

Networks, media and automation

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Digital Society · SL

IB Diploma Programme Digital Society SL (first assessment 2024; 2021 guide). This topic equips the remaining CONTENT areas (3.3 computers, 3.4 networks and the internet, 3.5 media, 3.6 artificial intelligence, 3.7 robots and autonomous technologies) situated by the seven CONTEXTS, as demanded by the source-based Paper 2 (30% at SL): diverse sources explored, their claims and perspectives evaluated. This handout teaches the content areas, the contexts and the source discipline. All worked examples are original classroom cases.

Must-know for networks, media and automation:

Family	Content
computers	3.3: the machines and their limits
networks	3.4: the internet's layers and their choke points
media	3.5: creation, distribution, participation: the changed feed
automation	3.6 AI and 3.7 robots: decisions and actions delegated
sources	diverse sources: claim, perspective, provenance evaluated

From computers to robots

As substrate, **computers** (3.3) process with limits (memory, energy, attention); **networks and the internet** (3.4) connect them in layers, each layer a choke point (the cable, the platform, the standard): who owns the layer decides its rules. Closest to daily life is the content area of **media** (3.5): creation (everyone a publisher), distribution (the feed ranked, not chronological) and participation (the comment, the share, the pile-on).

Worked case. The class-news feed: three versions of the same school event (the official post, the student video, the satirical meme) travel differently because the ranking algorithm rewards engagement, not accuracy: MEDIA content on a NETWORK choke point.

AI, robots and the contexts

In 3.6, **artificial intelligence** is delegated decision (the classifier that flags, the recommender that ranks); **robots and autonomous technologies** (3.7) add delegated ACTION (the warehouse robot, the autonomous mower): each delegation moves a human judgement somewhere else. Every case is situated by the seven **contexts**: cultural, economic, environmental, health, human knowledge, political, social: the same recommender is a different case in the economic context (whose market) and the health context (whose wellbeing).

Worked case, continued. The school's essay-feedback classifier: AI content (delegated judgement) in the human-knowledge context (what counts as good writing) and

the social context (who gets encouraged): the context choice changes the question.

Working with sources

Paper 2 is source-based: the discipline is the **source** read three ways: its CLAIM (what it asserts), its PERSPECTIVE (who speaks, from where, with what interest) and its PROVENANCE (where it came from, who published it, when). Diverse sources means genuinely different perspectives (the platform's statement, the user's testimony, the regulator's report), and the essay weighs them rather than stacking the agreeable ones.

Worked case, concluded. On the feed case, three sources: the platform's transparency post (claim: ranking serves relevance; perspective: the seller of attention), a student creator's testimony (claim: the meme travelled furthest; perspective: the participant), and a media-literacy study (claim: engagement ranking rewards outrage; perspective: the researcher): the essay weighs all three against the case.

Checklist

- Computers, networks, media: substrate, layers, feed (computers).
- AI and robots: delegated decision, delegated action (automation).
- The seven contexts situating every case (sources).
- Claim, perspective, provenance on every source (sources).
- The worked feed and classifier cases understood (worked). Boundary notes: the examiner must see the inquiry working: concepts named, sources diverse and evaluated, real-world examples real. All worked examples are original classroom cases.