

ASPECTS REGARDING THE PENETRATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING IN ROMANIA

ASPECTE ALE SITUA IEI PENETR RII RE ELELOR DE SOCIALIZARE ÎN ROMÂNIA

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Abstract: One of the biggest currently problems are the social network. This mode of entertainment is specific mainly to young people, the others preferring the ways of "old" communication. The paper presents some aspects of the penetration of these networks in Romania, and the categories of people connecting to them, providing additional data from the west of the country.

Key words: *Internet, statistics, social network*

INTRODUCTION

In Romania, 38% of children under three years are accessing the Internet daily. The main argue of 11% of children is that they are entering the net to make lessons. While 80% of Europeans are entering in virtual space to play, Romanians children are fans of social networking.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study is based on some statistical date from Romanian and foreign sites, and from personal data, taken by questionnaires in the west side of Romania. The questionnaires data were inserted and studied with Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Romania, 70% of adolescents and 54% of children fall daily on

the net, while only 55% of parents accessing it, shows a study conducted at the initiative of Save the Children, in cities from seven counties. Most popular among teenagers and children are socializing sites Hi5 and Facebook, Yahoo Messenger and Skype. According to statistics, 82.6 among adolescents in Romania can be found today on Hi5. Unlike the young Romanian, 80% of European children access the Internet for video games online, according to a study by British agency, specialized in researching children's media consumption habits (quoted by Mediafax). The study, which was conducted in eight European markets on a sample of 2323 children aged between seven and 14 years shows that four in five children go online to access video games.

According a foreign survey results, only 65% of children in Germany enter the web game, compared with 89% of Danish children do. Many popular games, including Club Penguin, Stardoll and World Café, using Flash technology, are accessed from PCs or laptops. The studies also show that games success is directly related with the manufacturers desire to make profits from these activities. Most children play games online for free, while 16% paid for a subscription to access the game, and 15% had bought goods within virtual games.

British children are the ones who made the highest number of subscriptions to online video games (25%), and those who bought most of the game's virtual goods (20%). By contrast, only 11% of children in the Netherlands were purchases of virtual goods in the game and only 8% made their subscriptions. Furthermore, 18% of children who participated in the study said they do not pay to access online video games, but that could do this in the future. In France, 26% of children said they could pay taxes for online games. In Denmark, 27% of children stated that they intend the same in future. In Europe, one third of children said the main reason for not paying for online games is their parents' refusal to spend money on such services.

A study from a year ago, reveals that 63.5% of children under 14 years are accessing the computer daily, and approximately 59% of them enter the internet every day to visit web pages to play, usually violent games. The figures are alarming because research shows that 38.7% of children under three years access the Internet daily, while 11.8% of children aged between 7 and 10 years are operating in cyberspace to find information for homework.

While the Internet has opened the world to many in ways never imagined, new studies continue to show that Internet overuse can become harmful. Examples of Internet addiction include online gambling, gaming and shopping, obsession with pornography, blogs, social media and chat rooms.

Teens are more at risk because, they have been raised in technology their entire life. Other at-risk groups include people who are immobile or homebound, people who lack social support, people who suffer from depression or anxiety disorders, and people who have addictive personalities.

One of the later large-scale studies conducted on Internet addictions was completed in 2006 by Stanford University's School of Medicine, which interviewed 2,513 adults in a nationwide telephone survey. Researchers said 68.9 percent of respondents were regular Internet users, and one in eight displayed at least one possible sign of problematic Internet use.

Internet usage in general has clearly increased over the past decade, with 68.7 percent of homes boasting Internet access in 2009, compared with 41.5 percent in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Some statistics about Emails:

- 90 trillion - the number of emails sent in 2009
- 247 billion - the average number of emails sent in one day.
- 1.4 billion - the number of e-mail holders, world.
- 100 million - new email users over the previous year.
- 81% - the number of emails that were spam.
- 24% - increase from last year spam
- 200 billion - the number of spam per day (assuming 81% are spam)

And about Websites

- 234 million - the number of sites in December 2009;
- 47 million - the number of new sites in 2009;

Some users have told that would use social networks even during a sex. 7% confessed that they would read a message received during a sex. The survey shows that 30% of users of Facebook and Twitter and would check the latest updates at any time of night. 47% of study participants said they check their accounts at night and sometimes a percentage of 53% check what happened on Facebook or Twitter from the moment they woke up this morning. Most affected by the "anger" are young people under 25 years.

In terms of social networks, we have the following statistics:

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- 126 million - the number of blogs on the Internet (according to BlogPulse)
- 84% - Percentage of social networks with more women than men;
- 27.3 million - the number of tweets / day on Twitter (November 2009);
- 57% - percentage of Twitter users in America;
- 4.25 million - people who watch it on @ aplusk
- 350 million - Facebook users;
- 50% - Percentage of users who access Facebook account every day;
- 500,000 - number of active Facebook applications.

