Popularity of the internet with university students

Popularność Internetu wśród młodzieży akademickiej

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Abstract

Introduction: Virtual reality constitutes an exceptional chance to support personal development, but it also creates new barriers and inequalities and it brings about many threats, both to the person and to society in general. Besides the indubitable advantages of the Internet, it more and more often endangers the harmonious development of a person. Virtual reality puts users in a situation in which interaction and communication is conducted differently to what they are used to based on their everyday experience.
Aim of the research: The aim of the research was an analysis of the Internet's popularity among university students. The method that was used was a diagnostic survey, carried out using questionnaires, which were the tools used to achieve the goal. Chosen results of the research, essential from the point of view of the formulated problem, were presented in the project. The research issue is encapsulated in the question: How popular is the Internet among university students?
Material and methods: Empirical research was conducted in the academic year 2010/2011 at universities in the Świętokrzyskie province. A total of 950 students attending medical majors (nursing, physiotherapy, medical rescue), pedagogical majors (social rehabilitation, integrated pre-school and early education, pedagogy with logopaedics) and technical majors (mechatronics, construction) took part in the research.
Results: More than 50% of the people that took part in the research were between 20 and 25 years of age. Over 33% of them were aged between 26 and 30. More than 87% of the participants used the Internet, 88% of the respondents had created a Facebook account, 81% of the students logged into the Nasza Klasa website and over 76% of them admitted to frequent use of scientific information found in the Internet. More than 55% of them benefited from psychological counselling via the Internet. In the presented research 75% of the students used the GG (Gadu-Gadu) messenger service very frequently. The conducted study confirmed that over 64% of the polled students used online shops very frequently and more than 73% of the respondents looked for a life partner on a dating website. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents looked for employment in the Internet, the biggest percentage of whom were students of medical majors (85.42%) and pedagogical majors (78.62%).
Conclusions: The Internet has become a meta-reality, as important as the real world. The basic space in which the Internet User Generation functions is in the form of social network portals. People more and more willingly create their accounts on more than one social network portal. This is a craving for meeting other people, restoration of contacts from the past and getting to know new cultures (often subcultures).

Streszczenie

Wprowadzenie: Rzeczywistość wirtualna stanowi wyjątkową okazję do wspierania rozwoju osobistego, ale także tworzy nowe bariery i nierówności, co powoduje wiele zagrożeń zarówno dla człowieka, jak i dla ogółu społeczeństwa. Oprócz niewątpliwych zalet Internetu, coraz częściej stanowi on zagrożenie dla harmonijnego rozwoju człowieka. Wirtualna rzeczywistość stawia użytkowników w sytuacji, w której interakcja i komunikacja prowadzona jest inaczej.
Cel pracy: Analiza popularności Internetu wśród młodzieży akademickiej.
Materiał i metody: Badania empiryczne zostały przeprowadzone w roku akademickim 2010/2011 w szkołach wyższych na terenie województwa świętokrzyskiego. Ogółem badaniu poddano 950 studentów kierunków medycznych (pielęgniarstwo, fizjoterapia, ratownictwo medyczne), kierunków pedagogicznych (resocjalizacja, zintegrowana przedszkolna i wczesnoszkolna edukacja, pedagogika z logopedią) oraz technicznych (mechatronika, budownictwo). W badaniu posłużono się metodą sondażu diagnostycznego, w ramach którego wykorzystano technikę ankietowania. Problem badawczy zawarto w pytaniu: Jak popularny jest Internet wśród studentów?

