someone has an opinion or an interest in a certain type of content, whether it be political, personal or even business related, their social media will be directed in such a way whereby they will only see this type of material for the most part.

So its important to keep in mind that when people have an opinion that they have largely gathered through their Facebook or Instagram newsfeed then chances are, most of the content they see is supportive of, or similar to this opinion.

Remember how the algorithm works, and remember that news on social media is anything but objective!



*F*rom all of us at Donegal Youth Service
we would like to wish you a happy Christmas
and a prosperous new year



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