In Romania there are 255.560 accounts, representing about 1.18 of country population (year 2009). Most of the facebook users are in the “young” range, from 13 to 30 ages (figure 1).

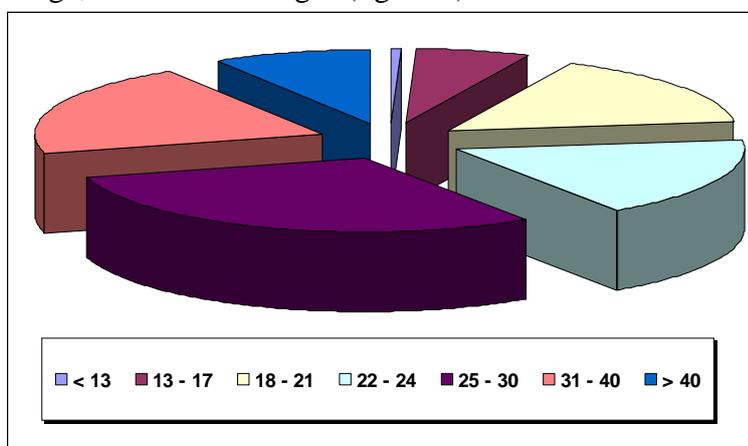


Fig. 1 – Facebook utilization, by age

Table 1

Facebook penetration (2009)		
Country	Number	Percent
Romania	21.500.000	1,19%
Ungaria	9.981.000	3,33%
Serbia	10.147.000	9,93%
Bulgaria	7.640.000	6,80%
Ucraina	46.481.000	0,32%
Polonia	38.500.000	1,66%

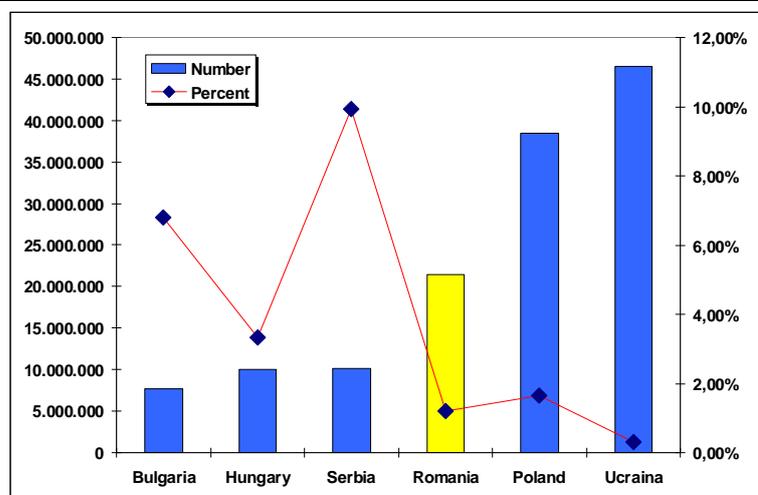


Fig. 2 - Facebook penetration (population, percent)

Table 2

Differences between Generations of Internet Users

Older - Digital Immigrants	Younger - Digital Natives
Prefer to talk on phone or in person	Prefer to connect via text, chat, Facebook, Hi5, games, etc.
Text sparingly	Text more than call: 47% of teens can text with eyes closed
Prefer synchronistic communication	Prefer a-synchronistic (sequential) communication
Accustomed to and like manuals with clear steps	Cannot relate to manuals - They figure it out intuitively
Assume they will work their way up the ladder in the workplace, in a linear fashion, in one career.	Try many careers, want balance among family, friends, activities, work. Prefer flexible hours, opportunity to make up work remotely, i.e., from a café on a weekend.
Hang out in person, clubs, dinners, etc.	Hang out online in chats, social networking sites and games etc.
Value 'proper' English	Use texting and instant message shorthand: brb; luv ya, r u ?
Tell friends about a trip on the phone, or with an in-person slideshow	Tell friends about a trip by posting an album online
Use the Internet to gather information	Use the web to socialize, play, watch videos, shows, etc.
Think young people waste their lives online	Many aspects of life are happening only online
Think of the Internet as not "real life"	Internet is as real, and often more pleasurable, than offline life
One task or pleasure at a time	Several tasks or recreation activities at a time: Watch television, text, study.