Wyniki: Osoby badane w ponad 50% były z przedziału wiekowego 20–25 lat. Ponad 33% studentów to osoby pomiędzy 26. a 30. rokiem życia. Ponad 87% badanych korzysta z Internetu, 88% respondentów założyło swój profil na Facebooku, 81% studentów loguje się na Naszej Klasie. Do bardzo częstego korzystania z informacji naukowych w Internecie przyznaje się ponad 76% badanych studentów. Ponad 55% badanych korzystało z porad psychologicznych w Internecie. Komunikatora Gadu-Gadu bardzo często używa 75% badanych studentów. Wyniki badań potwierdzają, że ponad 64% ankietowanych bardzo często robi zakupy w sklepach internetowych oraz ponad 73% badanych poszukiwało partnera życiowego na portalach randkowych. Miejsc pracy w Internecie poszukiwało 78% badanych, z czego największy odsetek stanowią studenci kierunków medycznych (85,42%) i pedagogicznych (78,62%).
Wnioski: Internet stał się metarzeczywistością, równie istotną co świat realny. Podstawową przestrzenią, w której funkcjonuje pokolenie internautów, są portale społecznościowe. Tam znajdują oni odbicie rzeczywistości, poszukują „sposobów" na swoje życie. Młodzi ludzie nie mają oporu przed opisywaniem relacji w pracy, w domu, w szkole, na studiach czy ocenianiem innych na blogach i forach internetowych. Ludzie coraz chętniej zakładają swoje profile na więcej niż na jednym portalu społecznościowym, kierując się chęcią poznawania nowych ludzi, odnawiania kontaktów z przeszłości, poznawania nowych kultur (często subkultur).

> *The Internet changes a person's psychological attitude towards time and space in a very radical way. If one focuses all his or her attention on something particular, useful and easily accessible, he or she may lack motivation to reflect deeply. Yet one has a natural need of internal peace and time to think over life and its mysteries to gradually achieve mature control of oneself and the world around.*
>
> John Paul II

Introduction

The twenty-first century is the era of the Internet along with the development of the latest forms of multimedia. The virtual world gives vast opportunities concerning communication, science, information and entertainment. Virtual reality constitutes an exceptional chance to support personal development, but it also creates new barriers and inequalities and it brings about many threats, both to the person and to society in general. Besides the indubitable advantages of the Internet, it more and more often endangers the harmonious development of a person. In these days of progressing technologisation of daily life, it is difficult to imagine the everyday existence of a modern, active person without the Internet. This person presents someone lost in cyberspace who cannot function without it any more. For many, this tool has become a "deity", for others a nuisance [1].

The Internet, as a phenomenon, came into being in the 1960s. The idea to create the Net emerged on the grounds of the fight over world dominance. Nobody considered the Internet in terms of mass usage, nobody foresaw how much its function would change [2]. 17th August 1991 is thought to be the day of the birth of the Internet in Poland. On this day the first email was sent from the Faculty of Physics of the University of Warsaw in Poland and reached the Computer Centre of the University of Copenhagen.

The Internet, similarly to other innovations in the latest technologies, has advantages and disadvantages.

A child, a youth and an adult are all vulnerable to different threats that lurk in the virtual world. The Internet, intentionally used in children's and youths' education, gives vast possibilities of stimulating students to make the process of learning more attractive. Undoubtedly, it enriches the education process with new, not widely available in traditional teaching,

means of illustrating processes and presenting objects. The Internet, due to its technical attractiveness, even mysteriousness, causes interest and positive motivation to work with this complicated system, and therefore to learning; it causes and sustains the student's own activity [3].

The group of young Internet users is becoming bigger. There are computer laboratories and libraries with Internet access in the majority of schools and colleges. In the majority of Polish cities, towns even, Internet cafés are an attractive way of spending free time. Many young people own personal tablets and hence have unlimited access to the Internet, which means that they are more attractive in the eyes of their peers.

The exceptionally fast development of multimedia technology has provoked significant social, cultural and economic changes which correlate with the psychological changes in the modern human's structure. Sław Krzemień-Ojak writes in his book "Kłopoty z tożsamością" about *teleanthropus* and *medioanthropus*, that is a person whose identity is imposed by media [4]. Accurately, the 21st century has been called by philosophers the century of loneliness.

