

Evaluation

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making communications
work **for everyone**

Contents

This presentation is in four sections.

- 1 What do I do? Introduction**
- 2 What is evaluation and why does it matter?**
- 3 Challenges and barriers to evaluation**
- 4 Ofcom's evaluation toolkit – an update**

Ofcom & media literacy: our programme of work

Refreshed and
relaunched our online
media literacy
programme



The programme has
five overlapping areas
of focus



Engage



Research



Initiate



Evaluate



Establish

The evaluation work
that I do has these
focus areas



Toolkit



Promotion



Knowledge base

collaboration

EMPOWERMENT

Respect

agility

Excellence

What is evaluation?

Evaluation helps you understand, demonstrate and improve the impact of your activity (Reading Outcomes Framework)

Evaluation: using monitoring and other data you collect to make judgements about your project or organisation. (NCVO evaluation guidance)

Evaluation is the process of examining programmes (or interventions) to determine their value, merit and worth ... It also provides vital information for improved decision-making and more effective services in the future. (Early Intervention Foundation)

We use the word **evaluation** in its broadest sense to refer to any systematic process to judge merit, worth or significance by combining evidence and values. (Better Evaluation)

What is evaluation?

Impact

These evaluations will focus on asking you to consider what the project achieved and how well you met your objectives.

Process

These evaluations will focus on asking you to consider how you delivered your project and the extent to which the way the project was delivered effected the final outcomes.

Economic

These evaluations will focus on asking you to consider the costs of your project relative to the benefits, asking questions like, “was the outcome worth the cost?” Or “could something else of delivered the same outcomes for less?”

Process versus impact

One of our aims with this guidance is to nudge towards **impact evaluation**.

Our research tells us that while the orgs we are targeting in phase one are doing evaluation, it is largely process evaluation (how well something was delivered and whether it could be more effective), as well as reach (how many people interacted/ received the training, etc.)

It is this lack of deeper evaluation that has sparked calls for better, more robust work to be done – that there is no evidence base to speak of that demonstrates that the work is moving the dial (process evaluations tend to demonstrate the people enjoyed a certain initiative for example). Even if many people believe that it probably is.

Why evaluate? Is it all about impact?



A note on our thinking on impact

Impact

Impact refers to longer-term change at an individual or societal level that can be attributed to the outcomes of an intervention. Impact is likely to be harder to measure than outcomes.

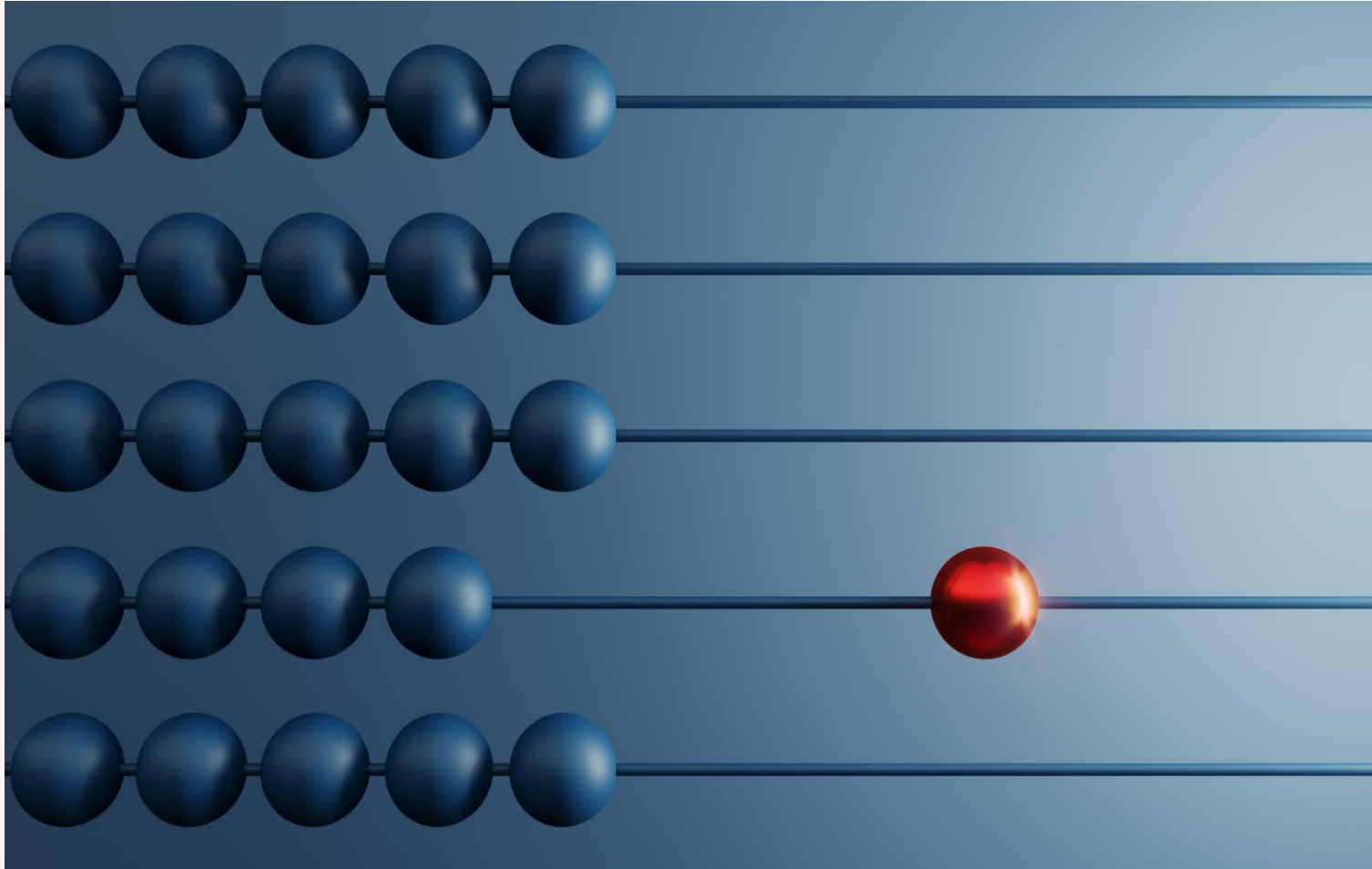
For example, impact of a media literacy project could be:

