

Are People Ready for a Change in the Digital Age?

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Abstract: *The article entitled "Are People Ready for a Change in the Digital Age?" is within the scope of communication sciences, namely communication online, which is a relatively new field, and has as main role the serious analysis of the degree of acceptance, and the use of new Social Media applications, namely Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram. This approach highlights the differences in communication clearly seen over time, moving from classical communication, traditional, crossing the digital age, online communication.*

Keywords: *Online Communication, Internet, Web 2.0 reality, chat, Social Media, social networking.*

1. Introduction

The main aim of this scientific article is to show the degree of presence on every social environment mentioned above, time spent online, the problems that arise and the impact each social media have in everyone's life.

Besides all these features, it is interesting to find out which of the three Social Media application is the top preference, what the interviewee would do if the application did not exist application and

what would s/he change about it. Thus, this paper is based on the assumption that shows that people spend so much time in the virtual environment, they want to be part of a community, and they give a great deal of free time for their presence online.

2. Online in 2017

The subject in this paper is part of the online communication, bringing to the fore the fact that the online environment has come to mean a continuous dialogue between people, a permanent opportunity of providing feedback to any information we have. The said range is growing, with many objectives which generate awareness, create leads, increase the rate of impact of information presented to the public and improve public engagement rate. Referring to these aspects, bibliographic sources have been used, especially electronic sources, but also books in print. The research was started in early December 2016.

The increased use of Social Media Networking Websites has become an international phenomenon in the past several years. What started as a hobby for some computer literate people has become a social norm and way of life for people from all over the world (Boyd, 2007:33). Teenagers and young adults have especially embraced these sites as a way to connect with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities, and showcase their social lives.

Claudia Coja brings the following definition "communication occurred when the man, being rational, tried to know better the world around us, knowledge is not possible outside communication" (2010: 9). As a continuation of this subject, language and media all have gone through many changes and improvements, from oral to electronic. Who would have thought that 2017 will produce so many changes in terms of communication? Now, classical communication was exceeded much from communicating over the Internet, so that the latter came to be a real technological success. Gradual occurrence of the Internet has brought many changes that have affected us more or less.

Internet communication mediated by computer is a "current stage of development of communication through language" (Trohin, 2006, *apud* Coja, 2010:9). Recently, using the Internet we can communicate even with those who are on the other side of the globe, we can know the information in seconds, or even find things we do not know. Of course, for this communication to be conducted properly some "aid" is required, i.e. webcam, accessories, and other programs that are helpful so that we can communicate in real-time chat, talk on Skype or even to sell or buy what we want. Not only that online communication has replaced traditional communication, but brought along with it changes in terms of human interactions. It seems that it is now much easier to send a message to a friend at the expense of meeting with him/her, it is better to sit comfortably at home, and order your favorite food, watch a movie online, or buy a book.

Communication via the Internet is expanding more and more and it is starting to see results, as well as the positive, but also the negative aspects of this communication.

By bringing this new trend of online communication in Romania, the number of customers using the Internet as a means of communication has increased, at the same time with the number of companies investing in promoting and selling online. There is a clear reason why online communication is seen differently; the fact that information generally speaking is perhaps the main resource for the nation's critical industries such as companies, and also for the national economy and national security. We hear everywhere about Social Media, hear details about this word, authors focus on the development of this concept, promotion, sale, and more for it. But what is this "*Social Media*" word? Lately, there has been a phenomenal rise of a new kind of media – called "social media" that has proliferated and fundamentally changed the way we communicated in the last 10 years. Social media is the online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. It is a shift in how people discover, read, and share information and content; it supports

the human need for social interaction with technology, transforming broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogue (many to many).

In "Users of the world, unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media", Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein from Indiana University have defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content"

(<http://michaelhaenlein.eu/> accessed at 05.01.2017, ora 18:32).

To be sure we understand the term Web 2.0, here is a description of it: "Web 2.0 is a term that was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilize the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion", as cited by Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein. In other words, we could say that social media is the channel of online communication, social interaction and search for easily accessible information, with which we can all talk and produce texts (articles) or change these written words, pictures, audio, or even video with people who are directly interested in the issues that we deal with. There is a purpose for this interaction online that aims to create new friendships or businesses.

Recommend, analyse, compare, "monologue becomes a dialogue (with the resources provided by the platforms for free: forums, groups, blogs, social networks, and platforms for video, audio outs, and instant communication), the information becomes accessible and users transform consumers into creators of content in an environment where knowledge is democratised." (Horea, 2011:43).