While searching for information, young people have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with many new points of view on diverse subjects, they discover new fields of knowledge, get to know different customs and cultures. At the same time, they adapt to the requirements of life in the real world around. In the Internet, accurate, important information can be found next to harmful content in an ethical, moral or educational sense. The world of the Internet opens for a young person an inconceivable amount of stored information and unlimited possibilities of using it. In the virtual world there is the possibility of understanding and also solving developmental problems specific for the given age. The Internet is a place

where young people look for answers to their existential questions and fathom out the secrets of solutions in the field of interpersonal relations, in the field of values, ethical and moral system, interests and world-view-related orientation [5–7].

A modern young person, preparing themself for independence and adulthood, searches for their own personality, which can mean rebellion, disregard for hitherto authorities and values, and this, in consequence, may result in isolation. Many people in crisis situations use psychological or spiritual support in virtual form, which gives the opportunity of consulting many problems at any time without direct, personal contact. The experience in using different kinds of psychological and medical counselling through mass media dates back to the 1950s. People could receive help and essential information in specialist magazines, through the post, on the radio and television and via telephone [8].

The first direct experience of using the Internet in providing particular psychological services took place in the United States in October 1972, the moment after the Internet had appeared, and it included demonstrating a direct therapeutic session using two computers at Stanford and UCLA universities during the ICCC [9]. In the present reality the virtual space is a perfect medium for allowing youths to meet, keep in touch and strengthen bonds with other people all over the world, which gives them the chance to benefit from unlimited experience that helps them self-develop and solve their own problems [10]. However, the popularity of the Internet as one of the forms of psychological help (at the beginning – indirect) was more connected with the functioning of the first discussion groups since 1976. The number of such groups multiplied a few times at the beginning of the 1980s, which was caused mainly by financial availability of personal computers (PC). Probably after this, the first contacts between psychologists, psychiatrists and clients appeared. The first free psychological counselling services through the Internet, as it appears in different sources, were of Uncle Ezra's authorship and were directed to the students of Cornell-Ithaca University in New York in 1986. Similarly, services in the field of mental health (free of charge) were also provided in the United States in the form of single consultation or advice at the beginning of the 1990s [10]. Later on, chargeable psychological advice also appeared. Doctor Bob Holmes was the first person, as he states himself, who offered on his website (www.leonard-holmes.com) the first free counselling, and then, if the customer was satisfied, paid sessions. Nonetheless, Sommers was the pioneer in this field – he worked with more than 300 customers in the period between 1995 and 1998 throughout the world using diverse available Internet instruments and computer programmes (http://www.tidalwave.net). At the same

time, a similar service was being developed in Europe. Servers and websites offering psychological counselling started functioning in 1995 in London (np. www.pinkpractice.com, www.win.net/cyberpsych). Statistics from the end of the 20th century mention about almost 1000 psychologists helping via the Internet. Current psychological practice through the net can include the following kinds of services:

1. Psychotherapy: only direct contact through the Internet (one time or a few times) between a client and psychologist on the patient's initiative, in order to help the client psychologically in the field of mental health or emotional support.
2. Consultation or advice: this is the psychologist's or psychiatrist's answer only through the Internet to the particular patients' questions.
3. Additional contact: as a supplementary form of traditional psychotherapy contact.

The outlook on the scope of Internet services in psychological counselling were similar from the beginning and concerned almost every kind of psychological help.

