Image ecologies: Infrastructures of visual art education in Sweden and Estonia

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* Learning
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## Sample

Teachers active in visual art educators' online communities in Estonia and Sweden.

## Implications For Educators About

Professional development

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

This essay is a visual interpretation of the media ecologies of visual art education in Sweden and Estonia. As the title of the article suggests, an ecology of visual art education means infrastructures for accessing, producing, showing and sharing images. The study is empirically informed by social network analysis conducted in online communities and by interviews with teachers who are active in those communities. Graphs of activity and connectedness in online communities are included in a media ecology model, based on the teacher interviews. The model visually relates online collaboration with material technologies, such as classroom computers or cameras, and different forms of governance, such as curricula. The essay attempts to contribute to the existing literature regarding the relation between technologies and educational practice by combining digital methods with media ecology and infrastructure theory, and methodologically by using visual methods for interpretation.

# Outcome

Looking at graphs, colours indicate that geography and alumni affiliation create local communities in the online social networks.... The analysis also demonstrates that the Twitter chat evinces a more coherent community than the Facebook groups.... The interviewed teachers stated that new digital technologies, developed for assessment and evaluation, demand a predefined learning process that can be graded and assessed in smaller parts, described by Dennis Atkinson (2011: 102) as prescriptive pedagogy. This educational paradigm is also visible in Estonian and Swedish policy documents and curricula. In response to these new demands, online collaboration and content sharing become ways to manage everyday teaching. According to the interviewees, online collabora- tion was also considered a way to defy the logic of capitalist society, namely ownership and consumption. Conversely, by sharing material, these commu- nities simultaneously uphold a system of unmanageable workloads and governance.... A media ecology approach emphasizes the invisible organizing and structur- ing nature of contemporary media, or in other words, media as infrastructure. The formation of infrastructures, whether we talk about roads, broadband cables or computer systems for evaluation of education are always connected to a certain image, or dream, about the future (Peters 2015: 35). But these dreams are also guided by understandings of the past and present." (Author, 242-243; summary of the findings in a visual form on p. 244-245).