We cannot discuss social media without this type of socialisation (social network), namely chat. The notion of "online chat" refers to any type of Internet communication with the primary purpose of direct

communication between two or more people through programs or applications installed in a computer connected to the Internet (Claudia C., 2010: 28).

By accessing the Merriam Websters Online Dictionary, we have obtained the following definitions of the term *chat*, distinguishing between verb and noun:

Verb:

- a) to talk in an informal or familiar manner;
- b) to take part in an online discussion in a chat room;

Noun:

- a) idle small talk;
- b) light informal or familiar talk;
- c) any of several songbird (as of the genera *Cercomela*, *Granatellus*, or *Icteria*);
- d) online discussion in a chat room

(word *chat*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com>, accessed on 03.01.2017)

Speaking of advantages and disadvantages, in terms of disadvantages, Kaspersky Lab (Kaspersky Lab is a global cybersecurity company founded in 1997. Kaspersky Lab's deep threat intelligence and security expertise is constantly transforming into security solutions and services to protect businesses, critical infrastructure, governments and consumers around the glob). www.kaspersky.com , accessed at 03.01.2017) have conducted an opinion poll in which they surveyed over 16,750 people around the world to find out what emotions the users of these social networks have. Somewhat surprising is the fact that the chase of appreciation plays a central role, with 42% of those questioned saying they are envious when their friends receive more appreciation than they do.

Therefore, this research shows us that users feel envious when they see the apparently happier lives of their friends on social networks. Despite the desire to have positive feelings from social networking interactions, when they see friends' happy posts - about holidays, hobbies or parties, users often feel bitter that others enjoy life

more than them. Even though social networks have emerged as a way to keep in touch with friends and share beautiful moments with them, this study has shown us the opposite, the fact that social media leave people with a bitter taste. "Our relationship with social media has developed into a vicious cycle. We want to go onto our favourite social platforms to tell all of our connections about the positive things we are doing – that makes us feel good", says Evgeny Chereshev, head of Social Media at Kaspersky Lab. "But the reality is that everyone is doing the same thing, so when we log onto social media we're bombarded with images and posts of our friends having fun. And it looks like they're enjoying life more than us. It's easy to see why this is leaving people feeling down and why so many people have considered leaving social media altogether. The difficulty is that people feel trapped because so many of their precious memories have been stored on social media and they don't want to lose access to these."

However, people (78% of those interviewed) considered the possibility of giving up on social networking accounts, but the only thing that makes them remain is the fear of losing digital memories, but also contact with friends. To help people decide more freely if they want to stay in social media or leave without losing their digital memories, Kaspersky Lab is developing a new app – **FFForget** who will allow people to back up all of their memories from the social networks they use and keep them in a safe, encrypted memory container, and will give people the freedom to leave any network whenever they want, without losing what belongs to them – their digital lives. (https://usa.kaspersky.com/about/press-releases/2017_unsocial-media-jealousy-of-online-friends-leaves-people-feeling-down-kaspersky-lab-study-reveals, accessed at 03.01.2017).

3. Research methods

In this paper, I will use a type of research, namely qualitative research. I will distribute a questionnaire of 23 open-ended questions, closed answer, multiple answers.

The questionnaire will be distributed online to 150 people as follows:

- 17 persons under the age of 18;
- 17 students;
- 17 people aged over 30.

After analysing the 51 responses, I will highlight the following:

- How long an average internet user spends online;
- What is the most used way to be online (smartphone, tablet, laptop, computer);
- What is the most appreciated application of the three applications mentioned - Facebook, Instagram, and Whatsapp;
- What is the most commonly used application of the above-mentioned ones;
- What is it that changes to improve on each application?
- What application could give up if this problem, ... etc.

On the other hand, for a better understanding of all these issues or uses of these three Social Media applications, I will also apply an individual interview to 2 people per age category, a total of 6 people interviewed. In this way, after answering the questionnaire, we will learn more about these socialising environments, but we will especially notice the way the subjects feel when they are tested for a face-to-face interview, not just a questionnaire.

4. Conclusions

The scientific article presented with the research method and the bibliographic references helped me, on one hand, to observe that the world spends a lot of time in the online environment and surprisingly many people are online even when they meet with friends or dine with the family.

On the other hand, this study has helped me understand the needs of different age groups, what is the most used application for them, what would they want to change for each gift and which of the

three applications they would like or they could give up if problems arise.

Of course, this modern means of communication offers many benefits to users, and this has been proven by the answers of the questioned people, namely socialisation itself, the much faster transmission of important information, and a more private communication environment.

People are connected almost at any time of the day, they want to receive as much information as possible from as many people as possible, they want to discover what other people do, they want to exchange information, whether this means personal photos, favourite videos or even political opinions or various comments on current topics.

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