Virtual reality puts users in a situation in which interaction and communication is conducted differently to what they are used to based on their everyday experience. New quality of interpersonal contacts is defined by specific characteristics of virtual space, which, according to Suler, are as follows [11]:

1. Limited sensory experience: the virtual environment assumes the possibility of contact based on experience, making use of the senses of sight and hearing, and the combination of these two modalities. But still, the lack of physical contact is a significant limitation.
2. Identity flexibility and anonymity. The lack of direct interaction between users of the Internet results in atypical ideas in the field of auto-presentation of the participants of the communication. They can, but do not have to, reveal more detailed information about themselves.
3. Equalisation of status. Virtual space gives equal chances to its users regardless of their status, wealth and race. Thanks to this, the influence on the others depends only on the communicative skills of the person, their determination and the views that the person presents.
4. Transcending spatial boundaries. Internet communication gives opportunities to talk to people with similar interests and needs, independently of the place of residence and the distance between them. Covering a distance within a few minutes or seconds builds a new world, regardless of geographical location.
5. Time stretching and condensation. Cyberspace gives opportunity for synchronous communication when many people take part in the same conversation.
6. Access to numerous relationships. One can quite easily contact with a large group of people. Owing

to advanced search, filtration and selection options, communication with particular users or groups becomes effective.

7. Permanent records. Virtual communication and Internet acquaintance can be wholly documented and the records of conversations stored.

8. Altered and dream states. When sitting in front of the computer's monitor and controlling the reality with the keys on a keyboard one can experience states similar to dreams. There is the possibility that this state may be the cause of some forms of Internet addiction [12].

The results of research available in the Internet state that almost 60% of Polish students spend 3 to 7 h in the Internet every day. Students do most of their daily errands with the help of the Internet – they read, watch films and TV series, use online banking, communicate with peers through social network portals and prepare for tests and examinations [12]. The research for the Polish Open University indicates that e-learning is obvious for young people. They are aware of the advantages that such a system of education brings; at the same time, they know what Polish e-learning lacks. The virtual world is a natural environment for the majority of students. A survey carried out for the Polish Open University showed that almost all Polish students use the Internet every day. The most – almost 40% – use it for 3–4 h a day, more than 11% for 5 to 7 h. What is interesting, those who use the Internet for less than an hour constitute a smaller number (6.1%) than those who use it for more than 7 h every day (6.7%). The generation that is currently studying grew up together with the development of the Internet. They were familiarising themselves with new network applications and tech-

nical news on a regular basis and learnt how to use them efficiently in everyday life. The accessibility of the Internet is growing and it concerns not only big cities, but also small towns and villages; lower costs of Internet access are visible, and recently, thanks to smartphones, also the popularity of the mobile Internet – all of these influence the growing community of active Internet users [13].

Aim of the research

The aim of the research was the analysis of the Internet's popularity among university students. Empirical research was conducted in the academic year 2010/2011 at universities in the Świętokrzyskie province.

Material and methods

A total of 950 students attending medical majors (nursing, physiotherapy, medical rescue), pedagogical majors (social rehabilitation, integrated pre-school and early education, pedagogy with logopaedics) and technical majors (mechatronics, construction) of extramural and full-time studies took part in the research. The method that was used was a diagnostic survey (the opportunity of receiving results from such a large group of respondents accounted for the choice of this particular research method) carried out using questionnaires, which were the tools used to achieve the goal. The questionnaire included 20 questions and particulars including information about sex, place of residence and the age of those surveyed. Chosen results of the research, essential from the point of view of the formulated problem, were presented in the project. The research issue is encapsulated in the question: How popular is the Internet among university students?

Results

More than 50% of people that took part in the research were between 20 and 25 years of age. Over 33% of students were aged between 26 and 30. People over 40 years of age constituted the smallest group – a little over 2% of students (Table 1).

The respondents more often were from cities with a population of over 100,000 – over 45% of polled students, and cities with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 citizens – 27.47%. More than 15% of the surveyed students lived in villages. Exact data about the place of residence is shown in Table 2.