- increased resilience to disinformation
- a change in the way that participants consume news
- an increase in the creativity of the audience when it comes to online media

Impact evaluation

Impact evaluation will focus on asking you to consider what the project achieved in terms of change for the target audience and/or wider society, and how well you met your objectives.

Challenges and barriers to evaluation



1. Funding
2. Perceived absence of definitions and frameworks
3. Participant engagement
4. Pace of change
5. Motivation
6. Nature of the sector

Challenges and barriers - funding



- Evaluation seen as costly
- Staff don't have expertise
- It costs £ to buy in help
- Funders require evaluation but don't build those costs into their grants
- Funding cycles don't allow enough time for evaluation

Challenges and barriers – frameworks and definitions



Difficulties measuring what good media literacy is, or understanding ‘what impact looks like’ were identified as barriers. While some frameworks for measuring media literacy outcomes do exist, these were often considered complex, and difficult for practitioners to apply in practice.

Challenges and barriers – participant engagement



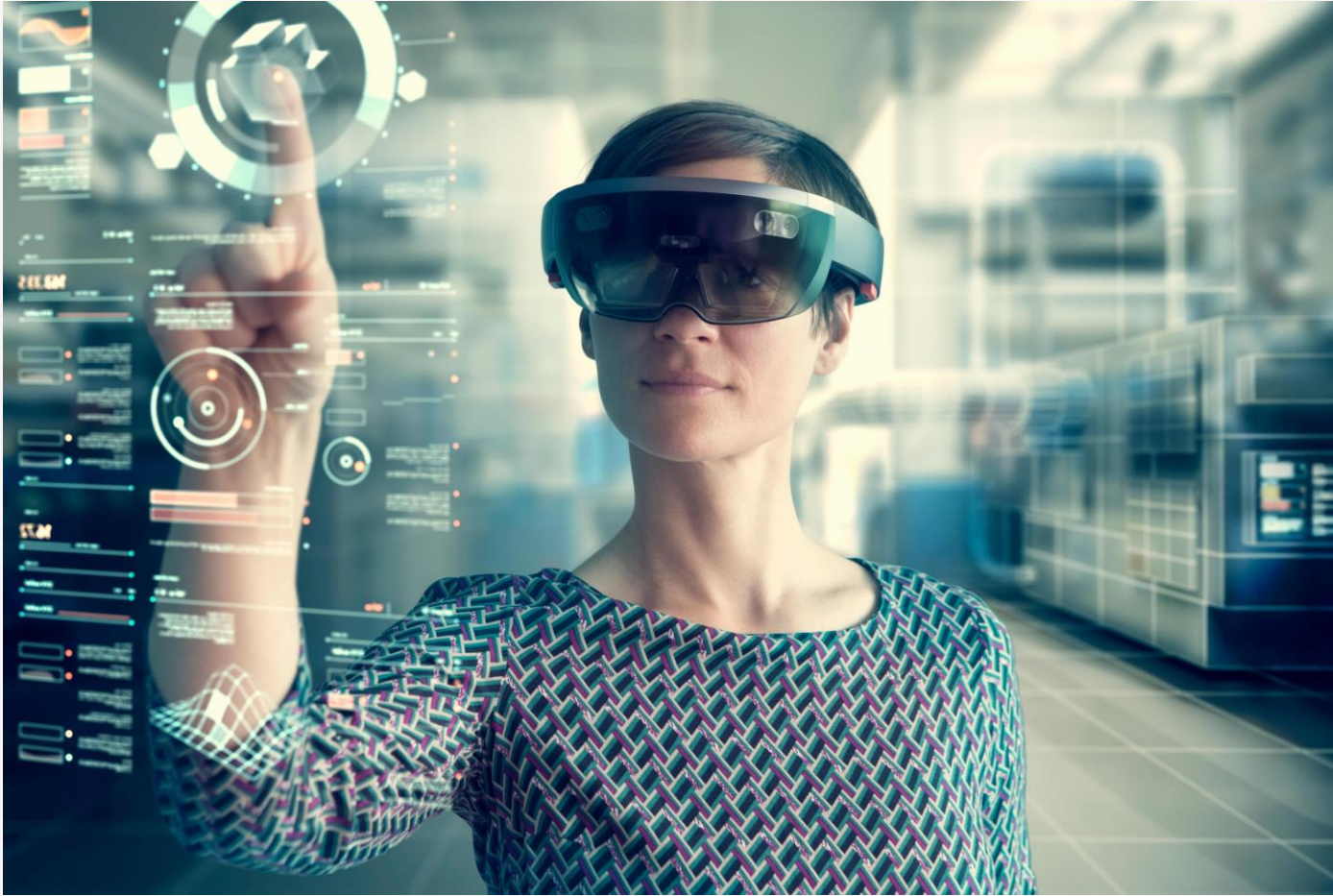
- Evaluation requires input from participants (in terms of pre and post surveys, focus groups)
- Reaching participants, especially for orgs with online materials, can be challenging
- Digital inclusion work – some groups hard to reach online

Challenges and barriers – motivation



While the benefits of evaluation are often acknowledged, a lack of formal requirements to evaluate projects from funders can result in a lack of motivation to take on the additional costs and effort of conducting an evaluation – with a perception that effort is better applied looking to the next project

Challenges and barriers – nature of sector/ pace of change



- Breadth of activity across sector
- Range of delivery methods
- Changing tech dictating changing initiatives

How evaluation is framed in the guidance