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Safety concerns: Physical kidnapping, assault, robbery	Safety concerns: Sexting, inappropriate pictures online, cyber stalking, identity theft, privacy invasions (hijacking of email accounts, social networking sites)
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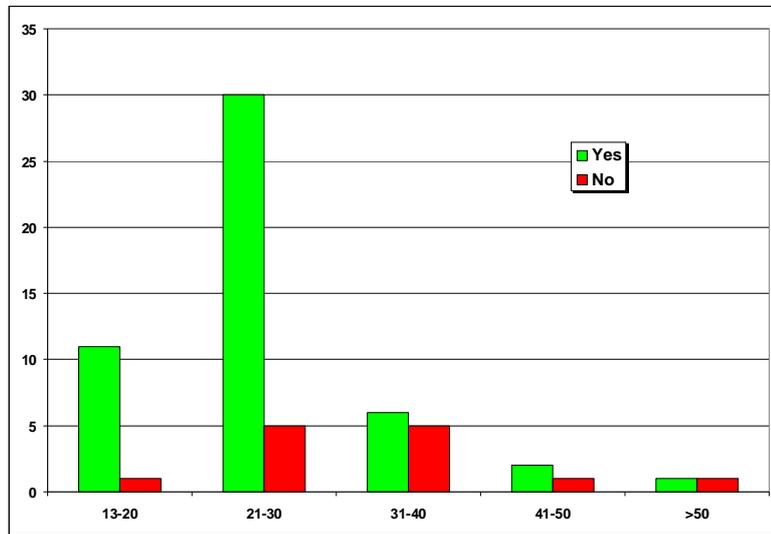


Fig. 3 - People who have Internet navigation knowledge, sort by age, west of Romania

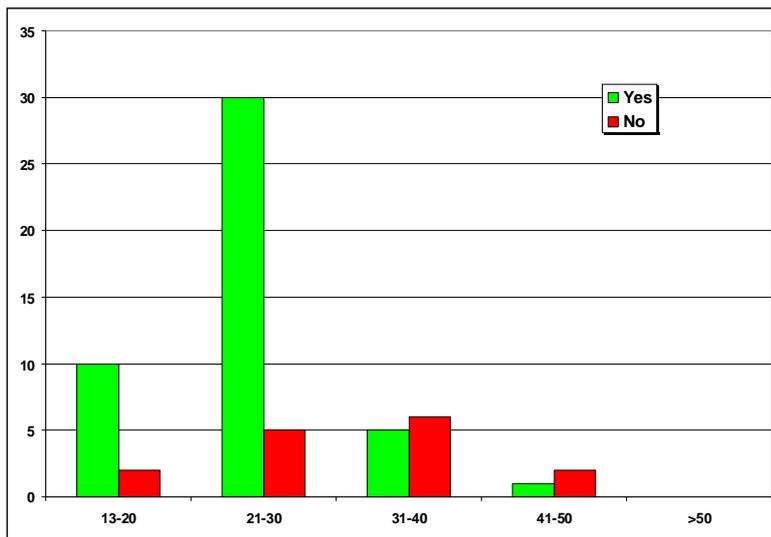


Fig. 4 - People who have e-mail knowledge, sort by age, west of Romania

CONCLUSIONS

Some young people spend too much time in front of the screen, up to 20 hours a day. Spending countless hours a day, every day, on the Internet or online gaming can interfere with young people's emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

Unlike older generations, the younger generations often socialize, hang out, and communicate online rather than in person. They usually text rather than talk on the phone, and often prefer to hang out on Twitter, Facebook and MySpace rather than in the local bar, on the street or at the town square.

Unlike older generations, young people are highly capable of effective multitasking, which appears to the older generation as lack of attention and lack of focus.

Around the world there are alarming reports of Internet Addiction. For example, in Korea there have been 10 cardiopulmonary-related deaths in Internet cafés. China reports 13% of its population is Internet-addicted. The U.S. and the west often show similar stats, with 9% of U.S. Internet users hiding their non-essential Internet use.

While the older generations may primarily use the Internet to gather important information and follow up on important news, younger generations use the Internet for communication, fun and gaming, to find out about each other, information-gathering, view videos, listen to music, blog, chat, share links, read news, shop, and "surf."

The older/parent generation, being digital immigrants, view all these online activities and multitasking as a waste of time and lack of focus. They do not understand the value of online social networking, the learning that takes place in online games, the capacity of young people to multitask, and the enormous fun, pleasure and sense of community that young people derive from these activities.

Given the options for leisure, Romanians are "sentenced" to sit at a computer more, especially since most internet users in our country are between 30-35 years. They have a great tendency to play, to interact with others, exchange experiences, photos, comments. It says that it is preferable that people access the Internet to make things more interesting and constructive, but this will be possible after the Internet will have a higher penetration rate. At this point it is important that the Internet becomes a tool for them, something normal, but will later, be "directed" to higher value

services for them and for those who create them.

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