People that took part in the research were students of pedagogical majors – 290 people, medical majors – 336 people and technical majors – 324 people. There were 48.32% women among the respondents, the highest percentage of whom were the students of pedagogical majors – 73.44% and medical majors – 63.70%. Men constituted 51.68% of respondents, the

Table 1. The age of the researched students (*n* = 950)

Age	Number	Percent
20–25	483	50.84
26–30	321	33.80
31–40	123	12.94
Over 40 years of age	23	2.42

Table 2. The place of residence of the surveyed students (*n* = 950)

Place of residence	Number	Percent
Village	151	15.89
Town up to 50,000 citizens	106	11.16
City from 50,000–100,000 citizens	261	27.47
City over 100,000 citizens	432	45.47

Table 3. Students' population size with division into sex and major

Gender	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female	213	73.44	214	63.70	32	9.88	459	48.32
Male	77	26.55	122	36.30	292	90.12	491	51.68
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

largest group being the students of technical majors. The exact distribution of the numbers with division into sex and major is presented in Table 3.

The respondents were asked about using the Internet. Over 87% of those polled answered positively, only 0.6% did not use the Internet, but more than 11% did this sporadically. The division of answers for all respondents is illustrated in Table 4.

The first social network portals appeared in the United States in the mid 1990s. The prototype of www.nasza-klasa.pl, the classmates.com website, appeared in 1995. Those first virtual communities were oriented towards particular, closely related social groups (former students, family, friends). One could administer the list of friends, add new people, send them messages, etc. The users started to decide to create new groups that were connected by common interests and acquaintances. These bonds became more and more virtual and did not necessarily corresponded with actual connections. In the Internet, it is common to maintain contact with people with whom normally such contact would not have been sustained. The newest generation of social network portals is almost entirely controlled by users themselves, and they are the ones who create the content of the site. Virtual communities can sometimes become similar to real ones: for some, the Internet is a parallel world in which they sometimes function more frequently than in the real world. The low cost, high effectiveness and multimedia character of information in the Internet is conducive to fast development of different forms of social life [14]. Nk.pl (formerly nasza-klasa.pl), with over 12 million users, and Facebook, with more than 8 million users, were the most popular social network portals in Poland in 2010 [15]. According to Megapanel research dated to March 2011, almost all Internet users (99.3%) use Social Media and devote about 1.5 h to it daily [16]. More and more often friendship is virtualised, and the Internet together with social network portals starts replacing natural, indispensable to proper social functioning, interpersonal contact.

The results of the research concerning Internet communities seem to be interesting. Eurobarometer research shows that 35% of citizens of the European Union use social network portals. The fact that the

Table 4. Use of the Internet by surveyed students

Surveyed students	Number	Percent
Yes	834	87.80
No	6	0.63
Sporadically	110	11.58

percentage of Poles using such portals is higher than the European Union average and constitutes 43% is interesting [17].

Boyd and Hargittai conducted research among 1000 students at the University of Illinois at the start of 2010. The results showed that the majority (87% in 2009 and 90% in 2010) of students used Facebook. More than 75% of the polled group stated that they use it often – 76% in 2009 and 81% in 2010. According to Megapanel PBI and Gemius research that took place in October 2010, 67% of polled Poles used Nasza Klasa, and 47% of them used Facebook. Within a month the situation changed; November summing up showed that the users were migrating from Nasza Klasa to Facebook. Sixty-five percent of respondents had an account on the Nasza Klasa portal, whereas more than 50% were on Facebook [18].

Currently, there are numerous social network portals on the Polish market that can be divided into different categories, for example: business – LinkedIn, hobby; social – Facebook, MySpace; matrimonial – Sympatia.pl, Przeznaczeni.pl. The rapid growth of the number of social network portals in Poland has closed within the period of the two last years. Even though social network portals existed before in the Polish network, this sudden increase is connected mostly to the popularity boom of Nasza-klasa.pl, which currently has over 13 million of registered users; that is more than 30% of Poles [19]. Which social network portals do the researched students use? The exact data is illustrated in Table 5.