It can be confusing

From the outside, we know that evaluation can seem complex, costly and overwhelming. This toolkit seeks to demystify that process, offering a simple step-by-step guide as to how to carry out an evaluation of a media literacy initiative

Going back to basics

Evaluation is the process of assessing the design, delivery and outcomes of an initiative. This could be to spot opportunities for improvement in the delivery process, to understand what impact the initiative has had on those taking part, and/or to understand the cost effectiveness of the initiative for its intended purpose.

It is a learning tool

It is important not to see evaluation as a judgement at the end of the project: evaluation can help you learn about your project, iterate and make progress towards your goals.

Ofcom – what we are doing

- Non-academic, step-by-step, guide
- Segmented by delivery methods
- This guide will be divided into four main sections:
- Choosing/ Preparing/ Doing/ Sharing
- Written using plain English – those using it can select their own “journey” through the guidance

Ofcom – what we are doing

- Illustrated with case studies
- Top tips boxes
- Templates
- How-to guides for:
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Online polls
- Quizzes
- How to present your findings
- Glossary of key words

One key message – making a positive out of negatives



- Evaluation is about showing learnings, actions and next steps
- It doesn't have to be 100 per cent satisfaction
- By identifying things that didn't work and showing how you are addressing these, post-evaluation, you are demonstrating progress
- Funders want to fund something impactful
- They prefer honesty and transparency over 100 per cent satisfaction

Finally – tell us what you need!



We are considering further ways in which we could support the sector to evaluate media literacy outcomes, and we would welcome views as to what more we could consider doing.

Thanks

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Questions?