More than 88% of the respondents created a Facebook account while simultaneously logging in on Nasza Klasa – 81% of students. Social network portals with little popularity are Netlog – only 4.53% of those questioned used this website, and Twitter – a little over 2%. The respondents' indications suggest that

Table 5. Using social network portals (Nasza Klasa, Facebook, Netlog, Twitter)

Social network portals	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Twechnical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nasza Klasa	248	85.52	291	86.61	232	71.60	771	81.16
Facebook	223	76.90	301	89.58	314	96.91	838	88.21
Netlog	21	7.24	6	1.78	16	4.94	43	4.53
Twitter	11	3.79	2	0.59	7	2.16	20	2.11

The results do not sum up as the respondents could choose more than one answer

Table 6. Searching for scientific information in the Internet

Searching for scientific information in the Internet	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very often	194	66.90	284	84.53	247	88.59	725	76.31
Often	58	20.00	40	11.90	65	20.06	163	17.16
Sometimes	36	12.41	11	3.27	7	2.16	54	5.68
Never	2	0.69	1	0.30	5	1.54	8	0.84
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

they less frequently used Netlog and Twitter portals; the majority were the users of portals broadly advertised and simple in use (Table 6).

More than 76% of respondents admitted to making use of scientific information in the Internet very frequently: 17% of them often looked for scientific knowledge in the Internet, 5% of the polled sometimes extended their knowledge through the Internet and only 0.84% definitely avoided deriving scientific knowledge from the Internet.

Various practical situations determine looking for help in the Internet. It is often the shame of revealing a personal secret or a dialogue about deviation, in the respondents' opinion. The researched students were asked if they ever benefited from anonymous psychological counselling in the Internet. Table 7 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents' answers.

More than 55% of respondents benefited from psychological counselling in the Internet. Moreover, 32% did this often. It seems that virtual help cannot replace interpersonal aid in the situation of crisis, as over 11% of the polled had never benefited from such forms of help.

Gadu-Gadu was launched on 15th August 2000 and it quickly became very popular. According to the information given by the Gadu-Gadu company, more

Table 7. Benefiting from psychological counselling in the Internet

Benefiting from psychological counselling	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes, very often	98	33.80	124	36.90	91	28.09	313	32.95
Yes, but only sometimes	131	45.17	201	59.82	196	60.49	528	55.58
No, never	61	21.03	11	3.27	37	11.42	109	11.47
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

Table 8. Using Gadu-Gadu messenger and chat rooms

Using gadu gadu and chat rooms	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Yes, very often	157	54.14	278	82.74	286	88.27	721	75.90
Yes, but sometimes	123	42.41	55	16.37	35	10.80	213	22.42
No, never	10	3.45	3	0.89	3	0.93	16	1.68
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

Table 9. Looking for employment in the Internet

Looking for employment in the Internet	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Yes, very often	228	78.62	287	85.42	235	75.23	750	78.95
Yes, but sometimes	60	20.69	25	7.44	72	22.22	157	10.53
No, never	2	0.69	24	7.14	17	5.25	43	4.52
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

than 10,000 users registered on the first day [24]. Gadu-Gadu occupied an unused market niche and today it holds the position of market leader [20, 21]. Gadu-Gadu emoticons became cult and the sound of a new message is well recognised [22]. Seventy-five percent of the respondents of the presented research used Gadu-Gadu messenger very often, only 22.42% claim that they used it sometimes and only 1.68% of the polled had never used "gg" or visited a chat room (Table 8).

The Internet and social network portals are used not only to communicate with private friends, but also to build and develop professional contacts. Employers ought to be aware of the fact that it is not a temporary trend, but an inevitable change of communicating as well as acquiring and processing information, therein also data about jobs and employers. The results of the "Kandydaci 2.0" research conducted by the Employer Branding Institute shows that as many as 96% of students and graduates aged on average 23 years old verify information about employers in the Internet. According to a report from Instytut Badań Rynkowych, 85% of GoldenLine portal users make use of it to acquire information about a potential employer, 32% of Internet users simultaneously look for such data on Facebook, and 23% on LinkedIn [16]. The research conducted by the authors of this article is confirmation of the quoted results. In this research, more than 78% of respondents claimed to look for employment in the Internet, the highest percentage being the students of medical majors – 85.42% and pedagogical

majors – 78.62%. Only 4.52% of respondents had never looked for employment in the Internet, from whom the lowest number constituted the students of pedagogical majors – 0.69%. The exact distribution of the results is presented in Table 9.

Shopping via the Internet is becoming a more and more popular way of purchasing goods. Obviously, there is also the risk of fraud and an inability to refund the merchandise or to lodge a complaint for personal reasons; nonetheless, this form of buying has become the most common in recent years. When shopping online, the consumer has the right to receive full and clear information about the offered services and goods – before ordering written confirmation about the purchase. The consumer ought to be informed about the right to withdraw from the agreement within seven workdays without incurring costs (with the exception of the shipping cost of returning goods to the seller [23]). The conducted research confirms that more than 64% of the polled very often bought goods from Internet shops, the majority of whom constituted students of technical majors – 69%. Twenty-six percent of students sometimes shopped online, and the majority of them were also students of technical majors. The students of medical majors never purchased goods online – over 13% of respondents (Table 10).

Functioning on social network portals is a chance to find a life partner. More than 73% of the respondents looked for a life partner on dating websites, the students of technical majors being the majority – 85%. 7.44% of students of medical majors had never

Table 10. Purchasing goods in Internet shops

Purchasing goods in the Internet shops	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes, very often	186	64.13	203	60.41	224	69.12	613	64.53
Yes, but sometimes	71	24.48	89	26.49	91	28.10	251	26.42
No, never	33	11.38	44	13.10	9	2.78	86	9.05
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

Table 11. Seeking a life partner on the Internet

Seeking life partner in the Internet	Major						Total	
	Pedagogical		Medical		Technical			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	188	64.83	234	81.55	276	85.18	698	73.47
I sometimes use(d) dating websites	85	29.31	77	23.05	36	11.12	198	20.84
No, never	17	5.86	25	7.44	12	3.70	54	5.68
Total	290	100	336	100	324	100	950	100

used such websites. Unfortunately, the results suggest indisputably that students, especially of technical majors, for different reasons (it is not known why, it was not included in the questionnaire) do not seek interpersonal contacts, they only focus on "browsing through" dating websites in order to find a life partner. It would be purposeful to ask about their motives for looking for a life partner in the Internet and the requirements imposed on such person, which can form another important and deeper research material (Table 11).

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the development of the Internet has allowed the creation of a new face of society – virtual, seeking scientific reports, employment and important information in the Internet. Users not only passively benefit from the Internet's prosperity, but they create it themselves. The rapid growth in the number of social network portals is only a quick response to the new needs of consumers. The Internet has become a meta-reality, as important as the real world. The basic space in which the Internet User Generation functions is in the form of social network portals. This is the place where they find the reflection of reality and look for "ideas" for life. This is the place in which one can talk about one's preferences, from culinary ones, through fashion, music, to erotic fantasies, in spite of the feeling of no privacy, intimacy or physical close-

ness. Young people are not reluctant to describe relations in the workplace, at home, at school, at university or to judge others on their blogs and Internet forums [24]. People more and more willingly create their accounts on more than one social network portal. This is a craving for meeting other people, restoration of contacts from the past and getting to know new cultures (often subcultures). One might ask oneself the question whether it is not virtual exhibitionism. Is this the result of a lack of self-confidence and social acceptance, and therefore an extraordinary urge to draw people's attention to oneself through the Internet?

Young people can make a more favourable impression on others and pretend to be better than they are in reality. The consciousness of the existence of virtual reality and knowledge about its positive sides is essential for improved social functioning, but a modern young person, who cannot imagine his/her life without access to the Internet and computers, very often forgets that the condition of well-being of his/her health is to take care about individual, versatile development, the ability to manage one's time reserved for rest and to sustain satisfying contact with friends, acquaintances and family.

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